

THE CONCEPT AND AUDIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY WALL PAINTING

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Abstract: One of the media tools in the contemporary art is Urban Environmental Graphic urban, wall painting and street art. This art is for ordinary audiences and can vastly communicate routine and everyday life of people. Clearly, the daily communication can have mutual effects of city walls on audiences and also, the audiences can reflect their perceptions of a successful wall painting, especially in virtual world.

The main objective of this study is to achieve to the most important affecting factors of environmental graphics (especially wall painting) in affecting audiences and enhancement of their awareness and perception about art and relevant issues. Now, the question is that can the process of formation of a wall painting from the stage of idea processing to presentation of concept to implementation affect improvement of qualitative level of attitude of audiences? How one can achieve common language among different people through a novel idea with different implementation in wall painting?

In this field, the hypothesis in this study is: display of novel ideas and concepts using modern technologies and understanding issues about the people of the current age can affect survival of work and its impact on contemporary audiences and finally, its globalization.

Keywords: Wall painting, contemporary audience, globalization, idea.

INTRODUCTION

At the global age of information and digital revolution, a new period of art was formed. In second half of 20th century, modernism was removed in benefit of new post-modern movement. Something that was focused on postmodernism was freedom of expression, individualism and conceptual revolution. Postmodernism used to defend an approach that was more individual than modernism in terms of style, aesthetics and design.

Modernism brought unit, consistency and coordination and postmodernism caused inconsistency, heterogeneity and even turbulence in urban space in some cases (environmental graphics of walls and architecture). On 1990s decade, postmodernism made graphic designers and architects use mixed and scattered range of styles and expressions. Pop culture, graffiti and new non-traditional forms, visual communication such as film, video and digital media could extraordinarily affect not only graphic design, but also manner of its realization in urban environment

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of 21st century [1]. As one of the most important pillars of every society is the space and environment, at which people live, the phenomena of the current age have undoubtedly affected the people of the society deeply and this is the society that the audiences can gain more recognition of culture, beliefs, human relations, politics and society through walls of city. As a result, it is clear that the audiences or citizens can also affect street art consciously or unconsciously and they can also conduct each work to be an international work.

In this regard, young and modernist talents have been able to use modern expression and conceptualization methods to have deep impact on contemporary audience as it is referred in this study in summary.

AUDIENCE AND CONTEMPORARY WALL PAINTING

In the contemporary age, wall painting is considered as one of the manifestations of urban and public art. The direct relationship between audience and living environment has always caused continuing use of decorative elements in form of motifs and color to create beautiful effect in architecture from ancient times until now. In architecture encyclopedia, in addition to name wall painting as a type of architectural decorations, the position of this art in different effects of spaces (attached and detached) is expanded and it has been mentioned that the art branch can create new surface in space in addition to use characteristics of wall surface [2].

Clearly, visual elements such as color, rhythm, form and fabric are the most important communicative tools in environmental graphics that can undoubtedly affect audiences. Wall painting as a branch of environmental graphics is not separated from such feature, but also can affect them as mass media at the same time that it is fed by traditions, rites, religion and politics. Environmental art has unbreakable bond with audiences and as a result, it has been mixed with relevant discussions of psychology. Environmental Psychology is a field of Psychological Science that considers positive and negative effect of environment on human and vice versa. Moreover, this field evaluated performance of neural system of human mind against the deficiencies of surrounding environment.

According to the theory of Creek, in Environmental Psychology, psychological study of human behavior is in such manner that is related to everyday life of people in physical environment. In Environmental Psychology, the customs, traditions, values and social and cultural norms are considered. According to Gifford, Environmental Psychology refers to mutual investigation of individual and his/her physical place. In such mutual impact, the individuals can deform the environment and at the same time, behaviors and experiences of individuals would be changed by the environment

