Exploring Street Art in the Digital Era:

How the Value of Street Art is Co-Created

by

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Abstract

How do street artists, and their artwork(s), become well-known and acclaimed in the digital era? Of course, not all street artists aim to become famous, but those who do seek to become renowned often struggle to identify the steps needed to reach a level of renown-ness that will allow them to secure profitable commissions, recognition within the street art community, and wider reputation and fame. This study aims to improve the understanding of how street artworks achieve renown/ness in the digital era by exploring some of the different perspectives of the actors involved in the street artworld; and looks to reveal and analyse the different types of interactions that happen both on and offline - and that influence the value of street art. A multi-method qualitative approach is used to access the different points of view of street artists, street art curators, and street art connoisseurs who make use of digital platforms. The study reveals the multi-dimensional nature of a complex social process characterised by value co-creation amongst both professional and amateur participants in the world of street art. The research findings provide a valuable new understanding and explanation of the social dynamics underpinning the value co-creation of street art across a wide set of key actors. Indeed, it seems that the value of street art develops via the interactions happening amongst street art crews, between street artists and curators, during discussions on digital platforms, and importantly from interactions that happen both on and offline. The research also identifies some of the practical vocational implications for street artists and contributes with some new insights and knowledge in regard to how creative renown and acclaim is achieved in the street artworld in the digital era.

Keywords: *street art, value co-creation, renown-ness, creative practice, art valuation.*

Dedication

To my near and far family.

Acknowledgements

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Terms and abbreviations

CAQDAS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
OSS	Open-Source Software
RQ	Research Question
SA	Street Art
SNS	Social Networking Site
UE	Urban Environment
UGC	User Generated Content
VIP	Very Important Person
VOIP	Voice Over Internet Protocol
Gangs - peers - crews	Street artists and graffiti taggers are frequently part of groups that they refer to as either *gangs, peers,* or *crews.*
Layers	Frequently used term by interviewees describing the different dimensions of being a street artist.
Numbers on SNSs	The data related to reactions on SNSs: like, comment, share, mentions.
Renown-ness	The measure of acclaim/fame of a street artwork.
Stunts	Disruptive and unusual Street Artworks are referred to by interviewees as *stunts.*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study and presents the background information that developed into the current research project. The chapter is organised as follows. Section 1.2 presents the background of the study in terms of motivations and interests to study Street Art (henceforth SA). Section 1.3 provides a brief introduction to the main themes explored in Chapter 2 and highlights the gaps in the literature. Section 1.4 outlines the focus and the scope of the study. Section 1.5 discusses the original academic and practical contributions of this study, and Section 1.6 shows the organization of the thesis in six chapters.

1.2 Background and Motivations of the Study

My desire to undertake this study developed as a result of two life events. The first was my professional experience as a digital community manager in a media agency that specialised in crowdsourcing. In this experience, I spent a great deal of time observing and managing online creative crowds guiding them in the production of new and profitable media for their businesses. This experience informed the way I look at digital interaction and suggested considering digital communities as users able to engage in collective creative processes. The second life event was the master's in arts administration. During those studies I learned about public art and urban creativity, and I became interested in how street artists, curators, the public, and other actors contribute to the making of the meaning(s) of art available outside of museum walls.

The professional experience in crowdsourcing and the academic interest in urban creativity led me to research further and document myself on the creative experiences that can be found within the urban environment. My interest in SA also led me to attend events such as exhibitions, performances, live-painting sessions, and other events, as well as exploring the growing digital presence of SA. I saw that SA is frequently represented in magazines and used together with photography, fashion, music production, and other creative industries to convey value. However, I also noticed that there was considerable interaction happening on digital platforms such as blogs, webzines, and social media networks where pictures of SA were circulating.

Exploring the street artworld as a spectator and researching on relevant literature on the practice, the history, and its social composition, allowed an initial definition of SA. SA is "cultural phenomenon" (English, 2012) characterised by members of a subculture (Browne & Browne, 2001; Ferrell, 1996; Spearlt, 2015) that express themselves (Haenfler, 2013) by using non-conventional means, styles[1] and platforms (Bacharach, 2015) - often illegally (Ferrell, 1996; Young, 2014a) - such as public walls, subway cars (Cooper & Chalfant, 1984) as well as during SA festivals (Caldwell, 2015; Riggle, 2010) or as commissioned work for business and/or within public policy initiatives (Costa & Lopes, 2015). This early definition suggests that SA acquires meanings and values according to where it is executed, whether it has been authorised/commissioned, who performs the artwork and in which style, whether it appears on a secluded wall or as a public performance during a dedicated event.

However, an important characteristic of SA is how it circulates within audiences today compared to its origins in graffiti. Indeed, the past twenty years saw SA

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[1] See Appendix A for a review of the most popular genres of SA.

spreading towards different audiences via the internet - on digital fora, blogs, webzines, and online newspapers - where both professional and amateur viewers could both witness and interact with a street artwork. However, the rise of SA was not exclusively due to the internet. The contemporary understanding of SA started when the - at the time - graffiti writer known as Banksy decided to perform street artworks and organise exhibitions in certain London neighbourhoods (Blanché & Jonas, 2016) during the early 2000s. The organization of exhibitions in the streets, the private views during the early 2000s, and the advancement in technology both from the re-production and visualization perspectives, contributed to making SA a representational genre that everyone could access and afford (Blanché, 2015).

SA has indeed become present and available on different digital platforms such as Flickr, Instagram, Facebook, and blogs as well as location meta-data appearing on digital maps (Glaser, 2015; Saunders, 2011). This wider presence of SA allowed the emergence of new actors that interact with SA and promote further circulation of street artworks online. Indeed, together with street artists and SA photographers, other actors can view, appreciate, discuss and share their thoughts on the artwork displayed online (MacDowall & de Souza, 2018). Moreover, the ability of SA to gather both virtual and analogue masses of people has been recognised by institutional players such as urban planning authorities, which in the past twenty years started to include SA as one of the drivers for the regeneration of neighbourhoods (Abarca, 2015; Di Brita, 2018; Ulmer, 2017). Therefore, it is evident that SA in current times is characterised by integration between analogue and virtual aspects and by the participation of different actors in the discussion on the meaning and in the use of street artworks. However, as briefly illustrated below and explained in Chapter 2, it is still unclear who these actors are and

how they interact - either online or offline - and whether they contribute to making an artwork renowned.

To get an initial picture of what happens when SA appears becoming viral[2] online, this study considers the stencil street artwork that appeared in Rome in 2018. The piece was executed near the Parliament building during a period of political turmoil in Italy. The artwork depicted the leaders of the two winning - although antagonist - political parties while kissing each other, as visible in Figure 1.1 below. Because of the connection between the artwork and the trending topic of the recent elections, the street artwork quickly became viral online (Marsala, 2018). When the artwork appeared in Rome, passers-by took pictures with their mobile phones and shared it on their personal social media pages, exposing the work to the general audience. Newspapers and photographers became aware of the news and its potential to generate online traffic, and reproduced pictures of the artwork on their websites. In a few hours, the newly executed street artwork and the nickname of its author became known across the whole country.

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[2] "Viral content is online content that achieves a high level of awareness due to shares and exposure on social media networks, news websites, aggregators, email newsletters and search engines." Source: Backlinko.com

Figure 1.1.

Example of Street Artwork That Becomes Viral

The example briefly discussed above raises a series of questions that this study aims to address, which are related to understanding how a brand-new street artwork becomes renowned today. Indeed, the phenomenon for which a street artwork transforms from being unknown to achieving renown-ness and becoming viral may seem quick and straightforward at first sight, but there are aspects that are still unclear both from a practical point of view and considering the gaps in the literature, as illustrated below. In particular, it seems that different actors are involved in the transformation of a street artwork from unknown to renowned. Moreover, following subsequent research and review of extant literature, I found that little has been written on how street artworks become renowned today. Therefore, the overarching research question (RQ) that informs the current study is: *how do street artworks transform from being unknown to becoming renowned in the digital era?*

1.3 Establishing the Territory

In the past twenty years, SA has become increasingly studied by a wide range of scholars who approached it from different perspectives. Since SA is today a considerable component of the urban landscape (Bengsten, 2016), visual art, sociology, law studies, criminology and other disciplines have explored SA using various methods and analytical approaches, producing scholarships in the form of monographies, journal articles and participations to topic-specific conferences. This academic attention highlighted different aspects of SA, including the fact that it is a phenomenon characterised by intense social participation where different actors intervene at different stages and contribute to the making of its value, as presented in the definition available in the previous section.

Indeed, the literature shows that SA is perceived differently by the different members of society who interact with this form of expression according to whether it is perceived as an artistic intervention or whether it has both a damaging effect and an illegal connotation. The general public observe, appreciate, use and criticise SA appearing in the urban environment (UE) and on different supports (Browne & Browne, 2001; Stewart, 2008; Cooper & Chalfant, 1984 to 2015; MacDowall & de Souza, 2018); law-enforcement authorities try to contrast the proliferation of illegal SA because it is perceived as something anti-system needing to be removed (Weisel, 2002); subculture groups use graffiti tags to communicate within cities in a battle of styles (Browne & Browne, 2001; Ferrell, 1996; SpearIt, 2015); different media productions integrate SA in their creative output (Chang, 2008; Cooper & Chalfant, 1984 to 2015; White, 2018); local authorities use SA to regenerate abandoned and/or decaying neighbourhoods (Abarca, 2015; Di Brita, 2018; Ulmer, 2017); businesses use SA as a language able to

access specific demographics and communicate brand value (Niccolai, 2001); the art market and cultural institutions continuously try to grasp the value of SA and convey it through exhibitions and other events (Ross et al., 2017) to attract different audiences.

The social embeddedness of SA attracted a heterogeneity of researchers with different backgrounds that used different approaches to study graffiti and SA (Bengsten, 2016). Indeed, some studies on SA focused on its visual elements and social implications (Castleman, 1982; Dew, 2007; Di Brita, 2018; Hansen, 2005; Kelling & Coles, 1996), while other studies considered the textual data and the meanings surrounding SA available in different contexts such as academic publications, practitioners discussion boards, catalogues, digital fora and blogs, social media and on public policy documentations where street artists seemed to be playing with the public interactively (Stewart, 2008; Irvine, 2012; Kelling & Coles, 1996).

1.3.1 Street Art in Place

Scholars agree to consider SA as a form of visual expression of subcultures experienced in public areas (Ferrell, 1996; Gastman & Neelon, 2011; Irvine, 2012; Stewart, 2008; White, 2018) such as walls, subway cars, or other supports, where they have been executed without the authorization of the wall owner (Young, 2014a, 2014b). By sharing a similar nature and for being born in non-institutionalised environments (Ferrell, 1996), graffiti and SA are phenomena that often get confused one for the other. Indeed, before the term SA was ideated in the 1990s (Blanché, 2015), graffiti had already come a long way since its first appearance during cavemen times (White, 2018). The word *graffiti* originates from the Italian *graffito* with the meaning referring to the decoration technique used in ancient times. In fact, the *Oxford*

Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2021) defines graffiti as visual "drawings or writing" that are illegally sprayed, painted or scratched on any surfaces.

Usually, SA has a more legal connotation than graffiti, but it can be both legal and illegal (Nomeikaite, 2019) depending on whether or not the artwork has been commissioned, and according to the generally accepted perception for which tagging and graffiti are illegal, marginal and related to a subculture (Haenfler, 2013) that use the tag as a set of codes for internal communication, whereas murals and authorised art are legal (Lökman & Iveson 2010). Stylistically, legal SA can take the form of traditional graffiti with tags and names (Friedman, 2008), other than adopting one of the different styles[3] developed over the years, such as those available in Appendix A.

The literature briefly discussed above shed light on the presence of different actors that influence the value and the meaning of SA. However, the literature on the topic is still incomplete and does not illuminate the aspects needed to answer the overarching RQ outlined above. For example, previous studies defined SA and graffiti as forms of expression of social groups (Browne & Browne, 2001; Dew, 2007; Hansen, 2005; Stewart, 2008), but it is still unclear whether and how the final output - street artworks - depends on the relationships that street artists have with their peers. Moreover, the literature shows that street artists interact with the UE (Ellin 2007; Irvine, 2012) through the argument of visuality, but does not explain in detail the components of these interactions and how they affect the value of a street artwork. Moreover, despite the wide representation of SA in digital media and in virtual galleries (MacDowall & de Souza, 2018; Razzoli, 2017), it is still not clear whether the digital circulation of street artworks influences their diffusion amongst different audiences.

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[3] The most popular SA genres today are guerrilla art, mural art, yarn bombing, stencil art, posters/stickers.

Previous research and media on SA reveals that photographers played an important role in spreading the knowledge of SA towards the general public (Cooper & Chalfant, 1984 to 2015) and making SA a universal concept (Conklin, 2012). However, the understanding of the role of photographers can be widened by exploring their behaviour and interaction with other actors and their use of social networking sites (SNSs) to share street artworks. After all, Irvine (2012) said that the community of SA is not limited to the analogue world but can also be digital users that navigate online. This also suggests that there are other actors that may be involved in conveying, distributing, modifying, and establishing the value of street artworks via the internet, such as bloggers, social media pages and other platforms which this study aims at identifying and explaining.

1.3.2 Valuating Art

Understanding how the value of art is established is an area of major interest within the scholarship on the topic. However, the extensive examples and complexity of art (Hagtvedt et al., 2008) make it difficult to establish a single scientific framework applicable to all cases. Nevertheless, a key aspect in the literature consulted shows that a considerable component of the value of art depends on emotional and cognitive components (Baltissen & Ostermann, 1998; Silvia, 2005a) of the viewers and on their aesthetic experience (Osborne, 1986), regardless of the specific arts education (Silvia, 2005b). Moreover, when potential SA viewers circulate the UE, they undergo a process of "acquisition, interpretation, selection and organization of sensory information" (Hagtvedt et al., 2008, p. 198), and the features of this process depend on a series of physiological, social, and cultural elements. The literature shed light on how the

general audience values art items over non-art end-products[4] by stating that actors are aware they are contemplating something pleasant, that has stimuli and is connected to the context where art is experienced (Candy & Edmonds, 2002, 2008; Candy et al., 2018; Dewey, 1989; Hagtvedt et al., 2008; Pelowski et al., 2017).

Indeed, despite the value of art being defined when artists initiate the creative process (Cornock & Edmonds, 1973), it is in the general audience that the value becomes established. Kleiner (2019) said that when audiences react to the stimuli resulting from features of an artwork (Hagtvedt, et al., 2008), the value perceived of artworks differs from the original meaning of the author. The final value of an artwork is, therefore, related to both the initial value embedded by the author and the value attributed by the viewers of the artwork itself (Bourdieu et al., 1997; Dewey, 1989; Edmonds et al., 2009).

The value of art can include also intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics other than the original value provided by the author and the value resulting from the experience of viewers. Indeed, the literature showed that different material and abstract characteristics of artworks underpin their economic value. Some of these characteristics are related to the size of a picture/painting, the sale location, the execution techniques, the established fame of the authors, and the similarity to other famous artworks (Coslor, 2016; Coslor & Spaenjers, 2016; Sagot-Duvauroux, 2011). However, different authors (Becker, 2008; Bongard, 1970; Bowness, 1989; Moulin, 1987; Robertson, 2005) stressed that the presence of interactions between the artwork and its audiences also plays a pivotal role in determining the value of art, but is hardly included in the economic valuation of art.

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[4] By end-product, the author refers to the outcome of an artistic endeavour, whether it is a physical outcome or an artistic performance.

The literature briefly discussed above provided interesting insights to the composition of value of art. However, the cited studies have not explicitly dealt with the street artworld. Hence, the need to conduct research with the aim of understanding who the actors are that contribute to the creation of value in SA, whether the value is created by the street artist, the general audience, other actors, or a combination of them, whether the representation of SA on digital platforms contributes to the creation of value, and which actions performed by whom create/stimulate value in the street artworld.

1.3.3 Co-Creation in Street Art

The literature mentioned above showed that in order to understand *how street artworks transform from unknown to renowned in the digital era*, it is important to explore the street artworld to identify the different actors contributing to this transformation. However, to address the overarching RQ, this study aims to explain how this transformation happens and how value is created amongst the different actors. Indeed, the idea for this research came from witnessing on SNSs the fast transformation of an unknown street artwork into a renowned one (Figure 1.1), and by making some considerations on how it happens. One of the considerations was that the different actors may be involved in a co-creation process similar to crowdsourcing, therefore the literature on co-creation was explored.

The existing body of research on co-creation reveals that different actors come together and participate in the creation of value and sheds some light on the overarching RQ. The literature on co-creation (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Collins, 2010; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a, 2004b; Seran (Potra) & Izvercian, 2014; Toffler & Toffler, 2006) argued that, in certain production processes, the value of commodities

can be created collaboratively between producers and consumers according to the prosumerism paradigm. Moreover, value co-creation is not limited to the collaboration between producer and consumer(s) but can happen also in the case of any other collaborations that businesses establish with other actors (Storbacka & Nenonen, 2011) in what Ritzer (2014, 2015) calls the "prosumption continuum framework".

The literature suggests that the prosumerism paradigm is applicable to today's knowledge-based economy (Krahn, et al., 2008) where consumers somehow participate in production processes. Moreover, it is now well established from a variety of studies on crowdsourcing (Aitamurto, 2017; Deuze, 2007; Estellés-Arolas & Gonzalez-Ladron-de-Guevara, 2012; Lakhani & Panetta, 2007; von Hippel, 2005; Piller et al., 2011) that many creative processes in the arts and media production are characterised by cooperation amongst different parts/actors that are placed at the same hierarchical level. In this context, who consumes is often the same entity as who produces, and the active participation of consumers/users and audiences contributes to determine the value of a commodity/service.

To better situate the study, the literature on the creative value chain was explored. The literature showed that the basic linear model of value chain (Hartley, 2004; Pratt, 2008) can be used to understand how the value of a commodity changes from the production to the consumption of the good. However, reviewing the literature showed that the linear model of the value is not adequate to explain how the value of a street artwork is created as well as how it changes across the value chain. Indeed, further literature has been consulted (Liao, 2014; Madudová, 2017; Preece et al., 2016) and suggested that in creative industries, value is often defined by consumers (Pratt, 2004; Hartley, 2004) rather than by who produces the commodity. Therefore, reviewing

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the literature on the value chain suggested further investigation in order to understand the characteristics of this model when applied to the SA world.

The concepts briefly discussed above are useful for this study because they show that in a creative context, end-users are not just passive viewers, and they contribute to generate value together with producers. Moreover, this collaborative value creation can happen in both material (Jenkins & Deuze, 2008) and virtual spaces (Banks, 2009). The aim of this study is to verify whether the way value is created and distributed for SA can fall within the theoretical boundaries and the practical features of co-creation, where different actors concur to the definition of value of street artworks and contribute to their renown-ness.

Establishing the territory allowed to shed light on different aspects of the process for which unknown street artworks become renowned in the digital era, but there are still unanswered questions that this study aims to illuminate. For a basic visual representation of the interrelated research issues (i.e., the research problem) this study addresses, refer to Figure 1.2 below. This figure will be referred to in this thesis to help the reader locate the contributions to this study, and in terms of describing and explaining the overarching RQ. The unanswered questions in Figure 1.2 below have been merged with the literature gaps identified in Chapter 2 to construct five original RQs[5]:

RQ1: *Who are the actors contributing to the legitimation and valuation of street art?*

RQ2: *What are the roles of these different actors in defining the value of street art and to what extent is this value defined online?*

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[5] For a detailed account of how the five RQs have been developed, please refer to Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

Figure 1.2.

The Research Problem

The Research Problem diagram showing a central BLACK BOX with an orange arrow flowing from "Unknown Street Art" (left) to "Renowned Street Art" (right). Black arrows point outward from the Black Box to: "Who is Involved?", "What They Do?", "Where Are They?", "More or Less Digital?", "Is Value Changing?" (leading to "How?"), "Any Gatekeepers /Facilitators?", and "How Things Happen?".
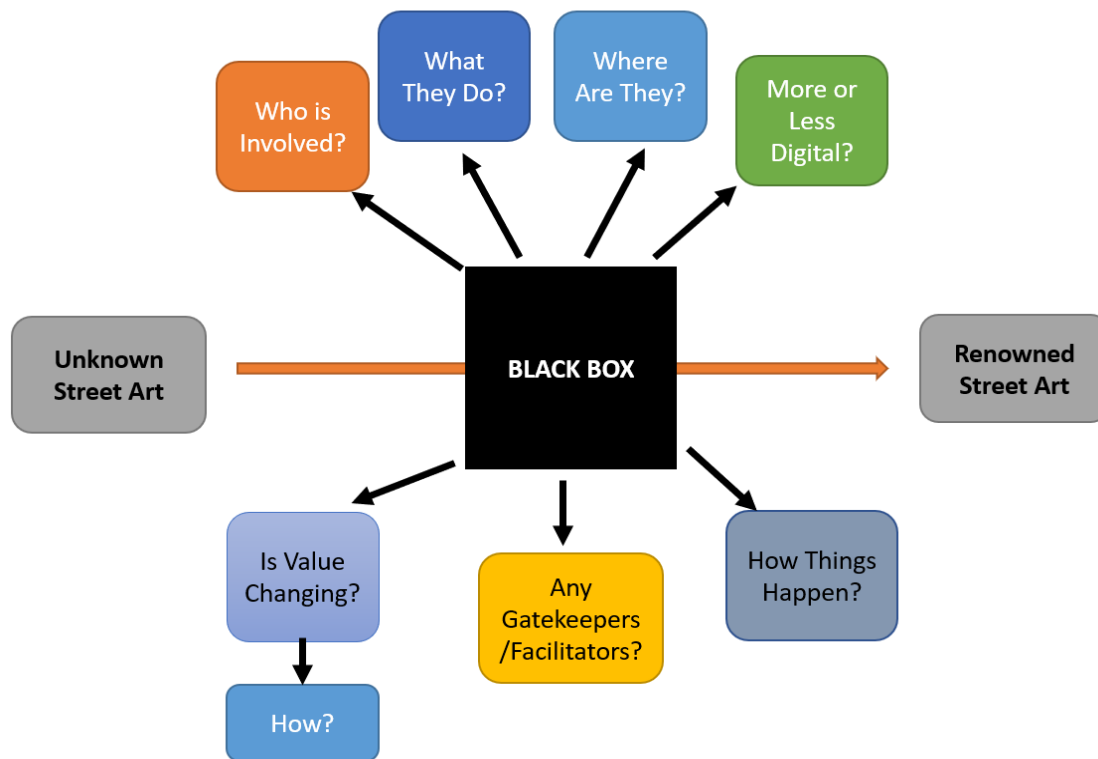
Source: the thesis author.

RQ3: *How is the audience of street art composed? Are there differences between online and offline audiences?*

RQ4: *To what extent is the value of street artworks defined in a co-creation process taking place on digital platforms? What does this process consist of?*

RQ5: *What is the value chain of street art and to what extent does it include digital elements?*

1.4 Focus and Scope of the Study

This study proposes to address the five questions above via a multi-method qualitative investigation of the street artworld[6]. The aim of the study is understanding

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[6] A detailed discussion of the research design, methods and philosophical positions is available in Chapter 3.

how the value of a street artwork changes while they are used and considered by different actors and, to pursue this aim, three types of qualitative data have been collected: primary data as semi-structured interviews with three types of participants identified during the literature review; secondary[7] data in the form of conversations on SNSs; and field notes taken along the study. The qualitative data have been analysed through the Gioia et al. (2012) methodology.

Interviewing three participant types allowed for the gathering of the perspectives of different participants. These perspectives have been combined to create a thorough understanding of the phenomenon for which street artworks become renowned. Indeed, interview schedules focused on understanding the participants' perception of how street artworks become renowned today, on the use of digital means to distribute street artworks amongst audiences and/or discover new SA, on the level of interaction between street artists and the public, on street artists' perception of how their work are valuated, and on the valuation and selection practice of curators[8]. Conversations on SNSs have been collected in order to expand the scope of the study and include not only the perspectives of three different interviewees - although rich in information - but also to bring in the enquiry data related to the actual digital interactions happening around SA.

Analysing three different data types allowed for grasping the complexity of the phenomenon studied and explained how street artworks become renowned today. In particular, the analysis allowed the emergence of five aggregate dimensions of the phenomenon which provide a detailed understanding of the following aspects: who are

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[7] Kozinets (2010) refers to secondary data archived online as *archival* data to distinguish it from other data.
[8] For a more detailed scope of the interview schedule, please refer to Chapter 3 and to Appendix F.

the actors that participate in the creation of the value of SA; what actions are performed and by whom; how are digital platforms used; what collaborations street artists engage in and how do actors interact; what is the role of the different actors in the value co-creation of SA; the creative practice of street artists that aim at becoming renowned; the presence and the role of gatekeepers; and the community dynamics in SA[9].

Understanding this complex phenomenon also underlines the importance and the originality of this study. Indeed, the study has shed light on the different interactions that happen amongst the actors involved in SA and advanced the understanding of cumulative value co-creation occurring in complex social systems, such as the street artworld. Therefore, this study makes a relevant contribution to research on SA by explaining that street artworks become renowned today according to a series of factors. These factors are the intrinsic value of a street artwork, the possibility of interaction amongst different actors, the shared practice of street artists who aim at becoming renowned, the digital skills that street artists employ in their practice, and the participation of street artists in a close-knit community of creatives.

1.5. Contributions of the Study

While some considerations on the impact have been mentioned above, this study makes a number of new contributions to our knowledge by:

- Providing further evidence that the production of SA is underpinned by a complex system of interactions between different actors. With this, providing further understanding of the who the actors are contributing to the legitimation and valuation of SA.

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[9] For a detailed discussion of the findings, see Chapter 4.

- Providing a much-sought understanding of the roles of the different actors in defining the value of SA and the ability of these actors to contribute to the renown-ness of street artworks.

- Providing an understanding of the different audiences of SA and the actions they perform after experiencing SA in the streets and on SNSs.

- Explaining and describing the shared practice of street artists that wish to become renowned in terms of use of SNSs, social media/digital skills, collaborations with other actors and creative output. With this, the study also provides an understanding of the issues encountered by street artists in their creative work and the practical solutions they adopt to survive in the field.

- Outlining the structure of a model of creative value chain that can be applied to SA and set out the basis for future studies on this topic.

- Providing insights on the interactions that characterise the production of SA at different levels: among street artists, between street artists and gatekeepers, among curators, within online communities. Hence, verifying whether and how the value of SA is co-created amongst different actors.

- Making practical contributions related to the outcomes of the research which can be useful for different actors involved in SA.

- Providing methodological nuances in the study of SA within the social sciences. As explained in Chapter 3, this study adopted a multi-method qualitative design that included the exploration of digital communities and the uses of digital content.

1.6 Organization of the Thesis

After this introductive chapter, the thesis continues as indicated below[10].

Chapter 2: presents a review of relevant literature and the background to this research. The chapter has two main sections. Each section has been termed a *pillar* in the literature review because of the metaphorical function of each section in supporting the argument that is developed. The RQs emerge from the discussion of the literature in each pillar.

Chapter 3: presents the method used to conduct this study. The chapter starts with the justification of the philosophical positions adopted, and then discusses the research design and the research methods used. The chapter includes a discussion of the procedure followed to analyse the data and an initial representation of the data structure. Chapter 3 also briefly discusses the ethical issues and challenges encountered during the data collection.

Chapter 4: presents the findings from the qualitative analysis of interviews, conversations on SNSs and field notes. This chapter is divided into four main sections that relate to the four main aggregate dimensions of the topic. A further fifth cross-cutting dimension - value elements - is addressed within each of the four sections of this chapter.

Chapter 5: in this chapter the findings are drawn together.

Chapter 6: this final chapter reflects on the author's experience on data collection and analysis and draws the main conclusions from this study in terms of the

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[10] The reader should note that the thesis has been equipped with hyperlinks that 'connect up' the different sections. This has been done for ease of access and to allow the reader to follow the overarching digital dynamic of the thesis.

limitations and opportunities for future research. This chapter also outlines the theoretical and practical contributions of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The content of Chapter 2 provides theoretical support to the overarching question: *How do street artworks transform from being unknown to becoming renowned in the digital era?* and identifies the gaps addressed in the current study. The literature review chapter is organised in three sections. The first section presents the concepts related to SA and how it originated and evolved from graffiti. The second section discusses the experiences of both art valuation and value co-creation (as a general concept) and also considers how this applies to arts and media. The third section takes stock of the learning from the literature and shows how the black box diagram has been partially illuminated.

2.2 Understanding Street Art

This section explores the concepts and the practices of SA, graffiti, and public art by reviewing the main theories related with the concept of SA. The subsections below explain how SA evolved from the graffiti phenomenon becoming a global representational and artistic genre, and review the concepts related to public art that can be useful in understanding the social participation aspects of art placed in the streets. The literature showed that SA is a practice where different actors are involved, but there is no complete understanding of who these actors are and what they do in order to influence the value of street artworks. Understanding SA means to consider its historical, practical, and conceptual evolution from graffiti: from a form of expression of subcultures within disadvantaged neighbourhoods to the distribution and further

development in media. Different actors take part in this historical journey and contribute to defining the value of graffiti and street artworks.

2.2.1 Graffiti vs Street Art

From cave graffiti in ancient times, the practice of graffiti evolved and acquired artistic significance in the early twentieth century, when young gangs started to mark and claim the territory in neighbourhoods of American East Coast main cities (Friedman, 2008) as visible in step 1 of Figure 2.1 below. The first modern graffiti artist is known as *Cornbread* (De Melker, 2011) who started to spray-paint on public building walls in the late 1960s to elicit the interest of a young woman and then ended up using his works as a means for protesting social inequities in disadvantaged communities. Cornbread's practice evolved by including commissions: they made some major stunts[11] such as decorating the Jackson 5's private jet and the Philadelphia Zoo unofficial logo (Currier, 2010), amongst others. Cornbread's involvement in commissioned work influenced other members of the early graffiti community to start reproducing Cornbread's works in artistic replicas and in different contexts. Once the replicas circulated in a wide range of settings and environments - private collections, galleries, exhibitions, merchandising, modern antiques - their artistic value became established and contributed to convert them into elements of the artworld (Schwartzman, 1985; Deitch et al., 2021; Günes & Yilmaz, 2006).

However, Cornbread's work is a milestone of modern graffiti and SA because they were executed using a different style: spray paint (White, 2018). This cheap and versatile technique for painting - step 2 of Figure 2.1 - was ideal for early graffiti artists who needed affordable, portable tools in dangerous situations where the authors had

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[11] Street artists refer to their creations as stunts as will be evident in Chapter 4 - Findings.

to be able to escape a police chase (McKnight, 2007). This precarious situation, the danger of being caught, and the risk related with illegal graffiti painting were some of the main components of the practice of graffiti (Ferrell, 1996).

Therefore, with the rise in popularity of Cornbread as well as with the use of spray/can paint, the term word *graffiti* became used to describe the forms of expression produced by gangs populating the major cities of the East Coast of the USA in the period among the late 1960s and 1970s (Ferrell, 1996). The new-born graffiti phenomenon drew its meaning from the harsh conditions into which the lower-middle class was living at that time represented by dramatic poverty, racism, violence, and decadence of public spaces - especially in big cities like New York and Philadelphia (Deitch et al., 2021; Günes & Yilmaz, 2006; Ferrell, 1995, 1996). Within this deteriorated public environment, younger generations needed to express themselves with what the public space could offer, so they started to write on walls and, therefore, get possession of otherwise abandoned places. This activity represents the origin of the contemporary graffiti practice and became famous as *tagging*[12] (Lachmann, 1988). Its most renowned exponent at the time was the Greek writer TAKI, author of tags in Manhattan since his intent - like the intent of all the graffiti writers at that time - was to be *all city*[13] (Cooper & Chalfant, 1984).

As discussed below in more detail, young people of marginalised neighbourhoods were part of a subculture that could not express themselves in the traditional and institutional places, so the appeal of being part of an alternative representational movement was high (Chang, 2008). The practice of graffiti found a

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[12] Graffiti consisted of elaborated and colourful pieces containing names and short sentences (Cooper & Chalfant, 1984).
[13] Graffiti taggers aimed at becoming known in as many neighbourhoods as they could with their tags.

fertile substrate within young audiences, where it grew and spread during the 1970s and 1980s also aided by the birth and spread of the hip-hop movement which used graffiti as one of the means of expression (White, 2018) as visible in steps 3 and 4 of Figure 2.1. Therefore, young communities used hip-hop and graffiti to express themselves in a world that was otherwise hostile and exclusive. The contraposition between younger communities from marginalised neighbourhoods and the public space in the 1970s and 1980s represents the very first example of tension between the need of expression of marginalised communities who wanted to find their own place in the world (Phillips, 1996) and the public space. This tension was exploited by graffiti taggers and early street artists that invaded the public space to claim it (Chang, 2008) with elaborated writings, colours, installations and other interventions on any element of the UE (Cooper & Chalfant, 1984; Lachmann, 1988).

During the 1990s, thanks to the diffusion of music videos, the hip-hop music movement used graffiti to communicate and spread within middle class households via television (White, 2018). Graffiti became a frequent element of hip-hop and other media (Cooper & Chalfant, 1984); sports teams and entertainment industries used graffiti to convey the messages and values of their brands, images, and logos (Miller, 2006) as shown in step 4 of Figure 2.1 below. The diffusion of graffiti in media allowed its value to be appreciated by the public. This led to the emergence of the early street artists between the 1990s and the early 2000s, such as Banksy (Gastman & Neelon, 2011) who changed their practice from performing on subway cars and hidden walls, to exhibiting in museums, galleries, and other venues (Blanché, 2015; Friedman, 2008; De Melker, 2011).

Famous street artists[14] all started what is known today as *Street Art* during their collaborations in the early 2000s (Blanché, 2015; WebArtAcademy, 2010; Widewalls, 2014). The evolution of SA from graffiti in the early 2000s also consisted of the development of diverse painting styles as well as moving to the rest of the world (Ross et al., 2017) as shown in the seventh step of Figure 2.1 below. The shift from the once mysterious and illegal graffiti to a more accepted and represented medium allowed street artists to become more elaborate when executing an artwork. This was also due to the availability of resources and opportunities:

- Spray painting was not the only intervention technique anymore as artists had more time to spend on their works, using more elaborate and diverse techniques[15].

- With the recognition of the creative component of graffiti thanks to media, many institutions - from private businesses to public authorities - started to trade and commission jobs to the new-born artists.

Exploring the causes of this conceptual - and practical - evolution can help both distinguish between graffiti and SA as well as understanding the two phenomena in terms of social participation.

If we look at the technique, graffiti started its way towards a more artistic significance when the works entailed something more than just tagging. For instance, the techniques started to include tri-dimensional drawing, elaborate compositions, and other elements, like the use of arrows that enriched the writing with movement (Gastman & Neelon, 2011; White, 2018). This visual transformation is deeply documented by Cooper and Chalfant in their *Subway Art* (1984) and analysed in the

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[14] Aèrosol, Banksy, Blu, Faile, JR, Os Gemeos, Swoon, to cite a few.
[15] See Appendix A for a list of available SA styles.

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practice by Ferrell (1996) and other studies (Castleman, 1982; De Melker, 2011; Invaluable.com, 2017; Sprayplanet, 2018; White, 2018). Hardcopy publications such as Cooper and Chalfant's photography book[16] contributed to the conversion of graffiti from vandalism and protest to a form of expression and art. The representation of graffiti in different media contributed to highlighting its artistic elements and promoting it to the wider public. Indeed, some elaborate graffiti works are nowadays considered art in part because they have been shown in publications where their artistic features were illustrated, highlighted, and explained. Understanding the evolution from graffiti to SA can be done by looking at a timeline that considers the different milestones of this evolution in terms of stylistic aspects, media representation, and actors involved - Figure 2.1 below. However, reviewing the literature on this matter showed that it is still unclear who the different actors are and what their role is in contributing to the transformation of graffiti into SA, its legitimation, and its valuation.

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[16] Constantly updated with new styles and techniques since its first printing in 1984.

Figure 2.1.

From Graffiti to Street Art

1 — 1920: first forms of graffiti tagging appearing in the streets of New York

2 — 1960s and 70s: graffiti evolved in stiles and meanings and detached from simple tagging (Cooper and Chalfant, 1984; Gastman and Neelon, 2010)

3 — 1960s and 70s: graffiti taggers grouped according to techniques, stiles and sense of belonging creating collectives and communities

4 — 70s: hip hop culture is born in New York using graffiti and tagging as a form of communication (Browne, 2001)

5 — 1979: graffiti artists are exhibited in a gallery in Rome

6 — 1980s and 90s graffiti are considered in their artistic features and used by media, music and other industries

7 — 1990s and 2000s: appearance of street art on authorised walls, museums, galleries and other events worldwide (Ross et al., 2017)

Source: the thesis author.

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2.2.1.1 Understanding Graffiti

This subsection outlines the various elements that form the concept of graffiti with a focus on the artistic value that graffiti acquired from published media, the use of graffiti by local authorities and organizations, and the recognition of graffiti by the audience. Understanding graffiti means considering the reasoning of different authors and relates to both the practice and the history of this phenomenon. The definition of graffiti used in this study considers a series of elements identified by different authors. One of them is the fact that modern graffiti is a form of expression of marginalised communities that have no other ways of expressing themselves in the public space (Stewart, 2008). The activity of tagging started during the late 1920s but had its biggest diffusion during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Gastman & Neelon, 2011; steps 1 to 4 in Figure 2.1), when subway cars and city walls were illegally used (SpearIt, 2015) by local gangs to claim ownership of a neighbourhood (Browne & Browne, 2001). At the same time, the hip-hop subculture used graffiti as a tool for communication during the late 1970s (SpearIt, 2015) and shared its origins with graffiti: being born within non-institutional contexts and being related to illegality/vandalism (Browne & Browne, 2001; Stewart, 2008).

From the above broad definition, it is possible to identify the main elements of contemporary graffiti[17] discussed in this subsection:

- Graffiti is the form of expression of a marginalised and non-hegemonic subculture (Haenfler, 2013): Graffiti is not part of mainstream culture.

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[17] As opposed to prehistoric cavemen's inscriptions, figure drawings, and other similar figurative representations found on the walls of ancient human structures.

- Evidence of belonging to a subculture comes from the intertwinement with hip-hop music (White, 2018).

- Graffiti started as tags on subway cars and city walls: Graffiti uses an alternative canvas (Browne & Browne, 2001; SpearIt, 2015).

- The use of public space made by graffiti taggers and artists is illegal: Graffiti is illegal or at least non-authorised (Ferrell, 1996).

- Graffiti is used by members of a subculture to express themselves and to claim ownership of a neighbourhood, or to impose mastery of spray/can painting techniques, or to confirm the status of the tagger/author: Graffiti as a code/language for the expression and communication of a defined group of people.

Relating to this last element, a debate arises regarding the possibility of considering graffiti as a form of art given its use by a specific subculture as a tool for expression. Indeed, positions on this element vary greatly even at the same time (Stewart, 2008). For instance, the case of the Italian gallerist Claudio Bruni, who invited two American graffiti artists[18] in 1979 and displayed their works in the Galleria La Medusa in Rome (step 5 of Figure 2.1), can be considered as one of the pioneer forms of recognition of early 1970s graffiti as a form of art. However, it is frequently possible to observe the proliferation of tagging as a means to claim possession of an area as well as examples where the public seem to have recognised in graffiti a sense of artistic expression that contributes to the general niceness of an area.

The divergent opinions above represent the two extremes of the debate on the legitimacy of graffiti in terms of whether it is a form of art and whether it should be allowed/promoted in the UE. In this debate, as illustrated in Figure 2.2, we have, on

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[18] *Lee Quinones* and *Fab 5 Freddy.*

one side, the opponents to graffiti arguing that, to be art, graffiti must get permission/legitimation from authorities and from artistic institutions (Beardon, 2006), and on the other side we have graffiti artists themselves who agree that the legitimation of artworks comes from other artists and from graffiti's history (Stewart, 2008). This is particularly interesting for this study because it suggests that (I) there is a sense of belonging to a community in graffiti that has the power of legitimising the creative output; and that (II) that members of gangs are one type of actors that influences the value of graffiti.

However, not everyone agrees with attributing graffiti the artistic value that converts it into the language of a subculture, and the debate developed around the dialogue between graffiti artists and those who oppose considering graffiti as art. Graffiti artists generally perceive the illegality of their actions (Hansen, 2005) but, despite the possibility of being considered vandals that destroy property and beautiful landscape[19], they regard their works not as something that damage the environment but rather as an addition to it.

Also, graffiti artists perform an internal distinction that divides those who do "something creative" and "environment specific" (Dew, 2007, p. 195) from the graffiti taggers or, as Australian graffiti artist *Vexta* defined them, "troublemakers to the core" (Beardon, 2006). The difference stands in the fact that the former are generally aware that their interventions are illegal and/or non-authorised, but their general attitude towards creating graffiti is to produce something aesthetically favourable and to stimulate "public debate" (Dew, 2007, p. 241); whereas the graffiti taggers operate

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[19] *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*: definition of vandalism.

outside any defined or institutional code of practice (Hansen, 2005), justifying the general negative perception of graffiti-tagging by the public.

At the same time, graffiti artists who promote creativity through their works without damaging the existing landscape are considered "ethical vandals" (Stewart, 2008, p.89) since their intent is to spray-paint and intervene in the urban context performing vandalism, but with the purpose of expressing and communicating the voices of those who are generally underrepresented in the contemporary world: young people. Therefore, graffiti can be considered as a language used by marginalised social groups (Browne & Browne, 2001) to claim space in the city and document their own existence (Hansen, 2005). Hence, vandalism is an intrinsic value of graffiti which acts as the voice of a subculture that expresses itself using the UE as a canvas. Figure 2.2 below summarises the main points identified above.

Figure 2.2.

Difference Between Non-Artistic and Artistic Graffiti in the UE

URBAN ENVIRONMENT

NON ARTISTIC GRAFFITI	ARTISTIC GRAFFITI
• Made of tags	• Made to stimulate public debate
• Related to problems of safety in the cities	• Related to a genre or a specific technique
• Do not contribute to the urban décor	• Contribute to décor/niceness of an area
• Used by gangs and crews	• Sometimes integrated within urban planning
• Used to claim ownership of a neighbourhood and mastery of spray painting techniques	• Used by local authorities and businesses
• Contrasted by artistic graffiti	• Sometimes fought by non-artistic graffiti/taggers
• Fought by transit, police and urban décor authorities	

Note. What is here called "artistic graffiti" is the evolution of the practice of graffiti into what has become Street Art.
Source: the thesis author.

