

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta filozofická

Bakalářská práce

Street Art in American Culture

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Plzeň 2017

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta filozofická

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Studijní program Filologie

Studijní obor Cizí jazyky pro komerční praxi

Kombinace angličtina – francouzština

Bakalářská práce

Street Art in American Culture

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Plzeň 2017

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracoval(a) samostatně a použil(a) jen
uvedených pramenů a literatury.

Plzeň, duben 2017

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Poděkování

Chtěla bych poděkovat své vedoucí Mgr. et Mgr. Janě Kašparové za její neustálou podporu, odborné vedení a užitečné komentáře.

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1. Introduction

This bachelor's thesis is aimed at the phenomenon of street art. Since this phenomenon offers a lot of opportunities for exploration, not only various kinds and types of street art or possible approaches to it, the perspective of this bachelor's thesis is to focus entirely on graffiti and its alterations such as murals, stencils etc.

The exploration of graffiti is focused on the connection between the American historical, political and cultural events and the development of this subculture. The whole topic seems to represent an unusual challenge in the field of researching, as it was particularly difficult to find the appropriate piece, its author and locality. However, I found dealing with such an interesting topic to be a great opportunity to me.

Concurrently, the thesis is focused on the general description of the phenomenon of street art. Initially, the explanation of why to consider it as real art that has developed from great works of art into the current form and shape takes place.

The theoretical part is divided into two. The first part introduces street art in general. It describes the way of transformation into the current form. The definition of basic types of street art such as LED throwies or street installations is provided followingly. Further, a chapter about street art terminology introducing terms used in the subculture is presented.

The second part of the theoretical part of the thesis deals with graffiti. The etymology of the word is to be explained. To be ready to comprehend the phenomenon fully, the bachelor's thesis introduces the brief history and the development of the subculture. Then, the main intention of this thesis is presented - the connection between the American historical political and cultural events and the development of the phenomenon of graffiti. Primarily, it lays emphasis on the fight against racial segregation and great American figures such as J. F. Kennedy.

The theoretical part also discusses the point of street art being more or less illegal. It looks into a law clause and the basic theory of the ban. With this chapter the theoretical part is to be enclosed.

The practical part of this bachelor's thesis consists of two surveys – the Czech and the English one shared with foreigners. The method of the evaluation was based on the analysis of both surveys and the subsequent comparison of the obtained results.

The objective of the practical part was to compare the knowledge of Czech and foreign respondents.

2. Theoretical part

2.1 Street art

People have been surrounded by art since the first civilization. Art may be regarded as a message or as a tool of self-expression. During thousands of years the art had its place in caves, chapels and galleries and eventually made its way to streets, hence the term we are most interested in in this thesis – Street art.

Street art is usually understood as a visual art performed in public locations by various artists. It is not limited to the gallery venues, nor easily collected or possessed by those who turn art in to a trophy or investment.[1] The term gained popularity during the graffiti art boom in 1980's¹ and continues to be applied to subsequent incarnations till nowadays. The most common incarnations of today's street art are Stencils, Yarn-Bombing, Graffiti, Street installations or Sculptures. Its definition and uses are changing. Street art was originally considered as a tool to mark territorial boundaries of urban youth but today it is more or less seen as a mean of urban beautification and regeneration. The terms "urban art", "guerrilla art", "post-graffiti" and "neo-graffiti" are also sometimes used when referring to artwork created in these contexts.² It may be however also considered by many people as vandalism and under certain circumstances even a crime.

Nevertheless to understand that street art might be considered an art it is necessary to trace its roots. The first academy of art called Accademia e Compagnia delle Arti del Disegno (Academy of the Arts of Drawing) was established by Cosimo de' Medici in 1563 in Florence. He was supported by the architect Giorgio Vasari. The standards for the education of art were thus officially determined for the first time. It was faithful imitating enriched by the ideal retaining "the charm and smoothness". Later the new academies Europe

¹ The graffiti boom during the 1980's is mostly thought of as a countercultural phenomenon synonymous with the New York City subways and streets.

² "Neo-graffiti" is a term coined by Tokion Magazine in the title of its Neo-Graffiti Project 2000, which featured "classic" subway graffiti artists working in new media; others have called this phenomenon "urban art." A discussion by the Wooster Collective on terminology can be found at WoosterCollective.com.

came to existence in other places in Europe (Accademia di San Luca in 1577 or Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1648). They were all offering the education in the manner of Vasari's "arti del disegno" and they were trying to strictly distinguish fine arts from manual crafts. However, in 1839 when the photography was discovered people started to question the necessity of anxious observance of visual precision as this was much easier with cameras.

Most of the artists were attempting to face the rules of academy but they met just a massive opposition. They were not discouraged though and from the second half of 19th century till the beginning of World War 2 the world of arts fundamentally changed. A large quantity of creative approaches and interpretations occurred with the continuous violation of the rules of academy.[2]

The art has always been mirroring the importance of its period and since the beginning of the 20th century a large number of artistic movements has emerged. Those trends were often branded by society or they were self-proclaimed in declarations of young revolutionary artists. In a view of the fact that the art of expressing one's thoughts can be more difficult to appreciate than the art that depicts the real world, the modern art is often refused as a scant equivalent of children's art. Nonetheless, the majority of current artists depict culture and society they live in. They deal with the question of social pluralism, inner conflicts between spiritual and social life and the effects of consumerism and social liability. However, the result is not always pleasant and very it often reveals disturbing facts or insolvable opposites.

One of great examples of a social question pictured by the mean of street art is the painting on the wall on the abandoned playground in East Harlem (New York) called *Crack is Wack*. The author, Keith Haring, chose this place because it is on frequented place near to the high way, so many of passing drivers have the possibility to notice it. Haring lanced the campaign against crack. He wanted to make the government react to New York drug epidemic. The local authority made the wall re-paint, but later when they realized the topic of the painting, they asked Haring to paint a new version. *Crack is Wack* is one of Haring's pieces with the social message; he was

inspired by Jean Dubuffet, Andy Warhol and by the art of Graffiti. After his premature death at the age of 31 the wall became his New York memorial.[3]

2.1.1 Types of Street art

There are many types of street art in the whole world. We will try to name individually at least the most important of them in an alphabetical order.

