

## AN AUTHOR OF URBAN PUBLIC ART: LUIS BALDINI

### UM AUTOR DE ARTE PÚBLICA URBANA: LUIS BALDINI

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#### BIOGRAPHY

**Pedro Andrade (P. A.)** - Good morning, Luís Baldini. Look, before we start talking about your works, I would like to ask you some questions about you, so we can get to know each other better. Many graffiti works are done by young people. You are a young man, but how old are you, if it is not indiscretion?

**Luis Baldini (L. B.)** - A 41 year's old boy (*laughs*).



Figure 1: Luis Baldini  
Credits: Pedro Andrade

**P. A.** - The name Baldini is not very common in Portugal. Are you Portuguese, Brazilian, of Italian origin, or of another origin?

**L. B.** - I'm a great mix here, man. My parents are from Mozambique, but their background is Indian, French, Greek and Italian. And ... Alentejo (*laughs*). Well, I ended up being born here, in Leiria, in 1978, and I came here to Lisbon at the age of four, and at six I went to the south bank of Tagus river. And on the south bank I established my base, my headquarters.

**P. A.** - Do you live in Almada?

**L. B.** - Yes.

**P. A.** - And what is your profession or occupation?

**L. B.** - I am a freelance illustrator, I don't really like to say "designer", because I avoid design work a lot now, I've done it since 1997 or 96. And the design industry now, is in a way not ... In the past we had another aura, the designers. Now it's a little bit different.

**P. A.** - Did you attend what courses and degree of education: school, high school, technical or artistic education, university, or other?

**L. B.** - I had a course in Communication and Culture Sciences, in the area of audio-visual and multimedia...

**P. A.** - Where?

**L. B.** - ... that I didn't finish, at Lusophone University, I was already in the seminar for the last year ... issues in life (*laughs*).

**P. A.** - Tell me a little about your story: how many years ago did you start creating works in public places?

**L. B.** - In public places, this was since 1998, since I came here [to Lisbon] on vacations, because in the 90s we all lived in Mozambique. Since 1988, 89, I went to Mozambique and lived there until 2000. And that's where I also started my professional career. But then, whenever I came on vacations, I saw graffiti and stuff. As I always drew, it was funny, like, how do they do this? Hey man, I would like to put my scenes there, right, and also on the wall, in the public space. Until one day I came here on vacation to my neighborhood, in Arrentela, and I saw people doing graffiti there. I was already known for drawings, but I no longer lived there. Sometimes I was there with the guys and stuff, and then at that time, there was a certain graffiti boom, and in my area there was a crew [graffiti team], who told me right away: hey, you have to start painting, and they indicated me where to buy cans...

**P. A.** - So, in short, in terms of the main moments of your entry and experience in the world of graffiti, you went through the initial phase of getting to know you, through marking *tags* (signatures) in various parts of the city, and then start to make letters or graffiti with images? How was your evolution?

**L. B.** - In my evolution I spent very little time with tags, and I immediately started attacking what I always wanted, the characters or beeps, as they used to say at the time. I started a lot in figuration and graphics, etc., I just started to focus more on images, because there was already a lot of people doing letters, and the guys doing images were bad. There was the usual big shots at the time, Mosaik, Exas, Wize, Kreyz, and so on. They did mostly letters, and so did many *crews* here at Lisbon. In the river Tagus south bank, only me and Kobac, Klit, Clear and some other guys from other crews, we did images, cartoons and the like. I have a more classic background, I have always drawn, as a self-taught person in this case. I've always had an appetite for comics, films, science

fiction, horror, fantasy. And as I read a lot, now not so much, but I read a lot of fantasy, really, like Tolkien, and a lot of things, science fiction, *Alien* (...)

**P. A.** - This is great. We will talk later about your works in more detail, which is very interesting. But still to finish the part of your biography, let me put the following questions: are there periods of the year or month when you do less or more work?

**L. B.** - Yes.

**P. A.** - Which ones?

**L. B.** - Man, ok, now it's a little more atypical. At this point I shouldn't be doing anything, but I have a lot of commissions, and I have to finish them by the middle of next month. Then I have to go to Mozambique, stay there for a season, I will do something artistic.

