Heidegger, Graffiti and Street Art: Graffiti and Street Art as Saving Power Against the Danger of Modern Technology.

A M Short

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Abstract

In this thesis I shall make the claim that through a reading of Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art* we can re-examine our understanding of graffiti and street art, moving beyond our common conceptions. Research concerning this topic is negligible. The two instances where Heidegger is brought into connection with graffiti and street art fall short of making any significant steps forward in reimagining graffiti and street art. Through textual analysis and hermeneutic study, I shall work to reinterpret graffiti and street art in light of the ideas presented in Heidegger's essay on art. While graffiti and street art are the defining art movements of the 21st century at present we think about graffiti and street art as either vandalism or as artworks. Through outlining Heidegger's understanding artworks, I shall suggest that graffiti and street art can be seen as both originating an understanding of our world and originating space. This will reveal the importance of graffiti and street art, going beyond the understanding of this phenomenon as something trivial, a mere cultural appendix. Furthermore, I shall present the argument that the modern mega city, a ubiquitous city, is a symptom of what Heidegger refers to as modern technology, which is shown through the order and instrumentality of the city. I shall then contrast graffiti and street art with modern technology, which Heidegger claims is detrimental to our understanding of Being. I shall conclude that graffiti and street art, far from being mere acts of vandalism or aesthetically pleasing works or art, are in fact a saving power against the danger of modern technology that is evident in the cities of the globalised world.

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Abbreviations

In line with Heidegger scholarship when referencing Heidegger's essays and books, throughout my thesis, I shall use abbreviations. I have provided the full details for the texts used here.

OWA – *The Origin of the Work of Art.* – Heidegger, M. 1935. *The Origin of the Work of Art*. In: *Basic Writings: Revised and Expanded Edition*. pp 143 -212. Translated by: Krell, D. K. Routledge. London.

QCT – *The Question Concerning Technology.* – Heidegger, M. *QCT* or *The Question Concerning Technology*. In: *Basic Writings: Revised and Expanded Edition*. pp 311-341. Translated by: Krell, D. K. Routledge. London.

IM – *Introduction to Metaphysics*. - Heidegger, M. 2000. IM. *Introduction to Metaphysics.* Yale University Press. London.

GA 65 - *Contribution to Philosophy (of the Event).* - Heidegger, M. 2012. Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event). Indiana University Press. Bloomington.

NI – *Nietzsche Vol 1 and 2: Will to Power as Art and The Eternal Recurrance of the Same.* - Heidegger, M. 1991. *Nietzsche: Volumes One and Two*. Translated by: Krell, D. K. Harper One. New York.

P – *Pathmarks.* - Heidegger, M. 2007. Pathmarks. Translated by: McNeill, W. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

PLT - *Poetry, Language, Thought.* – Heidegger, M. 2001. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by: Albert Hofstadter. Harper Perennial Modern Classic. New York.

W - *Introduction to What is Metaphysics*. - Heidegger, M. 2007. Introduction to What is Metaphysics. In: *Pathmarks*. Translated by: McNeill, W. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge

BT – *Being and Time.* Heidegger, M. 1962. *Being and Time*. Translated by: Macquire, J. & Robinson, E. Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Oxford.

Introduction

My interest in graffiti and street art goes back to primary school. I remember visiting a family friends house after school one day and seeing the *Street Sketchbook (2007)* on the shelf in their lounge. I asked to borrow it and I poured over the pages, copying out the pictures that really caught my eye. I have loved graffiti and street art ever since. However, in that time I had only thought about graffiti and street art as something I liked or enjoyed.

I began to consider how graffiti and street art could be thought about differently around a year and a half ago during a module on Martin Heidegger and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Specifically, the lectures on Heidegger's thought concerning truth and art caused me to contemplate how graffiti and street art could fit in to Heidegger's philosophy of art. I asked my lecturer if there had been any research done in this area. He could only find Andrew Johnson's undergraduate essay *The End of Art or the Origin of New Art? A Heideggerian Historization of the New York City Graffiti movement (2007)*, which I found to have greatly missed the point of Heidegger's work. In my final assessment for the module, I addressed Heidegger's understanding of art. The latter part of the essay contained some rudimentary ideas about graffiti and street art which have been greatly expanded upon and developed throughout the research presented here.

I must make one small note before moving on. Throughout this thesis I will maintain a split between graffiti and street art, rather than using one title for both. As will become clear in the history of graffiti and street art they are distinct art forms in many ways. In fact, many graffiti writers distinguish themselves from street artists. The former works within the boundaries of illegality maintaining a distance from art institutions and traditional art forms while the latter's work is often legal and is shown in art exhibitions.

Why Graffiti, Street art and Heidegger?

Graffiti and street art could be dismissed as being a trivial topic, as something that merely decorates or defaces our city streets. In contrast, Heidegger is a serious philosophical thinker concerned with far more important things than graffiti and street

art. Despite seeming separate from one another there are good reasons behind bringing them together here. They are both important in their own right.

We should not write off graffiti and street art immediately, they are in fact the defining art movement of the 21st century. While graffiti began in the 1960s, it was in the closing decades of the 20th century and opening decades of the 21st century when graffiti and street art were recognised as a serious art movement. In Henry Chaflant's *Training Days (2014)* LADY PINK goes so far as to say that graffiti and street art 'have become the biggest art movement the world has ever seen' (LADY PINK. 2014: 103). Graffiti and street art can now be seen on a global scale, celebrated both in galleries and on the streets. The importance of graffiti and street art is similarly recognised within the academic world. Joe Austin, a popular culture professor and writer of *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis (2001)*, argues that graffiti and street art 'constitute what is perhaps the most important art movement of the late twentieth century' (Austin, J. 2001: 6) which has continued to grow in the 21st century. Whether you are a fan of graffiti and street art or not, they are this centuries biggest art movements and they are also a phenomenon unique to the late 20th and early 21st century.

Recent literature on graffiti and street art however argues the complete opposite suggesting graffiti and street art are part of a long lineage stretching back to cave paintings. In his BBC documentary *A Brief History of Graffiti (2015)*, Richard Clay argues that contemporary graffiti is a refined version of the prehistoric cave paintings and *graffito* (meaning scratched images) in the walls of Ancient Roman cities. He further claims that the presence of graffiti throughout history shows an innate human impulse to make a mark and to proclaim 'I was here'. Clay is not alone in arguing that graffiti dates back further than the 1960s. In *Scribbling Through History: Graffiti, Places and People from Antiquity to Modernity (2018),* Frood et. al. argues that rather than simply being a modern phenomenon it is in fact 'transhistorical' (Frood, E. et al. 2018: 3). The authors of this book claims that graffiti exists at all times through history as a consistent part of human culture. They argue that graffiti is legitimate and should be looked at closely because it gives rise to an understanding of the everyday person in opposition to

official documents of that time. There have been a number of other texts that make similar claims about the presence of graffiti within historical societies across many cultural borders. These include Juliet Fleming's book *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England (2001), Ancient Graffiti in Context (Baird and Taylor 2011*), *The Popular History of Graffiti: From the Ancient World to the Present (2013), Medieval Graffiti: The Lost Voices of English Churches (2015)* and *Graffiti in Antiquity (2017).* The premise of each of these books follows Clay and Frood et. al. arguing that graffiti is a human behaviour that crosses cultural and historical boundaries.

Despite these claims I am going to treat graffiti and street art as something that began in the 1960s. Graffiti, as I shall be using the term, does not predate that decade. It refers to tags, throw ups and pieces later evolving into murals and street art. Even the authors of *Scribbling Through History* acknowledge a distinct difference between what appeared before the 1960s and that which came after. They concede that graffiti as I have defined it 'originated in the 1960s and 1970s' (Frood, E. et. al. 2018: 7). It is this movement and not the carved messages of antiquity that I intend to make reference to.

Due to the fact that graffiti and street art are unique to the late 20th century and early 21st century through understanding it we could learn about ourselves. However, the current discussion of graffiti and street art can be limiting. As chapter one will show, we talk of graffiti and street art in terms of being artistic masterpieces or as an act of defacement. The simplicity of this dichotomy is why Heidegger must be introduced. In order to understand ourselves better, we must re-examine graffiti and street art. The thinker to help us do so is Martin Heidegger.

If graffiti and street art define the 21st century art world, Heidegger as a great and unique thinker defines the 20th century. As Michael Inwood states, Heidegger 'was (with the possible exception of Wittgenstein) the greatest philosopher of the twentieth century.' (Inwood, M. 2000: 1). He rethinking philosophy. Heidegger sought to overcome the metaphysics that had defined thinking throughout Western History. His work is unique and brings with it a different understanding of the world. Heidegger stands out because of his return to the question of Being. He argues that the question of Being had been misunderstood from the moment of Philosophy's conception. Heidegger argues

that within metaphysics we focus on beings as opposed to Being. Our understanding of Being as appearance leads to a calculative manner of thinking in which truth is a correct proposition, meaning a statement corresponds to an object in the world of appearance. Heidegger wanted to return to Being in its ontological sense. Initially he was concerned with the question of the meaning of Being, what it meant *to be*. However, in the 1930s Heidegger began to focus on the question of the history of Being. It is Heidegger's focus on this question that shapes his understanding of everything, including art. In chapter two I shall show that Heidegger's understanding of art found in *The Origin of the Work of Art* (from now on referred to as *OWA*) offers a view that goes far beyond our current conception of art works. Due to the uniqueness of Heidegger's understanding, re-examining graffiti and street art through his philosophy of art will open up new avenues of thought. Bringing the biggest art movement of the 21st century and the best thinker of the 20th century can only lead to an understanding of graffiti and street art that is far more nuanced than we are currently aware. While at first it may seem like an unimportant topic, a view of graffiti and street art informed by Heidegger's philosophy can alter the way we see ourselves and the world in which we live.

Far from attempting to add to the echo chamber of Heideggerian scholarship and academia, I shall attempt to make the thought of the most important thinker of the 20th century engaging to those outside of Heideggerian circles. I shall make what can seem like a daunting subject accessible to graffiti writers, street artists, as well as art students, street art critics and fans alike.

The failings of the current literature

Although it remains a rare occurrence, some literature concerning graffiti and street art draws on philosophy. Much of this literature references the work of Walter Benjamin and Guy Debord. Both are mentioned in *Viva La Revolucion: Dialogues with the Urban Landscape (2010)* and Ewelina Chiu's essay *Street Art in* Galleries*: Aura, Authenticity, and The Postmodern Condition (2014).* Benjamin is also cited in Linda Mulcahy and Tatiana Flessas' *(2015)* discussion of legal responses to graffiti and street art, more specifically in relation to the shock that can occur when encountering these works. Benjamin's famous theory of 'the aura of a work of art' from *The Work of Art in the Age*

of Mechanical Reproduction is used in *Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction: Reconsidering Benjamin's Aura in "Art of Banksy"* (2016) to explore the impact of digital technology on the aura of street art. While the references to Benjamin and Debord remain brief, Heidegger in comparison is still far less prevalent and where Heidegger does appear, his thought is misunderstood.

In my preliminary research there were only two times where Heidegger was explicitly mentioned in relation to graffiti and street art. The first being in Shepard Fairey's *OBEY Manifesto (2021)* on his website. The second is Andrew Johnson's aforementioned essay published in *The Dialectic: The University of New Hampshire's Undergraduate Journal of Philosophy (2007)*. Both have significant shortcomings in their knowledge of Heidegger's philosophy. They also both fail to substantiate any claim about how Heidegger's philosophy of art can alter our understanding of graffiti and street art.

Shepard Fairey argues that graffiti and street art makes visible the phenomenon of the city, meaning people are better able to see their surroundings because of graffiti and street art. These claims however depend on a single quote from Heidegger's *Being and Time.* Fairey says *'Heidegger describes Phenomenology as "the process of letting things manifest themselves."'*. The street artist claims that, as an experiment in Phenomenology, street art makes manifest what is right in front of people's eyes. There is no more elaboration on Heidegger's thought than this. Fairey does not expand on his understanding of Heidegger's philosophy of art by reading *OWA*. This leads to limitations in Fairey's understanding of Heidegger's view of artworks, especially because of the change in Heidegger's thought between *Being and Time* and *OWA*. As will be made evident in the second chapter Heidegger's philosophy concerning art is far more nuanced than the single quote Shepard Fairey has used as his philosophical lynch pin.

Andrew Johnson's paper, *The End of Art or the Origin of New Art? A Heideggerian Historization of the New York City Graffiti movement (2007)* is limited in different ways. Despite having read *OWA,* Johnson still fails to grasp the point of Heidegger's essay. Johnson argues that graffiti offers 'color in [an] otherwise drab world' (Johnson, A. 2008: 16), that it allows an escape from reality and that graffiti was significant in the culture of New York city. All of these points are contradictory to Heidegger's claims about art.

While I will elaborate on Heidegger's philosophy of art later, I shall briefly refute Johnson's claims. If graffiti adds colour to a drab world, it is merely aesthetic and enjoyable. However, Heidegger seeks to move beyond the idea that works are aesthetic objects for the pleasure of a subject. Thus, Johnson's claim is redundant. As is his second claim, that graffiti is escapism. A work in that case merely serves as an object for a subject to get lost in. Again, this goes against Heidegger's desire to overcome aesthetics. The final claim, that graffiti had 'world historical importance' due to its cultural impact in New York ignores Heidegger's thought altogether. Heidegger argues that works are not mere cultural appendices, Johnson however disregards this point.

It is clear that the current considerations of Heidegger and graffiti and street art do not engage with his work in any meaningful of insightful way. Due to their failure to make any serious strides in considerations of graffiti and street art in light of Heidegger's work, there remains much scope for such research to be done. This project is an attempt to at least take the first steps towards this goal. Before getting to the main body of the thesis I shall briefly discuss the methodology used throughout this project as well as outlining the chapters.

Methodology – Textual Analysis and Hermeneutic study

The process of this project combines textual analysis and hermeneutic study. The texts I shall explore throughout this thesis will be split into four groups: Heidegger's own texts, secondary texts concerning Heidegger's work, those texts about graffiti and street art and literature about the city including city planning, globalization and global cities.

Heidegger's own texts are important within this thesis, for obvious reasons. While I shall be focusing for the most part on *OWA,* other texts will play a part in contextualising and adding to the claims I make within the following chapters. The other texts of Heidegger's I shall draw on are *The Question Concerning Technology, Introduction to Metaphysics, Nieztsche: Vol 1* and *Contributions to Philosophy.* The few books and essays I have selected will give a well-rounded understanding of Heidegger within the context of the question I am posing.

In addition to Heidegger's own works, I shall make reference to Iain D. Thomson's Heidegger's Philosophy of Art, Julian Young's *Heidegger, Art and Postmodernity* and Hurbert Dreyfus' *Heidegger's Ontology of Art*. These are the most prominent texts about Heidegger's philosophy of art currently available. In places they do fail to grasp Heidegger's philosophy however they do offer some insight which will be useful to us.

The texts about graffiti and street art are of equal importance to Heidegger's work in the context of this thesis, especially within the first chapter. These will include academic texts such as Lisa Gottleib's *Graffiti Art Styles (2008)*, Nancy Macdonald's *The Graffiti Subculture (2002)* and Nicholas Riggle's essay *Street Art and Common Places (2010)*. However, I will also refer to popular cultural texts including books by Banksy, interviews with graffiti writers in Henry Chaflant's *Training Days (2014)* as well as websites the STRAAT Museum's website and the street artist Swoon's website. The combination of both academic and popular cultural texts will be important in creating an overview of our current conceptions about graffiti and street art.

In the third chapter I shall look at literature concerning the city, city planning and globalized cities. I have looked at and will make reference to *The Social Logic of Space (1989)* by Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson, *Cities and Urban cultures (2003)* by Deborah Stevenson and Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities (2016)* among others. This shall give rise to an understanding of the context in which graffiti and street art appear, which I intend to argue they stand in opposition to.

These four disparate groups will be brought together in a hermeneutic analysis of how Heidegger's work can inform our understanding of graffiti and street art. The hermeneutic aspect of this project results from the attempt to reinterpret graffiti and street art through a reading of Heidegger's *OWA.* In order to recontextualise graffiti and street art I shall begin with an overview of our current conceptions of graffiti and street art. These common notions of graffiti and street art shall then be challenged through re-examining them in light of Heidegger's philosophy. Chapter one solely addresses graffiti and street art. Chapter two will introduce Heidegger's *OWA* before returning to graffiti and street art in light of how Heidegger views art. Chapter three will then develop the ideas set up in chapter two contextualising graffiti and street art in the city. I shall also

rethink the city through Heidegger's ideas about modern technology. I will then argue that graffiti and street art are a saving power against the danger of modern technology.