Art intervention – This form of street art is used to bring about a change in the existing system. It is a process of intervening with already existing art works, with people or with a specific area. People also use interventions to protest about the artworks that they do not support. [4]

Graffiti – Writings or scribbled, scratched, or sprayed illicitly on a wall or other surface in a public place [5]

LED throwies - LED throwie is a small LED attached to a coin battery and a rare earth magnet (usually with conductive epoxy or electrical tape), used for the purpose of creating non-destructive graffiti and light displays. [6]

Murals – A large, complex, and labor-intensive graffiti painting. Pieces often incorporate 3-D effects, arrows, and many colors and color-transitions, as well as various other effects. [7]

Reverse graffiti – this term means leaving a mark or tag on surfaces that the artist does not paint on but selectively cleans [8]

Stencils – Stencil graffiti is one of the many types of graffiti. These use a design cut on a cardboard that can be easily used to produce a number of graffiti. Stencil graffiti also uses spray paints and markers just like a normal graffiti, and these paints are applied across the stencil to complete intricate designs. [9]

Sticker art – This art is also famous by the names of sticker bombing, sticker slapping, slap tagging and sticker tagging. This form of street art uses stickers to display a message or an image which is generally associated with a political agenda. Sticker art is also used to comment on an issue or a policy. Stickers

can be printed at very nominal costs and are also easy to put at accessible places. [10]

Street installations – while conventional street art is done on walls and surfaces street installations use three dimensional spaces in which objects are set in an urban environment. [11]

Tags – A stylized signature, normally done in one color. The simplest and most prevalent type of graffiti, a tag is often done in a color that contrasts sharply with its background. Tag can also be used as a verb meaning "to sign". [12]

Tiling – tiling is usually done on a street pavement by the same material that is used for crosswalks. [13]

Video projections – Video Projections have recently emerged out as an interactive form of street art. In this technique video projections are made on a wall or a building forming interesting images and animations. [14]

Wheatpaste – this concerns a homemade mixture used for putting up posters. Usually it is a concoction of flour, sugar and water. It is relatively cheap and it can be done in large quantities. Posters which have been put up with wheatpaste are referred to as wheatpastes [15]

2.1.2 Street art terminology

As every phenomenon, culture and subculture, street art has also its own terminology that is understandable only to those who are interested in it. These terms can describe the way it was done, the place where some piece occurred or the tools which artist used during his work. This chapter presents several chosen examples.

Spot Jocking – this term is used when someone puts up their work next to a popular street artist. This place will give them more attention [16]

Up/Getting Up – Getting up means that artist is doing his work consequently all around the city. When one notices that an artist has an impressive amount of his pieces, they may say that the artist is “really up” [17]

Childstyle – it is a piece of work that if done in the manner of child painting or that emulates the quality of kid’s art [18]

Sticky side – it creates a big part of graffiti and street art itself. Sticky sides are when artist paints or write on a sticky side of a sticker so he can stick his work down on inner side of some glass box (e.g. newspapers bin windows) [19]

Clipped – getting clipped means when the piece is partially covered by newer piece placed next to it [20]

Roller – it is the manner of creating pieces with rollers. They are usually large-scale works using house paint and paint rollers on high poles. They were originally used in graffiti for making big block letters and later adopted by street art community [21]

Ad disruption – or takeovers occur when artists use advertisements and billboards as their canvases. It can be done in two ways. One - when artist uses the advertisement and works with the content. Or second, when artist completely removes the ad and replaces it with his original work. [22]

Run time - The run time describes the length of time a piece has lasted on the street, from the moment it was put up to the instant it was removed, painted over, or worn away. Pieces that have long run times are impressive given the illegal nature of street art. [23]

2.2 Graffiti

2.2.1 Graffiti – the definition of the term

When talking about graffiti it is usually talked about writing on the public places like walls, bus stations, subway etc. The techniques are various. It can be spraying which is perhaps the most spread, painting with roller, writing with

markers or scratching on the glass or plastics. The origin of the word graffiti comes from Greek word “grafein” which means “to write”.

The message of the content is usually comprehensible for the specific group of people (e.g. who concretely did the piece, which crew). It is about expressing with the help of stylized letter, portrait – character, or signature – tag. There is wide choice of possibilities in styling but it has also its strict rules.

Stanislava Hrabcová describes graffiti in her diploma thesis as following *“it is non-official, non-structuralized and non-organized subculture of young people who react to anonymous life-style of a city. The graffiti represents a visual structure of letters with emotional context placed in public places anonymously, illegally, unworldly and iteraly. It is inspired by a number of artistic styles of 50’s of 20th century and by expression of mass culture like advertisements and commercials. Graffiti as a form of urban art stabilized its outward expression in to a standardized and stabile figure that is bordered peculiarly by pivotal topic – artistic treatment of letters with personalized style.”* [24]

2.2.2 Graffiti vocabulary

Because we will use a lot terms containing graffiti vocabulary in this thesis, it is necessary to explain at least the most important and the most used of them. They are ordered alphabetically.

Character – a face or a figure [25]

Chrom – graffiti made with silver color. Usually done in cities so it could be easily visible [26]

Jam – meeting of graffiti authors (sometimes graffiti jam – a meeting of graffiti authors on a legal wall) [27]

Legal – graffiti on a legal place/wall [28]

Needle, Skinny cap – a jet with the tightest mark [29]

Out line – a universal jet, tight line for outlining the silhouette [30]

Panel – graffiti made on train [31]

Piece – graffiti in general [32]

Rooftop – a graffiti made in height (e.g. on roofs) [33]

Sketch – a rough drawing of graffiti [34]

Tag – a personal sign of graffiti author [35]

Throw up – a quickly made graffiti, usually unicolor and one stroke [36]

Wholecar – graffiti over the railway carriage [37]

Wholetrain – graffiti over the trainset [38]

Writer – a person who does graffiti, an author of graffiti [39]

2.2.3 The history of graffiti

The graffiti movement had begun in the second half of 20th century in US metropolises. Most sources introduce a teenager from New York called TAKI (traditional Greek nickname for Demetrius) as the first writer. He lived in the 183rd street. He has worked as deliveryman which allowed him an easy entrance to public places. Once he was executing his job he spotted an inscription sprayed on a wall that said JULIO 204. When he checked that the number corresponds with the number of the street he quickly understood the message. Because of it he went to work the next day equipped with a spray and he sprayed his response– TAKI 183 – on the first wall and it started to appear over the whole New York. He was very passionate about this that people started to ask who TAKI 183 is and what does that mean. The response was explained in New York Times in article ‘*TAKI 183 Spawns Pen Pals*’: [40]

“Taki is a Manhattan teenager who writes his name and his street number everywhere he goes. He says it is something he just has to do. His TAKI 183 appears in subway stations and inside subway cars all over the city,

on walls along Broadway, at Kennedy International Airport, in New Jersey, Connecticut, upstate New York and other places.”[41]

Demetrius himself explains in the same article:

“I just did it everywhere I went. I still do, though not as much. You don’t do it for girls; they don’t seem to care. You do it for yourself. You don’t go after it to be elected President.”[42]

Young Demetrius became a celebrity and gain hundreds of followers who followed his rules and started to spray their own names. With this the legendary ‘tag’ was born and youth of the city discovered a new way of an entertainment, art and a life style. Streets, abandoned houses, passageways or garages on the outskirts of cities – slum section of cities were the places lead by gangs of teenagers mostly “black skinned” to who were these places like the home. Those places gave the space to this type of art and entertainment. Graffiti became their life ideology, their style connected with clothing and music – hip-hop.

During this period of time it was popular to do pieces on trainsets in subways and other means of transport because they permitted the quick spread of the message. However a new character appeared on a scene. It was SUPER KOOL 223 and he achieved fame when he changed the jet at his can. Nobody knows today what kind of jet it was but it allowed him and writers to cover bigger surface during their work.

The first who was successful at his attempts to do a whole car was FLINT 707 in 1973. He is also noticeable for using a 3D technique which consists in the trick where no straight borders are and the division between individual surfaces is done by using a perspective. Three years later, in 1976, the all over painted trainset appeared on the railway and three writers CAIN, MAD 103 and FLAME ONE were in their heyday. [43]

All those writers and artists seems to be part of group of young Afro-Americans who just react with graffiti and hip-hop life style to the same old generation of white rich kids who were romping around in disco clubs.

