



BLU at Campo de la Cebada in 2012, curated by Oficina de Gestión de Muros. Photography: BLU

MADRID PAISAJE URBANO: ITS DECOLONISING ROOTS

MADRID PAISAJE URBANO: SUS RAICES DECOLONIALES

Santiago Villajos
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Abstract Madrid Paisaje Urbano is the name of the open air urban art gallery of Madrid's city Council. The project started suddenly in October 2013 in *Intermediae*, a section within the Matadero Centre of Contemporary Creation. It nowadays is still running. This paper looks at the initial stages of the project in *La Noche en Blanco* 2010 and the research group *Decolonising Knowledge and Aesthetics* that Matadero arranged through a public call in collaboration with Goldsmiths University in 2012. In order to do so, the article provides an network ethnographic approach based on the author's empiric experience as a member of that research group. It introduces the relevance of the CULM (*Construir un lugar mejor sin destruir lo que tenemos*) project in La Mancha in order to understand the development of Madrid Paisaje Urbano, as well as its relation with the creation of MIAU Fanzara in 2014 through some of the artists who connected these projects. Finally, a comparison between CULM and MIAU illustrates Schacter's anthropological theories on agonistic and consensual Street Art practices.

Keywords Street art, mural art, intercultural practices, postcolonial, public landscape.

Resumen Madrid Paisaje Urbano es el nombre de la galería de arte urbano al aire libre del Ayuntamiento de Madrid. El proyecto comenzó repentinamente en octubre de 2013 en *Intermediae*, una sección dentro del Centro de Creación Contemporánea Matadero y hoy en día sigue funcionando. Este documento analiza las etapas iniciales del proyecto en *La Noche en Blanco* 2010 y el grupo de investigación *Decolonising Knowledge and Aesthetics* que Matadero organizó a través de una convocatoria pública en colaboración con la Goldsmiths University en 2012. Para ello, el artículo proporciona un enfoque etnográfico de redes a partir de la experiencia empírica del autor como miembro de ese grupo de investigación. Se presenta la relevancia del proyecto CULM (*Construir un lugar mejor sin destruir lo que tenemos*) en La Mancha para comprender el desarrollo de Madrid Paisaje Urbano, así como su relación con la creación de MIAU Fanzara en 2014 a través de algunos de los artistas que conectaron estos proyectos. Finalmente, una comparación entre CULM y MIAU ilustra las teorías antropológicas de Schacter sobre prácticas de arte callejero agonísticas y consensuales.

Palabras clave Arte callejero, arte mural, prácticas interculturales, poscolonial, paisaje público.

Street Art and Mural Art are not a philistine practice anymore. Journals are a living proof of it. It's been already seventeen years since the Carpe Diem Collective organised Chromopolis for the Olympics in Greece, where Os Gemeos painted their first Giant in Volos as the result of collective work on scaffolds. This time lapse is today large enough to ask for internal feedback.

Moreover, the vast transcendence of these kind of projects, globally reproduced, has expanded the limits of the particular art world that initially shaped them to include external feedback too.

Conceived as they are as intercultural practices, these kind of art meetings undoubtedly involve translations. They are thus appropriate cultural practices to be explained and understood under the light of Postcolonial theories and criticism.

This article focuses on the institutional reception of the practices of producing large pieces of mural art for the public landscape at the particular context of Madrid. In order to do so, it follows a postcolonial perspective which is driven to understand the way interculturality was translated along the conceptual entanglements and spatial associations of a particular process of reception (Latour, 2005).

The research methods primarily are personal ethnographies developed by myself as an art theoretician, researcher and curator who was involved in promoting these murals before, during and after the «Madrid Paisaje Urbano» gallery creation in October 2013.

Let us start in September 2010. It was the 11th's eve. The Spanish capital had arranged a new Nuit Blanche event after a series of annual editions that started in 2006. Translated it as «Noche en Blanco» in Spain, the original impetus of the Nuit Blanche started in Paris in 2002. It basically consisted in a festive takeover of the city by the arts at both internal and external public spaces, that is, at streets and

squares but also at institutions like museums, exhibition centres and art galleries that freely opened their doors to bring closer and more democratically culture to citizens during the evening, even also at abandoned public settings. These punctual surfeits of ephemeral activities were running in Madrid until 2012 to be reactivated in 2017. For the 2010 edition (Berástegui, 2010), the coordinators were Basurama, a collective of architects established in the Tetuán District whose productions are mainly driven to reutilise waste materials with a loable impetus which often though are more aestheticised than functional, too much centered in furniture and far from structural or wholistic solutions.

One of the numerous proposals of that Noche en Blanco was signed by Remedios Vincent, the artist responsible of the blog «Flores en el Ático» - Flowers in the Loft -, who managed to get public funding for creating the «Oficina de gestión de muros» - the Managing Walls Office - especially for the 2010 edition (Vincent, 2010). The activity was planned to produce four large murals at the environment of the river Manzanares that was being turned into a landform architecture park through the burying of the M-30 motorway since 2004.

The invited artists were BLU, Sam3, Jorge Rodríguez Gerada and Erica il Cane, but the curating processes finally just achieved to get the neighbours's approval for the designs of BLU and Sam3 (Berástegui, 2010, Vincent, 2010a). The star of the Noche en Blanco 2010 was however the new City Hall that released the Crystal Gallery, a massive space with more than 2,000 glass triangles covering a street that literally turned an opened public space into a closed institutionalised one. At the corners of Cibeles Square, a monumental screen projected several pieces of video art, some of them with scenes of people writing on trains with spraycans that easily may come out of the book *Madrid Revolution* (Abarca, 2011).



