

## BODIES THAT PAINT, SPACES THAT FEEL

**Marcio Santos Lima**

Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia de Sergipe, Sergipe, Brazil

Conceptualisation, investigation, writing – revision and editing

**Makson Silva Alves**

Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia de Sergipe, Sergipe, Brazil

Conceptualisation, investigation, writing – revision and editing

---

### ABSTRACT

This article investigates the sensory and affective experiences of students in the Architecture and Urbanism programme at the Instituto Federal de Sergipe — Lagarto campus — during the collective painting of a mural in an academic space. Drawing on the theoretical framework of Juhani Pallasmaa, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Baruch Spinoza, and other authors in phenomenology and the philosophy of embodiment, a qualitative methodological approach is adopted, combined with content analysis, as proposed by Laurence Bardin, for critical observation of the collected data. The study examined spontaneous written accounts produced by students, in which they described their impressions, sensations, and reflections following the practical activity. The objective was to identify core meanings related to emotions, bodily sensations, and the symbolic appropriation of lived space. The results reveal that the aesthetic experience fostered intense multisensory encounters, a re-signification of the institutional space, and the strengthening of affective and social bonds among participants. The choice of colours, the use of the moving body, and the collective engagement with the pictorial practice generated a learning environment that brought together artistic expression, theoretical reflection, affectivity, and personal development. Thus, it is argued that architecture should be understood as a sensitive field of lived and shared experiences, and that pedagogical practices involving art and embodiment can decisively contribute to the ethical, perceptual, critical, and sensitive formation of future architects.

### KEYWORDS

architecture of the senses, mural painting, graffiti, affects

---

## CORPOS QUE PINTAM, ESPAÇOS QUE SENTEM

### RESUMO

Este artigo investiga as experiências sensoriais e afetivas vivenciadas por estudantes do curso de Arquitetura e Urbanismo do Instituto Federal de Sergipe — campus Lagarto — durante a pintura coletiva de um mural em espaço acadêmico. A partir do referencial teórico de Juhani Pallasmaa, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Baruch Espinoza e outros autores da fenomenologia e da filosofia da corporeidade, adota-se uma abordagem metodológica qualitativa, e a análise de conteúdo, conforme Laurence Bardin, para observação crítica dos dados coletados. Foram analisados relatos escritos espontaneamente pelos estudantes, que descreveram suas impressões, sensações e reflexões após a atividade prática. O objetivo foi identificar núcleos de sentido relacionados às emoções, sensações corporais e à apropriação simbólica do espaço vivido.

Os resultados revelam que a experiência estética promoveu intensas vivências multissensoriais, ressignificação do espaço institucional e fortalecimento de vínculos afetivos e sociais entre os participantes. A escolha das cores, o uso do corpo em movimento e o envolvimento coletivo com a prática pictórica geraram um ambiente de aprendizagem que uniu expressão artística, reflexão teórica, afetividade e desenvolvimento pessoal. Dessa forma, defende-se que a arquitetura deve ser compreendida como campo sensível de experiências vividas e compartilhadas, e que práticas pedagógicas que envolvam a arte e a corporeidade podem contribuir decisivamente para a formação ética, perceptiva, crítica e sensível dos futuros arquitetos.

#### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

arquitetura dos sentidos, pintura mural, *graffiti*, afetos

### 1. WHEN THE BODY ENCOUNTERS THE WALL: INAUGURAL GESTURES

This study examines the relevance of art education in school environments, particularly within the academic space of a higher education institution, emphasising affective and sensory experience. The proposal to create a collective mural in the building of the Architecture and Urbanism programme at the Instituto Federal de Sergipe was more than a simple artistic intervention: it was a sensory and affective experience that called upon students' bodies and subjectivities to engage with the institutional space in an active, creative and symbolic way. The painting of a seven-metre-long mural, carried out using graffiti techniques and other pictorial practices, articulated perceptions, emotions, colours and gestures in a shared aesthetic experience that re-signified the school's physical space by transforming it into a place of belonging, expression and memory.