2.2.4 The connection between Graffiti and the American history

The phenomenon of graffiti was primarily created with the aim to leave some message. However, as it goes with the art of all kinds, artists quickly understood that they have the power to communicate with the world through their art. This power to communicate is also why there is a tight connection between the American history and the topics. Sprayers were doing their best to react and express their opinion during certain period of time, to a specific event in the history. The objective of this chapter is to capture this connection between American political and cultural historical events and the evolution of graffiti and give examples of several pieces. However the graffiti as itself is not done in these days, examples of them in kind of subspecies like murals or panels will be shown.

2.2.4.1 Rosa Parks

The topic of civil rights and especially racial segregation enables us to consult the question of the connection of historical events and graffiti. This topic forms a great part of American history and has never stopped to be discussed. It may be because a great part of the graffiti subculture is embodied by African American youth who were always very opened in expressing their feelings and opinions.

The racial segregation has always played a significant role in American history. It has always been there and at every period of time, there were attempts to solve it. It was, and still is a part of election campaigns of most of the candidates for the post of President. In the 1950's, the president of USA, Dwight David Eisenhower, overtook the office with determination to defend civil rights and he also supported them to the borders of federal administration's power. During the first three years of his governance, he abolished the racial segregation in public services in Washington D.C., such as hospitals for veterans and federal boathouses. Nevertheless, there were two main aspects standing in the way of definite act. The president preferred the local or state activity instead of federal ones and what more, he had doubts that this situation would be changed by laws. *"I do not believe that we can*

change people's hearts by the help of laws and state decisions." And therefore, the initiation to preserve human rights came from court rather than from executive or legislative power.

By the end of the year 1955, there was a turnover in the movement for civil rights in Montgomery, Alabama. It was 1st of December, when the African American seamstress Rosa Parks was on her way home after a long day at work. Because she refused to give up her seat in the bus to a white man, she was arrested. The leaders of the black community met the next evening in the Baptist church on Dexter Avenue and they started a large "bus boycott". This movement found a great leader in 26 years old local pastor Martin Luther King Jr. He enriched the movement by non-violence and passive resistance based on evangelism, on the work of David Henry Thoreau and on the Indian example of Mahátma Gándhí. [44]

In 2009 there was a street artist called Mr. Brainwash. He became popular thanks to the movie "*Exit through the gift shop*" directed by his fellow British artist Banksy. He painted a mural giving a hold for what have Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr. and Barack Obama done for the civil rights. This mural is painted in Los Angeles, next to the studio of Mr. Brainwash. It represents Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr. and Barack Obama, standing next to each other. On the left side of the wall there is a text that directly refers to these figures. The text underlines how related these three characters were. The three of them embody the evolution of African American rights since the 1950's. The repetition and choices of the verbs refer to specific action accomplished by these emblematic figures. (see picture 1)

Rosa Parks was the first African American woman to dare and "sit" for her rights and eventually, for those of all African American people. Her symbolic and heroic action was a starting point for Martin Luther King Jr's fight for African-American civil rights. There is no doubt his battle played a major role in the evolution of rights and mentality and therefore, made possible for an African American man to run for presidency and win. In a sense, Barack Obama becoming president of the United States in 2008, is the dream come true of Martin Luther King Jr.. Nonetheless given the current circumstances

and events happening in the States lately, one can hardly say that the fight for equality is over, and that the prejudices belong to the past. [45]

2.2.4.2 The assassination of J. F. Kennedy

The biggest changes related to of civil rights came during the leadership of J. F. Kennedy. At the beginning he did not want to provoke southern Democrats by perseverance to answer the racial issues. He was never as interested in civil rights as his brother Robert Kennedy or Hubert Humphrey. Whereas he made some dramatic gestures to support black leaders, he understood the moral and emotional importance of the biggest movement of this decade much later. His consciousness was woken up due to movement for civil rights, which was led by Martin Luther King Jr. The laws of desegregation at schools led to action thousands of parents and young people.

On 22nd November 1963, President John Fitzgerald Kennedy took his campaign journey in the center of Dallas. He was in an opened car with his wife Jacqueline, John Connally, the Governor of Texas and his wife Nellie. President Kennedy was shot twice to head and to neck. He died almost immediately. The Governor Connally was also seriously injured, however he survived this attack. Few hours later the police of Dallas arrested Lee Harvey Oswald, a 24 year old former sailor, who was the employee of Texas book warehouse from where the shots were fired. Oswald was murdered shortly after without an opportunity to ceondemn. Two days after his arrest, when he was transported from one jail to another, supervised by TV cameras, Jack Ruby, the owner of Dallas night club stepped out from the crowd and shot Oswald mortally to stomach. His death gave the birth to doubtfulness of the attack, which persists till today. Ones say, that it was CIA and mafia, others point out to Fidel Castro. In 1979 the White House's commission proclaimed, that there were more shooters killing Kennedy, but this theory was doubted by experts from FBI. May the circumstances of his assassination be of any kind, his tragic death preserved him in minds of people as martyr's leader, who was destroyed on the top of his life journey. [46]

In February 2017, the portal Foxnews.com published an article that released that graffiti referring to the assassination of JFK was found at the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, the World War II Memorial and the D. C. War Memorial. They were performed by permanent marker, nevertheless the author is unknown. This article did not quote the text of the graffiti so we cannot say whether it was satirical or not. (see picture 2)

“The graffiti is being removed by the National Mall and Memorial Parks monument preservation crew, and they are using a mild, gel-type architectural paint stripper that is safe for use on historic stone.” [47]

This piece of supposed vandalism is not the only graffiti piece reflecting the act of JFK’s assassination. As it was already said he is preserved in people’s minds as martyr’s leader. So, there is no surprise that small pieces of graffiti appear all over the world and mainly in the USA, which condole with his tragic death. Most of them are performed in simple way using just permanent markers. Usually with simple message: *“RIP JFK”* (see picture 3)

2.2.4.3 The rights of homosexuals

The atmosphere of liberalism in the 1960’s encouraged also the homosexuals to demand the right for a fair treatment and a general recognition. On 17th July 1969 the police made a raid in clubs for gays in Greenwich Village. The attempts to close all places where homosexuals got together were quite usual all over the country at that time. However the owners of the bar were trying to defend them and the fight moved to the streets. Another hundred homosexuals and their supporters joined the fight. The affray lasted the whole weekend and resulted into newly gained sense of belonging and to a common organization called Gay Liberation Front. When the information about the affray in the Stonewall bar spread the gay movement got nationwide dimension. One of the main tactics was to encourage people to not to be afraid to manifest their orientation. It was not an easy decision because those who confessed to be gay had to face ostracizing, sometimes physical attacks; they were excluded from army and civil service and they were discriminated at work. Despite this risk, thousands of homosexuals and

lesbians admitted their orientation. In 1973, there were nearly 800 gay organizations and every bigger city had its own gay community with its own culture. New gay churches, synagogues, medical institutions, culture centers, restaurants and many more public buildings were built. Homosexuals started to publish their own newspapers and they ran for public posts in politics. In 1974, gays forced the American psychiatrists to stop call the homosexuality “mental disease”. The next year, the Commission for American Civil Services abolished the prohibition of accepting homosexuals.