From the institutional point of view, graffiti and its authors have initially been considered anti-system, or at least non-institutionalised subjects intervening on walls with the purpose of being opposed to and by public authorities and established art institutions such as museums. Because of this, part of the literature on graffiti is focused on the antagonism of graffiti writers with institutions and treated the topics of (I) the cost of removing graffiti works from public spaces; (II) the problem relating to the lack of public security; and (III) the problem relating to a manifestation of anti-culture deriving from public acceptance of graffiti as a way of expression for young people (Weisel, 2002).

From this review, it appears evident that the value of graffiti is determined by the social actors that experience them. Graffiti makers consider themselves either artists (Dew, 2007) or vandals. However, they believe that to be a graffiti tagger/artist, the legitimation has to come from within the community they are part of (Stewart, 2008). Also, art organizations such as galleries tend to consider the value of graffiti in order to organise events and exhibitions. This gives an initial understanding of graffiti as a phenomenon where different actors can contribute to its value. However, the role of the different actors in defining the value of graffiti as well as SA still needs clarification.

2.2.1.2 Graffiti in Contemporary Society

A further understanding of the graffiti phenomenon useful for this study comes from the exploration of the dynamics behind its origins. As illustrated in Figure 2.3 below, contemporary graffiti have specific characteristics. One being their role in

Figure 2.3.

Evolution of Graffiti into SA and Social Implications.
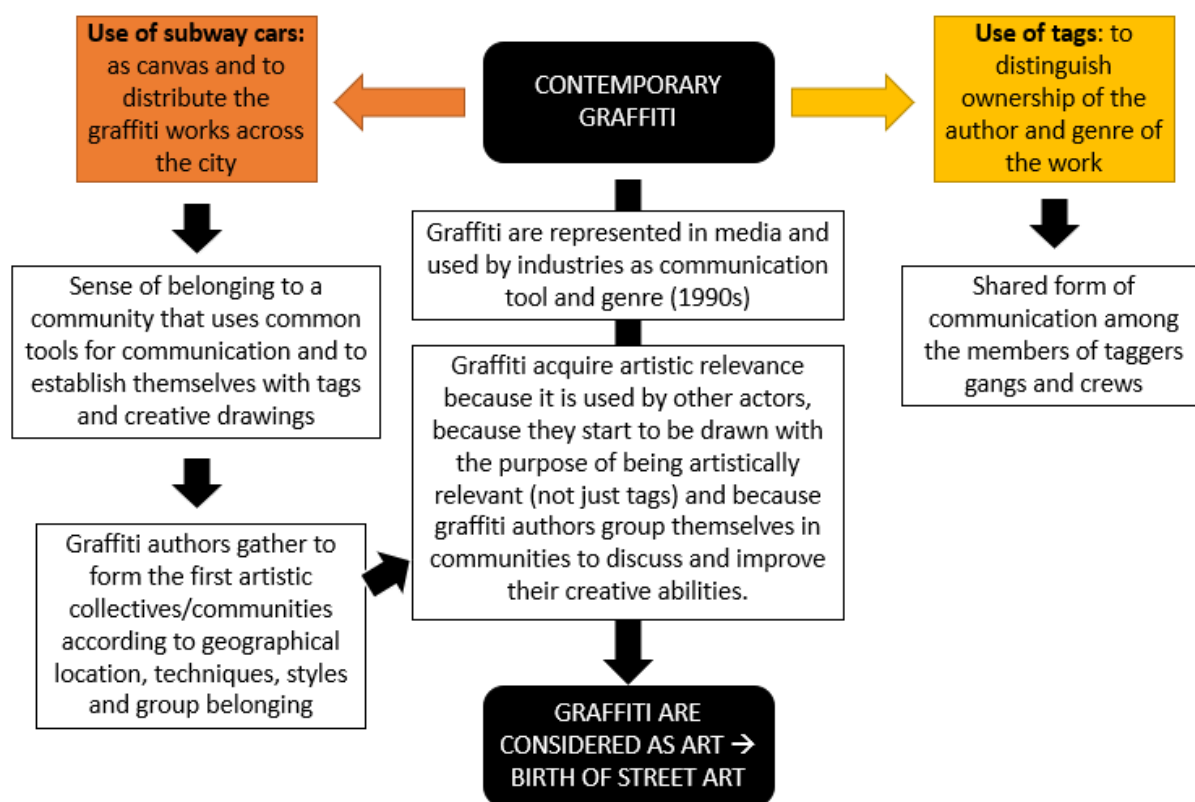
Source: the thesis author.

contemporary urban society[20] as discussed by Ferrell (1996). This author illustrates the models of social organization of graffiti taggers and writers during the 1980s and 1990s, defining graffiti as an example of anarchist criminology. In particular, Ferrell identified two typical elements of graffiti writers that are (I) the use of tags - stylised logos - used by graffiti taggers to distinguish their works from those of other authors, and (II) the use of subway cars (top part of Figure 2.3) as the canvas for their artistic representation and distribution.

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[20] "a society that is typical of modern industrial civilization and heterogeneous in cultural tradition that emphasises secular values, and that is individualised rather than integrated - contrasted with folk society". Source: *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*.

Tags represent both the measure of a tagger's fame and the discriminant element for the style quality of graffiti (Ferrell, 1996). Whereas the use of subway cars helped graffiti to spread all over the cities (Chalfant & Prigoff, 1987; Cooper & Chalfant, 1984) and allowed artists to compare each other's work, getting inspired and improve their artistic approach by imitating that of others. Graffiti tagging - and its spreading through subway cars - was thus one of the forms of expression of the youth subculture (Brewer & Miller, 1990) and adds itself to the list of underground/alternative artistic languages (Lachmann, 1988) of a generation that used tags (Miller, 1994) to express themselves in the UE despite being considered criminals by other actors (Stewart, 1987).

Historically, the practice of contemporary graffiti tagging followed an evolution of styles and meanings that began by the end of the 1960s in America's East Coast cities and still continues today in many Western metropolitan areas (Cooper & Chalfant, 1984 to 2015; Gastman & Neelon, 2011). As shown in the left part of Figure 2.3, when graffiti authors gathered in subway car depots to perform tags, they created a sort of proto-artistic collective where taggers grouped in crews to execute, view, discuss and appreciate the tags of their peers. When this happened - in the early 1970s - a sense of belonging related with each groups' tagging styles and techniques started to arise, allowing the formation of the first stylistic diversification that would later be called artistic movement or genre (Diaz, 1992; Glionna, 1993; MacDuff & Valenzuela, 1993; Quintanilla, 1993) once graffiti's artistic relevance became accepted by institutions (Blanché, 2015). The sense of belonging to a community by graffiti taggers derives from the discussion and judgements happening within their groups on both style and artistic features of graffiti works. In this sense, it is unclear whether graffiti

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taggers can be considered as a community of peers which act as a first type of audience that observes graffiti and provides an initial commentary/valuation in terms of style, technique, or other features of the work.

The circulation of graffiti within cities and on published media allowed the works to be exposed to different audiences. One of these audiences consists of photographers that then share their photos via traditional and/or digital media. One of the first examples of this is the book *Subway Art* by Cooper and Chalfant (1984): two authors who contributed to the transformation of the sub-cultural phenomenon of graffiti into an art form. By the 1990s of the twentieth century - black box at the bottom of Figure 2.3 and as shown in steps 6 and 7 of Figure 2.1 - some institutions in the western world recognised the importance of graffiti as not just a form of communication, but also as a form of expression of a subculture. This led to the perception of graffiti from a mix of undecipherable codes of a marginalised community to a phenomenon to be understood aesthetically.

By the 2000s, public institutions started to discipline and sanction graffiti as an activity done within the urban space (Lombard, 2013). The Melbourne City Council's *Graffiti Management Plan* (2014) is an interesting example that shows how local authorities recognised graffiti and intervened both prohibiting illegal works (Nam, 2019) and determining the areas within the city where graffiti writing could be performed with a four-year adjournment of the plan. Another example is what happened within the Bushwick neighbourhood in Brooklyn, NY, where street artists are authorised and encouraged to perform SA on public building walls (Stewart, 2008) with the intention of providing the neighbourhood with a system able both to prevent wild tagging and to

enrich the cultural/artistic offer of the city. In other places, authorised graffiti were used by institutions as a deterrent for illegal graffiti (Craw et al., 2006).

However, the literature shows that when tagging is disciplined and institutionalised, graffiti taggers are not happy. Indeed, one of the founding elements of graffiti and street artists is that proficiency, mastery and artistic cleverness are features that an artist develops by living the streets, railyards, trains, and other abandoned places, and often "begin with simple tagging" (Stewart, 2008, p. 89) instead of being artistically institutionalised. The opposition between institutionalised and spontaneous/rebel dichotomy of graffiti is nowadays still characterising the practices and experience of both graffiti and SA around the world. For instance, there is something that happens within graffiti environments where graffiti taggers engage in tagging over commissioned graffiti/street artworks in Bushwick, NY, in order to disfigure the original work and re-gain possession of the neighbourhood (Lu, 2015).

2.2.1.3 Evolution of Graffiti into Art

Given graffiti is still a form of expression of a specific social group, there are some elements that distinguish it from SA which are useful to define the latter. One of the main differences between the two phenomena is the purpose that moves the author. Therefore, if graffiti are based on tagging that enables the author to claim ownership of the place and declare his/her belonging to a subculture/crew/geographical area or the disruption with the imposed order to confirm his/her neighbourhood identity, SA is based on drawing, for which the artists are involved in an "intervention" (McCormick et al., 2010) aiming to promote social change in a specific environment.

Another aspect that marks the passage from tagging to artistic drawing is represented by the neatness (Stewart, 2008) of the latter compared to tagging. Indeed, when legal and artistic graffiti and/or street artworks are performed, it frequently means that the author has been contracted, that the sessions needed to perform the work have been determined with the owner of the wall/building, and that the amount/colours of paint have been decided in cooperation with the other parts involved in the execution. Whereas, when illegal graffiti are executed, it means they have been done usually at night with the fear of being caught by the authorities. The difference between these two experiences is evident in the neatness and in the detail of the work:

(I)   In the case of illegal graffiti, their authors have material restrictions and pressure while performing their works. Therefore, both detail and overall neatness of graffiti can be impacted by this aspect (Stewart, 2008).

(II)   In the case of commissioned and legal graffiti/SA, pressure and restrictions are generally alleviated and artists can apply their skills more minutely and execute their work with higher detail.

According to this view, the separation of graffiti from an illegal activity to a recognised artistic experience, stands also in the different technical quality of the pieces (Stewart, 2008).

There is another view on illegal graffiti, however, that focuses on the aesthetics of illegal works rather than on that of commissioned ones. In this view, illegal graffiti embed the concept of aesthetics of disorder (Young, 2005) for which the viewers get to participate in the experience of graffiti erupting from any random place of the UE representing the "smooth surface of community" graffiti "is founded" upon (Young, 2005, p. 50). A further difference between graffiti and SA emerges from considering

the institutionalisation of the latter in the form of public art, as discussed in the next subsection.

In conclusion, graffiti-tagging is a practice that represents the features of its birthplace[21] by expressing territory ownership and group belonging. Graffiti subversively impacted on pop culture with particular evidence during the 1970s and 1980s because it stimulated the creation of forms of expression accessible by everyone and by laying the foundation of SA (Maric, 2016). This cultural movement (English, 2012) was eloquently recorded historically in the book by Gastman and Neelon, (2011)[22] and graphically in the book *Subway Art* (Cooper & Chalfant, 1984 to 2015). During those years, young people were responding to the hard conditions they were living in by creating a socio-cultural phenomenon - tagging subway cars - that later started to gain importance for and attention from the artworld because of the aesthetic relevance of some works, because of the willingness of certain graffiti authors to add something beautiful to the landscape, and because of the representations circulating in published media. This contributed to the transformation of graffiti into SA and lays a fundamental learning for this study that aims at further exploring the difference between the two practices in terms of the actors contributing to determining their value.

2.2.1.4 The Rise of Street Art

Ferrell (1996) and Deitch et al. (2021) think of SA as the result of a rebel, post-consumerist movement of popular expression in the late 1960s. The UE of major American cities on the East Coast acted as a fertile substrate for the development of popular artistic movements like punk-rock, hip-hop music, and graffiti. Thus, as

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[21] Marginalised and/or abandoned areas of an urban context.
[22] *The History of American Graffiti.*

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detailed in the following paragraphs, SA comes - historically, conceptually, and practically - from graffiti. By considering the evolution in terms of practice of graffiti identified in the previous subsections, it is also possible to define SA by highlighting its nature of real time practice opposing it to the lack of theory on the subject (Irvine, 2012). Understanding the rise of SA from graffiti, therefore, requires looking at the practical/visual understanding of the cluster of graffiti that detached from pure-tagging and trespassed into artistic practice. A comprehensive way to do so is looking at the visual review available in the work by Cooper and Chalfant (1984 to 2015). The different editions of this book documented the evolution of the actions of graffiti writers who spray-painted public transport cars in major American East-Coast cities during more than twenty years. A very important aspect of the book and the reporting activity is that the authors have published the first work that presents graffiti as something to be understood and appreciated instead of something to be criminalised. As the cities' Transit Authorities were constantly destroying graffiti on subway cars, giving them a sort of natural short life, the creation of a hard-printed copy of those works by Cooper and Chalfant[23] initiated the visual dissemination of reproductions of artistic graffiti worldwide.

Many other authors contributed to the dissemination of SA towards either the general audience or a more specialised one, allowing the discovery and then the understanding of this form of expression through mass media (Baker et al., 2010; Banksy, 2006; Deitch & Swoon, 2010; Deitch, 2011; Deitch et al., 2021; Fairey & Obey, 2008; Fairey et al., 2018; Ganz, 2004, 2021; Ganz & Macdonald, 2006;Gastman et al., 2007; Harrington & Rojo, 2008; Klanten, 2008; Lazarides, 2008; Lewisohn & Chalfant,

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[23] *Subway Art*, first edition in 1984.

2008; Mathieson et al., 2009; Shove, 2009; Shove et al., 2010). Hence, *Subway Art* together with other relevant publications presented to the public illustrate a vast array of urban artworks showing specific views and/or meanings that go far beyond the mere expression of marginalised and unspoken voices previously performed by graffiti taggers. With the representation of urban artworks through mass media, the authors listed above allowed the general audience to see graffiti as a form of expression to be appreciated artistically and started to provide a review of both the authors and the contexts behind the graffiti works that finally were considered artistically relevant. Therefore, SA was rising from graffiti thanks to the media showing features of its changed practice.

It is in fact in this published practice (Irvine, 2012) that graffiti becomes SA. Moreover, first mass-media in the 1990s and then the internet in early 2000s contributed to the dissemination of graffiti styles - mainly mural art - worldwide thanks to the interconnection of graffiti culture with hip-hop, rap and with political events (Irvine, 2012; steps 6 and 7 of Figure 2.1). Thanks to this dissemination, many graffiti artists went from being underground/unknown performers to famous art stars who received commissioned jobs to create murals, installations, and other SA performances that communicate with the UE. SA can be, therefore, conceptually understood by considering how it rose in terms of importance within audiences, contexts, and practice. Below are five theoretical perspectives that help understanding of SA in this sense:

- SA is one of the media available within the UE, it embodies the phenomena that one can find in a city, the every-day experiences of spaces and places, and the playful interactions of the public. All the interactions happening because of SA well

placed in urban spaces can re-attach the public to the "here and now" (Irvine 2012). SA is a force that, through its visual and aesthetics, enables society to be materially present in an era of disappearance (Bolter & Grusin, 2003).

- SA is a cultural movement that, by both nature and tradition - since it derives practically and theoretically from graffiti - fights against the concept of unified and normalised institutional art (Irvine, 2012). The practice of creating street artworks thrives on the tensions resulting from the performance of art in contexts where art is traditionally not present: the ordinary urban landscape and outside of institutional contexts like museums and galleries (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993).

- Street artworks are executed in areas of the UE that are generally not considered central and/or suitable for artistic presence (O'Doherty, 1999). SA flourishes in contexts that the traditional institutions identify as "museums without walls" (Foster et al., 2016).

- SA has undergone an equal distribution both in real life and on digital platforms thanks to the diffusion of information and communication technologies (ICT). The diffusion of SA amongst younger generations is due to its suitability for the digital media (Irvine, 2012) and to the possibility for the general audience to contribute to the mass-distribution of images, pictures, stories, and other performance on the internet. Therefore, SA has a global nature that has grown in parallel with the web's content-sharing platforms.

- SA is represented in many styles, techniques, and authors' purposes for which groups of people, artists and cities in general are perceived as

connected/networked elements of a single movement. Because of this, SA can be considered as part of "contemporary culture in a globalized world" (Irvine, 2012).

The theoretical aspects of SA listed above can be further synthesised to define SA conceptually and comprehensively: SA is a globalised (Irvine, 2012) cultural movement (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990; Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993) made of artists who operate in antithesis to institutionalised and normalised art (Irvine, 2012) and in traditionally non-suitable contexts for art (O'Doherty, 1999), that entails aesthetic interactions in the UE between the viewers and the artwork (Bolter & Grusin, 2003) and that is available to the wide general audience on different supports such as city walls, mass media and the internet (Irvine, 2012).

Considering both this definition and that on graffiti above, it is possible to identify some aspects that highlight the rise of SA from graffiti. These aspects are mainly related to the reasons behind executing a street artwork or a graffiti work, to the legality of the work, and to the effect(s) on the context where the graffiti/street artwork has been executed. Indeed:

- Some graffiti authors consider themselves artists but tend to detach from taggers or from those who use spray-paint to claim ownership of places (Dew, 2007) and not to add something to the context (Hansen, 2005).

- Although graffiti tagging is the form of expression of a subculture, it is not as globalised as SA which has a much wider remit (Blanché, 2015; Ferrell, 1996; Irvine, 2012), and thus remained relegated to that form of expression.

- Considering the discussions developed by Hansen and Dew (2005 and 2007 respectively) on how graffiti authors place themselves within artistic practice, it is necessary to remind that graffiti taggers generally do not consider themselves

artists nor do they need institutional recognition that their activity is art as they do not require creative recognition of their activity. Whereas, street artists are at least aware of their artistic role, as explained in the next subsection.

- Graffiti taggers do not aim at aesthetic interaction when they perform tags, their activity is aimed at communicating between well-defined social groups (Ferrell, 1996).

2.2.2 Street artists Conveying the Value of Street Art

The literature discussed so far showed that the value of graffiti and SA is related to the practice and influenced by different actors. Amongst these actors, we have street artists that, with their intentions, start defining the value of SA. The literature showed that most street artists do not define themselves as graffiti or street artists, they just believe they are artists who regard the city as a creative workshop (Irvine, 2012). This use of the city as a working environment by artists that most times operate outside of legal boundaries - using walls, pavements and other urban landscapes often illegally - gave artists the name of *urban navigators* (de Certeau, 1984). This is due to their activity of illegally invading public or private spaces of cities (Lefebvre, 2003) with their artworks.

As already mentioned above, whatever the purpose of street artists, they believe their intervention contributes to the enrichment of the urban context (Hansen, 2005) and to the stimulation of public debate through aesthetics (Dew, 2007). By adding something original to the UE and by speaking a non-institutionalised language, street artists play the role of representing and communicating the voices of young people who are naturally outside of the contemporary institutional world (Stewart, 2008). Moreover, to be considered a street artist, there is no need to show mastery of

technique/spray painting, but it is sufficient to do SA and leave a mark in the street (Castleman, 1982) as noticeable in the variety of SA genres/styles available in Appendix A.

Hence, the practice defines the artist and, in turn, defines the phenomenon. This method of identifying street artists based on their practice is cross-generational as it can be applied to any experiences/waves of SA (Irvine, 2012): from the 1970s and 1980s graffiti to urban interventionists of 1990s[24] and to contemporary street artists of the 2000s[25]. The practice of street artists defines SA because each artist's subculture influences the category into which their artworks are situated. Indeed, because of no common or shared genre in SA, each street artist embodies the artworks with their own personal, political, social, and sometimes legal issues. Because of this, street artists are not the expression of an artistic or representational genre (Kelling & Wilson, 1982) - although SA has specific genres (Visconti et al., 2010; see Appendix A) - but they represent each specific subculture through their works in the UE (Kelling & Coles, 1996).

The genre and the quality of street artworks evolved since the appearance of the first graffiti in America's East Coast metropoles and converted from simple tagging to a more elaborated practice that involved the use of techniques, methods, and graphic effects (Nguyen & MacKenzie, 2010) as previously discussed. The evolution of graffiti into SA is very much connected to a stylistic development of the former into the latter, and to their use by street artists (Waclawek, 2008; McAuliffe, 2012). Also, after the birth and the spread of the internet as a mass-media - early 2000s - many street artists saw their own works circulating both on and off the streets. The street

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[24] Banksy, Swoon, Fairey, amongst others.
[25] Oakoak, Os Gemeos, Blu, for example.

element is an implicit value of SA because the creator is a street artist, confirming that the practice defines the artist.

Another important role played by street artists is that of bringing art techniques and genres into the street, within the reach of the general audience who is not attracted or educated towards art appreciation into museums. Indeed, while pop art - with Duchamp, Dada and Warhol - developed by anticipating what art could be, SA brought these concepts into the streets for everyone to experience (Klanten & Huebner, 2010). Hence, earlier street artists were responsible for converting anonymous urban spaces into new contexts where the engagement between the artwork and the audience was considered as an event, a performance, and an intervention for which the traditional logic of an art container was turned inside out (Bieber in Klanten & Huebner, 2010; Burger, 1984). Street artists allowed audiences to appreciate art out of the walls of traditional art institutions and used non-institutional walls to represent artistic concepts, disrupting with the urban order imposed from above, and applying their techniques to different areas of a city in discordance with the prescribed uses of the context (Debord in Knabb, 2006).

To sum up, street artists played and still play an important role in establishing the value of SA. They identified the city both as an immense canvas and as a source of concepts to express through SA itself; they enabled the diffusion of SA towards the wide and non-arts-educated audience; they transposed the pop art techniques from museums, galleries and art academies to the outside streets; they consider themselves as contributors to the UE for being able to transform a non-artistic place into a work of art; they stimulate public debate through aesthetics and enable young people to express themselves through this non-institutionalised creative practice.

2.2.3 Social Interaction and Representation of Street Art

As just discussed, the value of SA is initially defined by the practice of street artists. However, this value can also be influenced by other interactions that happen between street artworks and the contexts where they appear. Indeed, Irvine (2012, p. 237) said that "whatever the medium and motives of the work, the city is the assumed interlocutor, framework, and essential precondition for making the artwork work". This quote suggests that SA aims at interacting with its audience and that street artworks function only when they are placed in the urban context where interaction happens. Therefore, social interaction is a prerogative for SA to exist and to be understood by the audience. What is not clear from the literature is the composition of the audience of SA and whether the interactions that happen between SA and its audience(s) contribute to defining the value of street artworks[26].

SA is, therefore, something that visually interacts with the public and is reproduced both in the physical space and through virtual and digital means. By making itself recognisable and publicly visible in the city, SA acquires a social meaning that relates to the already existing symbolic values embedded in an urban context. Therefore, there are elements of the value of SA that relate to the context. These elements are:

- The location of the street artwork in the city.

- The specific pattern of a neighbourhood.

- The level of social interaction of the local community.

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[26] RQ2: *What are the roles of these different actors in defining the value of street art and to what extent is this value defined online?* RQ3: *How is the audience of street art composed? Are there differences between online and offline audiences?*

Street artists interpret the semiotics of UEs into which they produce SA by overlaying their works onto an already existing context and by using the city as both a canvas and a source of materials/inspirations (Ellin, 2007). This relationship between artists and the UE is the result of the artistic intention of the artist towards the set of meanings, values and cultural patterns offered by the local context as both "operational space" and "practiced place" (de Certeau; 1984).

In fact, the context where street artists operate is not just a geometric abstract space, a geographic area, or the medium's screen where artistic expression takes place, but is related with the "dense spaces" made of complex social interactions (Boscaino, 2018) happening in, with and through a public space in the UE (Batista et al., 2017, p. 17). Again, the social nature of SA allows artworks to be used as a "call to place" as opposed to the propagation of urban "non-places" where transit and commerce happen anonymously (Augé, 1995), such as shopping centres, airports, railway stations, etc. For what concerns the location, early 2000's street artworks were characterised by both the context of early graffiti - decaying or abandoned spaces in urban areas - and by integration with highly commercialised places.

The literature discussed shows that part of the meaning and the value of SA is related to the context it elicits from, to the practice of street artists, and to the different social interactions that occur when SA appears in the UE. Indeed, SA is able to reveal, highlight and/or re-invent the meaning/value of a place. However, it is still unclear how the context and the practice influences the value of SA and whether, for example, the representation and visualization of street artworks on "pan-digital media platforms" (Irvine, 2012, p. 238) has a similar effect on the value and on the renown-ness of street artworks.

2.2.4 Operationalizing Street Art

This subsection delves deeper into the practice of SA to identify its main features, characteristics, and constituent elements. In doing so, these elements are also examined in parallel to graffiti to demonstrate further the practical and operational evolution of SA from its older cousin. Some operational aspects have been identified in the study performed by Conklin (2012), which revealed five operational features of SA. Table 2.1 below identifies the five features identified by Conklin (2012), each of which has a different meaning.

Table 2.1.

Operational Differences Between Graffiti and Street Art (I)

Feature	Street Art	Graffiti
Damage and Permanency	Street artworks[27] do not usually damage the supporting structures they are performed upon (building walls, for example). Posters, yarn-bombing pieces, and stickers can be removed easily. Other SA types can be more permanent and require expensive methods to remove them. For example, 3D installations occupy public space and some residues of SA can be considered littering (Moore & Prain, 2009 in Conklin, 2012).	Graffiti disrupt the urban order and represent a disturbing element within the urban context.
Aesthetics	Street artworks are generally rich in technical and artistic terms → their aesthetic falls within common taste (Schlecht, 1995 in Conklin, 2012).	Graffiti & tags are aesthetically pleasant when media conveys their value. Graffiti tags are technically basic.
Threatening	SA can be the result of an institutional practice - curatorial process, therefore if perceived as something authorised.	Graffiti are related to gangs and criminal activities.
Embeddedness	Some forms of SA are thought to relate directly with the local context.	Graffiti tags are a detached expression of a specific and often marginalised subculture. They use the physical space as a medium for communication and claim ownership of a neighbourhood.
Understandability	SA aims at being understood and at communicating to audiences. SA stimulates public debate (Dew, 2007). SA can be understood by all audiences (McAuliffe, 2012).	Graffiti and tags are coded into the language their authors want to speak. Their aim is to be understood only within a limited group of people and not by a wider audience (McAuliffe, 2012).

Note: adapted from Conklin (2012).

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[27] For a list of street artwork types please see Appendix A.

In Table 2.2 below, features have been added from the literature discussed in this section. These additional features serve to demonstrate the further characterisation of SA.

Table 2.2.

Operational Differences Between Graffiti and SA (II)

Feature	Street Art	Graffiti
What is the purpose of…?	SA entails aesthetic interactions in the UE between the viewers and the artwork (Bolter & Grusin, 2003)	Graffiti are made to claim ownership of a territory or to communicate the technical skills of the author(s) (SpearIt, 2015).
Who legitimises it?	Unclear, need to investigate the artworld to understand who the actors are that define the value of SA.	Graffiti and tags are legitimised by the social groups they elicit from (gangs, neighbourhoods, hip-hop music groups).
Recognition	Unclear how the audience of street art is composed: general public, photographers, other street artists, all of the above?	Graffiti and tags are recognised amongst the social groups they elicit from (gangs, neighbourhoods, hip-hop music groups). (Stewart, 2008).
Effect	Unclear. Because the effect of SA in its context is to intervene aesthetically (Bolter & Grusin, 2003). When SA appears in a context where it was previously absent, does it promote interaction amongst its viewers? Are these interactions the cause of the identification of street artworks as art?	Graffiti and tags are a detached expression of a specific and often marginalised subculture. (Stewart, 2008). Cities' abandoned walls - and in some cases subway cars - become covered in tags and other subculture communication methods (Browne & Browne, 2001; Gastman & Neelon, 2011; SpearIt, 2016) in a vandalic way (Stewart, 2008).

Note: Integration from Table 2.1 above and adapted from Conklin (2012).

Merging Tables 2.1 and 2.2. allows an operational definition of SA. However, there are further operational aspects of SA that make it even more recognisable (Irvine, 2012). The specific aspects of SA identified by Irvine (2012) are relevant for this study since they include the concepts of community-based and digital reproduction. By looking at the practice, it is possible to say that:

- SA is both local and global (Irvine, 2012): although styles and genres of SA are similar worldwide[28], the reason it has successfully spread through cities is the attachment to local issues and the ability to represent the discomfort of local communities.

- SA is post-internet and post-medium (Kimvall, 2019): it is an art movement that perfectly situates itself in both real and digital spaces (Irvine, 2012). Thanks to the spread of digital tools and networks where the wide audience can upload, share, comment and valuate artworks, SA has grown in substance and meaning on the web.

- SA is something ephemeral but is documented on the web thanks to photography - as seen above with the Cooper and Chalfant (1984) work - and the internet.

- The social dynamics of SA have specific styles, hierarchies amongst actors, rules, and communication layouts.

2.2.5 Street Art as Public Art

SA is a phenomenon born outside of institutionalised contexts as spontaneous acts of self-expression and, therefore, is characterised by a predominant social element. Given the overarching question *How do street artworks transform from being unknown to becoming renowned in the digital era?* it is important to understand the

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[28] See Appendix A.

social elements that surround SA. In this study, the concepts related with public art are explored in order to understand the effects of art placed in the streets on the value of art itself (Doezema, 1977; Knight, 2008).

Public art has some similarities with graffiti and SA related to considering the technical and practical evolution of the phenomena. The former is a cultural movement resulting from the exclusion of young people from institutional art (Hansen, 2005), that draws practice both from pop culture (Klanten & Huebner, 2010) and contemporary music sub-genres (Brewer & Miller, 1990); the latter - SA - developed from the former once artists started to group into collectives and analogue social networks (Glionna, 1993; Diaz, 1992; MacDuff & Valenzuela, 1993; Quintanilla, 1993) to perform more technically elaborate interventions and once published media distributed urban artworks as artistic end-products to be contemplated (Cooper & Chalfant, 1984).

As seen above, an important feature of SA is that there is a relevant social component that contributes to the definition of value. As to say, the artist is not the only entity that decides the meaning and the value of an artwork, but there are other entities that intervene - as Duchamp (1957) said - in the creative act. During his speech, Duchamp declared that artists are not the only authority in the creative process, but the spectator - the audience - is the player with the most power[29]. This view is particularly important for this study because it recognises the role of audiences in determining the value of art that is placed in the streets, such as public art. The creation of an artwork is seen as a participative activity of at least two types of actors: the artist and its audience.

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[29] Duchamp said that there is an *art coefficient* between the intention of the artist to create art and the realization of the piece of art itself. This coefficient represents a gap into which the viewer engages actively to interpret and give value to the work of art.

Public art is generally not considered a genre or a technique but is a form of human activity that is distinguished from the other forms of creativity because of the unique associations on how it is made, where it is located, and how it gets its meaning (Bach, 1992). According to this definition, public art evokes and expresses community values, transforms a landscape, and promotes public debate by questioning assumptions, causing attention and involvement - characteristics shared with SA as seen in the previous subsection. The main aim of public art is to generate an interactive process where artists, audiences, institutions, designers, local authorities, and funding agencies cooperate and discuss the elements related with the public art performance/project (Bach, 1992).

At the same time, public art evolves with the public it relates to (Bach, 1992). Therefore, materials, languages, models of interactions and other forms of public involvement in public art vary according to the composition of the public. In conclusion, public art reflects what happens in society and adds significance to places without significance. It is clear from the above premise that public art shares many aspects with SA both conceptually and in practice. These elements are listed below (Landi, 2014):

- Public art can be both functional and expressive and it regards the use of either permanent or temporary decorative forms such as painting, relief, mural, sculpture etc.

- Public artworks are made in order to improve, modify, promote, or demolish the concepts of identity in a specific space.

- Public art authors can consider themselves as artists, craftspeople or simple citizens that participate in the creation of public art installations.

Furthermore, there are other characteristics of public art that can be found in SA. For example, public art is described as both "site-specific" and as belonging to the public domain by McCarthy (2006, p. 256); the authors of public art perform their creations mostly in public spaces (Roberts & Marsh, 1995); sculpture, paint, functional objects are only some of the forms of public art (Hamilton et al., 2001). Public art also has interesting characteristics related with social engagement: the first regards the empowerment of the audience with a role that is - in other art forms - almost fully detained by the artist, the second is the location of artworks that shifts from an enclosed place to "open space" (Knight, 2008; Bach, 2001, p. 153) and the third is the message that is exchanged between artists and their audience. As a consequence of this brief review, it is possible to state that:

- Public art has a public component for which "the artist provides the source material" but the meaning of the artwork depends on the socio-demographic characteristics and points of view of the viewers (Knight, 2008, *Preface*).

- Public art is available to everyone that uses the public spaces (Bach, 2001), even though "the sheer presence of art out of" a museum "does not automatically make that art public" (Hein, 1996, p. 4).

- The message conveyed by the public artwork goes beyond the artist's original purpose and provokes a reaction in viewers (Doezema, 1977).

Furthermore, placing art in the streets - outside of institutional walls - is a feature of public art that local authorities and central governments consider when they aim at educating and civilizing the population towards the appreciation of fine art. This practice can be seen under the populistic view of art (Knight, 2008) and has been implemented through public cultural policies (Gattinger, 2012) especially across 1970s

Europe. In this framework, public art is the amount of art identified and approved by public institutions, and then distributed towards the population with the intent of creating a generation of citizens educated in arts and culture (Matarasso & Landry, 1999; Baeker, 2002; Evrard, 1997).

The institutional intervention in the public space with creativity enabled the wide audience - and not just the art-educated public - with the ability to understand art and identify it in the public space. In fact, being exposed to public art empowered the general audience with knowledge and skills that are necessary to understand and valuate art items - the public becomes the critic. With public art, the general audience becomes an important element of art itself (Phillips, 1989, p. 332): art can be "public when it takes the idea of public as the genesis and subject for analysis".

Per these last points it is important to stress that public art's message perceived or elaborated by its audience can be totally different from the one originally intended by the artist and that there can be many channels onto which the message is transmitted. This is fundamental learning for this study as it sets the basis to intend the general audience not just as a passive group of viewers, but as one of the actors able to influence the value of art placed in the streets. Moreover, this is even more so if we consider that the use of the internet has allowed a circulation of art in non-institutional contexts - as computer screens are not museums - and represents a further occasion for actors other than artists to engage and interact with art (Irvine, 2012).

2.2.5.1 Integrating Public Art and Street Art

To complete a review of public art that can be useful in understanding SA, this subsection discusses the concepts that outline the former to better understand the

latter. Knight (2008) identified three essential elements in public art that can be easily found also in SA.

- The first is that both public and street artworks are executed in immersive and experiential environments: this means that instead of being detached from the environment they are displayed in - as in museums or inside the walls - public and street artworks become part of the context and can be traversed through.

- The second shared element is that both public and street artworks can create interaction and relationship with viewers/participants: street artworks aim at stimulating public debate by disrupting the institutional order of the city - the same thing is done by public artworks that are strategically placed in places where their presence stimulates public debate.

- The third element is related with the nature of public art/SA in terms of private ventures or private and public mixed partnerships. Both art forms, in fact, can elicit from private initiative as a legal agreement, as a form of vandalism, or from partnerships with public institutions.

Moreover, Knight's work (2008) highlighted other common aspects of public art and SA. The author indeed said that public artworks:

- are created for large audiences and are not elite art: the broad public;

- aim to attract people's attention: public art often disrupts with the monotony of the common urban framework by interrupting its schemes and introducing shapes, colours, and other disruptive elements; and

- provide aesthetic experience that triggers different reactions and sensations in the audience.

Knight (2008) adds that public art's messages can be understood by a non-art-educated audience. This is also an aspect of SA and it means that public artworks are not coded into specific languages comprehensible only to art-educated people, but that can be comprehended by the general audience without specific means or knowledge supports.

Another contribution to the understanding of public art comes from the practice of taking art out of the institutional artworld - museums, galleries, and similar organizations - and putting it amongst the public (Riggle, 2010). According to this practice, public artworks get their meaning from being outside of institutional walls (Riggle, 2010) but they are also characterised by both anonymity and susceptibility to destruction by nature or humankind. Moreover, the detachment between the production of public art and the institutional artworld impedes the latter to shape the forms of production of the former and ensures that it is difficult to move from the street to the museum/institutional artworld. What is important within this theoretical discussion on public art is that it stresses the importance of the public/viewers/audience as one of the actors able to shape the value of art placed in the streets. In conclusion, the similarities between public and SA are as follows:

- Artists and the general audience are both involved in determining the value of art in the streets.

- Both the general public and public artworks are in public spaces that are not institutionally designed to host art. This represents the disruptive element of both public art and SA compared to traditional art placed within walls.

- Public art and SA are not designated for elites or fine art contexts but ideated for the general public.

- Public art and SA can be understood by an audience without a specific arts education.

- The meaning of artworks placed in the street is detached from the institutional artworld context.

The diagram in Figure 2.4 below summarises the concepts illustrated in the whole of Section 2.2. This figure summarises the main operational characteristics of graffiti, SA, and public art in the UE. Graffiti are placed in the 100% spontaneous art section (left) of Figure 2.4 since they are unlikely commissioned and/or authorised. Public art is placed in the opposite side since it is supposed to be fully commissioned. SA is in between because it can be both a spontaneous act, and a commission. However, it must be remembered that Blanché (2015) differs between graffiti and public art by saying that the former are "self-authorised expressions" (2015, p.33) that aim at communicating with a large group of people such as gangs, crews, and other members of the subculture.

Figure 2.4.

Art That can be Found in the UE.

SPONTANEOUS ART

COMMISSIONED ART

GRAFFITI

- Happen in abandoned places
- Related to disadvantaged or abandoned areas
- Used by gangs to communicate and claim ownership of a neighbourhood or to show mastery of spray-painting skills
- Are codes and are understood by authors and other gangs
- Considered disruptive of the urban context

STREET ART

- Happens in public or abandoned places
- Can be spontaneous or commissioned
- Allow artists to use the public space to express themselves
- Can have political or aesthetic reasons
- Is the result of either public planning, commissioned work or spontaneous
- Is done not to claim territory ownership
- Its meaning is created by authors and audience
- Speaks to everyone

PUBLIC ART

- Creative process is done by artists, but meaning comes also from the audience
- Creates interaction between audience, artwork and context
- Is available in public spaces, outside of museums
- Accessible to non-arts educated audience
- Considered positive for urban décor

Note. In this figure, graffiti, SA, and Public Art are presented with their main characteristics and placed according to their level of spontaneity, from the left to the right of the picture.
Source: the thesis author.

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2.2.6 Summary

This section showed that SA was born in non-institutionalised and un-commissioned contexts, and with the intention of interacting with audiences without institutional mediation. SA came conceptually from graffiti in the sense that it is the result of young people's willingness to express themselves in a way that contrasted with the mainstream forms of expression and communication in America's main East-Coast cities. However, while graffiti aims at communicating ownership and the technical mastery/spraying skillset of taggers, SA creates relationship with the audience and establishes a conversation based on aesthetic, social, and political issues. Both phenomena, anyway, provide a disruption with the continuity of the urban landscape because they appear in places not traditionally thought for art.

Reviewing the literature in this section shows that the value of SA is not exclusively defined by authors/artists but may depend on the various actions carried out by other actors such as photographers, curators, crew members and the general audience. What this study aims at understanding is the contribution of each of these actors in defining the value of SA. Hence, the RQs emerging from Section 2.2 are:

RQ1: *Who are the actors contributing to the legitimation and valuation of street art?*

RQ2: *What are the roles of these different actors in defining the value of street art and to what extent is this value defined online?*

RQ3: *How is the audience of street art composed? Are there differences between online and offline audiences?*

2.3. Understanding Value Co-Creation in the Creative Field

Having examined the nature of SA and identified the gaps in the literature that need to be addressed in order to illuminate the overarching RQ, this section explores

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the examples of art valuation and co-creation in the three subsections below with the aim of developing a multi-disciplinary framework for the current study. The first subsection discusses contemporary art valuation. The second subsection explores different concepts in relation to prosumerism, co-creation, and crowdsourcing.

Art valuation and co-creation are two key topics that need exploration if one aims at understanding how the value of street artworks changes when they become renowned in the digital era. Around these concepts there are a number of elements that help both situate this study in the literature, and inform the methodological choices discussed in Chapter 3. However, although the literature explored below provides useful insights and fundamental learning for this study, none of the identified theories and practices are currently applied to SA.

2.3.1 Art Valuation

The aim of this subsection is to discuss the practices and theories underpinning visual art valuation useful to situate the current study. In order to do so, this subsection discusses the literature on the economic, social, and psychological aspects of visual art valuation, and identifies the players involved in these practices together with their roles. Hence, this subsection is organised in three main parts: the first part introduces the socio-cultural perspective to art valuation and discusses what is considered to be art as well as a three-part viewpoint as an initial framework to contemporary art valuation; the second part discusses the formation of value of art in the context of the aesthetic experience; the final part discusses the practical and theoretical underpinnings of the economic valuation of contemporary art.

Reviewing the literature revealed that the economic value of artworks considered to determine the auction/selling price does not include a series of

components that the authors or the critics wanted to embed in the work. This aspect is particularly relevant for this study because it provides an understanding of which actors and to what extent they influence the value of artworks. Artworks have a complex nature and they can elicit different sensations and emotions in viewers. Art can be intended as an "artefact, single artist or a group of artists, event, venue, performance, song or an exhibition that contains rich, complex, direct and symbolic meanings" (Baumgarth & O'Reilly, 2014 in Luonila & Jyrämä, 2019, p. 3). An artwork is the result of a creative act (Duchamp, 1957), and aims at provoking an experimental and intangible experience (Dewey, 1958) in viewers based on the value of the product itself (Colbert, 2007). Therefore, artworks' value depends on how they are perceived and consumed by different actors who may have different experiences and reactions (Colbert, 2007; White et al., 2009). These perceptions vary according to processes of interpretation, organization and elaboration of specific information that come both from the artwork and from the context into which the artwork is placed. Moreover, the artist's intention of embodying the artwork with value is also important in the general perception/identification of artworks value, and a model is illustrated below.