[3]. On the other hand, public art such as wall painting is in significant relationship with the society and sociology. Natalie Heinich says about art sociology: “in tradition of art sociology, there are three attitudes about relationship between art and society including impact of art on the society, the impact of society on art and art as the society”. In her opinion, although many people have imagination about art sociology in frame of two initial attitudes, the two attitudes are not appropriate for formation of art sociology. This is because; in both attitudes, the art is imagined separated from sociology; although an attitude can help art sociology that separates art and sociology and investigates the art as a social institute that is in relation with other institutes [4]. In line with special position of audience in public art, Heinich mentions that perception of audiences is very important to a level that no work can be existed without audiences and more importantly, it is too hard to attempt to gain attention of contemporary audience. According to fundamental changes in urban structure and new concepts of urbanization, political and social events of the current age and bombing of image and information in virtual world, human and contemporary art were also changed considerably. Hence, it is clear that today, to create an effective wall painting, only traditional methods can't be efficient. The contemporary designer presents new and innovative works with different orientations in new arts like folk art, conceptual art and minimalism using different tools and sometimes, a combination of these arts that can enchant contemporary audiences. Hence, different methods in wall painting are created in terms of implementation techniques and ideation at the current world. Here two cases are referred in Tehran and at world level.

Tehran Metropolis is being changes and grown everyday like a wonderful and strange creature. It seems that walls are attending in an attrition and endless race in destruction and construction for many years and the citizens are viewers of the race and are waiting for ending whistle.

The city of contrasts has observed wall paintings of “Mahdi Ghadyanloo” over the years presenting new form of this art in Tehran, which has gained attention of international media too. The artist has implemented more than 100 wall paintings on walls of Tehran City from 2006 to the date and they have become famous because of fantasy and supernatural forms. Effect of these fantasy paintings on special and general audiences and specifically visual aesthetics of works of Ghadyanloo have undoubtedly played vital role in internationalization of his name. He says: “in my works, I always think about audience and feelings transferred to them obsessively and feel responsible against audiences. However, this won't happen on canvas. In my opinion, this is one of the main differences between wall painting and painting on canvas that audience is in top of the pyramid”.

One of the most important specifications in works of this artist is implementation of complicated concepts in minimalist, unadorned, illusionary and surreal way. Bicycle rider moving against the gravity, children going up and down on stairs backwardly, cars flying in line with white clouds in the blue sky and the world that artist conducts mind of audiences to the world beyond the Tehran's sky. Implementation of his works is by means of simple color on wall, but their saying language is deep concept with a content of life. The works are mysterious works in calm scenes that make audiences deepening and thinking in a metropolis like Tehran with paying no attention to the contemporary world (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Using realism elements in an uncommon space, ref [6]

“Richard Howard” Howard Griffin Gallery director in London says about works of Ghadyanloo: “surrealist imagination and fantasy of Ghadyanloo is a kind of review under condition of living and the concept of life for me with a worldwide theme about hope, futurism, loss and sadness.” According to Howard, works of the artist are significantly minimal and a kind of silence is dominated in their composition.

Another special characteristic of his wall paintings is interaction of painting with the urban environment and coexistence with architecture. The paintings have not only decorative aspect and are drawn specific to same environment. According

to Ghadyanloo, “wall painting is in fact a social and popular art. Before drawing on wall, I go firstly to the environment of the neighborhood and after talking to people and becoming familiar with history and total space of the neighborhood, I implement appropriate drawing, so that it can be implemented on no other wall” [5]. The most brilliant works of Ghadyanloo with such features and completely loyal to the environment and the history is wall painting named “Bazar Marvi” located in old neighborhood of Pamemar. This work has been implemented using old native elements, especially Qajae Era, in a very skilled manner on wall (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Wall painting under the title of “Bazar Marvi”, ref [ibid]

In composition of works of “Mahdi Ghadyanloo”, use of points, lines, surface, motion, harmony and contrast in frame of geometric, non-geometric, abstract and naturalist in uncommon position, perspective, and game of highlights and creation of visual contrasts, beautiful brightness of colors are easily observable to express a fantasy and wonderful space. Using these elements intelligently to create painting on walls of city has been able to gain attention of audiences not only in an overview, but also with a thoughtful attitude.

In addition to his works in Iran, his work titled “We have Not Start the Game” could be referred on wall of one of the most important centers of implementation of wall paintings at the world in London. The specification of this wall is implementation of a creative painting of famous artists across the world, which

would be cleaned after a while and another implementation would be performed on it (Figure 3). In this work, two elements of crow are seeking an opportunity in greedy way to hunt a kid while jumping rope in line with a window to the sky. The peak of the kid while being happy because of jumping to the sky makes the kid bait of crows. It seems that at the same time with happiness, a type of worry about a terrible future is waiting for the kid. Here, as it was mentioned before, use of naturalist elements and geometric surfaces is observable with exact order in a nice form. According to the artist, anxious and dark space is dominated on entire work despite other works that have always blue and clear.