However as it happened with civil rights and the feminism movements, the gay movement also suffered the inner contradiction and powerful resistance from conservatives. Leaders of the lesbian movement accused their men counterparts of chauvinism and the non-sensibility to things that are specific to women. The increasing opposition of conservative moralists and Christian fundamentalists was bigger threat for gay community. These groups managed to invalidate the new laws against the gay discrimination in Miami in Florida, St. Paul in Minnesota and in Wichita in Kansas. However, the true equality was far away. By the end of the decade the gay movement lost its enthusiasm which it had at the beginning and it had troubles to maintain their hard-won victories, particularly when there was a new threat beyond the horizon – AIDS. This was probably the most discussed and the most feared social problem in the 1990’s. It affected the most the community of gays and drug addicts who used the syringes, but it spread among another groups of population not long after the first cases were announced in LGBT community. [48]

The graffiti enabled to express thoughts about this topic, not only by street artists, but mostly members of the gay community themselves. Most of the pieces show a simple confession made just by a marker or pen. It may be easier for them to express their orientation, because these pieces are mostly anonymous, so they do not have to be afraid of coming-out. Nevertheless, there are some graffiti pieces made by great graffitiists. Most of them are fighting not only for the possibility to encourage people to admit their orientation, but they fight for their rights for marriage or adopting a baby. On

the other hand, there are a lot of bigger and smaller graffiti pieces that are openly expressing their hate for gay community. Some of them even say: “*No to gay marriage, kill them.*”

Icy and Sot are two brothers from Iran, residing in Brooklyn, New York. Since 2006 they have contributed to international urban art culture through their striking stencil work depicting human rights, ecological justice, social and political issues. They transcend their histories of artistic and political censorship by using public art to envision a world freed from borders, war and gun violence.[49] In February 2014, they have made a stencil piece called “*Colorfire*”. This street art shows a little boy, holding a can of spray (aerosol) in one hand and in the other hand probably a lighter. He is spraying the aerosol out of the can and at the same time he lights up the lighter. It creates a fire. Because the can is full of colors, it creates a colorful light. His face is little bit tightened. The fire should represent the LGBT community. Perhaps, it should leave the message that people cannot be afraid of this community and maybe that it is necessary to “widen” it. This piece fights for rights of gays and lesbians. (see picture 4)

2.2.4.4 Black Lives Matter

Black lives matter is an international activist movement originating in the African American community that campaigns against violence and perceived systemic racism toward black people. BLM regularly holds protests against police killings of black people and broader issues of racial profiling, police brutality and racial inequality in the United States criminal justice system. In 2013, the movement began with the use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on social media, after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of African-American teenager Trayvon Martin. Black Lives Matter became nationally recognized for its street demonstrations following the 2014 deaths of two African-Americans: Michael Brown, resulting in protests and unrest in Ferguson, and Eric Garner in New York City. Since the Ferguson protests, participants in the movement have demonstrated against the deaths of numerous other African Americans by police actions or while in police custody. In the summer of 2015, Black Lives Matter activists became involved in the

2016 United States presidential election. The originators of the hashtag and call to action, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi, expanded their project into a national network of over 30 local chapters between 2014 and 2016. The overall Black Lives Matters movement, however, is a decentralized network and has no formal hierarchy. [50]

In June 2015, when 29-year-old artist Markus Prime saw footage of Texas police officer aggressively manhandling a 15-year-old black girl, he was full of emotions. He said that watching the footage of Cpl. Eric Casebolt forcing that girl, whose name is Dajerria Becton, face-down to the ground and sitting on top of her as she cried for her mother triggered an immediate need to respond. [51] He decided to channel these emotions, use them as fuel and express them through art. Markus wanted to show what it looks like if a black women were awarded the kind of respect white men receive. The image shows a white policeman lying face-down on the ground with his hands tied behind him. Meanwhile, a black girl wearing an orange swimsuit stands over him with one leg placed on the officer's back and her hands triumphantly on her hips. Though the figures pictured draw parallels to Becton and Casebolt, they are faceless in Markus' image, which reflects the ongoing harsh treatment of black lives at the hands of the police. The message it sends is symbolic of the entire Black Lives Matter movement, Markus said. He also said that using the artwork to react to real-life events is the sort of thing he does not do too often, mainly because he despises the idea of using his work as a prop to gain more attention. But watching Becton forced face-down to the ground by a police officer was something that he, as an artist, could not ignore. (see picture 5)

2.2.4.5 September 11 attacks

The September 11 attacks, also referred to as 9/11, were a series of four coordinate terrorist attacks by the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda on the United States in the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001. The attacks killed 2,996 people, injured over 6,000 others, and caused at least \$10 billion in property and infrastructure damage and \$3 trillion in total costs.

Four passenger airliners operated by two major U.S. passenger air carriers were hijacked by 19 al-Qaeda terrorists. Two of the planes, American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, were crashed into the North and South towers of the World Trade Center complex in New York City. Within an hour and 42 minutes, both 110-story towers collapsed, with debris and the resulting fires causing partial or complete collapse of all other buildings in the World Trade Center complex, including the 47-story 7 World Trade Center tower, as well as significant damage to ten other large surrounding structures. A third plane, American Airlines Flight 77, was crashed into the Pentagon (the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense) in Arlington County, Virginia, leading to partial collapse of the building's western side. The fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, initially was steered toward Washington D.C., but crashed into a field in Stonycreek Township near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after its passengers tried to overcome the hijackers. It was the deadliest incident for firefighters and law enforcement officers in the history of the United States, with 343 and 72 killed respectively.

The destruction of the World Trade Center and nearby infrastructure caused serious damage to the economy of Lower Manhattan and had a significant effect on global markets, closing Wall Street until September 17 and the civilian airspace in the U.S. and Canada until September 13. Many closings, evacuations, and cancellations followed, out of respect or fear of further attacks. Cleanup of the World Trade Center site was completed in May 2002, and the Pentagon was repaired within a year. On November 18, 2006, construction of One World Trade Center began at the World Trade Center site. The building was officially opened on November 3, 2014. Numerous memorials have been constructed, including the National September 11 Memorial & Museum in New York City, the Pentagon Memorial in Arlington County, Virginia, and the Flight 93 National Memorial in a field in Stonycreek Township near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

The 9/11 has influenced not only the further life of people of the United States but it influenced also their religious faith. For some of them it strengthened, it helped them to deal with their fear of further attacks and to

cope with their loss of their family members, friends and loved ones. Other started to question their faith, because they cannot understand what happened and their religion did not give them answers they wanted. [52]

This incident had also a big influence on street art. As it was for example with assassination of J. F. Kennedy, a lot of people grabbed markers into their hands and started to spread their messages of condolences all over the country. Their messages consisted mostly of simple “9/11”. The reference was discovered also on Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, the World War II Memorial and the D. C. War Memorial. However, as it was already mentioned, all memorials were cleaned from those pieces. Lot of graffiti is intended to encourage people to live life like they lived before. This encouragement was done for example on the statue of General George Washington in New York City, few days after the attacks. The author left here a simple message with chalk: “*My Friends, we will be fine.*”, and he attached the piece sign. (see picture 6)