In this thesis I present some ideas that I hope will establish the grounds on which more work could be done in the future. There are more questions to be asked and new avenues of thought to be followed. The most important thing this project could achieve is to show that far from being vacuous, a mere cultural appendix, graffiti and street art when seen through a Heideggerian understanding of art, can tell us something important about the world in which we live.

Chapter One: Graffiti and Street Art: Our Current Understanding

The aim of this chapter is to set up what will later be challenged in chapters two and three when Heidegger's philosophy of art is introduced. While the content of this chapter may be familiar to some, it is important to have a shared foundational understanding of graffiti and street art before going any further. Firstly, I shall briefly outline the history of graffiti and street art, from graffiti's origin in the 1960s to the present-day art world boom. This will cover many aspects of graffiti and street art including its conception, its growth within New York and its impact in Europe. This history will show a dichotomy in our current understanding of graffiti and street art which is based on aesthetic judgement.

In this chapter I want to draw out the similarities between our aesthetic appreciation of traditional artworks when compared to graffiti and street art. In order to do so I shall clarify our current understanding of the word 'Art'. Four requirements will be suggested for something to be classed as art. These four categories are: creative action, conveying ideas, conveying emotions and the beauty of the work. Through establishing our current definition of art, while showing how graffiti and street art conform to this conception, Heidegger's impact on our current understanding of graffiti and street art will be made more evident. Additionally, I will look at our current understanding of the political nature of graffiti and the impact that it can have on the cityscape. These conceptions will later be challenged in light of Heidegger's *OWA*.

The History of Graffiti and Street Art

This section will form a comprehensive story of the growth of graffiti and street art. It is not possible to cover everything within the history of graffiti and street art. Instead, the aim is to paint the larger picture of the movement through addressing some key points. Throughout this section I shall refer to information from the STRAAT Museum's website (2021), where a timeline of graffiti and street art development can be found. The STRAAT Museum is the largest permanent graffiti and street art museum in the world, which opened in 2019. The events on the timeline that Giulia BLocal and Alex Pope have

created give a well-rounded starting point for the history of graffiti and street art. That being said I shall expand in areas where their analysis is brief, giving more examples and offering more detail about public perceptions of graffiti and street art as we move through the decades.

Contrary to popular belief, graffiti and street art began in Philadelphia not New York. In 1967 a teenager nick-named 'Cornbread' began writing his alias on the walls of a youth detention centre. Upon his release, he continued to write but on the walls of the city. He is widely acknowledged as the world's first graffiti writer. His 'tags' gave rise to many other youths in Philadelphia tagging the city. One of these writers, Cool Earl, is credited with being the first to not simply write his name but add different stylistic elements to his tags such as arrows, crowns and halos. These additions have become staples in tagging since the sixties with tags becoming ever more intricate. Graffiti has since become synonymous with New York City where it arrived a year after its conception. Subsequently, tagging exploded in the five boroughs of the east coast city, later developing into 'throw ups' and 'pieces' in the 70s and 80s. In Philadelphia, there remains a focus on tagging and what is called 'Philly Hand Style'.

In the 70's, there were developments within graffiti on two fronts. Graffiti began to gain the attention of newspapers and galleries, being touted as the next big thing in the art world. However, the city officials of New York viewed graffiti in a negative light and sought to put a stop to the defacement of public property. This is a dichotomy that has shaped all discussion on graffiti since and remains to this day.

The positive response to graffiti came with the stylistic advancement of the movement. The works being created began to grow in complexity, meaning the talent and craftmanship of the artists was far more apparent. Tags had been popular for a number of years, being written by much of the youth population of New York City. Tags covered the subway stations and the inside of the train carriages. However, in 1971 the first so-called 'Masterpiece' was created. Masterpieces were far more challenging than the single line, single colour, tags. Anna Waclawek says that masterpieces or pieces are 'large, colourful, elaborate and stylistically challenging works' (Waclawek, A. 2011: 18). Whereas Lisa Gottlieb says that because of their elaborate nature, for graffiti writers'

pieces are 'considered the pinnacle of graffiti art' (Gottlieb, L. 2008: 36). Graffiti was no longer simply about 'getting up' but also about who was most technically proficient and innovative. With pieces, graffiti comes to be understood in relation to artistic intent. The name itself gives this away. The word 'masterpiece' evokes the idea of great artworks such as the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel or the work of Leonardo Da Vinci for example. The increased technical proficiency, colour and visibility meant that graffiti began to be spoken of in terms of aesthetics.

In 1971, *The New York Times* featured an article with the headline *'TAKI 183' Spawns Pen Pals'* (The New York Times, 1971: 37) about the writer TAKI 183 who had famously covered all five boroughs of New York with his tags and pieces. This inspired more teenagers to become writers. Graffiti became more popular on the street. Masterpieces became the most predominant type of graffiti capturing the attention of gallery curators. The first exhibition of graffiti was held in New York at The City College, featuring graffiti writers from across the city. The event was organised by sociologist Hugo Martinez who saw the work on trains and encouraged the featured artists to transfer their talent to canvas. From here graffiti began to infiltrate the art world with more gallery shows throughout the 70s. This included the first European graffiti exhibition which was held in Amsterdam.

Despite graffiti entering the art world, writers did not stray from the trains. In fact, the pieces being painted on trains became larger and more ambitious. The first full train piece was completed in 1973 by Flint 707. These expansive works were completed in the main by a crew of writers, an ambitious pair or a single artist. The expansion of the works on the trains led to action from the authorities that saw graffiti as a plight, a sign of decay.

The officials of New York took a dim view of the works that had started to disrupt the visual landscape of the city. In 1972, the *Anti-graffiti Bill* was introduced in New York. This bill meant that no one could carry open spray cans or ink markers in public. It brought with it tough sanctions for the young writers of the city. Despite the best efforts of the public to clean the streets and the local legislations graffiti continued. It was not until the late 80's that any significant change occurred on the trains of New York City.

Before graffiti was finally removed from the subway system the moral panic surrounding the activity grew. The writers were not seen as artists but rather as delinquents who were wilfully destroying the city. Problems in New York were blamed on graffiti. This is interesting, especially when the majority of New York was under the rule of the mafia at the time (See: Fear City: *New York Vs The Mafia*, 2020). Graffiti became an easy scapegoat, with the city's ills being attributed to it.

The 1970's was witness to the exponential growth of graffiti and the 1980's saw this momentum continue. Its popularity and the reaction against graffiti increased in the new decade. While graffiti had already entered Europe, its presence grew in the '80s. This growth occurred for a number of reasons. Most importantly, the Parisian graffiti writer Bando brought the New York style of graffiti writing to France and developed this as a foundation for a unique European style. Graffiti writer Jon One says that a 'lot of the graffiti was based on Bando's style' (JON ONE, 2014: 67). He further refers to Bando and another writer Mode 2 as 'the European style masters' (JON ONE. 2014: 67) influencing generations of graffiti writers.

The continent also had one of the biggest sites for international graffiti writers in the 1980's: the Berlin Wall. Writers in Europe didn't write on the trains as much as their New York counterparts. Instead, the walls of cities became covered in tags, throw ups and pieces. The Berlin Wall became a pilgrimage for writers to see the work of others but also to paint. The now world-famous Keith Haring travelled to paint a piece on the Berlin Wall before returning to New York to paint large scale works throughout the city. The spread of graffiti in Europe was also affected by the first international Hip Hop tour, *The New York City Rap Tour* in 1982. Not only did this introduce hip hop to Europe on a large scale but the renowned graffiti artist, Futura 2000, painted on stage at each of these shows. This also cemented the connection between rap music and graffiti, with graffiti as the backdrop to the music. Graffiti became the aesthetic element of Hip Hop.

These events occurred alongside the release of films such as *Wildstyle (1982)* and *Style Wars (1984)* as well as Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing (1989)* which brought the worlds of New York and Los Angeles to teenagers across Europe. As did Henry Chalfant and Martha Cooper's book *Subway Art (1984)* which has become known as 'the bible of

graffiti writers' and is infamously 'the most stolen book from libraries' (Kindynis, T. 2017: 515). These developments led to a wider knowledge about graffiti and the lifestyle of the writers. With its acceptance in the world of cinema and publishing, graffiti instantly became widely accessible. People who weren't involved in the culture were introduced to the world of graffiti.

Graffiti was becoming more popular, however the aim to combat the presence of graffiti in New York did not slow down either. In many ways, this effort was revived by the mayor of New York at the time, Ed Koch. He portrayed graffiti as being the main scourge of the city. Graffiti's position as a scapegoat was maintained in the 80's. The moral panic that was established by the New York authorities played a large part in the removal of graffiti on the subway trains. At the end of the decade, in 1989, the subways in New York finally move through the city, clean of graffiti. New trains were introduced that could be buffed to ensure any train that left the depot was free from graffiti. Writers gradually realised their work would not see the light of day, deterring them from painting the trains. As KEL says the authorities were 'already gaining the upper hand on graf. And I was not going to continue to fight.' (KEL. 2014: 83). Ultimately, there was little point in painting trains if the pieces were never going to be seen. However, graffiti was not removed from the city completely. Tags, throw ups and pieces all continued to appear around the streets of New York. Writers either painted on the streets of New York or they moved to Europe where there was more freedom to paint.

Despite the removal of graffiti from the subway trains in New York, there were still a number of high profile and more high-brow art shows that featured graffiti writers who had begun to work prolifically on canvas. These exhibitions featured works by the aforementioned Keith Haring as well as Jean Michel Basquiat. Both artists gained notoriety through painting on the street. They created works for the gallery but installed them on the street. It is questionable whether either artist would have referred to themselves as graffiti writers. In many ways Haring and Basquiat were a precursor to street art because of their bold imagery which made their works widely accessible. Hans-Jurgen Lechtreck states that 'Haring wanted to make his art effective in contexts expanding beyond the city... crossing social and cultural boarders' (Lechtreck, H. 2019:

52). As we will see later this became a trend in street art. The French graffiti stencil artist Blek Le Rat who started painting rats throughout Paris in 1981 was also a precursor to street art. Arguably, Blek Le Rat opened the door for Banksy, moving away from words and using the same technique as has been made popular by the latter of the two.

In the 1990's, graffiti writers in Europe were able to travel with ease and paint in cities across the continent. This was because of the interrail movement which was founded in 1991. The ability to travel from city to city in Europe began to meld together styles birthing new variations on the New York style. It also meant that artists were seen further afield than their neighbourhood, city or even country.

The first website dedicated to graffiti was established in 1994 making the work of writers accessible worldwide. The online gallery of graffiti, called *Art Crimes: The Writing on the Wall* sought to showcase some of the best talent to people across the globe. Other events also occurred to bring international artists together for the enjoyment of audiences. Established in Germany, 'Meeting of Styles', as it later came to be known, is said by its founders to have been 'established as a Graffiti-Hall-Of-Fame where artists could paint almost legally on thousands of square meters surface.' (Meeting of Styles, no date: online). Since its' beginning, **'**Meeting of Styles' has grown and spread to other countries as diverse as Peru, Poland and Thailand. The events are attended by thousands of spectators who marvel at the works. The public are not only viewers of the finished work. Instead, they can be witness to the creation of these works and talk to the artists. This gives the public an insight into graffiti that they would not otherwise have, challenging their preconceptions. They are given an insight into the creative process, coming to understand graffiti as a form of art.

Despite the growing acceptance of graffiti and street art there were still public concerns about graffiti as a public ill. The publication of *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Communities (1998)* by George L. Kelling and Catharine Coles fuelled the moral panic. Communities were already frustrated with graffiti due to its messy appearance, but *Fixing Broken Windows* made them fearful after graffiti became associated with crime and violence. The general consensus arose that graffiti, if left on

the street, would lead to worse acts including gang crime and drug dealing. Thus, communities were keen to rid their streets of these symbols of delinquency.

While there were glimpses of what could be thought of as street art in the 1980's it is a decade later where street art begins. There is no consensus on the exact moment of street art's inception. However, in the 1990's there is a growth in wordless, bold images and iconography. This focus on images in place of words is the defining difference between street art and graffiti. Street art gained acceptance and mainstream popularity far quicker than graffiti as it was legible. An easily recognisable icon gained everyone's attention not only that of other street artists. There was no longer any need to decipher or be part of the club. The work could speak to you no matter who you were. This led to street art becoming stylish and, soon entering galleries and private collections.

In Paris, the street artist Invader began to place mosaic versions of characters from the video game *Space Invader* around the city in 1998. The American street artist KAWS began to deface advertising throughout New York. However, it is with the arrival of Banksy that street art really enters the world stage. While Banksy was writing graffiti in the late 90s it was in the early years of the 2000's that he transitioned to the street art stencil style that he is famous for. The 2000's and 2010's gave rise to a boom in the public interest in graffiti and street art. It is in these decades that graffiti and street art are truly established as fully fledged art movements.

The works of street artists now feature in solo exhibitions and sell for millions, heralded as the greatest works in contemporary art. For example, works by Keith Haring have sold for $6 million. An Untitled piece by Jean Michel Basquiat however has far surpassed this amount, being sold for $34 million. One of Banksy's works on canvas *Subject to Availability* sold for £4.5 million. It is not only his works on canvas that sell however. In many cases works are removed from walls by museums and private collectors who purchase them. During the Covid-19 pandemic a piece by Banksy appeared in Nottingham but was removed after being bought for an undisclosed six-figure sum by a museum in Essex. (See: Murry, J. 2021.) The value of these works has led to it being a great honour for a city to have one bestowed upon it by the illusive artist. In 2021, Tendring district council sought to protect a work by Banksy, which was created as part

of his so called 'Spraycation' by hiring full time security for the site. (See: Foskett, E. 2021.)

The rise of personal forms of communication such as blogging and forums have led to a greater connection between artists. There is an ever-growing archive online of works from around the world. It is not only through self-published photographs that graffiti and street art are proliferated. Banksy published his first book, *Banging Your Head against a Brick Wall* in 2001. His other books were published in quick succession: *Existencilism* (2002), *Cut It Out* (2004), *Pictures of Wall* (2005) and *Wall and Piece* (2006). Through publishing these books, Banksy's ephemeral works which often disappear after only a few days are made available to everyone within their own living room. This is also the case for the artist Shepard Fairey who published *Obey: Supply and Demand* in 2006. Other books have focused on graffiti and street art as a whole. Nicholas Ganz's *Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents (2004)* explores the different types of street art across the globe bringing together an extensive overview of hundreds of street artists. As well as many books there have also been a number of documentaries produced in the mid to late 2000's such as *Infamy* (2005), *Bomb It* (2007) and *Beautiful Losers* (2008) among many others.

Graffiti and street art exhibitions also continued to grow in the 2000's and beyond. Banksy held his own solo exhibition *Turf War* in a warehouse in Hackney London. In 2008 the Tate Modern London curated an exhibition simply called 'Street Art'. These museum exhibits and art shows, especially in world renowned institutions such as the Tate Modern, serve to legitimise graffiti and street art. Similarly, in 2011 the UrbanArt Biennale began. This shows that graffiti and street art were becoming widely recognised within art institutions.

In the 2010's, live events like 'Meeting of Styles' continued to draw thousands of interested and awe-filled visitors including Upfest and Nuart in the UK. Martyn Reed, the director and founder of the Nuart festival, says that their 'event aims to stimulate debate by challenging entrenched notions of what art is, and more importantly, what it can be.' (Reed, M. 2021). A general consensus among the organisers of these festivals is that they aim to alter public perceptions of art while celebrating the best artists from

around the world. Over recent years the rehabilitation of public opinion has occurred to such a great extent that the presence of street art (more so than graffiti) implies cultural vibrancy and diversity. Street art is now advertised by local councils in Bristol and Melbourne on their tourist information websites (See: Destination Bristol. 2021. & Visit Melbourne. 2021.). Due to its positive connotations, street art became associated with reviving derelict areas and breathing life into those spaces that had long been left colourless. Street art has since become synonymous with gentrification. In 2009, a project began to transform a disused industrial space in Miami turning it into a tourist attraction filled with art. This continues the tradition of Meeting of Style with a hall of fame style outdoor space. As does the Bushwick collective which was started in 2013. The Bushwick Collective is 'a street art project that turns the formerly industrial neighbourhood of Bushwick into an open-air museum that attracts many tourists' (Blocal, G. & Pope, A. 2021). A conscious decision is made to allow street art. Whereas graffiti, especially tags and throw ups, are excluded from the permitted work. The division between that which is aesthetically pleasing and that which is ugly impacts the decisions relating to graffiti and street art.