Screen at Cibeles Square. La Noche en Blanco, 2010. Photography: Author

Three months after the Noche en Blanco finished, the Oficina de Gestión de Muros published a selection of walls stating the City Council had given permission to paint them (Vincent, 2010b). However, until December 2012, the few actions of the *Oficina* happened outside of Madrid in the cities of León and Valencia (Vincent, 2011), so it seems the permission was not enough to attract artists to paint to Madrid. In the meanwhile, the Street and Mural Art scene was exploding in London, especially in Shoreditch, where ROA had painted his very well known Heron in 2010. Next year, he produced an impressive piece of work with a falcon on a mound of bones at the entrance court of a social centre at Peckham Rye that, nowadays, is a coworking space and the British artist Phlegm also painted there. On one of the sides of the courtyard, he developed his oniric illustrative style through a large spyglass, whilst he pushed forward the notion of trompe l'oeil on the facade by depicting fantastic architectures linearly in black and white. The quality of those pieces

was undeniable. I got to know them as the result of being a postgraduate student by then in London, where I conducted too some participant observation work at the Waterloo tunnel. There I met Robbo before he fell into a coma and unfortunately died, some time after he did an individual exhibit at Pure Evil Gallery in which there were displayed some Banksies.

He was painting with the Spanish writer Nes and referred to how difficult had become to write graffiti independently in London without being sanctioned. Some of his crew mates were indeed in jail because of it, but he still kept on doing it. Indeed his coma started after he fell down when he was painting a high spot. Thus in 2011, the Street Art situation in Madrid and London could not have been more antagonical. In Madrid there were at least a selection of 23 walls on which it was allowed to paint, but no artist seemed willing

to do it, while in London people was risking their lives and actually losing them in order to paint mural pieces illegally. RIP Robbo.

The situation for Madrid slightly changed in 2012. In the beginning, however, the impulse did not come from Madrid, or at least not for Madrid. It was instead for La Mancha, the land of Don Quixote located at its immediate southern periphery. On 6 June 2012, the webpage «Construir un lugar mejor sin destruir lo que tenemos» was launched in Facebook as a citizen initiative to transform the urban landscape of Quintanar de la Orden (CULM, 2012), the ancient capital of La Mancha during the lifetime of Miguel de Cervantes.

The project was aimed to start painting on the tallest building of the town that was erected in 1968 without taking into consideration the UNESCO and other international architectural guidelines on heritage (Villajos, 2016). So, people of the town actually disliked it as a result of that bad decision. The Facebook webpage was mainly built as a mean for exploring and sharing knowledge on the global phenomenon of large Street Art murals, but it also had the function of demonstrating for skeptic locals and followers that was actually possible to make it to happen. Four months after, in September, a non-profit organisation was created in the capital of Spain with the name «Madrid Street Art Project» (Raro, 2018). The founders were Diana Prieto, a worker of the Spanish Ministry of Culture, and Guillermo de la Madrid, the photographer in charge of the blog «Escrito en la pared» (2006). Guillermo started posting photos of Street Art in 2006, that was also the year the Council of Zaragoza, the city where Diana Prieto is from, started running the Street Art Festival «Asalto» (Beltrán et al, 2015). The initial aim of Madrid Street Art Project was to spread Street Art practices in Madrid through guided street visits that normally took place once or twice a month at the historical quarters of Lavapiés and Justicia. Their impulse came after a private commission of the Cervantes Institute to Diana Prieto, who

was working there two months before than creating Madrid Street Art Project and being signed by the Spanish Ministry of Culture. The Cervantes Institute is a transnational cultural institution managed by the Spanish king and president with the aim of promoting the Spanish language worldwide. Nevertheless, the name the founders thought for the non-profit organisation was in English «Madrid Street Art Project».

By the end of September 2012 the agenda of the CULM project started being integrated into the Council of Madrid's. Conversely to what happened to the Oficina de Gestión de Muros in 2011, which moved from the capital to the outside, this time the displacement was from the peripheral setting of La Mancha to the core position of the capital. That happened when I was selected after a public call as a member of a research group promoted from London at the Politics Department of Goldsmiths University in collaboration with the municipal center for contemporary creativity Matadero (2012).

The group was conceived as «Decolonising knowledge and aesthetics». It was driven to explore both theoretically and practically the potentials of post-colonial theories and critical studies on arts and culture at Matadero, with the internationalisation of Madrid cultural practices as its essential objective. How surprising as it may seem for the city Council of the capital of Spain collaborating with Goldsmiths University, the professionalism of the research group was constituted quite ambiguously. The fact that there was no agreement mediating the professional relationship is quite illustrating.

The regulation was built instead on a series of documents published online by Matadero and shared through a mailing list with the members of the research group that were soon breached by Matadero (Villajos, 2018a).

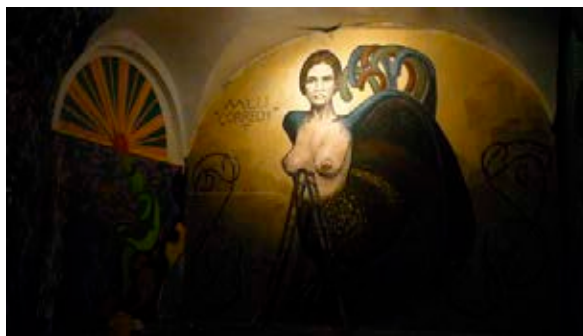
Although the group was apparently created as the result of selecting eleven researchers,

theoreticians, artists and curators in a public call, in practice, a larger number of people who were not selected within the call were also included. Moreover, even though the call stated that the group was aimed to promote the work of young researchers, most of these non-selected integrants were at a mature stage of their careers.