However, big and very live pieces of graffiti connected to 11th September arisen next to the small messages. In most cases about it was in form of murals. Among the artists who contributed was also Banksy; he made his tribute in Manhattan’s Tribeca neighborhood depicting Twin Towers with a flower instead of an explosion. (see picture 7)

In the USA, there is a crew of street artists, called The Wallnuts. It is a group of nine people working on graffiti and murals together. One of them, with the nickname Phyme, created a mural after the attacks of 11th of September. It depicts the American flag on the background of World Trade Center. On the right side of the mural there are emblems of institutions which helped during the incident (e.g. NYPD). On the right-down corner is depicted the World Trade Center in flames – right after the attack. Above this there is an American bold-headed eagle, crying over the loss of lives. And over him there is a writing that says: “*Remember 9-11-01*” This mural was made as a tribute to those who survived the 9/11 attacks, and as a condolence to those who lost their lives. (see picture 8)

The 9/11 attack is probably the “the most liked” topic among the graffiti artists, because of American nationalism and the need of constant support. There is an innumerable quantity of bigger and smaller pieces. A lot of them are from the period right after the incident. However a lot of graffiti is created reflecting what happened that day even today.

2.2.4.6 President Donald J. Trump

Donald John Trump is an American Republican politician and the 45th president of the United States, who he became on 20th January 2017. He came into White House at the age of 70 as the oldest and at the same time the richest president elected. He also became the first man in office without previous political or military post. On the 16th July he officially announced his candidacy for presidential election by the Republican Party and after the victory at primaries he obtained the nomination for the office of the President of the United States during the party’s meeting in July in Cleveland. On the 8th November 2016, he gained at elections 306 votes and he defeated his main opponent Hilary Clinton, who gained 232 votes.

His presidential campaign was deemed scandalous. He was not afraid to criticize the former leaders of the country. On 16th July 2015, when he officially announced his candidacy he also introduced his pre-election mottos “*Make America Great Again*” and “*America first*”. During the first Republican debate he was the only one who did not make any commitment to support the winner of primaries and that he would not candidate for independent third party in case of his failure. According to his own statement, he was against the American invasion to Iraq in 2003. During the TV debate of Republican candidates for president in September 2015 he criticized the former US president George W. Bush and his brother Jeb Bush because of the war in Iraq. When he announced his run for president he said that his property is \$8,7 billion, however according to Forbes Magazine it was \$4,5 billion.

He is “the king of social networks”. His domain is Twitter, where he often attacks his opponents. For example, “*If Hillary Clinton can’t satisfy her*

husband what makes her think she can satisfy America?” or “Jeb Bush has to like the Mexican illegals because of his wife.” [53] [54]

There are many reasons why many protests and demonstration took place all over the America, after he was elected the next US President.

Those demonstrations touched the graffiti and the street art, too. Most of pieces are satirical murals referring to his personality as well as to his appearance. Lots of them also depict his current wife, Melania Trump.

For example, the New York street artist Hanksy depicted Trump as “a *giant pile of crap*” on Manhattan’s Lower Eastside in the summer of 2015. It lasted the course of the presidential campaign, but it was whitewashed in early January. (see picture 9)

Lots of graffitists depict Donald Trump as a caricature of Adolf Hitler, expressing that his opinions about “non-white Americans” are very similar to Hitler’s about Jews. For instance, the artist named ABCNT shows Trump as a small boy hailing as it was done in fascistic Germany. This piece can be found in Los Angeles. (see picture 10)

In mocking his appearance, there is no exception that his hair or his skin’s color stays untouched. As an example I have chosen the piece of unknown artist in San Francisco. This author has chosen to comment on his defense of white supremacist. He switched his head with an orange that has his face. Above this picture there is a writing “*white supremacist*”, where the word “white” is scored out and replaced by “orange”. (see picture 11)

In contrast to satirical pieces, there are still a few pieces that are supporting Donald Trump and that are expressing the accordance with his opinions and statements. They appear in a classical graffiti style, to give a simple message mostly by using hashtags with Trump’s statements. (see picture 12)

2.2.5 Why is graffiti illegal?

“If graffiti changed anything – it would be illegal” – Banksy

The above used Banksy’s proposition depicts precisely the intention of this chapter. Here the facts will be explained about why this phenomenon, not only of graffiti, but of most of street art subcultures too, is more or less illegal.

Widespread graffiti may diminish the appearance of community and indicate a growing gang presence, according to the Los Angeles Police Department. Gang members use graffiti tags to mark territorial lines and intimidate rival gangs. The LAPD recognizes the graffiti is often created by young adults for non-gang-related reasons, ranging from social activism to civil disobedience.

Authorities are concerned that graffiti produces a negative image of the community. While many images are purely artistic, some graffiti contains profanity, advertises drug trafficking or expresses prejudiced ideals.

The cost of repairing vandalized property also takes a financial toll on communities and local governments. Cities in California, Connecticut and other state have tried to solve this question by implementing “free wall” programs to provide artists with legal areas to paint. Unfortunately, these initiatives can inadvertently attract more illegal activity to businesses surrounding free walls.

Also, it is necessary to mention the “broken window theory” here. The broken window theory is a metaphor, which states that “a broken window left unattended is a sign that nobody cares and leads to more damage, more broken windows.” So, using other words it is possible to say that if nobody would not care about graffiti and left it on the walls and on public properties it would cause much more graffiti and much more concerned crime. [55]

The phenomenon of street art is not considered as a real art, even if it enables the artists to express their thoughts and feelings. This was described at the beginning of this thesis. The street art is a very wide topic. Because of

this it was necessary to present at least the most popular types of street art. This bachelor's thesis is aimed at the subculture of graffiti. Concretely how it is connected with the historical events. It has shown that the history inspires the graffiti artists and the world is full of graffiti referring to some historical political or cultural event.

3. Practical part

The practical part of this bachelor's thesis is aimed at the research survey. For this purpose, two questionnaires were created - one in Czech and the other one in English. The Czech form was spread among people in the Czech Republic via internet and the English one was shared with people all around the world – predominantly in the USA, Portugal and Germany.

The Czech survey includes 3 questions about sex, age and education. Other 3 questions which are intended to define the street art and street artists. Followingly, there are 3 other questions testing the ability to recognize shown types of street art. The last inquiry surveys the people's views of street art; whether they consider it to match real art or whether it rather reminds them of vandalism.

The English survey is identical, with one more question in addition. This query's point is the origin of the respondent, as there is a need to divide respondents in accordance with their nationality. I anticipated this question to provide me with data revealing different knowledge of people from various places of the world.

The research part is divided into four parts. The first part is the analysis of the Czech survey. Herein, the used method consists of examining the questions in the survey and commentaries of the respondents' replies. The second part deals with the analysis of the English survey. The same method is to be applied with this, as well. The third part comments on the results of both surveys, and draws conclusions about people being acquainted with the phenomenon of world's street art. Based on both the surveys containing the question about known street artists, the fourth part introduces them and presents some of their works.