Street art was further legitimised during Barack Obama's election campaign for the 2008 election in America. Shepard Fairey used a screen-printing technique akin to the ones he uses on his prints that he pastes on the street to create an image of Barack Obama. The image, emblazoned the word 'Hope' and became the defining icon of that election. While this helped popularise street art it also affected public opinion about Obama. The connection to street art, gave the Obama campaign a grass roots authenticity. In becoming one of the most recognisable political images in recent history, Fairey's work truly brought street art to the everyman.

Another event that brought graffiti and street art to the attention of millions, if not billions was the advent of social media and more specifically Instagram. The photo sharing app bought with it a greater ease of capturing, sharing and appreciating graffiti and street art. With this development, millions of people could see a work half way across the world. You no longer need to be in a specific city or neighbourhood to see a

work. If graffiti and street art took the galleries to the streets, as it commonly asserted, Instagram moves the gallery into your hand.

Through the past six decades, graffiti and street art have grown to be widely accepted within the art world. While street art is not unscathed by prejudice, the scales are overwhelmingly balanced in favour of street art. Graffiti has consistently faced much more resistance. This brief outline shows a dichotomy between praise of artistic works and dismissal of graffiti as defacement. This dichotomy is based on the aesthetic pleasure a work can offer. In the latter half of this chapter, I want to expand on the prominence of aesthetic judgements that contribute to the praise of graffiti and street art.

What Is Art?

Here I want to define art in general terms before returning to graffiti and street art in light of this definition. A typical definition of art is similar to that which can be found in the *Cambridge English Dictionary*. Art is defined in four ways: 'the making of objects, images, music, etc. that are beautiful or that express feelings', 'an activity through which people express particular ideas', 'paintings, drawings, and sculptures' and finally 'the activity of painting, drawing, and making sculpture' (Cambridge English Dictionary). The four defining traits of an artwork are that it is made by an artist through creative action, that the work conveys ideas or expresses emotions and that it is beautiful. These are the four things our discussions on all art centre around. There have been many different movements within the art world. No matter what, these works are discussed in relation to the terms outlined above. We have a long tradition of critiquing works in such ways. It is because these works conform to all of the key elements outlined above. Whether it be Leonardo Da Vinci, Picasso or a newly established talent or an outsider artist, it is because we can talk about them in such a way that we can designate them as art. Only once we can grasp the current discussion of graffiti and street art with connection to this definition of art can we come to a richer and more nuanced understanding through reading Heidegger's *OWA.*

Creative action

In the literature of graffiti and street art there cannot be enough importance placed on the creative action of the writers and artists. This is the case among the writers and artists themselves as well as those who study this phenomenon in different capacities. Discussions of the creative process have been part of the conversation as graffiti developed. In her book *Graffiti Art Styles: A Classification System and Theoretical Analysis (2008)* Lisa Gottlieb argues that over time as 'graffiti was reconfigured as art, it became the subject of aesthetic analysis that discuss the visual qualities of the work and the creative process' (Gottlieb, L. 2008: 49). As soon as tags and throw ups gave way to pieces, graffiti began to be considered part of the art world and be talked about in artistic terms. This meant graffiti was seen as the result of creative action rather than destructive intent.

With regards to the way graffiti writers and street artists talk about their own work, there is a large emphasis on technicality and style and the creative process. Within graffiti, there is such importance placed on technicality that a hierarchy is established on the basis of creative action and the ability to execute a piece perfectly. For graffiti writers, things such as can control and complexity of form are what sets writers apart. Those who are proficient, prolific and innovative are called 'Kings', while those who fail to master the creative process are deemed to be 'Toys'. The writer SPIN argues that writers pride themselves on their ability to form works. He says that writers judge others in relation to their 'composition, color scheme, white space, line, texture, shading, accents' (SPIN. 2014: 147). These are skills acquired through practice. Another writer TEAM defends graffiti as an artform, saying that graffiti 'is an artform, without a doubt: it's got style, guidelines and ways to do things' (TEAM. 2014: 167). For writers, there are certain requirements a work must conform to. These include the formalistic and stylistic requirements.

Joe Austin uses graffiti writers' dedication to their craft as a defence against the dismissal of graffiti as vandalism. He says that in the early days of graffiti 'writers used the yards as a workshop and a studio, experimenting with new designs and techniques while creating new works for circulation' (Austin, J. 2001: 67). This shows that rather

than writers mindlessly destroying other people's property they were crafting something, taking time to develop artistic pieces. The brilliance of the work is attributed to the time taken in creating a work. Once it was known that some sort of thought and creative process was behind the work, graffiti became part of the art discussion. This only increased with the rise of street art.

Within street art, the focus on creative action and the emphasis on making is no less important. The very distinction of graffiti and street art is drawn through the creative process of artists, the technique and materials used. Street art is widely considered far more inclusive and diverse than its precursor in terms of creative action. Firstly, because of the variety of medium that is used within street art there is opportunity for even more conversation about the specifics of the artist's creative process. It is argued that because graffiti writers use ink pens and spray cans, they are limited in the scope of their creative action. Street artists on the other hand have more freedom to create in different ways. Nicholas Ganz argues that the street art movement (also referred to as post-graffiti) is 'characterized by more innovative approaches to form and technique.' (Ganz, N. 2004: 7). He continues arguing that street artists are 'free to develop without any constraints and stickers, posters, stencils, airbrush, oil-based chalk; all varieties of paint and even sculpture are used' (Ganz, N. 2004: 7). The way in which works were created expanded as the mediums used by artists changed. Street artists were able to draw on a lot of traditional art leading to street art being more painterly than graffiti. In fact, many street artists including Shepard Fairey and Keith Haring had traditional art educations which would have taught them about the importance of form and creation.

Conveying emotion

In relation to creative action, Nancy Macdonald argues that when discussing graffiti and street art we talk about the writers and artists 'as creative agents of meaning' (Macdonald, N. 2001: 4). Writers and artists don't simply put a work together. They also imbue their creations with meaning. Their subjective perspective, feelings and thoughts are said to come across in their work. This is another way in which graffiti and street art conform to our current definition of art.

In relation to artworks conveying emotion Devon D. Brewer argues that graffiti is written by its creators for the purpose of self-expression alone. While graffiti is often attributed to the egotistical and the fame hungry, Brewer argues that a 'primary concern for writers is artistic expression, since style and aesthetics are not only means to fame, but also ends in themselves' (Brewer, D. D. 1992: 188). According to Brewer there is little significant motive beyond self-expression within graffiti. Graffiti writers also say their own work is an exercise in self-expression. SPIN argues that with regard to graffiti 'personal expression lies at its very heart' (SPIN. 2014: 159). Similarly, the graffiti writer TEAM's work is described in Training Days as 'unhinged bursts of self- expression' (Chaflant, H. 2014: 160). This suggests that there is in fact an emphasis on self-expression among graffiti writers. The New York writer KEL claims that his aggression comes through in his work and does so through the boldness of his letters. He says that graffiti 'allowed me to project my aggressions and my presence… The letters would get bolder and wilder, and the colours could be super aggressive' (KEL, 2014. 80). Graffiti is described by KEL as a type of outlet for his aggression, which comes through in the composition of the work. Thus, for writers, their pieces are a form of self-expression, with the colour and form giving them a chance to show their emotion and personality.

Like Brewer, Robert Sweeney argues that street art is 'a form of artistic expression' (Sweeney, R. 2013: 4), used by artists to convey an emotion or feeling. Banksy's *Girl With Balloon (2004)* is a perfect example of a work that is considered art because of its emotional content. In *Wall and Piece (2006)* a double page spread shows a photograph of *Girl with Balloon* in London across from the words 'when the time comes to leave just walk away quietly and don't make any fuss' (Banksy, 2006: 79). The work is intended to be a piece about loss. The emotional content of the work sets it apart from tags and piece, and means it is an artwork. In 2017 *Girl With Balloon* was voted Britain's favourite artwork in a poll carried out by Samsung. It came first despite other artists including William Turner, David Hockney and Anthony Gormley. While Banksy talks more explicitly about politics in relation to his work there is none the less an emotional element to his work that resonates with the public at large and means that even among people who

view graffiti and street art unfavourably he stands out. He is akin to a 'real artist' because of the emotional content of his work.

Both graffiti and street art conform to the notion that a work of art conveys emotion. They are spoken about in relation to self-expression, as an outlet. This, in many ways, has become a cliché in the discussion about graffiti and street art. A work of art however mustn't just convey emotion but must also convey an idea. The next section will show the continued conformity of graffiti and street art to our traditional definition of art.

Conveying ideas

Throughout its history, graffiti and street art have conveyed political and socioeconomic messages. Pieces became the medium through which these messages were conveyed. Due to their large scale and the fact they were painted on trains the idea would be seen throughout the city. KYLE and JON ONE created a piece that protested the conflict in South Africa and Central America. JON ONE, when interviewed for *Training Days (2014)*, said that 'it wasn't the typical piecing where you have, you know, your name in the middle flanked by B-boy characters on both sides.' (JON ONE, 2014: 61). This shows that political works, even among graffiti writers, stood out from other works as being more thoughtful and considered. JON ONE also did a piece critiquing the mayor of New York Ed Koch, which boldly said 'Dump Koch'. Another piece, this time by LEE, demanded that the government should 'stop the bomb', referring to the threat of nuclear bombs during the Cold War. These messages, which address political events give rise to an understanding of graffiti, or some graffiti at least, as not being created by mindless vandals.

There were also pieces akin to public service announcements such as a piece memorialising John Lennon following his assassination created by LADY PINK, IZ the WIZ and MARE. Not all of the pieces conveying a message are serious by any means, some full train pieces celebrated the Christmas period such as the Fabulous Five Crew's 'Happy Christmas New York' train and a 'Happy Holiday' piece by JSON and RICHIE. These pieces remained on the trains for a considerable period, even at a time when all effort was being put into removing graffiti from the city of New York. LADY PINK says

that her John Lennon piece 'ran for four years' (LADY PINK. 2014: 102) which was not the case for a piece in the traditional graffiti style. Privilege was given to pieces that conveyed ideas legibly to the general public because they conveyed an inclusive message, in this case memorialising a public figure.

The use of images rather than words within street art led to an increased legibility, meaning it was easier to convey a message to a large amount of people. Banksy famously uses striking images to critique figures of authority, consumerism and social norms within his work. Shepard Fairey's work attempts to show the meaninglessness of images in an age of advertising. In his *Manifesto* he claims that his 'Andre has a Posse' sticker has no meaning. He nonetheless seeks to convey an idea but one of meaningless and peoples endless search for meaning. Through avoiding a specific meaning an idea is indirectly conveyed.

The importance of a message being conveyed in street art is present in the general public's appreciation of it. In *Street Art, Sweet Art? Reclaiming the "Public" in Public Place (2010)* Laurel Anderson et. al. show that people's enjoyment of street art is dependent on the work conveying an idea. They quote an interview participant called Sam as saying 'I'm always a big fan of street art as long as there's thought put into it, and there's skill behind it' (Anderson, L. et al. 2010: 525). His enjoyment of the work is conditional, based on if the artist is considered in their approach and that the work is well executed. This implies that street art is only art when it is done to a high standard and if the artist is able to create something conceptual.

The importance of concept and message is implicit in the reaction towards tags and throw ups when compared to the work of Banksy who is widely considered subversive and thought provoking. People will often say, 'I like good street art' or 'I don't like graffiti but I like that'. In one such case a judge said of a defendant facing vandalism charges 'He is no Banksy' (Brighenti, A. M. 2017: 122). This statement implies that works by the likes of Banksy are tolerated, accepted or celebrated because his work is thoughtful and conveys a meaning. This further suggests that this defendant didn't live up to the artistic expectations about graffiti and street art that have become the norm. In other words, the graffiti writer was punished because his work could not be

recognised as art. Interestingly the illegal nature of graffiti was not so black and white when it came to street art. Many have defended the presence of street art while criticising graffiti. Andrea Mubi Brighenti argues that with decisions about the legality of graffiti and street art 'an aesthetic judgement [enters] the legal field as a ground for incrimination' (Brighenti, A. M. 2018: 122). This implies that the more aesthetically pleasing a work is, the more likely it is to remain on the street with the writer or artist escaping the threat of arrest or persecution. The split in aesthetic appreciation distinguishes graffiti and street art in much of public opinion. I shall address this further in the section titled 'Beauty'.

The political nature of graffiti and street art

Due to the ideas street art conveys there have been many works that have been used in protests and rallies in recent years – notably in the protests in America and Britain against the Iraq war. In his book *Wall and Piece (2006)* Banksy gives an example of an 'anti-war demonstration, London 2003'. In the photograph there are multiple placards emblazoned with the slogan 'wrong war' under Banksy's artworks. This shows that Banksy's street art speaks to people and for people on a political level, signifying the alternative views of the sign's owner. Street art and graffiti can be political tools of protest and activism. As we saw in the previous section, many of the pieces conveying a message had a political point to make. Since its' beginning, graffiti has been consistently associated with political messages. From as early as 1968 in the protests in France slogans and phrases were written on the walls of the city. While these were not in the 'New York style' and predated the European graffiti boom the presence of a 'graffitiesque' type of writing on the walls is important to note. The association of graffiti and street art with politics is intrinsically linked to their ability to convey a meaning. However, I shall challenge this idea within the next chapter.

Beauty

The last of the traits of art according to our definition is that creation must be beautiful. Both graffiti and street art are talked of in terms of beauty. The beauty of the works however is at times said to take away from the political nature of graffiti and street art.

Frood et. al. argues that graffiti 'evolved from a form of social protest into something less political which is more attentive to its artistic expression and technical execution.' (Frood, E. et al. 2018: 7). This shift away from politics and towards pure aesthetic pleasure is visible to an extent. There has been a movement away from graffiti to murals which can be seen on the side of people's houses and in communal spaces. These works serve an aesthetic purpose and are often abstract patterns or bright, colourful illustrative images. In this sense there is a divide between the political and beauty, suggesting they are mutually exclusive.

In contrast, Nicholas Riggle argues that 'there is no necessary tension between a work's beauty and its philosophical, critical, religious, or moral force.' (Riggle, N. A. 2010: 250). He suggests that just because a work is political that does not discount its' beauty. Nor does its' beauty discredit the political message. Riggle makes reference to the work of Swoon, a street artist from New York. In her work she depicts members of the local community in cut out artworks that she pastes on the street. In many ways these works take back the city streets for these people as a political statement about public ownership of space. At the same time her work remains ornate and intricate, they are almost lacelike and thus they are beautiful while conveying a political message.

While tags and throw ups are often dismissed as the ugly side of graffiti by the general public, cases are made for tags being beautiful in their own right. Writers such as KEL and SPIN describe tags as 'a form of calligraphy' (SPIN. 2014: 152) and as 'beautiful handwriting' (KEL. 2014: 7). In her study on graffiti styles Lisa Gottlieb also describes tags as being 'much like calligraphy' (Gottlieb, L. 2008: 171). This understanding focuses on the intricacy and craft of creating a tag, however this is not yet a widely accepted view. It does show the propensity to defend something through emphasising its beauty which is a common trait in discussions of graffiti and street art.

Within the general public, some people defend graffiti as a form of beautiful art. Lisa Gottlieb states that 'many people argue that graffiti art beautifies rather than defaces' (Gottlieb, L. 2008: 2). They see graffiti art as adding a pop of colour to the city, making it aesthetically enjoyable. This was a clear motive for the aforementioned Bushwick collective. Beauty is also used by graffiti writers to justify their work. Joe Austin states

that graffiti writers 'often asserted their worthiness and their right to add some needed beauty to the trains' (Austin, J. 2001: 182). Those participating in the graffiti defend their action through the beauty they add to their surroundings rather than defacing them. By arguing that their work is beautiful, they draw a distinction between their skilled work and the mindless youths who scrawl on public property such as bus stops with sharpies and paint pens.

The same defence is used by street artists. In *This is Not a Photo Opportunity (2014)*, Martin Bull quotes Banksy as saying 'I'm hoping we can transform a dark, forgotten filth pit into an oasis of beautiful art' (Bull, M. 2014: 79). It appears that in the eyes of street artists, their work is justified because it completely transforms a place for the better making it a vibrant and beautiful space. In a similar vein, Nicholas Riggle argues that the street artist C. Finley turns the street into a much more comfortable and welcoming place. He says that by 'covering dumpsters with such homely décor, Finley draws attention to the fact that the street is also a kind of living room. Her work reveals that the elements of our common places need not be so uninviting' (Riggle, N. A. 2010: 246). Here Riggle suggests that the city becomes more homely because street artists take the time to add colour and pattern, making the environment feel a little more comfortable and cosier. The addition of something pretty makes all the difference and makes living in the city more bearable.