The sensory experience in the field of aesthetics and the visual arts has established itself as a fundamental axis for understanding the relationships between subject, space and materiality. Through a phenomenological and interdisciplinary approach, recent research has sought to restore the body as the protagonist of the perceptive process, overcoming the hegemony of vision in the apprehension of built environments and proposing a broader and multisensory reading of architecture and spatial practices.

At the core of this discussion are the contributions of Juhani Pallasmaa, especially in *Os Olhos da Pele: A Arquitetura e os Sentidos* (The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses), in which the author argues that "every touching experience of architecture is multisensory; qualities of space, matter and scale are measured equally by the eye, ear, nose, skin, tongue, skeleton and muscle" (Pallasmaa, 1996/2011, p. 39). This conception establishes the notion that architecture and the urban environment are perceived through an embodied experience, in which the senses act simultaneously and in an integrated manner.

This perspective resonates with the phenomenological philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945/1999), for whom "(...) the body is our general medium for having a world" (p. 203), not being merely a passive receptor of stimuli but an active and sensitive subject, who perceives and constructs meaning in the world through tactile, visual, auditory, olfactory and kinaesthetic experience. Perception, according to the philosopher,

is not the sum of isolated sensory data but a total experience, in which “( ...) the senses communicate with each other” and “( ...) there is a common carnality between the seer and the visible, between the hearer and the sound, between the toucher and the touched” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1999, p. 233).

Complementing this phenomenological lens, the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza contributes by proposing that bodies are in constant relation and that such encounters generate affections, modifications that affect both body and mind. As the author states in *Ética* (Ethics), “( ...) the human body can be affected in many ways by external bodies” (Espinoza, 1677/2009, p. 107), and these affections give rise to emotions, memories and thoughts. Thus, urban experience is not merely a physical passage but an existential phenomenon, in which the materiality of space provokes, affects and transforms subjectivities.

This research was guided by the following scientific question: in what ways do collective aesthetic practices, such as mural painting, provoke sensations, emotions and affections that contribute to the construction of belonging and to the multisensory perception of architectural space?

The main objective was to analyse, based on students’ reports, the emotions, sensations, and affections experienced corporally during the process of painting the mural. The analysis of these reports was articulated with the phenomenological framework, especially the contributions of authors such as Merleau-Ponty, Yi-Fu Tuan and Juhani Pallasmaa, who understand experience as constituted through the interrelation between body, space and sensitive perception.

## 2. SENSITIVE MAPS: BODIES, SPACES AND AFFECTIONS IN DIALOGUE

For Pallasmaa (1996/2011), the architectural experience occurs through the totality of the senses, affirming that “( ...) the best architectural spaces are not merely seen; they touch us profoundly, connecting with our emotions and memories” (p. 39). He offers a critique of the predominance of vision and advocates a multisensory experience, restoring touch, hearing and smell as mediators of spatial perception.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/1999) complements this view by stating that “( ...) the body is our general means of having a world” (p. 203), being simultaneously subject and object in the perception of space. According to the author, corporeality is a condition for sensitive experience and for the construction of meaning in the environment.

The philosopher Espinoza (1677/2009) contributes by conceiving encounters between bodies and spaces as sources of affections. These are understood as modifications that generate emotions and thoughts, composing subjectivity. Thus, aesthetic and urban experience is also an emotional and existential phenomenon.

The philosopher Lucy Huskinson (2021), from a psychoanalytic perspective, highlights the significant role of the built environment in human perception and in the construction of identity. She observes that “an architectural design that fails to contain us sufficiently will establish an existential malaise” (p. 221).

The theoretical basis of this work starts from the understanding that space is not a neutral entity, but a field of meanings that updates itself through lived experience. Tuan

(1977/2015) asserts that space becomes meaningful as it is perceived and experienced by a sensitive body. According to the author, “experience is a cover-all term for the various modes through which a person knows and constructs a reality” (p. 7), with bodily senses — sight, touch, hearing, smell and taste — being the first mediators of this relationship with the world. The construction of spatial perception is therefore a continuous and cumulative process, beginning in childhood and transforming with the subject’s experiences, shaping cognitive maps that organise and give meaning to the surroundings.