By November 2012, when the first theoretical encounters of Decolonising Knowledge and Aesthetics had taken place, I proposed then the option of producing large murals in the surroundings of Matadero to Manuela Villa, the content's director of Matadero who was also in charge of the group meetings. That adapted the CULM's proposal for La Mancha to the context of Madrid by looking at convergence points. The most evident one was the sake for internationalisation, and there was also the decolonising impetus of the research group.

The festival All City Canvas seemed a clear referent that gathered both conditions quite accurately. It was carried out in Mexico with international contemporary artists, whilst also taking the avant-garde of Latin American muralism as a referent, so I suggested it as a model to Manuela Villa. All City Canvas happened in that year's May and took Aryz, Escif, Vhils, Herakut, El Mac, ROA, Sego and Saner as its protagonists. In the course of ethnographic research, I checked along 2012 that ROA had painted two impressive pieces with dead bulls in the Madrid quarter of Lavapiés, at the common spaces of Tabacalera and «Esto no es una plaza». It seemed that his links with Madrid, his murals in London and his participation at Mexico all constituted clear indicators to translate the impact that his participation in the Decolonising project may reach to the responsables of Madrid's corporation.

The idea was contributing to build a bridge between the global and the local while also generating the effect of internationalisation



Alkonost, by Milu Correch, and part of a shaman mural cycle by Cyril23. Tabacalera Street Art Workshop, Madrid, August 2013. Photography: Author

that was sought by the agenda of Matadero when they published the call of members.

Consequently, before mailing the content's director, I had contacted ROA, who became interested in the proposal. Furthermore, when I told Manuela about All City Canvas and the interest of ROA, INTI had also answered an email to me. His seemed an even more precise participation, especially due to his characteristically Latin Americanist style that established a clear connection with the 20th century avant-garde of muralism and the Magical Realism through his interpretations of carnival and the kusillo (Froger, 2013). His cultural identity as a Chilean also contributed to make a clear statement of intentions for the task of exploring the linkage between that historical avant-garde movement and the Street Art, since he started painting in connection with figures like Mono González, from the Brigada Ramona Parra. In fact, the Brigada Ramona Parra is referred to as a clear influence by Robert Sommer in his foundational book on Street Art (1975). Both INTI and ROA became interested in taking part of the Decolonising project, but Manuela did not seem to care so much about it.

Also in November the Oficina de Gestión de Muros reactivated in Madrid after two years. Remedios Vincent then seemed to have discarded the 23 walls in Usera in order to

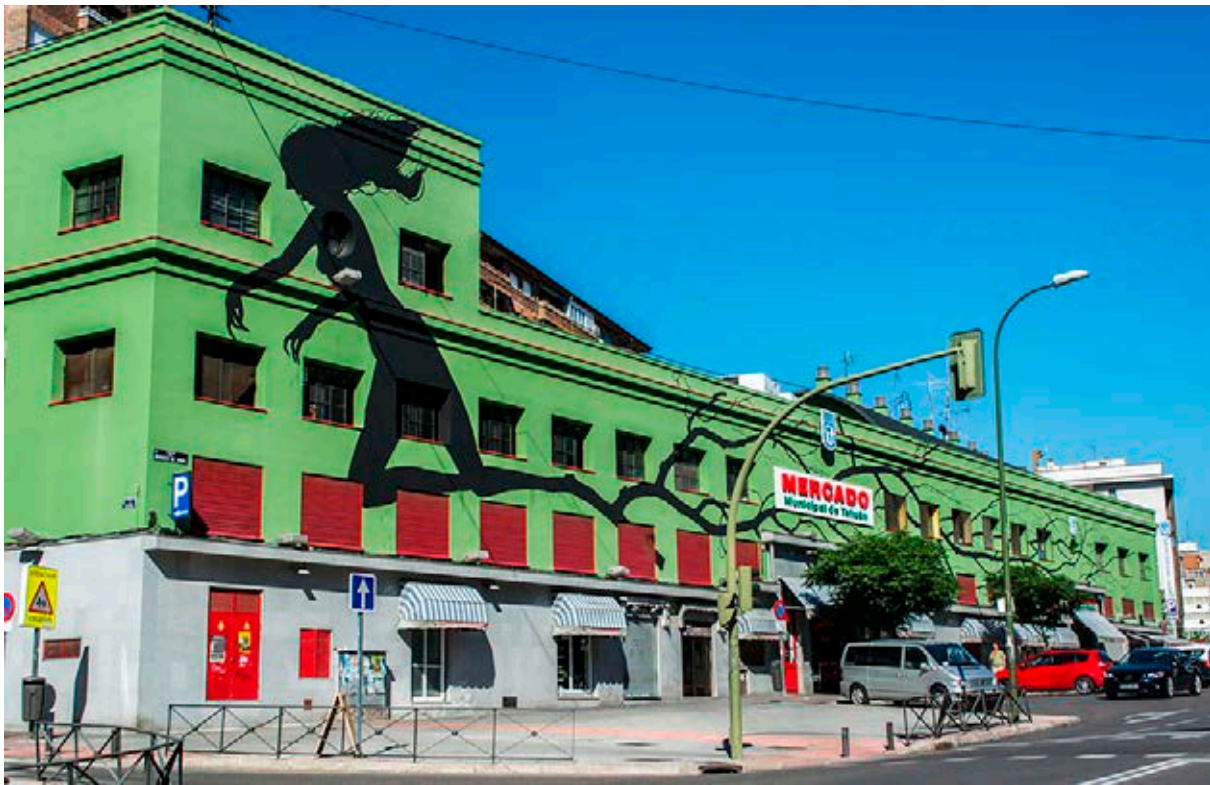


A detail of the mural painted by Suso33 at Tetuán for Madrid Paisaje Urbano in 2013, compared to an inscription of Dalí dedicating a book. Photographs: www.lasimagenesqueyoveo.com & William Bennett Gallery