3.1 The analysis of the Czech survey

This survey engaged 40 respondents. The absolute majority of them were women with 82, 5% of respondents which means 33 women. 17, 5% of

men covered the rest. In compliance with the **age**, the respondents are divided into five groups:

- 15 – 20 years – 8 respondents (20%)
- 21 – 25 years – 19 respondents (47, 5%)
- 26 – 30 years – 6 respondents (15%)
- 31 – 35 years – 4 respondents (10%)
- 36 + years – 3 respondents (7, 5%)

The following question investigated **the terminated education**. On the ground of their answers, the respondents are divided into 5 groups representing the degree of their education.

- Elementary school – 4 respondents (10%)
- High school/grammar school – 29 respondents (72, 5%)
- University; Bachelor degree – 4 respondents (10%)
- Graduate specialist – 1 respondent (2, 5%)
- University; Master degree – 2 respondents (5%)

These are the questions intending to divide the respondents into corresponding groups. The forthcoming questions are inquiring the people's cognizance of the phenomenon of street art.

The fourth question of the Czech survey was asking people if **they knew what street art was**. This query was created with the intention to ascertain the amount of respondents (not)being familiar with the phenomenon. There were four options to answer:

- Yes, street art is my hobby – 0 respondents (0%)
- Yes, I am actively interested in it – 2 respondents (5%)
- Yes, but I am not actively interested in it – 34 respondents (85%)
- No, I have never heard about it – 4 respondents (10%)

These answers reveal street art as a free-time activity, or as a way of life not widely spread among people. However there still is a good base of good street artists and performers.

The fifth question dealt with **people's idea about the meaning of the term "street art"**. It was intended to give various definitions. As this query was set in the Czech survey, the most frequent answer was a simple translation of the English word "*street art*" into Czech "*pouliční umění*". The other answers represented "*free art*", "*the art in streets*", "*the art presented on public places*". The most complex answer suggested "*The street art is whichever creative work on public places made by man. It includes both graffiti and installations, sculptures, billboards etc.*"

In accordance with the previous question revealing some respondents not being aware of street art actually existing and having a particular meaning, even here we can encounter the answer of not knowing what the term means, or a very general answer "*painting, creating*".

On one hand, this indicates the fact that knowledge of street art is very general and basic. On the other hand, those short definitions were quite true, with some deficiency in details. However we can derive accordingly that although most people are not interested in street art, or they even have no idea what it is, they are able to reckon its probable meaning.

Do you know any street art artists or their work? This was the sixth question of the survey not limited by the origin of the artist, so the respondents could mention any name. This question was oriented mainly onto those having answered the fourth question suggesting they were actively interested in street art. Obviously, those who take no active interest or have never heard about the phenomenon cannot participate on providing examples of street artists.

In accordance with this fact the majority of the answers stated the respondents not being able to name any of the street artists' names. Yet, some did mention a name, very frequently the England-based graffiti artist Banksy. Another often repeated name was Pasta Oner, who is a Czech pioneer of graffiti and street art. Tomáš Popelka and Knížák were suggested as well. The only American street artist mentioned was RISK, who has been on scene since 1980's.

The results of this inquiry are to testify the outcome of the previous question.

The forthcoming three questions match the same pattern. Each respondent was asked **to identify the shown example of street art**. The respondents had a possibility to choose the right answer from three options

containing one being right. The examples were chosen randomly, without any logical connection inbetween.

The first example reveals graffiti that was originally made in Indonesia, in front of the building formerly being a hospital (see picture 13). The proposed options were:

- Graffiti – 39 respondents (97, 5%)
- Paste up – 0 respondents (0%)
- Stencils – 1 respondent (2, 5%)

This question was responded perfectly with just one exception in which the respondent ticked the option “stencils”. For graffiti being widely spread, the abovementioned outcome is not surprising. Which is of interest is the link inbetween the answers revealing the respondents not even having a clue of the meaning of street art and then finally realizing being aware of this piece.

The second illustration introduced the installation by the Portuguese artist Bordalo II called Flamingo (see picture 14). It is placed near the city of Oeiras and it was made on the occasion of the Festival Iminente. The options proposed for this example were:

- Bomber – 3 respondents (7, 5%)
- Installation – 31 respondents (77, 5%)
- Lettering – 6 respondents (15%)

Anew, most of the respondents were right choosing the option of installation. This type of street art is not as known as graffiti, however the title "installation" evidently manifests the procedure used for completing this type of street art.

The third piece presented the yarn bombing made by the artist from Houston Magda Sayek (see picture 15). According to the answers, this example was noticeably the most difficult one to recognize. From the proposed options:

- Installation – 8 respondents (20%)
- Yarn bombing – 19 respondents (47, 5%)
- Sticker – 13 respondents (32, 5%)

In here, the majority of respondents did not miss the target again. However, the number of incorrect answers was not very diverse. This effect may be caused by the fact, that yarn bombing is not spread in the Czech Republic at the scale needed to people being able to guess the right term.

The last question of the survey concerned **the people's opinion about street art, whether they rather consider it being art or vandalism.**

The bulk of respondents expressed their answer followingly:

"It depends; I consider it as art until it does not damage the private property, schools or office buildings."

Or:

"I think that it is a piece of art which we can admire, but only conditioned by it being placed on an interesting spot. Unfortunately, not everyone who

endeavors to perform (in this case we talk mostly about) graffiti is a real artist and no every time he chooses a right place – public or private property as e.g. trains, houses and their plastering are the zones, where graffiti should not appear without any previous permission. In this case I consider it being foul vandalism.”

Within this question, 7 other respondents answered “art” without any further explanation.

3.2 The analysis of the English survey

Alike the previous survey, this questionnaire equally consists of 10 questions, with one extra question inquiring the origin of the respondent.

According to the sex, the majority of respondents were again women with 24 respondents (60%).

Based on their age, the respondents were divided into five groups that were made to be in accordance with the Czech survey.

- 16 – 20 years – 9 respondents (22, 5%)
- 21 – 25 years – 14 respondents (35%)
- 26 – 30 years – 4 respondents (10%)
- 31 – 35 years – 4 respondents (10%)
- 36 + years – 9 respondents (22, 5%)

According to this fact, the majority of respondents come from the age group from 21 to 25 years.

The following question demanded the origin of the respondent. It was integrated into the survey, because the place where the respondent lives can influence their knowledge about street art. It is caused by the fact that street art is developed differently in various countries.

- United States of America – 25 respondents (62, 5%)

- Great Britain – 1 respondent (2, 5%)
- Germany – 3 respondents (7, 5%)
- France – 4 respondents (10%)
- Spain – 1 respondent (2, 5%)
- Australia – 6 respondents (15%)

As there was only one respondent coming from Germany and one from Spain, we can not integrate their answers as relevant for the whole nation. Nevertheless, they can be integrated to maintain the quantity of 40 respondents.