**P. A.** - You have commissions regularly, don't you?

**L. B.** - Yes. But at this point, I am looking at another area that is really freelancing in illustration, and also I am connected to tattoos, as a tattoo artist for fifteen years. Only lately I have been much more in graffiti, because, what can I say, it is something that makes us a little bit freer. We do a lot more physical exercise, we are outside four walls. Unless we have a commission, in a closed place. But, well, the outdoors is extremely important.

**P. A.** - Look, tell me, do you usually paint in what part of the day, if you have a part of the day when you like to paint more (morning, afternoon or night), and at what time of the week (working days, Saturday, Sunday)?

**L. B.** - On any given day, the sooner the better. But it also depends on the degree of complexity of what I'm going to do, and when I want to end it. If it's something that I know I already had everything timed, I can go, like, after lunch, at about 1 or 2 p.m. And it also depends on the time of year. Since the sunset is now around 5:40 p.m., we have to count on that and continue for another twenty minutes, until the sun goes down, unless we have good lighting. If you go on afterwards, it is not worth it to be doing details with a bit of random lighting, is it? Because then a person arrives there the next day and it is nothing like what we wanted to put there.

**P. A.** - Another thing: in what spaces in the city do you usually do these works? In trains or street walls? Or on a "wall of fame", for example the one at Campolide zone at Lisbon, or in other places where a whole wall is covered, which is called back to back? In central or local places at Lisbon, at its suburbs or at other cities or locations?

**L. B.** - I personally prefer to be as underground as possible, and I love abandoned places. As I like to explore, an abandoned place is a special place. One person is there alone, and there are no other people to interact with. It's just me, my work and my music, which is very important, and some snacks, it depends on the place (*laughs*).

**P. A.** - Do you always carry music to inspire the works?

**L. B.** - Yes, this is very important, very very important.

**P. A.** - And what kind of writer do you think you are? I will say a few types, which are the most common:

- train writer: one who performs graffiti on train or metro coaches<sup>1</sup>;
- beginner writer (or “toy”), who only makes signatures (tags) to mark his terrain, and performs the so-called “trown up” or “vomited” graffiti;
- experienced writer, who performs graffiti frequently, or sometimes on demand, or participates in national and international contests;
- authorized writer, who performs with authorization from a city hall, merchant or other owner; or the unauthorized writer, who executes without other’s permission (the so-called “pichação” in Brazil);
- bomber writer, who paints everywhere he can;
- complete writer: who has works of great quality, such as the so-called Burneos (works considered almost perfect), or in places of difficult access;
- portraitist writer: he makes images of famous or symbolic characters, caricatures, etc.

**L. B.** - In my case, I am a mixture of three that go around: the experienced, the portraitist and the complete.

## PUBLIC ART WORKS

**P. A.** - Look, moving now to your works, e.g. the one that I saw you paint, *Birds of Prey* [a graffiti inspired by homonym comics and film]. In general: what are the reasons that lead you to carry out your works?



Figure 2: Hybridization between classical art and graffiti: sketch

Credits: Luis Baldini

<sup>1</sup> This was the first form of graffiti, carried out between 1969 and 1972, in carriages and subways in Manhattan, by a young American resident in a poor and immigrant neighborhood in New York, whose signature was *Demetrius*.

**L. B.** - Like all graffiti artists, I like recognition. This is undeniable. People like to always do more and better, and have some feedback, usually positive, and also do some internal challenges, right? It depends on the complexity of the work to follow. In this case, *Birds of Prey* had a certain complexity, because there are several characters. The deadline there was to focus on the main face of the main actress, and the others did not need to be so similar [to the original characters], as long as they were illustrated there, and because these last ones are on another plane further back. But the focus was really on Harley Quinn [the film protagonist].

**P. A.** - And do you plan your work? If you do, how? For example, through sketches, internet searches, photographs, videos, miniature drawings for on-site guidance, or other actions?