start curating the perimeter of the «Campo de la Cebada» - «The Barley Field» - a public parcel squatted by the neighbours in the very historical centre of Madrid, just five minutes walk to Plaza Mayor (Bravo, 2012). The squatting happened in 2010 after the Noche en Blanco, and became formalised through an agreement in February 2011 with the Council that was active until 2017, when local government decided to invest 8 million Euro in building new sports installations (Moraleta, 2017). The artist chosen to start the works was Blu again, who painted an elaborated mural to criticise how institutions burn public money arbitrarily. Although the piece had a high quality, it soon became marginal for the neighbours, who distributed the space backwards the mural. By 2015 and 2016, when Madrid Street Art Project had taken control for curating the walls of the

space, it was replaced by the other murals. The last artist who painted there was L'Atlas in March 2017, as it is stated in the last post published by Guillermo de la Madrid in his blog «Escrito en la pared» eleven years after its funding (Madrid, 2017). Unlike the case of Zaragoza, where workers of the Council had restored «Amor visceral» one of the two murals painted there by Blu in 2006 (Villajos, 2015), the position of Madrid was the opposite, that is, to destroy the public mural in order to reuse its surface as an ephemeral space of fashion, of trend, to turn it into a visual commodity. It seemed no matter to anyone that 23 walls were willing to be painted since 2010 in the city. The walls at the Campo de la Cebada became old within months and the neighbors needed to replace them. Blu's mural was prophetic.

In December 2012, the proposal of producing a festival similar to All City Canvas



Tetuán Market, painted by David de la Mano and Pablo S. Herrero for Madrid Paisaje Urbano in 2014.
Photography: <http://porlacalledealcala.blogspot.com.es>

was presented to Madrid's City Council in one of the meetings of the Matadero Decolonising knowledge and aesthetics research group.

It was me who did it, and referred too to Phlegm besides ROA and Inti, because he was already interested in the project by then.

I adapted the heritage driven approach which started developing through the CULM page in La Mancha six months before to the actual setting of Matadero, the river Manzanares and its surroundings. After taking a course on the history of urban development in Madrid I became conscious of the lack of knowledge to which that particular area of the city was submitted. Even though Arganzuela, the particular district on which Matadero is placed, is an historical part of the city that was depicted by important authors like Goya, Galdós or Pío Baroja in their works, coherent histories were lacking. The murals could

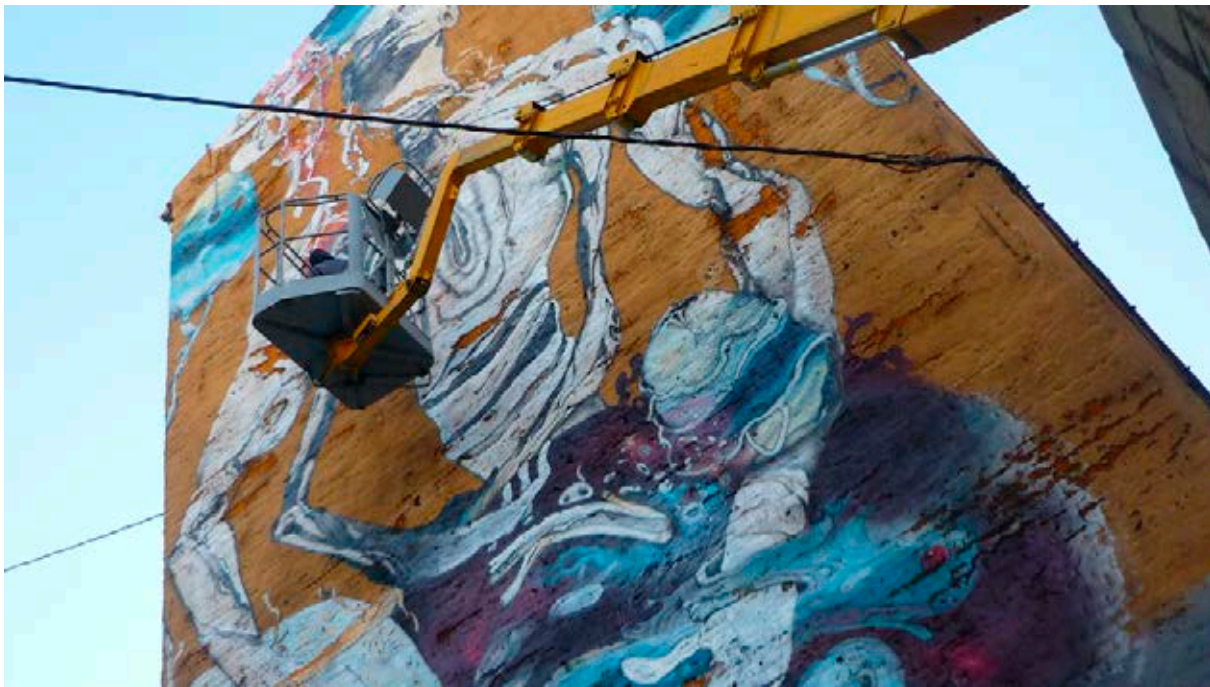
become a medium for compensating such a lack of knowledge. They also may contribute to reflect on universal issues such as how those natural spaces were culturised and fagocitised by the city growing, how they became meaningful. The intention was to apply postcolonial theory at the political scale of the city in order to understand its dynamics from an ecological positioning. Three major artists like ROA, INTI and Phlegm were confirmed by then, so the internationalisation was sure to take place. The workers of Matadero wrote the proposal of producing these large murals up at the session's proceedings besides another idea introduced by myself consisting in producing an application of augmented reality for the Street Art of Madrid through database and geopositioning techniques. The next month, the fourth after the sessions of the research group in collaboration with Goldsmiths had