The fourth question inquired the terminated education of the respondent. In accordance with their answers, they were divided into five groups:

- Elementary education – 0 respondents (0%)
- Junior high school – 4 respondents (10%)
- High school – 17 respondents (42, 5%)
- Post-secondary education – 7 respondents (17, 5%)
- Graduate education – 12 respondents (30%)

Based on this, the terminated education of the majority of respondents is high school education. 7 respondents attended the post-secondary education which is an optional final stage of formal studying. This stage of education is often delivered at universities, academies, colleges, seminaries, conservatories and institutes of technology. 12 respondents are learned in graduate education which involves learning and studying for academic or professional degrees or certificates.

The fifth question focused on the awareness of the existence of street art phenomenon. They responded followingly:

- Yes, it is my hobby – 0 respondents (0%)
- Yes, I am actively interested in the street art – 7 respondents (17, 5%)
- Yes, but I am not actively interested in it – 24 respondents (60%)
- No, I have never heard about it – 9 respondents (22, 5%)

In this case, the number of respondents having street art as their hobby is the same as in the Czech survey (0). Most of the respondents stated knowing the term street art but not being actively interested in it. In addition 9 respondents suggested having never heard about such art.

The following question dealt with the respondents' knowledge of the meaning of the term.

The answers were similar. Everybody suggested it being a special type of art performed in public places. Some of the respondents enumerated some kinds of street art such as stencils, graffiti, yarn bombing, installation of acrobatics. Only two respondents reported not to know the meaning of the word.

The seventh question inquired the respondents' knowledge of any names from the field of street art. Unfortunately, the majority of them was not able to provide any name. However, there were some suggesting a few artists personally. The most frequently mentioned names were Bumblebee – a street artist from Los Angeles; Other from the USA as well; Lady Pink, Mr. Brainwash, Nychos, Keith Harring or Dzia – the performer from Belgium or Word to Mother – an artist from The United Kingdom.

The other three questions again demanded the respondents' ability to recognize the shown sample of street art. The examples were the same as in the Czech survey so there is no need to present them again. Equally, the respondents could choose the right answer from three proposed options.

The first example revealed the graffiti. From proposed options, respondents replied followingly:

- graffiti – 35 respondents (87, 5%)
- Paste up – 3 respondents (7, 5%)
- Stencils – 2 respondents (5%)

The next picture presented the installation by Bordalo II. The chosen options were:

- Bomber – 0 respondents (0%)
- Installation – 40 respondents (100%)
- Lettering – 0 respondents (0%)

These answers make it clear that the connection between the title of this street art and the piece itself is very tight in this case. Thus, even if the respondent does not know anything about street art, they do not lack the brains to recognize this example.

The third and the last illustration represented the yarn bombing. Based on the proposed options, respondents chose following:

- Installation – 9 respondents (22, 5%)
- Yarn bombing – 27 respondents (67, 5%)
- Sticker – 4 respondents (10%)

Given that we dealt with some respondents not being aware of street art's existence, this kind of it was too hard for them to title. Nevertheless, most of the respondents chose the right answer of yarn bombing anyway.

The very last question of both surveys investigated the respondents' views of street art. The English version provided the same sub-question as the Czech survey dealing with the respondents' considering street art rather representing real art or manifestation of vandalism.

In contrary to the Czech survey revealing occasional answers of it being both art and vandalism depending on the venue, permission and a thin border one has to be aware of not to spoil it, in the English survey people were not afraid of openly expressing their negative opinion about it, for example:

“Graffiti is illegal and should not be done. If the person is so interested in painting on buildings and other property, they should do it on paper and murals. Then, I would call it art. Doing something illegal should not be called artistic and beautiful in any shape or form. It is wrong and should not be done. Everything beautiful should be right.”

Nevertheless, even within this survey we could encounter such questions suggesting both sides of the activity. Particularly:

“As does everything, it has two points of view. On one hand, when it is nice, with a thought, we can accept it. On the other hand, when it only lies in a random outcry which is done on one’s house, then it is vandalism and it should be illegal.”

Furthermore, other statements considering street art as real art and not admitting it being able to represent an expression of vandalism were to be provided:

“Whether you like it or not, graffiti IS art. The definition of art is the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture. Is graffiti not visual? It is a way for artists to express themselves. And it is art.”

Or:

“It is art because it is something that inspires people and allows them to have a say. For example a very famous one is by Meek. It says keep your coins, I want change. This saying was extremely powerful and captured the attention of several people. This saying is powerful. Graffiti has meaning through the form of art.”

These statements were chosen from the questionnaires of American people. Therefore it shows that Americans are more open-minded to graffiti and street art in general. On the contrary, they are not afraid of expressing their aversion to this phenomenon as well.

3.3 The comparison of Czech and English survey

The intention of this chapter is to summarize and comment on the results of both the questionnaires. It is to be carried out in several paragraphs. Afterwards, both summaries are to be compared with the intention of finding out which respondents are better informed about the phenomenon of street art itself.

In the Czech survey, more women responded. Particularly, 82, 5% of all respondents were female. The most numerous age group was from the age of 21 to the age of 25 years. It took 47, 5% respondents. The majority of Czech respondents were educated at the level of high school or grammar school, which corresponds with the most represented age group.

Answering the question of knowing street art generally, 85% stated so, but they do not take any particular interest in this phenomenon. Contrarily, most of the answers to the question about the explanation were right, which shows the ability to derive the right definition from the name itself. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents stated that they are not familiar with any name of a street artist. A little group of them mentioned mostly Czech names such as Pasta Oner, Tomáš Popelka or Knížák and the most popular British artist Banský representing foreign performers.

The following three questions dealing with the recognition of street art types were not problematic for most of the respondents and higher percentage of answers were at the right option's disposal. In the first case requiring graffiti as the right answer, only one respondent ticked a wrong option (stencils). The second sample dealt with installation. In this case people were not as sure as in the first one which is to be derived from the outcomes where 77, 5% chose the right answer, but 15% of them voted for lettering. The last example was

perhaps the most difficult one when considering the result. In spite of majority (47, 5%) answering right (yarn bombing), still there was a numerous group of people (32, 5%) who suggested “sticker” as the right one.

The last question looked into the people’s opinion about street art asking them whether they consider it being art or vandalism. No answer suggested it representing vandalism completely. Majority of respondents stated that provided the piece is nice, with a thought and performed at a worthy venue, then it is art. However, given that somebody sprays on someone’s facade or any private property, the respondents comprehend it as pure vandalism which should not be done.

The English survey was a bit more balanced in the question of sex; 60% of respondents were women with the counterpart of 40% of men. The most numerous age group was again from the age of 21 years to the age of 25 years and the terminated education was at the level of high school which corresponds with the age. Most of the respondents came from The United States of America, particularly 62, 5%. These were followed by Australians with 15%.

No respondent participated on street art stating it as their hobby; however 17, 5% of them were actively interested. Nevertheless, the most numerous group was created out of those who were familiar with the phenomenon of street art, but they are not actively interested in it. In addition 22, 5% stated that they had never heard about street art at all. Despite a comparatively high percentage of those having never heard about it, the definitions from the sixth question were more or less right which is to thank to the title itself.