Impact on the city – public and private space

As has been shown in the previous section, emphasis is placed on the fact that graffiti and street art impact the city through creating a more aesthetically pleasing environment. However, the current understanding of graffiti and street art is that they both challenge the distinction between private and public space. In fact, a lot of street artists when talking about their works have the intention of raising questions about ownership of space within the city.

This is a consistent feature of the literature concerned with street art. In *Viva La Revolucion: Dialogues with the Urban Landscape (2010)* Alex Baker argues that street artists challenge the corporate ownership of public space. He argues that through the

presence of graffiti and street art, passers-by are invited to become creative agents rather than passive consumers. Baker argues that 'art should allow for an opening to turn consumers into producers, spectators into collaborators' (Baker, A. 2010: 26). People are no longer simply the pawns of capitalism, they are brought into a more active political role in society, with the possibility of also changing things in their environment. People are made aware that they live in a giant advertisement, realising that it is 'a place for creative expression' (Baker, A. 2010: 26) rather than corporate monopolization.

As I mentioned earlier, Swoon approaches her work with a similar intention in mind. On her website it says that she began 'pasting her paper portraits to the side of buildings with the goal of making art and public space of the city more accessible' (Swoon, no date: online). This may seem paradoxical because public space is always accessible to the public. However, the intention of Swoons work is to reclaim the space for the people who live in it every day. Rather than allowing the space to be taken by corporate entities she places portraits of people who live within the community on the street staking a claim and marking their ownership of the streets they live on. Shepard Fairey also stresses the importance of undermining the corporate ownership of public space. In a brief interview with Steven Heller for *Voice,* Fairey claims that his OBEY 'stickers were a rebellious wrench in the spokes, a disruption of the semiotics of consumption' (Heller, S. 2004: 1). His work is a protest against the proliferation of advertising, a way to dissent and bring people's attention to the endless images of aspiration. Fairey sees himself as inducing people to be more aware of the influence the advertising industry can have. As Alex Baker suggests, graffiti and street art try to turn people from consumption to production.

In her book *Graffiti and Street Art (2010)*, Anna Waclawek similarly argues that graffiti and street art disrupt corporate ownership of the street and are a 'subjective use of territory' (Waclawek, A. 2010: 74). This suggests that the individual takes space for themselves and does what they want with it. Waclawek argues that people, street artists specifically, take over space with their subjective feelings and thoughts. The personal and subjective use of territory is opposed to the anonymous city. Furthermore,

Caitlin Frances Bruce, in *Painting Publics: Transnational Legal Graffiti Scenes as Spaces for Encounter (2019)*, claims that those who are made silent and invisible fight to be heard in a city that ignores them. She says that public 'name writing… emerged as a means of resisting anonymity within cityscapes that are increasingly inhabited by strangers' (Bruce, C. F. 2019: 73). This, like the two examples above, is thought to be a subjective reaction against the city. The name writing of an individual is a voice, staking a claim on a part of the city. Graffiti and street art are understood as taking back space from corporate entities for the public. Through disrupting the aesthetic landscape and creating works illegally, graffiti writers and street artists take the street for themselves and for others.

Conclusion

Graffiti and street art conform to an understanding of art as the result of creative action, with the works being composed by writers and street artists. I have outlined the emphasis placed on the composition of a work, the mediums used and technique that occurs within discussion of graffiti and street art. Writers and artists were described as 'creative agents of meaning', conveying both emotion and ideas. The most popular works of graffiti and street art are those which are thoughtful. The pieces that were legible, conveying a message to the public rather than writers, were left on the trains longer than the more exclusive works. The thoughtful pieces of street art stood out to members of the public as a bench mark for all graffiti and street art to be measured against.

Most importantly, these aesthetic judgements have been shown to cause a dichotomy in the way graffiti and street art are viewed. On one side of this distinction graffiti and street art are ugly acts of defacement. It is usually graffiti that falls into this category. There is a long history of graffiti as a scapegoat because it is a visible plight. On the other side of the dichotomy there are the beautiful and artistic works of graffiti and street art. Street art more so than graffiti, falls on this side of the dichotomy. However, some more intricate and legible pieces can sometimes be viewed in a positive light. The question then must be whether the four traits outlined here and the dichotomy that is caused by aesthetic judgement leads to a nuanced and complex understanding of graffiti and

street art. The concern is how well we really understand graffiti and street art through its incorporation into our traditional view of art. Should we limit ourselves to these four categories in our judgement of graffiti and street art? If we do, I would argue we cannot acknowledge the importance of this phenomenon.

As I said in the introduction to this thesis, graffiti and street art are unique to our age. It would seem that we are doing ourselves an injustice by maintaining an understanding of these movements dependent on a definition of art that leads to the dismissal of a large portion of graffiti. We are judging graffiti and street art on common conceptions that have stood since the beginning of western thought. There is no possibility of understanding the uniqueness of our age through analysing traits that are considered to be eternal. All artworks can be judged in terms of their beauty or the emotion they convey but we must look deeper. Graffiti and street art occur in a unique way, they appear on our streets not on canvas. They are illicit and shocking. To settle for aesthetic judgements as we have seen above does not account for this difference. Even the discussion about the impact of graffiti and street art on the city does not go beyond ideas of beauty and subjectivity.

As we move forward our preconceptions will begin to be questioned. There will shortly be no room for the common understanding of graffiti and street art outlined in this chapter. Having established graffiti and street art's conformity to aesthetic traditions. I will show how Heidegger's philosophy helps us overcome our current understanding of art and more specifically graffiti and street art. This will lead to a far more nuanced understanding of a phenomenon that defines this century.

Chapter Two: Heidegger, Graffiti and Street art: A view of graffiti and street art informed by Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art*

This chapter will argue that through reading Heidegger's *OWA* we can gain a greater understanding of graffiti and street art than is currently available to us. The previous chapter outlined the common conceptions of graffiti and street art where a dichotomy arose between claims that on one hand it is beautiful, meaningful and full of artistic intent and on the other is meaningless vandalism, void of meaning. I showed that on both sides of the argument, these standpoints arise from understanding the work of art as an aesthetic object. Works, as aesthetic objects communicate something to us on behalf of the artist and are beautiful. It became clear that our understanding derives from the idea that a work is an object created by one subject and seen by another who can enjoy or find displeasure in the aesthetic aspects of the work. The question arose about whether these judgements and the questions within aesthetics really give way to a full and complex understanding of artworks. If these judgements fail to go beyond the superficial enjoyment of a work, they cannot tell us anything of significant meaning about our current age. Through introducing Heidegger's *OWA,* this chapter will begin to suggest that there is indeed more to graffiti and street art than we currently understand. Our concern here is not whether Heidegger would think the street artists Banksy and Swoon are great artists in the same vein as Paul Klee and Cezanne who he greatly admired. Instead, our concern is how Heidegger opens different avenues of thought concerning artworks. We can then look at graffiti and street art in a new light.

Heidegger's essay on art is important for us because in it he attempts to free artworks from aesthetic conceptions, to move beyond thinking of works of art as beautiful aesthetic objects. While aesthetic conceptions are commonplace and have become second nature to us, Heidegger claims that within aesthetics art dies. He argues that within aesthetic judgements we fail to see the work itself. Heidegger claims that our understanding of works is abstracted by aesthetic judgements.

Art is something far more important for Heidegger than an object of enjoyment. It is important for Heidegger that we move beyond aesthetics. It would be easy to jump to the conclusion that *OWA* is simply a treaty on art. However, we must be careful in our assumptions when reading Heidegger. The fact that Heidegger's essay is about art should be cautiously considered. Heidegger does not attempt in any way to define what artworks are, he is far from concerned with creative action or formal aspects of a work.

Heidegger's understanding of artworks is shaped by his philosophy more widely. Thus, in order to understand the conclusions Heidegger comes to concerning art, it is important to know the context in which Heidegger's essay on art is written. *OWA* sits within a specific period of Heidegger's work in which his thinking experiences what is called the *Turning* or *the Turn (die Kehre)*. While this is not a distinct split from his previous work, the more widely known *Being and Time (2006),* it marks a change of direction in Heidegger's line of questioning. While Heidegger remains concerned with Being he moves from *the question of the meaning of Being* to *the question of the history of Being*. Due to the fact that *OWA* was written in the 1930s the essay does not ask what artworks are but is instead concerned with artworks in relation to the history of Being.

To understand *OWA* and Heidegger's critique of aesthetics alongside the connection between art and the question of the history of Being we will be required, for a short time, to step away from graffiti and street art. We must concern ourselves with the ideas within Heidegger's essay in order to come to a different understanding of art. While Heidegger's *OWA* is a short essay, we must condense it further, limiting ourselves to those points within the text that will illuminate our understanding of graffiti and street art in a new way. This chapter is far from a commentary on Heidegger's essay which already exist elsewhere (See: Inwood, M. 2000 & Stulberg, R. B. 1973.). If this chapter were to cover everything in Heidegger's essay, it would lose any focus on graffiti and street art. Instead, I shall focus on those points in the essay that are most important in moving beyond aesthetic understandings of artworks.

Our Common Conceptions of the World

For Heidegger, our current understanding of artworks fits into an understanding of the world in which all beings are things, in the sense that they are objects. It may be counterintuitive to even have to state this because it seems so blindingly obvious to us. However, Heidegger wants to challenge the way we view beings and the world. He talks of three groups of beings that make up our world, namely mere things, equipment and artworks, all of which are defined simply as things. However intuitive this understanding seems; Heidegger challenges this common place thought. He argues that our understanding of things is flawed. He goes so far as to say that our current conception of beings does violence to them.

The first of these groups Heidegger refers to is mere thing. This is matter in its rawest form such as a rock or wood. Equipment is then thought to be the mere thing with added utility. For example, wood can be used to make a chair and rock can be used as a brick. However, the rock or wood must be altered in some way in order to be fit for purpose – the mere thing must be shaped in order to have use value. The last group, which is of greatest concern for us, namely artworks, adds to the mere thing further. On top of the use value that equipment adds to the mere thing, artworks also convey meaning. This meaning is the message, the idea or emotion that is being conveyed through the work. Rock becomes a sculpture which conveys a meaning to the viewer. The mere thing must also be shaped in order to create an artwork. We can see this understanding of artworks when we look back at graffiti and street art outlined in the previous chapter with regard to creating meaning.

The three thing-concepts

For Heidegger the way we currently understand the world, is the result of abstraction and contradiction. Heidegger outlines three concepts of the thing that he says have come to define our understanding of the world. While these concepts go largely unquestioned, Heidegger suggests that we should be weary of them. The first concept is that the thing is the bearer of properties, the second is that things are perceptible only through sensations and the last is the matter and form concept, where matter is shaped into a form. The latter is the most important for us but an understanding of the failings of all three will solidify the need to overcome our current conceptions of the world.

Heidegger addresses the first thing-concept by saying a 'thing, as everyone thinks he knows, is that around which the properties are assembled.' (OWA:148). This is a concept derives from the Greeks, and the philosophical boundaries that are established in the Greek age. The philosophers Plato and Aristotle believed things had a core that was the foundation of the thing while the characteristics were gathered around that core. This can be understood through a quick example. We would say that a piece of wood is brown, rough, heavy and dry etc. It would seem self-explanatory that these characteristics are connected to the core of what wood is. This is one way we learn to talk about beings in school and which has become second nature. However, Heidegger argues that 'this first interpretation of the thingness of the thing, the thing as bearer of its characteristic traits, despite its currency, is not as natural as it first appears. (OWA: 150). Despite the fact that this is an acceptable way of thinking of things, Heidegger argues that the 'thingness of the thing' is never truly reached or understood through this concept. Instead, we remain far away from the thing. We understand the being as a collection of traits instead of seeing the being itself. Here Heidegger doesn't simply mean the mere thing but all beings as they can all be subsumed under this thing-concept. Think of a cold, shiny, hard metal knife or a work of art made of stone or glass which could be talked of in terms of characteristic traits of the material.

Heidegger's critique of the second thing-concept, the idea that things are perceptible through sensations, similarly suggests we lose sight of beings. The difference here is that we try to bring beings too close to us. Due to the fact beings are understood through sense perception, our understanding of the thing is thought to originate internally. Heidegger says that through the second thing-concept 'a thing is nothing but the unity of a manifold of what is given in the senses' (OWA: 151). Through this concept we come to think of things in terms of touch, sound, taste, sight and smell. Like the first thing-concept, this is an understanding of beings that we are taught in the early stages of our lives. It is traditional. However, it is an understanding that for Heidegger derives from the modern age. More specifically it is the result of Descartes who drew a distinction between body and mind. Descartes' thought suggested that anything outside the mind was uncertain, the external world in many ways became unknowable. Thus, the only

way to experience a being is through the sense perception of the being. In *Being and Time* however, Heidegger was critical of Descartes thought and sought to overcome the subject-object distinction that appeared as a result of Descartes work. Heidegger argues that despite this concept being 'correct and demonstrable in every case' we should be wary of thinking that it actually reaches the 'thingly character of the thing'. Importantly, Heidegger correctly points out that we 'never really first perceive a throng of sensations' (OWA: 151). In our day-to-day life we don't first come across sensations, but rather beings themselves. For Heidegger to think about a thing in terms of sensation is to step away from the thing itself. He says that 'to hear bare sound we have to listen away from things… i.e., listen abstractly' (OWA: 152). This means that when we talk about sense perceptions we talk as if we can isolate sensations. Heidegger however argues we are unable to do this. He claims that the sounds we hear are connected to beings. Heidegger states that we 'hear the door shut in the house and never hear acoustical sensations or even mere sound' (OWA: 152). Despite the fact we can talk abstractly of sense perceptions, we never really experience things through sense perceptions alone. Heidegger argues that we don't hear things in isolation but rather in connection to the world.

For Heidegger, the matter and form concept is no more able to reach the thing than the previous concepts. Again, this concept is derived from Greek thought, from Plato and Aristotle's shaping of western philosophy. This concept is based on our understanding of beings that arise from Plato's theory of *ἰδέα* where 'the thing solicits us by its outward appearance' (OWA: 152). This means that we cannot know the thing in any way other than how it outwardly appears to us. Heidegger says that within this concept what 'is constant in the thing, its consistency, lies in the fact that matter stands together with form.' (OWA: 152). This implies that a being is what it is as long as matter is formed in a certain way. Through the matter-form concept, we do not see the being itself but rather formed matter. In the case of equipment and artworks, we focus on the fact that it has been shaped by human hand.

This idea of formed matter may have originated with the Greeks but transformed in the Christian age when God is said to have formed matter, as the creator of all beings, *the*

ens creatum. The understanding of equipment and artworks come from an understanding of formed matter transposed from God as creator to man as creator. Heidegger acknowledges that within the Christian faith, God forming matter is different to how humans can craft beings. However, the idea that all beings are created and shaped has remained. When we talk of artworks in relation to this thing-concept, we think that 'matter is the substrate and field for the artists formative action' (OWA: 152). We can see this in the focus on the creative action of graffiti writers and street artists outlined in the previous chapter. They are said to have composed the matter in some way through their creative action, controlling the matter and placing it in a certain form for their own ends.

This thing-concept is the grounds for a formalistic understanding of artworks which is maintained in discussions of graffiti and street art. Heidegger argues that this concept does not originate within the field of aesthetics, despite the fact that forming matter has become ubiquitous with artists and artworks. The matter-form concept arises within the field of equipment. Only later is this applied to artworks through aesthetic conceptions. The understanding of both equipment and artworks as formed matter derives from the Greek works *tēchnē* which has for Heidegger come to be misunderstood as handicraft or creative action. I shall return to *tēchnē* later in this chapter to clarify Heidegger's understanding of the word in relation to truth and artworks. While the matter-form concept fits all things, Heidegger suggests that it should be questioned in its ability to reach the thing in itself.

Our understanding of all things, once we look at Heidegger's critique of these concepts, is flawed. We miss the beings themselves and only come to an abstract understanding. In opposition to the abstraction of things through the three thing-concepts, Heidegger suggests that we need to maintain focus on the thing itself and the Being of the thing. Heidegger argues that everything 'that interposes itself between the thing and us in apprehending and talking about it must first be set aside. Only then do we yield ourselves to the undistorted presencing of the thing.' (OWA: 151). In order to reach the thing itself we must firstly rid ourselves of these conceptions which drive a wedge between things and our understanding of them. Heidegger claims that 'we ought to turn

toward the being, think about it in regard to its Being, but by means of this thinking at the same time let it rest upon itself in its very own essence' (OWA: 157). While we can and should think about beings, we should not let this disrupt and warp the essence of the being itself. Until now we have been unsuccessful at understanding things as they are. Through removing these thing-concepts and the current understanding of things, Heidegger opens up a more fundamental understanding of beings and more importantly, art. Our seemingly natural understanding of graffiti and street art will have to change in light of Heidegger's philosophy.