This distinction between space and place is fundamental. While space can be understood as an abstract, geometric and physical dimension, place is constituted as lived space, imbued with values, affections and identities. As Tuan (1977/2015) states, “what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (p. 13). From this perspective, Sylvia Cavalcante and Gleice A. Elali (2017) point out that place is a symbolic construction resulting from the subjective appropriation of space. This appropriation, in turn, does not necessarily depend on the passage of time, as in a traditionally understood place, but can occur immediately and spontaneously through symbolic and expressive actions, such as the act of painting a mural.

The body plays a central role in this process, for it is from it that a human locates, orients and projects themselves into the world. The body is, as Tuan (1977/2015) stresses, the first instrument of mediation with space: “( ...) the posture and structure of the human body, and the relations (whether close or distant) between human beings” (p. 39) underpin the principles of spatial organisation. Architecture, as a field of production of spaces, has the potential to intensify, silence or redirect this experience, potentially dehumanising or enhancing the sensitive experience of the environment. Huskinson (2021) brings into the debate the dynamic between ego and unconscious in relation to space, similarly to what Tuan (1977/2015) describes as the paradox between space and place: “place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other” (p. 1). He further affirms that “the ideas ‘space’ and ‘place’ require each other for definition” (Tuan, 1977/2015, p. 13), establishing an essential tension in human experience.

For Huskinson (2021), this same dynamic is reproduced in the relationship between the ego and the unconscious. “According to psychoanalytic theory identity or personality is not fixed, but develops through the interaction of the ego and the unconscious” (Huskinson, 2021, p. 47), in a mutually dependent relationship that, when unbalanced, can generate disturbances similar to mental disorders. The author further adds “( ...) it is the dynamic interaction between these two positions, experienced in relation to the environment one finds oneself in, that underpins the healthy development of personality” (p. 48). For her, buildings possess an evocative quality that involves us in a provocative relationship, establishing an exchange of experiences between architecture and the individual. As Pallasmaa (1996/2011) states,

architecture is our principal instrument of relating to space and time, and to give human measure to these dimensions. It domesticates unlimited space and infinite time, making it tolerable, habitable and comprehensible for humanity. (pp. 16–17)

At this point, colour acquires decisive importance. Colour is, above all, a perceptual phenomenon that profoundly affects the way spaces are felt and experienced. For Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1810/2013), the perception of colour is not merely a physical or physiological act, but also a psychological and symbolic one. He proposes a distinction between physiological, physical and chemical colours, suggesting that colour constitutes a field of polarities and meanings that cannot be reduced to a merely decorative function. From the perspective of perception psychology, Lilian Ried Miller Barros (2006) observes that colour possesses properties that transcend the visual, functioning as a vehicle for emotions, atmospheres and symbolic associations. Eva Heller (2000/2013) reinforces this idea, stating that the meanings attributed to colours are neither random nor purely subjective, but socially and culturally constructed throughout life, from childhood.

Thus, the choice of colours for the mural is not neutral. The palette used, the contrasts, harmonies and visual rhythms act directly on the observers' sensitivity, provoking cognitive and affective reactions. According to Farina et al. (2011), colours have the power to stimulate or disturb, depending on the context in which they are placed and on individuals' prior experiences. In a school environment, this ability to influence becomes even more relevant, considering that students are at stages of emotional, intellectual and social development. Colour should therefore be understood as an essential component of the educational ambience, capable of mediating relationships, provoking moods and contributing to identity construction.

Thus, we understand graffiti as an urban language and aesthetic manifestation that articulates all these elements — body, space, colour and time — in a form of direct, public and sensitive expression. As Bruno Pedro Giovannetti Neto (2011) points out, graffiti has accompanied human history since its origins, constituting a practice of inscribing the human on space. From cave paintings to contemporary murals, the act of drawing or painting on the urban surface is a symbolic act of appropriation, resistance and communication. Liliana Liviano Wahba (2019) interprets graffiti as "( ...) the art of making visible what one does not want to see" (p. 56), transforming anonymous and forgotten walls into mediums of expression and denunciation. Graffiti challenges the institutionalisation of art and occupies public space as an accessible gallery, democratising the aesthetic experience and opening pathways to the creation of affective bonds with place.