Figure 3: Wall painting under the title of “We have not started the Game”

In field of creating new and effective ideas with creative implementation in wall painting, another artist with international fame is referred here. JR is the nickname of young French Artist, who has travelled to most countries of the world to present his works. In his opinion, “photography is a worldwide art that is trapped in framework of galleries and museums. With the presentation of photo in open space, it would be possible for all people to see all pictures for 24hrs and the only unpredictable thing is the date of ending of the exhibition” [7] and [8].

The street artist introduces himself as “Photographeur” as a person who has mixed graffiti works with photography. In other words, he is a photographer who displays his photos using graffiti style. The main element in his photography is large size portraits which used to be hanged illegally on walls, roofs, bridges, trains, cars and any place that could pile audience. JR uses portraits to challenge

race differentiation thoughts, assumptions and injustice. His works are typically a combination of art and reality. In his works, he speaks about commitment, freedom, identity and restrictions. In a part of his speech titled "Use Art to Change the World" on 2011 after gaining TED Award, he says: "art is in some aspects that can change the world; although its mission is not changing the world, but also is to change the perceptions. Art can change the attitude to the world and cause comparisons. In fact, this issue that art can't change things has changed it into a neutral space to exchange thoughts and negotiation; if so, audiences would be able to change the world" [9]. Special feature of street art of JR is his emphasis on black and white works. He can adjust his works wonderfully with the surrounding area and the architecture of the building. In some works, contrast of picture with the surrounding environment can attract audiences. The common feature of his works is photography with man theme and black and white in large size. It seems that he wants to display internal identity of human through selecting black and white color regardless of racial, ethical and national preferences. Through selecting photography technique, he attracts audiences in realistic form and with no interference of fantasy, imagination and mystery. The audiences of works of JR can understand personal, social and political reality of people in direct encounter of faces. Through magnifications, he has been able to represent depth of fatigue, aging, pain, fear, hope and excitement on roof of houses, streets, cars and trains. Maybe this is because; streets can see millions of people experienced different emotions and feelings and had different concerns. His works are very close, familiar and intimate and the audiences can even have sibling with them. His works are protective, rebellious and sometimes smooth and reckless. He tries to inform audiences about the surrounding world with his art and to achieve this goal; he has implemented a lot of challenging political and social projects at the important points of the world. Among these works, several brilliant works are referred here. On 2005, he completed a project named "28mm" related to some portraits of immigrant youths resident of Paris. After printing the photos in large size, he attached them on walls of important places of the city (like Europe Home for Photo and Paris Municipality). He was aimed in showing the situation of marginalized youths and protest to stereotypical photos showed by some media. Although the street exhibition seemed illegal, it could have wide reflection in media and success of the artist. Another successful work of JR is a giant portrait showcased on 2008 on the roof of house of slum dwellers of the City of "Kabira" in "Kenya"; eyes staring at audiences (Figure 4).

In this project, similar to the previous one, the artist tries to show protest to inappropriate situation of life of some people who have no ability to express their situation and hope in supports of others; a look full of fear, despair and desire.

