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Public Art Research,  
Aims and networks  
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<b>Public Art Research, aims and networks</b>	4
Editorial, José Guilherme Abreu UCP/ CITAR coord. R3iAP	

## Articles

José Guilherme Abreu , UCP/ CITAR coord. R3iAP, Portugal	6
<b>Letter on statuary and power. Statues as political statements</b>	
Carme Grandas, Institut d'Estudis Catalans, Catalan Society of Historical Researches	34
<b>Some considerations on the construction of Public Art Networks</b>	
Pedro de Andrade, University of Minho, Communication and Society Research Centre	57
<b>Cultural Resistance To Covid-19: An Encyclopedia of Public Art for Artists and Tourism Publics?</b>	
P. Moreira, E. Vieira, J. G. Abreu, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, CITAR, CBQF	75
<b>Insights for the endorsement of a holistic approach for public sculpture research: the BIONANOSCULP project</b>	
Yuliia Shemenova Department of Fine Arts of the Institute of Arts of Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Ukraine	87
<b>The theme of Judaica in the mural art of Poland (on the example of the murals of the cities of Krakow and Lodz)</b>	
Frederico Alves Caiafa, PhD Candidate, IHA/NOVA FCSH]	97
<b>Pixa Bixa: uma reflexão sobre arte urbana <i>queer</i> e o ativismo em Lisboa</b>	
Miguel Ángel Chaves Martín, Universidad Complutense de Madrid	105
<b>Commemorative monuments in Rome (1870-1911): images and symbols of the new capital</b>	
Sónia da Rocha, PhD Candidate, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, CITAR	119
<b>VIArtes – Ressonâncias entre a Arte Pública e o Património</b>	

## Essays/ Review

José Francisco Alves, CIEBA, FBAUL	130
<b>A nova onda de derrubada das estátuas</b>	
Svann Langguth, RWTH Aachen at the Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia	134
<b>Some guesswork on a cultural expression: Signs on the wall</b>	
Pedro Soares Neves, CIEBA/FBAUL, ITI/LARSyS	146
<b>Recensão do livro Arte(s) Urbana(s)</b>	

**José Guilherme Abreu** – UCP/CITAR

Co-editor of Volume 2 of CAP

### **Public Art Research. Aims and networks**

Since 20<sup>th</sup> century's last decades, public art, and its youngest expression, street art, have been obtaining increasing impact on non-specialized audiences, and gaining greater attention by critics and other specialists, for public art is the artistic discipline "that characterizes best the manifestations of the last third of the 20th century" (Maderuelo, 2000:240).

Nowadays, there is no urban improvement, no architectonic iconic intervention, no landscape project, no heritage revitalization initiative that do not have, as its expected consequence, public space redesign and public art display. Meant as one of the main urban regeneration tools, public art has been contributing to transform the 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial-functional city into the convivial cities of post-industrial era (Miles, 1997).

Present in art schools and university curricula, where it engages increasing advanced studies, when talking about Public Art now, we think the time has come to gather, to analyze and to reflect upon what has been done, in order to generate new synthesis, about what this novel, and yet very old domain, has achieved.

Engaging Public Art a progressive ideario (Armajani, 1995), has anything carrying social relevance really changed in our cities? Did public art succeed in catalyzing meaning to our common ground of interaction? How do social sciences assess the outcomes of globalized public space aesthetic gaze and use? And talking about meaning, is public art fostering social inclusion of multi-ethnic minorities and avant-garde thinking or action? As all utopian project, is public art inspiring the creation of new and more rewarding goals to our culture?

Obviously, these aims are not supposed to be achieved by a couple of articles in a single journal. So, let me express our goals in a most humble way, as Hannah Arendt did, when she said that "what I propose, therefore, is very simple: it is nothing more than to think what we are doing." (Arendt, 1958:5)

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