The danger of aesthetic conceptions

The abstractions that occur within aesthetic conceptions is for Heidegger, the reason artworks die within aesthetics. He argues that we do not see the works themselves, instead artworks merely become objects. Heidegger says that aesthetics 'takes the work of art as an object, the object of aisthesis, of sensuous apprehension' (PLT: 77). Through understanding them in such ways artworks are reduced to what we feel when we look at them. In the case of graffiti and street art, we may feel disgust, intrigue, upset or admiration. To talk of a work in relation to emotion is to be unconcerned with the work itself. It is to see nothing aside from a subjective understanding of the artwork.

Heidegger argues that artworks are never truly known through an objective understanding either. In both cases the work itself is lost. Within aesthetics artworks become mere 'objects of the art industry' (OWA: 166). He claims they are treated like objects by art historians, connoisseurs, curators, art students, critics and private collectors. He argues that from the perspective of art historians' artworks are objects of science. Essentially artworks become artefacts from which knowledge about different ages of history can be understood. Art historians study the pigment used and the techniques used in the creation of an art work collecting data about the work. This for Heidegger does not give rise to an understanding of the work itself. Art students, on the other hand, may be concerned with the works as objects of inspiration. The general public may view these works as objects of beauty and enjoyment. In all of these cases

for Heidegger the work of art is used as a means to an end and is never seen because we do not let it be itself.

The essence of the work of art or the 'workly nature of the work' as Heidegger calls it cannot be spoken of in aesthetic terms. Only through overcoming the three thing-concepts and going beyond the current aesthetic conceptions of art does Heidegger arrive at a more essential and nuanced understanding of artworks. In order to overcome these concepts, he seeks to redefine how we think about beings and Being. It is essential that we understand Heidegger's ontological position before we can turn directly to artworks and see them in a new light.

Metaphysics

All three thing-concepts are the result of what Heidegger calls metaphysics, which he argues has led to us losing sight of Being and beings in their essence. Metaphysics is concerned with truth and being, in fact Heidegger says that metaphysics 'is the history of truth' (W: 232) and the truth of Being. However, both truth and being has been misunderstood from the very foundation of Philosophy. While Greeks such as Parmenides and Heraclitus are praised by Heidegger, he draws a sharp distinction between those early Greeks and the thought that emerged with Plato and Aristotle. In his Nietzsche lecture series, Heidegger argues that with the latter thinkers the boundaries are set for what is to follow. Throughout his work, Heidegger points to Plato's theory of *ιδέας* as that which has led to our current misunderstanding of Being and beings. He sees all philosophy since to be a continuation or an attempted reversal and failed overcoming of these initial steps. In *Introduction to What is Metaphysics* Heidegger says that 'the truth of Being has remained concealed from metaphysics during its long history from Anaximander to Nietzsche' (W: 280). Thus, we have never really understood Being at all. While we would like to think we have an understanding of Being we are in fact confused, only able to understand beings as Being.

As the foundations of philosophy were built beings came to be thought of in relation to outward appearance. The understanding of beings through their outward appearance means that we rely on what is immediately present to understand a being as what it is.

Heidegger however argues that there is something more than the outward appearance that is the essence of the being, in other words its Being. While ever we view beings as beings, comprehending only their outward appearance, we do not grasp their Being. We are only able to understand beings in an abstract and distorted way which has been made evident above.

Our preoccupation on outward appearance has led to truth as correct proposition. Truth as correct propositions has led to what Heidegger calls exact thinking. He argues that exact thinking 'merely binds itself to the calculation of beings and serves this end exclusively' (W: 235). Within metaphysics, we do not think of beings as anything other than what can be calculated. The affect this has is that anything that is not intelligible to calculation is dismissed as not being within Being. In the modern age, the certainty of outward appearance has been brought into question. Through Descartes mind body split sense perceptions have become our way of knowing the world.

It was made clear in the introduction to this thesis that Heidegger's essay on art does not stand in isolation, that it is the result of his philosophy more widely. It is only in relation to Heidegger's effort to overcome metaphysics that we can understand how he comes to his understanding of art. In fact, Matt Dill (2017) argues that the whole purpose of *OWA* is not to discuss art works as such but to overcome metaphysics. The fact that his essay on art rejects age old thing-concepts and aesthetic views of art works is a result of Heidegger's attempt to go beyond metaphysical thinking. Through seeing how Heidegger overcomes metaphysical thought we will also come to understand how he can view art so differently than we are currently able. Only once we have overcome metaphysics and aesthetics will we be able to reconsidered graffiti and street art.

Transcendental empirical split against the ontic-ontological difference

One concept that significantly impacts the way we understand artworks, is the transcendental empirical split. In connection to artworks this split conforms to the split between matter and form. The form is transcendental, meaning it is before experience

and is over and above matter. In contrast matter is empirical, in the sense that it is the material aspect of the work that we experience through sense perceptions.

The transcendental empirical split essentially means that Being is thought to arise in the appearance of beings. The transcendental empirical split, like the matter-form concept, has its ground in the Greek age with Plato and Aristotle. In *Contributions to Philosophy (GA 65)* Heidegger states that with 'The determination of the *ἰδέα* as the *κοινόν* turns the *χωρισμός* into a sort of being, and that is the origin of "transcendence" in its various forms, especially if even the *ἐπέκεινα* is grasped as *οὐσία* on account of this determination of the *ἰδέα*. Here is also the root of the representation of the *a priori*.' (CP 65: 169). The Greek here makes this quote seem far more intimidating than it is. *κοινόν* means common to all, thus *ἰδέας* are common to all beings of a specific sort. For example, the *ἰδέα* of a car encompasses all cars, it is the 'what is' of the car that transcends that specific car. The outward appearance of the car, which is shared with all other cars, is what makes the car a car. *χωρισμός* means split or abyss, which in Kant's work becomes the transcendental empirical split between that which is known through experience and that which is known before experience or is known *a priori*. *ἐπέκεινα* means beyond and *οὐσία* means presence. This means that we come to understand beings through a split between that which is present and that which is beyond beings in their appearance. Being or the 'what is' of the being is thought of as something beyond presence which can be known prior to any experience of the beings themselves. Through this understanding of beings, we come to see beings as Being itself. Heidegger breaks with this tradition and seeks to move beyond our focus on beings and instead look at Being. In doing so he moves beyond form and matter.

The ontic-ontological split moves away from the metaphysics of presence. In order to understand this, it is important to define both the ontic and ontological and the difference between them. Here I shall refer to secondary definitions as they state very clearly the difference between ontic and ontological. Jan Slaby, in the *Heidegger Lexicon (2019)*, eloquently defines the ontic as that which 'applies to entities as such, i.e., their properties, their various arrangements and behaviors, whatever can be known empirically about them.' (Slaby, J. 2019: 542). This is how we see beings within

metaphysics as Being is derived from that which is empirical. Slaby points out that, in contrast, ontology 'concerns being–i.e., what it is for a given entity or class of entities to be' (Slaby, J. 2019: 542). Through his fundamental ontology Heidegger does not simply question beings as appearance, instead his concern is with the Being of beings.

The Being of beings is exactly that which cannot be understood through the three thing-concepts because they derive from an understanding of beings as presence and not Being. It is in relation to Being, not beings or the properties, arrangements or behaviours, that Heidegger approaches artworks. Instead of talking about works in terms of the matter-form concept he uses the terms world and earth.

World and earth against matter and form

While they are both conceptual pairs, we should not be tempted to map world and earth on to matter and form. The way they interact is different. This is due to the fact that world and earth is connected to the question of the history of Being. Matter and form are thought to be absolutes, in contrast world and earth are historical.

Neither world or earth are merely objective, we should not think of these concepts in terms of beings as appearance. Rather than being comparable to the form which matter takes world is guidance and measure for a historical people. World for Heidegger 'is the ever non-objective to which we are subject as long as the paths of birth and death, blessing and curse keep us transported into Being' (OWA: 170). Through world, in the Heideggerian sense, all beings come to appear as they are. Heidegger argues that it is through world that all beings gain their look. World isn't like matter either, it is not simply that which is intelligible. There is that within world which cannot be mastered, which remains somewhat unknowable. This is due to the fact that world must set itself back into earth in order to come into being.

Just as we should not equate world with form. Earth is far from being matter as mere thing to be shaped. Instead, earth, for Heidegger, is 'that which comes forth and shelters' (OWA: 171) through its self-refusal. Earth allows all beings to rest in themselves, which as was said earlier is required to understand the Being of beings.

Unlike matter, earth cannot be subjected to exact science and experiments. Heidegger argues that earth 'shatters any attempt to penetrate it' (OWA: 172). This is why when we talk about matter in terms of being the bearer of traits we do violence to it, because we attempt to penetrate that which cannot be penetrated. Exact science fails to grasp the being itself because all beings are sheltered in the self-refusal of earth.

Heidegger's understanding of world and earth is dependent on his understanding of truth. Rather than relying on truth as correct proposition, Heidegger returns to an understanding of truth present in the thought of the early Greeks such as Heraclitus and Parmenides: *aletheia*. Heidegger argues that when correctly translated this word means truth as unconcealment. However, *aletheia* has been misunderstood since the inception of metaphysics.

Truth as unconcealment and strife

Truth as unconcealment is, for Heidegger, a coming to appearance of beings. Our metaphysical understanding of the world does not allow us to grasp the fact that beings come to appearance by standing in the open region of clearing. Heidegger says that beings 'can be as beings only if they stand within and stand out within what is cleared in this clearing' (OWA: 178). We must understand that when we talk about beings they already stand in this open region. Our common understanding of truth as that which is verified relies on truth as unconcealment.

Heidegger argues that within the open region however there is both truth and untruth. However, he does not simply mean truth and lies. Instead, within the open region of clearing there is both clearing and concealment. Beings do not stand in the open region completely intelligible.

While there is both clearing and concealment the latter is not obvious to us. This is especially the case because we comprehend beings in relation to their outward appearance and presence. When we think about beings as presence anything not immediately intelligible simply doesn't exist. However, Heidegger suggests that because of concealment, that which is not intelligible remains part of Being. The reason we think

there are simply the beings we can see and nothing besides is because concealment 'conceals and dissembles itself' (OWA: 179). This means that concealment cannot be seen. Concealment nonetheless is important as it is only because concealment conceals itself that any being stands within clearing. The interplay of clearing and concealing, their oppositional dependence on one another, is what Heidegger calls 'primal strife'.

As with clearing and concealment, world and earth are in strife with one another. Heidegger says that 'the world is not simply the open region that corresponds to clearing, and the earth is not simply the closed region that corresponds to concealment' (OWA: 180). As we have seen above world is measure and guidance whereas earth is self-closing. Strife occurs because world draws earth into unconcealment and earth draws world into self-refusal. World needs earth as ground in order to stand up. For Heidegger, world and earth need each other to stand out more as that which they are. Far from being a dispute Heidegger argues that through strife 'the opponents raise each other into the self-assertion of their essential natures' (OWA: 174). World and earth in strife are the reason all beings come to be known as they are. Within artworks world and earth are brought into strife through the rift design, which is measure and outline. The rift-design is set back into the earth of the work-material. Only when set back into the earth can the world and earth shine forth in their strife. Heidegger argues that because of the strife that occurs within the work artworks are the occurrence of truth as unconcealment, allowing beings as a whole to be seen.

While we think of works of art as decorative objects of pleasure, they are for Heidegger the happening of truth. He further argues that works of art establish truth historically. Due to the fact that strife is historic, truth is not absolute, instead truth is truth for a historical people. Heidegger claims that within artworks there is a poetic projection which gives rise to a new historical people. Through this projection the foundation for a historical age is established, the measure and guidance for a new historical people is thrust up while that which has become customary is thrust down. Heidegger calls this 'bestowing'. The measure and guidance when set back into earth establishes the ground for the historical world. The combination of bestowal and grounding leads to the beginning of a new historical age. A good example of this idea would be the Christian

world surpassing that of the Greeks. The Christian Church is the artwork which thrusts up the measure and guidance for the Christian historical people grounding the open region of clearing in which they come to stand. Poetic projection decides what is sayable and unsayable for a given historical people. It is through naming beings that they come to stand as they are. For Heidegger, all artworks and language have their foundation in *poēsis* which translates as poetry in a broad sense. For Heidegger, *poēsis* is a type of truth as unconcealment not merely poetic verse.

Artist/artwork/Art

As we have already seen *tēchnē* for Heidegger is not concerned with the creative action of a human being. *Tēchnē* is instead related to bringing forth, truth as unconcealment and our knowledge of being. It is a type of knowing which comes from standing in the midst of beings seeing them in their essence. It is only when an artist or craftsman knows beings that they can bring a being into appearance. In fact, Heidegger argues that artists and craftsmen allow 'what is already coming to presence to presence arrive' (N1: 82). The artists relationship to the work is about knowing beings and making the happening of truth actual. If works are the result of the happening of strife and unconcealment for Heidegger his view undermines the importance of the artist as sole creator of the work. The artist does not imagine and think up the work in their subjective and internal mind. Our current understanding of graffiti writers and street artists as creative agents is flawed and should not be the basis for our appreciation of graffiti or street art. While the artists remain important because they are co-responsible for bringing forth the work, our emphasis is wrongly placed when we are fascinated by the minds and emotions of the creators. With an understanding of world and earth, truth as unconcealment, strife and *tēchnē* we can now proceed to explore two artworks from *OWA* in relation to graffiti and street art.

Our understanding of works in terms of creative action, when understood through Heidegger's essay on art, must be rethought. Rather than being the result of creation works are also the result of preservation. As the happening of truth artworks are not only to be enjoyed but must be understood as unconcealment. Julian Young argues that

when 'one looks at the context from which 'found' is taken and which establishes the meaning it has for Heidegger, it becomes clear that its central meaning is not 'create' but rather 'preserve'' (Young, J. 2001: 58). Heidegger argues that a work of art must find preservers in order to be a work. The unconcealment of the work must be seen by the viewer, the viewer not only the artist must stand in the open region of clearing. The knowledge that the artist has of beings as a whole is what is preserved in the work. The historic people that a work gives rise to preserve the unconcealment that occurs in the happening of truth. For this reason, artworks for Heidegger do not remain works forever. Rather than being eternal, artworks are works only through the preservation of a people. Creative action is a small part of an artwork. It is rather the happening of truth which the artist makes actual and that is preserved by the people that make the artwork an artwork.

The origin of art. Or art as the origin?

The question of the origin of the work of art can be read in two ways. It can either be understood as a question of the origin of the artwork. Or, it can be understood as the question of what art is the origin of. While there are two questions that can be derived from *OWA* it is the latter that should concern us in this circumstance. The former question about the origin of art remains largely open ended. Heidegger states that his essay does not provide a definitive answer about the origin of art. In the epilogue he says that the 'foregoing reflections are concerned with the riddle of art, the riddle of art itself is. They are far from claiming to solve the riddle.' (OWA: 204). He argues that the point of the essay is to see the riddle not to answer it. To come to any solid conclusion about the origin of artworks would require further inquiry. The question of what art is the origin of however has a more conclusive answer. Thus, that will be the line of questioning we will take in what follows.

The rest of this chapter will explore how artworks originate. Heidegger shows two ways a work can be an origin. The first is that the artwork originates our understanding of a world. The second is that the work originates the spatial existence of the world and does so historically. In relation to both ways a work can originate, Heidegger offers an

example which I shall explore before applying Heidegger's ideas to graffiti and street art.

Originating understanding

Heidegger shows that an artwork can originate an understanding in relation to a painting by Van Gogh called *Old Shoes*. He argues that in the painting the shoes lay engrossed in their Being. This is important for our understanding of beings and Being. As we saw above in relation to Heidegger's critique of the three thing-concepts, we must let a being rest in itself in order to see its Being.

In his analysis of the painting, Heidegger is not concerned with mere representation. While he accepts a being is represented in the painting he does not stop there. Heidegger argues that beyond representing an object from the real world, the painting of the shoes originates our understanding of the world of the person who wears the shoes. We don't simply see a pair of shoes but for the first time come to see the world and the earth that the shoes are connected to. The easiest way to think about this is in relation to advertising, where a life is signified through the objects that sit unused. We can infer the world those beings belong to as they sit there engrossed in their essence. However, we should be careful not to equate connotations with the unconcealment of beings or Being.