By using graffiti as part of the educational and expressive strategy at the Instituto Federal de Sergipe, the mural project contributed to transforming the school space into a symbolic territory, re-signified by the students' collective experience. Graffiti practice thus revealed itself as a pedagogical tool of listening, dialogue and construction of subjectivities. The colours, forms, symbols and themes chosen by participants reflect both their individual identities and collective aspirations, materialising an aesthetic experience that unfolds into an existential one.

The notion of aesthetic experience as lived, situated and transformative can be further enriched by John Dewey's (1934/2010) thought, who understands art as a form of experience. In his work *Arte como Experiência* (Art as Experience), Dewey proposes that aesthetics is rooted in everyday life and that artistic enjoyment is an intensification

of the interactions we maintain with the world. He asserts that “( ...) the work of art as a whole is an experience” (Dewey, 1934/2010, p. 67), emphasising that art should not be dissociated from life, but understood as a mode of knowledge and engagement with the environment.

Additionally, Gaston Bachelard (1957/1993), in *A Poética do Espaço* (The Poetics of Space), contributes with the idea that space is intimate and imagistic, proposing that the house, for instance, is not merely a physical construction, but a space of memories, dreams and affections. He stresses that “( ...) the house is our corner of the world” (p. 26), reinforcing the importance of sensitive experiences in constituting the bond between subject and space. These considerations enrich the understanding that the mural painted by the students not only physically intervened in the school building, but also activated deep layers of memory, imagination and belonging.

In short, this work relies on the articulation between body, space, colour and visual language as central elements of sensitive experience. The mural painting, therefore, constitutes a way of “bringing human scale” to architectural space, as proposed by Pallasmaa (1996/2011), activating the transformative potential of art as a lived and situated experience. By exploring the senses and affections involved in producing the mural, it seeks to understand how everyday aesthetics can become a tool for transforming the environment and the relationships established within it.

### 3. THROUGH GESTURES AND LISTENING: MODES OF SENSING AND NARRATING EXPERIENCE

This study adopts a qualitative approach, emphasising the understanding of the sensory experience lived by participants during the collective creation of an artistic mural in the Architecture and Urbanism building at the Instituto Federal de Sergipe. The choice of this approach is justified by the interest in investigating the subjective, affective, and embodied dimensions of the aesthetic experience, understanding knowledge not only as a rational datum but as something that emerges from the embodied experience of subjects in space (Lakatos & Marconi, 1985/2003).

Participants were selected through an outreach activity linked to the courses Fine Arts II and Perspective, integrating teaching and artistic practice in a broader context. In total, sixteen students from the 2024.1 cohort of the Architecture and Urbanism course participated. The painting site was a double-height wall in the newly constructed block of the campus, designed specifically to house the classrooms of the course. As it was an elevated surface, execution required the use of scaffolding and personal protective equipment. With only three kits available, a rotation system among students was organised, allowing everyone to participate safely and collaboratively. The painting activity took place over five weeks, between December 2024 and January 2025, with sessions scheduled twice weekly. This timetable enabled the work to progress continuously, respecting the pace of the collective process, necessary breaks, and the contingencies inherent in large-scale artistic practice (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Compilation of moments from the activities with the use of personal protective equipment and scaffolding

Credits. Márcio Lima

While some students rotated painting, others contributed by preparing the paints, cleaning materials, providing snacks, or simply occupying the space with music, singing, and conversations, creating an environment of sensitive engagement and shared joy. The collective atmosphere that emerged during the activity reinforced affective bonds and fostered an aesthetic experience that went beyond the technical task.

