

Urban Art in Tel Aviv

Researchers

Yael Shapira

Master of culture research

Founder of "Alternative tel aviv"

Project manager

Arch. Orit Rozental

Conservation Architect

Conservation Department

Tel Aviv Municipality

Research Summary

Independent art in the public space, namely graffiti, stands apart from any other traditional art styles. Contemporary art only resides within official art establishments, and thus is intended only for the cultural elite. Contrarily, urban art exists in the common municipal public space, accessible to all. Urban art has transformed into a widespread field in Israel over the past 20 years, with varying areas, artists, and trends.

Urban art produced on buildings without permission from the owner is illegal – artists can face fines or even incarceration. Many city administrators and citizens, however, enthusiastically welcome urban art. A thirst is developing among the general public to discover more about the emerging art movement, and people have become so attached to street art that they mourn the removal or damage of pieces by authorities, property owners, or other artists.

The research will map, document, and preserve street art in Tel Aviv with artistic, cultural, and historical importance. It aims to define which artworks, artists, areas, and walls deserve recognition, maintenance, and preservation. Additionally, it will investigate how the city can facilitate independent street art in the future.

Research Description

The Tel Aviv urban art research will create a system to define Tel Aviv street-art pieces, areas, and walls that contain artistic, cultural, and historical importance. The research will first map the relevant areas and artists in the field. It will next identify styles and trends of urban art in Tel Aviv, both independently and in comparison to urban art in other major cities. The Tel Aviv municipality planning teams can then protect urban art from damage or erasure according to the research's guidelines.

In the mapping stage of the research, the maps will highlight the areas of Tel Aviv rich with street art. The map can help define Tel Aviv's urban art centers and circles of influence in order to create a scheme of urban art's development with respect to urban regeneration. The results of the research will explain why urban art exists in certain buildings, walls, and areas of the city, and what





values they hold for the city.

Information is currently being collected about urban art's historical background and identifying global influences on Israeli urban art. Additionally, the study is investigating the influence of social events in Tel Aviv and greater Israel on urban art.

The research will continue with a record of Tel Aviv's urban art history throughout past eras and generations of street artists. It will differentiate the content and techniques between graffiti and other public art, highlight significant artists in the field, and research the artists' backgrounds. Photographic documentation will accompany the findings.

The urban art research seeks to create a working set of guidelines through which planners can determine the importance of urban art in Tel Aviv, reasons to protect both urban art and the

values that urban art provides, which pieces to protect, and how to maintain them. Using other municipalities around the world as examples, the study will develop a list of recognition and maintenance methods to suggest how urban planning can enable urban art. For instance, planners can design streets based on certain guidelines, or factor urban art into designs for store fronts or other architectural projects so that street artists can contribute their artwork to the buildings. Ultimately, the research will help Tel Aviv's planning teams understand how to use urban design to sustain street art in Tel Aviv.

Research Status

Yael Shapira began research in March 2019. The study is currently collecting materials for the historical background.