



"The street is ours!"

Political graffiti and wall slogans as a form of protest for democracy and human rights

Lectures, film screening and discussions

2021 will mark the tenth anniversary of the so-called "Arab Spring", a time when many - especially young people - took to the streets en masse, hoping for political and social change. A few years earlier, in 2009, it was the so-called "Green Movement" in Iran and in 2013 it was the protests in Istanbul's Gezi Park.

All these protests were accompanied by slogans and graffiti on the walls and in the streets. It was not just a physical and visible appropriation of the public space, it was an important attempt to create a public counter to the prescribed "truth", at least for a certain period of time.

In addition to these events with international experts on the situation in Tehran, Beirut and Istanbul, we shed light on the importance of political graffiti in Graz. This is also about resistance, partly against the rulers, but partly also against certain social groups.

December 7, 2021, 6 p.m. ([online presentation](#), in english)

Murat German (Sabancı Üniversitesi, İstanbul):

I protest therefore I am!



Gezi protests is unique in Turkey's political history in the sense of gathering people with different political, ethnical, religious, sexual inclinations that otherwise not come together. This unusual solidarity made the urban literature consisting of political graffiti and wall slogans reach a more plural language as compared to examples seen before.

In addition to political pressure, there is also a very large scale gentrification process which leads to dispossession and displacement. This is yet another dimension that makes the collective street writing even more abundant and sustainable. This presentation will comprise the traces of the collective urban street culture which is among the components that shape the opposition's discourse.

Photo: Murat German, a wall in Istanbul, translation of the slogan: "Don't be afraid! It's we, the people."

The event takes place ONLINE via Zoom.

The link to the event:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87279239275?pwd=aHI1L3ZFS-HVybXFUYXFZa1ZzYnluQT09>

December 9, 2021, 6 p.m. (online presentation, in english)

Patricia Barakat (part-time instructor at Notre Dame University-Louaize of History of Design in Beirut, actually Bahrain):

Political Protest narrated through Graffiti: The Case of Beirut“



The presentation examines three critical moments in Lebanon's recent history that led to demonstrations and protest movements, as well as statements in the form of graffiti. 1) The assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005 led to the "Cedar Revolution"; 2) the garbage management crisis that led to activist protests called the "You Stink" movement in

2015, and 3) the economic collapse and increasing corruption that led to the "17th October Revolution".

Photo: Patricia Barakat, a wall in Beirut

The event takes place ONLINE via Zoom.

The link to the event:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85275367292?pwd=Rk1zan-RRdU1PbVRoOUZySjhMejVGZz09>

January 2022 (Exact date will be announced)

Joachim Hainzl (XENOS Association, Graz):

“Hate Speech” on the walls of Graz (Lecture)

Followed by a discussion with **Daniela Grabovac** (Head of the Styrian Anti-Discrimination Agency, Graz):

Graffiti and wall slogans - are there limits to freedom of expression?

On behalf of the Styrian Anti-Discrimination Agency, Joachim Hainzl researched



in the public space of the Austrian city of Graz in 2021 for graffiti, stickers and slogans that could be viewed as racist, sexist or defamatory.

But what about the fight for justice and human rights in a democracy? Is everything allowed, should everything be allowed? What about insults against those who think differently or

representatives of state authority? Are there limits to anti-fascist or anti-sexist slogans as well?

Photo: Joachim Hainzl , „More dead cops!“, at a wall in Graz, close to a police station

March 2022 (Exact date will be announced)

Keywan Karimi (Iranian filmmaker, Paris):

"Writing on the City" (film screening, 60 minutes followed by a discussion with the filmmaker)

In his documentary film, Karimi uses graffiti, wall slogans and murals in Tehran



to document the historical and political development of Iranian society since the days of the so-called "Islamic Revolution" till the protest of the „Green Movement“ in 2009.

The documentary film began to produce in 2012 and completed in 2015. The film edited several times and it

has been shown in several film festivals. Karimi was sentenced to several years in prison by a Tehran Revolutionary Court for the film. He was finally released in 2017 after 5 months in prison.

Photo: Screenshot of the film „Writing on the City“

A publication will appear on the lecture series in spring 2022!

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