The specific example Heidegger gives is of a peasant woman. She is herself unaware of the equipmental being of the shoes. While she works, the shoes allow her to complete her daily tasks protecting her feet from the elements, she has no reason to think about the shoes. Heidegger argues that the shoes make plain both the world and the earth of the peasant woman. In terms of world, which as we saw earlier is not merely our objective surroundings but more so the guidance of a historic people's life, Heidegger says that the shoes are 'pervaded by uncomplaining worry as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, the trembling before the impending childbed and shivering as the surrounding menace of death.' (OWA: 159). For Heidegger, the conditions of the peasant woman's life are present in the shoes. Both in the sense that her daily struggle to have enough food and in the sense that death looms.

In the shoes, when they rest in their essence, we see the non-objective measure of the peasant woman's life. While the shoes are connected to the world, they are also connected to the earth which vibrates in the shoes. Heidegger says that we see 'the dampness and the richness of the soil' and the 'quiet gift of ripened grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field' (OWA: 159). The shoes do not only allow the woman's daily tasks to be completed but connect her to the earth. The shoes in fact belong to the earth, vibrating with its silent call.

Through Heidegger's understanding the shoes are unabstracted. They are no longer thought of as matter plus value instead they are seen as reliable. Because the shoes are left engrossed in their essence, we see that they are connected to world and earth in relation to which they are reliable. Heidegger argues that through the painting we come to see not just the usefulness of the shoes but more importantly their reliability which is the equipmental being of equipment. We cannot arrive at this understanding through the thing-concept because the shoes would be abstracted from their Being. It is not only the equipmental being of the shoes that is disclosed by the painting but the Being of all beings, what Heidegger calls beings as a whole. Heidegger argues that without the artwork we would not understand the world, as beings as a whole. Here, understanding the world is not limited to a theoretical conception and abstract understandings. Rather we see the world and earth of the peasant woman, not mere thing-concepts. Works of art do not merely represent an object in the world but instead open up an understanding of a being for the first time.

Through moving beyond mere representation, Heidegger's analysis of Van Gogh's painting avoids both the objective and subjective understanding of artworks. This however is not something that is readily accepted. The secondary work on Heidegger's essay often returns to our more traditional view which results from metaphysical understanding of art works. In *Heidegger, Art and Postmodernity (2011)*, Iain D. Thomson does not follow Heidegger in overcoming the subjective and objective. He retreats back into traditional ideas of representation. Thomson argues that the peasant woman is actually present in Van Gogh's painting. Thomson claims that he 'can no longer see Van Gogh's painting without also seeing the figure of "the little old woman

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who lived in the shoe" emerging from the dark opening of the shoe on the right.' (Thomson, I. D. 2011: 218/9). However, in the picture Thomson uses to illustrate his point there is a barely distinguishable patch of shadow. Thomson's attempt to argue that the peasant woman is objectively present seems ridiculous when effort is made to see what he claims is there. The way Thomson reads Van Gogh's painting is flawed. He thinks that for something to be read in the painting it must explicitly be seen. To treat the work in such a way is to maintain the understanding of the artwork as an object of representation. In avoiding an objective understanding of art works we should resort to its opposite and talk of works in terms of subjectivity. Heidegger has been wrongly criticised for viewing Van Gogh's painting through his own subjective experience. The art critic, Schapiro infamously argued that Van Gogh's painting was actually of a pair of shoes that the artist owned rather than the shoes of a peasant woman. Schapiro argues that Heidegger's claims 'are not sustained by the picture itself but are grounded rather in his own social outlook with its heavy pathos of the primordial and earthy.' (Schapiro, M. 1968: 206). Schapiro claims that because of the historical truth of the creation of the painting Heidegger's description of the painting are his own preferences projected onto the work. In *OWA* Heidegger foresees the argument Schapiro makes and dismisses the idea that his description can be called subjective projection. In place of both objective or subjective understanding Heidegger argues works are the happening of truth, that discloses beings, beings as a whole.

I now want to suggest that graffiti and street art are in fact capable of doing just this although in a different way to Van Gogh's painting. While the latter is painted on a canvas and can be seen in galleries or museums, graffiti and street art are found in the city streets. Not only that but they are painted on the beings in the cityscape. This means we must alter our approach slightly to understand how graffiti and street art originate an understanding of beings and world.

Through Van Gogh's painting, the equipmental being of equipment is disclosed, giving rise to an understanding of the peasant woman's world. The same can be said for graffiti on the subway trains of New York. For the most part, commuters will remain unaware of the subway trains. The commuters, like the peasant woman, are unable to see the

equipmental being of the thing they are using. The trains go unnoticed as long as they remain reliable (think about when a train is delayed or is cancelled. We become aware of reliability when it is no longer present). As a tourist, new to the sight of the trains among the buildings and speeding in and out of tunnels throughout the city, they will be noticeable. When you live in the city, using the subway every day, they will fade into the background. However, when graffiti pieces appear on the outside of the train cars, something changes. As the train enters the station or when they are seen in among the buildings, they will be seen for the first time. The ability to simply step on to the train unaware of them is no longer an option. In many ways, graffiti has the opposite effect of Van Gogh's painting as it doesn't allow the trains to rest in their essence. Instead, the mere utility of the trains is disrupted, making it visible.

Upon understanding Heidegger's philosophy of art, to say that the trains became canvases is too simplistic. Instead, the artworks that appeared on the subway disclosed the equipmental nature of the trains, not turning them into galleries but altering our understanding of the cityscape as world. The trains carry people to their jobs and are used by tourists to move from one attraction to another, it allows free movement of people away from the traffic of congested streets. Until graffiti and street art appear, the reliability of this function is not considered.

While graffiti moved from the trains in the 1980s, it still appeared on what was merely useful in the streets, again giving rise to the disclosure of equipmental being. Tags, throw ups and pieces are found on shop shutters, lamp posts, phone boxes and walls of the cityscape around the world. Graffiti is also synonymous with trainlines and motorway bridges throughout Britain. These beings go unnoticed until they are no longer reliable. However, when graffiti is present, we are more aware of what these beings are for and how they fit into the world. Graffiti and street art also appear on beings that are no longer used, such as bordered up houses and shops or the aqueducts in Los Angeles and Montpellier in France. Through the presence of graffiti and street art we also come to see that these beings have been abandoned, stripped of their reliability and use. The lack of use opens these beings up as a ground for new possibility which is seen by writers and artists.

Rather than graffiti and street art making the city more beautiful or defacing it. We come to a better understanding of the city due to the fact that graffiti and street art make more obvious those things which normally go unnoticed. The works stand out against the beings they appear on, bringing to the forefront of our attention exactly what those beings are. In the next chapter I want to explore this in more detail, suggesting that while the city remains largely equipmental and instrumental, graffiti and street art stand out against their surroundings. I shall suggest that while graffiti and street art are dismissed as useless, it is this supposed uselessness that brings to our attention the need for utility within the city.

Originating space

According to Heidegger artworks are also capable of originating space. Heidegger explores this notion in relation to the Greek temple. Graffiti and street art seem to pale in comparison to a work of such scale and magnificence as the Greek Temple. However, we are not concerned here with aesthetic judgements and artistic merit as such. Instead, we seek to grasp how Heidegger's ideas about space in relation to the temple apply to graffiti and street art.

The fact that works originate space can seem somewhat confusing because we would first of all assume that for a work to exist there would already have to be space in which it could stand. This assumption however is based on metaphysics and exact science. For Heidegger, space is not merely a void to be filled or the gap between beings. Instead, it is the open region in which all beings come to stand. The temple, as a work, opens the open region up as space. In relation to the temple, Heidegger argues that works open up the 'spaciousness of space' (OWA: 170) and first give things their look. He claims that all distance and nearness stand in relation to the temple and do not exist before the temple.

In other words, all beings are seen only in relation to the temple as a work that is the happening of truth as unconcealment. Heidegger says that by 'the opening up of a world, all things gain their lingering, hastening, their remoteness and nearness, their

scope and limits. In a world's worlding is gathered that spaciousness out of which the protective grace of gods is granted or withheld' (OWA: 170). The setting up of the world establishes the grounds on which everything is understood. It is through the temple that the Greek god is brought into being, which gives the life of the Greeks its guidance. Heidegger argues that through the temple-work, space is set up. The work then stands in the space that itself has created. Space, for Heidegger, means the liberated space of the open region, that region in which beings come to stand as they are. The way in which all beings are seen, stands in relation to the temple and the open region that is established in the work through the setting up of a world. It is not only world but earth that the artwork brings into appearance through originating space.

Heidegger argues that works such as the temple also set forth the earth. That which we think of as being natural and eternal is established and altered through the setting up of the temple-work. Heidegger says that the motion of the sea, the space of the air and the rock of the cliff all become visible through the fact that temple stands there. Heidegger says that the 'temples firm towering makes visible the invisible space of air. The steadfastness of the work contrasts with the surge of the surf' (OWA: 168). While we think of the sea and the air as constants, the temple-work brings them into being, meaning we come to see them only in relation to the temple. The same is true of other natural beings, Heidegger continues saying that the tree 'and grass, eagle and bull, snake and cricket first enter into their distinctive shapes and thus come to appear as what they are' (OWA: 168). It is only in relation to the work that these beings can appear because the work itself opens up the open region of clearing, bringing these beings into unconcealment in the space around it.

While the temple stands at the dawn of the world for the Greeks as an historical people this cannot necessarily be said for graffiti and street art in relation to the modern age. However, there is room to make the claim that they both originate space within the city scape, creating a new way of viewing the city. Graffiti and street art have opened space within the cityscape for new sub-cultures such as rap music and breakdancing as well as skateboarding through changing the way the city is seen. While these works of art have come to be seen as the aesthetic of Hip Hop and youth culture there is a case to be

made for the fact that graffiti and street art offer a people a destiny by thrusting up what is new and previously 'unsayable'. As poetic projection, graffiti and street art open the spaces of the city in which these activities occur, through thrusting up new ways of looking at things. To a skateboarder a set of stairs become an obstacle to jump. Similarly, an abandoned car park becomes the space for a dance battle or a 'block party'. Graffiti and street art doesn't necessarily need to cover the walls of the place in which these activities occur but the wide spread presence of graffiti and street art in the city will, I would argue, change the way all aspects of the city appear.

Another such way in which space is opened through graffiti and street art is in relation to protests and revolutions. It became evident in the previous chapter that graffiti and street art are seen as vehicles for political messages. It is common that Banksy and Shepard Fairey's work are spoken of in relation to the political meaning conveyed by the works. In light of Heidegger's ideas about the Greek temple however, I want to argue that it is not simply a political message within the work that leads to change. We should focus on the fact that graffiti and street art open the space for protest. The 1968 protests in Paris were on streets, littered with 'graffiti-esque' writing on the walls which would have thrust up the possibility to question and act against the current conditions. Graffiti and street art alter the politically sayable or unsayable. They can alter an everyday street into a place that is open to the possibility of change. Not simply through conveying a meaning, but by making the ordinary questionable. Prior to any real action or change, there is first graffiti or street art that dissents, challenging the familiar. The unsayable becomes sayable. Again, this occurs on a smaller scale than the temple but a people are brought together. They stand in the space which was opened up by the graffiti and street art which becomes the place of protest.

Graffiti and street art are not only comparable to the temple because the space for human action is opened up by the work. The temple also sets forth the earth. Similar to the way the temple makes visible the rock it rests on, graffiti and street art makes visible the earth within the city. These works allow us to see the earth of the buildings, which otherwise does not come to our attention. While people say that graffiti is a pop of colour against the drab, grey city, it is graffiti and street art which first make the grey of

the city palpable. In relation to graffiti and street art, the city first comes into appearance. We see the city as it is for the first time through their presence. Graffiti and street art are worn away over time by the howling wind and lashing rain which makes the earth visible. While Heidegger talks of beings being able to withstand the storm making earth visible, graffiti and street art does the opposite. We see the effects of this weather through graffiti and street arts inability to withstand the force of the elements. Graffiti and street art are left open to the rain lashing against it and the heat and light of the sun that slowly causes the colours to become less vivid. The visible deterioration of a work makes earth clear to us for the first time. Both world and earth are made visible. Due to this visibility, we understand our world and space is opened for a people.

Conclusion

If we follow Heidegger's understanding of artworks outlined in *OWA,* it becomes clear that we are no longer able to simply talk about graffiti and street art in relation to the dichotomy found in chapter one. Far from being an act of defacement or a beautiful aesthetic object, graffiti and street art stand to originate understanding and to originate space for a people. I suggested that graffiti and street art originate understanding through not allowing the subway trains or other aspects of the city to rest in their essence. Through a reading of Heidegger, graffiti and street art were also shown to originate space within the city, opening a ground for new possibility as well as giving everything in the city their look.

Through moving away from the thing-concepts which abstract our understanding of beings, Heidegger arrives at a far more nuanced understanding of artworks which allows us to grasp the way a work of art comes into being. Heidegger's ideas have helped us move beyond the idea that the artist is the sole cause of the work through his suggestion that a work is in fact the happening of truth. Through overcoming the metaphysical understanding of truth as correct proposition and setting aside our dependence on exact science, we came to a new conclusion about artworks. This has aided us in viewing graffiti and street art differently. Our normal conceptions of graffiti and street art, according to Heidegger's essay on art lose sight of the work itself, meaning we have never seen the true importance of graffiti and street art. We have only

ever been able to view graffiti and street art in an aesthetic way but as Heidegger argues aesthetics is where art dies. We have not been aware of the happening of truth that occurs in graffiti and street art because they have been encompassed in an understanding of artworks dating back to Plato. To look at graffiti and street art in relation to our traditional views of art is to miss something rather unique. If graffiti and street art give rise to an understanding of the city or if they originate space as has been suggested in this chapter, we should not simply dismiss these works as being either ugly or beautiful. In order to understand the capacity of graffiti and street art to originate understanding and space we must look in more depth at the city in which they appear.

Chapter Three: Graffiti and Street Art in the Modern Mega City

Graffiti and street art do not exist in isolation. As I have argued above, the context in which they appear is significant if we are to understand these phenomena as something unique to the 21st century. In order to re-examine graffiti and street art, in light of Heidegger's thought we must consider the importance of the city in their birth and growth. Heidegger does not specifically talk about the city within his work but he does talk about 'modern technology' and globalisation in his essay *The Question Concerning Technology*. However, Heidegger challenges our common understanding of technology as he does with art. These ideas, once understood, can be used to look at the city in a different light. I shall compare Heidegger's claims with a consistent theme within the literature concerning utility and placelessness within the city. Through understanding the city as well as graffiti and street art in light of Heidegger's philosophy, we can reinterpret graffiti and street art. If the last chapter opened up new avenues of questioning, this chapter will do so to an even greater extent. At present, the ideas of modern technology being dangerous and the claim that graffiti and street art are a saving power may seem odd. As we continue through this chapter however, it should become clear that graffiti and street art are in fact able to oppose the march of globalisation.

In the first part of this chapter, I want to contextualise the city, aligning it with Heidegger's thoughts on technology and globalization. It is important that this ground is established in order to then see the impact that graffiti and street art could have within our understanding of the city. Later I shall explore the possibility that graffiti and street art fits the modern age, suggesting that its manner of reproduction is akin to the manufacturing and instrumental nature of the modern age. However, I shall conclude that while graffiti and street art remain somewhat within the realm of technology, they do in fact break beyond the homogeneity and ordering of this age. We must diverge from *OWA* but this does not mean that we move away from art necessarily. Heidegger's view of technology is closely linked to his view of art as we shall see.

The Question Concerning Technology

As occurred in *OWA* concerning aesthetic conceptions of artworks, Heidegger challenges our common conceptions of technology. Heidegger's essay on technology does not focus on the technological advancements that occurred throughout his lifetime. He is not concerned with machines taking over or spying on us. David Tabachnik argues that 'Heidegger is doing far more than simply prophesizing some frightening technological future' (Tabachnik, D. 2007: 489). Heidegger does not simply refer to computers, smart phones and Artificial Intelligence, these are only by-products of what Heidegger means when he says technology. Rather Heidegger's concern is with technology in relation to Being and the forgottenness of Being that has occurred at an increasing rate in the age of modern technology.

The essay opens with our current understanding of technology as a means to an end and a human activity. However, Heidegger quickly questions our assumptions. For Heidegger, an exploration of Aristotle's four causes shows that technology is a type of revealing similar to *poēsis* (art). In place of cause or the Latin causa or casus Heidegger uses the Greek word *aitia* which means 'to occasion'. Rather than 'making', the craftsman lets 'what is not yet present arrive into presencing' (QCT: 317). However, the 'maker' is not solely responsible for the being coming into appearance. For example, the silversmith makes the being there are three other causes that contribute. The silversmith is co-responsible for what is brought forth. As with artworks, we have come to place human beings as the sole cause of the object coming into appearance. This coming to presence may be made actual by the artist or craftsman, as we saw in the previous chapter, but it is important to remember that bringing forth must occur within revealing. Heidegger states that technology 'is therefore no mere means.' (QCT: 318) but rather a type of revealing. The essence of technology is *tēchnē*, which as we have seen in the previous chapter is a type of knowing, of standing in the open region of clearing. However, we do not recognise the essence of technology, often we take the word technology to mean that which is technological. As with the thing-concepts in the previous chapter, we only see an abstracted version of technology. This too is the result of metaphysical thought.