The recognition and legitimation of art can also be seen through the institutional lens (Becker, 2008, Dickie, 1969; 1974; van Maanen, 2009) for which there are "*core personnel* in the artworld, such as artists, museum curators, art critics, and the like" (Graves, 1997, P. 2) that have a power in identifying an artwork as such (Luonila & Jyrämä, 2019). Although the view of institutional theory of art is of merit since it identifies the actors who contribute to legitimising end-products as *art*, it is not the approach adopted in the thesis. The reason lies in that the current study aims at understanding the role of all the actors involved in defining the value of SA, and the

literature discussed in section 2.2 suggests going beyond an institutional lens if the aim is to capture the complexity of the phenomenon. Therefore, the current study includes all the possible institutional actors - curators, artists, critics (Becker, 2008, Dickie, 1969; 1974; Graves, 1997; van Maanen, 2009) - as well as non-institutional actors - who can be considered adopting the concept of co-creation - concurring to influence the value of SA in order to go beyond the limits of institutional theory of art.

2.3.1.1 Evaluation, Valuation, and Identification of Art's Value

This subsection discusses art in its general terms, and illustrates the components of an interactive approach to art valuation. Art forms are so numerous they cannot be included in a single scientific framework (Hagtvedt et al., 2008). Indeed, the early attempts at defining art considered it as the general man-made activity aimed at producing something either artistic or as craft (Hauser, 1999), or something to be taught within professional artisans' guilds (Hagtvedt et al., 2008). The current conceptual separation of art from craft is due to the need to detach human activities that produce utility from those who create pleasure to the mind, during Enlightenment (Shrum, 1996 in Hagtvedt, et al., 2008).

Little agreement exists among scholars over the definition of art, and the literature on the matter is wide. Indeed, some authors believe that art has a higher importance and more beautiful appearance compared to other human activities, therefore viewing art rather than non-art end-product means to contemplate beauty, among other things (Pelowski et al., 2017). Others stress the point that an end-product is art when the viewers categorise it as such (Dewey, 1989). Another view on art considers the stimuli related with experiencing it. Stimuli make viewers identify art

because it is perceived as "embodying human expression" (Hagtvedt et al., 2008, p. 199) in a specific context.

This last aspect is important for the current study because it highlights the importance of the interaction between viewers and artworks, as well as the ability of the latter to create stimuli in the former, especially in the context of visual art (Funch, 1999). Indeed, Baltissen and Ostermann (1998) and Silvia (2005a) argued that the value of art is related to the viewers' perceptions of its emotional and cognitive components. Visual artworks indeed produce stimuli that elicit different reactions from different types of audiences which include people both with and without art education. This is because people with different education tend to value artworks in the same way when it comes to emotional valuations, but they generally have differing opinions on what makes the works interesting (Silvia, 2005b).

This study does not make a differentiation between arts savvy and non-savvy audiences purposely because of the intention to include all the people who may influence the value of street artworks and make them renowned. However, one must remember that a non-arts-educated public reacts differently to visual artworks (Bezruczko & Schroeder, 1994) than a public that has received arts education. Also, since viewing art is considered to be a "general human phenomenon" (Hagtvedt et al., 2008, p. 198), the whole of Section 2.3 focuses on the general public, and its purpose is providing an understanding of how the general audience values art.

The interaction between citizens and the urban context is characterised by "acquisition, interpretation, selection and organization of sensory information" (Hagtvedt et al., 2008, p. 198). According to this view, citizens are interacting with the urban context and their level of interaction depends on a series of aspects, including

physiological and social elements, even though Dutton (2001, p. 203) believes that "the perception of art is a cultural universal". Furthermore, from a socio-cultural perspective, art in general is valuated based on the context, the artwork as a product, and the simultaneity of consumption and production in "networked structures" (Luonila & Jyrämä, 2019, P. 10) where the art is identified by both artists and consumers.

Based on the discussion above, the definition of art adopted in the current study considers it as a both situational and socially constructed phenomenon (Baltissen & Ostermann, 1998; Silvia, 2005a), where different actors that take part in all the production and consumption of end-products able to generate stimuli (Hagtvedt et al., 2008). Although different authors have studied different aspects of the interaction between citizen and the UE, there is no clear model that consider all the factors involved as identified above - physiological, social, cultural, and social factors.

A Three-Part Viewpoint on Interactive Art Valuation

In [Section 2.2](#), SA has been discussed as a form of visual art whose practice is the result of the interaction of artists, audience(s), and context. The three-part viewpoint approach (Candy & Edmonds, 2002; Candy et al., 2018) discussed in this subsection states that the value of art does not depend just on the shapes and images painted, and by the technique(s) used by the authors, but also in the multiple interactions happening within the audience, between the audience and the artworks, and with the context. This approach of art considers it as the result of the interactions between all the components that are involved in its making (Edmonds et al., 2009). Indeed, in a creative act of an artwork, the general audience does not have just a passive role of viewers and the value of the artwork is exclusively related to its execution (Dewey, 1934 in Edmonds et al., 2009). Therefore, the making of an artwork

entails its engagement with the viewers in the audience (Edmonds et al., 2009) as well as with the context.

The concern towards this interactive participation became relevant during the 1960s, when the concept of public art started to spread over Western countries in their cultural planning and when the practice of graffiti began its journey through the US major East Coast UEs (Groys, 2008). Indeed, as seen in Subsection 2.2.5, the public art conception of a creative act sees the general audience as able to determine the value of artworks depending on taste, education, and experiences (Duchamp, 1957; Knight, 2008). Also, according to the definition of public art by Bach (2001) and Hein (1996), an artwork should be placed outdoors and be subject to the viewing and enjoyment of the audience. This element is also shared with the interactive art valuation model described below for which there must be a sort of spontaneous and easy interaction between artworks and the audience. This is also what happened when graffiti started to be appreciated by the public thanks to media and publishing. Indeed, as illustrated above, the general audience started to appreciate the artistic element of graffiti when this form of expression was circulating through media (Cooper & Chalfant, 1984). Being represented in media allowed the rise of SA as an artistic practice that can be experienced, recognised, and appreciated by the general audience.

Valuation of contemporary art can be done considering the "interactive art system" identified by Cornock and Edmonds (1973, in Edmond et al., 2009). This model is made of three elements as illustrated in Figure 2.5 below: the artwork which interacts with the audience according to its features; the audience that can interact with the artwork; and the environmental context. Moreover, this system is characterised by

Figure 2.5.

The Three-Viewpoints of Interactive Art Systems
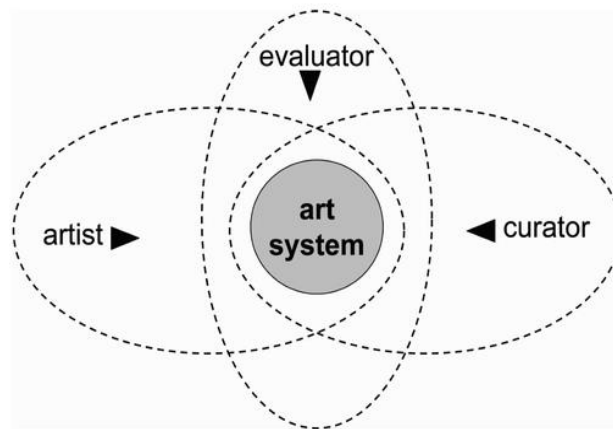
Source: Edmonds et al. (2009)

three different actors - the artist, the curator, and the evaluator - each with a different role (Edmonds et al., 2009):

- Artists execute the artwork and connect it with the art system, they make sure their work belongs to a specific genre and that it reproduces the intentions or the vision of artists themselves.

- The curator's role is to "facilitate the encounter between artworks and their audience" (Edmonds et al., 2009, p. 143). Its work consists of enabling the perception of the value of the artwork by audience and artist. Therefore, the role of curators is not just related to building collections of artworks, but is more that of a mediator between artists and their audience, fulfilling the interactive nature of contemporary art.

- The evaluator's mission is to understand the "behaviour of the system in its context" (Edmonds et al., 2009, p. 143). The evaluator role can be combined with that of the artist or the curator according to the viewpoint to be taken.

A further understanding of how value is created within the contemporary arts market is given by the idea of the "art machine" presented by Rodner and Thomson (2013). This study highlighted the collaborative nature of the contemporary arts market, where "discerning artists, art professionals and art supporters, […] work in unison to generate symbolic and financial value for art" (Rodner & Thomson, 2013, p. 1). The study by Rodner and Thomson (2013) drew from the "five-phase model" by Drummond (2006) which can be useful to assess the value of contemporary art for deceased artists but is not adequate to value artworks affected by "market forces, career management issues, substitution effects, and product life cycles" (Schroeder, 2010, p. 18 in Rodner & Thomson, 2013) that are relevant for 21st-century pop artists. For this reason, the "art machine" (Rodner & Thomson, 2013) also drew from Robertson's (2005) idea of the progress of artists towards stardom, characterised by a series of validation levels, each of which is represented by a different actor/organization. Thus, the value of artworks can be assessed, according to Rodner and Thomson (2013), by looking at the characteristics of the specific artworld[30] made of artists, curators, galleries, critics, scholars, art fairs, collectors, and museums, amongst others (Thornton, 2009).

Rodner and Thomson's work (2013) is instrumental for the current study because it provides further understanding of the interactive nature of artworlds and sets up a list of actors that intervene in defining the value of contemporary artworks. However, it is important to note that their 2013 publication suggests the application of the art machine as an "interlocking and interdependent mechanism of validation for contemporary art" (Rodner & Thomson, 2013, p. 14), that it is far from being scientifically efficient to determine the value of contemporary artworks. Moreover,

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[30] Specific because every art classification - modern art, contemporary art, pop art - has a differently organised artworld.

although this work indicates the presence of multiple actors that produce and use financial and symbolic value to reach stardom, it cannot be applied tout-court to SA.

At this point, it is important to recognise the non-linearity of the creative act: a process the outcome of which is to create an artwork through a non-linear interaction of artworks, artists, and empowered audience(s) (Dewey, 1934 in Edmonds et al., 2009). This interactive (Edmonds et al., 2009) process sees the artist as the initiator (Cornock & Edmonds, 1973), but the viewers can decide whether what they are seeing is art or not (Bourdieu et al., 1997; Dewey, 1989). With this view, the value of art is the result of the contributions of the different actors that intervene in the creative act. The viewers' decision also depends on the stimuli resulting from the features of the artwork (Hagtvedt et al., 2008) and by achieving a perception of the artwork that may be different from the original intention of the artist (Boscaino, 2018; Kleiner, 2019). Moreover, the interaction described above is facilitated when artworks are placed in an outdoor context (Bach, 2001; Hein, 1996), an element of public art that seems particularly applicable to SA and that suggests to further investigate how the different components (Edmonds et al., 2009; Rodner & Thomson, 2013; Thornton, 2009) interact in this specific context.

2.3.1.2 The Aesthetic Experience as an Occasion to Create Value

The literature reviewed in this section refers to the value that derives from the audience's aesthetic experience. Osborne (1986) recites that the value assigned to an artwork should be the result of the aesthetic experience sustained by the viewer. According to Osborne (1986, p. 2), an aesthetic end-product can be either:

- any item suitable of aesthetic attention; or
- any item that is "specifically well adapted to evoke and sustain aesthetic interest".

Therefore, any end-product towards which the public has an aesthetic interest, or that evokes an aesthetic interest, can be an aesthetic one. This definition is quite loose as almost everything in the right conditions could be identified as an aesthetic end-product. On the other hand, Osborne also identifies what a work of art is (1986, p.2) by stating that it can be:

- any item that is "adapted to evoke" an aesthetic attention; or

- any item that is intentionally made in order to generate an aesthetic attention (Monroe, 1983, in Osborne, 1986).

The second definition above is more appropriate for an artwork since the verb *to make* indicates the human presence in making the work of art. Moreover, the intention of the maker must be that of eliciting an aesthetic attention from the public. In other words, "artworks" (Hayward and Beardsley. 1983, p. 21) are something humanly produced with the purpose of satisfying an aesthetic interest in the public. Regarding the concept of aesthetic value, Osborne (1986) said that aesthetic value can have two meanings. One is related to the value attributed to an aesthetic experience; the second meaning is the value assigned to objects of aesthetic experience.

2.3.1.3 Economic Valuation of Art

This subsection illustrates how the economic value of an artwork is formed and the players involved in this process. The economic valuation of art can be done considering the characteristics and properties of an artwork (Robertson, 2005). Indeed, these characteristics can be both internal and external and the degree of embeddedness into the value of the artwork depends on the reference market. Some of the characteristics are the material size of an artwork, the location where it is sold, and whether the artwork has been executed with different techniques (Sagot-

Duvauroux, 2011). Location is also a characteristic that influences the economic value of an artwork, since the "provenance and artist's Career Documentation" (Coslor, 2016, p. 24) are important drivers.

The factors intervening in the determination of the economic value of an artwork do not refer only to abstract characteristics, but also to the different players that contribute to its realization (Becker, 2008; Bongard, 1970; Bowness, 1989; Moulin, 1987). According to these authors, the price of an artwork reflects the outcome of the interactions between all the involved actors. But what is more important - for the current study - is that despite the various techniques used, the price of an artwork would never reflect its full value, which depends on an emotional component of personal experiences that is not interesting for the market (Robertson, 2005).

Moreover, we know that the value imbued in a contemporary artwork is related to visible aspects of the artwork itself (genre, technique, size, colours) (Velthuis, 2005), but also to the intrinsic aspects related with the persona of the artist (Thrift, 2008) which are the symbolic and cultural elements developed by the artist and the context. Indeed, the value and meaning of an artwork are also linked to the relationships that artists maintain with their peers and the critics (Preece et al., 2016), the place where artists can build their provenance, as well as their country of origin, so their output can be connected to a location-specific representational genre.

The value of an artwork can also be linked to the relationship that it has with the author and the "oeuvre" (Preece et al., 2016, P, 1387) which is articulated in both the artistic manifesto as well as in the overall aesthetic of an artwork. Then, the final components of an artwork's value are related to its legal aspects. Indeed, every artwork that is valued on a market has a commercial value which is protected in terms of

intellectual property, under copyright laws. The commercial value is curated by professionals such as the artists' managers, who define the terms of reproduction, sale, rent, and other uses of artworks (Preece et al., 2016).

Finally, the value of artworks is also related to the artist's history. Preece et al.'s (2016) paper presents the (I) *Cultural Capital* related to the school/academy where artists got their education; the (II) *Social Capital* related to the ability of artists to have people who write about them and create any sort of publicity; the (III) *Economic Capital* related to the ability to exploit the power of gatekeepers in order to access market segments; and the (IV) *Reputational Capital* related to the ability to have an audience that is an indicator of success/validity in the contemporary artworld.

An established econometric method to determine the market value of art is the one used in the *Old Masters Market*. This method values Old Masters' drawings by considering a series of characteristics of the artwork (Robertson, 2005):

- technique

- subject matter

- dimension

- artist's name

- year of sale

- provenance

- other characteristics

- saleroom (name of the auction business)

- signature

- reproduced in the auction house catalogue

Despite being quite comprehensive, the characteristics listed above do not consider other variables like buyers' tastes, time, and place, as discussed below.

Time. Artworks' prices depend much on the trend of general prices in an economy. According to Robertson (2005), there is a sort of correspondence between the general performance of an economy in a certain location, and the performance - or general price level - of arts trade.

Place. The fame and the price of artworks depend on the level of the local economy where the artwork is from. This connection has been identified by Robertson (2005) and explained by looking at the general fame and price levels of Chinese pottery since the start of the Chinese economic boom.

Taste. Taste is very important when determining artwork prices. Some authors (Coslor & Spaenjers, 2016) have demonstrated that in the art world, certain artworks are preferred over others because of their belonging to the average most accepted art genre/technique instead of being the most beautiful aesthetically.

Finally, there are other indexes that are used to know the price of art and, thus, to have a reference of its overall value. These indexes generally consider some unique factors of artworks: they are sold occasionally on the market; there are no two identical artworks, apart from copies; few bidders access each artwork auction; artworks possess an extra value element that derives from their owners (Goetzmann & Spiegel, 1995). Artworks are particularly difficult to valuate as the arts market is not as liquid as other markets such as the traditional financial markets (Coslor & Spaenjers, 2016). However, considering artworks as investments is not an innovative practice (De Marchi & Van Miegroet, 2014; McAndrew, 2012). Indeed, artworks are characterised by lack of "know-ability" of the piece being traded, which means that the information available

about the artwork's value and about its economic properties, are not readily available (Carruthers & Stinchcombe, 1999, p. 378). Private and public sales happen in the arts market, with private transactions making about half of the total turnover, and with information about prices often kept private because certain private galleries may vary prices according to characteristics of buyers (Plattner, 1998; Velthuis, 2005). Moreover, price levels are rather unknown also because of the traditional relations structure of the arts market that relies on conventions and on fixed lists of clients (Geertz, 1978).

Other studies (Coslor & Spaenjers, 2016; Louargand & McDaniel, 1991; Robertson, 2005) discussed whether artworks can be assimilated to financial investments with contrasting conclusions. Indeed, although Louargand and McDaniel (1991) believe that art can be useful to diversify a portfolio of investments, Coslor and Spaenjers (2016) said that the characteristics of artworks impede them from becoming completely assimilated to a financial investment. This latter view is also supported by Robertson (2005) who stressed that the impossibility of having a universally accepted and objective valuation and estimate of artworks, prevents them from being close to financial investments. Nevertheless, the price of artworks is defined by institutional actors: private galleries, investors, public/private auction houses, investment funds, pension funds, and academics.

The literature consulted on the economic value of art provides interesting insights on the different actors that influence at least one type of value of art - the price - in institutional contexts. However, because of its antagonism towards any institutionalization of artistic practices, SA seems not to be fitting in the methods of economic valuation of art discussed above. This subsection showed that there is a

considerable discussion on how to calculate the economic value of artworks based on a series of indicators, theories, contribution, practices, and institutions. However, the academic output on the economic value of art scarcely contributes to understanding how audiences - or other actors - influence the value of art. Nevertheless, the literature discussed in this subsection showed that actors such as curators and galleries function as intermediaries between the arts market and the artwork/artists, and therefore it would be relevant to include them in the study as participants in order to understand their perception of how value is created.

2.3.1.4 Summary on Art Valuation

The aim of the last three subsections was to provide an understanding of how visual art is valuated today. Indeed, this section referred to different studies that explained different components of the value of an artwork: economic, sociological, and artistic. Artworks are complex things, and it would be very difficult to come up with a valuation criterion that could be applied to all forms of art. Indeed, the indicators and indexes discussed above could hardly be applied to SA because of how far this form of art is from the institutionalised artworld.

Exploring the literature on art valuation showed that there are different aspects that influence the value of artworks. Criteria can refer to the dimensions of the artwork, their author's name fame, the context where the artwork is displayed, the actor who is evaluating them - it can be a professional such as a curator or a member of the critics, or a non-professional - the connection to an artistic genre and so on. What is clear from the literature is that the initial value of an artwork is determined by its author(s) but then the value can change according to the different passages the artwork makes along a value chain, as discussed further below.

What is not clear from the consulted literature is whether SA has the same valuation dynamics of other visual art forms, and whether the actors involved in the valuation of SA are the same for visual art in general - author, curator, critics as indicated by Thornton (2009) - or whether there is a contribute from other actors. For example, the literature discussed in this subsection showed that there is an interactive process among artists, audiences, curators, and context for the determination of the artistic value of visual art, and one may think that SA has similar characteristics, but there is still the need to illuminate this particular aspect and understand how value is determined, by whom, and on which occasions.

2.3.2 Co-Creation in the Creative Field

This subsection of Chapter 2 illustrates the dynamics of co-creation that help understand how people collaborate in order to collectively produce something and is organised in five subsections. The first subsection explores the concept of co-creation and prosumerism. The second subsection is dedicated to distributed knowledge. The third subsection is about co-creation experiences in arts and media. The fourth subsection discusses the creative crowd. The fifth subsection presents the concept of creative value chain.

Section 2.2 of the current chapter showed there is a component of both the practice and the value of SA that relates to the relationships developing between art in the streets and its audience(s). Moreover, Chapter 1 showed that the phenomenon being investigated in this study is characterised by interactions amongst different actors happening online, each with a different role, and suggests that there might be relationships that contribute to the definition of the value of street artworks. Hence, the need to explore the literature on collective interaction and on collaborative value

creation in order to understand how crowds of people - either online or offline - can interact to produce value.

The literature reviewed in Subsection 2.3.2 below contributed to developing an understanding of the *value-in-use* topic which is included within the concept of co-creation. Also, the authors present in the current subsection discuss crowdsourcing as a form of collective work as well as its applications to arts and media. Reviewing the literature on the topics mentioned above allows fundamental learning with a series of definitions on co-creation, collective intelligence, and crowdsourcing. Although prosumerism and crowdsourcing are not the focus of the study, exploring these theories and practices helped in understanding how a multitude of users interact and benefit from their work, and thus help with setting a useful theoretical framework.

2.3.2.1 Co-Creation

Since one of the aims of this study is to understand how interactions between actors create value and contribute to make street artworks renowned, it is necessary to explore the literature on co-creation. The aspects explored in this subsection are history of co-creation, theory of prosumerism, alternative media production systems, and crowdsourcing. The modern conception of co-creation is related to the service-intensive post-industrial society (Toffler, 1984); a context in which consumers cease being purely a consuming entity and start participating in the production process (Kotler, 1986), becoming embedded in it. One of the main features of co-creation is that it is considered as an alternative way of production (Seran (Potra) & Izvercian, 2014) that involves the consideration of all the cultural, economic, and demographic changes that contemporary firms face nowadays (Schumpeter, 2003), such as the need to rely on innovative ideas generated outside of firms' boundaries. In this context,

the traditional definition of the consumer as the end-user of a commodity and of the producer as the sole creator of value is inverted.

In co-creation, businesses are keen to involve consumers with the aim of improving the production process (Kandampully & Duddy, 1999). Many organizations have shifted their focus on consumers adopting the paradigm shown below in Figure 2.6 (Grönroos, 1994). According to this paradigm, consumers are involved in the production process and collaborate with producers in the creation of value that benefits both of them (Grönroos, 2011; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a, 2004b; Seran (Potra) & Izvercian, 2014). In co-creation, consumers are not passively consuming goods/services but are participating in their creation/ideation and are seen as a useful resource for a firm (Cova & Cova, 2012; Collins, 2010; Luonila et al., 2019; Perera et al., 2020; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Saarijärvi et al., 2013; Toffler & Toffler, 2006) and are named *prosumers*. Drawing on this paradigm*, prosumers* are defined by Lang et al. (2020, p. 178) as "individuals who consume and produce value, either for self-consumption or consumption by others, and can receive implicit or explicit incentives from organizations involved in the exchange".

Figure 2.6.

Alternative Value Creation Paradigm
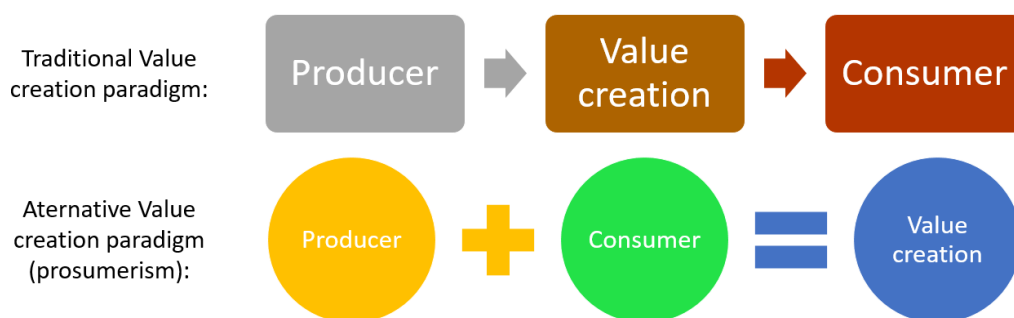
Source: the thesis author.

The involvement of prosumers in the production process allows the generation of value collaboratively - co-creation - which differs from what happens with traditional business value creation (Tapscott & Williams, 2008). However, value co-creation is not limited to collaborations between producers and consumers but can be related to any sort of collaboration that businesses establish with stakeholders: clients, partners, institutions, suppliers and so on (Storbacka & Nenonen, 2011). The theory of prosumers was initially developed by Toffler in the early 1980s and attributed a new role for consumers where they become authors of their own goods and which focuses on the concept of value-in-use as opposed to the value-in-exchange one (Toffler, 1984). Prosumerism and co-creation are the main theories of the service-dominant logic (Luonila et al., 2019). Toffler identifies three evolutionary waves for the role of the consumer in the production process:

- The first wave is represented by agricultural society, where citizens produce and consume basic commodities in their own houses. They can be considered prosumers. First wave societies are characterised by self-production and survival consumption.

- The second wave coincided with industrial development in Europe. Its main feature is the organization around the factory, where workers create products that are sold in the marketplace, and consumers buy them. This is the era of the value-in-exchange as products are exchanged against money/income.

- The third wave is a synthesis of the first and the second. It happens in the post-industrial era, where the dominant institutions are the homes of prosumers, identified by Toffler (1984) as "electronic cottages", where production activities are performed instead of going to factories. In this context, the market becomes less

Table 2.3.

The Three Waves of Value Creation

	THESIS **FIRST WAVE**	*ANTITHESIS* **SECOND WAVE**	*SYNTHESIS* **THIRD WAVE**
Dominant Institution	Agriculture	Industry (Factory)	Home
Mix of Prosumers and Consumers	Many Prosumers - few Consumers	Few Prosumers - many Consumers	More Prosumers - fewer Consumers
Dominant Processes	Self-production	Industrialization and marketization (consumers gather goods at the market)	De-industrialization and de-marketization
Form of Social Interaction	Survival	Efficiency as Producers Indulgence as Consumers	Individuation
Social Nexus amongst people	Kinship and Friendship; tribe	Contracts and transactions; workplace	Family and Friends; neighbourhoods

Source: Kotler (1986)

important as people are producing in their own homes for their own sake, instead of producing for exchange.

Each evolutionary wave identified by Toffler has a dominant institution, a specific mix of prosumers and consumers, and a unique dominant process (Toffler, 1984) as shown in Table 2.3 below.

Adding to Toffler's theory with prosumers there is the *Prosumption Continuum Framework* (Ritzer, 2014, 2015), that proposes two opposite types of prosumption according to whether we consider the two endpoints of the continuum (Darmody, et al., 2017). Indeed, we can have:

- prosumption-as-production (P-A-P), which involves all the activities traditionally considered as production. As an example, one can refer to the concept of crowdsourcing as discussed in the next subsection.

- prosumption-as-consumption (P-A-C), which involves all the activities traditionally considered as consumption. For example, digital user generated content (UGC) such as Wikis, network sharing economies, social media networks, to cite a few.

- a different set of other activities located within the continuum at different points and distances from the two endpoints. Examples in this case depend on the extent to which prosumption is based on either production or consumption, and on the integration of value creation within the two opposites (Esper et al., 2009).

In this framework, prosumption happens when consumption is simultaneous with production practice and when consumption and production are considered the same thing (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Tapscott & Williams, 2008; Toffler, 1984). The relationship between consumption and production is ubiquitous, therefore they happen synchronically, but not all the examples of prosumption can be considered as a single model/process (Ritzer, 2014). The different types of prosumption can, indeed, be placed on a continuum and classified according to different combinations of P-A-P and P-A-C (Darmody et al., 2017).

One example of prosumption is crowdsourcing: an evolution of the paradigm in Figure 2.6 for which the production tasks originally executed internally by the employees of a business, are assigned to large groups of people that execute small parts of the original activity in exchange for value or money (Darmody et al., 2017). The crowdsourced tasks are performed by a multitude of consumers defined as crowds that also benefit from the value they contributed to create (Bauer & Gegenhuger, 2015).

Consumers in crowdsourcing benefit from the final product because it has the characteristics that consumers themselves have identified; in crowdsourcing, the members of the crowds are prosumers that perform co-creation (Dujarier, 2016).

Prosumption and crowdsourcing are models that find application in today's knowledge-based economy and world (Krahn et al., 2008) where consumers either directly or indirectly participate in the production process and definition of the value of the goods they consume. Participating in the production process provides different benefits for prosumers (Estellés-Arolas & Gonzalez-Ladron-de-Guevara, 2012). This is particularly true if we look at contemporary media production which, according to the many authors listed below, there is a cooperative environment characterised by users that participate to the definition of media products together with firms in a context of distributed knowledge. Examples of prosumption and crowdsourcing in contemporary society can be found in different industries that use the creativity of consumers (Wolny, 2013). We can look at electronic banking where consumers hold a bank account as clients but also provide both functioning data for the service and perform banking operations at ATMs. Moreover, the Web 2.0 (Wolny, 2013) allowed the creation of platforms where users could both consume and produce content, actions and interactions. This is the case of UGC content on Wikis, blogs, social media platforms, e-commerce, Open Source Software (OSS) services, thematic digital fora, and media exchange platforms.

So far, the literature has provided fundamental learning that seems to be easily applied to the case of SA. Indeed, in the first section of this chapter we have seen that the production of street artworks may be an exclusivity of street artists, but the value and the meaning of street artworks seems to be the result of the interactions that elicit

once they are placed in the public space. However, reviewing the literature suggests that there may be other actors that influence the value of street artworks, and revealing them, together with their actions, is the aim of this study.

2.3.2.2 The Importance of Distributed Knowledge

To understand how online crowds contribute to the definition of the value of SA, this study explored the meanings of knowledge-based economies. Since the first theorizations of the knowledge-based economy concept (Smith, 2002), business organizations have come a long way and have incorporated a series of sharing and digital changes (Benkler, 2006). As mentioned before, it has become quite common today to use ICT in the current economic settings, and especially in production patterns that exploit the knowledge of crowds. Amongst the debates on the definition of distributed knowledge, this study considered the broad terms identified by the OECD (1996, p. 7; 2005) for which "knowledge-based economies are those which are directly based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information".

To understand how businesses use knowledge and why this is important in the current era, it is useful to take into consideration the debate on distributed knowledge and innovation carried out by contemporary scholars and professionals. Indeed, successful businesses are those able to recognise and access the opportunities lying outside of their boundaries (Lakhani and Panetta, 2007) and transform them into useful knowledge for the company, according to *Sun Microsystem* co-founder Bill Joy. Joy's experience-based belief is supported by the studies on the nature of knowledge and innovation made during the last sixty years (Hayek, 1945; von Hippel, 1994, 2005). In particular, Hayek (1945) argued that centralised economic models are unable to coordinate all the peripheral bits and pieces of knowledge because it is an unevenly

distributed resource, especially if as peripheral bits we consider the end-users. Moreover, von Hippel (1994, 2005) argued that users have a high importance within the whole productive/creative process, despite the difficulty for knowledge to move amongst players: from producer to consumers, amongst consumers, and amongst businesses. Also, Lakhani and Panetta (2007, p. 1) stated that users hold a "dominant role in originating innovation".

Indeed, end-users are able to generate innovative products and services when they experience new needs and when they are organised as a community; this generally happens well before manufacturers realise there is a potential market to exploit, as the purpose of manufacturers is to produce for the mass market (Riggs & von Hippel, 1994). Especially in scientific innovation and IT development, the model of centralised and proprietary innovation is unadapt for organisations with knowledge distributed outside of its boundaries or within communities (Lakhani & Panetta, 2007). Harnessing the power of end-users is a frequent approach in the services-dominant logic, where users are grouped into brand communities (Etgar, 2008; Goulding et al., 2013; von Hippel, 2005). Indeed, innovative businesses tend to stimulate value co-creation with their customers instead of acquiring technology and ideas from outside (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Examples of alternative models to organise innovation are the OSS projects. In fact, after the success of *Linux OS* where professionals around the world contributed to develop the software's features for free, big traditionally innovative companies like IBM, Apple and Oracle also joined the model by creating - and managing - online communities where both employees and external contributors could participate in the development of new software (West & Gallagher, 2006). These OSS projects with

users organised in communities are complete and meaningful examples of what a distributed innovation system can be and how they can solve problems via a decentralised approach that empowers self-selected participation, self-coordination, and collaboration amongst end-users (Lakhani & Panetta, 2007). It is possible to find successful examples of OSS communities/distributed innovation systems in different industries such as apparel, biotechnology, entertainment, and media. A common aspect of collective intelligence that is often forgotten is the availability of an online community of users where interaction occurs and creates value exploited by businesses (Schau et al., 2009; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). These users share specific set of characteristics like demographics, interests, language etc.

These online communities can work in systems that use specific infrastructure, such as the theory of organizational genes (Lakhani & Panetta, 2007; Malone et al., 2009). According to this theory, there are four main building blocks[31] that form a specific infrastructure/model according to how they are combined. Indeed, we can have the (I) Self-organizing community where professionals collaborate in software development by deciding which feature must be included in a new software release (Amor-Iglesias et al., 2005). This model is characterised by a mostly flat hierarchy because every member has the same decisional power. A famous example of this model is the OSS organization *Linux*. Then, there are (II) Commercial and Blending Communities where members of the community not only produce something valuable for a company but also vote which solution is the best. An example of Commercial and Blending Community is the t-shirt design firm *Threadless*. Then we have models where (III) outsiders innovate. Businesses organised this way take the problem of a company

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[31] The building blocks of Malone et al. (2009) are not to be considered together with the four *building blocks* identified by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) to apply the framework of co-creation.

and launch an open call for ideas to solve the problem. The best idea takes a cash prize, and the company sees their problem solved. An example of this model is *InnoCentive*.

2.3.2.3 Co-Creation in the Arts and Media

As shown above, media industries and arts organizations use communities to co-create value (Lakhani & Panetta, 2007; von Hippel, 2005). As a matter of fact, many creative industries have benefitted from co-creation: movie production, fashion, television, marketing, game development, and digital public relations (Deuze, 2007). Indeed, the use of co-creation in creative industries has become quite common today and is not a novel way of thinking about cultural productions (Benkler, 2006; Nakajima, 2012; Rodrigues & Horvath, 2020; Saragih, 2019; Walmsley, 2019). As early as 1974, Becker highlighted that creative work is collaborative (1974), while Bourdieu (1993) described the field of cultural production as a collaborative network of different actors. These views have been supported and further extended with the conceptualisation of the art world as a co-production value-creating context facilitated by technology that stimulates collaboration amongst users (Bonet & Négrier, 2018; Crawfort et al., 2014; Luonila, 2017; Walmsley, 2019). Especially in the case of innovative industries, as already discussed above (Lakhani & Panetta, 2007; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a, 2004b), value co-creation can happen between producer and consumers (Grossman, 2006 in Banks & Deuze, 2009; Hartley, 2009). However, in some creative industries the co-creation is about value, while in some other industries it is the actual creativity/product that is co-created. This is also what was identified by Grönroos (2011) and partially already discussed earlier in the section on the difference between co-creation and co-production (Luonila & Jyrämä, 2020):

- Co-creation is the participation of the provider in the creation of consumer value.

- Co-production: is the participation by the consumer in the process of production.

In the music industry, co-creation has been seen as an occasion to create value collaboratively between producers and consumers, but that brings benefits at different levels (Saragih, 2019). Indeed, to cite a few examples, consumers participate in and promote *crowdfunding* initiatives that enable young and brand-new musicians to finance their creative activity as well as the participation in events (Quero et al., 2017); fan bases create online communities to support their favourite artists and create dedicated online content (Burnes & Choi, 2015) and brands exploit these communities (Goulding et al., 2013); music fans, freelance writers, editors, and the like, collaborate as "co-creative labour" (Saragih, 2019, p. 470), or use online communities to distribute their creative works (Gateau, 2014). All these examples expand the value chain of music with co-creating experiences (Gamble & Gilmore, 2013) and provide interesting insights for the understanding of co-creation in the creative industries and in SA.

In media/journalism, content can be co-created between journalists and readers/crowds. With this interactive content-creation method (Piller et al., 2011), the crowdsourcer is the editor/journalist, and the online crowd is invited to participate in the creation of a story that is then published. Indeed, some magazines adopted co-creation practices by assigning different tasks to their readers/online crowds (Aitamurto, 2017, p. 189): "developing topics, choosing the topic, brainstorming sources, and shooting contexts". Although co-creation in media/journalism has been presented more as a professional process (Aitamurto, 2017, 2019) than as a natural collaborative event, the experience of crowdsourcing as open journalistic practice can

be considered to understand how creative content authors can interact with online crowds on digital platforms in order to co-create value.

In *new media*[32] the audience is not seen just as readers or passive viewers, but more as users, who contribute to generate value for the medium itself and for the whole industry (Banks & Deuze, 2009). This enriched role of media viewers follows in part the paradigm of co-creation for which customers/users/media viewers cease their passive role and engage in a more labour-intensive and active role that is related to using/consuming/viewing the medium and contributing to value definition. According to this paradigm, new media industries are decentralizing their productive phase towards users rather than concentrating it in the hands of producers.

It is clear that, in arts and media, there are different actors who co-create the value of creativities. However, these are not just single actors/professionals but can be grouped into co-creating communities (Luonila & Jyrämä, 2020)[33]. As we have seen in the current subsection, it is frequent to see communities characterise the context into which artworks are delivered and contribute to shaping the interactions between actors in creative industries, as well as how value is co-created (Grönroos, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Value co-creation in the arts has the characteristic of not being tied to the original dichotomy of producer consumer (Preece et al., 2016). Indeed, as Preece et al. (2016) suggest, the concept of value in the arts has of course a socio-economic nature but cannot be intended as merely dichotomic/business related where there is just a producer and a consumer or a community thereof.

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[32] New media is defined as "new information and entertainment products and services that use digital technologies such as the internet" by the *Oxford Learner's Dictionary*.
[33] The concepts of tribe and tribal consumption are discussed in more detail in below.

The few examples of co-creation in arts and media discussed in this subsection have in common that value co-creation in the art has specific rules and norms for social interaction (Luonila & Jyrämä, 2020) and can be intended as a cumulative value-creation process. This process happens in a material or a virtual space, and in the case of the arts, can be carried out both by single actors and by communities of users that share specific practices (Luonila & Jyrämä, 2020). The virtual space can the digital platforms - as mentioned above - with distinct features in terms of interface, interaction functions, accessibility, and property. Today, digital co-creation in arts and media usually happens on platforms privately owned. However, it must be mentioned that both users and producers can have a negative perception of digital platforms where co-creation happens (Banks, 2009; Jenkins & Deuze, 2008).

The examples above show that co-creation has become a popular production pattern in arts and media, where producers and consumers cooperate and interact in different ways to create value. Indeed, with reference to the arts, different authors (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Peñaloza & Venkatesh, 2006; Preece et al., 2016; Preece & Kerrigan, 2015; Rodner & Thomson, 2013) have shown how contemporary creative production patterns are influenced by both the so-called sharing economy and by a socio-cultural approach. In this view, the value and the meaning of creativities depends on the interactions occurring within the actors that participate in the production of commodities. The discussion above is very useful for this study and it suggests that, in a creative context such as that of SA, different actors can contribute to determine the value of street artworks. Moreover, looking at the arts with a socio-cultural approach that sees the participation of different actors goes hand in hand with the concepts of "art world" (Bourdieu, 1993; Danto, 1964), and with the multi-stakeholders

approach (Kerrigan et al., 2011), and develops a view for which the meaning and the value of artworks are influenced by a set of actors who co-create these meanings via interaction within the people that constitute the core group (Preece & Kerrigan, 2015). However, one must keep the features of SA in mind when considering what type of co-creation can happen in this industry. Indeed, what is not clear at this point, is whether the value co-creation framework can be used with SA and who are the different actors that take part in it.

2.3.2.4 The Creative Crowd: An Alternative Form of Production

Some authors (Lakhani & Panetta, 2007; von Hippel, 2005) noticed that a frequent business practice sees firms tapping into the power of online crowds to generate ideas and benefit for the business (Acar, 2018; Allen et al., 2018; Blasi & Sedita, 2018). This notion is particularly important for this study because it suggests looking into the literature on crowdsourcing to find a model that explains how crowds can co-create/produce things when interacting online. Hence the literature reviewed in this subsection explores again the concept of crowdsourcing to verify whether the alternative paradigm in Figure 2.6 on prosumerism - and its technical and practical implications (West & Altink, 1996) - can be applied to creativity and SA.

As seen in the previous section, SA is a phenomenon where different actors are involved in what looks like a creative process where who produces the artwork and who consumes it are often similar entities. This process resembles the flat hierarchies typical of innovative organizations (Anderson & King, 1993) that decentralise parts of their production processes and give autonomy to employees and customers (Pillinger & West, 1995; Zaltman et al., 1973). Decentralization towards consumers is also highlighted in von Hippel (2005) and Lakhani and Panetta's (2007) works which

identified the ability of crowds to generate ideas when they experience new needs before firms/producers recognise the need for mass production.

Decentralization of the production processes and crowd creativity are fundaments of crowdsourcing because consumers/users/customers/ act as part of a creative crowd able to determine the value of a commodity/service through their active participation. A creative crowd comes to birth when an activity that was originally performed by one or more employees within a firm's walls is assigned to a crowd as an open call (Howe, 2006a). When this happens, it brings benefits to members of the crowd but also to the firm who is tapping into the power of many (Dawson, 2010). The early definition of crowdsourcing provided by Howe (2006a) includes the open call system to engage with the crowd to stress the difference between crowdsourcing with its portmanteau cousin outsourcing. Indeed, according to Howe (2006b & 2009), Brabham (2013), and Zhao and Zhu (2012), while outsourcing firms can identify and contract the external provider(s) of the needed service, in crowdsourcing crowd members remain unknown.

To further understand the concept of the creative crowd within the crowdsourcing model, it is useful to look at the work by Estellés-Arolas and Gonzalez-Ladron-de-Guevara (2012) as pointed out by Boscaino (2018), which define crowdsourcing as the execution of an online task where different actors can participate: we can have individuals, non-profit organizations, firms, and other organizations assigning the task to large crowds via an open-call system. Estellés-Arolas and Gonzalez-Ladron-de-Guevara's work (2012) revealed that the users that participate in crowdsourcing may have different knowledge about the activity that is being executed, that the participation of users is usually voluntary (also confirmed by Brabham, 2013),

and that it brings benefit to both users and producers. The benefit for users depends on what the crowdsourcer established as the task to perform, while the crowdsourcer benefits from the work of users on the platform (Estellés-Arolas & Gonzalez-Ladron-de-Guevara, 2012). The four main elements of a crowdsourcing production model are: the availability of a crowd, the crowdsourcer, the task performed, and the platform, as identified by Hosseini et al. (2015). The innovative aspect in this process is represented by the shift in importance/relevance from producer to consumers and is related to the value-in-use concept (Skaržauskaitė, 2013) for which value is created through a dialogical relationship amongst peers.