The original design of the mural was based on an original canvas by the course instructor, later projected and traced onto the wall. The choice of the artwork was directly related to the elements present in the composition, which reflected the content of the two courses. Therefore, the focus was not on the creation of the design to be painted, but on the bodily and sensory experience of engaging in artistic mural painting. The painting represented a perspective structure suggesting buildings seen from below, with a central opening shaped like an inverted map of the state of Sergipe, symbolising the sky and the reinterpretation of the territory with a chromatic scale applied in analogous and complementary colours (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Painting by Márcio Lima, 2024, acrylic on canvas, 70x40cm

Credits. Márcio Lima

In addition to the completion of the work, resulting from the collective painting, data were collected via an online form applied after the practical activity. Students who participated in the mural painting were invited to describe, in open narrative language, their impressions, feelings, perceptions, and reflections arising during the experience. The form contained open-ended guidance encouraging participants to address how they felt during the sessions, which physical or emotional sensations they perceived, and how they understood their relationship with the space and other participants after the artistic intervention. This strategy aimed to promote the emergence of a subjective, sensitive, and plural discourse, in line with phenomenological assumptions, which value the direct description of experience as it occurs without reducing it to pre-established categories.

Data analysis followed the procedures of content analysis, according to Laurence Bardin's (1977) classical approach, involving three main stages: pre-analysis, material exploration, and analysis of results. Pre-analysis consisted of a floating, intuitive reading of the reports to capture general impressions and map recurring or expressive themes. Subsequently, the texts underwent a process of thematic categorisation, which allowed the categorisation of recording units according to regularities, symbolic resonances, or significant singularities. It is important to emphasise that analytical categories were not predetermined but emerged from the empirical material itself, respecting the inductive and interpretative logic characteristic of qualitative analysis.

The categories were then interpreted in light of the phenomenological framework, especially the contributions of Merleau-Ponty (1945/1999) on embodied perception, Espinoza (1677/2009) on affects, and Pallasmaa (1996/2011) on the multisensory experience of architecture. At this point, the body was considered not merely an instrument or intermediary of perception, but the very condition of possibility for sensitive knowledge of the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1999). Thus, the reports were read as expressions of experiential knowledge, in which space, colours, gestures, and collectivity are inseparable, intertwining in the constitution of meaning and affect.

Hence, the adopted methodology aimed to embrace the complexity of lived experiences, recognising that aesthetic and educational practices are not limited to content transmission but involve subjective, relational, and bodily processes. The reports were listened to attentively, with careful consideration given to their poetic, affective, and symbolic density, considering that each word, hesitation, or metaphor could contain a trace of the sensitive relationship between participants and the inhabited space. In this way, the study did not aim to describe the activity objectively or statistically, but to understand how the participants experienced and ascribed meaning to it. By valuing these multiple layers of meaning, the research reaffirms the pedagogical, existential, and spatial value of collective artistic practices in the context of architecture and urbanism education.

#### 4. WHAT THE BODIES SAID: VOICES, COLOURS AND AFFECTIONS IN THE MURAL

To explore the students' sensory and affective perceptions during the mural-painting activity, Bardin's (1977) content analysis methodology was employed. This qualitative methodology allows for the identification, categorisation and interpretation of meaning

nuclei manifested in participants' accounts, organising them into thematic categories that emerge from the repetition or singularity of specific content. The procedure was carried out in three stages: exploratory reading, thematic categorisation and interpretative analysis.

The practical activity, undertaken by students of the Architecture and Urbanism course, consisted of the collective painting of a seven-metre mural. Participants were invited to describe, in a personal and reflective manner, their bodily sensations, emotions and affections experienced, relating them to the propositions of Juhani Pallasmaa (1996/2011) in his work *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Montage showing moments of the collective painting. The use of spray and the fear of heights were the main challenges.

Credits. Márcio Lima

From this analysis, six main categories emerged: personal challenges and overcoming; multisensory experience and corporeality; sense of belonging and connection to space; social interaction and teamwork; emotions elicited by the experience; and learning and theoretical-practical integration.