For Heidegger, that which is technological has existed long before modern technology and with the rise of modern technology everything has changed. He argues that 'modern technology is something incomparably different from all earlier technologies because it is based on modern physics and exact science' (QCT: 319). The march of correct propositions and calculation within metaphysics reaches its height within the modern age. Modern technology, while still a type of revealing, is a different type of revealing from all that has gone before.

Within modern technology nothing is left to rest in itself. Heidegger argues, that 'the type of revealing that rules in the modern age is a challenging [Herausfordern] which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be stored up as such.' (QCT: 320). When we see beings revealed as order, we do not see their essence. In many ways the 'what is' of the being becomes inconsequential. In the modern age, beings are resources for the use of humans. Beings become part of what Heidegger refers to as the 'standing reserve' [Bestand]. This, for Heidegger, is the inherent danger of modern technology. It threatens to consume everything in human concern for resources which are then used up.

Standing reserve

Instead of the wind or rivers we see opportunities for energy which can be collected and stored for human use. Heidegger contrasts examples of different technological beings to emphasise the change that occurs between technology and modern technology. He argues that the windmill and watermill are significantly different from the wind turbine and hydroelectric dam. The windmill and watermill are examples of technology prior to modern technology, the hydroelectric dam and wind turbine however occur as a result of revealing as order.

The latter examples challenge nature and seek to store energy as part of the standing reserve. The hydroelectric dam, Heidegger says, 'sets the Rhine to supplying its hydraulic pressure' (QCT: 321). The river becomes the first step in a long line of processes merely a cog in a much larger machine. The fact that power is collected from the Rhine so expertly, Heidegger argues, wrongly makes us believe ourselves to be in control of the river. We stop the river from flowing freely and extract energy from it as we please.

The dam and turbine obstruct the water and wind respectively while storing energy, meaning we do not see the river resting in its essence, we are completely unaware of the counterplay of world and earth and Being. In contrast, the windmill and watermill allow nature to be as it is. The latter pair do not use up the water or wind and show no signs of obstruction or desire to control. In relation to the windmill and watermill nature is not merely a source of energy that can be collected up and stored. Water passes through the wheel of the water mill and is allowed to be as it is. Nature does not lose its being, it is left to rest in its essence. The windmill in many ways is controlled by the wind, Heidegger says that the sails 'are left to the winds blowing' (QCT: 320). Rather than cultivating energy by standing in the way of nature the windmill bows to natures being.

While the dam and turbine could be seen as an advancement of the windmill and watermill, there is a distinct difference lying between the two due to the effects of modern technology. We must be careful to understand, as David Edward Tabachnick argues, that the 'point for Heidegger is not "what" we build but rather "why" we build it.' (Tabachnick, D. E. 2007: 495). The why of the dam is different to the why of the watermill. The hydroelectric dam is the result of the challenge set upon nature to provide energy to be stored. We should be cautious in our assumptions that Heidegger wants to return to a simpler time, one completely removed of any connection to technological machinery. The concern for Heidegger is the impact that modern technology has on our understanding of beings and our attempts to control them.

It is not only nature that comes to be completely mastered, standing ready for the use of human beings. Heidegger argues that every being 'stands by in the sense of standing reserve' (QCT: 322). To show the impact of the standing reserve, Heidegger uses the example of a plane that sits on the runway always ready to be used. He states that 'it stands on the taxi strip only as standing-reserve, inasmuch as it is ordered to insure the possibility to transportation. For this it must be in its whole and in every one of its constituent parts itself on call for duty, i.e., ready for take-off.' (QCT: 322). All aspects of the plane, every single nut and bolt, must be in working order and at every moment ready to go. This is similar to the storing of natures concealed energy, the plane is

thought to exist only for our use. Its capacity to transport us is a sort of energy stored up as potential for travel for human beings.

The Danger of Modern Technology

We think that modern technology is harmless and we believe that our concern with ordering and calculation are a result of our growing rationality. However, Heidegger argues that there is a danger in modern technology and this is a danger that we are unaware of. He states that 'where enframing reigns, there is danger in the highest sense' (QCT: 333). Enframing is another word for the type of revealing that occurs in the modern age where everything is encompassed in revealing as order. As everything is incorporated into modern technology and standing reserve, all beings can be used but more concerningly for Heidegger, used up. Heidegger uses the example of the agricultural production of food in opposition to the farmer working the land to show the looming danger. He argues that the latter cares for the land and the animals. However, through the ordering of modern technology, the 'field that the peasant formerly cultivated and set in order appears differently than it did when to set in order still meant to take care of and maintain' (QCT: 320). While the farmer set in order through care and maintaining the modern agriculture industry merely seeks energy and uses all beings as resources, including land, crops and animals.

We see advancements in food production as meeting demand and as a sign of our progress. However, Heidegger argues that the march of 'progress' cannot go forth without its casualties. Heidegger sees a danger in our ignorance to the essence of beings and our concern with control and mastery. To believe we can take everything for ourselves rather than let it rest in itself has, as the following quote evidences, led to some bleak consequences. In the original version of *The Question Concerning Technology*, which is quoted in *Demythologising Heidegger*, Heidegger says that

> "Agriculture is now a mechanized food industry, in essence the same
> as the production of corpses in the gas chambers and extermination
> camps, the same as the blockading and starving of countries, the
> same as the production of hydrogen bombs.' (Caputo, D. 1993: 132).

The example of the concentration camps was excluded from the final lecture and the subsequently published versions. However, the specific example Heidegger uses is significant. While Cecil L. Eubanks and David J. Gauthier claim that 'Heidegger exhibits an appalling ethical insensitivity' (Eubanks, C. L. & Gauthier, D. J. 2011: 138) we should not get drawn into moral debates. There is an important understanding to be gained from the comparison. To dismiss it for such reasons is to miss Heidegger's point entirely as he chose these examples purposefully to emphasise the dangerous nature of modern technology.

The point that Heidegger is trying to make is that the concentration camps came into appearance only because human beings are reduced to resources. They, like animals slaughtered within the food industry, are a standing reserve. They are pieces that add to a whole. It is ridiculous to claim that it is insensitive as Heidegger is arguing that we have reached a stage at which everything can be treated as disposable and can be used up. He is arguing that we are becoming devoid of care. The care that is present in the farmer's working of the land is gone this for Heidegger leads to destruction. His claim that concentration camps and gas chambers are akin to the food industry is not without grounds. Their shared foundation is revealing as order. The danger of modern technology is that we come to believe we are the master of all beings, able to use, manipulate and destroy for our own ends no matter the kamikaze that follows.

We remain fearful of the technological, we fear artificial intelligence which is depicted as seeking to destroy humans and take over the world in films such as Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey (1968).* However, the real danger remains unnoticed. Despite numerous dystopian fictions, human beings stand blind to the essence of technology as revealing as order. We are quick to mistrust technological advancements but we do not see the foundation upon which they stand. We are unaware of the ordering and the way beings are revealed to us in a unique way compared to the rest of the western metaphysical tradition. Only through an awareness of revealing as order can we overcome this danger. Now we have outlined Heidegger's conception of modern technology and the threat it poses we can return to art.

Art as a saving power

While there is danger in technology Heidegger also sees the solution lurking in the same place where the threat lies. Reading Hölderlin, Heidegger sees a possibility for a solution through art. He quotes a line from Hölderlin's poem *Patmos*, which says *'But where danger is, grows/ The saving power also'* (*QCT*: 333). If the danger lurks in the essence of technology, *tēchnē*, which has enframed every being, the solution must be in the same place. For Heidegger, there is a connection between art and technology, or more correctly *poēsis* and *tēchnē* which are both types of revealing. This connection is the reason that Heidegger argues that art is the saving power against the danger of modern technology. He says that the 'essential reflection and confrontation with [technology] must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand akin to the essence of technology, and, on the other, fundamentally different from it' (QCT: 340). Art is that which is akin to technology but which is different enough to unconceal the danger within it. However, Heidegger argues that this possibility is conditional on the way we see art. He says that this saving power can arise 'only if reflection upon art, for its part, does not shut its eyes to the constellation of truth' (QCT: 340). In order for art to be a saving power we must reflect on works in connection to truth as unconcealment. Only through originating understanding or originating space can a work offer salvation from the danger of modern technology. For this to be a possibility, we must first see art in the way Heidegger outlines in *OWA.* Through re-examining graffiti and street art we will be able to see it as a saving power. Prior to establishing graffiti and street art as a saving power or at least something that can spark an awareness of the danger of modern technology we must understand the city in which graffiti and street art appear.

Globalization

Heidegger's thoughts about modern technology can help us understand the city and our place within it. In turn this can give us some insight into the presence of graffiti and street art within the cityscape. It should not be a grand stretch of the imagination to see the connections between Heidegger's claims in his essay on technology and the cityscape of the modern mega city. The ideas explored in *The Question Concerning Technology* ring true to an even greater extent in today's society. What Heidegger talks

of in his essay on technology was ahead of its time. Nevertheless, in this section I want to make this connection explicit.

Above we saw that within modern technology, planes were thought of as a standing reserve, a resource for the human capacity to travel. For Heidegger however there is another issue that arises from such beings as planes. In his essay *The Thing,* Heidegger states that all 'distances in time and space are shrinking. Man now reaches overnight, by plane, places which formerly took weeks and months of travel. He now receives instant information, by radio, of events which he formerly learned about only years later, if at all...' (PLT: 163). He continues saying that 'the frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness; for nearness does not consist in shortness of distance.' (PLT: 163). By nearness Heidegger means closeness to Being of beings as opposed to proximity. While the globe seems to be getting smaller, Heidegger argues that we are really no closer to beings than before. In fact, we are further away than we have ever been. He argues that we do not see the beings in front of us, they become increasingly abstracted by metaphysics and revealing as order.

Heidegger began to question these changes long before the post-modern theorists Anthony Giddens or Zygmut Bauman were able to even comprehend these ideas. In 1935, Heidegger wrote about the growing lack of distance and the loss of history due to modern technology. In *Introduction to Metaphysics,* Heidegger foretells of a

> time when the farthermost corner of the globe has been conquered by
> technology and opened to economic exploitation; when any incident
> whatever, regardless of where or when it occurs, can be communicated to
> the rest of the world at any desired speed; when the assassination of a king
> in France and a symphony concert in Tokyo can be 'experienced'
> simultaneously; when time has ceased to be other than velocity,
> instantaneousness, and simultaneity, and time as history has vanished from
> all peoples' (IM: 37).

Globalisation is not seen in a positive light by Heidegger. Here we see a similar resistance as occurs in *The Question Concerning Technology* to the consumption of the

entire planet in one totalizing standing-reserve. As a result of globalisation, space and time, history and truth as unconcealment are erased as everything becomes encased in systems of universality. When the entire planet can be traversed easily and when we can see news from both France and Tokyo there is no historic people. As we have seen a historical people depends on the originating of space where as globalisation irradicates space thus the very possibility of a historical people is undermined by globalization.

Globalization and the modern mega city

In the literature concerning the city, city planning and global cities there is a consistent concern with functionality. Much of the literature complains about the abstract nature of city planning which is measured. The general consensus is that city planning does not account for people's real lives and is abstracted. However, the other contributions do not avoid talking about the city in relation to order, standing reserve and modern technology. Whether the focus is placed on the subjective experience of the city or the mathematical planning of the city, functionality stands as the focus. Even with the social aspect of the city and the human experience of the city there is an overwhelming presence of practicality, usefulness and purpose.

In *The Social Logic of Space (1984)*, Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson argue that it is the 'ordering of space that is the purpose of building' (Hillier, B. & Hanson, J. 1984: 1). For Hillier and Hanson, it is through the construction of the city, space is defined and ordered to be used to the best of our ability. The ordering of space is not a by-product rather it is the purpose of building. Their understanding suggests that through building we seek to define areas for specific uses and organise our surroundings. This falls in line with what we have read above about revealing as order and the standing reserve. The importance of the usefulness of space and organizing does not stop with *The Social Logic of Space*, other examples within the literature follow suit.

Jane Jacobs, in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities (2016),* also focuses on functionality. In fact, the subtitles of Part One of her book are concerned with the

uses of different aspects of the city. The argument presented by Jacobs is that there are purposes of the city aside from those prescribed by city planning. Jacobs argues that it important to have diversity of purpose, not necessarily foreseen by city planning. She claims that all parts of the city 'must serve more than one primary function' (Jacobs, J. 2016: 133) in order to avoid only sporadic use of the different areas of the city. She claims that if the city does not have multiple uses, parts of the city fall into disrepair. All areas of the city then must function on at least two levels. Despite moving beyond the coldness of city planning, the use of the city remains an integral part of Jacobs understanding.

While Jacobs argues that the zones of the city must serve multiple purposes in *Cities and Urban Cultures (2003)*, Deborah Stevenson argues that cities have become 'conceptualised as a machine-like unit where every part (zone) was expected to have a specific function – roads were for traffic not people, the suburbs were for people not industry' (Stevenson, D. 2003: 80). The city is split into distinct zones in which a function plays out which distinguishes each of the areas from one another. While Stevenson and Jacobs hold opposing views, their work both emphasises the functionality of the city and our understanding of the city as something to be used.

The focus on function continues in the literature concerning cities within the age of globalization. The importance however is placed on economic networks. Melanie U. Pooch, in her chapter *Global Cities as Cultural Nodal Points (2016),* claims that 'Global cities function as economic networks in which, for example, the transnational corporations and international institutions are linked between cities.' (Pooch, M. U. 2016: 31). Pooch's claim suggests that the advent of global cities are connected to the ease of economic growth, with cities across the world connected through the spread of corporations to all corners of the planet.

Elena Păun makes a similar argument. She claims that within globalization large 'cities function primarily on the basis of their interrelated firms and their dense local labor markets.' (Păun, E. 2011: 203). This means that the city does not exist alone. Similar to the dam on the Rhine which turns the river into a part in a long process, a city within globalisation is abstracted and becomes a cog in a much larger economic machine. This

shows that within the globalised world there is a propensity to see the city as a whole as a standing reserve. A mere part of a process ready to be used. This is the same treatment that Heidegger claims the river and agricultural field receive within the age of modern technology. The importance of functionality, purpose and use in relation to the literature concerning the city suggests that the city and different aspects of the city are a standing reserve.

As globalisation has spread, one of the tell-tale signs has been the growing ubiquity of cities and the loss of space. While in the past there have been different architectures in different cities it is becoming more and more common for multiple cities to be designed and built using similar styles. Ivan Turok argues that this led to 'city centers, shopping malls and housing developments across the country to look more similar and predictable, encapsulated in the notion of the clone city.' (Turok, I. 2009: 13). Furthermore, the New Economic Foundation (NEF), in their report on Clone Cities argues that because of the spread of global brands, England is becoming 'a nation of clone towns' (NEF 2005: 2). The report presents the thesis that globalisation has led to a loss of distinction between places. They suggest that many 'town centres that have undergone substantial regeneration have lost their sense of place and the distinctive facades of their high streets under the march of the glass, steel, and concrete blandness of chain stores built for the demands of inflexible business models that provide the ideal degree of sterility to house a string of big, clone town retailers.' (NEF. 2005: 1). Within cities the design and layout has become ubiquitous. The same shops can be seen over and over again. There any many franchised and chain shops that blur the distinction between different areas of the world. For example, McDonalds and Starbucks are globally recognised brands. The presence of these franchises in a city diminishes any specificity of place. When you walk into a Mcdonalds you could be anywhere in the world. The specific city that you are in does not matter. NEF argues that a cities heritage is destroyed in order to ensure brand ubiquity. They say that walls 'and windows are ripped-out to accommodate identical shelving and signage.' (NEF. 2005: 7). That which is available in one place is made available universally. We must remember however, that

this is not the result of an 'evil corporate power' or 'a shadowy organisation'. Instead, this ubiquity is always the result of revealing as order.