A further theoretical contribution to the understanding of both co-creation and crowdsourcing is given by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000) that considers both concepts as types of business organization that promote the interaction between firms and their customers and create new value through cooperation, knowledge transfer and mutual service. This definition is useful for this study because it explains how value can be transferred from one end to the other of a production system organised through crowdsourcing, although the Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000) study explicitly refers to a business organization.

The main features of co-creation can be summarised by looking at Payne et al.'s (2008 and 2011) works. These show that: (I) co-creation happens between two or more players; (II) co-creation is characterised by shared benefit resulting from "integration of resources" (Payne et al., 2008 in Skaržauskaitė, 2013, p.118); (III) all parts must be available for interaction; (IV) collaboration must be available in different forms (Frow et al., 2011; Sheth & Uslay, 2007). The list of features discussed above

also characterise certain production processes in arts and media (Deuze, 2007) as well as today's digital economy (Benkler, 2006).

To sum up the concepts discussed in this subsection, one can look at the relationship between producer and consumer in the case of co-creation:

- Producer and consumers are at the same hierarchical level (Estellés-Arolas & Gonzalez-Ladron-de-Guevara, 2012; Payne et al., 2008).

- The production process has a flattened/horizontal structure (Anderson & King, 1993).

- The outcome is reached thanks to the contributions of the consumer and controlled by the producer (Agrell & Gustafson, 1996)

- The outcome is valuable both for consumers and producers (Estellés-Arolas & Gonzalez-Ladron-de-Guevara, 2012).

- The participation of consumers in the creative process involves higher levels of innovation (Skaržauskaitė, 2013), such as a platform that enables crowdsourcing to happen (Palacios et al., 2016).

Finally, authors on co-creation specify that having a simply collaborative environment from producer to consumers/customers, is not enough to identify a co-creation process (Brabham, 2013). Indeed, there is a need for end-users to play an active and central role in the creation of value, and there is a need for the process to be continuous, and supported by all parties (Pieters & Jansen, 2013; Jansen & Pieters, 2017). Although originally thought for business settings where firms harness the skills and abilities of the crowds, but with relevant applications to both education and community research (Akhilesh, 2017; Ferri et al., 2020; Lopera-Molano & Lopera-Molano, 2020; and others), co-creation and crowdsourcing are concepts that seem

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adaptable to the context of SA. In particular, in order to understand how street artworks become renowned in the digital era, some questions have arisen with reference to verifying the characteristics of crowdsourcing, co-creation, and creative crowd in SA and have driven the investigation[34], as reported in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4.

Questions Emerging From Subsection 2.3.2.4

Are street artists and their audience(s) at the same hierarchical level (Anderson & King, 1993)?

Can both street artists and their audiences contribute to the value of street artworks?

Are there more actors that participate in the co-creation? Is the general audience playing a central role (Pieters & Jansen, 2013; Jansen & Pieters, 2017)?

If the value of street artworks is co-created amongst street artists and the general audience, do street artists have control over the value-creation activities done by the general audience (Agrell & Gustafson, 1996)?

In the value co-creation of street artworks, is the final outcome valuable for both street artists and the general audience (Estellés-Arolas & Gonzalez-Ladron-de-Guevara, 2012)?

Can the use of digital media platforms by viewers/general audience be considered as the innovative aspect (Palacios et al., 2016; Skaržauskaitė, 2013) needed to call this a co-creation process?

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[34] These initial questions have been developed into RQ5.

2.3.2.5 The Creative Value Chain

Exploring the concepts related to the creative value chain can help situate this research which aims at identifying the activities of different actors that contribute to the renown-ness of street artworks. Indeed, the value chain is a concept that indicates a set of activities for which a product or a service is delivered on the market (Porter, 2008) and that contribute to the value definition of the product or service. In this view, the formation of the value for a product or a service is seen as the result of economic activity organised as a process/system with a series of inputs-outputs, players, and outcomes (Institute for Manufacturing, n.d.). The concept of the creative value chain has been discussed by different authors (Hartley, 2004, 2009; Pratt, 2008) as a vertical process from producer to consumer, with the commodity in the middle. In particular, Pratt (2008) talked about a *production chain* as a characteristic of production and to highlight the importance of a connection between production and consumption. These two views form part of the linear model of the value chain. This model of value chain can be used with SA if one considers the latter as one of the creative industries. This can be done by including SA within the wider definition of creative industries (Caves, 2002; Hartley, 2004, 2009) where consumption is related to factors like education, representations of the cultural values of a place - milieu - and social institutions that help to convey the artistic message and identify the players of the value chain itself.

Applying the concept of the value chain to SA is possible, but the linear structure briefly discussed above is not able to include all the characteristics of SA mentioned in the previous section and related to co-creation. Indeed, one would think the creative value chain for SA to be composed of more than three elements - producer, good/commodity/artwork, and consumers - and that the structure would need to

include horizontal elements related to the integration of production and consumption at different levels, typical of creative industries (Hartley, 2004; Hesmondhalgh, 2019; Pratt, 2004). This need to integrate and adapt the structure and the dynamics of the value chain is also supported by other research which highlighted how the linear model cannot be used for every creative production (Liao, 2014; Pratt, 2004; Hartley, 2004).

In creative industries, for example, the prices of creative commodities are mainly dependent on consumers' tastes (Liao, 2014). Moreover, the production and circulation of value in creative industries does not always start with the creation of a commodity/artwork but initiates within "groups of actors" (Madudová, 2017, p. 231) that influence the creative process. The value in creative industries then moves along the chain and, after the commodity has been created, is transmitted to consumers thanks to "creative distributors" (Miles, 2009 in Madudová, 2017, p. 234). The particularity of creative industries today is that creators/artists are part of the distribution infrastructure both because some commodities are presented directly by the producer in the form of physical performances, and because the ICT allows a fast and costless distribution of value towards wider audiences (Liao, 2014).

In creative industries, much of the value definition of the commodities is done by consumers (Flew & Cunningham, 2010; Pratt, 2004; Hartley, 2004). For example, artwork prices are not decided by artists/authors, but are the result of a bargaining process between the artists' agents and the commissioning institutions, or they have no price at all if we consider spontaneous street artworks (Hartley, 2004; Irvine, 2012); moreover, consumer tastes have a relevant impact on the final price of artworks (Keane, 2009; Pratt, 2009). The integration of the linear value chain with horizontal elements can also refer to the digital platforms that allowed the distribution of arts in

general (Flew, 2010; Liao, 2014) and the possibility for different actors to interact with and discuss artworks online. The literature discussed in the first section of the current chapter denotes SA as a phenomenon characterised by interaction, cooperation, and value co-creation. However, the features of the co-creation process that characterise SA are still unknown and blurry, and the way this modifies and/or integrates the linear model of the creative value chain needs to be unveiled in order to understand how street artworks become renowned in the digital era and the actors who are involved.

2.3.4 Summary

Co-creation is a way of organizing the work of crowds and is a model adopted in different media production contexts that entail the presence of a hybrid entity - a tertium genus - between the consumer and the producer, performing both activities: the *prosumer*. When consumers operate in a context of distributed knowledge, they generate innovative concepts because they experience new and diverse needs before producers even recognise them. In this context, consumers are empowered with the possibility to both generate ideas, and shape products and services thanks to decentralization.

The role of the prosumer in contemporary economies is crucial because of the shift from a traditional market economy to a knowledge-base one characterised by participation. Indeed, different studies have shown that the most successful companies are those who understood the importance of the elements residing outside of their boundaries: the existence of communities and the knowledge they possess. In practice, many innovative ICT organisations are using a decentralised approach that allow to gather and harness the knowledge that lays distributed within digital communities. Co-creation then becomes a process for which users/consumers can

combine the value they created with the one created by producers in what is called the *joint sphere*, generating the value-in-use during interaction (Grönroos, 2011).

Arts and media production are not immune from the influence of co-creation. Indeed, many authors identified in the past two sections demonstrated that creative organizations value and, therefore, use co-creative patterns in their business. In media production, producers and consumers are immersed into a context for which they contribute equally to the generation of creative content and influence its value. With this perspective, viewers acquire a new role and are not anymore just a group of passive viewers but contribute actively to the generation of further value of the medium itself.

Figure 2.7 below shows the value co-creation model developed as a result of the literature reviewed in Pillar 2, and illustrates the theoretical lens used to examine the street artworld, providing an initial explanation of the black box in the next section. Figure 2.7 can be looked at from bottom to the top in order to acknowledge the historical context that informed the conceptualisation of co-creation - grey area in Figure 2.7 - used in the current study. Indeed, starting from the bottom dark boxes of the figure, value co-creation can be conceptualised considering the need for contemporary businesses need to adapt to a society where innovation drives economic growth and is located outside the boundaries of companies (Kandampully & Duddy, 1999; Lakhani & Panetta, 2007; Schumpeter, 2003). To do this, a hybrid entity is born with a mix of characteristics from producers and consumers: the prosumer (Collins, 2010; Cova & Cova, 2012; Grönroos, 1994, 2011; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; 2004b). According to a prevalence of consumption or production, we can identify

service-led businesses (Luonila et al., 2019) on different points of the prosumption continuum framework (Darmody et al., 2017; Ritzer, 2014, 2015).

The characteristics of co-creation that are considered in this study are: the presence of open calls where a task is assigned to creative crowds (Howe, 2006); the availability of a community where value is co-created (Bauer & Gegenhuger, 2015; Darmody et al., 2017); the presence of a business/central entity that exploits the creativity of members of a community to their advantage (Wolny, 2013) assigning them a task to complete in exchange for something (Estellés-Arolas & Gonzalez-Ladron-de-Guevara, 2012); the need of at least two players able to co-create value (Payne et al., 2008, 2011). However, it is important to separate value co-creation from co-production, and to acknowledge that co-creation can be cumulative (Luonila & Jyrämä, 2020).

The conceptualisation of co-creation in this sense offers a theoretical lens to examine SA and suggests which elements to look for in the phenomenon object of the study. Hence, the formulation of the what/how/who/where of co-creation in SA (top section of Figure 2.7 below) into RQ4 and RQ5 below. Addressing these questions means identifying the different actors involved in SA, their hierarchy in the co-creation system, the platforms where value co-creation occurs, the benefits from participating in the co-creation process, the composition of the SA community, the types of interactions amongst actors, and a model of creative value chain that can be applied to SA. The RQs emerging from the current subsection are:

RQ4: *To what extent is the value of street artworks defined in a co-creation process taking place on digital platforms? What does this process consist of?*

RQ5: *What is the value chain of street art and to wat extent does it include digital elements?*

Figure 2.7.

The Co-Creation Framework
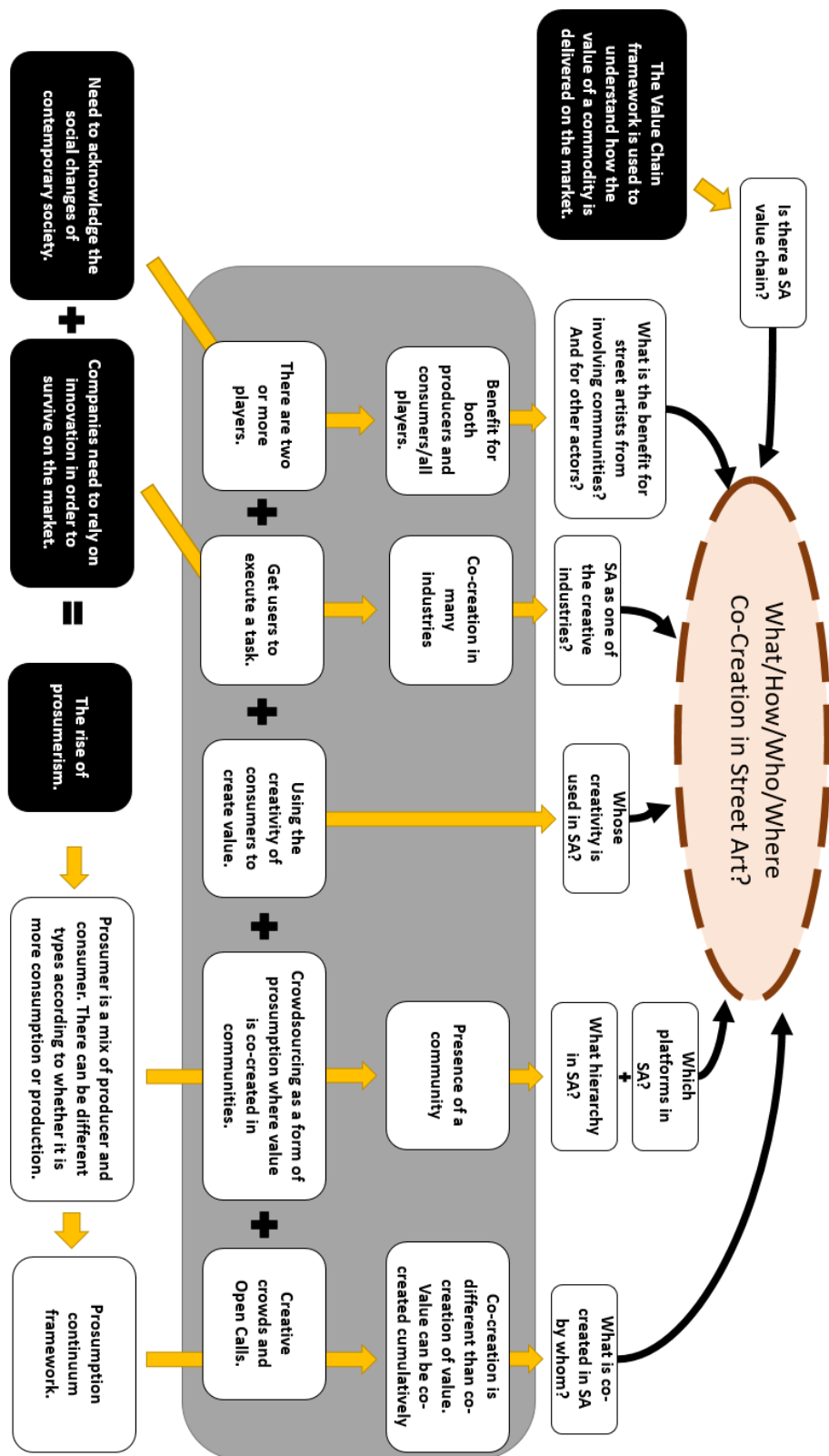
Source: the thesis author.

2.4 Taking Stock of the Learning

The current chapter allows fundamental learning on the street artworld and its dynamics. Indeed, exploring the history and the practice of SA shows that, although street artists are those who create the artwork, the value of their creativity may depend on the actions performed by any other actors in the street artworld. Reviewing the literature on art valuation and co-creation showed that there are theoretical gaps within the literature on contemporary art valuation related to how that happens in SA, and that co-creation has been mainly used in business or to explain service-driven business organisation. In particular, the literature on co-creation and art valuation is very limited if one wants to use it to explain the functioning of SA, hence the need for this in-depth qualitative study of the street artworld.

Reviewing the literature allowed the definition of a theoretical framework that gives an initial explanation to the questions in the black box diagram and that justified the adoption of a multi-method qualitative approach. Indeed, as shown in Figure 2.8 below, there are different aspects of the black box that have been illuminated thanks to the review undertaken in the current chapter. However, the original questions in Figure 1.2 still seek an exhaustive answer together with the RQs related to the literature gaps identified in the current chapter. These RQs are listed below.

RQ1: *Who are the actors contributing to the legitimation and valuation of street art?*

RQ2: *What are the roles of these different actors in defining the value of street art and to what extent is this value defined online?*

RQ3: *How is the audience of street art composed? Are there differences between online and offline audiences?*

RQ4: *To what extent is the value of street artworks defined in a co-creation process taking place on digital platforms? What does this process consist of?*

RQ5: *What is the value chain of street art and to what extent does it include digital elements?*

Figure 2.8.

The Theoretical Framework Related to the Black Box
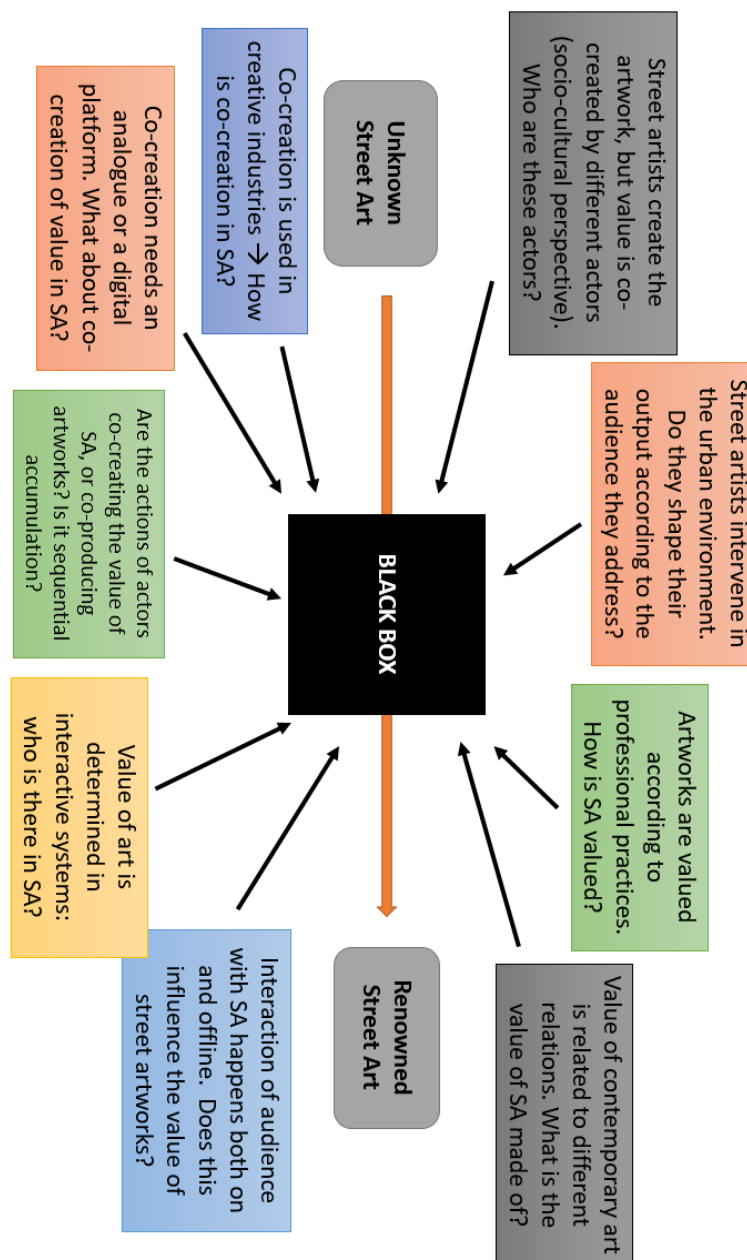
Source: the thesis author.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

3.1 Introduction

The Introduction chapter presented the problem investigated in this study and underlined the need to explore the interactions on SNSs where different users engage online regarding SA. The sections in the current chapter show the methodological choices made to illuminate the RQs above which address the overarching RQ: *How do street artworks transform from being unknown to becoming renowned in the digital era?*

This chapter is organised as follows. Section 3.2 presents the research philosophy with a discussion on the rationale behind the choice of an interpretive and qualitative approach towards the data and on situating the research**.** Section 3.3 illustrates the research design of this study and justifies the adoption of a multi-method qualitative approach. The research methods - tactics (Saunders et al., 2019) - for data collection are discussed in Section 3.4, while the data analysis on the three different datasets is shown in Section 3.5. Section 3.6 illustrates the thematic analysis procedure that generated the results presented in Chapter 4. Sections 3.7 and 3.8 discuss the adaptations and limitations of the study, as well as the ethical considerations, respectively.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The purpose of this section is to illustrate how data have been gathered and what constitutes relevant knowledge in this study. A philosophical paradigm is formed to justify the methodological approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and to show the "basic

belief system or world view that" guided "the investigation" (Guba & Lincoln 1994, p. 105).

3.2.1 Ontology and Epistemology

Ontology is the study of the nature of the reality (Blaikie & Priest, 2019), and is a complex of assumptions and beliefs on the relevance of facts that can be perceived either as objective or subjective. In an objectivist view, social entities have an existence that is totally independent from that of social actors, whereas a subjectivist approach considers the perceptions and the actions of social actors as elements that define the social process (Saunders et al., 2019). Reviewing the literature in Chapter 2 underlined the complex interactive and subjective features of SA, where different social actors come together and contribute to defining the value of street artworks. Hence, the reality of the phenomenon studied here - i.e. street art - is socially constructed and this reality is what is being considered to make sense of the artworld. Therefore, the thesis is informed by social constructionism (Saunders et al., 2019).

Indeed, this study considers the multiple stories, perspectives, and experiences of three types of social actors: street artists, curators, and SA connoisseurs visible as interactions and conversations generated (Gergen & Gergen, 1991) on SNSs. Indeed, the relevant meaning for this study is located in the way a community/social context develops ideas and attitudes (Dickerson & Zimmermann, 1996) towards an end-product. The choice of a social constructivist ontological approach stands in the possibility to consider the various meanings and perceptions social actors give to society/phenomena which vary according to the different interpretations they have and give to the researcher.

Epistemology is the assumptions made on "what constitutes acceptable knowledge" (Saunders et al., 2019. 133) in a study. It refers to choices made to decide which elements of the observed reality are relevant for the study. Saunders et al. (2019) highlighted that acceptable knowledge in every research depends on the perspectives of the researcher towards the topic studied, and on the type of data that is being collected/analysed. Since this study considered the subjective perspectives, attitudes, and feelings from a multitude of heterogeneous individuals which cannot be thoroughly measured quantitatively (Saunders et al., 2019), a subjectivist approach was adopted (Black, 2006) to develop a qualitative multi-method research design.

3.2.2 Research on Street Art in the UK

The data collected for this study offers a detailed account of the context and experiences of different social actors in the street artworld. However, the study was conducted with both participants and data from the UK. Indeed, the conversations on SNSs considered in the current study appeared on websites owned by UK resident street artists, curators, bloggers and/or administrators in a timeframe that goes from 2015 until the end of 2019[35]. Likewise, all the interviewees are either UK residents or have strong bonds with the UK SA scene for employment/professional reasons.

The reason behind situating the current study in the UK stands in the intention to study SA in one of its recognised birthplaces in the world (Blanché, 2015). Indeed, although SA being now a worldwide phenomenon (Caldwell, 2015; Widewalls, 2014), some of the first and most recognised and iconic street artworks have been performed either in the UK or in America (Bacharach, 2015; Blanché, 2015; Cooper & Chalfant,

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[35] The time frame of the research has been agreed with and approved by the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee.

1984; Maric, 2014a, 2014b). Hence, the current study is the first to investigate specific characteristics of SA in the UK and sets the grounds to conduct studies aimed at further expanding the knowledge of SA in different cultural contexts.

However, the SA phenomenon in the UK has important characteristics that need to be identified before articulating the design of the current study. SA is a frequent element of the British UE. Street artworks can be found in any major cities of the UK, where local street artists - either born or resident - characterise the local SA scene (Inspiringcity, 2017). The SA output is particularly rich in British cities traditionally connected with SA (Blanché, 2015): London, Bristol and Brighton. However, street artists have been establishing themselves with styles, topics, and presence in other cities such as Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Cardiff, Cheltenham, Leicester, Belfast, Sheffield, Aberdeen, to name a few.

Together with local street artists, the UK also has a rich SA festival and galleries scene. *UpFest* is Europe's largest SA festival and takes place in Bristol, the alleged birthplace of Banksy. *Nuart Aberdeen* is one of the UK's leading SA festivals. *Cheltenham PaintFest* is one of the many local SA festivals. *Graffik* gallery, *Well Hung, Hung-up,* and *Pure Evil*, are all established SA galleries in London. *Shoreditch Street Art Tours* is one of the tour operators that organise SA tours in Shoreditch and other famous SA neighbourhoods in London. The UK SA scene is also rich in virtual terms. There are, indeed, numerous blogs, webzines, digital fora, social media pages, and other SNSs, as well as a wide presence of SA in media where street artworks are shared, viewed, discussed, commented, challenged, and reproduced by professionals, enthusiasts and amateurs.

3.3 Research Design

The current research has been designed as a multi-method qualitative study because of the need to incorporate different research techniques and methods, illustrated below in detail. Considering the current discussion on research design (Saunders et al., 2019), this study can be thought of as being essentially "descripto-explanatory" (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 188) because it aims at describing how street artworks become renowned in the current era. Moreover, via a multi-method qualitative approach, this study seeks to explain relevant aspects of the process for which street artworks become renowned such as the quality of social participation/interactions, the theoretical and practical implications, and the use of digital skills by participants. This approach allowed the RQs to be illuminated, and the emergence of a richer perspective of the phenomenon that is not currently available within the extant literature.

As discussed in more detail below, three data types have been considered in this study. Two of them - interviews and field notes - have been generated during the study; one - conversations on SNSs - is archived on digital storage (Kozinets, 2015). Moreover, interviews have been conducted with three types of participants. Using three data types allowed to bring various perspectives to be brought into the study and generated triangulated findings that provided a more comprehensive explanation to the phenomenon for which street artworks become renowned in the digital era.

3.3.1 A Multi-Method Qualitative Study

This research is a study of the interactions performed both on and offline by different social actors that have an impact on the renown-ness of street artworks. The object of this study is, therefore, the complex of social experiences and interactions that happen around the representation of street artworks both on and offline. The

adopted research approach considers elements typical of netnography, such as the collection of online UGC and online interviews (Kozinets, 2015), as well as data collected as face-to-face interviews used to gather the multiple perspectives of a wide set of actors (Saunders et al., 2019).

The multi-method approach was considered suitable for this study because it allowed both digital and analogue data to be drawn upon. These data were then analysed using one single thematic technique (Gioia et al., 2012). Indeed, the phenomenon studied here is something that happens in real life - a street artwork becoming renowned as seen in Chapter 1 - and has a relevant digital component. Moreover, in the phenomenon for which street artworks become renowned, there is communication happening between the various actors that may be manifest online, while other communication happens away from digital screens. Hence the need to flank digital data in the form of UGC, with interviews. However, despite the presence of important online elements in the phenomenon for which street artworks become renowned, the digital aspect covers only part of the total interactions useful to answer the RQs. Indeed, the online part of this study can be referred to as *observational* or "passive netnography" (Kozinets, 2010, p. 75) because there has been limited online participation of the researcher in the field where digital interaction happens.

3.3.2 Introduction to Research Methods

The research methods used for this study are of a qualitative nature and are typically used to study social phenomena (Marshall & Rossman, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Travers, 2001; Flick, 2019). These methods have been identified considering both the RQs illustrated in Table 3.1 below, and for the purpose of providing an interpretation of how street artworks become renowned in the current era.

The study has been conducted collecting qualitative data in the form of semi-structured interviews, transcription of conversations on SNSs, and field notes. The reason for the choice of more qualitative methods for data collection and analysis stands in the need to answer specific RQs, the need to explore and understand meanings related to a specific phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), and the need to understand the complexity of contexts examined and the cultural insights coming from the perceptions of different actors/participants (Kozinets, 2010; Ritchie et al., 2013; Robson & McCartan, 2016; Yin, 2017). The methods are:

1. Primary data: 45 semi-structured interviews conducted either face-to-face or online - via email, messenger software or Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP). Three interviewee subgroups were identified: street artists, SA curators, SA connoisseurs.

2. Secondary data referred to as *archival* data (Kozinets, 2010) in this thesis[36]: six UGC items each containing a snapshot of the visual element, the interactions feed[37], and a transcription of the caption accompanying the visual element.

3. Field notes: 50 observational and reflective field notes.

The research methods used in this research are related to the RQs which, in turn, come from the identification of gaps in the literature as discussed in Chapter 2. The relation between the RQs and the various methods is illustrated in Table 3.1 below.

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[36] Details of the six conversations on SNSs are available in Appendix D.
[37] The interactions feed is the list of comments and other functions that one can find on SNSs.

Table 3.1.

Relation Between Gaps and Research Methods

Identified Gaps	Research Questions	Research Method(s)
The value of street artworks is not exclusively dependent on street artists' intentions but can be influenced by any other actors involved and by the context.	RQ1: *Who are the actors contributing to the legitimation and valuation of street art?* RQ2: *What are the roles of these different actors in defining the value of street art and to what extent is this value defined online?* RQ3: *How is the audience of street art composed? Are there differences between online and offline audiences?*	Semi-structured interviews with artists, curators, and SA connoisseurs. Transcription and observation of social media posts representing street artworks. Field Notes. Data analysed through the Gioia et al. (2012) methodology.
Co-creation is popular in arts and media. Is it also how the value of SA is created? The creative value chain is interesting and may provide useful nuances to understand how the value of creativity depends on contributions by different actors, but there is no specific value chain for SA. The literature did not specify whether SA can be valuated like other forms of visual art or differently.	RQ4: *To what extent is the value of street artworks defined in a co-creation process taking place on digital platforms? What does this process consist of?* RQ5: *What is the value chain of street art and to what extent does it include digital elements?*	Transcription and observation of SNSs. Semi-structured interviews with artists, curators and SA connoisseurs. Field Notes. Data analysed through the Gioia et al. (2012) methodology.

Source: The thesis author.

3.4 Data Collection

The subsections below illustrate the research methods used to collect and collate data. It is organised in five subsections. The first subsection shows how the researcher got into the street artworld. The second subsection presents the data collection for interviews. The third subsection is dedicated to archival data. The fourth

subsection illustrates the use of field notes in this study. The fifth subsection illustrates the issues encountered during data collection.

3.4.1 Mapping the Field

Finding participants was a long process due to both the secretive attitude of street artists and their distrust towards institutional players such as members of academia. Nevertheless, before collecting the three types of data in this research, a preliminary immersion within the street artworld has been performed and monitored using two spreadsheet documents. The first spreadsheet was populated during a preliminary observation of webpages on SA in the UK. The first sheet in this document included 28 webpages of blogs, social media pages - Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest - fora, magazine websites, gallery websites, SA festival websites and webzines with a focus on urban creativity and SA in the UK. The rest of the sheets in this document have information on each single webpage about similarities and differences between pages, and about aspects of the digital participation that seemed interesting and useful for the data analysis. More information about the 28 webpages archived in the spreadsheet is related to the number of connected webpages such as parent social media pages[38], related projects, UGC, and other relevant digital content. Every sheet of the document is related to a single entry and includes information on whether and when those pages were contacted, and whether the contact had happened privately or publicly on their news feed. This preliminary observation allowed a first virtual immersion within the SA world, and provided an initial source of potential interviewees, conversations on SNSs, and other information on the webpages on SA available within the UK. Extracts of the first spreadsheet are available in Appendix C.

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[38] Some websites have more than one social media page.

The second spreadsheet document contains information on potential interviewees and archival data. It is divided into four sheets: one for each interviewee sub-group plus one for the archival data. The sheets with potential interviewees have columns that organised the data according to the following characteristics:

- Position in the list

- Nicknames on social media

- URL of main social media page

- Email address

- Relevant artworks published - only street artists

- Whether they had been contacted for the study

- Their reply

- Whether they had signed the consent form

In the second spreadsheet, the entries with interviewees have been highlighted with different colours according to whether they took part in the research. Extracts from the second spreadsheet are available in Appendix C.

3.4.2 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are the primary data (Gillham, 2000) collected in this study and they allowed the gathering of detailed information on the role of the different actors in making street artworks renowned. The reason behind the choice of semi-structured interviews is the flexibility this method allows in terms of how to approach the interviewees and the possibility to interact with them in order to achieve further insights in a specific area or around a specific issue (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Forty-five semi-structured interviews have been conducted with three types of participants: street artists, SA curators, and SA connoisseurs - 15 participants per type. The reason

behind the choice of these three types of interviewees stands in the need to get a multiple perception of the dynamics of the process directly from both the authors of SA and from those who are familiar with online interactions on SA and have their core business in valuating street artworks. Conducting 45 interviews ensured that enough data was collected in order to answer the RQs and is related with the willingness to provide "depth and breadth of salient information" (Saunders & Townsend; 2018, p. 488).

3.4.2.1 Outlining the Interviews: Three Different Interview Schedules

The three different interviewee types received dedicated questions as reported in Appendix E. The three sets of questions were used as a guide for semi-structured interviews in order to gather specific insights from each subgroup. The development of schedules followed Kvale's (1996) model that illustrates how to perform interviews for research. In particular, the questions were thematised in order to be connected to the three main topics of the literature, and to allow responses to follow the themes of the study: understanding SA; understanding the experiences of art valuation; understanding co-creation in arts and media. The interview schedules have different outcomes according to the interviewee subgroup. For what concerns the first subgroup - street artists - the desired outcomes were the following:

1. Understand street artists' understanding and extent of use of social media networks and blogs/the web to communicate about their work.

2. Understand street artists' perception of the artistic valuation processes around their artworks.

3. Understand to what extent street artists interact with their audience(s) on SNSs.

4. Find out about street artists' perception on the effects of digital interactions on the renown-ness of street artworks.

   For the second group - SA curators - the questions aimed at understanding the professional practices related to valuing street artworks for curatorial events, and the role of digital interactions on SNSs on this valuation practice. Therefore, the interview questions were designed to:

1. Understand what criteria are used by museums and galleries/exhibitions when they choose certain street artists.

2. Understand whether the presence of street artworks on SNSs is relevant for museum managers and curators in terms of their exhibition choices/professional practice.

3. Understand whether curators consider the digital popularity of street artists to determine who will feature in an exhibition.

   For the third group - SA connoisseurs - the questions were aimed at investigating how digital audiences appreciate street artworks online and how street artists become renowned on SNSs. The questions in this interview schedule were formulated to do the following:

1. Understand the interviewee's perception on how street artworks become renowned.

2. Understand the role of SNSs in the consumption and distribution of street artworks amongst audiences.

3. Understand the role of the digital audiences in determining the renown-ness of street artworks.

4. Understand the practice of street artists in making their artworks renowned.

3.4.2.2 Sampling: Procedures and Criteria

The sampling for interviews followed a non-probability criterion adopted after comparing different literature on sampling practices. Following Kuzel (1992) as well as Saunders and Townsend (2016, 2018) and Saunders et al. (2019), for heterogeneous groups like in this study, the number of participants should be between 12 and 30. Adler & Adler (2012) suggest a higher number of participants - up to 60 for qualitative research - which is also indicated in Saunders and Townsend (2016), especially when more groups are expected to be included in the investigation, as it happens for this study. Finally, Saunders and Townsend (2016) suggest that for heterogeneous groups, the number of participants should depend on the RQ, on the relevance of the data, and on the epistemological view adopted for the research, with a maximum number of 60 participants. For the sampling of interviewees, two criteria were considered: purposive and snowballing.

- Purposive: this non-probability sampling technique is based on the haphazard selection of cases that have specific characteristics able to answer the RQs.

- Snowball sampling: this also non-probability sampling technique has been used to access further participants that responded to the essential characteristics.

The purposive criterion changed according to the sub-group the interviewee belonged to. For example, street artists were considered suitable to participate when they were frequently posting content on SNSs and engaging in substantial interactions with other SNSs users. Similarly, SA connoisseurs and curators were selected amongst those who run SNSs and seem to engage with both the UGC and other users. Table 3.2 below summarises the criteria and the size of the samples for each group.

Table 3.2.

Interview Sampling

Groups	Selection principle	Samples	Size of Sample	Access
Street artists		Identified within preliminary observation of websites + referral	15	
SA Curators	Purposive + snowballing	Identified within preliminary observation of websites + art galleries, + referral	15	Personal email, consultation of archives/records online.
SA Connoisseurs		Identified within preliminary observation of websites + referral	15	

Source: the thesis author.

The snowballing approach revealed itself very useful especially to access street artists, who tend to consider themselves averse towards academia and social media. However, conducting the first interviews was very important to the success of the whole data collection procedure since the initial participants worked as existing contacts (Buchanan et al., 2013 in Saunders et al., 2019) that acted as gatekeepers to access further participants for interviews and to indicate potential conversations on SNSs.

Finding participants was, however, a long process which was documented in the field notes. Performing 45 interviews with three subgroups was indeed a challenging task, but such numbers are frequent in qualitative studies that consider heterogeneous groups of participants. The sample size also depended on theoretical saturation. Indeed, the size of 45 interviewees is determined by following the literature specified above, but the number of interviewees could have increased or decreased in case the information resulting from the interviews seemed to be repeated, limited or

unsatisfying. Indeed, the definition considered in this study for theoretical saturation is that of Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 61) for which is it a "criterion for judging when to stop sampling the different groups pertinent to a category".

Table 3.3 below provides information of the characterisation of interviewees for each of the three subgroups. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, the three interviewee subgroups showed unintentional gender concentration. Indeed, Street artists were predominantly male, Curators were predominantly female, and Connoisseurs were more evenly distributed. The last column to the right shows whether interviewees had mixed roles and refers to the possibility for interviewees to be exclusively street artists, curators, or connoisseurs, or to have either two or three roles. A very interesting aspect of interviewees within the first group (street artists) is identity and practice. Indeed, as shown in the right column of Table 3.3, some street artists said that they do SA, but others said their practice also includes graffiti and commissioned murals. As shown in Appendix A, all the practices included in Table 3.3 fall within what is understood as SA in this thesis. However, this blurry identity and mixed practice must be considered because it represents an important aspect of how the practice of SA also defines its value.

Table 3.3.

Interviewee Characteristics

Number	Interviewee Group	Code	Gender	Mixed role
1	Street artists	Group1_REC001	Male	Street artist and graffiti artist
2	Street artists	Group1_No2	Male	Street artist and curator
3	Street artists	Group1_REC003	Male	Mainly graffiti and commissioned mural artist
4	Street artists	Group1_No3	Male	Street artist and graffiti artist
5	Street artists	Group1_No18	Male	3D Street art and mural artist
6	Street artists	Group1_No7	Male	No
7	Street artists	Group1_No8	Male	No
8	Street artists	Group1_No10	Male	Street artist and graffiti artist
9	Street artists	Group1_No11	Male	Mural artist and graffiti artist
10	Street artists	Group1_No12	Male	No
11	Street artists	Group1_No13	Male	Street artist and graffiti artist
12	Street artists	Group1_No14	Male	Street artist and sticker artist
13	Street artists	Group1_no16	Male	No
14	Street artists	Group1_no18	Male	No
15	Street artists	Triple	Female	Street artist, curator, and connoisseur
16	Curator	Group2_No1	Female	No

17	Curator	Group2_no2	Female	No
18	Curator	Group2_No3	Female	Curator and lecturer
19	Curator	Group2_No3	Male	Curator and scholar
20	Curator	Group2_REC008	Female	No
21	Curator	Group2_No6	Female	No
22	Curator	Group2_No7	Male	No
23	Curator	Group2_No8	Male	No
24	Curator	Group2_No9	Female	No
25	Curator	Group2_No10	Female	No
26	Curator	Group2_No13	Female	No
27	Curator	Triple	Female	Street artist, curator, and connoisseur
28	Curator	Group2_No15	Female	Curator and street artist
29	Curator	Group2_No16 Group3_No25	Male	Curator (books on SA) and connoisseur
30	Curator	Group3_No18Double	Female	Curator and connoisseur
31	Connoisseur	Group3_No1	Female	No
32	Connoisseur	Group3_No4	Male	No
33	Connoisseur	Group3_No5	Female	No
34	Connoisseur	Group3_No6	Male	No
35	Connoisseur	Group3_No7	Female	No

36	Connoisseur	Group3_No11	Female	No
37	Connoisseur	Group3_No12	Male	No
38	Connoisseur	Group3_No14	Male	No
39	Connoisseur	Group3_No15	Male	No
40	Connoisseur	Group3_No17	Female	No
41	Connoisseur	Group3_No18Double	Female	Curator and connoisseur
42	Connoisseur	Group3_No20	Male	No
43	Connoisseur	Group3_No24	Male	No
44	Connoisseur	Group2_no16 Group3_No25	Male	Curator (books on SA) and connoisseur
45	Connoisseur	Triple	Female	Street artist, curator, and connoisseur

Source: the thesis author.

3.4.2.3 Data Collection

Interviews started with street artists. They were initially identified by observing their level of activity on the websites in the first spreadsheet document, such as posting their artworks on SNSs or interacting with available content and then by following the indications of the social actors who got in touch during the preliminary observation of webpages (snowballing). SA curators are professionals that manage or participate in the management of virtual and/or analogue galleries, exhibition spaces, SA festivals, and museums, where they curate the collection of street artworks, and write books on SA. They were identified by looking at the staffing of SA galleries in the UK, and by referring to authors of media on SA, other than using the snowballing technique as mentioned above. SA connoisseurs run websites/blogs/social media pages/digital fora

on SA. Connoisseurs were identified amongst those managing the websites identified in the two spreadsheet documents mentioned above.

Potential interviewees were approached in different ways. Street artists were mainly approached by direct message on one of their social media platforms. Facebook was the main contact point, although some participants have been contacted through Instagram, Twitter and via email. SA curators were approached on their personal or professional email available online. SA connoisseurs were contacted via the messaging service available on the website they managed. For the first contact message, a standardised template was adapted to the case by changing the receiver's name/nickname and according to the group the potential participant belonged to. In the case of a positive response, three documents were shared with the participant: the Participant Information Sheet (PIS)39, a consent form, and the interview schedule, so as to prepare participants for the interview. Finally, a date and time was set for an online appointment, and the interviews conducted. Of the 45 interviews conducted, 35 have been recorded on a digital recorder, and ten were email interviews. Of the 35 interviews that have been recorded, eight were conducted in person, and the rest using a VOIP service such as Skype, WhatsApp call, and/or Facebook call. The average length of the recorded interviews is 36 minutes. Only ten interviews lasted less than 30 minutes.

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39 Containing, amongst other things, the title and the purpose of the research, information about the researcher and the social group of other participants; information anonymity and confidentiality of information; the voluntary nature of participation in the research; recognition of the right to withdraw at any time and that the conversation was being recorded for research purposes; assurance the data will be destroyed after a period of time. All documents shared with participants were approved by the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee.

3.4.3 Archival Data

The archival data considered in this study are six conversations on SNSs. By conversations on SNSs, this study refers to content shared on websites that allow users to interact in different ways. These websites can be blogs, webzines, digital fora, and social media platforms where users participate in conversations, share content, and react to UGC. Every conversation considered in this study has both a visual element - typically showing the street artwork - a textual part where different users comment, and the specific interactive features of the platform considered[40].