started, I presented the latter idea to a funding call that took place in Matadero externally to the group, because the group had no funding for itself. Although the group was published as an opportunity for producing art projects for the Council, that is, public art, with the aim of internationalisation however the workers in charge said there was no money to do it. Moreover, my proposal was rejected to be funded at that external call by Matadero, which by April 2013 presented an application of Street Art and augmented reality in collaboration with the urban artist Belin (Intermediae, 2013). Those events were the beginning of an episode of deliberate institutional plagiarism.

Since Matadero had no funding, in April 2013 I presented a research project to the scholarships program in curating of the Botín Foundation, the personal non-profit organisation of Emilio Botín, the chief of Banco Santander. The Foundation started to be managed by his daughter Ana Botín after he died in September 2014. She was the one responsible of introducing Banco Santander at an important set of Spanish universities within the neoliberal restructuring of the study programmes (MICINN, 2008). She is nowadays recognised as one of the ten richest women in the world and apparently an arts supporter. Also in April I had to start returning a postgraduate studies loan to Banco Santander, so the most consequent decision was to do it while getting a salary or a grant from any of its dependent institutions. The call was aimed to promote innovation in curating and collecting contemporary art, as well as to involve the collaboration with Goldsmiths University in the processes, so it included Os Gemeos besides INTI, Roa and Phlegm as artists to participate in the festival. A parallel exhibition should run with gallery works in display.

The next month, I presented a more elaborated proposal to the international postgraduate funding program of the now

extinct Caja Madrid Foundation. Caja Madrid was a public bank with roots in a medieval Monte de Pietà, who invested important sums of money into social and cultural projects of public interest. It was turned into a private corporation in 2010 and that year it became related to a scandal when a massive fraud was uncovered by the clients (Segovia, 2014). The foundation disappeared in 2013 and its vast social investments were significantly reduced to the nowadays Montemadrid Foundation. May 2013's was thus the last program of postgraduate scholarships of Caja Madrid. The project I presented with the title «Madrid Riverside Gallery» was aimed to organise a meeting of artists producing large scale murals in the environment of Madrid Río with a parallel exhibition running in Matadero, the elaboration of a catalogue and a series of conferences in collaboration with Goldsmiths. Although the project was focused in the city of Madrid, its history, its public space, and its internationalisation, the Foundation rejected it. I also sent it to the Banco Santander Foundation and the chief of the university section of Banco Santander besides five more proposals asking for a salary in order to produce scientific-technological development in the field of cultural heritage for Spain, but all of them were rejected. The next month, in June, the bank started stalking to me on the phone because I had not started giving my study loan back. Tired and angry, I left the country with a fake Interrail ticket like the European Graffiti writers of the 1990s and the early 2000s in order to assist a meeting on Street Art at a UK university. Matadero should have covered those travel expenses from the budget of the group, but I was discriminated. When I returned to Madrid for the meeting of July 10, I found out that several colleagues of the research group had been some in London some of the same days than me with the support of Matadero funds indeed.



Laguna painting in Usera for Madrid Paisaje Urbano in 2014. Photography: Author

That meeting of July 10, 2013 was crucial for the history of Street Art in Madrid. I proposed once again to paint on walls at the environment of Matadero. However, this time there were no artists willing to paint, but an Argentinian female muralist who was getting Madrid from Buenos Aires to actually paint there in the midst of an European tour. I had already mentioned her in a project I presented again to a research call, this time at the Reina Sofia National Museum of Contemporary Art under the title «Decolonising the urbs: urban art as a decolonial practice». Her name is Milu Correch and by that summer she was a member of the collective «Un pueblo, un mural» - «One town, one mural» - who had been travelling around innermost Argentina with Mariela Ajras, Mariano Antedomenico and Marcos Bourdett painting murals and sharing their experience with local artists (Un pueblo, un mural, 2013). She was rejected by Matadero.

The workers of the corporation said there was not enough money for it, so she finally

Painted an Alkonost in homage to some Basque friends at the Street Art workshop of Tabacalera, where Cyril23, the manager of the space, gave permission to her to cover one of his murals in early August. Several days after, she painted a vast depiction of Dulcinea in La Mancha, so the CULM project actually started to happen and became connected to Madrid's. A miracle happened just two months after Milu Painted for CULM: in October 2013, money appeared to paint murals in Matadero and the urban gallery «Madrid Paisaje Urbano» started being produced there. But no one made me know it at Matadero. I just got to know it after the murals had been produced, even though I had been a whole year developing projects and searching funding for the Council of Madrid. The policy chosen by the curators of the project then was to include only artists inhabiting Madrid or directly related to the city. That was how they translated the internationalising means of the proposal I had been shaping for the institution according to the public call on which I was

selected. Also instead than in a festival, the walls were produced as official commissions of public art, but no issues on preservation or materiality were considered. The artists involved were Borondo, Suso33, San, E1000, SpY and la Galería de la Magdalena. No issues on integrating local heritage in the murals were considered either.