Similarly to the Czech questionnaire, the following three questions asked the people to recognize the shown examples of street art. In the first case the respondents were a little bit uncertain. In comparison with the Czech result, only 87, 5% respondents chose the right option of graffiti. There is a probability that this fact was caused by slightly better knowledgeableness of the respondents of the English survey. The second provided sample was, on the

contrary, much better in this case, as there was not a single wrong answer to this question. All 100% respondents ticked the right option of the installation. The third one came out better for the English respondents again. From 40 respondents 67, 5% of them voted for the option of yarn bombing, which was right. In spite of the fact that 22, 5% of them chose the installation, the complex result is still better.

In the last question dealing with the opinion of street art, a number of respondents were not afraid to express their disgust about this kind of art and they stated that it was pure vandalism and should be illegal. However, a high number of them defended street art as real art with the argument of it being good-looking, providing us with a particular message to share or beautifying public places in a way. As well as this, a great argument presented it to be a way of expressing personal feelings in a visual way which corresponds with the very definition of art.

To compare these two surveys; the English one was more balanced in the question of sex. Both of them had the same dominant age group from 21 to 25 years. As well as this, the level of education was the same in both surveys.

In the question dealing with respondent knowledge of the phenomenon of street art the majority of Czech respondents stated that they were familiar with it, but they were not actively interested. A more significant difference was in the option that suggested "yes, I am actively interested in it". This option was chosen only by two Czech respondents; meanwhile in the English questionnaire seven respondents voted so. The question asking to give a definition of street art was very balanced. Everybody described street art in their own words and everybody was right.

In the question dealing with the respondents' awareness of any street artists, the English respondents were able to provide more names, so we can assert that they are better informed about performers generally.

Nevertheless, the answers on the questions with examples of street art were again balanced with just one exception. The second example representing the installation was better answered by English respondents which has to do with the straight connection between the name of the type and the product itself.

In the last question, the Czech respondents were more or less identical in their answers. None of them was straightly against the street art, until it damaged their or others' private property. On the contrary, the English respondents were not afraid to express their clearly defined attitude. We might say that in accordance with their answers, they could be divided into three groups. The first group would consist of those being comfortable with street art and considering it being real art. The second group would involve people who were strictly against the phenomenon and who described it as pure vandalism. The third group would be made from people answering in the same way as the Czech respondents. That means they are not against street art until it damages private property.

3.4 Artists mentioned in the questionnaires

As already abovementioned in the introduction to the practical part; in this subchapter some artists mentioned in the surveys will be shortly introduced.

3.4.1 The Czech artists

Pasta Oner – his proper name is Zdeněk Řanda. He is the pioneer of the graffiti in the Czech Republic. On scene he has been working since 2005. Among his production belong “Last Day in Paradise” (Prague, subway station Anděl), “Time/Brain mural” (Prague, Ženíškova street), or “Im Not Who I Was Before (Prague, Národní třída)

Tomáš Popelka – he is known under the pseudonym **real 143**. He started to paint eleven years ago but he discovered spraying 6 years ago. He works mainly in Karlovy Vary.

3.4.2 The American artists

Bumblebee – a contemporary street artist from Los Angeles. He is associated with figurative designs, razor sharp stencils, and a controlled color palette. His work is represented by e.g. “Blanket” (Los Angeles)

Lady Pink – She was born in Ecuador but raised in New York City. In 1979 she started writing graffiti and soon got well known as the only female capable of competing in the graffiti subculture with boys. Chosen from her murals, we have to mention “Dragon Wall”, “9-11 Tribute” or “Lady of the Leaf”

4. Conclusion

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to introduce the phenomenon of street art in American culture. The thesis was particularly focused on the graffiti in connection with American historical political and cultural events. The main aim was to find out if and how the connection is to be made.

The thesis was divided into two parts – theoretical and practical. In the theoretical part, the phenomenon of street art in general and the subcultures were introduced and the question about street art being real art or not was dealt with. The second part of the theoretical part was focused on the mentioned connection. The procedure was done in a way of introduction of the chosen era or event in several paragraphs and then the piece of graffiti was introduced with its author and its location.

The practical part presented two surveys – the Czech and the English ones. The Czech questionnaire was shared with people living in the Czech Republic. The English questionnaire was spread among people all around the world, but mainly in the United States of America. The survey was submitted by 80 people in total. The main aim was to compare the knowledge and awareness of street art of these two groups. The results came up really balanced just with minor differences. These differences suggested the unlike level of knowledge of street art.

To sum the outcomes up, both the interviewed groups showed some recognition of this topic. Foreign respondents inclined to answer both more correctly, particularly and thoroughly which represents the main difference. Given that the name of street art itself and most related expressions originate from the English language, the foreign respondents were to gain this advantage. On the contrary, most of the Czech participants showed their familiarity with such terminology, as well. The explicitness of the foreign respondents was another point of interest which showed at least a different point of view at the whole topic or maybe even revealed the diverse nature of the people's origins.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasise the general awareness of street art which is either conscious for the respondents or at any rate are they able to reckon its point.

5. Endnotes

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7. Abstract

The aim of the Bachelor's thesis was to introduce the phenomenon of Street art, to enumerate some of the street art types and terms, to verify the connection between graffiti and political and cultural events in the history of the USA and to compare the knowledge about the street art of Czech and foreign people.

The thesis is divided into several parts. The theoretical part introduces the phenomenon of the street art. It is divided into several subchapters. These subchapters are concerned about the evolution of street art, the types of street art, the street art terminology, the phenomenon of graffiti, its glossary, and the connection between the graffiti and historical political and cultural events in the USA. The practical part occupied the research survey of which aim was to discover the different level of knowledge of street art of Czech and foreign people. This Bachelor's thesis might inform the readers about the street art in general and about the graffiti connected with the history of the USA.

8. Resumé

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo představit fenomén street artu, vyjmenovat některé street artové typy a pojmy, ověřit spojitost mezi graffiti a historickými politickými a kulturními událostmi Spojených Států Amerických a porovnat znalost street artu českých a zahraničních obyvatel.

Práce je rozdělena o několika částí. Teoretická část představuje fenomén street artu. Je rozdělena na několik podkapitol. Tyto podkapitoly se zabývají vývojem street artu, typy street artu a street artovou terminologií, fenoménem graffiti, jeho glosářem a spojitostí mezi graffiti a historickými politickými a kulturními událostmi USA. Praktická část se zabývala výzkumným dotazníkem, jehož cílem bylo zjistit rozdílnou úroveň znalosti street artu českých a zahraničních respondentů. Tato Bakalářská práce by měla čtenáře informovat a street artu obecně a o graffiti ve spojitosti s americkou historií.

9. Appendix



Picture 1 – Mr. Brainwash “Inauguration day”



Picture 2 – reference to JFK assassination



Picture 3 – reference to JFK assassination



Picture 4 – ICY and SOT “Colorfire”



Picture 5 – Markus Prime “Black Lives Matter”



Picture 6 – reference to September 11



Picture 7 – Banksy "9/11 Tribute"



Picture 8 – Phyme “Remember 9-11-01”



Picture 9 – Hanksy “Giant Pile of Crap”



Picture 10 – ABCNT “Bitchy Rich Salute”



Picture 11 – Unknown “Orange Supremacy”



Picture 12 – Unknown “We support Trump. Trump for President”



Picture 13 – Example of graffiti



Picture 14 – Bordalo II “Flamingo”



Picture 15 – Magda Sayeg “Yarn Bombing”