3.4.3.1 Sampling: Procedures and Criteria

The conversations on SNSs have been identified through social media and search-engine search (Kozinets, 2015), by browsing the websites available in the first spreadsheet, and by following the indication of interviewees that were asked if they knew or were the authors of any blogpost/social media post that went viral. Therefore, also for archival data, the sampling followed the purposive and snowballing criteria. The six examples are described in more detail in Appendix D. Archival data have been selected by following specific criteria such as the presence of consistent and relevant conversations on each thread and removing information not relevant for the study, such as promotional content, third parties' information, personal information of users. Specifically, the criteria for the selection of archival data followed Kozinets' (2015) indication for:

1. Relevance: data must be able to provide an understanding of the phenomenon one is "moving into and within" (Kozinets, 2015, p. 169).

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[40] The most common features in most SNSs are the *like*, *share* and *comment* functions.

2. Activeness: conversations and interactions comments were maximum three years old, as specified in the approved ethical review form. Moreover, conversations have been considered only when interaction was evident and regular.

3. Interactivity: conversations considered in this study were characterised by an evident flow of communication between participants. Therefore, if a comment is a one-off or if it does not relate to any other comments, nor it appears to aim to relate to any other comments or generate an interaction, it is not considered as interactive.

4. Substantial: the conversations available on the websites and social media pages must have a "critical mass of communication and an energetic feel" (Kozinets, 2015, p. 168).

5. Heterogeneity: conversations were considered once it was clear that they contained a variety or a difference of participants and conversations that provide social sense. Comments available on the conversations on SNSs were able to relate to the street artworks and generate interaction with other users.

6. Rich in data: the conversations between users provided a description of the social interactions amongst digital users.

7. Experiential: the data provided a specific experience related to the studied phenomenon.

In practice, the archival data were selected according to whether the conversations on SNSs presented the characteristics listed above. Enough variety of data and information on the phenomenon studied here was collected with five conversations on SNSs. However, the researcher wanted to include a negative example to further inform the analysis. Therefore, with six conversations on SNSs it

was possible to gather enough information to explain the phenomenon according to the criteria for the selection of online data (Kozinets, 2015). The characteristics of the six conversations on SNSs have been summarised in Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4.

Characteristics of the six Conversations on SNSs (I)

Criteria	Conversation 1	Conversation 2	Conversation 3	Conversation 4	Conversation 5	Conversation 6
Relevance	Gives an understanding of actors and actions performed	Shows that interactions are numerous in certain cases	Absence of interactions	Interactions are attracted by show-off of technical skills	Users are interacting in the interactions feed	Many users are interacting
Activeness	Interaction is evident and regular	Interaction is evident and regular	Absence of interactions	Interaction is evident and regular	Interaction is evident and regular	Interaction is evident and regular
Interactivity	Evident flow of communication	Evident flow of communication	Absence of interactions	Evident flow of communication	Evident flow of communication	Evident flow of communication
Substantial	Interactions have an energetic feel	Interactions have an energetic feel	Absence of interactions	Interactions have an energetic feel	Interactions have an energetic feel	Interactions have an energetic feel
Heterogeneity	There are different participants in the conversation	There are different participants in the conversation	There is no participation in the conversation	There are different participants in the conversation	There are different participants in the conversation	There are different participants in the conversation
Rich in data	There are comments, hashtags, likes, rich caption and important visual element	There are comments, hashtags, likes, rich caption and important visual element	The conversation is not rich in data	There are comments, hashtags, likes, rich caption and important visual element	There are comments, hashtags, likes, rich caption and important visual element	There are comments, hashtags, likes, rich caption and important visual element
Experiential	The conversation provides insights on the studied phenomenon	The conversation provides insights on the studied phenomenon	The conversation provides insights on the studied phenomenon	The conversation provides insights on the studied phenomenon	The conversation provides insights on the studied phenomenon	The conversation provides insights on the studied phenomenon

Source: the thesis author.

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3.4.3.2 Data Collection

The identification of conversations on SNSs proceeded from consulting the websites available on the first spreadsheet document and by asking interviewees for referrals in the form of URLs, hashtags, or other examples. Conversations on SNSs were then saved in the fourth sheet of the second spreadsheet document and anonymised before any output. Together with the URL of each conversation, other characteristics have been noted for analysis purposes together with the visual element of each conversation (see Appendix D for details). These characteristics are available in Table 3.5 below. Data collection for archival data followed the ethical principles related with the use of internet data. Access to websites and virtual communities was performed after the researcher presented himself and introduced the study to community members via a message/comment shared on the main page of the website/social media page/forum board. Moreover, the authors of the six conversations gave their consent for the use of the digital content in this study.

Table 3.5.

Characteristics of the Six Conversations on SNSs (II)

Characteristic	Conversation 1	Conversation 2	Conversation 3	Conversation 4	Conversation 5	Conversation 6
Location of the artwork	Shoreditch, London	Glasgow	London	Camden, London	Birmingham	Mexico
Styles used by the author	Spray Paint Mural	Spray paint mural	Spray paint mural, graffiti art, 3D graffiti	3d Street Art	Spray paint mural	Stencil art
Characteristic	Painting a VIP	Painting a VIP after death	Carousel of street artworks	Carousel of images about street artwork	Subject for a festival	British Photographer being re-posted
Comments about the author	Available	Available	None	Available	Available	Few
Comments about the artwork	Available	Available	None	Available	Available	Available
Comments/response to other users' comments	Few replies	Frequent replies	None	None	Frequent replies	Few
Sharing (mainly on Facebook)	N/A	Many shares	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Presence of emojis	Not in the caption	Not in the caption	None	Only in comments	In both caption and comments	In both caption and comments
Presence of more than one picture	No	No	No	Yes	No	No

Source: the thesis author.

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3.4.4 Field Notes

While browsing the web, exploring the different SNSs, conducting interviews, and during data analysis, two types of field notes were produced. The first field notes were observational (Schwandt, 2015) and were generated during the fieldwork. Insights were recorded within the observational field notes about the experience of accessing the different SNSs, on observing how the different social actors interacted on SNSs, about actors' reactions to the researcher's presence within SNSs and to being interviewed. The second field notes were of a reflective nature and were produced during data analysis. Reflective notes are frequently used for qualitative research (Kozinets, 2015; Mortari, 2015; Saunders et al., 2019). In this case, they were produced to record the researcher's thoughts on the conceptual patterns that seemed to unveil as the analysis progressed and on other relevant aspects of the data.

Google Keep was used as a tool to collect and organise notes for ease of access and for the possibility to save content while browsing the web as well as to download the notes in a usable format for analysis. The observational field notes were labelled *Exploring the field*, while the reflective field notes were labelled *Insights from Analysis*. In total, 50 observational and reflective field notes were produced during the whole study. Examples of the two types of notes with label differentiation are available in Appendix C.

3.4.5. Issues Encountered During Data Collection

One of the main issues encountered during data collection regarded the identification of potential interviewees. Indeed, the street artworld is as wide as secretive, and this made getting hold of participants, receiving their responses, and in being able to conduct a face-to-face/phone/VOIP interview very difficult. After two

months of low number of interviews and failed attempts, the contact message was changed, and the numbers of participants started to increase.

An issue with the data collection was related to averse behaviour and negative attitudes that resulted after the first contact point with communities online. As usually happens (Bishop, 2014), navigating through digital SNSs such as Facebook, Instagram, and blogs/digital fora can result in encountering behaviours which can interfere with one's actions, commonly known as *trolling*. Indeed, when entering an online community posting the ethically approved introduction message, some answers were not just irrelevant for this study, but they also risked undermining the credibility of the researcher. The strategy in this case was to ignore useless messages and continue with online interaction, taking notes of interesting reactions as illustrated in Table 3.4 above.

Another issue with archival data is related to the ethical need to anonymise participants. In our case, all representations of names, figures, pictures, references to places, people and organizations have been anonymised by blurring or deleting sensible information. Therefore, all data has been anonymised with the purpose of respecting the confidentiality and privacy of participants even though all conversations were happening on already public platforms and were using tools (hashtags, mentioning, emojis, etc.) with the clear intent to be in the public domain (Townsend & Wallace, 2016). However, there is a chance that users commenting on social media may be under 18 years of age, therefore, apart from anonymising the user handles, the text used for analysis and visible in the next chapter has been paraphrased.

3.5 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data consisted of the thematic analysis of the interview scripts and of the archival data using the Gioia et al. (2012) methodology, integrated and supported by field notes. However, as suggested by Kozinets (2015) and Saunders et al. (2019) with regards to qualitative studies, once researchers immerse themselves in the studied community to interact and engage with its members, reflection starts, and this can inform the understanding of the phenomenon of the study. Indeed, initial reflective understanding started during the preliminary observation of websites which generated field notes, as discussed above.

3.5.1 Bringing the Data Together

The data analysis followed the process of data collection, script writing, coding, and interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). However, the analysis of the three datasets started with transcription and familiarization with the data. It must be noted that this familiarization phase (bottom part of Figure 3.1 below) has been particularly important because the transcription required attention and focus, which allowed further understanding of some aspects of the phenomenon and represented the first occasion to familiarise with (Riessman, 1993) and interpret (Bird, 2005) the data.

Indeed, interpreting both conversations on SNSs and field notes required an initial qualitative analysis before proceeding with the thematic procedure. This initial analysis (blue textbox above *Conversations on SNSs* in Figure 3.1) consisted in coding portions of information in each conversation on SNSs and is explained in more detail in the next subsection. Moreover, this coding was informed by the insights coming from the observational field notes (right-bottom part of Figure 3.1). Once the initial analysis of conversations was complete and provided a set of codes, open coding was

performed also on interview transcripts (green rectangle at the centre of Figure 3.1). At this point, reflective notes were produced to record the researcher's thoughts on the initial analysis, and to create conceptual connections between ideas, codes, patterns, and relations that seemed to emerge from the coding (orange textbox at the centre-right of Figure 3.1). These reflective field notes informed the thematic analysis as support and integration for the primary and archival data (top part of Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1.

Data Analysis Procedure
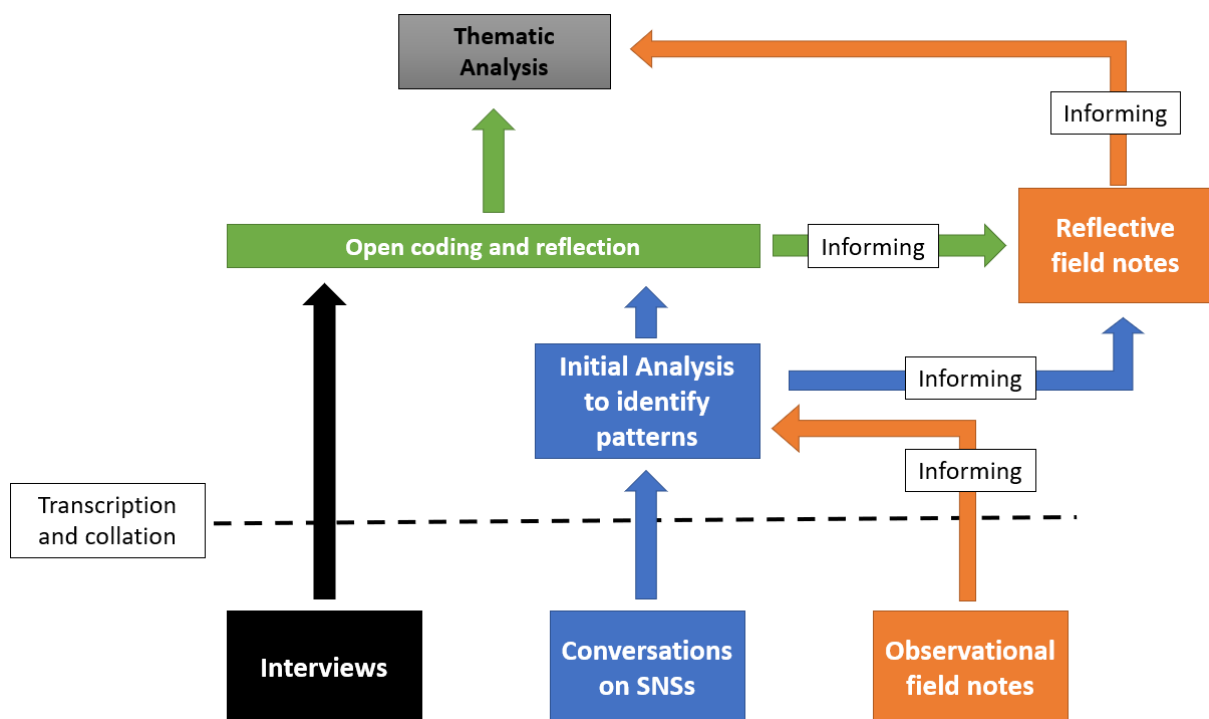
Source: the thesis author.

3.5.2 Analysing Conversations on SNSs

Secondary data analysis is usually connected with quantitative methods but in this case, it can also be applied to qualitative research (Hakim, 2000), especially considering that both the initial enquiry and the thematic analysis of archival data gave important insights and reduced the need to perform new research for resources (Babbie, 2015). Including archival data was very important in this study since it allowed the identification of both the trends in the behaviour of online users, and the meanings of online conversations on SNSs.

Before performing a thematic analysis on the three data sets, the conversations on SNSs were subject to an initial qualitative enquiry. This initial enquiry consisted of (I) identifying and separating all the components of conversations on SNSs that could be useful in the open coding (visuals, text caption, text comments, interaction data); (II) assigning a code to selected portions of text and visuals that were thought to have qualities important to understand the phenomenon. The initial enquiry has been done because, differently from interview transcripts, archival data are characterised by more than just textual information. Indeed, the initial enquiry allowed a better understanding of the quantities and qualities of interactions that happen in conversations on SNSs. The results of this initial enquiry informed the generation of reflective field notes (blue arrow at the right-centre of Figure 3.1) and allowed a complete thematic analysis to be performed, as discussed in Section 3.6 below. Together with the characteristics initially identified in Tables 3.4 and 3.5, conversations on SNSs were analysed to identify further salient information of interactions, as shown in Figure 3.2 below. The enquiry aimed at identifying the characteristics presented in Table 3.6 below. The three tables

were used as a grid of analysis to characterise the interactions and to analyse the archival data.

Table 3.6.

Characteristics in Conversations on SNSs for Initial Enquiry

Characteristic	Meaning
Length of comments	How long are comments?
Caption	How long is the caption and what is there?
Presence of emojis	Are emojis present? Where?
Mentions	Who is mentioning who and why?
Visible context	What can be seen in the picture?
Visible technical features of the artwork	Does the picture show how the artwork is done?
Storytelling features	Is the post presented as a story?
Presence of people in the picture	Who are these people? Is the public available? Is the artist available?
Comments in the interaction feed	Who is commenting?
Replies	Reply to public, reply to artists, reply to curators, reply to any other actor.
Hashtags	Are hashtags used? Where?

Source: the thesis author.

Figure 3.2.

Example of Initial Enquiry in Conversation 1
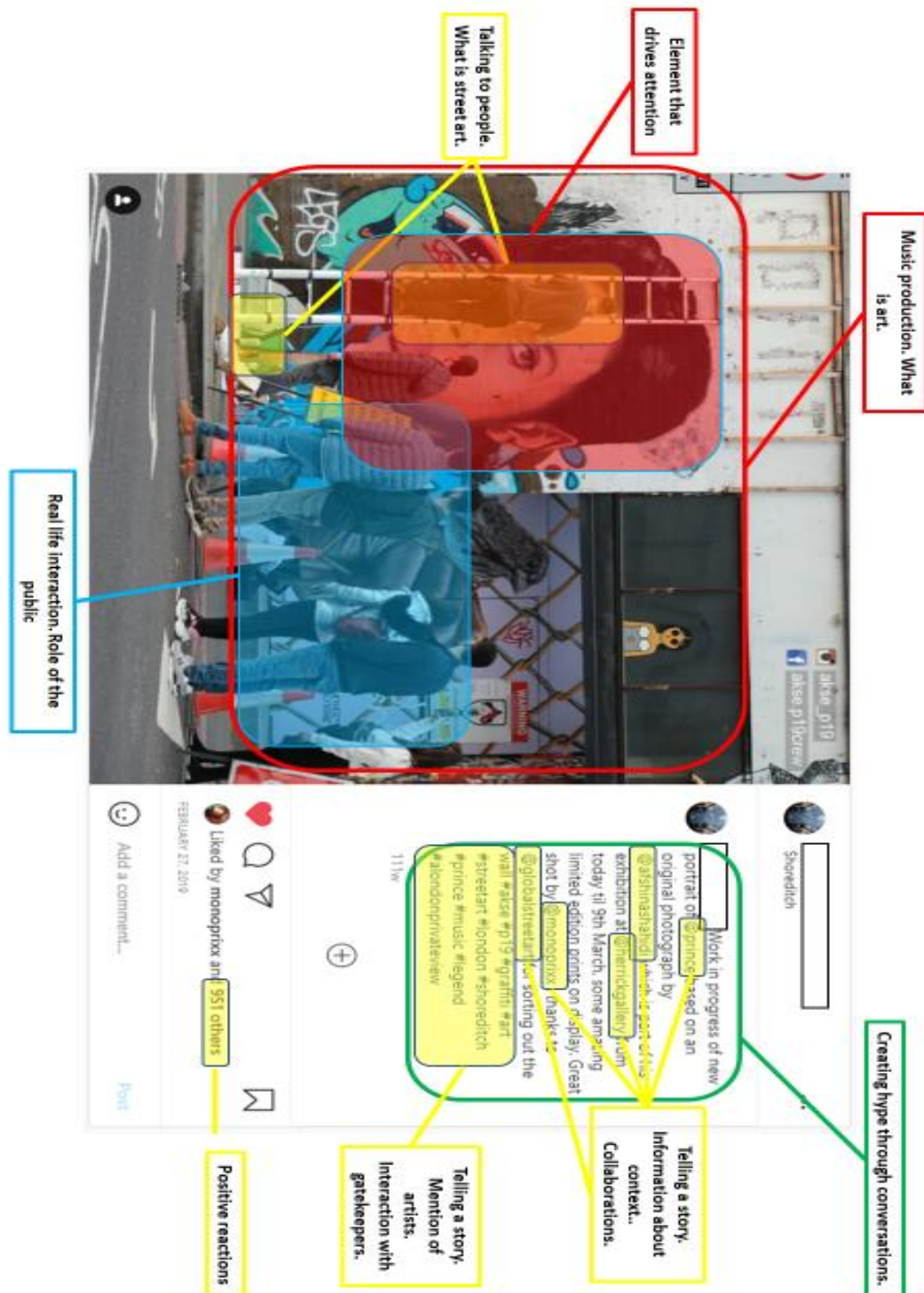
Note. The analysis of conversation (comments and other text) has been omitted from this example to save space in the thesis. However, the caption and the comments were analysed in terms of meanings, reactions, and metadata which informed the thematic analysis.
Source: retrieved from Instagram, collated by the thesis author.

3.5.3 Thematic Analysis.

Interviews and conversations on SNSs have been analysed with the thematic method which works with first order concepts, second order research themes, and aggregate dimensions of the phenomenon (Gioia, et al., 2012). Reflective field notes had a supportive role that helped to keep track of the patterns and relationships that developed during the analytical process. The analysis contributed to let both patterns and relations emerge from the data, and be both theorised and built inductively (Strauss, 1987; Ezzy, 2002).

The thematic analysis started with open coding for both the interview transcripts, the transcribed textual conversations, and the visual elements of the conversations on SNSs. This part consisted of assigning terms and labels to small pieces of data and to portions of images or full images according to whether and how much that piece of data was representative of a wider dynamic. The coding progressed using informant terms with little or no influence coming from the researcher/literature. These codes are an initial step of analysis (Miles et al., 2018) because it is the first systematic organization of the data towards themes, and they are visible in Table 3.7 below.

Initial codes were further analysed following the Gioia et al. (2012) procedure to determine the relationships and the meanings between them. This consisted of a more elaborate re-reading process aimed at converting the simple codes into categorised ones able to represent conceptual constructs and thematic patterns and noticing the similarities to the themes identified in Chapter 2. Therefore, the analysis proceeded in constantly going backward and forward from the datasets and the actual analysis being produced. The themes determined through the analysis are the result of the exploration of the data sets, but the themes' meaning was guided by the theoretical concepts that

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emerged in the literature review. This approach was adopted for all the data sets. However, this does not mean that the analysis contrasts with the inductive view/interpretivist philosophical paradigm identified at the beginning of this chapter, but that, to perform the analysis, the themes have been informed by reviewing the literature, and then used as a lens to look at the transcripts.

The re-reading and categorization of codes resulted in formulating connections between them, and in the development of higher-order concepts. The refined first order concepts have been grouped according to the aspect of the phenomenon they described, which resulted in the emergence of higher order themes/categories. In this phase the development of emerging themes was independent from the themes originally elicited from the literature. Separating these sets of themes was done purposely to guarantee qualitative rigour to the analysis. Therefore, both a first order - informant centric - and a second order - researcher/theory centric - processes (Gioia, et al., 2012) have been followed in this study.

In the following stage, the categories have been reviewed and refined by understanding whether the original themes elicited from the literature review are consistent with the initial themes related to the collated data. The two set of themes have been verified in terms of both coherence and validity in relation to the data set[41]. This was done in order to understand the meaning of each theme by grouping together the semantically similar codes, and by giving categories, labels and describing the terms (Gioia, et al., 2012). The purpose of this part of the analysis was to specify which aspect of the observed phenomenon is being captured by each theme. At this point, a

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[41] The analysis produced a complete thematic map of the data sets, which allowed the further refinement of the themes and the analysis of the data. This thematic map has been named *Findings Coding Tree* and is available in Figure 5.1 for clarity.

detailed analysis has been conducted by explaining the story within each theme and by specifying all the relationships between themes and stories.

A report has been produced in the final stage of the analysis which presents the meaning of the worked-out themes. The results have been presented in Chapter 4 with an analytic narrative that presents and illustrates the stories resulting from the analysis and provides an answer to the RQs. The findings illustrated in Chapter 4 include both elements of the phenomenon identified within the literature review chapter, as well as emerging findings that were not foreseen. Therefore, to interpret the full range of findings, Chapter 5 - Discussion - taps into further disciplinary perspectives that have not been considered before in the thesis. These perspectives are: the marketing approach to creative communities, the consumer tribes/collectives, and the branding power of narratives (Goulding et al., 2002; Goulding et al., 2013; Närvänen & Goulding, 2016; Preece & Kerrigan, 2015).

3.6 From Codes to Aggregate Dimensions

The initial open coding process resulted in 67 initial codes generated using the informant - participants - terms (Table 3.7 below). Through the whole process, each initial code has been developed and modified following the identification of a deeper structure of the information resulting from the data, and the definition of categories. The next subsection shows how the different initial codes have been fitted within each initial second order theme/category. The coding process consisted of: (I) going through every transcript searching for information that seemed to be important for the understanding of the phenomenon object of this study; and (II) generating a new code or modifying/grouping existing codes. Because of the large data set, NVivo was used as a CAQDAS to speed up the coding process.

Table 3.7.

67 Initial Codes

Initial Codes	
1. Social media - digital	35. Components of the process
2. Not useful for fame	36. Gaining popularity
3. Contributing to fame	37. Interaction with gatekeepers
4. Effects of media on value	38. Festivals
5. Browsing the web	39. Galleries
6. Interaction between people	40. Collaboration with organizations
7. Unsure or averse to social media	41. Audience recognising value
8. Talking to people	42. Artistic value - what is…?
9. Dynamics	43. Value of street artworks
10. Discovering online artworks	44. Element that drives attention
11. Online artworks	45. Element decisive for renown-ness
12. Reacting to online content	46. Value co-creation
13. Positive reaction	47. Ego of artists
14. Mention of artists	48. Motivation to create street art
15. Creating hype through conversations	49. Financial
16. Technical or style reaction	50. Difficulty of artist life
17. Location reaction	51. Telling a story
18. Asking for more info - interest shown	52. Uniqueness
19. Networking reactions	53. Disruptiveness
20. Missing info - lack of data	54. Reference to pop culture
21. No reactions - blank	55. Recognition of pattern
22. Actions of social actors	56. Quality
23. Effects of audience on renown-ness	57. Location
24. Actors involved	58. Shared practice to achieve renown-ness
25. What gatekeepers do	
26. Role of gatekeepers	59. Role of the audience
27. Information about context	60. Sense of belonging to the institutional artworld
28. Sense of belonging to community	
29. Talking about genre or painting styles	61. Community life
30. Value of street art	62. Painting walls for other organization
31. Talking about value	63. Music production
32. Curatorial work	64. Merchandising
33. Effects of Audience	65. Diffident towards social media
34. What makes the difference between graffiti and street art	66. Just scrolling
	67. Prefer real life interaction

Source: the thesis author.

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3.6.1 Fitting Open Codes Together in a System of Concepts

In order to create initial concepts, the different codes were examined and organised following Gioia et al. (2012) procedure keeping the informant terms without "going native" (Gioia, et al., 2012, p. 19), meaning that the researcher kept an external perspective while immersing within the informants' world. The 67 initial codes generated have been renamed and collated within a specific concept according to the focus of the respondent in that portion of text, with a total of 33 first order concepts as reported in Table 3.8 below. Most of the codes have been associated with just one concept, but other first order concepts are made of more than one code. Each concept identified at this stage represents one relevant aspect of the themes that has enough information to illuminate the RQs.

Table 3.8.

Initial Codes Into First Order Concepts

1st Order Concepts	A. ACTORS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS	B. ACTIONS PERFORMED IN THE PROCESS	C. INTERACTION BETWEEN DIFFERENT ACTORS	D. NAVIGATING THE SPACE OFFLINE
Codes	24. Actors involved **23. Effects of audience**	12. Reacting to online content **13. Positive reactions** 14. Mention of artists **15. Creating hype through conversations** 16. Technical or style reaction **17. Location reaction** 18. Asking for more info - showing interest **19. Networking reaction** 20. Missing info - lack of data **21. No reactions - blank**	5. Navigating offline **7. Unsure or averse to social media** 6. Interaction between people **5. Browsing the web**	8. Talking to people

1st Order Concepts	E. NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL SPACE	F. UNSURE OR AVERSE TO SOCIAL MEDIA	G. VALUE CONVEYED ON SNSs	H. WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO RENOWN-NESS
Codes	5. Browsing the web	65. Diffident towards social media **66. Just scrolling** 67. Prefer real life interaction	1. Social media/digital	45. Element decisive for renown-ness

1st order concepts	I. WHAT IS NOT USEFUL FOR RENOWN-NESS	J. VALUE OF STREET ARTWORKS	K. USERS RECOGNISING VALUE AND STARTING HYPE	L. ELEMENTS THAT DRIVE ATTENTION TO THE ARTWORK
Codes	2. Not useful for fame	42. Artistic value: what is…?	15. Creating hype through conversations	44. Element that drives attention

1st Order Concepts	M. WORKING WITH GALLERIES	N. WORKING WITH FESTIVALS	O. OTHER COLLABORATIONS	P. TALKING ABOUT VALUE
Codes	39. Galleries	38. Festivals	36. Gaining popularity with other institutions	31. Talking about value

1st Order Concepts	Q. CURATORIAL WORK	R. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GRAFFITI AND STREET ART	S. VALUE OF STREET ART	T. ART GENRE OR STYLE
Codes	32. Curatorial work	34. What makes the difference between graffiti and street art	30. Value of street art	29. Talking about genre and painting styles

1st Order Concepts	U. MERCHANDISING	V. MUSIC PRODUCTION	W. COMMISSIONED WORK	X. ELEMENTS THAT MAKE AN ARTWORK RENOWNED
Codes	64. Merchandising	63. Music Production	62. Painting walls for business	52. Uniqueness **53. Disruptiveness** 54. Popular culture - reference to… **55. Recognition of pattern** 56. Quality **47. Ego → This became a 1st Order Concept on its own (XBis).** Location

1st Order Concepts	Y. TELLING A STORY	Z. ROLE OF GATEKEEPERS	AA. PRACTICE OF GATEKEEPERS	AB. ROLE OF AUDIENCE

Codes	51. Telling a story **42. Artistic value**	26. Role of Gatekeepers	25. What gatekeepers do	59. Role of audience

1st Order Concepts	AC. FINANCIAL ISSUES	AD. MOTIVATION TO CONTINUE	AE. STREET ARTISTS ARE NOT GRAFFITI TAGGERS	AF. SENSE OF BELONGING	AG. CONTEXT
Codes	49. Financial	48. Motivation to continue	34. Difference between graffiti and SA **43. Value of street artworks**	28. Sense of belonging to the community **60. Sense of belonging to the institutional artworld**	27. Information about context

Source: the thesis author.

Once the first order concepts had been defined, the analysis continued by searching for similarities and meanings that could explain the deeper structure between the vast array of codes and concepts as explained in Subsection 3.5.3. At this point the process included a reasoning at multiple levels: the first level is related to the information eliciting from the codes and the first order concepts in Table 3.8; while the second level of analysis is aimed at understanding what occurs theoretically within the concepts. A first attempt of theorization from concepts to determine themes is Figure 3.3 below. In the figure, it is possible to see seven initial themes which have been further refined with the progression of the analysis. Each initial theme had at least two main concepts. Figure 3.3 below is an initial conceptual map following the identification of the initial themes and the main concepts included in them which helped make sense of the meaning eliciting from the data.

Figure 3.3.

Conceptual Map With Seven Initial Themes
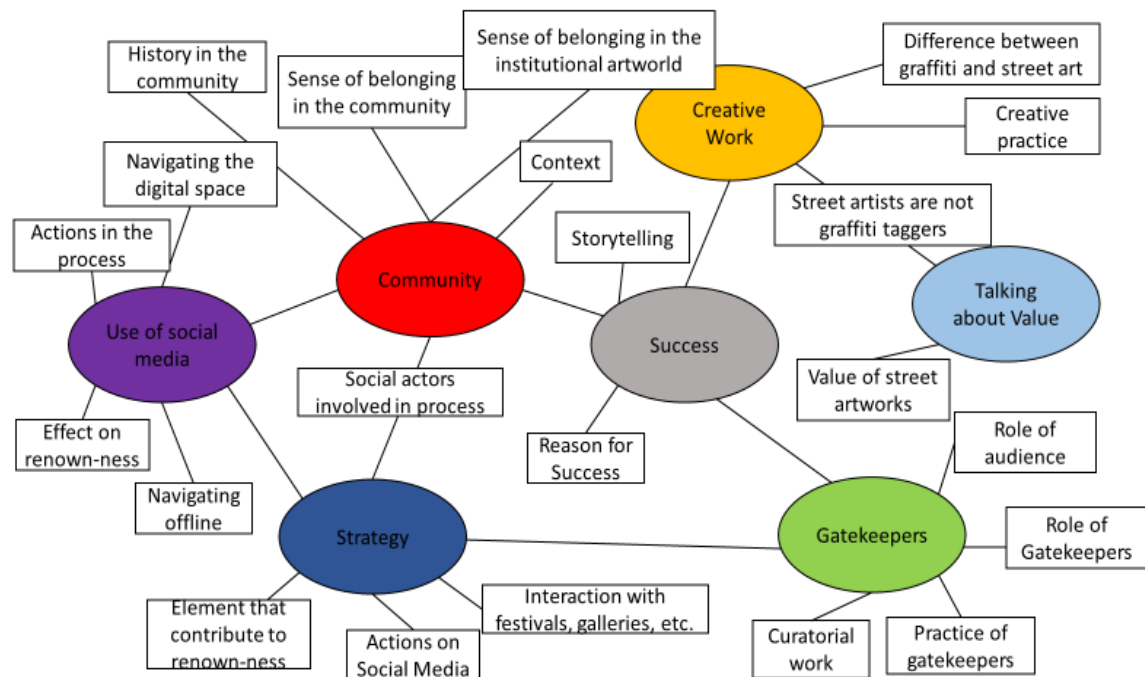
Note. First order concepts are represented in rectangles and initial themes are represented in ovals and each with a different colour. The relationship between themes and concepts as well as within themes is represented by a straight line.
Source: the thesis author.

3.6.2 Review and Definition of Themes

After an initial definition, the data extracts within each initial theme have been re-read in order to understand whether they provided a coherent pattern to justify the presence of first order concepts fitting within in them. While reading the data extracts, the aim was to verify internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity within themes following Patton's (2015) criteria to evaluate categories. The re-reading consisted of verifying the consistency of coded extracts in relation to the theme, and the consistency of each theme related to the data set as a whole.

During this operation, it became evident that the initial themes were not comprehensive of all the important first order concepts and were not able to describe "the dynamic relationships among the emergent concepts that describe or explain the

phenomenon" (Gioia, et al., 2012, p. 22). Below is a brief description of the initial themes:

1. Success:

   Reading the coded extracts within the *success* candidate theme showed that respondents focused on the use of digital media and on which elements contributed to making them successful and viral as artists, while doing their work. There seemed to be an overlapping of coded extracts with those belonging to the *use of social media*, and the *interaction* themes, especially those referring to the how success happens within street artists, therefore connected to *actions in the process* in *use of social media.*

   Reading extracts coded within *success* made evident that the concept of success is highly connected with the role of different social actors in making the artwork successful and renowned. Therefore, what is being said by participants in the *success* initial theme is coherent with what the respondent said in the *use of social media* and the *strategy* themes, and this suggested merging the three themes within a wider theme called *Components of the process*.

   Further to this, many responses also stated that *success* is highly subjective and depends on both stylistic and popularity factors, therefore suggesting there is a relationship between the way street artists understand success and both the way they perform their creative work, and the way they spread it towards their audiences. Therefore, the coded extracts originally categorised as *Talking about value* have been used both to populate the new refined theme *Component of the process* and to inform the fifth aggregate dimension *Value*

elements discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Finally, some minor data extracts originally coded within the *success* theme have been re-coded in order to make sense of the *Difficulties of artist life* refined theme.

2. Use of social media

   This initial theme is one of the biggest in terms of number of coded extracts. As it happened with the previous initial theme, much of the data coded within this theme had also been coded in other initial themes, such as *success* and *strategy*, suggesting that this and other initial themes can be collapsed into further and more explanatory themes, such as the *Components of the process* and the *Interaction* themes.

3. Strategy

   In this initial theme, the coded data describes how street artists strategise their online presence in order to promote their work. This includes how social media and blogs are used, and which gatekeepers have been involved in the process. Reviewing this theme made evident that it describes a phenomenon that can be explained by other themes. This led to the definition of the themes *Social media influence on value*, *Elements decisive for renown-ness* and *Collaboration and interaction with other social actors.*

4. Gatekeepers

   The codes of *practice of gatekeepers* and *role of gatekeepers* feed into this initial theme. There is a rather confusing awareness, amongst interviewees, of who the gatekeepers are and what their role is in the process of making street artworks renowned. After reviewing this theme, it seemed evident that some of the coded extracts of this initial theme also fed into the *strategy* initial theme,

suggesting that a refined theme that includes *gatekeepers*, should also include how street artists strategise the dissemination of their work, so to include both a direct - artists promote their work - as well as an indirect - other actors promote artists' work - dynamic for street artworks to become renowned. This led to the creation of the two themes *Gatekeepers* and *Shared practice to achieve renown-ness*.

5. Community

   This initial theme has information on how street artists, SA curators and SA connoisseurs form a community of homogeneous practices and values. The information coming from this initial theme is the main component of the refined theme *Community*. However, parts of the extracts from this initial theme were grouped to form the *Difficulties of artist life* refined theme.

6. Creative work

   In this theme interviewees describe how they work and what inspires them to create their street artworks. The extracts in this theme, together with the meaning coming from the *strategy* and the *community* themes, contributed to the definition of the *Creative value*, *Other creative work,* and *Difficulties of artist life* refined themes.

7. Value

   In this case, there is not enough data to support *talking about value* as a standalone theme, therefore part of the extracts belonging to this initial theme have been merged into the *Creative value* refined theme. However, the concept of value is frequently discussed by respondents and this led to identifying a theoretical overarching dimension that spans across all themes

and aspects of the phenomenon studied here. This has been identified as the *Value elements* dimension as shown in Figure 3.3 below.

After this reviewing phase, it became clear that some initial themes were not completely classifiable as such, but more as a collector of information able to describe some aspects of a wider and more articulated theme. Further to this, other first level concepts had not yet been included within a theme because their importance had still not emerged before comparing the data with the concepts in the literature. Therefore, the ability of each theme to explain different aspects of the phenomenon for which street artworks become renowned has been checked against the concepts coming from the literature, and the result is the list of second order themes available in Table 3.9.

The reviewing process consisted of reading both the collated extracts within each theme, and the entire data set to verify whether the newly determined themes were coherent with the meaning available within the rest of the data. Further coding has happened in this phase, together with merging entire themes and parts of them together with other initial themes as discussed above. The result of this process is Figure 3.4 below, with the refined themes and the aspect each of them tells about the phenomenon. Figure 3.4 shows refined themes in oval figures and different first order concepts (with identifying letter) in rectangles. There are four different colours, each of them is related to a distinct aggregate dimension visible in Figure 3.5. This anticipates the complete picture of the data structure - coding tree - with first order concepts, second order themes and aggregate dimensions discussed in Chapter 4.

Figure 3.4.

Refined Themes
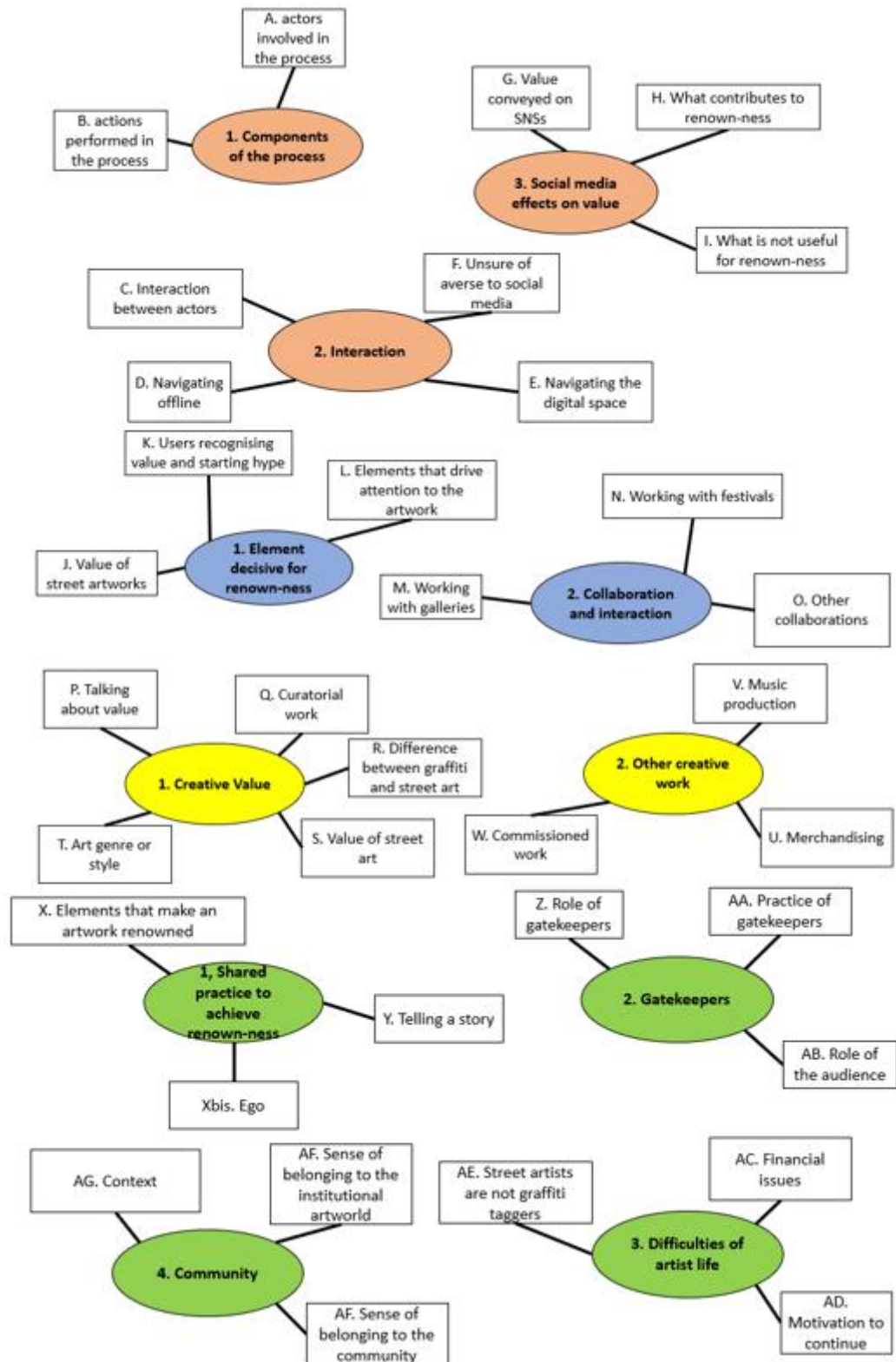
Source: the thesis author.

The visual representation of the refinement process of themes in Figure 3.4 above has been transposed into Table 3.9 below so as to have a clearer visualization of how each first order concept relates to the second order themes. Every first order concept is related to a word-code as they first appeared in Table 3.8; every second order theme has a number from one to four and a different colour according to how they are going to be discussed in relation to each Aggregate Dimension in Chapter 4.

Table 3.9.

Refined Second Order Themes and First Order Concepts

2nd Order Themes	1. Components of the process	2. Interaction	3. Social Media Influence on value	1. Elements decisive for renown-ness
1st Order Concepts	A. Actors involved in the process. **B. Actions performed in the process.**	C. Interaction between the different actors. **D. Navigating offline.** E, Navigating the digital space. **F. Unsure or averse to social media.**	G. Value conveyed on SNSs. **H. What contributes to renown-ness.** I. What is not useful for renown-ness.	J. Value of street-artworks. **K. Users recognising value and starting hype.** L. Elements that drive attention to the artwork.

2nd Order Themes	2. Collaboration and Interaction Amongst Actors	1. Creative Value	2. Other Creative Work
1st Order Concepts	M. Working with galleries. **N. Working with festivals.** O. Other collaborations	P. Talking about value. **Q. Curatorial Work.** R. Difference between graffiti and Street Art. **S. Value of Street Art.** T. Art genre or style.	U. Merchandising. **V. Music production.** W. Commissioned work.

2nd order Themes	1. Shared Practice to Achieve Renown-ness	2. Gatekeepers	3. Difficulties of Artist Life	4. Community
1st Order Concepts	X. Elements that make an artwork potentially renowned. **Y. Telling a story.** Xbis. Ego.	Z. Role of gatekeepers. **AA. Practice of gatekeepers.** AB. Role of audience.	AC. Financial issues. **AD. Motivation to continue** *AE.* Street artists are not graffiti taggers.	AF. Sense of belonging to the institutional artworld. **AF. Sense of belonging to the community.** AG. Context.