Figure 3: Previous execution in the atelier

Credits: Luis Baldini

**L. B.** - Yes, normally, I always planned them. I do the drawing, a primary sketch, just to see the plans, how it will look. If it is just a figure, and then the rest is a more classic, more abstract background, it is different. But lately my paintings are based much more, like, on the figurative, either from my photographs or else the ones I get on the internet. After all, there are no big themes that I use. There are some, it depends on the moment, it depends on what I feel, but the most of what I do, in abandoned places, it's training. Like, I take figures, portraits, etc. everything that is figurative, and I keep inventing, until I reach that part, until I have a result. OK, I'm going to use this now, figuratively, and then a graphic or abstract element, and try to make it homogeneous with that. And since there are already a lot of people painting, yes there are, and a lot of good things out there, it's a lot ... how can I say ... tricky, because a person doesn't want to do the same thing as what is out there, so you're always on that quest for the...

**P. A.** - Original ...

**L. B.** - Original, it's that artist thing ...

**P. A.** - Exactly ...

**L. B.** - Exactly, so many of the things I do, the most before there's a commission, is training, always training. In the middle of training, sometimes, it appears something that will pull a more humanitarian theme, or environmentalist, or something like that, it also depends on what I am doing ... man, today I'm going to do something about little fishes', for example, in quotes (*laughs*). But most of it is really training. I am a bit methodical, I like speed, you never know what might happen, like, since if we are painting on the street there may be bad weather, etc. And the faster and more accurate we are, but with discipline, the more we can overcome a rain that may come in the next hour, for example.

**P. A.** - And that interferes with your painting. Moreover, some problems may emerge with other people, who don't like the painting or upset you, by saying that this cannot be done in that place?

**L. B.** - Ah no, that never happens. It happened here a little bit now, but I just have ... phones, and focus on work. I work on a mission, and when I'm on a mission, there are no delays. Unless it's something bigger. For example, recently I have been painting a huge structure in Mozambique, at the invitation of a gallery in the port of Maputo, where I built a monument dedicated to the heroes of Mozambican culture. It was a huge thing, like, and it was quite a huge task, because we had to take material from Portugal into there, since South Africa was out of stock, I had to do it by carrying 140 kilos of material from here over there. And everything went well as I planned. I only stayed one more day there, doing some finishing touches. But that happens always, I always reserve an extra day, because, when the work is finished, there are things that I discover that, man, I'm going to put a little more there. But we are talking about Africa, where anything and everything can happen. And it is far, about 10.000 km from here. Everything went well because there was study, planning, methodology, discipline, and I was at ease, this is very important.

**P. A.** - That is great. Look, and what is your favourite style: graffiti, stencils, stickers, murals, posters, or others?

**L. B.** - It's graffiti, and murals too. But mainly graffiti.

**P. A.** - Why? What are the reasons for your preferences?

**L. B.** - I think I was used to it, right? But this with regard to street painting, in the urban scene that is there. Yes, I like graffiti, letters, I like to see great letterings, several bold styles, characters, figurative works and everything. As for the stencil part, there is one thing or another that is fine, but it doesn't catch my attention, even if I respect it a lot...

**P. A.** - As you know, public art artists like Banksy in England and Le Rat in France are people who sometimes mix graffiti and stencils, although they prefer stencils... and

what style or sub-style do you prefer most now? You already said it's graffiti, but have you had any evolution within that style, in terms of images, letters, colours, etc., from the beginning until now?



Figure 4: Hybrid public art: erudite culture and graffiti culture within the public-private space of the art gallery

Credits: Luis Baldini

**L. B.** - Yes, yes, for example when it comes to realism and hyperrealism. There are a lot of people out there doing hyperrealism, that you really didn't see when I started. You could see a face there in black and white, like, people made a portrait, but there was always a part that was not so precise. I didn't do it at that time either, I did it on charcoal, paper, etc. When we saw portraits like that, at that time, until 2000, maybe they would look good, but graffiti is difficult. The essence was there, but now we see people doing real photos on the wall.



Figure 5: Execution stages: background, marking, filling, etc.

Credits: Pedro Andrade



**P. A.** - For example, the background is often prepared with white paint that covers the expected surface of the work. Do you paint that, a background? With what, with white paint or using something else?

**L. B.** - Yes, it depends on what is at the base of the background.

**P. A.** - On the wall...

**L. B.** - It is better to make a blank. And then the spaces that are blank and shouldn't be like so, are painted with the colour of the foreground, right? But normally, we paint with the colour that dominates the background the most. I use more colours like black, or lilacs, more or less around this spectrum, or green, darker green.