We must also return to the idea of human beings as a standing reserve. With the spread of globalization there is the need for an ever-ready workforce. Cities have become hubs for human beings, not as beings but rather as a standing reserve of consumption and production. People live and work in cities, they also have their leisure time there. Work places and offices accommodate for a healthy workforce equipped with gyms, cinemas, activity days and experiences. Human beings become comparable to free range hens or bolts holding a car together. They are kept in good condition and expected to be ready for work at moment's notice. These facilities are said to be provided with the aim of staff 'wellness'. Human beings must also be ready to consume at the drop of a hat. The diverse range of shops, boutiques, markets and craft fairs in any given city makes consumption constantly available. In both cases human beings are resources. There is then no historic people within the city, they have no shared destiny. Instead, they are consumed in instrumentality and order. Thus, the cityscape greatly contributes to the position of human beings as a standing reserve.

Public Art

Before returning to graffiti and street art in light of what has been discussed above, I first want to analyse public art in the modern mega city. The ubiquity of cities is not only visible due to franchised shops or work places but also in relation to public art sanctioned by city councils. Through the incorporation of art into city planning in the modern mega city, our interaction with art in the cityscape is as a decorative finishing touch or a cultural appendix. The view of art maintained within city planning and in relation to sanctioned public art is not that which gives rise to art as a saving power. While art seems to stand against the regiment of offices and the speed of the city it is the 'why' of the art not the 'what' that is important. Despite the fact that art is in the city these works are seen in the aesthetic way that Heidegger moves beyond.

Within the modern mega city public art is a cultural artefact that can be advertised as a draw for tourists and be used to heighten the cultural significance of a city in the eyes of on lookers. In *The Urban Renaissance*, the Arts Council argue that attractive

'architecture, landscaping and art in public places enhance the value of developments for years to come' (Arts Council, 1989: 6). The Arts council sanctions artworks that add to the value of an area. It is this emphasis on value and economic benefit which for Banksy leads to the removal of graffiti. He says that the 'people who run the cities don't understand graffiti because they think nothing has the right to exist unless it makes a profit' (Banksy, 2006: 8). This shows that public art (and sanctioned street art) is accepted by the council because of what can be gained from the works. If an artwork is sanctioned within the city, it must function aesthetically and economically. In comparison to public art graffiti is ugly and useless, at least the treatment of it suggests so.

Public art resembles the works found in the galleries of any major city. In fact, Nicholas Riggle argues that public art sculptures turn the street or public space into an art gallery. *Tilted Arc's* 'use of the public space is the use of an art-world sanctioned art space' (Riggle, N. 2016: 254/255). For Riggle, sanctioned public art is not public but rather draws public space into the art institutions. Public art disregards public space in another way. Suzi Gablik, in her article *Aesthetic Connections* also refers to *Tilted Arc*. However, she argues that a large majority of public art that appear in the street are made and are only 'subsequently inserted into the public sphere' (Gablik, S. 1995: 79). Public art works then are not necessarily site specific. Art works, like *Tilted Arc,* do not add to public space instead they disrupt the space. As Riggle has suggested, public space is altered by the installation of public art works.

One recent example of public art stands out, as a draw for tourists while also creating ubiquity between cities in the UK. In recent years there has been a public art project run by *Wild in Art* and city councils in which each city in the UK has animal statues, that form a trail, for 'a fun day out for families' (ItsInNottingham. Online: 2020) in city centres. While they are there for a short time only and seemingly appear from nowhere, they are no less ubiquitous than any other aspect of city planning. The animals depicted may be different in each city (Nottingham has owls, Manchester has bees etc.) but this nonetheless adds to the lack of distinction that occurs within modern cities. After the success of the first event, the sight of these sculptures is something that can be

expected and is indeed planned in conjunction with school summer holidays. What could have at one time had some claim to spontaneity is instantly stripped of any unique sense of place or time and becomes universal. The order and control of these events is emphasised by the fact maps are provided. The statues can then be found easily which takes any element of surprise null and void. The sanctioned art of the mega city, does little to awaken any awareness of the danger that modern technology holds within the city scape.

Graffiti and Street Art against the City.

In the first chapter I outlined the history of graffiti and street art. There I mainly talked about its roots in New York and it's spread across Europe but here, it is important to make an explicit point of determining where graffiti appears. It is more prevalent in some areas than others. Graffiti began in Philadelphia and quickly moved to New York. Graffiti also appeared in Paris, Los Angeles, Melbourne, Sheffield and London. We do not, in any of the literature find any evidence to show that any village, hamlet or suburb experienced such a drastic influx. This suggests that graffiti and street art is a phenomenon restricted to the cities of the world. This is important in making the claim that graffiti and street art stand against the march of globalization.

Villages and smaller communities are less likely to experience the effects of globalization and enframing. Or at least they show less evidence of globalization. They remain, to a certain extent, on the peripheries of 'progress'. People who live in villages are less likely to be nomadic, meaning they do not move every couple of years for work as people in the city do. There is not the same fast paced and instrumental nature to their life. The village in which they live is home. People know each other and have lived there all their lives. The community is more likely than a city community to retain some semblance of space and shared destiny. There are more likely to be traditional events that draw the community together, meaning they are to some extent a historical people. The lack of graffiti and street art in these areas suggests that there is less need for it. The saving power of art is not required to stand against globalisation in smaller towns or villages.

I have suggested above that the modern mega city has become ubiquitous, largely undistinguished from its counterparts across different nations. This means that we have lost any sense of space and time and no longer have the capacity to be a historic people. We are, within modern cities, encompassed in the enframing of modern technology.

The prominence of graffiti and street art in the city suggests a connection between the revealing as order and the works coming into being. I would argue that the type of revealing we stand within has given rise to graffiti and street art in some way. These works are then part of modern technology but as art they stand as part of the solution. While modern technology has enframed us and turned us into standing reserve graffiti and street art are the furthest thing from ubiquitous. What would otherwise be a ubiquitous street is turned into space, as an open region of clearing, through the works that are uniquely placed on the walls. As we saw in the last chapter, graffiti and street art as art originate space. They do so as the happening of truth. When graffiti or street art are placed on the street, we see the beings around them in a new way. Graffiti and street art, whether the artists are aware of it or not, create locales and space within the city. While a lot of aspects of the city can be repeated on a global scale and are written into the city through planning and blueprints graffiti and street art resist this global drive. Despite the fact that graffiti and street art can be repeated throughout a city or across multiple cities each time they are specifically placed and everything stands out in relation to it. You cannot take the pieces of graffiti and street art and place them directly onto a street in any other city. If you were to remove graffiti or street art it would change the street. Removing an artwork from a street would reinstate the ubiquity and utility of city streets. Although graffiti and street art are repeated there are subtle changes in each work. These works of art exist specifically where they are in relation to all the beings in the street they appear on. This is how they originate space in the city street within a placeless globalised world.

Here I want to argue that graffiti and street art remain a saving power despite being a global phenomenon. Even though graffiti and street art are reproduced they exist in a specific place. This can be linked not only to Martin Heidegger but also to Walter Benjamin's thoughts in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (2009)*. In

his essay, Benjamin argues that as we have come to reproduce works, they have lost, what he calls, their aura. For Benjamin, the aura of a work, in the simplest terms is the specific circumstances of its creation such as the time and place in which it is made. He splits the value of works into two groups. There are works that have display value and those that have cultic value. The first of the two is akin to Heidegger's understanding of aesthetic conceptions of art works. The display value of works derives from the gratification gained from a beautiful work that is valued because it can be displayed and enjoyed. The second of the two, the cultic value, is valued because of its association with religion and ritual. The ritualistic value of art works is not however confined to those works that are explicitly religious. Benjamin argues that the last of the cultic works were those photographs which captured family members who later died and became ghostly ancestors that would guide the later generations through their retained presence in the photographs. He argues that after this, all art dissolves into that which has a display value.

Similar to Heidegger's distinction between the windmill and hydroelectric dam Benjamin separates older forms of reproduction and mechanical reproduction. Benjamin sees no real danger in the mechanical reproduction that occurs. The reproduction of works has happened for a long time, predating the printing press and artists, such as Keith Haring who sold mass-produced works at the POP Shop in New York. The more archaic manners of reproduction, Benjamin argues, maintain some semblance of the aura in that it has a specific space and time of creation. Graffiti and street art fit into the latter category. While there are elements of reproduction within graffiti and street art, the works within these movements maintain some originality each time a work appears. They are not perfectly replicated each time, there may be similarities but they are not carbon copies of each other. When works are stencilled, there is an aim to reproduce works over and over again, with speed and ease. While the works are similar, it is the position of the work on the street and their relation to different beings that means that the work is unique.

Despite the fact that some cities, such as Melbourne, give permission for murals and designated street art areas, this does not mean that graffiti and street art in its rawest

form, as saving power can be captured. The way in which graffiti and street art are incorporated into city planning, is through the setting up of a place that already exists for the work of art. The acceptance of these works is based on aesthetic judgement. The pieces are thought of beautiful additions. If aspects of graffiti and street art are drawn into city planning, they lose their capacity to originate space. Writers and artists claim that graffiti and street art lose something when it is done legally or when it enters a gallery. However, it is questionable whether they understand the reason why graffiti and street art lose their spark when they are confined to a specific designated space. It is not necessarily the illegality that is important when we consider graffiti and street art. The importance must instead be placed on their coming into appearance, the thrusting up of the extraordinary.

Like the farmer, graffiti artists and street artists stand in a different relation to the city than city planners or many of the people that live there. Or at least their works would suggest they do. There is a certain care that is taken in the work, a care for the place in the city scape. While it may seem that graffiti and street art are an attempt to deface and destroy the city, they actually bring it into being in many ways. As I suggested in chapter two, graffiti and street art originate understanding and space. They disrupt the ordinary and are surprising and unexpected. Due to the fact that they thrust up the extraordinary they reveal to us the ordered nature of everything else within the city. Something can only be described as a chaotic mess in relation to that which is ordered and clean. If graffiti and street art are defacements it is because they do not fit what is ordinary with the city.

The fact that graffiti and street art, but more often graffiti, is dismissed as being illegible is the result of revealing as ordering. Graffiti stands in opposition to street signs and the common language of advertising. Graffiti is seen as lacking any purpose because it does not convey a communicative message. This is why people feel that graffiti is exclusive, because they do not understand its message. This reveals the need for mastery and the need for complete comprehension that comes with our metaphysical understanding of truth as a correct proposition. Language is thought to be useless unless it can be easily comprehended and be used by everyone.

It is not only arguments against graffiti that result from revealing as order. Graffiti and street art are praised for being anti-authoritarian and subverting control. The praise arises because we attribute all desire for order on to those we see as oppressing the creative freedom of the people in public space. However, the call for public ownership of space is still part and parcel of the ordering of beings. The call for public space to be owned by the public still fits within the mastery that dogs this age. In this view space remains functional and is sought to be owned. We do not recognise that revealing as order stands at the foundation of these claims.

Compared to the functionality of the city graffiti and street art appear to be useless. They are thought of as mindless defacements, a needless disruption of the aesthetic landscape. Through the reaction to graffiti and street art as defacement our drive towards mastery and universality is revealed. The desire to remove the illicit works and maintain the utility and cleanliness of the city is evidence of our desire to master our environment. Graffiti and street art are not simply a rebellious act, a middle finger to the system as such, but rather they can be the key to understanding our inability to permit that which we cannot control. It reveals that that which is not useful cannot remain within the city. That which is unknown and not within our control cannot remain.

Conclusion

Graffiti and street art do not simply disrupt the aesthetic landscape but rather their presence unconceals the revealing as order that is foundational to the modern mega city. While cities are becoming ever more ubiquitous, graffiti and street art through originating space bring back a certain uniqueness to the city. Any chance of a historical people and a knowledge of beings is dependent on this uniqueness in opposition to the utility and ubiquity that overshadows beings within modern technology. This understanding however is dependent on seeing art and technology in a Heideggerian way. We cannot take our current conceptions with us if we are to arrive at the conclusions I have suggested.

The prevalence of graffiti and street art in the city as opposed to villages is evidence of the importance of the city in relation to graffiti and street art. Through Heidegger's suggestion that where there is danger the solution can also be found led to the suggestion that graffiti and street art is a possible saving power against the drive of modern technology and the standing reserve within the city due to the fact that it opens the ground for new ways of seeing things. This danger I have argued gives rise to graffiti and street art, whether or not the writers and artists are completely aware of this danger and the unconcealment their works offer.

I have also suggested that graffiti and street art make far more obvious the aspects of the enframing nature of the city. Graffiti and street art stand out against the order that only comes to the forefront through the presence of artworks on the streets as opposed to be contained within galleries. I have suggested that the attempts to cover up and remove graffiti and street art makes more obvious our attempts to master and the importance we place on utility.

Conclusion

The aim throughout this thesis has been to show that a reading of Heidegger can alter our understanding of graffiti and street art. I have shown that Heidegger's *OWA* can help us to move beyond an understanding of graffiti and street art as something merely beautiful or as an act of defacement. In its place we come to a far more nuanced and complex understanding of these art movements. Once we understand Heidegger's philosophy of art, graffiti and street art can be thought of as that which originates our understanding of our world while also originating the space of the city in new ways. In chapter three I argued that graffiti and street art make plain the ubiquity and order within the city and the modern technology which guides our understanding of the world. These conclusions however are dependent on seeing artworks in relation to truth as unconcealment not as aesthetic objects or cultural appendices. While I have made some foundational claims about graffiti and street art and the way Heidegger's essay on art can alter the way we see them, there are limitations to what has been covered here. There is room for expansion in further research to which I have opened the avenues towards.

I have argued that graffiti and street art can be seen as a saving power against the danger of the modern city. However, there remains a need to question how we interact with graffiti and street art. More specifically, we could and should question the prominence of smart phones and social media in relation to our aestheticization of graffiti and street art. It should be questioned whether or not smart phones and social media cause a reintegration of graffiti and street art into modern technology. Care would have to be taken in this line of questioning to not merely fall into the tropes of negative views of smart phones. The pre-conception of phones and social media would have to be set aside otherwise there is a danger of simply arguing that these technological advancements are the doing of evil corporate entities who want to spy on us and distract us from the 'reality' of the world. This would be too simplistic and would be regressive when we consider Heidegger's claim that technological advancements in themselves are not necessarily bad. We could explore the mediation of graffiti and

street art through smart phones and the internet in relation to Heidegger's ideas of the They-self, indifference and inauthenticity which appear in *Being and Time* as well as his thoughts concerning Bustle which can be found in his *Black Notebooks*. Thought would need to be given to how a smart phone distorts and disregards space and the importance of aesthetics online, especially on Instagram, leading to a loss of any understanding of Being. Any research in this area would need to pose questions about the affect social media and smart phones can have on bringing forth and the unconcealment of Being. We would need to question if and how any semblance of clearing could remain in the digital age, which could possibly lead to some interesting and unexpected answers. I have not, as yet, been able to find any research devoted to this topic however there is an article on the impact of the internet in relation to Benjamin's idea of an art works aura, *Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction: Reconsidering Benjamin's Aura in "Art of Banksy" (2016)*. This would be a good starting place for anyone looking to explore the impact of social media and smart phones on our understanding of graffiti and street art in the city through an understanding of Heidegger's thought.

Another avenue for further research is the connection between Walter Benjamin and Martin Heidegger. More specifically their understandings of art and Benjamin's understanding of the city which could be explored in relation to graffiti and street art. The combination of their ideas could elevate our understanding of graffiti and street art to an even greater extent than I have been able to present here. The fact that Benjamin extensively talked about the city could be an important addition as there is no specific mention of the city within Heidegger's work. My claims regarding Benjamin and Heidegger's views of art are only preliminary. If we were to explore the connection between Heidegger and Benjamin in relation to graffiti and street art an important book would be Jeff Maplas' *Heidegger and the Thinking of Space: Explorations of the Topology of Being (2012).* The last two chapters in the book, aptly titled, *Heidegger in Benjamin's City* and *The Working of Art*, could offer a great insight into the way an understanding of Benjamin's conception of the city can aid an understanding of Heidegger's conception of space and art works.

While the combination of Heidegger and graffiti and street art initially seems strange this thesis has shown that through the most important thinker of the 20th century, we can come to see the biggest art movement of the 21st century in a different light. Heidegger does not talk about graffiti or street art in his own work. However, through understanding beings, Being and artworks in a different way we can come to a new understanding of graffiti and street art through Heidegger's work. Whether Heidegger would have been appreciative of the ideas laid out here is up for debate. The importance lies in the fact that through re-examining graffiti and street art we can come to a better understanding of our world. Not through the ideas it conveys or the aesthetic beauty it possesses but through the disclosure of beings we can come to know our world and our Being to a greater extent. This Being as we have seen in the third chapter is connected to the revealing as order that occurs in modern technology. I have shown that revealing as order is unconcealed and, in some ways, combatted by graffiti and street art which originates understanding and space. However, the question remains whether we have the capability to see this and recognise the danger in modern technology.

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