Source: the thesis author.

Once the theme refinement has been completed, a further re-reading activity has been performed on all the extracts belonging to each theme to verify whether the emerging themes contained concepts and information that are able to explain the phenomenon (Gioia, et al., 2012). The refinement of themes also allowed the theory coming from the literature review to be considered together with the first order concepts coming from the coding. This analysis process followed Gioia et al. (2012) indication to consider both the informant and the researcher insights of the phenomenon, related to experiencing the phenomenon in the first person as a researcher, and from reviewing the literature.

The result of the definition of the themes is the identification of the four main aggregate dimensions, which are the *social process*, the *value co-creation*, the *creative practice*, and the *community* dimensions (Figure 3.5 below). Moreover, one concept elicited from the narrative of interviewees has been available in each of the four dimensions and has achieved the role of a fifth dimension that goes through the whole data structure as visible in Figure 3.5 below. These dimensions illustrate the main aspects of how unknown street artworks become renowned in the current era, which actors are involved, and the different layers of renown-ness frequently mentioned by interviewees. A detailed description of the themes, the way they function together, and the story about the data are available in the next chapter.

Figure 3.5.

Final Defined Themes and Aggregate Dimensions
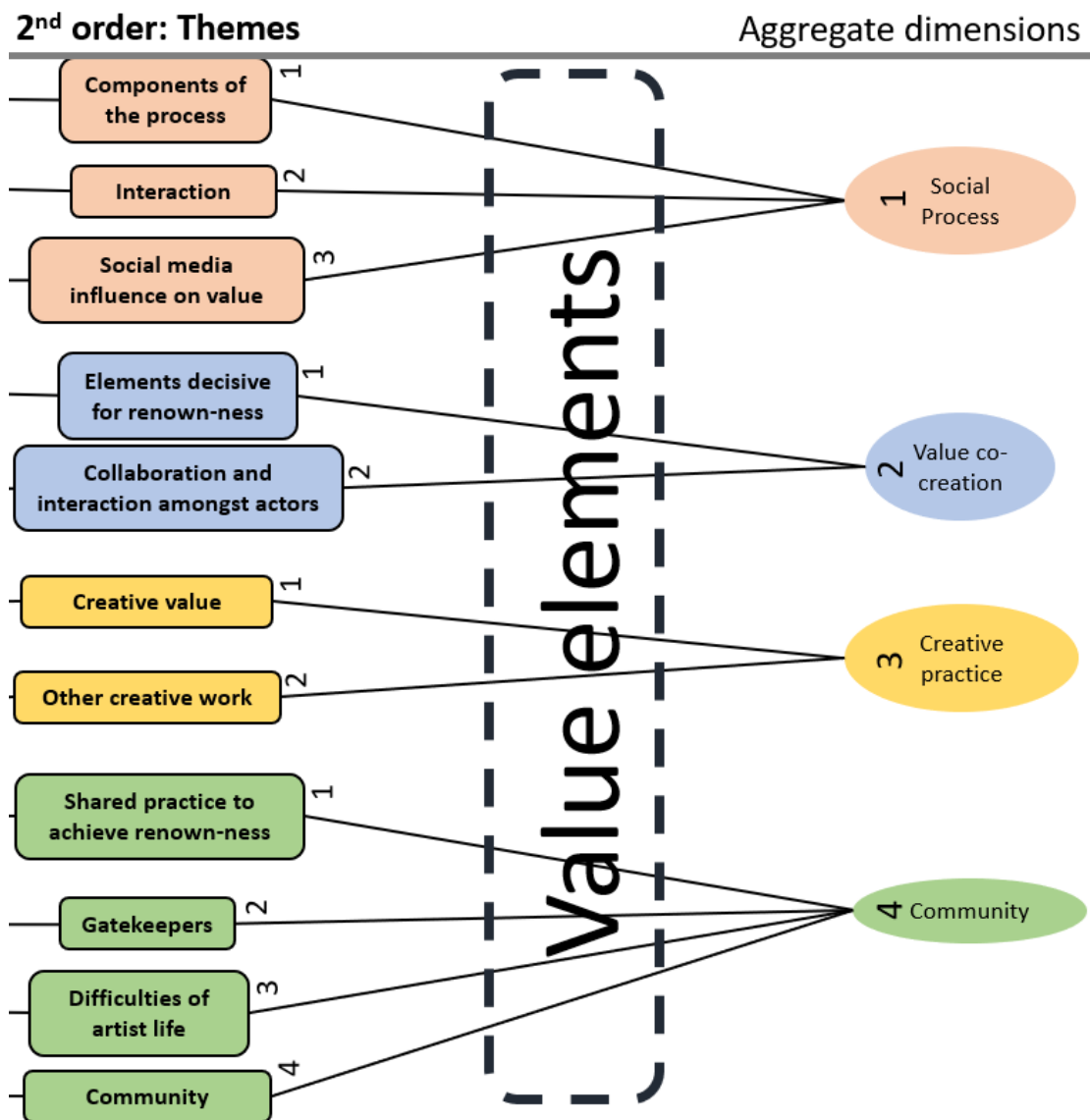
Source: the thesis author.

3.7 Adaptations and Limitations of the Study

Given the multi-method approach with observational netnography as a supporting element, there have been methodological adaptations to approaching participants and online communities, to contacting potential participants, and to collecting data. For example, participants and online data have been identified both

with the use of online search engines (Kozinets, 2015), and by interacting in real life with community members. This double-entrance approach allowed reaching a wide set of potential participants and archival data and gathering insights on websites where social interaction was happening.

Using observational netnography as a supporting method to explore a phenomenon comes with its shortfalls. For example, the exploration of websites allowed the consideration of a single manifestation - in the case of this study it would be a single digital reproduction of a street artwork on SNSs - which may not be comprehensive of all the other manifestations of the street artwork and understand other nuances of the phenomenon or describe an entire process (Kozinets, 2015). Moreover, according to Kozinets et al. (2014), studies conducted in the form of pure netnography would not take into consideration the aspects related to non-computer mediated conversations. This study included both worlds - analogue and digital - without expecting to overcome the limitations of netnography, but with the purpose of integrating the insights coming from observational netnography - observing communities from a "digital distance" (Kozinets, 2010, 2015; Saunders et al., 2019) - with the rich account provided by interviewees.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Data collection, data handling and a Data Management Plan (DMP) were approved by the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee before collecting any data. Involvement of all interviewees was voluntary (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Informed consent was obtained by both interviewees and owners of conversations on SNSs by providing a PIS and a Consent Form that participants were free to sign. Participants were informed beforehand of the purpose of the study, of the storage of data, of the

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anonymization procedures, and of the possibility to receive a summary of the study once completed. All participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study, and of the researcher's contact details in case of issues.

Data collection sought to keep confidentiality, privacy and anonymity of both interviewees and digital users. Interviewees were assigned a code with numbers and letters, and relevant archival data were assigned a number from one to six. Archival data was considered for the study after owners agreed to the academic purpose. Conversations on SNSs were anonymised by blurring nicknames, information about location, and other references to people or brands unless the data owner requested to be credited in the thesis output, so to comply with the ethical guidelines on the use of digital content in research (Kozinets, 2015; Saunders et al., 2019; Townsend and Wallace, 2016). Moreover, the approached online communities that produced comments used in this study were informed with a public post/message that the conversation was being used for academic purposes and that they were free to withdraw their contribution to the conversation at any time. The anonymised data has been kept on a password-protected spreadsheet stored in the University of Birmingham assigned desktop computer, as indicated in the DMP. The PIS and Consent Form are provided in Appendix D.

3.9 Summary

The current study aims at unveiling the multiple subjective perspectives of the different actors that characterise the street artworld and explain how these perspectives contribute to the making of SA. Through a social constructionist philosophical approach, this thesis generated a rich and relevant data set that allowed both to address the RQs, and to contribute to progressing the theory on value co-

creation in the arts. Indeed, the multi-method qualitative research design set the basis to gather the details of the different perspectives that characterise the creation, consumption, and valuation of SA in the digital era, and considered both analogue and digital settings as source of data.

Qualitative methods were used to address the RQs and to gather the different perspectives of a range of actors that are involved in the street artworld. The accounts of participants as well as the information coming both from secondary - archival - data and from the researcher's perspective allowed the definition of a novel value co-creation model that characterised SA, but that offers itself as a starting point for the conceptualization of value co-creation in the arts. Indeed, the used methods allowed the definition of a value co-creation model that considers the multiple stakeholders of SA, that highlights the different professional and amateur approaches of actors towards SA, and the influence these approaches have on the value of creativities.

All RQs are aimed at unveiling social dynamics and making sense of social participation in SA. Therefore, each chosen method is of qualitative nature and its use in the study allowed great voice to be given to participants (Gioia et al., 2012). This qualitative approach highlighted the subjective experiences and perspectives of the different actors to be considered during the investigation and underpins the social constructionist philosophical position that pervades this study.

The thesis moves on now to discuss the findings from the qualitative analysis of the subjective experiences of the actors identified in this study as participants. The findings chapter discusses the five main aggregate dimensions of the phenomenon studied here, and is articulated into eleven themes/sections. However, the articulation of the results of the analysis allowed the emergence of a novel way of looking at value

co-creation in the setting of SA, and this must be kept in mind since co-creation is the

central organising structure of the thesis from now on.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings emerging from three different datasets[42] that have been analysed as discussed in the Gioia et al. (2012) methodology, as seen in Section 3.6. Figure 4.1 sets out the coding tree in visual terms for ease of access. Four aggregate dimensions emerged from the analysis of the data which are the (I) *Social Process* dimension, the (II) *Value Co-Creation* dimension, the (III) *Creative Practice* dimension, and the (IV) *Community* dimension. The four aggregate dimensions are discussed in order in this chapter as they relate to each other.

4.1.1 A Multi-Dimensional Phenomenon

The important aspects of each dimension are mentioned below.

(I)   The *Social Process* dimension: it has emerged from interview data and from the observation and analysis of SNSs that different actors have different roles in making an artwork renowned. These actors engage in continuous activities and interact with one another, they build relationships between themselves, and they interact on SNSs in ways that influence the renown-ness of a street artwork.

(II) The *Value Co-Creation* dimension: different actors contribute to the value that allows a street artwork to move from being unknown to becoming renowned in different ways. Collaboration amongst the actors influences the renown-ness of a street artwork. This collaboration can be formal or informal in nature and can take place both on SNSs and also in the analogue world.

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[42] The reader should note that not all the data extracts are transcribed below. More extracts are, however, available in Appendices B, C, and D.

(III) The *Creative Practice dimension*: data revealed that when street artists deploy their technical, artistic, and intellectual skills in the execution, promotion and consumption of street artworks, value is created. The creative practice of street artists is articulated in the different stages of the process with each stage of the creative practice having particular characteristics and influencing the value of street artworks. In this practice there are different actors involved and specific actions are performed.

(IV) The *Community* dimension: sharing an interest and feeling part of a community is important for street artists. For example, they come together with the intent of improving their reputation within the SA community and to learn new skills and practices that contribute to making street artworks renowned.

As set out in Figure 4.1 below, there is also a fifth aggregate dimension called *Value Elements* which cuts across the whole range of themes and is discussed within the other four dimensions. This dimension is related to the different accounts of value that have been found through data such as the value of street artworks when they are executed, the value of the relations amongst all the participants in the social process, the value related to the production and distribution of street artworks and their representation on and offline, the value of the practice of the actors, and the value resulting from being part of a community.

In total, the analysis identified 11 themes that play through the four dimensions discussed above. These emerging themes support the concepts identified in Chapter 2. For example, the existence of a collaborative context in SA where the general audience and other actors contribute to creation of value - similar to the concept of prosumer (Seran (Potra) & Izvercian, 2014; Ritzer &Jurgenson, 2010; Collins, 2010;

Toffler & Toffler, 2006); the concept of interactive art valuation (Bourdieu et al., 1997; Dewey, 1989; Edmonds et al., 2009); the presence of specific actors able to facilitate the circulation of street artworks within society (Hartley, 2004; Pratt, 2008); the outline of a value chain for SA that can be used to understand how value is generated and circulates within the street artworld; and the presence of two types of audiences of SA (one more professional, one amateur).

Other themes such as: the shared practice of street artists whose aim is to become renowned; the fact that the street artists are not just a group of people who create SA, but are also a community with a shared interest; the difficulties connected with being a street artist; and the creative work done by street artists to generate income; emerged from the data. These emerging themes informed the elaboration of the aggregate dimensions and generally contributed to the understanding of the street artworld. Moreover, the themes explain in detail the aspects of each aggregate dimension in the subsections below. The chapter moves on at this point to present the findings in relation to each of the four dimensions set out above in more detail. The remainder of the current chapter is organised into four main sections: *4.2 Understanding the Social Process*; *4.3 Understanding Value Co-Creation*; *4.4 Understanding the Creative Practice*; and *4.5 Understanding the Community*.

Figure 4.1.

Findings Coding Tree

1st Order: Concepts

- Actors involved in the process
- Actions performed in the process

- Interaction between the different actors

- Navigating the space offline
- Navigating the digital space
- Unsure or averse to social media

- Value conveyed on SNSs
- What contributes to renown-ness
- What is not useful for renown-ness

- Value of street artworks
- Users recognizing value and starting hype
- Elements that drive attention to the artwork

- Working with galleries
- Working with festivals
- Other collaborations

- Talking about value
- Curatorial work
- Difference between graffiti and street art
- Value of street art
- Art genre or style

- Merchandising
- Music production
- Commissioned work

- Elements that make an artwork potentially renowned
- Telling a story
- Ego

- Role of gatekeepers
- Practice of gatekeepers
- Role of the audience

- Financial issues
- Motivation to continue
- Street artists are not graffiti taggers

- Sense of belonging to the institutional artworld
- Sense of belonging to the community
- Context

2nd order: Themes

- Components of the process — 1
- Interaction — 2
- Social media influence on value — 3
- Elements decisive for renown-ness — 1
- Collaboration and interaction amongst actors — 2
- Creative value — 1
- Other creative work — 2
- Shared practice to achieve renown-ness — 1
- Gatekeepers — 2
- Difficulties of artist life — 3
- Community — 4

Aggregate dimensions

Value elements

1. Social Process
2. Value co-creation
3. Creative practice
4. Community

Source: the thesis author.

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4.2 Dimension 1: Understanding the Social Process

Dimension 1 refers to the ways in which actors interact in order to establish, build, and adjust their relationships and, thus, influence the way street artworks become renowned. The data analysis allowed the development of three themes: *Components of the Process, Interaction*, and *Social Media Influence on Value* as shown in Figure 4.1 above**.**

At this point, it is important to say that Dimension 1 is one of the most populated sections of the entire chapter and is presented with nine subsections. To understand each element presented here, the reader must be conscious of the articulation between the different actors that take part in the value cumulative process explained in this section, of the actions performed by the different actors and the impact they have on the value of street artworks, of the interactions that happen on and offline, and of the importance of SNSs in conveying the value of street artworks to different audiences. Moreover, although this section describes the different actors involved in the process, the term *actors* in SA will be discussed many times due to both the complexity of the social context of the street artworld, as well as the intertwinement and interconnection of the aggregate dimensions of the phenomenon.

Street artists include their peers as one of the audiences that interacts with both the artwork and its author(s), but they are not the only audience. Indeed, even at the outset of the process discussed in this section, the audience can comprise of different actors depending on the location where street artworks are shared; that is to say that sharing can occur both on and offline where a general audience may have no specific aesthetic education and/or knowledge, or be made up of more specialised individuals as discussed below.

4.2.1 Theme 1 - Components of the Process

This second order theme (see Figure 4.1 for the full list of themes) refers to the different modes of interactions that both characterise the social process mentioned above, and to the actors involved. The different actors involved in the process are listed in subsection 4.2.1.1. below according to their importance in the social process, and the actions performed are available in subsection 4.2.1.2. One important characteristic related to the actors is that, often, they are single individuals within a group of people who share common creative interests and perform the same actions. For example, street artists can work alone, or frequently be part of a crew, which is a collective of creative actors who have similar styles and inspirations. Also, the general audience, photographers, administrators of SNSs and sometimes curators can be considered as a homogeneous group because of the standardised actions they perform within the group, as has been revealed from the interviews. Evidence of this can be seen from Group2_No2 extract in Appendix B.

4.2.1.1 Actors Involved in the Process.

The analysis provided an account of the actors who contribute to the renown-ness of street artworks, adding to those already identified in the literature. These are:

- street artists working alone or as part of a crew;
- SA curators working alone or as part of an organization;
- SA connoisseurs: they can be photographers, bloggers, administrators of fora on SNSs;
- Galleries;
- SA festivals;
- scholars;

- public - either on streets or on SNSs;

- SA enthusiasts.

The key actors involved in the process were already identified by reviewing the literature: street artists, SA curators, and SA connoisseurs. This list was evident from the interviews. The other types of actors emerged from the data analysis. The interview data also revealed a richness in the variety of actor types. For example, my early understanding of connoisseurs became more detailed after having conducted the interviews: they are not simply the administrators of SNSs but have many other roles. SA connoisseurs can indeed be photographers and bloggers, they might be street artists and manage SNSs, or they can be curating exhibitions for an organization and organise their own SA festival. What is always present in the account of and on SA connoisseurs, is the importance of the SNSs they manage for the renown-ness of street artworks. Indeed Group3_No25 said that other "people who come on the scene to take pictures… they want to use me as a gateway" referring to how important their SNS is to share street artworks.

Also, curators are not confined to their traditional role of assembling collections, but as Group2_No12 put it, they have a responsibility towards the local scene since if "you are a curator, you're putting on a show because you're very heavily involved in your local SA scene" and "share things" and interact online (Group3_No25). Galleries and curators are frequently mentioned in the interviews and have a digital presence where they contribute to the renown-ness of street artworks. Group2_No13 said that galleries "are going digitally and are springing out" (Group2_No13). Finally, street artists can work alone or as part of a crew (Group1_No7 and Group2_No12). SA festivals are also actors that contribute to the renown-ness of street artworks. They

allow street artworks to appear on the organization's promotional tools making use of: their website, their social media and any possibilities occurring during the actual event, thus creating what Group3_No17 referred to as the "network effect".

There are different types of audiences referred to by interviewees. For example, many mentioned the general public as an important actor that contributes significantly just by being available on SNSs; other interviewees said there are specific members of the public who are enthusiastic about SA and they frequently interact both on SNSs and offline. What is important at this point is that the interviewees consider the wider general public very important for the renown-ness of street artworks because its presence (in terms of numbers) is considered by art professionals to be a reasonable measure of the value of street artworks.

4.2.1.2 Actions Performed in the Process.

This subsection presents the actions performed by the different actors mentioned above. The actions mentioned by interviewees are related to both on and offline settings. However, some actions listed below refer to observations of conversations on SNSs and have not been explicitly mentioned by interviewees. The data analysis revealed five types of actions that are listed and explained in the subsequent pages. The actions are illustrated in the following subsections: (I) *Using SNSs,* (II) *Playing with SNSs* (III) *Losing control,* (IV) *Online vs Offline,* (V) *Actions and reactions on SNSs.*

(I) Using SNSs. The use of online SNSs by the actors involved in the process is a central concept of the actions performed. Indeed, SNSs are used for a number of activities. For example, street artists learn about new styles and compare their work to their peers working elsewhere in the world; curators learn about new artworks

worldwide; and connoisseurs do it as part of their work for documenting SA on the web because they find street artworks online, and then physically visiting locations to photograph it. Indeed, thanks to SNSs, street artworks can easily be distributed "around the world" (Group3_No17) and street artists can interact with crews in other locations since they "don't need to actually be there to see what's going on" (Group3_No5). Like Group1_No2 said: "with social media, you can paint something amazing in your country and people see it in another country. So, it really is like a great way to expand your reach".

Interviewees are aware of the importance of SNSs and award them a certain trust in making artworks renowned, especially compared with the traditional ways SA was circulating within audiences. Indeed, Group3_No14 said that despite "a lot of people will probably see [a street artwork] in person if you paint the whole car on the Berlin subway […] nothing at all comes close to how much that will be reposted by people on social media" and Group3_No17 said SNSs are "usually quite good at putting artists online". However, the use of SNSs by actors is not limited to discovering new artworks. Indeed, another reason why actors navigate SNSs is to learn about SA festivals and/or exhibitions, and to interact with other actors who have an online presence. This interactive aspect is the central element to the theme of the next subsection: *Interaction*.

(II) Playing with SNSs. Some actions on SNSs are performed to accelerate artworks becoming renowned. Street artists, photographers and SA connoisseurs are aware of these actions and share content on SNSs with specific visual and textual characteristics to help street artworks go viral on SNSs and attract wider audiences. The intent of street artists is to make street artworks go from a lower layer of renown-

ness - brand-new street artworks - to a higher layer or "premier league" which is the level of Banksy as explained by Group3_No17 in Appendix B. Interviewees, indeed, said that street artists start from performing locally in "the area they live in", where they acquire lower renown-ness within the "subculture in the scene" (Group3_No17) by performing context-specific actions, and then they can access the higher level represented by "London, Brick Lane" (Group3_No17).

Street artists can use different "tricks" to move towards the premier league level of renown-ness. For example, they can execute artworks picturing topics that are already popular, so they can attract an audience already familiar with the topic. This is also done by SA festival organisers with the purpose of associating the event's social media page with an already popular topic and thus exploit its social media coverage. This trick is referred to, by interviewees, as "playing the social media game" (Group2_No2 and Group3_No7). Along with this, SA festivals and street artists try to exploit each other's presence on social media. For example, SA festivals share on their pages the "same announcement" available on the street artist's pages, exploiting what interviewees referred to as the "network effect" (Group3_No17). When street artists and SA festival pages use the same message, they do it both to be more recognisable by the general audience and to organise messages in a more standardised way. Doing so triggers a reaction in what interviewees referred to as "chain blogs" (Group3_No17), who re-publish posts with the same, or a very similar message.

Playing the social media game also affects street artists' self-satisfaction and the value perceived by different audiences. According to Group3_No12, receiving a continuous stream of *likes*[43] on social media is that "If you receive them, you smile".

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[43] The *like button* on Facebook is similar on other SNSs.

Group3_No12 said that having a high number of likes on SNS is good for business when they said that "If it happens… hey! and now that I've got this, I can charge twice as much for your event. So of course, it helps me". Therefore, street artists are aware that their performance and numbers on SNSs have a value that can be used for business purposes. Indeed, curators look at the numbers on SNSs to assess the value of street artworks. Group3_No14, for example, said that if a street artwork has many reactions on SNSs, "they [curators] might feature" the artists' "work in that magazine (...) or they may feature a video of you".

Therefore, street artists aiming to achieve renown-ness are concerned with getting reactions on SNSs. These reactions can take the form of users asking questions of the author(s) or physical location of the street artwork, as well as posting comments on the painting style, the models, and the crew and other participants. Group3_No14 said that achieving reactions depends on whether the street artist "has style and hits really good spots" and on the photographers' job of taking pictures of street artworks and posting them on SNSs that are part of the "graffiti infrastructure […] with big names in terms of having like 200,000 followers or even more than that" (Group3_No14). The presence and the activity of photographers is very important for street artists' creative output. Indeed, if photographers take care of putting street artwork pictures on SNSs, street artists can dedicate themselves to producing art. Whereas, if there are no photographers putting street artworks on SNSs, street artists have to work it themselves. Group3_No7 indeed said that many street artists without photographers spend time "posting, reposting and interacting on social media" spending "20 hours to create one piece of art. And then they need to spend another 22 to just make themselves famous. People don't have the time". This is also referred

to, again, as playing the "marketing game on social media" [Group3_No7 in Appendix B](#).

This last view is important because it contributes to understanding how the value chain works with SA, adding at least two actors into the process, located between the producer and the consumer of street artworks. These new actors are the photographers and the administrators of SNSs where photographs are shared. Nevertheless, "plain numbers"[44] (Group3_No17) on SNSs are not the only thing that contributes to the value of street artworks. Indeed, it is important to:

> *Be good at networking as an artist. For example, if you're a member of* ███████[45]*, they will contact you in the first place. Then if the only people following your social media are your parents and a couple of old school friends, it's going to make it so much harder for you to get traction than if you're somebody. (Group3_No17)*

Group3_No17 clearly refers to having high-quality connections rather than plain numbers as the factor that allows street artists to reach the higher level of renown-ness. The concept of renown-ness resulting from interviews is, however, relative. Indeed, a number of interviewees said that street artists specialise in a topic that is treated in a closed/monothematic group, and they manage to become renowned within that group, but not outside of it[46]. Street artists are aware they can become renowned within groups and shape their creative output in order to gain access and popularity in monothematic groups. Street artists specialise in a topic and repeat the same

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[44] The number of likes, comments, shares, and other reactions on SNSs is referred to by interviewees as "numbers".

[45] A famous network of street artists in the UK.

[46] This happens in monothematic groups such as football supporters, academics, pop culture/media and other theme-centred groups.

pattern/technique to represent it, as said by Group3_No20 and Group3_No6 in [Appendix B](#).

Finally, street artists have learned to use the technical functions of social media platforms and to shape their creative output in order to gain access to groups on SNSs and to maintain a high engagement level with their audiences. Indeed, interviews and conversations on SNSs showed that street artists use hashtags, reposts, mentions, captions and other texts to stimulate interaction on SNSs, and share content that is "visible and recognisable, not intimidating, not too sexual, not too illegal looking" (Group 3_No6).

(III) Losing Control. Despite the awareness in the functions of social media platforms, many interviewees said their perception of how street artworks become renowned on SNSs is that they had very little or no control over it. Indeed, interviewees frequently said they do not understand how or why it happens, but their work goes viral on SNSs. Group1_No14 said: "I posted that picture and it just took the roof. I mean, it was the most liked picture that I had ever posted" as well as "It's really amazing (…) just boom. Probably 6000 followers within a few weeks really". These quotes suggest that, sometimes, when street artworks start getting attention on SNSs, they get out of the control of their creators who can only passively observe the social media hype happening on SNSs. The "losing control" element appears frequently in the interview accounts, but it was captured also in the field notes: "Many photographers or street artists that use SNSs usually say "it got picked up and I lost control over it".

(IV) Online vs Offline. As the interviews went on, it became evident that the way street artworks become renowned today depends on those actions performed both on and offline. As discussed in Chapter 2, SA has a relevant connection within

the context where it is executed and begins to be appreciated locally before going global thanks, in part, to SNSs. Below the experiences of participants are presented that describe their actions in the local context as well as online to make artworks renowned. Group3_No14 states that: "if you do have tags[47] in bigger cities, or along places where people travel (…) people tend to take photos of this and then you get up in essence" which suggests that street artworks must first be available in specific real-life contexts in order to be noticed by general audiences who take photos to be shared on SNSs. The presence of SA in real-life contexts exposes the street artwork to further online audiences.

However, the way street artworks get exposed to audiences has not always been like that. Group3_No15 said that "almost 30 years ago there were enormous changes because the technology changed a lot" the way street artwork circulates amongst audiences. Today we have the "social web and all that" (Group3_No15) but, in the first decade of the 2000s, images of street artworks were "confined to some somehow subcultural niche, and secretive photo sharing" websites (Group3_No15). Indeed, the advent of SNSs allowed SA to move from being discussed amongst peers to being exposed to wider, non-specialised audiences. In particular, social media, blogs and other collectors of content became "tools for recognition" (Group3_No15) these are so important and have become "tools you need" if you are a street artist, as well as a "layer in the digital era" that artists need to "know how to use to get high in terms of recognition in the field" (Group3_No15). Finally, Group3_No15 is convinced that the digital world is "influencing also the things that are being produced on the street" suggesting that "the digital is really changing also the non-digital in this way".

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[47] The prototype of SA traditionally related with graffiti.

Before the internet, an artist who "painted the wall, had to go home, wash hands, leave the spray cans at home and then go back out and photograph [the street artwork]" while today, "you have people who are behind you photographing it, before you've even finished it. So, there are other people who are kind of following, and documenting it while you're actually doing it" (Group3_No15). This quote shows how the digital and non-digital aspects of SA are intertwined with actors performing actions both offline and online that have an impact on the renown-ness of street artworks.

(V) Actions and reactions on SNSs. There are different actions performed on SNSs that allow street artworks to move from unknown to renowned. These have been mentioned by interviewees and observed on SNSs. The data analysis showed that there are seven main categories of actions/reactions performed by the different actors who take part in the social process. Each of these actions influences the value of street artworks whilst moving them towards higher levels of renown-ness. These are:

Category 1: *Asking for more information - showing interest*

Category 2: *Context*

Category 3: *Mentioning*

Category 4: *Networking*

Category 5: *Positive reactions*

Category 6: *Technical or style reactions*

Category 7: *No reaction - blank*

This subsection presents each reaction as they have been found within the six conversations on SNSs considered in this study. The six conversations on SNSs are available in Appendix D. The data below are presented with the relevant category of action/reaction.

Category 1: Asking for more information - showing interest

Conversations 1, 2, 4 and 5 (Appendix D) show users asking for further information on the artwork available in the picture. Users ask for further information about the artwork and, specifically on the execution and the title, besides providing a positive reaction to the artwork itself and mentioning other actors - anonymised - in the comments (paraphrased):

I would love to see a time lapse of how you realised the artwork!
This is a great artwork! I love Stan Lee and other VIP tributes. Is it going to be available for long on the private wall? Does the city council help?
What is the official name of this artwork?
She is a VIP, right? 🤣 *well done to you and* ▮▮▮▮▮▮ *for coming over...*
Take it easy 😁😁

Category 2: Context

Location is one piece of information *actions* that connect street artworks on SNSs with their real-life context. Conversations on SNSs showed that users frequently ask for information regarding the location of street artworks. This is available in Conversations 1, 2, and 4 (Appendix D) where information about the location was either asked for by users or provided by the author of the post, on the SNS. Here is an example of what was found from Conversations 1, 2 and 4 (paraphrased):

I am going to visit this place and see the artwork!
The place sounds familiar, is it in XYZ?
▮▮▮▮▮▮ *- outside the old Red Gallery! - where I curated a few exhibitions some years ago - know it well!*
I always walk past this piece on my way to work. Well done!

I saw it in the small football pitch, near the crossroads community centre.

Spent the last couple of
weeks dodging rain
clouds working on a Stan
Lee tribute wall.

Mural can be seen on
Cumberland st in the
Gorbals.

#stanlee #xmen
#avengers #marvel
#deadpool
#marvelcomics
#spiderman #ironman
#hulk #EJEK

Nice Repair Job - I saw the street artwork today ✌️

Group3_No14 also said that users on SNSs ask about the location of street artwork: "you might also get contacted by people who ask about a specific entrance for an abandoned house or something like that". Group3_No5 said that it is not just the general audience who reacts to the context on SNSs, but also photographers and SA connoisseurs who run SNSs that have an interest in collaborating with street artists they see online: "if someone is doing something really interesting, then I can comment on it by saying "Hey, you know, when you're next in London, why don't you stop by and maybe we could do something?'"

Category 3: Mentioning[48]

Mentioning artists is one of the most frequent actions performed by the authors of posts on SNSs by SA connoisseurs and by SA crew members who mention each other. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below are snapshots from the comment area of Conversation 1, Conversation 2, Conversation 4, Conversation 5, and

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[48] Mention is one of the technical functions available on different social media platforms. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter allow users to *mention* other users by writing their names in the comments.

Conversation 6, respectively (Appendix D) showing that mentioning is a very frequent action on SNSs. Nicknames in the mentions have been anonymised.

Table 4.1.

Mentioning Reactions in the Conversations (I)

@██████████	██████████████
@████ 🤍🤍🤍	████████
	Get some clear coat on it quick…
OMG @████████████ are you in the area soon? I need a photo of this!	████████████████
	Very cool 😎
😍 @███████████ 🙌 @██████	████████████
😍 @█████████ @████████	
@█████████████ 🙌 @████████	██████ how good is this!
Night shot (because I'm long) of my Finnished wall for @████████ in Birmingham next weekend. Model @████████ 🙏🖐 thanks for the inspiration! Unfortunately, I can't be there at the weekend so I came early to do this. Thanks to @██████ and @██████ for the support #graffiti #painting #nature #culture #flowergirl #lilies	████dude!!
	it'll be there for a few months ;) it's a wall I paint every couple of months
	Brilliant tribute
	████████████
	Fantasic artwork
	Wow, that's awesome 😄🖐
	████████ 🖐

Note. Retrieved from social media, collated by the thesis author.

Table 4.2.

Mentioning Reactions in the Conversations (II)

@▇▇ thanks sir 🤙	@▇▇▇ 🤙 🤙 🤙
@▇▇▇ 🙏 thanks mate	@▇▇ mate nice one
@▇▇▇ thanks mate	@▇▇
@▇▇▇ thanks mate	
@▇▇▇ thanks mate 😊	@▇▇▇ thanks mate 🤙
@▇▇▇ cheers mate	@▇▇ thanks 🙏
@▇▇▇ 🤙	@▇▇ 🤙
@▇▇▇ thanks 🙏	@▇▇▇ glad you like it's @custardfactorydigbeth in Birmingham UK 🙏 @
@▇▇▇ thanks 🙏	@▇▇ 😊🤙
@▇▇▇ see you soon	@▇▇ thanks 🙏
@▇▇▇ thanks 🙏🤙	@▇▇ thanks mate
@▇▇ 🤙	@▇▇▇ thank you 🙏😊
@▇▇ 🤙 thanks	@▇▇ nice one geez
@▇▇▇ thanks mate	@▇▇ thanks mate
@▇▇ thanks mate 🙏 hope you are good	@▇▇ thanks cuz 🤙 x
@▇▇ 🤙 thanks	@▇▇ 🤙
@▇▇ thank you 😊	@▇▇ Surviving! Looking forward to seeing you and ▇ soon 😊
@▇▇ cheers bro 🤙 🤙 🤙 hope you good	
@▇▇ 🙏	
@▇▇ thanks mate	

Genial ▇▇▇	▇▇ JAJAJAJAJA ♡ ♡ ♡
▇▇▇ 😂	▇▇ Colombia vibes
▇▇▇	▇▇
▇▇ 😂😂😂😂😂😂😂 that's too jokes	▇▇
▇▇ haha	😂😂😂😂
Jejeje	▇▇
▇▇ 😂	▇▇ dope
▇▇	▇▇
▇▇	▇▇
▇▇ plata o plomo?	▇▇
▇▇ Silver!	▇▇ so good lol
▇▇ 😂	▇▇ lolz
😂😂	▇▇ 😂😂
▇▇	▇▇
▇▇	▇▇ hell yeah
The guy who created this originally is a tattoo artist from Norwich. Check him o	▇▇
▇▇	▇▇
▇▇ 😂	@▇▇
▇▇ plata o plomo?	@▇▇ @▇
▇▇ Ay Caramba!!	@▇▇

Note. Retrieved from social media, collated by the thesis author.

Mentioning is usually done by (I) artists as an attempt to catch the attention of SA curators and SA connoisseurs in order to increase the chance of appearing on their SNSs pages; (II) users on SNSs who call their friends to see the picture of the street artwork; and (III) curators and SA connoisseurs who aim at getting in touch with the author of the photograph for potential collaborations, or by members of SA crews that call each other to look at the street artwork. Street artists also spend time thanking the users who have shown appreciation for their works, as visible with the many thanking hands emojis (🙏) next to the Category 3 reactions particularly present in Table 4.2 above.

Category 4: *Networking*

SNSs are virtual places where the actors identified in Subsection 4.2.1.1 interact and search for business opportunities. However, networking amongst actors of the social process mainly happens behind the scenes, using private messaging services as stated by Group3_No12 or in person if the SA connoisseur has a physical space where street artists can meet and network. The only conversation where a networking reaction was visible is Conversation 1, where a user commented saying: "amazing! We'd make the perfect team, send me a message so we can network more!".

Category 5: *Positive reactions*

In Tables 4.1 and 4.2 above, Category 3 reactions usually accompany those in Category 5. They consist of positive comments, likes and other positive reactions from both the authors of the posts and other users. Further evidence of the textual part of the conversations is available in Table 4.3 below, which is related to Conversations 1, 2, 4 and 5 (Appendix D) where Category 5 reactions are clearly

dominant. The purpose of street artists whose aim is getting renowned as well as the aim of SA connoisseurs and SA curators, is to generate as many positive reactions in order to give a positive sentiment to their street artworks. This is clearly explained by Group3_No20 who said that "the purpose of stunts[49] is to gather more viewers. It has to be on a national tape, newspaper outlets or something like a blog or a specialist website". Usually, a positive reaction on SNSs means there has been an emotional engagement of the viewers with the street artwork. The emotional engagement, according to Group3_No5 is done by generating a euphoric feeling, these are clearly visible by the tone of the anonymised reactions shown in Table 4.3 below.

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[49] Street artworks that attract positive reactions.

Table 4.3.

Positive Reactions From Conversations

Serious detailing going on there bro.. . SPEECHLESS!!!	Brilliant
Great to watch you today and yesterday.amazing.	That's awesome bro!
Seriously mate. This is looking better than the MCR one. Genius, both.	
Very cool	Ohmigosh! Incredible!
ich liebe mich ich liebe mich ich liebe mich ich liebe mich ich liebe mich	Well done!
We need you to do this for us in Minneapolis!! Come on over here!	

Like I said before really clever	
Nice fix!	Yasss well worth a visit
Amazing	Incredible work
Doing a "Madonna"	WOW! AMAZING what a fantastic tribute. He would have been so happy to of seen that.
Great patch-up	
Perfect!	
What a great fix.	That is mint Dan Keep up the good work.
Modern day problems require modern day solutions	A thing of beauty.
I love this. She isnt damaged, she has evolved.	Awesome Danny boy
	What can one say but....a "Marvel-ous" piece of artwork :)
nice one!	

Brilliant
Do you have a name for this piece?

Note. Retrieved from social media, collated by the thesis author.

Category 5 reactions are triggered by different elements according to the actors who generated them. Indeed, while members of the general audience may react to the aesthetic experience and/or whose response is triggered by the recognition of a popular topic, street artists/members of the crew, curators and SA connoisseurs would be likely to react to the skills and the technique shown in the picture.

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Category 6: *Technical or style reactions*

Technical reactions are quite rare on SNSs. The only conversation with a few technical reactions is Conversation 4, which is presented by the author as a progression of five different pictures, as shown in Appendix D, demonstrating the evolution of the restoration of a street artwork. This conversation received numerous positive reactions from general online users and just three technical reactions coming from peers, as shown in Figure 4.2 below.

Although technical reactions are not frequent on social media, interviews revealed that showcasing technique, skills and style on SNSs contributes to generating reactions in users and, therefore, contributes to making the artwork renowned. Indeed, Group3_No12, Group3_No14 and Group3_No17 declared that they choose street artworks to post on their webpages according to the skills shown by artists. Greater detail concerning these interviewees' statements may be found in Appendix B.

Figure 4.2.

Technical Interactions on SNSs

Note. Retrieved from Instagram and collated by thesis author.

Category 7: *No reaction - blank*

Observing SNSs revealed that there are different webpages or social media pages where, despite the regular activity of posting content related to street artwork, little or no interaction is received from users. This is clearly visible in Conversation 3 (Appendix D) where, despite the showcase of pictures taken of stylistically remarkable street artworks in London, there is very little interaction, as few as six *likes* in total. Comparing Conversation 3 with those others considered in this study, showed that Conversation 3 lacks many features that are present in the other conversations. Conversation 3 is indeed a mere showcase of images, with no information provided regarding the authors of the street artworks, the location, information on the context or on the styles, no hashtags and no caption whatsoever. As shown in the [(I) Playing with SNSs](#) subsection, it is critical for content shared on SNSs to stimulate engagement with the public if the intention is to make street artworks renowned.

4.2.2 Theme 2 - Interaction

This subsection explains the different interactions happening between different actors and the effects these interactions have on the social process outlined in Section 4.2. The analysis of interviews and conversations on SNSs brought up four elements related to interaction. They are the *Interactions Between the Different Actors*, the *Navigating the Digital Space*, the *Unsure or Averse to Social Media* aspect, and the *Navigating the Space Offline* presented in order of how they are discussed within this subsection and how they appear in Figure 4.1 above.

Interactions happening on SNSs can have either a positive or negative impact on the renown-ness of street artworks. The quality of the impact depends on the

sentiment of the reactions, which is related to the attitude and feelings of actors. Both interviews and conversations on SNSs showed that actors interact both on and offline with an impact on the renown-ness of street artworks. Despite the general averseness of some actors towards social media and the digital world, street artists always maintain an online presence.

Most interactions on SNSs are related to exchanging pictures of artworks, leaving comments about styles, genres, and subjects, and interacting with peers (Group1_No1, No2, No4). Interviewees said that they interact on SNSs mainly "to share […] artworks all over the world […] instantaneously and not using too much effort to promote myself". Interactions allow both street artists and SNSs to get "new followers every day" (Group1_No4) and can happen either on blogs, "forums, Instagram groups" and Facebook pages "where there's people commenting" visibly and interacting privately (Group1_No1).

As mentioned above, interactions can become a negative experience. Indeed, interviewees have witnessed episodes of trolling which led to the withdrawal of their content from the platform. According to participants in the study, this happens quite frequently when the content shared is controversial, especially in political terms, which can provoke a strong reaction from viewers. The risk of raising controversies through interactions on SNSs and having negative value attributed to their artworks is the main reason why artists prefer real life to virtual interactions and to keeping it "old school" (Group1_No1).

4.2.2.1 Interaction Between the Different Actors

The analysis of the three different data sets revealed interesting insights for understanding the types of interactions happening between actors and the effects

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these interactions have on the renown-ness of street artworks. The interactions can be visible on SNSs or happening privately on or offline. Those happening online and visible to the public are the texts available within the conversations on SNSs. Those happening offline and not visible on SNSs consist of sharing content and communications amongst the different actors.

In the texts available in the conversations on SNSs, we can have the caption, as illustrated in Appendix D, the comments feed and several reactions that vary according to the used social media platform. The caption is created by actors who post on SNSs and usually include a description of the visual element, mention of actors involved, locations, timeframes, and the use of hashtags in order to connect the content with those topics relevant for the occasion.

Concerning the captions, please see a clear example below showing how authors of posts on SNSs compose their caption. Figure 4.3[50] below from Conversation 1 contains a description of what is in the picture, a series of mentions include the models and the photographers, the context, and the location along with details of the exhibition and the walls, and a series of hashtags. The comment feed contains texts produced both by the author of the post and by any other users who might comment on the SNS. Comments, as seen in Tables 4.1 to 4.3 are usually short and are limited

Figure 4.3.