The first category, personal challenges and overcoming, revealed accounts emphasising the confrontation of fears and insecurities, particularly regarding the use of scaffolding and unfamiliar materials. One student reported: "I will not deny that the first time I felt fear, but over time I got used to it". Another participant shared: "I had to face one of my greatest fears head-on; dealing with the height was really a bit tense, but I am glad I tried". These testimonies show how the body both exposes itself to risk and adapts, experiencing physical and emotional limits.

In the category of multisensory experience and corporeality, descriptions of sensations perceived through the senses emerge, reinforcing Pallasmaa's (1996/2011) concepts on the importance of architectural perception that extends beyond vision. One account states: "the environment was enjoyable in terms of sound, as my teacher and colleagues were playing music ( ... ). The smell of paint was everywhere, but this did not make the experience bad; however, the odour of the spray was less pleasant".

Another participant added: "painting the mural involved almost all human senses; I looked carefully at the painting, listened to my friends, and felt with my hands the fear and pleasure of colouring the buildings". Here, the senses become mediators of urban

and artistic experience, aligned with Pallasmaa's (1996/2011) argument that "( ...) the best architectural spaces are not only seen; they touch us profoundly, connecting to our emotions and memories" (p. 39).

Considering the account regarding the use of music during the activity, it is evident how the sound environment contributed to an aesthetic ambience that engaged more than just vision: sound, touch and even smell were activated in the experience. This reinforces Pallasmaa's (1996/2011) advocacy for architecture as a multisensory and situational art.

The third category, sense of belonging and connection to space, demonstrates how the activity contributed to building affective relationships with the university space. One student wrote: "it was also important because it took place in the COAU<sup>1</sup> block, allowing us architecture students to engage in creating art within the environment where we will spend memorable times". Another account reinforces this: "I believe we had very intense contact with that place and with the work we created". Such experiences contribute to re-signifying the academic space, turning it into a place of memory and affection.

The category of social interaction and teamwork highlighted the importance of the collective for completing the activity. One participant noted: "I really enjoyed the genuine teamwork with my classmates". Another commented: "this dynamic brought me closer to my classmates and let me have some really good times with them". The aesthetic and artistic experience, then, was relational rather than isolated, fostering joyful interactions that enhanced creative potential and reinforced the role of human connections in shaping meaning in space.

Here, drawing on Espinoza (1677/2009), it is possible to consider that joyful affections, such as cooperation and friendship, enhance the potency of bodies to act. The experiences of listening, collaboration and enjoyment reported by participants thus constitute potent affections that enhance autonomy and a sense of collectivity.

The fifth category, emotions elicited by the experience, collected accounts of diverse feelings arising from the practice. Joy, fear, satisfaction and pride were recurrent. One participant reported: "it was pure emotion of joy and fear, wonderful to paint, calming nerves in such a busy week". Another stated, "it was therapeutic, it helped us to relax our minds". The activity extended beyond its academic nature to become an affective and therapeutic experience.

Finally, the category learning and theoretical-practical integration showed how students related the practical experience to concepts discussed in class. One student exemplified: "according to Pallasmaa, architecture is not experienced as several isolated images, but in its material, tactile and auditory totality. Just as it was in the task of painting the mural, where various senses were used simultaneously". Another added: "with reference to Pallasmaa, painting the mural involved almost all human senses ( ...) feeling with my hands the fear and pleasure of colouring the buildings".

These accounts confirm the potency of sensory and affective experience in academic training and architectural practice, reaffirming that "the eye is the organ of distance and separation, while touch is the sense of proximity, intimacy and affection" (Pallasmaa,

<sup>1</sup> Acronym for Coordenadoria de Arquitetura e Urbanismo (Coordination of Architecture and Urbanism).

1996/2011, p. 43), and that the city and its spaces can and should be experienced in a multisensory, affective and participatory manner.

