

The Graffito Effect

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LEAD-IN:

SOUND EFFCET of writing on paper

SOUND EFFECT of throwing paper

SOUND EFFECT of zipper down-up

SOUND EFFECT of person walking on metal stairs

SOUND EFFECT of metal object scrape movement

SOUND EFFECT of spraying paint

SOUND EFFECT of shaking can

SOUND EFFECT of police

SOUND EFFECT of someone running on gravel

MUSIC: 'snowman' by rainbow

Last night something happened. I heard so many different noises scratching on metal stairs with keys or knives I don't know. Then, police came and someone was running; I wonder what happened.

MUSIC: 'Havana Club' by Ottmar Liebert

Sad Panda: "Street art is a form of vandalism; it's really bad and people should hate it."(:6)

Professor Shehab: "It doesn't have a very long life span. Not everything that is beautiful should live forever."(:6)

Hagar Tarek: "Sometimes when a graffiti artist draws in certain places it's out of context."(:4)

SOUNDEFFECT of birds

Every morning, I grab my cup of coffee to enjoy couple of moments in silence, but it never lasts for too long, Egyptian streets are so noisy and busy all the time especially in Cairo the capital of Egypt.

SOUNDEFFECT of a street

You would often hear Cairo traffic, people talking, and vendors selling things car honks

SOUNDEFFECT of vendor's car honk

and buildings everywhere and writing drawings on walls,

SOUNDEFFECT of rewinding a CD

Yes we write on walls: it may not look very appealing, but it definitely tells a story!

MUSIC: 'Tears in Rain by Joe Satriani

Doctor Bahia Shehab, professor of practice at the American university in Cairo explains what graffiti is.

Professor Shehab: "Graffiti is a very impulsive art also it's a very ethereal form of art. It lives for a very short while because of that I find it very charming is that you are not creating a work of art that is going to live forever, but rather you are creating a message that might be erased in five minutes or the next morning or in two weeks." (:20)

MUSIC: 'Tears in Rain by Joe Satriani

Graffiti is a form of expression that ranges from simple writings on walls to massive wall paintings. It's an act of objection, against corruption and oppression. It comes from the Italian word *graffito*. We can't really pin point the exact time at which graffiti began; it's sometimes viewed as act writing or spraying on walls to damage public property to express anger.

Ganzeer is or Mahmoud Fahmy is an Egyptian artist; Ganzeer in Arabic means the chain. His work has been blossoming since the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. He has been spreading messages about freedom social justice and criticizing Supreme council of the armed forces. Ganzeer's artistic activism has led to his arrest by Egyptian authorities.

There is no proper way of doing street art; it's messy, random, scattered everywhere, ugly and disturbing. At least, this is how most walls look like in Cairo. Sad Panda an Egyptian Graffiti artist has his own world view that he spreads by painting Sad Pandas everywhere. He has been doing street art since 2009. You might be thinking now who is Sad Panda? And may be expecting a brief introduction about him, but I am in the same position as you are, I have no idea. Sad Panda prefers to stay anonymous as according to him, what really matters is the work of art not the person behind it.

Sad Panda: "Art it's the most personal thing ever so you do what you do and then if the people liked it or hated it or whatever, it's the bonus you get. Street art is a form of vandalism; it's really bad and people should hate it. For me what I do is that I spread

sadness which is something bad so people should get mad because why do you want us to be sad you know. It's just too stupid. So they should actually hate whatever I do and ruin it. The thing is people liked it for a way or another I don't know why! It's sad but this is what happened but still; I try my best to make people feel sad.”(:48)

MUSIC: 'storm' by Vanessa-Mae

During the 25 January Egyptian Revolution, several protests took place mostly centered in Tahrir square. The walls of Mohamed Mahmud Street were an eye witness to the brutality of the police. Graffiti artists covered the walls with their art work documenting all what's happening, but that's the story of one street, so what was happening in nearby areas.

Sad Panda: “There is this piece in Zamalik; I guess it' still there I don't really follow up, but I was passing by this place once and I guess it was during Mohamed Mahmoud; like there was people dying ten minutes from this point. Fifteen to twenty couple just getting out laughing

SOUND EFFECT of beep

Drunk or whatever which is cool I don't mind this u know, but not with the same exact moment when people are actually dying for whatever reason even if you think that the reason why they are doing this doesn't really affect you like whatever it is so I went there the other day so I went there the other day and I wrote something on the wall right in front: keep on laughing you will die soon.”(:55)

While walking around Cairo streets, you would find paintings of Sad Pandas on walls and provoking messages.

Sad Panda: "I am doing this for you to hate it because I am just; it's either I am trying to make you sad. It's either in a sad way or the other way around I am making fun of you so still at the end you should feel bad you know." (:15)

MUSIC: 'Ana fe Intizarak' by Ammar El Sheraie

Graffiti doesn't have Egyptians origins; however, as it takes place in Egypt it must have had some of what I call The Egyptian flavor. Dr. Bahia Shehab adds her interest in Arabic calligraphy to some of her Graffiti art work.

Professor Shehab: "My interest relies in Arabic expression in the Arabic script whether it is calligraphy or a font or so all of the visual expression in the Arabic language, so I think graffiti is an extension to my research interest." (:16)

Dr. Bahia Shehab was invited to an exhibition commemorating 100 years of Islamic art in Europe, The only condition she faced is that she had to submit her work in Arabic but present any topic she wants.

MUSIC: 'Anni Di Silenzio' by Francesco Serao

Professor Shehab: "I only wanted to say No and in Arabic to say no we say no and a thousand times no. So I looked for a thousand different NOs on everything ever produced and then I collected my findings in a book and I placed them chronologically, and from that book came out an instillation which was three by seven meters instillation." (:20)

This event was only the birth of her idea, later in Egypt, you would find stencils of many Nos sprayed on walls, No to military trials, no to military rule, No to stealing the revolution, No to the new pharaoh, No to violence, No to burning books, and No to the stripping of women.

Professor Shehab: "I think the thousand times No is special because it launched my career as a serious artist. They are my children I can't choose. Cairo is a city that needs more color and whoever adds more color to the city is welcome to play."(:16)

Sad Panda: "The ideas you get you don't know where you get it and they actually keep eating you from the inside till they actually polluted you to get it to life."(:12)

Well, here comes the contradiction, street artists are spreading everywhere and painting everywhere they possibly can and some people believe that they should be given certain areas to paint. Hagar Tarek an AUC graduate believes that the role of streets artists is to make the slum areas of Cairo more beautiful and appealing.

Hagar Tarek: "When a graffiti artist draws in certain places, it's out of context. I believe if, in Cairo where we could give graffiti artists a certain area where they could actually make it better. I think it would have been better than just to draw their graffiti anywhere."(:14)

Sad Panda: "It's sad, you can't take what's made for the street and just make it private. You can't blame the people; you blame the people who actually put this idea in their minds. It's part of the trip that you draw, and what you draw people paint over it or ruin in a way or another and then you draw again." (:20)

Eventually, this is what art is all about differences. We will never be able to agree on one thing or even see things the same way; sound like I am describing life as well.

Thank you for listening. This documentary is produced by Engy Adham.

Special thanks to graffiti artist Sad Panda, Doctor Bahia Shehab professor of practice at the American University in Cairo, Hagar Tarek an AUC graduate.

Sources of Sound effects from: freeSFX.co.uk

Music from Youtube

Music by:

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