The connection with the CULM project was especially evident in the work of Suso33 who developed one of the pieces of his Absences series through schematic human figures depicted with black spirals in clear debt with Dalí's representations of Don Quixote. The relation of this artist with Don Quixote and institutions was established in 2005, when he participated in a grotesque event called Quixote Hip Hop that took place at the facade of the Spanish National Library in Madrid. He was then offered to engage an international tour in Latin America the next year, but rejected it. The artist chosen to do it instead was Laguna. He became one of the pioneers in the new large scale muralism at Spain after his return, when he painted the silo of Almagro in La Mancha for the International Festival of Classic Theatre. He painted with Os Gemeos and was also living some time in Valparaíso, where he painted with INTI. In fact, the first place of Europe where INTI painted was Almagro in a series of collaborative works with Laguna. Laguna started a monograph exhibition at the avant-garde centre La Neomudéjar in Madrid when the Madrid Paisaje Urbano was being produced. There he decided to participate in the CULM project with INTI in December 2013.

By that month, December 2013, a new revision of the project was presented in a session of the Decolonising knowledge and aesthetics group in Matadero with the name «Decolonising the Market». This was driven to recuperate a semi-abandoned public market for the neighbourhood through collaborative

murals by pairs of street artists. The murals at the market's perimeter were going to be the result of several participative processes driven to safekeep and enhance the area's heritage in order to engage the local communities with the artists. An important research of landscape archaeology was conducted in order to detect and to analyse different historical strata in the urban landscape of the market's environment.

But Matadero, which is placed just 300 meters to the building and now had a budget for producing public murals, rejected it. A market was painted instead within the Madrid Paisaje Urbano gallery the next year in Tetuán by David de la Mano and Pablo S. Herrero, two artists from Salamanca with no clear connections to Madrid, despite that condition was needed to take part of the Council's project. Probably, the fact that I was giving a talk in Salamanca one year before in which I referred to «Decolonising the Market» may have had an effect in their selection by Remedios Vincent. Lastly, a quite more elaborated version of «Decolonising the Market» was presented to Matadero in March 2015 with the name «CASABLANCA Project» (Villajos, 2015a). It included the celebration of seminars and finally considered the integration of locals also in the creative processes of painting and designing the murals through collective workshops in the spirit of American schools of muralism like Chicago and Philadelphia (Cockcroft et al, 1977), on which the Itinerario Muralístico Vitoria-Gasteiz (IMVG) is based. In fact, her director Veronica Werckmeister was one of the artists to take part in CASA BLANCA, a project that sought to combine an international artist and a local one from Madrid for any of the four walls of the market's perimeter. So the dialogue between global and local and the internationalisation could take place by also including the neighbours within the workshops. And... know what? It was rejected.



Sabek's placard on the scaffolding at Puerta del Sol, Madrid, during the occupation of the space in 2011. Photography: Anonymous

In April 2014, Manuela Villa, the responsible of the research group Decolonising Knowledge and Aesthetics rejected also INTI and Laguna to participate in a seminar at Matadero coinciding with one of the days they were going to be painting together for the CULM project in La Mancha thanks to a crowdfunding campaign (CULM, 2014). She argued that Matadero didn't need INTI and Laguna because they have already their own artists there. But eight months after their international success in La Mancha (Getty Images, 2014), Matadero commissioned a mural to Laguna for Madrid Paisaje Urbano. That mural coincided with the exhibition of the Decolonising Knowledge and Aesthetics group, which took place six months later

than the date it was stated on its foundational basis at the open call. Only two of the eight people who signed the exhibition as curators had previously been selected in the public call: Julia Morandeira, a Goldsmiths alumnus who was admitted with a late application beyond the deadline as Dolores Galindo states, and Silvia Zayas, whose poor English considerably limited the group's encounters and prevented to a large extent communication with a majority of the international professionals who visited Matadero. The other nine people selected in the open call with transparency procedures, that is 80%, were excluded of the exhibition's curating. Neither our names appeared in the catalogue's acknowledgments. That's how Matadero carried out a program

that was part of the actions for the Strategic Plan of International Positioning of the Council of Madrid 2012-2015 (Botella, 2012: 106).

The success of the CULM project came after a high polemic around INTI's free interpretation of Don Quixote was created, since he included symbols on the mural directly related to 19th and 20th century historical visions of Cervantes's character in Latin America like the Chilean independentist movement, Eduardo Galeano, the thought of Zapatistas and the global movement of Spanish indignados 15M that spread worldwide in 2011 after the Arab Spring. The symbols painted by INTI were not understood at the Spanish innermost context of La Mancha and the graffiti 15M was censored by local authorities, who lied and menaced with erasing the whole artwork if the mural was not modified as it has been explained somewhere else (Villajos, 2018b). The project already contained its decolonising nature in the title as it was presented at Reina Sofia Museum:

«Decolonising Don Quixote in Context». But that was pointless for local authorities, who produced a regrettable situation that reminded the first Street Art murals painted by Siqueiros in Los Angeles in 1932 (Tibol, 1961). Then a campaign was created at Change.org to make sure the mural was going to be preserved by a local neighbour who had already collaborated with the CULM project supporting Milu Correch (Díaz-Flores, 2014). Amongst the 1,880 people who signed the petition was the artist Sabek, one of the two fetishes of Madrid Street Art Project by that time.