It is also important to highlight that students' accounts reveal a fusion between expressive gesture and the perception of space as an extension of the body. This perception aligns with the notion of "lived spatiality" in Merleau-Ponty (1945/1999), who states that the body is the "scheme of all spatialities" (p. 215). The mural, therefore, was not merely a surface to be painted, but a field inscribing the emotions and corporeality of the participants, whose actions transformed the space into a place (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Montage showing moments of the collective painting. Completion of the mural and public opening of the new block of Architecture and Urbanism classrooms at the Instituto Federal de Sergipe

Credits. Márcio Lima

The practice reported here points to the urgency of conceiving school space as a site of significant aesthetic experiences that activate the body, the senses and affections. Inspired by Paulo Freire's ideas, which advocate for a liberatory and dialogical education, it can be asserted that the mural painting constituted an act of collective expression and knowledge construction. Freire (1996) already emphasised that "teaching is not transferring knowledge, but creating the possibilities for its own production or construction" (p. 47). In this sense, the activity allowed students to learn with the body, with others, and with the space.

From the perspective of Architecture and Urbanism education, curricula must include practices integrating theory and sensitivity, technique and affect. Education based on artistic experiences promotes listening, care and critical reflection, and expands students' aesthetic and human repertoire. The mural experience can thus serve as a model for other interdisciplinary practices that value collective creation, sensory experimentation, and symbolic appropriation of learning spaces.

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The practical experience of mural painting revealed that collective aesthetic practices, when lived in a sensitive, embodied, and participatory manner, possess remarkable

formative potential within the field of architecture. More than a visual intervention, the mural became a space for affective experimentation, where bodies could feel, create, and inhabit more fully. The students' accounts demonstrated that the appropriation of the built environment gains depth when mediated by emotions, memories, and bodily sensations, transforming the educational setting from a merely technical space into a territory of expression, encounter, and belonging.

Within this perspective, the theoretical contributions of Pallasmaa (1996/2011) and Merleau-Ponty (1945/1999) are reaffirmed, highlighting that architectural perception is, above all, an embodied experience — simultaneously tactile, visual, auditory, olfactory, and emotional. The city, the school, the walls: all reveal themselves as surfaces inscribing lived experience.

The analysis of the accounts showed that mural painting not only awakened creative and artistic skills but also stimulated internal challenges, strengthened interpersonal bonds, and activated a powerful integration between knowing and feeling, between theory and practice. This convergence of body and space, mediated through art, underscores the urgency of pedagogical methodologies that place sensory experience at the core of students' formation, particularly in the context of artificial intelligence, increasingly present in everyday life. By engaging students' senses and affections, such practices enhance not only technical skills but also the ethical, perceptual, and spatial formation of individuals attuned to the world.

Nevertheless, a challenge remains: how can multisensory experiences be systematically incorporated into academic curricula without reducing them to isolated exercises? In what ways can art become a structured pedagogical language rather than mere decoration? What kinds of learning spaces are we truly designing — and what do these spaces reveal about how we understand the body, knowledge, and collective life?

Perhaps the answers lie in creating more open and flexible curricula that value the sensitive as much as the technical, recognising art as a form of knowledge. One might assume that methodologies based on collaborative practices, such as mural painting, could be integrated transversally across subjects, fostering learning that does not separate intellect from the body. Similarly, school environments designed with attention to colour, light, sound, and texture could encourage everyday multisensory experiences without relying solely on occasional activities.

These reflections give rise to several hypotheses. The incorporation of multisensory practices into curricula may depend less on the creation of new subjects and more on a pedagogical paradigm shift, where the body and experience cease to be mere accessories and become the foundation of learning. Art, when integrated transversally into educational practice, may reveal itself not as ornamentation but as a critical and structuring language capable of connecting thought and sensitivity. Likewise, learning spaces, rather than merely reproducing functional and technical models, could be conceived as territories of affection, creative risk, and ethical encounter with others. These hypotheses do not resolve all questions raised but suggest that the actual impact of these experiences may not be immediately apparent, instead manifesting in the ways students carry forward — into professional practice and life — the memory of a body that has learned not only to see but also to feel and inhabit the world.

This study, therefore, does not conclude within its pages but presents itself as an invitation: that more walls be painted, more spaces be felt, and more bodies allow themselves to learn from what the world offers — not merely to be seen, but to be lived.