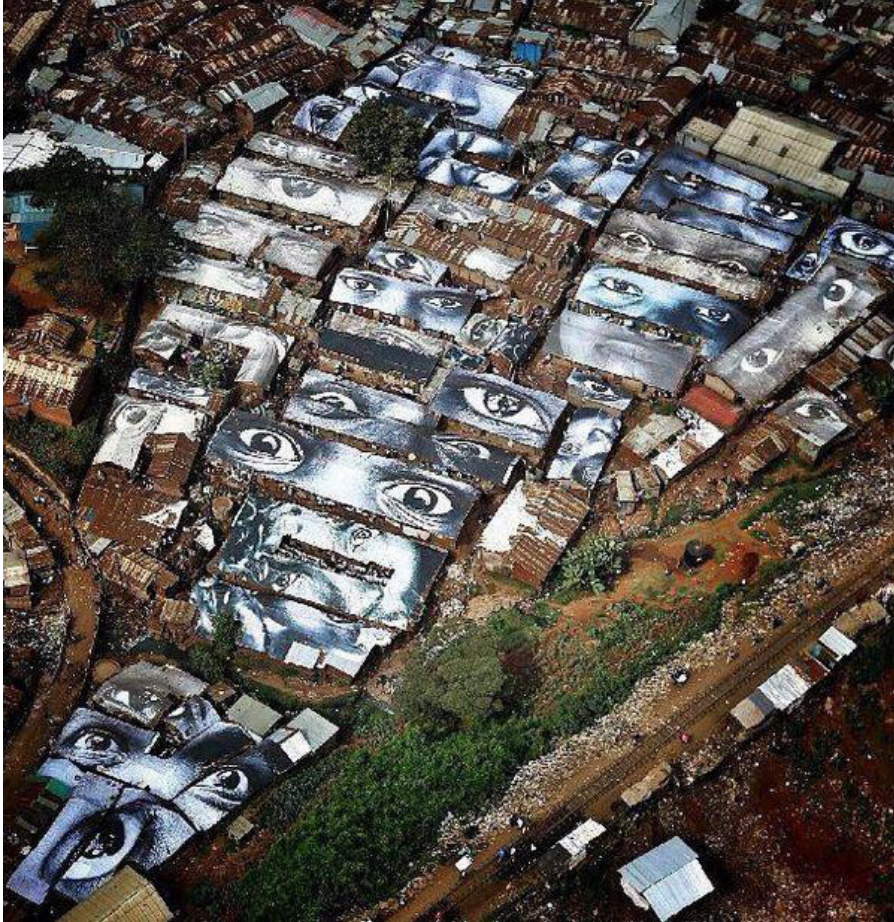


Figure 4: Painting called “Eyes on House of slum dwellers” in Kabira, Kenya, ref [10]

In this field, he says: “we attached work on roof of house this time; although with no use of paper, since it could not prevent water penetration. Hence, we used a material named “vinyl” that is an insulator and plastic material with similar function of waterproofing.” In fact, he refers to usefulness of art. Hence, people protect in good way, since in addition to express sympathy of artist with them, it can also protect their roof against water [ibid].

By 2015, the “New York Times” offered a work with theme of migration to this artist. He began to take photos from people who had come to New York for less than 1 year from different points of the world and had faced problems such as employment and language. JR says: “I selected 15 immigrants and took photo from

their life in shadow of city while walking and learning English anonymously. At the end, I attached photo of a 20-year old boy from Azerbaijan called “Elma” in large size in roadbed of one street of New York”. People used to pass over it and paid no attention to it. However, in April 2015, with publishing the image of Elma on cover of “New York Times” magazine, all people paid attention to it and hence, this work with theme “migration” was selected as the best cover image (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Photography projects called “Immigrant”, ref [10]

As it is illustrated in this figure, according to black and white color of the image and placement in an environment with traffic of many people and cars in day and night is changed into a different composition with moving elements. Colorful points (people and cars) create beautiful landscape in interaction with the work from upper part and in far distance. Moreover, the not predetermined encounters of elements beside or on the fixed image on the ground has been changed into a nice and time-related harmony and creation of sense of assumed motion in main personage. Interestingly, most photos of him are taken using aerial photography.

In records of JR, there are other big projects including “Face to Face”, “Champion Women”, “Wrinkles”, and other works which have typically changed public opinions and are showcased in some points of the world (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Photography project called “Wrinkle”, ref [10]

CONCLUSION

In a general conclusion, it could be found that environmental art, street art and wall painting can surely have deep impacts on audiences and create active, close and intimate space with contemporary audiences. The impact can improve taste of the audiences with a light rhythm and can conduct environmental art towards globalization by means of audiences.

No one of the two artists used to create works with the purpose of globalization; although changing attitude of audiences and affecting audiences has been certainly their main goal. Mahdi Ghadyanloo shows concept of life, fear and hope, desire and effort in depth of thoughts of a person and JR tries to gain attention of audiences to the surrounding environment and world through emphasizing political and social evolutions. The earlier artist creates familiar elements in an unnatural space using technique of acrylic color on walls in 3-D mode and the latter artist, uses different technique in unnatural spaces and invites audiences to watch and think. This can be an exhibition with the area of world and artists for all audiences across the world.

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