**P. A.** - This is to save some ink, in part...

**L. B.** - Yes, exactly.

**P. A.** - And then there is the marking: that is, the outline of the work's contours. And for that, often a spray or marker are used, based on a miniature drawing or on A4 sheet. How do you do that?

**L. B.** - When I am projecting the image, the first sketch of architecture, say, a figurative work with an American plan, I make my normal anatomical grid, which covers just the shapes, and then I start sculpting from there. I can mark this only with a can, it depends on the roughness of the wall. If a wall is a bit smooth, that allows me, if I want to save a lot of time, to use a marker, Poster for example, and I will go straight to the lines I want. And then from there, with the spray, I start applying layers. And with the dark ones, I start sculpting the shadows, and then from there I start to put blues (...). But it also depends on my mood.



Figure 6: Execution stages: filling, shading

Credits: Luís Baldini



**P. A.** - And then we move on to filling, in which the main colours are placed, sometimes silver, there are people who put silvery tones, etc. How do you fill your works?

**L. B.** - As most of the time I do more figurative work, so my feeling is a bit like that, it is as if I had to model the painting, and it is not so bold or contrasted, because it has to take gradient shades, face shadows, etc. Unless there are much more pronounced shadows, and then I crease those shadows first, and then I put clearer tones on top, until I homogenize the thing. As for the letters, people paint immediately, everything as a block (...). And then with a bit of other colour on top, the artist makes the gradient wherever he wants.

**P. A.** - Now I was going to ask you the shading of the images or the letters, but you have already answered that, in part. What about decorations? For example, various adornments are sometimes placed, such as bubble effects. Or, as seen in some graffiti, figurative parts that represent objects, not so much the characters. Or the special effects of “mangas” style comics.

**L. B.** - Yes, it depends on what is drawn, designed or ordered, but I don't use it much.



Figure 7: Execution stages: final touches

Credits: Luis Baldini

**P. A.** - Another thing: in terms of messages, sometimes dates, notices, dedications, inscriptions, quotes are also included. Do you use any of these elements?

**L. B.** - Normally, I never do anything like that, it's like a painting by itself. It is a figurative art work. At most, I put a very small signature there.

**P. A.** - Regarding signatures (or *tags* in graffiti jargon): do you sign individually or within groups of writers [graffiti authors]?

**L. B.** - No, no, it's just my tag, as I don't have a group of writers.

**P. A.** - And finally, in this public art works' sequence, you put the finishing touches, which we talked about earlier.

**L. B.** - Yes, yes, then I do the finishing touches.

**P. A.** - What style of letters do you use (blockbuster, computer, arrowhead, bubble, superimposed, wild style, or others)?

**L. B.** - No, I'm not much of a lettering artist. When I do it, maybe it's more like wild style.

**P. A.** - What is the relationship between letters and images, in your works? Are they completing one another, or do they conflict?

**L. B.** - They complement each other, they do not conflict. Unless letters are very ugly. And even so, it depends on the images that are on their side.

**P. A.** - And what style of signatures do you use (arrowhead, Paris, New York, or others)?

**L. B.** - I never use it, when I sign it is basically the normal sign, free way. Or now I have been using a little stencil of mine, saying "fraemo1". It is easier, I add it quickly, and it has a different aesthetic, a little cleaner.

**P. A.** - And, related to this, how do you comment on this phrase, said by some writers: "everyone knows me, but nobody knows who I am"?

**L. B.** - It is the typical old writer. But now everybody, or most of the people already know who they are. There are those like Banksy, the train and bombers people, they continue with this line of thought. And also because what they do is extremely illegal. And it is not advisable to walk around in the wind saying: look, I did this, and such. But there you go, it's that advertising thing. Everyone, the ordinary citizen, is used to seeing their name go by, without knowing who he is, not associating it with a face, or with a person. But everyone ends up seeing this type of personal advertising, whether on trains, walls, tags...

**P. A.** - Do you take photographs of your works, what are called flicks?

**L. B.** - Yes.

**P. A.** - Do you have an organized archive, with dates, places and themes of your public art works, which writers usually call Black Book? If so, how do you organize it?

**L. B.** - I already did. Sometimes I'm not very lucky with the technology, and now and then there's a record that burns and things like that. It happened a short time ago.