Example of Caption from Conversation 1

Work in progress of new portrait of @prince based on an original photograph by @afshinashahidi which is part of his exhibition at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ from today til 9th March, some amazing limited edition prints on display. Great shot by @monoprixx , thanks to @globalstreetart for sorting out the wall #akse #p19 #graffiti #art #streetart #london #shoreditch #prince #music #legend #alondonprivateview

Source: Retrieved from Instagram.

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[50] As per request of the author of the content, credit has been given to the photographer, the connoisseur, and the artist, while other mentions have been anonymised.

to a few words. In these situations, Group3_No1 said they "do a lot of short comments on social media, with comments like "nice work" and Group2_No1 said users comment without "fancy words". The short comments combined with the passion and enthusiasm in the interactions[51] amongst users are visible in the comments feed of Conversation 1, Figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4.4.

Interactions in the Comments Feed of Conversation 1

Source: retrieved from Instagram and collated by thesis author.

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[51] we can have the *like button,* which is shared amongst different social media platforms, but we can also have *share, comment, react*, and other functions.

As discussed earlier, what is visible on SNSs is only part of the interactions that occur between actors. Indeed, Group3_No20 said that they post on their webpage content that arrives in their inbox from street artists from different parts of the world. This is a typical interaction between street artists and SA connoisseurs who share content on SNSs: "you can post your stuff [street artworks] to people and they will post your work for you" on blogs, social media pages and elsewhere.

A combination of visible and invisible interactions happened with Conversation 6 and contributed to making street artworks renowned. Conversation 6 refers to one street artwork but is also analysed with a reproduction of the same artwork on another SNS. One has been photographed during a holiday trip and shared on a street artist's personal social media page. This caused considerable reactions from the public for a series of reasons discussed in Subsection 4.3.1. The other reproduction is available on an SNS and is the result of the street artist engaging with the owners of the SNS and getting their photograph re-posted and exposed to a wider audience. Both reproductions of Conversation 6 are available in Appendix D. There is also a visible interaction in Conversation 6 that shows how SA connoisseurs running SNSs go on the hunt for street artworks that already have a relevant popularity on SNSs and seek permission to repost, as shown in the comment feed: "Hello, would it be ok if I repost your picture, I will tag you of course, TY"

What happens in Conversation 6 has been explained by Group2_No12 who said that the renown-ness of street artworks is "strongly influenced by the internet" where, if the shared content "is popular, it will become shared and [street artists] will get a huge following". SNSs are also the places where street artists belonging to a crew "meet [for] discussing our work" (Group2_No12). However, street artists tend not

to "rely on a lot or all of the times" on online interactions, because the places where networking happens most are "art fairs and that kind of things" (Group2_No 1) where interactions between street artists and event organisers consist of the latter "getting free promotion and [street artists] getting the free exhibition. So, it's a collaborative work" (Group2_No13, Group2_No16 and Group3_No25).

4.2.2.2 Navigating the Digital Space.

Street artists said that they use SNSs for different reasons: being able to reach audiences who would otherwise be too distant to enjoy street artworks, being able to engage with curators who may be on the lookout for new street artworks/genres/artists, contributing to the creative production within the community, checking their peers' work technically and getting inspired, or using it as a digital repository/portfolio to be shown to potential commissioners. All interviewees seem to be using SNSs to discover artworks that are not available in their hometown/area, and to meet virtually with other street artists from around the world as stated by Group1_REC003. SA connoisseurs frequently use SNSs to "communicate with [street artists] through FB and Instagram on post or private messages" (Group3_No11), to check for more information about the author(s) of an artwork they have only seen once online, to "consume graffiti digitally through Instagram every day" [and to keep themselves] "updated about what is happening in other cities where I know people" (Group3_No14), using "blogs, webzines, websites" (Group3_No15).

All interviewees recognised the importance of having a digital presence and some form of interaction on SNSs but, as shown in the next subsection (4.2.2.3), an averseness and mistrust towards the digital world is also very common. Group1_No5 said that they prefer "deep connections rather than broad" because their followers

know how they work, instead "a street artist with 50,000 followers based on painting a Marvel character" does not have deep connections. Also, Group1_No4 specified that "the more followers you have, the more difficult it gets to interact with them; social media is a great tool to interact with your audience and gain exposure but we all have a life with other more important responsibilities" suggesting that interaction on SNSs whilst important, is not everything.

Nevertheless, SNSs are widely used by street artists "because it gives you a chance to see how people react to your artwork first-hand" (Group1_No2). Moreover, according to Group1_No2, street artists use SNSs as a response to the institutionalised artworld of museums and art galleries that have "commodified street art". Users navigate the digital space using different platforms that allows for a different set of interactions with other users from around the world. All interviewees mentioned Instagram as the main SNS where creative work is shared, viewed and discussed by different actors. Other interviewees mentioned other SNSs such as Facebook, Pinterest, digital fora, and blogs where they interact with other actors. The information coming from interviews on the platforms used by actors in the process were integrated by the insights coming from the observation of SNSs, which showed that almost any street artists who used Instagram, also used Facebook. In particular, street artists seem to prefer Facebook because it allows more interaction, while Instagram is used by those who know how to exploit the algorithm and other technicalities of the application, in order to benefit from it in terms of reach/audience. A number of street artists who have been using digital SNSs for a longer time also mentioned Flickr as an important SNS that focused on the visual aspect of SA rather than on text interactions. Some of the 28 websites and social media pages consulted in the preliminary

observation - as discussed in the Method chapter - have also been mentioned by interviewees as places for virtual interaction.

4.2.2.3 Unsure or Averse to Social Media

Interviews showed street artists have a feeling of averseness towards social media. This averseness is related to the perceptions of interviewees about social media and its effects on the SA culture. The averseness of street artists towards SNSs is also related to their disagreement towards the practice of other street artists in executing SA only for the purpose of becoming renowned rather than being part of a community. These street artists attract digital audiences by executing "a little stencil, a cute bear or a dog" instead of spending "25 years" improving their style and technique (Group3_No6).

According to interviewees, social media is a world of "fake relations" and "interactions", as stated by Group3_No18, Group3_No7 and Group3_No24. This is also justified by the fact that some social media platforms have become known because they allowed the purchase of followers to pump up the social media performance, and that "museums, galleries, and brands often make their decisions of who to show and with whom to work, based on the amount of likes or followers someone has on social media, instead of credibility of the artist" (Group3_No25).

The averseness towards SNSs started to develop when interviewees became aware that some digital platforms permit the purchase a certain number of followers, likes and comments and thus fake the actual breadth of the audience of a street artist. Indeed, different participants mentioned the technical infrastructure of certain SNSs and their algorithms, and said that institutions such as museums, galleries and other organizations consider the fake numbers on SNSs to make decisions on who to feature

for an event on SA, instead of considering the real value of street artworks, which is not visible on SNSs. This is what Group2_No4, Group2_No6, Group3_No4, and Group3_No7 said (Appendix B) when they described how businesses make decisions based on the value resulting from plain numbers on SNSs. Another reason for the averseness towards social media is the perception of the lack of control over how SNSs work. Group2_No3 said that "in the last couple of years, social media has just gone haywire", and Group3_No15 said that SA "is not street art anymore" because of social media.

Moreover, participants complained that the public is not able to get the real value of SA if they experience it exclusively on SNSs, and that due to this, the digital public cannot appreciate it. According to Group2_No16 and Group3_No25, the representation of SA on social media has created a system of "fans and or pedestrians. Not people that have knowledge of the culture" of SA. These people "only consume street art on Instagram, but they forget to look at the walls. They walk on the streets looking at their phone and forget to see what's around them" (Group3_No18Double).

4.2.2.4 Navigating the Space Offline

As stated earlier, the social process explored in this section is characterised by actors interacting both on and offline. Apart from the details resulting from the interviews, evidence of offline interactions has also been found online. This is visible in the Instagram post available in Conversation 1 and Conversation 4 (Appendix D) with two clear signs of offline interaction. One is the line of viewers who are attending the event of an artist executing the artwork[52]. The other is that of the comments

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[52] Conversation 1.

available in the feed of Conversation 1, such as "Great to watch you today and yesterday. Amazing. 🫰🫶✋". Another example is in the comments of Conversation 4, where one user said: "I saw her today, nice repair man👆".

Interviewees provided insights on their offline interaction, describing how they consume street artworks and how they discover new artworks. This is the case of Group2_No16 who stated, they consume SA "on the street" and that they "like discovering" street artworks in person rather than online. Other offline interactions described in interviews are related to networking activities amongst actors such as during events, SA exhibitions and SA festivals. For example, photographers usually "go and take pictures [in] areas where people are most likely to paint. This would be in Shoreditch and Camden" (Group3_No1).

4.2.3 Theme 3 - Social Media Influence on Value

This subsection presents the results of the analysis on interviews and secondary data showing the effects on the value of street artworks resulting from using social media. This subsection is organised in three components that discuss the *Actions on Social Media*, the *What Contributes to Renown-ness*, and the *What is not Useful for Renown-Ness* aspects resulting from the analysis of the data.

SNSs are widely used by all participants but, as illustrated in the previous subsection, street artists and curators are those who tend to consider the numbers on SNSs to determine the value of street artworks. SNSs have become so important today that what is happening digitally is also having an impact on the value of street artworks offline. Indeed, "most entities (galleries, museums etc…) are relying on social media" so much so that "their digital channels becomes an extension of the museum/gallery"

therefore "it is important that artists are engaging online with their audience" (Group2_No10) if they want to be noticed by institutions.

The use of SNSs in SA has indeed modified the style of street artworks. Group2_No6 said that street artists "are making internet-friendly art" because "the new walls are iPhone screens". Therefore, as Group3_No15 said, social media "is really meaningful and it is influencing also the things that are being produced on the street". Hence it is important for street artists to "have a good visual content on social media" so that "the streets art blogs will repost it" (Group3_No20). Interviewees said that curators give much importance to the use of SNSs, and social media in particular for the perception of the value of their creative output. Group3_No15 said that since the internet has become more interactive[53], social media is what street artists need to "get recognition in the field". However, street artists' use of SNSs is also incentivised by street artists attitude of separating themselves from the institutional world and keep SA "anti-system" (Group3_No18Double).

4.2.3.1 Value Conveyed on SNSs

Interviews revealed that the representation of SA on SNSs has modified the value perceived by audiences. For example, Group2_No12 stated that "there's no longer this taboo associated with" SA now that it is so popular on social media. Moreover, the commercial value of street artworks can be positively related to the digital following of street artists, whereas the artistic value is almost inversely related. The curator Group2_No12 said that galleries aim at street artists with an established large following because "there's already 65,000 people out there who likes that stuff and probably willing to pay for it". However, "the most reward and the most passion

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[53] Wide use of social media started in 2008 (source: https://ourworldindata.org/rise-of-social-media).

and a lot of the artistic value comes from people with lower followings because it means they're spending less time on building their own following and more time on doing art" (Group2_No12).

Interviewees are aware of this difference between commercial and artistic value and the effects it has on the business possibilities for street artists. For example, Group2_No2 said that their artistic output is stuck in trying to "please my audience on social media" which will lead to being identified by galleries and having more business opportunities, as well as "losing the sense of what is art for you". Therefore, Group2_No2 now has two outputs: one to be shared on social media to which they refer as "playing with my audience to achieve high numbers on SNSs and obtain invitations", and one for art's sake. Of course, Group2_No2 said that not all street artists are able to spend so much time maintaining two separate outputs because it requires "a lot of work". However, those who do it, refer to their artistic output for social media as "content" instead of art (Group2_No2). SA displayed on social media allows street artists to show their commercial output to curators since it "is like a portfolio for the artist. It helps curators to see what the artist is doing and the quality of his work" (Group3_No18Double). This is so important for commercial uses of SA that Group2_REC008 said that if a street artist has a valuable creative output, but an insufficient presence on social media, galleries "will work with [street artists] and will mentor them to build up a presence on SNSs".

4.2.3.2 What Contributes to Renown-ness

Interviewees agreed that there are elements of the content shared on SNSs that contribute to the artistic value of street artworks and that affect their renown-ness. One is the times a street artwork "passes through" someone's feed (Group3_No14). This

happens because, according to Group3_No17, users trust the judgement of other users and specialised SNSs. Therefore, if other "people are sharing it, it means that somebody who's seen it has already made a judgement on its artistic merits".

Another feature is related to the technical aspects of the platform[54]. Group3_No7 said that "Instagram's algorithm spits out stuff that you might like at you at random" and the content is even more accurate if users "follow a couple of hashtags that you like and enjoy". This way, social media users can just sit and enjoy the content that might be of interest to them, since social media will do all the work of searching, identifying and displaying the content.

4.2.3.3 What is not Useful for Renown-Ness

Observing street artworks on SNSs showed there are intrinsic elements of social media posts that are not useful to make street artworks renowned. Conversation 3 (Appendix D) is an example of this. In this conversation, a Facebook post contains a list of pictures with different street artworks and no other information or data accompanying the visual element. This is the exact opposite of what happens in Conversations 1 and 4, where textual and visual data and metadata allow users to engage with the post and get a more complete feeling of its value. What is lacking in Conversation 3 is information on the authors of the artworks, the topic represented, the photographer(s), the location, the mentions and use of hashtags, and any other element that might generate interest and reactions from the general audience. Therefore, it can be argued that the mere use of social media on its own, without adding data that differs from the visuals, is not able to generate the digital interaction that can potentially lead to renown-ness of artwork(s).

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[54] Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and other SNSs have algorithms that select and display content based on the user's interests.

4.2.4 Summarising the Learning from the Social Process Dimension

The analysis of interviews and conversations on SNSs has brought up the three main themes that make the social process for which street artworks transform from unknown to renowned. Figure 4.5 shows the social process in visual terms for ease of access, and also shows that street artworks can go from a low level of renown-ness when they are created by street artists - either alone or in crews - to a high level of renown-ness. Moving from low to high renown-ness depends on the actions and interactions that the social actors perform both on and offline.

As shown in Figure 4.5 below, the social process has different actors involved: the central row, in black, relates to those who perform the actions; the second row, outlined in blue, represents engagement in interactions; the final row shows engagement with other actors. Street artists create street artworks and get inspired by the creations of their peers, which they see in the streets and on SNSs. Sometimes the creation of street artwork is also produced as a crew. The brand-new street artworks have a lower level of renown-ness at this point. Then, street artworks are either photographed and shared on SNSs, or just shared on SNSs, which exposes them to the general audience for appreciation, curators for valuation, and to other actors, such as more photographers. At this point, it is reasonable to consider street artworks renowned within a first level audience. Then, street artworks are valued by a more professional, second level, audience, which uses them in their work: publishing books, professional blogs and scholars. Now, street artworks have become renowned across different types of audience both on and offline. The whole process is intended to be faster if it happens on SNSs, as interviewees have explained.

Figure 4.5.

Dimension 1 - the Social Process
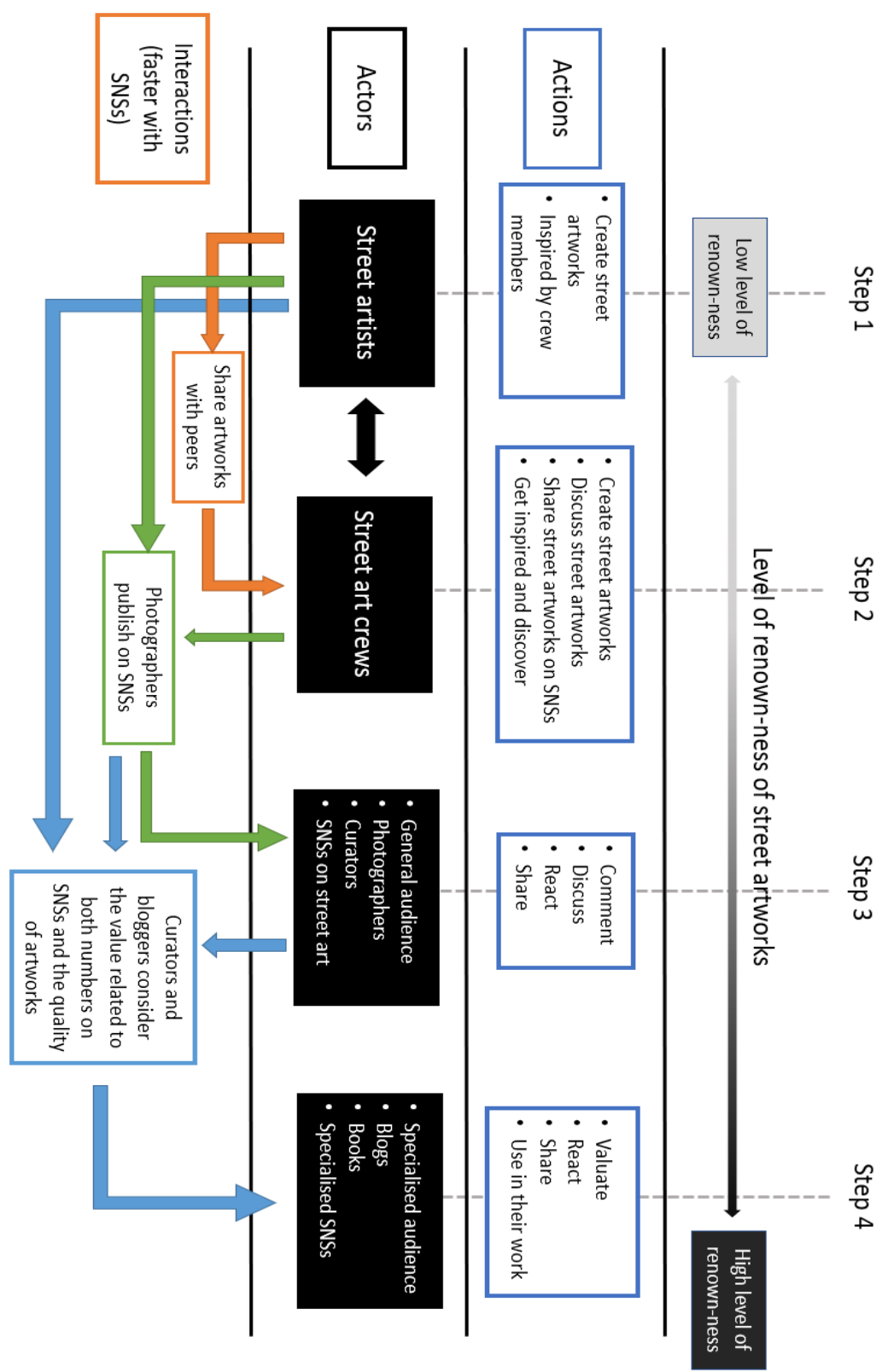
Source: the thesis author.

4.3 Dimension 2: Understanding the Value Co-Creation

This section sets out the decisive elements required for renown-ness due to their ability to create value as a collective action amongst actors. According to the interviewees, these elements are related to intrinsic characteristics of street artworks such as the aesthetic value, their relationship to the context and other concepts such as cultural references and trend topics, as well as visible characteristics such as the actions mentioned above.

According to the interviewees, the value of SA is created on and offline where different actors collaborate in such a way that substitutes the traditional legitimation process of contemporary art that works with critics (Group3_No18). The next two subsections are related to the two themes that make up the *Co-Creation Aggregate Dimension*. These are the *Elements Decisive for Renown-ness*, and the *Collaboration and Interaction Amongst Actors* themes (see Figure 4.1).

4.3.1 Theme 1 - Elements Decisive for Renown-ness

This subsection presents the results of the analysis on data showing how specific elements of street artworks shared on SNSs are decisive for their renown-ness. These elements are discussed in the three further subsections: *Value of Street Artworks, Users Recognising Value and Starting Hype*, and *Elements That Drive Attention to the Artwork*. The value of street artworks depends on a series of elements inherent in the artworks that have been indicated by interviewees and verified in the conversations on SNSs considered in this study. These elements impact on the renown-ness of street artworks because they attract different audiences that perform actions that are able to influence the value of street artworks. There are different elements that can attract the attention of audiences, these can be related to the

execution style, the intrinsic value of the artwork, the timing in relation to an existing trending topic, the location, the connection to other topics via hashtags and mentions, and the ability to play with the context.

4.3.1.1 Value of Street Artworks

The most common qualities that street artworks must have to become renowned are (field notes) being "daring, disruptive, questioning, bold, and fresh". Group2_No16 and Group3_No25 stated that "street artists gain popularity by being good" and by "coming up with smart, innovative ways to push their work out into the world and in great locations at the same time". The value of street artworks also depends on the execution style. Group3_No17 said that a street artwork is valuable according to its "artistic merit" and on what is perceived by the viewer. This depends on:

> *How clean are the lines, how well considered are the colours, the composition, does it have a message? It doesn't matter whether it's free hand or stencil. It just comes down to the difference between when you see a piece of work that looks like it's done by an artist versus a piece of art that looks like it was done by an eight-year-old. (Group3_No17)*

Therefore style, stylistic quality, presence of a message and other intrinsic aspects contribute to the perception of the artistic merit of an artwork. "Being good" and "high-quality" are similar concepts expressed by interviewees. They are related to "innovation and craftsmanship" of artworks and to ability to generate a consistent creative output as indicated by Group3_No25. Moreover, referring to the technical elements visible in the artworks, Group3_No25 and Group2_No16 said a street artwork is valuable when the "rebellion aspect" emits from it and when it is available for everyone who "can participate inclusively to the act of it on the street".

The interviewees said that the value of artworks also depends on the context surrounding them. Group3_No18Double referred to the context when they implied that the value of street artworks experienced on SNSs is lacking perspective and further information because it does not include the context which is "not just the marginal part of what's painted". Moreover, Group3_No18Double said that the value of street artworks is not only related to the numbers on SNSs, but is a process that aims at a global understanding of street artists, as explained in more detail in Appendix B.

The context is also affected by street artworks, as said by Group3_No11 who believe that a high-end street artwork "beautifies its environment". On the other hand, other interviewees said that the value of SA is not context specific. For instance, Group3_No13 stated that "[street artworks] are not pinpointed to anything. They're not pinpointed to location because of the global network". By context, the interviewee indicated also where artworks are exhibited and experienced. Indeed, SA can be exhibited within institutionalised contexts like galleries and museums, or more traditionally in the streets. The latter type of context is usually considered more favourably by street artists who stress the fact that "the power of street art is precisely that it's not high art. It's a low art and belongs to everyone" (Group3_No15).

Group2_No16 said that there are at least three examples of SA today in the UK: one is graffiti which is an illegal activity based on the repeated writing of names and tags, then there is SA, which can take different forms (see Appendix A) and should also be illegal, and then there is "this whole new mural culture that everyone is just calling street art" (Group2_No16). This finding is particularly important because it shows that, although interviewees in this study have been selected as street artists, their practice and identity seemed to operate across the concepts of SA, graffiti, and

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mural art (see Table 3.3 above for further details on the mixed practice of street artists). Indeed, as interviews progressed, it was realised that street artists do not necessarily make a distinction in terms of identity, even though they do make it in terms of practice, as the quote of Group2_No16 has highlighted. Therefore, within the thesis, although the focus is on the practice and the concept of SA, whilst keeping in mind that for UK street artists, there may be an overlap of creative practice and identity.

4.3.1.2 Users Recognising Value and Starting Hype

As stated above, content about artworks presented on SNSs with a series of metadata about the author, the context, and other actors that took part in the execution or distribution of the artwork, have more chance of attracting attention from users thus moving towards renown-ness. These metadata can be found either in the visual component of a post, in the text component, or in both. Conversation 4 is an example of how the engagement on SNSs might result from sharing a post rich in metadata[55]. This conversation shows the progress in the restoration of an existing street artwork and provides both a visual and textual description on how the restoration was achieved (Table 4.4 below), the context/location, and other metadata on the artwork (caption in Figure 4.6). All these data in the post contributed to the perception of the value by the general audience engaging with different reactions, including commenting and sharing, as discussed in the *Actions and Reactions* subsection above.

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[55] Appendix D for the visual post, Figure 4.6 below for the caption.

Table 4.4.

Progression of Conversation 4
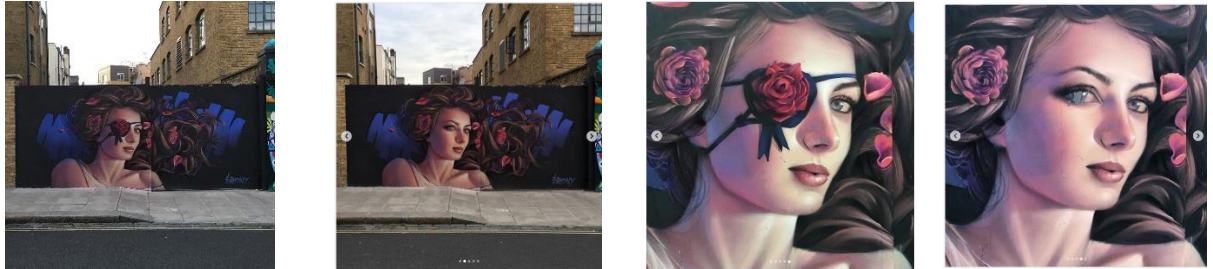
Note: for higher detail, please see Conversation 4 in Appendix D
Source: retrieved from Instagram, collated by the thesis author.

Figure 4.6.

Caption for Conversation 4

Messing with a piece from last summer that got scratched up. ◎Cheers as always to #therealartofstreetart for the #Camden spot. #streetart #graffiti #irony #ironystreetart #ironygraffiti #camdenmarket #Camdengraffiti #eyepatch #rnib #loss #somethingswefix #somethingswelooseforever

Source: retrieved from Instagram, collated by the thesis author

The value perceived by the audience that saw the artwork in Conversation 4, is related to the intention of the street artist to improve the urban context with the restoration, and to the use of metadata and information about the artwork, the context and the authors as visible in Figure 4.6 above. However, interviewees do not have a complete understanding of how users recognise value that starts the hype leading street artworks to renown-ness. Indeed, many of them frequently mentioned "a lot of luck" (Group3_No4) where things change "really fast" and where "what is old today doesn't need to be talked about at the end of the week" (Group3_No4). When describing how artworks get renowned, interviewees frequently use the word "luck".

4.3.1.3 Elements That Drive Attention to the Artwork

The audience starts engaging with street artworks shown on SNSs if they are stimulated to do so. The main elements are visible in Conversation 2 and Conversation 5, available in Appendix D, and listed below for ease of access:

(I)   Using a trending topic

(II) Using a popular topic within a demographic

(III) Using metadata related to location, events and VIPs.

Conversation 2, for instance, includes a Facebook post that has been published immediately after the death of the popular American comic book writer and producer (Stan Lee). Due to the recent death of the Very Important Person (VIP), the post received attention on the internet and numerous reactions taking the form of comments, shares and likes. In this case the audience is attracted by the easily recognisable cultural reference connected to a trending topic. In Conversation 5, however, the element that drives attention of the audience is not a trending topic but a combination of visual and written elements. The visual element includes a popular topic

for the demographic to whom the artwork is destined: a woman. The text element includes information on the location/context, the SA festival where they participated, the name of the model and other mentions of relevant names and topics/hashtags. Observing SNSs revealed that street artists often use a combination of visual and written elements to drive the attention of the audience to the artwork and thus make it renowned.

4.3.2 Theme 2 - Collaboration and Interaction Amongst Actors

There can be formal and informal collaborations and interactions amongst the actors that take part in the process for which street artworks become renowned. Formal ones are those occurring between street artists and curators in galleries/museums and festivals, and between street artists and the chroniclers - bloggers, photographers - documenting the phenomenon of SA under agreement between the various parties. Formal interactions can also happen on SNSs, where the formalization is constituted by the functions offered by a specific digital platform. For example, the text in Conversation 1 states that the artwork has been produced as part of an exhibition and mentions both the curator and the photographer as well as other collaborators. Similarly, in Conversation 5 the caption explains that the street artwork has been created for a festival[56].

Informal collaboration and interactions can also happen both in real life and on SNSs. In this case, Conversation 2 and Conversation 4 can be taken as examples because they are the results of informal interactions on SNSs. The different forms of collaboration are shown in three subsections below: the *Working with Galleries*

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[56] mentioned in the caption together with the model in the picture and two other collaborators.

subsection, the *Working with Festivals* subsection, and the *Other Collaborations* subsection.

4.3.2.1 Working with Galleries

Collaborations between street artists and galleries are frequent. Sometimes collaborations start even before the gallery has been founded. Indeed, many galleries started as spontaneous collectives of street artists, which then expanded and established more professionally. Group2_No12 stated that the gallery with which they collaborate was born from "local artists that had developed relationships" and that are "in charge of the selection process".

Mostly, street artists work with galleries using SNSs in the sense that they allow galleries to use the SA reproductions available on SNSs and sell them as prints. In this collaboration, galleries decide which street artists to feature in their collections by looking at "the amount of likes or followers someone has on social media, instead of credibility of the artist" (Group2_No16), and this happens more frequently "on a small regional level" according to Group2_No4. However, the relationship also works in reverse: street artists decide which gallery to work with according to the wider reach they can achieve and the ability of the gallery to "push to the next level" (Group3_No12).

4.3.2.2 Working with Festivals

Participating in and interacting with festivals is another very frequent collaboration method of street artists. Street artists take part in regional and national festivals and art fairs where they can showcase their works on a prints-base but also perform live action painting on walls during those events. Any collaboration can produce mutual benefit to both street artists and festivals, as stated by Group2_No2,

and is a type of interaction that is very similar to the one existing with galleries, where organisers take into account different "numbers" of artists - including "looking at the social media of the artists to see how many followers this person has" (Group3_No18) to make a selection and populate the line-up of a festival. SA festivals tend to invite street artists with big followings on SNSs, because this would trigger a collaboration in terms of promotional activities and cost reduction for the festival. Indeed, festival organisers know that if they "get an artist with a big fan base, then lots of people receive that my festival happens" (Group2_No2) because they will see that information from the street artists social media pages.

Street artists also select which SA festival to attend according to the benefits they might accrue from their participation. Indeed, interviews revealed that street artists who aim at international renown-ness want to join "the mural and street art festival circuit" which "offers a short cut" to go from regional to global, and choose those festivals that "ensure wide digital distribution" from which "a newcomer can trigger global interest" (Group2_No4). Like with galleries, street artists and festivals "use each other to gain fame, notoriety, money and awareness" (Group3_No12) as "exchanges" (Group2_No2) of value.

4.3.2.3 Other Collaborations

Interaction and collaboration are not limited to galleries and festivals but can happen also with other actors and can contribute to the renown-ness of street artworks. Group3_No18Double described a system of levels of collaboration which they called "circles of legitimation". In the first circle there are the most "direct peers" of street artists. They are the colleagues, direct collaborators and other street artists that have a similar style or genre and that may have collaborated in the making of street artworks.

In the last circle there is the general audience, and somewhere in between - unclear in the interviews - are "the critics". In this view, street artworks move progressively from their creation to their exposure to the general public, and each movement is represented by added legitimation provided by a different type of actor.

Group3_No18 provided a useful understanding of how collaborations contribute to the renown-ness of street artworks, but other interviews gave further insights of the collaborations that happen between street artists and the general public. For example, Group2_No12 said that collaboration with bloggers is important because it adds value to the street artwork. A view confirmed by Group2_No13 who stated that "bloggers put more spicy information about the artists themselves and push the popularity up". Collaborating with bloggers by adding information on social media, are the "chroniclers" (Group2_No3) who document the making-of street artworks. These can be photographers that collaborate with blogs, magazines and social media pages to further document the making, and the styles. of street artworks on SNSs (Group3_No5). Two other actors that can be added in this process are galleries which, according to Group2_No10, "have the power to bring an artist to popularity" and "museums who are consolidating artists' popularity". At the upper end of the "circles of legitimation" view formulated by Group3_No18, is the general audience. According to interviewees, this collective actor is not just a passive viewer, but has the power to "make or break an artist" (Group3_No1) especially on SNSs where users can express their views on what they see[57].

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[57] More detail on the power of the public on SNSs is available in Appendix B.

4.3.3 Summarising the Learning from the Value Co-Creation Dimension

This dimension explains how, in the phenomenon by which street artists become renowned, there can be different forms of collaboration between actors that contribute to the creation of value. Figure 4.7 below shows the main findings related to the co-creation dimension, and is divided into two: the right part showing that collaboration is achieved mainly with galleries and SA festivals, to which we can add street artist peers, bloggers, chroniclers and critics; the left part showing that value depends on a series of qualities with which the street artists embed their artworks and on the ability to affect, and be affected by, the context, and is created by posting on SNSs with metadata that stimulates the engagement of users.

Figure 4.7.

Main Findings in the Value Co-Creation Dimension
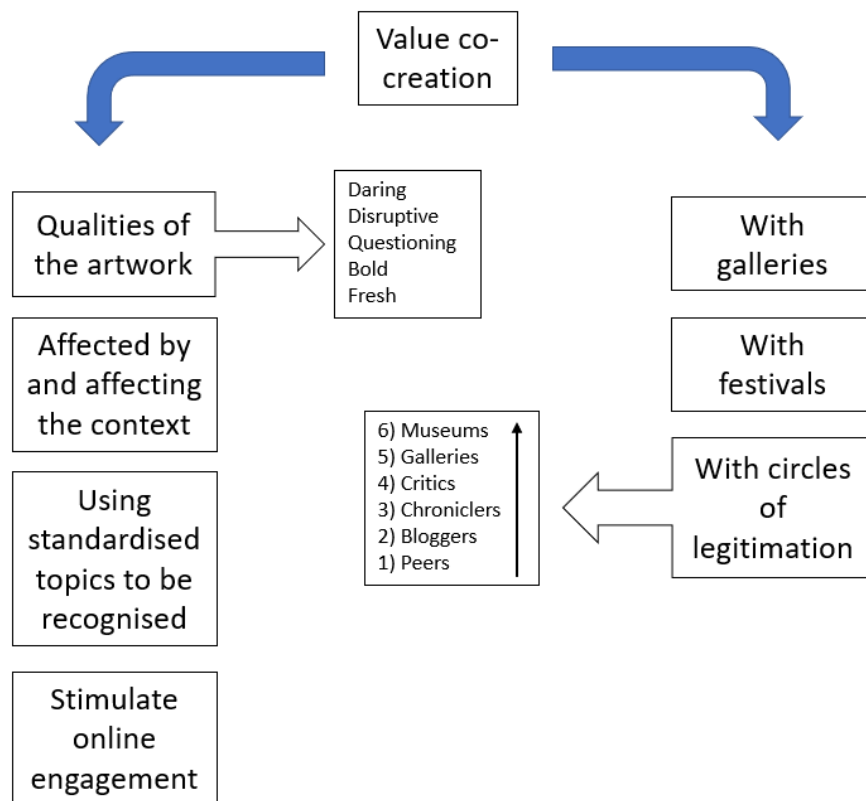
Source: the thesis author.

4.4 Dimension 3: Understanding the Creative Practice

In this section, the creative practice of street artists has been analysed in relation to how it affects the value of street artworks and how it is perceived by street artists, curators, and the general audience. The section is organised in two parts: one discusses the *Creative Value* theme, and the other one discusses the *Other Creative Work* theme. For a clearer picture of the themes, please see Figure 4.1 above.

Interviews revealed that the practice of street artists influences the value of street artworks. For example, street artists discussed the commercial value of their artworks and said that they concentrate their creative efforts in creating something that can be reproduced and sold, whereas other street artists are more concerned with creating street artworks able to please their digital following on SNSs because this may lead to further opportunities with galleries and museums. A number of street artists, instead, are worried about the aesthetic quality of their creations, suggesting they want to be recognised as creatively influential within their community of peers. However, the creative practice of street artists can also be considered as a mere job where street artists get commissions to execute works whose genre is not exactly their own.

4.4.1 Theme 1 - Creative Value

The creative value, for street artists, is the value resulting from their practice and from the effects SA has on other actors. Interviewees agreed that one of the main purposes of SA is to provoke a reaction from the audience. As Group1_Triple interviewee stated: "My main goal is to make people think outside on the streets" but they also consider "working in museums" as an opportunity to "open up my art to a different audience". However, according to interviewees, the creative practice in SA is divided between output for professional purposes, and output as high-art. Group1_No2

indeed said that, despite their popularity as a skilled street artist, they have been "commissioned work around the country for different kinds of brands and clients" which is also their main source of income.

Group1_No3, as well, is known and appreciated for being an old-school graffiti artist with interesting stylistic features, but they "paint photorealistic things (…) usually animals for schools"; and, finally, Group1_No4 wanted to stress the fact that they are a proper graffiti artist, but they also do other commissioned work to generate income: "I'm a graffiti artist mainly… And then I did some kind of mural work as well. Obviously, it's commercial work". Other street artists prefer to concentrate their creative output on the artistic side rather than anything commercial. It is the case of Group1_No13 and Group1_No11 who prefer to "keep [the creative practice] at that enjoyment stage" and not get into commissioned work, or to simply focus on their ultimate goal, which is "creating a body of work". The next five subsections present the findings related to the different aspect of value discussed in the interviews. The subsections are: *Talking About Value*; Curator*ial work*; *Difference Between Graffiti and SA*; *Value of SA;* and *Art Genre or Style.*

4.4.1.1 Talking About Value

Interviewees frequently discussed the concept of value related to their practice. Some talked about their personal meaning of artistic value, others have focused more on the value elicited from the on and offline interaction of street artworks with different actors, and other interviewees focus on the SNSs engagement street artworks can generate in order to have a measure of the creative value of street artworks. Street artists give much importance to their own perception of the value of their practice. Group1_No13 said that the value of their creative practice depends on whether they

like the output because "if I don't value it, then nobody else will". Group1_No18 also believes that their practice is valuable because it is a job they love to do, not because there is a public appreciating it.

Conversely, other interviewees (Group1_No16) said that they "make the most out of online feedback", and therefore they consider the value coming from the audience as important. Positive feedback from the audience happens, according to Group1_No5, when street artists have "found a niche" where the audience can easily relate to street artworks and recognise their meaning. In this case, the practice of street artists consists of reiterating the same genre and the same styles to keep that niche of audience[58]. Standardizing the practice in order to satisfy a niche is quite common among street artists. Group2_No12 and Group2_No13 indeed believe that, in order to achieve engagement with the public, a street artwork must be "accessible" and "speak for itself" instead of being overly complicated.

Connecting with the right people and generating engagement is also considered valuable for the practice of street artists. Group1_No2 considers valuable not just the number of followers street artists have, but "how many people are actually engaging with you […] because you can have two million followers. But if you only get 100 likes, there's not a very good breakdown of the number of people who are seeing your artworks". Moreover, according to Group1_No2, valuable engagement is the one generated with the right people who have the right connections (see Appendix B for Group1_No2 example). Group1_No7 and Group3_No20 also value the ability to generate engagement and talk about reactions. According to these interviewees, a reaction can be a "comment, judgement, whatever reaction" and also "having a smile

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[58] More detail on Group1_No5's narrative on the concept of *niche* is available in Appendix B.

on their face" or making "people think about something". However, as Group1_REC001 repeated, each public can have different reactions. Indeed, Group1_REC001 said that there can be an "old school"[59] public that care about some technical features of street artworks or a "modern public" whose reactions are shallower.

In conclusion, interviewees explained that the value derived from the creative practice in SA is made up of both the creative output - executing street artworks - and having a public that engages with your output. However, as argued by Group1_Triple, having an engaging relationship with the public "does not automatically mean you have enough food on your plate". Group1_Triple indeed said that the fame on SNSs "is fake" because it is not going to help street artists make "enough food at the end of the month even if you're famous on Instagram". Other interviewees are convinced of the opposite. Group2_No2, for example believes that "the financial value of the artwork is really based on the popularity".

4.4.1.2 Curatorial Work

Curators are the interviewees who discussed the concept of value more frequently. In their practice of building collections, curators interact with street artists and other actors in order to understand the artistic value of their artworks, but also to provide the commercial justification of an event, a publication, an exhibition or a collection. Therefore, it is in a curator's interest to "incorporate a lot of information into [the] curatorial process" (Group2_No12). What curators aim to include in their collection is something that is not just aesthetically pleasing, but as Group2_No12 put it, "because it's interesting and different".

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[59] Group1_REC003 define themselves as old school graffiti writer rather than *street artist*, but not exclusively.

Curatorial work can be quite intense when it comes to understanding an artist's suitability for an event. Group2_No4 said that "to consider an artist, a curator looks at all aspects of the artist and their career". Therefore, street artists are valued by including "social media, as well as looking at their CV and the other galleries and museums they have worked with, as well as the awards and residencies they have taken part in" in the assessment. The practice of curators can be varied. Some of them work exclusively with SA in the streets. Other curators aim at transposing SA from the street to the "museum and gallery settings" (Group2_No16). Some other curators work with both settings: street and museum/gallery (Group2_No25).

Curatorial work in SA requires a deep understanding of the artists' creative practice, ensuring artists are consistent and long-term in their creative production. Group2_No13 adds that the role of a curator consists also of being aware of the current reputation and renown-ness of street artists to assess their suitability for an event. To do this, curators "need to know about the audience" because they need to shape the exhibition according to the audience's taste, and make sure "that your collectors, your followers, will be interested in this artwork" (Group2_No13).

Similarly, experienced curators would never consider including a street artist "that's been doing it for six months" for a show, "no matter how many followers they have" (Group2_No25) suggesting the digital element attached to a street artwork is relevant for curatorial interest, but it is not the only component of the curatorial valuation. A shared practice among curators, according to Group2_No25, is to "look at the quality of the artwork" and to try to understand whether the creative practice they are evaluating is attributed to street artists "that care and they're great" or street artists "that are weekend warriors". Distinguishing between these two types of creative

practice is important for curators because their purpose is to produce events built around the value of "credibility, the innovation of the work, and" the ability "to tell a story" (Group3_No25) of street artists.

Other curators, such as Group2_No3 who do their work for educational purposes do not consider the digital popularity as important when organising a lecture or an exhibition, because that is not their purpose. They would rather "represent a wide variety of artists and genres, both historically and contemporarily". Other curators such as Group2_No9 do not take into consideration the audience of a street artist when selecting work for an exhibition because the focus is how distant street artists are from the "mainstream galleries and stuff". Conversely, Group2_No1 base their valuation on the artist's image in terms of goodness of their work, but they add that the value of an artwork is also the result of "the type of artwork, the medium, the size and the desirability of the piece, as well as the popularity of the artist".