The other one was el Rey de la Ruina -the King of Ruin- who asked to participate in the CULM project some weeks after Milu Correch painted in Tabacalera in August 2013, when Madrid Paisaje Urbano still hadn't happened. By 2013 they practised a feist style of iconic graffiti with narcissistic and activist slogans

that became popular and called the attention of some media, specially their throw-ups at the gate of the National Theatre Centre with Laparesse, a duo formed by Pincho and Yeti (Robles, 2013).

These artists were closely related to the 15M. Sabek, for instance, was the author of the most visible placard of the ones placed on the scaffolding of a giant advertisement at Puerta del Sol while the indignados camp was taking place in 2011. The image was seen worldwide, it was a monumental picture of Heinrich Himmler doing the nazi salute with Mickey Mouse's ears, a Euro coin sign covering the SS emblems of his cap and the sentence «No nos representan» -«They do not represent us»- written on it. In August 2013, while Milu Correch was painting in La Mancha, he explored his skills as a climber and a painter in Es Castell at the island of Menorca supporting Pincho for the Vang! festival. They painted there a silo hanging from ropes and several more murals that were erased by the town's major afterwards and El Rey de la Ruina painted one of his first large murals.

By the end of April 2014, just some weeks after INTI painted in La Mancha, both Sabek, Pincho and Ruina were funded by the Spanish Ministry of Culture to paint murals amongst others on the external walls of Tabacalera when Diana Prieto was working for that institution, through Madrid Street Art Project. In addition, an art gallery was released in front of the murals for the event with an exhibit on E1000, one of the artists who participated in Madrid Paisaje Urbano.

During that happening, Sabek planned to visit La Mancha to paint one of his first large murals to show solidarity with the CULM project, because local authorities stopped it after they censored INTI. Even though there were still colours left to be used, locals became suspicious and denied systematically their permission to paint. However, a claiming mural

was done at the end of April with the two dogs of Don Quixote against the nuclear cemetery the Spanish government was planning at Villar de Cañas, just one hundred kilometres to the capital of Spain. That project constituted a major health and security risk for millions of people (Sanz, 2018). It was approved without considering the geology of the setting and thus seriously menaced the whole water system of La Mancha which, moreover, has the UNESCO highest protection as a Biosphere Reserve. Sabek prepared a sketch to paint a mural hanging on ropes with water motifs on the same building than Laguna painted his mural. Also Pincho prepared a mural to be painted on a large wall with a design on Don Quixote and el Rey de la Ruina started working in a project about the Spanish Inquisition, but all the neighbours denied their permission. Finally, Sabek went to paint to La Mancha with LOLO, a Street Artist from Seville, but Pincho and El Rey de la Ruina didn't. They asked for large walls or money, but CULM just had colours, beds, a little bit of food and camera operators to offer. Then some locals from the village of Fanzara who had been following the CULM project at social networks contacted Pincho and gave him the commitment to organise a summer camp for artists there. The Council of Fanzara had stopped the project of building a waste dump in 2011. Once finished the struggle, they decided to expend public money in converting the streets to an open air art gallery to celebrate it. It was there, in Fanzara, where Sabek finally painted his water inspired mural, in order to refer «some natural pools where it is possible to get a bath» as they said in the guided tours in Fanzara in 2015. By the end of September 2014, twenty three artists had painted in Fanzara. Nowadays, three years after, sixty one pieces are mapped so far on the official handbook of the festival, and two more are referred to as disappeared (MIAU, 2018). Curiously, the mural of Sabek

is one of them. It was erased by Milu Correch in September 2017.

Let us finish with a last project I presented to a public call of the Council of Madrid in September 2017. It happened one year after Pincho and El Rey de la Ruina finally expended all the CULM project's colours left over after INTI and Laguna painted in La Mancha and were rejected in Madrid. Pincho and Ruina painted together a large piece with a razor blade and a screw on a cloth hanging on the main glass wall of the Buenos Aires Pavilion at Madrid Casa de Campo Fair Park. The context of that mural was the sixth edition of the project SeAlquila -ToRent- where I was collaborating as an invited curator and working as a handyman for the non-profit organisation Entresijos and the public company Madrid Destino y Cultura. In September 2017, I kept on my collaboration with SeAlquila, which presented a new project to the Council's grants on cultural creation.

SeAlquila is an interdisciplinary project aimed to produce ephemeral exhibitions at closed spaces during a weekend. It started in 2012 as an independent and underground event, but became internationalised after some of his and her members engaged with projects of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation abroad. SeAlquila also became more and more institutionalised in Madrid when some of his and her members started working for the Council and got some benefits from it like privileged access to public buildings for the display of their ephemeral exhibitions.

Since the call of Madrid's Council was massive, I decided to apply with an additional project as a curator, researcher and professor in collaboration with Lee Bofkin and Mar Vera from Global Street Art and Envés Diseño Sostenible -Envés Sustainable Design-. The project's title was Encuentro de arte urbano y sostenibilidad - Street Art and



Sabek's design to be painted with ropes for the CULM project and the mural painted with a platform in Fanzara for MIAU Fanzara, 2014. Photography: Author

Sustainability Encounter-. It was aimed to generate an international network of scholars and professionals on critical thought about the sustainability of Street Art practices or Intermural Art, as these are defined when institutionalised by Schacter (2017), who was the co-curator of the Street Art exhibit at Tate Modern in London (Lewisohn, 2008).