**P. A.** - As for your graffiti *Birds of Prey*, held in March 2020, it is inspired by the original comic strip, and perhaps the recent 2020 film with this title that has been on display in cinemas for weeks, for example in Amoreiras mall. For you, what are the meanings of these graffiti parts: images of people and objects, letters, etc.?



Figure 8: Contents, media, characters, lettering

Credits: Pedro Andrade

**L. B.** - This is basically a poster that someone made in the United States, from Time Warner, Warner Brothers, and basically this is for the people who want this on the wall, you can modify some things, because I said it depends on the wall where to put the respective graffiti. There were elements here, buildings, etc. I said, look here, these elements are not going to be okay. It is better to do something like an explosion behind, or even an environment, like the green of the night that was on that poster. And do the placing of the letters here, in this case this is a logo, *Birds of Prey*. And then here the buzzword, and the characters. As for the characters, each one I think has a gun, I didn't see the movie...

**P. A.** - This is the protagonist, isn't she?

**L. B.** - This is the protagonist, Harley Quinn, best known for Joker's girlfriend or ex-girlfriend. The Joker is that master character from DC. And until recently she acted with him in another film that was named *Suicide Squad*, in which the Joker was Jared Leto, it was another interpretation of the Joker, because this thing from DC, from comics has a lot to be said...

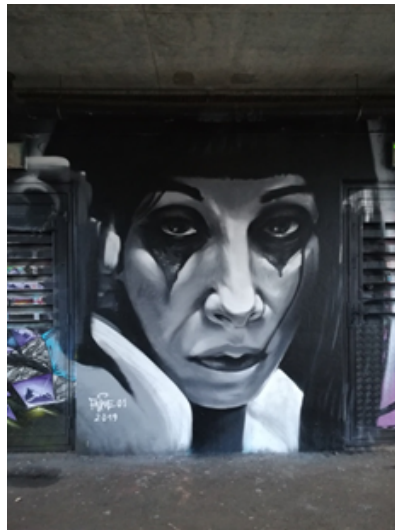


Figure 9: Media universes: comics, cinema, graffiti

Credits: Luis Baldini

**P. A.** - What relationship do you think exists among the various mass media or ways of disseminating this work, that is, the comics, the film and this graffiti of yours?

**L. B.** - A story is never linear, because in DC and Marvel, now the stories are divided into universes. In the past, in the story of Spiderman there was Peter Parker, who was bitten by a spider, and then there was Aunt May who was the old lady and Ben who died, etc. Now in the movies there is something else, it is always adapted to the moment we are in, etc. ... And then they say an excuse: “- Oh no, this is the Spiderman from the Marvel Cinematic Universe, nothing to do with that Spiderman that we read in Comics in 81”, for example. Like me, I started reading comics around 1985. I browsed pages in ‘81, I didn’t understand anything about what was going on there, I just saw images, as I was just a baby, like, what a fun it was! And, in 1985, since I started to learn to read and to write, I started to collect. Those stories of the heroes we knew, now are completely different, or they changed characters. What was a man is now a woman, is now a gay or a lesbian, or else, and they changed colour too. It makes a lot of confusion for the people of my generation. Because we were created to read these books, and suddenly, we are going to see a Marvel or DC movie coming out, in which appears a character that we really liked. Hey man, how are they going to make this character in the movies, in the cinema? He will have armour, and how the effects will be? No, he is now a Chinese. So the man was black, and now he’s a Chinese? For example. Now it is ridiculous to mix everything.

**P. A.** - Often audiences are also different, in what regards comics, films and graffiti. And therefore, these arts, perhaps, adapt to the tastes of the audience. And they change not only the plot, but also the characters themselves, don’t they? And they modify as well the relationship between them, that I find very interesting.

**L. B.** - Not only that, then you have to invent another universe. E.g., this is, I don't know, the Tree Man (*laughs*). Now I am making up this. This Tree Man belongs just to the universe of films. And people says: - Ah, OK, so there are some similarities with what you read in the comics, isn' it? The basic. But no, now it is only included in the cinematic universe. And we people answer: - Oh, okay! (*laughs*).

**P. A.** - Do you think that digital games influenced these characters, and the way they are drawn, or not? Because there is a huge influence of digital games, for example, in the movies. Do you think this also happens in graffiti?