## Machine Translation Post-Editing: Anabela Delgado

### REFERENCES

Bachelard, G. (1993). *A poética do espaço* (4th ed., A. P. Danesi, Trans.). M. Fontes. (Original work published in 1957)

Bardin, L. (1977). *Análise de conteúdo* (L. A. Reto & A. Pinheiro, Trans.). Edições 70.

Barros, L. R. M. (2006). *A cor no processo criativo: Um estudo sobre a Bauhaus e a teoria de Goethe* (4th ed.). Senac São Paulo.

Cavalcante, S., & Elali, G. A. (Eds.). (2017). *Temas básicos em psicologia ambiental*. Vozes.

Dewey, J. (2010). *Arte como experiência* (V. Ribeiro, Trans.). Martins Fontes. (Original work published in 1934)

Espinoza, B. (2009). *Ética* (T. Tadeu, Trans.). Martin Fontes. (Original work published in 1677)

Farina, M., Perez, C., & Bastos, D. (2011). *Psicodinâmica das cores em comunicação* (6th ed.). Blucher.

Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogia da autonomia: Saberes necessários à prática educativa* (43rd ed.). Paz e Terra.

Giovannetti Neto, B. P. (2011). *Graffiti: Do subversivo ao consagrado* [Doctoral dissertation, Universidade de São Paulo]. Biblioteca Digital USP. <https://doi.org/10.11606/T.16.2011.tde-11012012-152024>

Goethe, J. W. von. (2013). *Doutrina das cores* (4th ed., M. Giannotti, Trans.). Nova Alexandria. (Original work published in 1810)

Heller, E. (2013). *A psicologia das cores: Como as cores afetam a emoção e a razão* (M. L. L. da Silva, Trans.). Gustavo Gili. (Original work published in 2000)

Huskinson, L. (2021). *Arquitetura e psique: Um estudo psicanalítico de como os edifícios impactam nossas vidas* (M. Goldsztajn, Trans.). Perspectiva.

Lakatos, E. M., & Marconi, M. A. (2003). *Fundamentos de metodologia científica* (5th ed.). Atlas. (Original work published in 1985)

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1999). *Fenomenologia da percepção* (C. A. R. de Moura, Trans.). Martins Fontes. (Original work published in 1945)

Pallasmaa, J. (2011). *Os olhos da pele: A arquitetura e os sentidos* (A. Salvaterra, Trans.). Bookman. (Original work published in 1996)

Tuan, Y.-F. (2015). *Espaço e lugar: A perspectiva da experiência* (L. de Oliveira, Trans.). Eduel. (Original work published in 1977)

Wahba, L. L. (Ed.). (2019). *O grafite e a psique de São Paulo: Metáforas da cidade*. Blucher.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Marcio Santos Lima is a designer, artist, and educator. He holds a PhD in Visual Arts from the School of Communications and Arts at the University of São Paulo. He is a lecturer in Drawing and Fine Arts at the Instituto Federal de Sergipe. He is a member of the Multidisciplinary Group for Study and Research in Art and Education of the Department of Fine Arts at the School of Communications and Arts of the University of São Paulo. He is the leader of the research group LUPAA — Laboratory for Studies in Urbanism, Heritage, Architecture, and Arts at the Instituto Federal de Sergipe. He was a visiting professor at the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança, Portugal, where he taught drawing, illustration, and artistic research. He has participated in both group and solo exhibitions.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7775-8504>

Email: [desenho.lima@gmail.com](mailto:desenho.lima@gmail.com)

Address: Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia de Sergipe – Campus Lagarto, Estr. da Barragem, 286 – Jardim Campo Novo, CEP: 49400–000, Lagarto–SE, Brasil

Makson Silva Alves is an architect and urban planner, graduated from the Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia de Sergipe, with research experience on graffiti in the urban fabric.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2021-3042>

Email: [maksonau@gmail.com](mailto:maksonau@gmail.com)

Address: Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia de Sergipe – Campus Lagarto, Estr. da Barragem, 286 – Jardim Campo Novo, CEP: 49400–000, Lagarto–SE, Brasil

**Submitted: 16/05/2025 | Accepted: 05/08/2025**



*This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.*