The Encounter was also aimed to produce community engagement and creative activities with some international and local artists in order to be inclusive, to attract the attention of the media and the neighbours and to be earth grounded on the results. Madrid is a city worldwide known for its Graffiti and Street Art scene (Schacter, 2014), as well as for the Intermural Art that started flourishing under public institutional support at the dawn of 2013. By supporting its Autonomous University, Madrid was appealed to become a global referent on this topic. The quality and experience of the organisers was enough to get some support. But... the project was rejected. This time, however, the refusal was not stated on ambiguous or categorical terms.

There were instead a series of nineteen variables defined at the public call to be assessed in order to get funding, and any project with more than 50 points obtained an amount of economic support which not

necessarily had to be the whole budget of the application. But strikingly the project was rated with 41. When formal allegations were presented asking the Council for a rubric with an explanation and independent rates for any variable, the answer exceeded the deadlines established by law and came after some initial incomes had already been done to the chosen projects in April 2018. Of course, the Council reaffirmed the rejection, but no justification was provided and no marks were given for the 19 variables, but only for four categories. And they seemed certainly mistaken. Furthermore, that came one month after the Council arranged a talk with Madrid Street Art Project entitled «Street Art y Sostenibilidad» -Street Art and Sustainability in which the major subject matter were neither critical accounts on working methods nor how to generate alternatives for providing sustainability to Street Art practices, but gentrification processes at Lavapiés (2018).

This time plagiarism looked too evident, to the point that Madrid Street Art Project seemed to ignore the subject matter suggested by the title they had given to the event six months after the project presented to the call of the Council of Madrid.

By trying to be tempered, I registered an alternative asking the Council for economic



Pincho's mural painted with ropes at Menorca in 2013 and his design to be painted for the CULM Project in 2014.
Photography: Vang!

support in order to produce a large wall for the Madrid Paisaje Urbano gallery within the seventh edition of SeAlquila (Villajos, 2018b). The wall was going to be painted after and throughout community engagement and participative techniques. It was going to be a synthesis of all my projects refused by the Council since 2012. In addition, it demanded, once for all, a public recognition of my role as co-author of the Madrid Paisaje Urbano gallery as a result of the time I was advising the Council in Matadero. Veronica Werckmeister was happy to participate supervising a workshop like the ones she had developed in the Basque Country

after her whole American training, and INTI, Laguna and Faith47 became interested in taking part of it. Lee Bofkin also became interested in being part of the processes and suggested Hunto and Mr. Thoms to participate in the workshop. It was just less than 20,000 € extra for SeAlquila in order to solve the problem, but the Council rejected that option and limited the support to 5,000 €, which meant the nine professionals that were going to work should be turned forcibly to volunteers. Finally, the people of SeAlquila told me to coordinate the mural workshop with no remuneration when I asked to be paid the minimum fee established

for senior graduates at the professional sector of archaeologists and muralists, which in Spain is the same than architects. Obviously I refused and left the project, asking them to stop the idea of producing a participative workshop, because I was the author of the proposal within SeAlquila, whose curators had never used that methodology. SeAlquila didn't care about it, they went on with the mural and called Sabek to be in charge of the workshop. Nowadays, the cabinet of Manuela Carmena, the mayor of Madrid, is studying the case.

In conclusion, both the CULM project at La Mancha and then Fanzara are important constituent parts in order to understand the decolonising roots of Madrid Paisaje Urbano.

The relationship with CULM is far demonstrated along this article. The complexities of curating Intermural Art have also been shown, as well as the epistemological tensions emerging as a result of intercultural situations, both externally –the reception of Latin America at innermost Spain and the difficulties of Madrid's Council to assimilate cultural impulses that started flourishing seventeen years ago in European settings like Norway and Greece and decades before in the case of the Contemporary Mural Movement– and internally –the tensions between Madrid and La Mancha and the ones between struggling and celebrating–.

The refusal of external practices in Madrid, both from inside and outside the political borders of Spain is actually striking for a city and a cultural movement, the Street Art, that usually are shown as cosmopolitan. Conversely, ethnographic fieldwork demonstrated how the survival of obtuse and suspicious attitudes is not only a matter of peripheral or paletto mentalities in Spain, but it was and still is too operating hard within the mentalities of people in charge of producing culture at the Council of its capital.

The processes of Sabek's water mural clearly illustrate all these issues at multiple levels of meaning which can be related both

to consensual and agonistic ornamentation as they were defined by Schacter (2014). While the design was conceived for the agonistic context of La Mancha, where a political struggle was still necessary in the furtive spirit of his happenings at the indignados demonstrations, the mural was however turned into consensual in Fanzara, where victory after the dump issue opened ground for celebration. But victory was conducted far from monumental. In the end, the visual commodification of picturable surfaces which Blu's mural at Campo de la Cebada both criticised and suffered, it destroyed Sabek's consensuated quality in Fanzara and became stronger in Madrid, where prestige, dignity of labour, the value of heritage and the legitimacy of experience were sacrificed on the altars of a miserable low cost workshop of muralism. Many lessons to learn here.

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Giltza Bat – Una llave. Bilbao, 2013. Community Mural by the IMVG Project directed by Veronica & Christina Werckmeister with a picture showing its setting in front of the Guggenheim Museum. Photography: IMVG

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Recibido el 31 del 7 de 2018
 Aceptado el 13 del 11 de 2018
 BIBLID [2530-1330 (2018): 54-73]



Don Quijote de La Mancha, by INTI for the CULM project. La Mancha, 2014. Photography: Paula Jiménez