**L. B.** - Hum, no. Graffiti tries to keep up with everything, doesn't it? So, hum, on the one hand, yes, on the other hand, I don't know ...

**P. A.** - Let's move on to another aspect, your relationships with other writers. Although you normally do your work individually and don't have a fixed group of writers, do you sometimes work with other graffiti writers?

**L. B.** - There are several collaborations, with known people. In this case, the latter [painting] was a collaboration, he [a second graffiti painter] was the one who got this job, he was a contact, he invited me, he introduced me to the people of the order, etc. And we went there [the wall of fame where the graffiti *Bird of Prey* was done], at Lisbon, Campolide zone]. I did the whole figurative part, basically I did the whole project, and the drawing, because he is not an old writer, but he doesn't do this [drawings] anymore. However, he wanted to paint, so he took care of the letters, he arranged some things in the background, so we worked on it, there was a synergy there, it's normal, because I met him a few years ago. But I usually have a group, it's just me and some others, we do our 'fames', other times we participate in commissions together, one gets a job to another, and so on. As we are used to it, then it is automatic. There is a project, yes sir, where is it? Come on, you do this, I do that...

**P. A.** - So you have a kind of division of tasks.

Another thing: are you inspired by the works of other authors (photos, sketches, drawings), which serve, in part, as models of your works (what, in English, are called piece-books)?

**L. B.** - Yes, yes, a lot.



Figure 10: Heroes of urban public art

Credits: Luís Baldini

**P. A.** - What do you use, photos and sketches, drawings or other material?

**L. B.** - Photos and sketches basically. To be honest, lately it is very rare for me to be using original material, like sketch, a face that I invent, like this. Unless you do a drawing, but graffiti usually has this thing: you can go straight from a photo right to the wall. There is no need for a sketch, a previous sketch, or the like. And then it also depends on the skill level, as they say...

**P. A.** - ... Talent...

**L. B.** - Exactly, if you are more familiar or not. Because there are techniques, e.g. the grid, and doubles, which is making a lot of images and then taking a photo, and then you put some tricks on it with your cell phone. I don't have time for any of this, e.g. the grids on the drawings. The only thing I do is really anatomical drawing, like that sketch. Or some geometric figures, and such.

**P. A.** - After your work is finished, do you show it to other writers, for example, on the place where that work was done, or through photographs, videos, etc.?

**L. B.** - Now everything is done over social media, Instagram for example. We put images in Instagram. In addition to the people who is not a writer, who go there to put the "like", there are a few writers who also give that kind of support, via the usual "like".

**P. A.** - Have you ever interfered with the work of other writers? For example, through the practice named *tachar*, that has the meaning of "qualify", "censure", e.g. via deleting parts of another author's graffiti without his permission?

**L. B.** - It happens on the Walls of Fame, for example. Not in the letters, where the rules are different. In a space that is dedicated to a wall of fame, you cannot be limited to those paintings that have been there for decades, there has to be a renovation, always. Either by the same artists, or by others. Because the number of legal walls to make a more complex job, like ours, is scarce. So either one has a commission, what is not always the



case, or else get a wall by his house that is legalized by the neighbourhood, or something like that. Thus, like, these Hall of Fames have to be renovated. Me for example, as I always walk by these Hall of Fames, when I finish painting, if I don't take a photograph, the next day the painting may be no longer there. A German is already there, or someone else who came I don't know from where, who is doing his work there, and also takes a photograph. Now everything happens within social media, isn't it? People want to shine on social media, take the photo, go to the net, and the next day there's another person doing that over my work.

**P. A.** - Incidentally, *going over* is a graffiti jargon term, that means painting your name over another name. Have you done that?

**L. B.** - No. When a person has some letters and there is a person who puts the name on top, that is a sign of disrespect.

**P. A.** - Do you know writers who copy each other, an action that is called "bite"? How do they do it?

**L. B.** - We know several. Basically, I think that everybody copies each other. But that made more sense when graffiti started like a boom, isn't it? There are guys here who have been painting since 89, the old ones. And from that time, from 89 to 90 until 2004, you could see who was doing this. Because there was not such a wide spectrum of graffitiers.

**P. A.** - And why do they do it?

**L. B.** - Now there is a lot of information, social networks and counter social networks, there is a lot of dissemination of this visual information. There are a lot of people who start now, others started recently, others started five years ago. And everyone drinks the same styles, until there is one that may, I don't know, be more original, and whoever can be original always ends up being copied.



Figure 11: Hyperrealism in urban public art

Credits: Luís Baldini



## **PUBLIC ART AUDIENCES AND URBAN CULTURAL EVENTS**

**P. A.** - Do you collect any information about your publics (in conversations, interviews, photos, videos, etc.)?

**L. B.** - No.

**P. A.** - Or do you have any perception of what the main characteristics of your audience are in general, for example regarding age, sex, profession, education level?

**L. B.** - No, usually when I embark on a painting, I just will paint and do my craft...

**P. A.** - You have no feedback from people who come by and say: I like this, etc.?

**L. B.** - Ah yes, the feedback is always unanimous, be it age, gender...

**P. A.** - But are they younger, adults?

**L. B.** - Everyone give his opinion, and it ends up being unanimous, always...

**P. A.** - And they are men, women?

**L. B.** - No, everyone, it's who is passing by. We were on the street, and who showed up, even policemen and everything, would talk to me playing for a while, and then they would leave...

**P. A.** - Did they take photos?

**L. B.** - Yes, some policemen who were on patrol, they even said: man, if there is a "scene" [some problem], we are here, let us know. Cool.

**P. A.** - You talked on this before, but to resume now, do you have a website or do you participate in social networks where you exhibit or talk about your works? If so, do you have many followers?

**L. B.** - The only social network I use is, like, what is it? Facebook and Instagram. I have a page, which is Behance [www.fraemo1.com](http://www.fraemo1.com), that will link...

**P. A.** - A website page, right? Or a Facebook page?

**L. B.** - No, it is really a website, an on line portfolio. It is a bit abandoned, I have to ... it is not abandoned, it is disorganized...

**P. A.** - And you see your followers, you see how many there are, does that worry you or not?

**L. B.** - No, not really.



Figure 12: Public art for diverse publics: citizens, tourists and migrants

Credits: Luís Baldini

**P. A.** - So, in that case, you don't really know what they say about your work...

**L. B.** - In this case, on Instagram and Facebook it's right there, whoever has to say something says it right there, the biggest part is things that give more motivation ... it's always good feedback.

**P. A.** - Now there's WhatsApp, it's more visual.

**L. B.** - WhatsApp is only for group work. In this case, I speak very little, I just need to know some guidelines, and dates, etc., only in the very aspects of the organization.

**P. A.** - And have you ever exhibited in art galleries, museums or other cultural spaces? If so, which ones?

**L. B.** - I already had several collective exhibitions, I had an individual one, which was at the Casa da Cultura do Miratejo, in Laranjeiro, it was over 10 years ago. And then I had a few collective exhibitions in Almada, one at Braço de Prata [East Lisbon zone]. This one at Braço de Prata was excellent, I liked it a lot, it was named *Fabrik 01*, of which we made two editions. We were trying to bring that up again now. But at the time we had Fabrice there, who was in charge of Braço de Prata [project], an excellent person who helped us a lot. We had a group at that time, but now everyone does different things.

**P. A.** - And did you sell any work?

**L. B.** - Ah, at that time, a little. I think in all I only sold two or three pieces. In the first exhibition, that of Casa da Cultura, the works were not for sale. I decided not to, it was just meant to be a showcase, and nothing to be sold. Because I had a huge studio at that time, so I really wanted the works there, to make a lot of decoration in my studio.

**P. A.** - And it's possible to ask how much you sold them, on average? Can you live from that, or not?

**L. B.** - It depends on the artist's value, in this case, to be consecrated or not. I get along with people who say they are famous, that they sell pieces for € 10,000, € 5,000, € 3.000, around. I am also a bit cerebral in these things, as I don't do much to sell. My things sell for commissions, these have already a price. Let's paint this room, it's a given price, it works via invitations. Now I'm going to do an exhibition, individual yes sir, but it's not here. I'm going to do it in Mozambique. I am going to do an artistic residency there, I have a market there, and then I will soon see how much it will be worth.

**P. A.** - Do you go to or exhibit at a gallery or museum that only shows public art, like graffiti?

**L. B.** - Yes, there is Underdogs [an organized group of artists] for example, there in Marvila [a East Lisbon parish]. Underdogs, it is just Underdogs, who is really inside all of this.

**P. A.** - You certainly know the urban Hip Hop culture, which includes several manifestations of public art, such as graffiti, rap music, break dance, DJing (performances by disk jockeys), etc.. Do you fit in with it in any way?

**L. B.** - Not really, I am more of rock. But I have some affinity with hip hop, some artists that I like for a long time, but not in general, I don't identify myself very much.

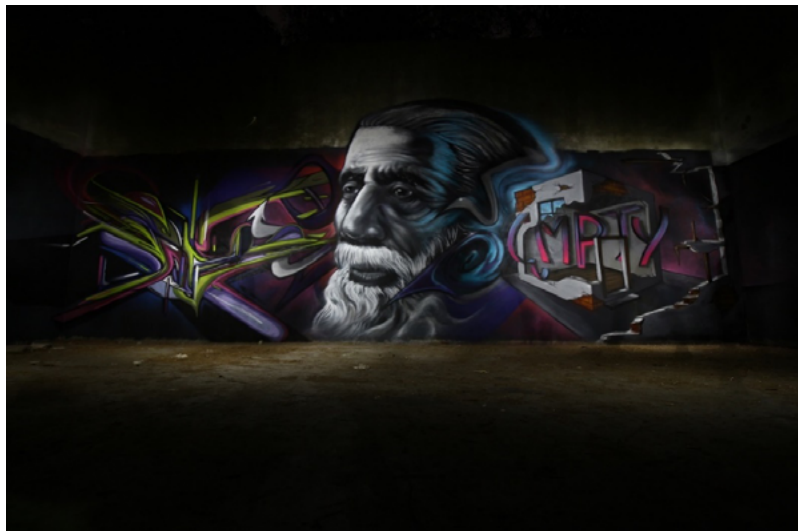


Figure 13: The street is a graffiti's art gallery

Credits: Luís Baldini

**P. A.** - And what do you think of the fashion for tattoos? You just talked about it. Have you painted tattoos or characteristic figures of tattoos in your graffiti?

**L. B.** - It depends on the design I make. Tattoos are every day, my daily work. It is a rewarding job, it has its drawbacks, it has its good points too. It has to be connected to graffiti, because a lot of graffiti guys end up becoming a tattoo artist.

**P. A.** - Why do people do them, the tattooed ones?

**L. B.** - Most of it is because of aesthetics. Many tattooed do it for a catharsis, some for an event memory, and there are people who do it just for collecting the different artists that they like, that they follow, in journals, etc... So, there are guys who don't mind traveling around the world to get a tattoo of I don't know who, who is I don't know where...



Figure 14: Tattoo - sketch in the studio

Credits: Luís Baldini



Figure 15: Tattoo - application on the body

Credits: Luís Baldini

**P. A.** - What do you think of the practice of the *buff*, which is the act of erasing graffiti by elements of some city councils?

**L. B.** - Art is ephemeral, and art in a public place is at the mercy of anything. For example, this place where we painted a graffiti [Campolide wall of fame], I heard that this wall goes down at the end of this year.

**P. A.** - I've heard that too...

**L. B.** - It seems that they are going to do an urbanization there. This must be from the Army, there are those little turrets there.

**P. A.** - What do you think about the role of city councils in cities, in relation to graffiti and other forms of urban art? To completely ban urban art in public places? Or authorize some styles of urban art, but not others? In this case, which ones to authorize? Authorize the various styles of urban art in places reserved by the city councils? Finance public art as an element of urban cultural heritage?

**L. B.** - The last two, no doubt.

**P. A.** - Hey man, Luís, I thank you very much, I learned a lot from you, I think we learn a lot from graffiti, I thank you for your cooperation.

**L. B.** - I am also very thankful, this was a show...

**P. A.** - One last question: do you think it is useful to do this type of interviews, so that, in places like universities and research centers, researchers, professors and students, they can be more interested, not just on the more legitimate urban cultural heritage, but equally on less recognized urban cultures heritage and public arts, in dialogue with citizens, tourists and migrants?

**L. B.** - Certainly, I think so, it is very important, we are teaching and learning at the same time, always, right? Hopefully this will help people to look at this type of art in another way.

Translation: Pedro Andrade

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