One notable aspect that emerged from the analysis is the attitude that the interviewees - especially the street artists - showed towards curators and their activity of valuing SA. Street artists generally show an averseness towards curatorial practice and this may be due to the fact that curators are perceived by street artists as belonging to the institutionalised artworld. Group2_No6 provided a colourful account of what curatorial means to them: "I am anti curator I think curators *are a disease* [emphasis added]. I'm an artist and I work with artists; we don't need somebody in between". Moreover, some potential contributors withdrew from participating in this study because they read the word curator in the interview schedules.

4.4.1.3 Difference Between Graffiti and Street Art

The interviews revealed that street artists care more about the difference between graffiti and SA in terms of value of both the practice and any relationship with the general audience. This difference is intentional in terms of both the value of artworks and of practice. One of the field notes recited that "before the 90s you were a rebel who then realised that it could be art. Now you are an artist and you want to start doing things on the street" which refers to the cultural change from doing something that "could be art" to being an artist who wants to work on the street.

A considerable number of interviewees showed averseness towards the concept of SA because they associate an institutional sense to it as a phenomenon and as a practice. Group1_No11, No12 and No13 discussed this association and said that "It's not my ultimate goal to be in the gallery" because their "audience is the outsider art scene". Interviews showed that street artists are aware that, in some way, parts of the graffiti practice have evolved into SA, and they expressed disagreement in this conversion. Indeed, Group2_No7 believes that "it is almost a shame that street art has become so popular" because it has lost the "fun, realness/rawness and edginess" elements typical of graffiti tagging.

Interviewees frequently mentioned the aspect of illegality that characterises graffiti compared with the more socially accepted practice of SA. Group1_No13 said that "the very nature of street art […] is the element of illegality to it". The practice of graffiti entailed specific interaction patterns that are quite different from those associated with SA. For example, Group1_No16 said that "before, people were used to meeting up at certain cheap stations in London and show each other their black books, or if you're lucky enough see a photograph in a magazine", whereas "with street

art you're painting on permission walls and people go over it within days" (Group1_No7). Group2_No12 provided nuances to the understanding of graffiti, describing it as a practice where there is "just me and my can painting specific things" such as tags and names. Graffiti taggers consider themselves a distinct community following a specific lifestyle. This lifestyle is considered more exciting than SA and entails "willing to go to prison for this" and "willing to risk their lives and futures for this kind of niche part of painting". Whereas, SA is "about selling out" (Group2_No12).

However, as already mentioned above, blurry boundaries exist between graffiti and SA in terms of identity and practice, we also observed that different street artists started as graffiti writers or still identify as such, whereas others started just as street artists. As Group3_No12 clarified, there are two main types of street artists: "those who came into street art and already had studied graphic design and illustration, and those who started from graffiti and tagging and got into street art". Another difference between graffiti and SA that became clear from the interviews is the perception of the audience towards the two practices. Indeed, graffiti taggers believe "the audience hates them" (Group1_No7) whereas "street art is much more digestible and directed towards the general public… and will always be accepted and looked at as safer than graffiti" (Group3_No25).

4.4.1.4 Value of Street Art

Accessibility and variety are the two main components of SA according to interviewees. As a form of artistic expression outside museums, SA has "the power of not being high art" (Group3_No15). This does not mean that the value of SA cannot be appreciated within the walls of galleries and/or museums, but that its essence is that of "low art and belongs to everyone" (Group3_No15). The perception of SA as a

form of creativity that speaks to everyone is also appreciated by businesses who are eager to exploit the accessibility of SA to their advantage. Indeed, Group2_No12 said:

> *You only have to wander around Shoreditch to see that companies will pay artists huge amounts of money to paint them a mural as an advert. Instead of a billboard, they'll just paint directly onto a building to try and appeal to this new culture.*

Different organizations are indeed aware of the ability SA has in talking to specific demographics and frequently commission street artworks as an advertisement tool. Obviously, When SA is used by businesses in connection with popular culture like videogames and other creative work, it loses that aspect of illegality that was originally attributed to graffiti. An example of how a known business used SA as an advertisement is available in Group1_No2 extract in Appendix B. Interviewees also mentioned "variety" as one of the values associated with SA. Because of the lack of an institution that codifies and defines the genres, street artists can generate a wide array of forms and styles. This aspect has been explained by Group2_No12 who said SA "is completely different the way TV is different" and by Group2_No10 who repeated that SA is being created "everyday" via influences from music and the UE as a complex of values, communities and messages "rather than just the location of a street".

4.4.1.5 Art Genre or Style

The creative practice of street artists can be understood also by considering the genre or style of street artworks. Appendix A contains a list of the most popular SA genres and styles that can be found in major European and American locations. On SNSs, genre and styles are the first things perceived by the public viewing a street artwork, even before the text/caption that accompanies the visuals.

4.4.2 Theme 2 - Other Creative Work

Together with executing SA on the street, street artists are frequently involved in creative work produced for other purposes such as charities, festivals, urban developments, restaurants, schools and music video/live events. In fact, different interviewees said that SA is frequently not a standalone practice, but it is "fused with so many other things today: advertising, commissioned wall painting, schools etc." (field notes). This happens also because street artists need to generate income to sustain their lives and their creative output. Of those street artists interviewed, some do commissioned wall painting as a side job from their main creative activity on walls. Merchandising from street artworks is also very common when SA becomes part of galleries exhibitions, events, and other commercial activities. Group2_No13 said that street artists "do paintings and prints" because "they sell very well (…) and it is affordable art".

4.4.3 Summarizing the Learning from the Creative Practice Dimension

The data analysis showed that the different actors connected with SA may place a different interpretation of the value of their creative practices. For example, street artists often believe that the value of street artworks depends only on the author's judgement and not on the judgment of other actors, other street artists believe that the creative practice of SA is valued according to whether it generates interactions either on digital SNSs or in real life. This aspect is also considered by curators when they are to make a judgment on the value of street artworks.

One important finding in this section explains SA as a practice that can be done either for professional purposes, or to create what interviewees call "high art" as shown in Figure 4.8 below. Concerning SA produced for professional purposes street artists

say that they create artworks in order to increase the following they have on SNSs, which then leads to more business opportunities with galleries and brands. Whereas, other street artists use SA as a full-time job in order to generate income.

Figure 4.8.

Summarising the Learning from the Creative Practice Dimension
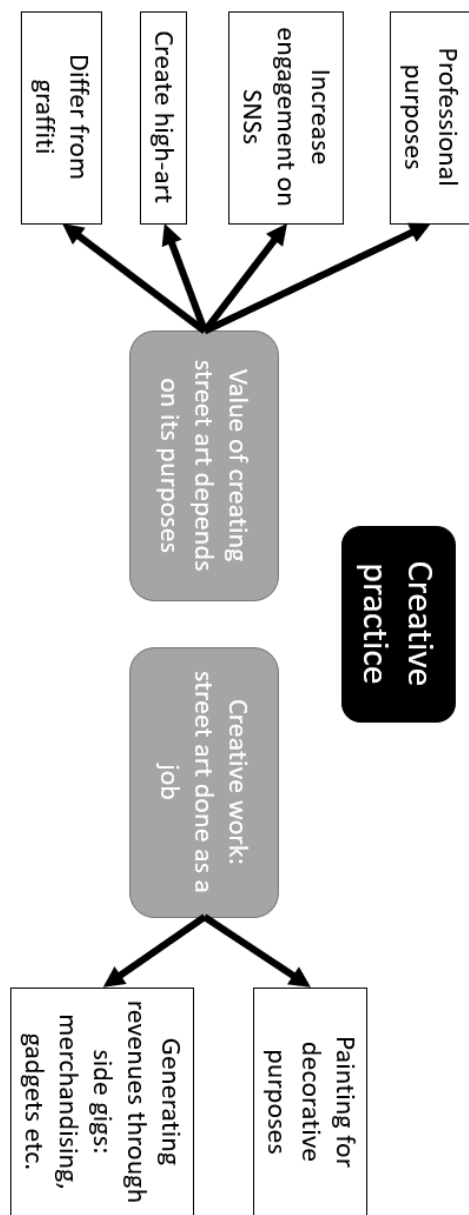
Source: the thesis author.

4.5 Dimension 4: Understanding the Community

The analysis of the interviews revealed that the behaviour of street artists within their peer groups - the crew members according to Group1_No7 and Group2_No12 - resembled that of a group of people with a shared interest who collaborate in order to produce SA. Interviews showed not only that the purpose of the community is to produce SA as a crew, but also to learn from each other about styles and techniques, to discover blank walls to use as canvases, to learn about business opportunities, and to seek out the feeling of being part of a community. Therefore, the account given by interviewees defines that the interactions that happen within SA crews resemble participative community practices available within tribal communities where value is co-created and accumulated as actors intervene in the process.

Another theme discussed in this section refers to the role of some actors who behave as gatekeepers. Interviews indeed revealed the presence of actors that work as facilitators in the process for which street artworks become renowned. The third and fourth themes in this section discuss the findings related to the difficulties related to living an artist life and to aspects of being part of a community. The four themes discussed in this section are the *Shared Practice to Achieve Renown-Ness* theme, the *Gatekeepers* theme, the *Difficulties of Artist Life* theme, and the *Community* theme. This is the last aggregate dimension (Figure 4.1) that was drawn from the analysis.

4.5.1 Theme 1 - Shared Practice to Achieve Renown-Ness

Interviewees are aware that knowing how SNSs work can help street artworks to achieve renown-ness quickly. One practice that street artists understand can make street artwork renowned is doing "a good job" (Group1_No2) using SNSs to create engagement with the digital public. According to interviewees, publishing plain pictures

on SNSs does not incentivise the engagement of the public, therefore they have learned to employ a strategy of actions that includes creating engaging captions, videos, use of mentions and hashtags, and creating a story that can be of interest to the audience.

Furthermore, interviews with street artists and curators revealed that there are "a couple" (Group1_No14) of elements that particularly contribute to attract audiences on SNSs and potentially make artworks renowned. These elements are the ability of artists to create something which is either disruptive, innovative, or questioning; that is a good quality representation of the current mainstream theme; or is linked to a promotional campaign; or is connected to an online trending topic. Often, more than one of these elements is available in a single post on SNS. Street artists believe that what makes an artwork potentially renowned is creating "a new story because people are desperate for stuff online to share" (Group1_No14), and that these stories shared on SNSs "have more layers than just social media. It needs to be all the media".

Interviewees frequently mentioned the term *layers* when discussing how street artworks become renowned. While analysing the data, it became clear that interviewees referred to the need for street artists to be proficient in different aspects such as: knowing how to use social media technically; knowing how to interact with different actors and gatekeepers in particular; understanding media in general and knowing how to incorporate media/popular subjects in their creative output. Indeed, Group3_No6 said that some street artists are renowned because they have been good at different things: "You have to be good at a lot of stuff. Photography, you have to understand hashtags, you have to be good at everything else". This means that other than being good at making art, to become renowned on SNSs street artists also need

to be "digitally savvy" (Group2_REC008) and know how social media works. These elements, together with others, are presented in the subsections below with reference to the conversations on SNSs analysed in this study.

The analysis brought up three concepts for this theme. They are *Elements That Make an Artwork Potentially Renowned*, the *Telling a Story,* and the *Ego* concepts, and are discussed in order below.

4.5.1.1 Elements that Make an Artwork Potentially Renowned

Interviews revealed that there are some specific elements needed for street artworks to engage with the public and become renowned. Street artists engage in a shared practice that uses these elements in their creative activity. To cite a few: street artworks need to be disruptive; to be connected to a trending topic; or to exploit the popularity of a subject within a specific demographic. Examples mentioned during interviews and observed on SNSs are street artworks picturing David Bowie, Prince, or Amy Winehouse immediately after the death of these artists; street artworks used as promotional material for the launch of a movie; street artworks with video-game characters. These examples are available in Conversations 1, 2, 5 and 6 available in Appendix D. The field note subsequently quoted captured five items relating to what interviewees believe contribute to the renown-ness of street artworks:

> *What you need to become famous: being current, have location, have a message, beautifully painted. Plus, you need a platform that lets you do that.*

The meaning of each element in the field note is discussed below:

(I) being current refers to connecting an artwork to a trending topic. It can be a political event[60], news about music, cinema, or a trending topic like the environment[61], the

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[60] Brexit fuelled the creation of numerous street artworks in and outside of the UK (Group3_No4).
[61] Banksy's environmental stencil artworks are popular worldwide.

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death of a famous character of the movie/publishing/music industry (Conversation 1 and 2), or a pop culture reference. This is one of the main elements that an artwork needs in order to "connect with people in a nutshell" (Group1_No1). Particularly, using current pop culture references allows street artworks to have "an easier reach on social media" (Group1_No5).

(II) Having a location refers to the artwork being connected to a physical context. Street artworks are usually influenced by the local milieu in terms of styles and subjects painted.

(III) The *message* element refers to street artworks being able to convey a message to an audience. Observing SNSs showed that the message can be of any kind: commercial, political, sexual, environmental, satirical, it can relate to a topic in media industries, etc. What is important is that the street artwork is "able to communicate with the audience" (Group1_No14).

(IV) Also, an artwork must be "aesthetically pleasing" (beautifully painted as in the field note above) meaning that it needs to have that visual "goodness" Group1_No5 was mentioning.

(V) Finally, *you need a platform*, meaning that all the elements above need to be conveyed univocally in one single setting. SA is traditionally displayed on streets, but, as discussed above, "the new walls are iPhone screens" (Group2_No6).

Moreover, interviewees provided further understanding of the elements above and added two more. A number of interviewed curators mentioned the need for "disruptivity" that elevates a street artwork from the rest of SA. By disruptivity, interviewees mean an artwork with novel elements that no other artists have used before, or that uses elements in an innovative way that stimulates the audience with a

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question, that presents some remarkable stylistic traits or an alternative way to refer to an already existing concept. An example of this is Conversation 6 in Appendix D.

Group3_No20 described disruptivity saying that an artist must breach into the subculture by doing stunts. Group2_No2, Group2_No10, Group2_No12 and Group3_No3 helped understanding what stunts mean and said that street artworks "have to be offensive", "controversial. Be out be loud. Go extreme" and that they need originality compared to the current artistic production. Group1_No14 said that another element is comedy. Indeed, they said that artworks have to be like "a meme that exists in the real world". This can be applied to Conversation 6 where, apart from the evident pop-art/cultural reference - which makes the street artwork able to "speak at the youth" (Group2_No16) - the author included a joke which is perceived as "light-hearted entertainment" (Group1_No14). However, street artists must also show "consistency" (Group1_No5) in their creative output and avoid sudden changes in subject and style. Maintaining a consistency in terms of style and technique allows artworks to be easily recognised by the audience and contributes to building a sense of following.

Another element that drives audience attention and almost guarantees the artwork to potentially become renowned, according to street artists, is a "very common topic" such as "a beautiful woman's face" or using sexual references (Group1_No7). However, this is not what all street artists or curators agreed. Indeed Group2_No9 said that the street artworks in Conversation 4 and 5 "are nice, but they don't really say anything or have any wider connection to the community". Also, Group2_No1 said that these common topics can be aesthetically pleasing, but for their gallery, "the image must be strong and original in terms of both colour choice and the narrative of the piece". Therefore, street artworks that have the potential to become renowned within

general audiences may not be suitable for curatorial interest because they may not show artistic quality in the execution (Group3_No18Double).

4.5.1.2 Telling a Story

Interviewees agreed that, to become renowned, street artworks need to engage with the audience. Indeed, there is a shared practice of street artists who create engaging stories to "keep the engagement up" on SNSs (Group1_No12). This is done by sharing not just the pictures of artworks, but also lists the details regarding how street artists approached the artwork, what led them to use that subject, and the reasons behind the selection of a location. To summarise, street artists who aim at engagement, know that they have to present the artwork as a *story*. This consists of making "people say 'I like how you did that'" (Group1_No12) which means that viewers should be able to see how an artwork is created, and not just the final piece on a wall.

Conversations 4 and 5 (available in Appendix D) comprise a visual element along with captions that explain how the artwork has been done. Moreover, Conversation 4 also provides a visual history with five pictures, rather than explaining the how within the text. The captions below demonstrate how street artists engage in creating this story. Conversation 4 includes information about the location, the mentions by other actors, and a series of hashtags related to SA:

Messing with a piece from last summer that got scratched up. ⊚Cheers as always to #therealartofstreetart for the #Camden spot. #streetart #graffiti #irony #ironystreetart #ironygraffiti #camdenmarket #Camdengraffiti #eyepatch #rnib #loss #somethingswefix #somethingswelooseforever

Source: retrieved from Instagram, collated by the thesis author

Conversation 5 is another example where the author included a variety of information to create an engaging story. Apart from information about the model in the street artwork and the location, they also referred to the conditions under which the artwork was executed, the people who contributed to its construction, and the possibility of meeting them at the festival:

> Night shot (because I'm long) of my Finished wall for @▮▮▮▮▮▮ in Birmingham next weekend. Model @▮▮▮▮▮▮ 🙏 👊 thanks for the inspiration! Unfortunately I can't be there at the weekend so I came early to do this. Thanks to @▮▮▮▮ and @▮▮▮▮▮▮ the support #graffiti #painting #nature #culture #flowergirl #lilies

Source: retrieved from Instagram, collated by the thesis author

4.5.1.3 Ego

The sense of ego has been frequently referred to by interviewees. This concept also appeared within the [differences between graffiti and street art subsection](), that street artists draw personal satisfaction from the performance of their posts on social media as well as from their creative activity. Group2_No2 states that good performances on SNSs with "numbers, are good for your ego" but then street artists aim at converting numbers on SNSs to financial performance: "later you start to realise how to profit out of it". The importance of ego-personal satisfaction is also confirmed by Group2_No12 who said that street artists "always say that what we do is for the people on the streets. But in reality, we do it for our own ego". This attention to ego can be noted in the captions of five out of the six conversations on SNSs considered in this study. Indeed, the captions include mentions and names of authors, street artists, curators and other people who collaborated to make the street artwork.

4.5.2 Theme 2 - Gatekeepers

Interviews showed that a wide set of actors is involved in the process by which unknown street artworks become renowned, and that their activities are happening

both on and offline. Some of these actors have been referred to by interviewees as *gatekeepers* which have a specific role in the renown-ness process. Group1_No2 said that "there are some specific gatekeepers for street art and we're talking about digital dissemination". These are, for instance, "the big blogs, the people on Instagram, who share the artwork of different artists" (Group1_No5). These big blogs "have big followings and they can really make or break an artist, depending on who they share" (Group1_No5) on SNSs. Group1_No2 described these gatekeepers saying that "they're the people who have the biggest followings and are the ones who are promoting lots of different artists and sharing who's hot at the moment" adding that not only the gatekeepers can make or break an artist, but they also identify the trending street artists.

Other gatekeepers, identified by interviewees, that have a relevant role in contributing to the renown-ness of street artworks are, as Group1_No7 listed them: "my crew, my colleagues" and "if I get some compliment from the guys that I know who paint and I respect, that's a thing"; underlying the importance of peer recognition in the SA communities. Street artists said they have exploited the connections with their peers to reach a wider audience. The peers can be photographers, bloggers and curators that the street artists know or are introduced to by their peers. The analysis brought up three main types of gatekeepers that have already been mentioned and discussed in terms of [actors involved in the process](#):

1. The community of peers: this group of gatekeepers is made up of street artists who follow each other in order to check each other's work, get inspiration, tips and suggestions on what to paint, how to do it, where to do it - walls are limited in number, especially authorised walls. The peer community is also useful for making

connections with further gatekeepers such as photographers, curators, and bloggers.

2. The wider audience, represented by digital and non-digital users connected from different parts of the world, which may appreciate specific styles, topics and genres, and not appreciate others because of cultural and social aspects. The general audience can be considered a gatekeeper because "they can make or break an artist" according to who they like on social media.

3. Curators, festival organisers, photographers, SA bloggers, and SA webpages on SNSs. All these can be considered gatekeepers because they all gather information on styles, genres, artists, communities, and other aspects of SA that are relevant for their work and share them with wider audiences or other professionals. Group3_No20 said that to get renowned, street artists need "blogs, posts and things like that".

The analysis revealed three concepts for the Gatekeepers theme: *Role of Gatekeepers, Practice of Gatekeepers*, and *Role of the Audience*. These are discussed in order below.

4.5.2.1 Role of Gatekeepers

Group3_No20 stated that gatekeepers are crucial in making street artworks renowned. This is because all the professionals involved in the process such as photographers, bloggers and curators contribute to distributing street artworks with blogs, galleries, festivals and the wider audience. Group1_No5 stated that gatekeepers are not important "financially", but "for festivals" because photographers contribute to the distribution of street artworks and share the results of their reportage with curators and festival organisers. Some gatekeepers such as curators have the role of initiator

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and facilitator for street artists because "they are doing the legwork to get permissions to paint walls. And it allows street artists "to focus completely on" working on "designs" (Group2_No11 and visible in Figures 4.3 and 4.6). This is particularly useful for street artists because it allows them to concentrate on their creative activity and removes the sense of danger and illegality that characterised the graffiti and SA culture for a long time.

The role of gatekeepers such as in blogs is visible in Conversation 6[62]. In this case, the original post already had some relevant success due to the elements that made the artwork renowned, as discussed in the previous subsection and because it used a platform to reach audiences. The original post also reached specialised SNSs - namely SA specialised Instagram pages - which re-posted the street artwork and reached even further audiences as visible in Figure 4.9 below. The difference between the likes achieved in the original post (above) and those in the re-post (below, in Figure 4.9) demonstrates the power of gatekeepers in making street artworks go viral in social media, and then become renowned.

Other gatekeepers also have important roles for the renown-ness of SA. Group3_No20 said that curators can "make or break an artist" by putting "on a show". SA curators do not deal only with collections, they also contribute to the dissemination of street artworks towards the audience by organizing SA tours in the streets or by finding street artists for a commissioned work, as stated by Group2_No13. Indeed, curators may use their lists to "find somebody that he thinks needs promotion and

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[62] Conversation 6 is made up of two posts on SNSs, the first is done by a photographer, the second is done by a specialised SNS.

Figure 4.9.

Conversation 6 Change of Likes

Liked by ███████ and 1,460 others
JANUARY 12, 2018

Liked by ███████ and 38,899 others
JANUARY 30, 2018

Note. The Likes in the First Row are Related to the Original Post, the Likes in the Second Row are Related to the Re-post.
Source: retrieved from Instagram, collated by the thesis author.

thinks they haven't been exhibiting in the area for a while" and suggest them for a wall-painting project.

Another important type of gatekeeper is the photographer. According to Group2_No9, photographers helped SA detach from the sense of illegality inherited from graffiti. Indeed, they said "photographers played a huge part in helping street artists get out globally. And that work was pioneered by people like Martha Cooper[63] in America in the late 1980s". Photographers are important gatekeepers because without their presence and work, "the work of street artists wouldn't be known" (Group2_No9). Interviews showed that photographers use both the internet and non-digital means to publish their reportages. Finally, peers, like friends, colleagues and members of the crew can be considered as gatekeepers because, as we have seen above, they are first ones to discuss brand-new street artworks and start sharing them with their peers/networks.

4.5.2.2 Practice of Gatekeepers

The gatekeepers identified above use a variety of practices that change according to their interests and profession. For instance, "curators put the things

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[63] Author of *Subway Art*, book used in this study to explore the history of graffiti and SA.

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officially in a gallery or a museum" (Group2_No12), and to do that they "consider the artists' digital popularity" (Group2_No2). However, the practice of curators has changed since the advent of the internet. Indeed, Group2_No4 said that "in the early days" of the internet, curators would be interested in street artists popular on the internet, whereas today the curatorial practice "is too well developed for [popularity on the internet] to have any significant impact on curatorial policy". Curators speak "to friends with a blog and through that data, they know all the artists in the area and the artists internationally" (Group2_No13). Doing this is of use for curators whose concern is to make sure the collections they are composing are backed up by data from SNSs such as "bloggers and instagrammers" (Group2_No13). Curators indeed collaborate with other gatekeepers and colleagues to have a sense of street artists and thus make an initial evaluation of them.

The practice of a curator consists also in creating connections between street artists and other actors in the process such as "someone with a drone who's going to film" (Group3_No5) the making of the street artwork and then publish it in real time on social media, or any other connection that would help street artworks to reach audiences. Therefore, the practice of curators as gatekeepers consists of wearing "many hats" for which curators are not just managing collections anymore, but they are involved in "making art", being the "PR person", "scouting for other artists to work with" and "buying and selling art on the market" (Group3_No5). This multi-tasking aspect of curators can be seen also in the composition of interviewees, which are frequently not just street artists, but also curators, bloggers, and street artists at the same time.

Other gatekeepers such as photographers share a common practice with curators. Group3_No1 said they "take pictures of street art and graffiti and post them

on Instagram". Also, Group3_No14 tends to "photograph tags, throw-up stickers to some degree and also pieces along the highways and truck sites on trains every day". This practice is at the base of what happened with Conversation 6 which was first photographed by Group3_No4, and then got distributed on another SNS thanks to the hype generated by the first online share.

4.5.2.3 Role of the General Audience

All interviewees are aware of the role of the general audience in contributing to the renown-ness of street artworks. Group2_No12 believes there is an "element of validation" from the online following of street artists. Indeed, they said that some famous street artists would have never been "commissioned to paint a mural on the side of the UN, if he didn't have this massive following". Nevertheless, they also say there is not a neat and tidy relationship between the number of followers and a street artist's success. Referring to their own gallery, Group2_No12 said: " ▆▆ has only 5000 followers. And yet he's one of our most successful artists whenever we do releases, they always sell out. So, it's not always black and white these things". Although, they also agree that "digital popularity is always a factor [curators] have to consider these days because now it's such a big part of being an artist". Also, Group3_No18Double is convinced it is the general public, in terms of numbers on SNSs, that "experts who are looking for artists look at". These experts look at numbers because:

> If you're organizing events, exhibition or a festival, it is nice to know that the artist has an audience. And if the artist has an audience, it means most of the times that the artist is doing a good job.

In this sense, the audience is almost a guarantee of the quality of the work of a street artist. The popularity on SNSs is data used by SA professionals to assess whether the merchandising related with an artist is potentially going to generate

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revenues, according to Group2_No10. This has also been confirmed by Group2_No4, which believes digital popularity can lead to success in a commercial setting "where perhaps critical judgement can be suspended in favour of generating capital". However, "there are many enormously popular *street artists* [emphasis added] whose fame does not translate to significant sales".

Other curators would disagree with this because "the popularity of artists in museums/galleries does not depend on their success amongst the audience. A street artist can be incredibly popular amongst their audience but still be unable to secure a gallery or museum show" (Group2_No12). According to Group3_No1, the general audience has an important role in how street artworks become renowned because "they can make or break an artist [since they] decide which artist is more famous on social media". Whereas Group3_No15 "don't think that the number of likes or followers have a direct correlation with the quality of the art", and Group3_No17 confirms this by saying that "the public can determine popularity, which is different than artistic merit". Group3_No5 believes "if the amount of comments from fans is huge, that's obviously going to have an effect on the popularity". This is also visible in Conversation 3 (in Appendix D) where the lack of both text in the caption and metadata caused very little reaction on social media.

4.5.3 Theme 3 - Difficulties of Artist Life

Street artists declared they feel the difficulties of an artist's life. In particular, Group2_No12 refers to the generational change of street artists and feels that those who started in the 1990s with graffiti and are now heading towards their 40s and 50s, are the ones who are struggling more with the different functions and tasks related to being a street artist in a digital world.

Issues are frequently related to the amount of time artists need to spend on their self-promotion rather than the time needed to produce artworks. Some street artists are, in fact, very adept with the functions of social media, and that covers their actual lack of creative ability according to Group2_No16: "artists have been making art for six months just because they're good on the computer and can make something fun". Group2_No2 refers to this by saying that street artists have to do "a lot of boring work because when you write to 20 people the same message and to 20 Facebook groups and post the same thing, this is ████ boring".

Moreover, being a street artist without access to financial resources can be quite difficult for those who are just starting their career. This is because being an artist demands "multitasking and use all the tools to become a known artist. So, you cannot just do art for art's sake" (field notes). Indeed, self-promotion takes a lot of effort and energy according to many street artists who were not aware of the amount of non-creative work they had to do in order to survive, especially on SNSs. Group3_No7 said "artists have such a tough time doing" self-promotion on SNSs, and mentioned that "there are the rare few people who are able to play the business game and the marketing game, as well as doing the art game".

This is why street artists do engage in "commissioned work to sustain their lives" (field notes), as discussed in Subsection 4.4.2. Interviewees said there are many street artists "who do art as a side gig to their main job, so it's more or less a hobby for most of them" (Group3_No7) and this is so frequent that "there are two or three people who work professionally [as street artists] all the time. And there are ten which do it as a hobby". Street artists refer to their creative activity as "running a business" (Group3_No7 and Group2_No12). For instance, as already mentioned above, street

artists try to "sell t-shirts, they sell stickers, and they sell posters" (Group2_No13) in order to generate income to support their expenses and their creative practice. The difficulty for street artists stands in having a strategically commercial mindset that needs to go hand in hand with their creative output. This aspect has also been caught in Table 3.3 above, where street artists have been identified also as mural artists, meaning that they use their practice of painting murals as a job.

4.5.4 Theme 4 - Community

The analysis of interviews and conversations on SNSs brought up three concepts discussed by participants in the Community theme: the *Sense of Belonging to the Institutional Artworld* concept, the *Sense of Belonging to the Community* concept, and the *Context* concept. These are discussed in order below.

All interviewees mentioned that street artists work and live feeling they are part of a community. Analysing the interviews revealed that the idea and the features of community described by interviewees characterise how value is created and distributed within and beyond the street artists' community. Indeed, street artists are concerned with deriving the value they imbue their artworks with from the community they are part of; they learn styles, techniques, and practices from their peers; they interact and share knowledge, resources and build relationships with other actors, thus generating relationships that influence how creativities are perceived and influence their value of SA.

From the community, street artists receive a series of benefits such as inspiration for their artworks, information about techniques, connections with other street artists, information regarding SA festivals and other events. As mentioned earlier, interviews showed street artists frequently search for an initial reaction from

their closest peers, who are fellow street artists or members of their own crew, or members of creative collectives, because they look for legitimation - and compliments - from those they trust (Group1_No7). Being part of a community is an important aspect of the street artworld because it brings benefits to their members. Group2_No16 said that the main benefit from being part of the community of street artists is to "learn their techniques" because that is how street artists "get bigger, better, and your audience grows".

4.5.4.1 Sense of Belonging to the Institutional Artworld

Interviewees have frequently commented on the institutionalisation of SA; mostly in a negative way. For instance, Group1_No2 said they "don't really believe that street art or graffiti should be in a gallery or museum because this is a very different context. We exhibit in the street". Other street artists like Group1_No14 said they "would be happy to be in an exhibition" but it is not their ultimate goal. Group1_Triple said that to be a street artist and to make a living out of it, one needs "to have a base of buyers who want to buy your stuff" suggesting that street artists need to engage in commercial activities typical of other forms of art. Group1_Triple also said they would be happy to work in museums because "it can open up my art to a different audience but, working on the streets means my audience is literally everyone who walks past that wall".

4.5.4.2 Sense of Belonging to the Community

The SA community is both very active and close-knit. Both interviews and conversations on SNSs showed that "street artists consider themselves as one of the gatekeepers that determine the value of their work" (field notes) and that the support within the community is very important. Indeed "street artists tend to keep in contact

with each other even if they don't like their work", and that online criticism is not really evident compared to "traditional kind of art-studio practice" where critics are much more present (field notes).

One of the reasons why street artists may enjoy the use of SNSs stands in the possibility that social media gives them to interact with their peers and the general audience. In this sense, Group_No2 said that with SNS street artists are "able to bring the artistic community together, share pictures with other artists and share it with people who appreciate street art and graffiti" and also to be part of "the larger graffiti community" (Group1_REC001). Having interaction and recognition with peers is very valuable for Group1_No11 and Group1_No12 who said, respectively:

When your peers are recognising your stuff. That's the most important thing.

Success for me today is the people that I have had the fortune collaborating with and becoming friends with. I love how all these energies that combine and strengthen the scene and strengthen the identity of an area.

Group2_No12 also participates in this sense of belonging to a community and explained that "to become a famous street artist, you have to have the support of your peers and your street art colleagues". Street artists - believe in a street artworld where "a community of people are working together and collaborating" (field notes). This supportive community has also been described by Group1_No11 who said that "when your peers are recognising your stuff. That's the most important thing", and by Group1_No12 confirming that "the success for me today is the people that I have had the fortune collaborating with and becoming friends with" in the SA community.

4.5.4.3 Context

Context is a very important concept in SA. A number of curators said that the location of their galleries is not casual. Group2_No12 said that galleries "draw inspiration from where [they] are, specifically geographically: East London is the capital of UK street art with Bristol. And we're lucky enough to have really great relationships with a lot of local artists". Therefore, galleries draw value from the context. At the same time, galleries and SA crews operating in a certain area can affect the perception of the local community towards SA. Indeed, Group2_No12 explained that the attitude of locals towards SA has changed over the time thanks to the work done by galleries. They said SA today "is very much more accepted. People like it as part of their culture, it attracts tourism and makes people feel special. It's interesting to live in an area with street art" (Group2_No12).

The context also influences the artistic output of a community of artists. This was mentioned by Group2_No9 who brought the example of street artworks in Northern Ireland - which reflect the local conflicts - compared to the more commercial and globalised SA output in London. They also said that the topics in contemporary SA are influenced by the demographic of street artists who "are white middle-class men so they're drawn to painting images of women". This was particularly interesting when the conversations on SNSs were analysed because it helped to explain why Conversations 4 and 5 had a great deal of online success despite the artwork subject being an anonymous woman and not therefore a popular cultural reference subject like in Conversation 2.

Group2_No9 said that street artists can become renowned because the topics they paint are related to nationally discussed issues like fox hunting, the environment,

and the relationship between urban and natural space, and this is a shared practice amongst street artists. Group2_No9 finally said that local SA output is influenced by the dominant taste in "advertising or sponsorship and the kind of demographic of the painters, whereas in places like Brazil, Africa, the Caribbean, where it's in a bit more of a rawer form, it's not so influenced by this stuff" therefore underlining the importance of the context in SA output.

However, Group3_No18 observed it is difficult to explicitly see context in modern street artworks in the UK, but they are convinced that "the artists are very influenced by the context. The place itself is also part of the work. It is not just the marginal part of what's painted". This view is also shared by Group3_No14 who believe that the value of artworks depends "first of all in the context, in the sense of where it's done", and by Group3_No4 who said street artists chose to execute artworks with "some sort of relationship over the place. The context".

4.5.5 Summarizing the Learning from the Community Dimension

The analysis of both interviews and conversations on SNSs showed that there is a sense of community within the street artworld. This community comprises a group of people that share interests and purposes and learn from each other in different ways. Street artists have learned that they can paint street artworks and make sure they are current, disruptive, beautifully painted (left part of Figure 4.10 below) and that they have a clear message and are related to a context. Within this shared practice, street artists have realised that they have to master digital tools in order to be able to convey the elements above, and create a relatable story, especially if the purpose is to engage with audiences on SNSs.

In the SA community, there are also actors that facilitate how street artworks become renowned. These have been identified by interviewees as gatekeepers (centre-left in Figure 4.10 below). They are, namely, their closest peers - street artists belonging to the same crew - the general audience on SNSs, and the groups of curators, bloggers, photographers, and other actors who facilitate the dissemination of street artworks. These gatekeepers engage in different activities that benefit the renown-ness of street artworks and their execution and wear "many hats" meaning that they have multiple roles.

All interviewees share a feeling that they belong to a global community. This community has both institutional aspects related to the presence of curators and galleries, and spontaneous features such as a sense of rebellion towards any art forms formally represented within walls. The sense of community is also felt by street artists because they share similar struggles (right end of Figure 4.10 below): the older demographic of street artists lack of familiarity with the functions of SNSs, the time needed to produce a street artwork cannot exceed the time employed to become renowned on SNSs, the need to engage in "side gigs" (Group3_No7) and commissioned art in order to generate income and survive.

Figure 4.10.

Summarizing the Learning from the Community Dimension

Community

Shared practice to achieve renown-ness

- Plain pictures are not enough to attract audiences
- Create an engaging story
- Be digitally savvy
- Street artworks need to be current, disruptive, beautifully painted
- Street artworks must have a clear message, be related to context, shown on a platform

Gatekeepers

- Facilitate the dissemination of artworks towards audiences
- Contribute to validation of street artworks
- Crew members
- Audience
- Curators/bloggers/photographers

Difficulties of artist life

- There is not enough time to create artworks and to work to become famous on SNSs
- Older demographics have difficulties understanding SNSs
- Need to survive financially - do street art as a job to generate income

Community

- Street art is a global community
- There are institutional aspects and spontaneous aspect in the community
- Shared interest in doing street art
- Sharing ideas, styles, recommendations and business opportunities
- Help each other

Source: the thesis author.

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4.6 Summary of Chapter 4

The findings from the data analysis are broadly consistent with some aspects already identified in the Literature Review chapter. However, interviews and conversations on SNSs data have clarified the blurry aspects of the phenomenon for which street artworks become renowned and allowed the emergence of different themes. The information elicited from interviewees and SNSs revealed the definition of four aggregate dimensions that explain important aspects of the phenomenon. Although there is no standalone aggregate dimension called *value* in this chapter, the element of value pervades the narrative of all interviewees and is noticeable in the SNSs. However, interviews showed that the value associated with social media is frequently one of distrust, especially from street artists belonging to an older demographic, and that the use of SNSs explains only in part how street artworks become renowned today.

The data analysis revealed that different types of value are created within the wider SA community both in a collaborative way and as a result of the creative practice; these types of value contribute to the renown-ness of street artworks. For instance, the value street artists put on street artworks depends on the painted subject and, according to a number of interviewees, is affected by the physical context surrounding the artwork. This value is then one that is perceived by different types of on and offline audiences who participate in the distribution of artworks in a sort of incremental co-creative process called circles of legitimation (Group3_No18; see Figure 4.7). In this process, street artworks are viewed by different types of audiences, and move from a low level of renown-ness to a higher level. Some interviewees are not happy with how the general audience perceives the value of SA today. Indeed, many complained that

viewing and consuming SA from the screen of a smartphone does not give the viewer the real value of the street artwork. This is due to the impossibility to appreciate the context that goes beyond the mere picture of an artwork, and because the relationships happening on social media and those experienced through mobile phones, are often considered to be fake.

However, there are different actors that contribute collaboratively to create value and participate in this process. The first actors are street artists who create a brand-new artwork. The next actors in line are the crew members and the colleagues of the street artists when they start commenting, discussing and elevating the street artwork by sharing it amongst themselves and on SNSs. The crew members together with the author of the street artwork are part of a community of peers where information is shared on styles, practices, and opportunities and where community members give support to each other. SNSs, and social media in particular, aided street artists to feel a sense of community, because they allowed interaction at worldwide level and the participation of other actors, who are not street artists, but share the same interest in SA such as photographers, curators, street art connoisseurs and bloggers.

Once street artworks have been scrutinised and commented on by their crew members, they are shared on SNSs where bloggers, curators and other connoisseurs can see them. This represents the next circle in the co-creative legitimation process mentioned above. Bloggers and photographers can then decide to more broadly share the street artworks on their webpages on SNSs, and thus create further conversations with members of the general audience as well as with other actors, such as curators. This is important for the movement of street artworks upwards in the co-creation process because galleries/curators and street art festival organisers do take into

account the numbers on SNSs to decide which street artworks to include in a collection/event.

At this point, the street artwork has already been exposed to different audiences, including professional ones, and can become part of exhibitions and other events in the street (i.e., SA tours), galleries and museums. The more actors share pictures on SNSs, the more street artworks are exposed to further audiences, the more street artworks have a chance of becoming renowned. A common feature of the actors involved in this process is that many of them do not have just one role. Hence, we can have curators that run SNSs specialised in SA, or photographers who curate books and collections on SA, or street artists who are members of a creative collective who run a gallery. The movement of street artwork from low to high levels of renown-ness is incentivised by elements intrinsic of the artworks. A combination of these elements in the street artwork helps online users identify the value of street artworks and stimulates engagement. These elements are visible on SNSs and can refer to accompanying textual information on posts, metadata about location, subjects/topics, cultural references, trending topics, context, styles, and the ability to tell an engaging story.

The findings in this chapter support the original view of the process for which street artworks become renowned, but also provide a further understanding of the complex relationships, the interactions and the meanings that characterise it. Indeed, different themes have emerged from the analysis and were not immediately evident from the background study of the literature such as: the need to have skills to make the most out of social media; the features of the SA community; the layered aspects of the process for which street artworks become renowned; the fact that the process of

renown-ness is made of interactions happening both on and offline; the fact that street artists are aware they have to master complex practices made up of skills and relationships with other actors; the fact that many street artists engage in side gigs to support themselves and their creative practice financially - and the difficulties related to this - and finally, the articulation of the concept of value across the different on and offline interactions. How the findings in this chapter answer the RQs is discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws out the findings from the data analysis illustrated in the previous chapter and seeks to answer the RQs that emerged from the literature. The chapter is organised as follows. Section 5.2 discusses how the findings relate to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. This section is divided into five further subsections relating to each of the RQs. Section 5.3 considers the *black box* diagram that was first presented in Chapter 1. Section 5.4 evaluates the principal learning points from Chapter 5.

5.2 Returning to the Research Questions

Exploring the literature provided relevant understanding of the street artworld, but also suggested the focus of this study with the identification of five RQs, each related to a gap in previous research. This section indeed provides an answer to the RQs by comparing the findings against the literature[64]. The findings uncovered a number of new emerging themes and dimensions that were unforeseen or discussed in the literature review chapter. Therefore, each RQ is addressed in the current section (5.2), while the next section (5.3) discusses the *black box* more widely by including the emerging themes. The five RQs are listed below and discussed in order:

RQ1: *Who are the actors contributing to the legitimation and valuation of street art?*

RQ2: *What are the roles of these different actors in defining the value of street art and to what extent is this value defined online?*

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[64] The reader should note that, in Chapter 5, some of the wording used by interviewees has been maintained because it makes sense when discussing the literature.

RQ3: *How is the audience of street art composed? Are there differences between online and offline audiences?*

RQ4: *To what extent is the value of street artworks defined in a co-creation process taking place on digital platforms? What does this process consist of?*

RQ5: *What is the value chain of street art and to what extent does it include digital elements?*

5.2.1 RQ1: *Who are the Actors Contributing to the Legitimation and Valuation of Street Art?*

This RQ resulted from reviewing the literature concerning the conceptual and operational evolution of SA. The literature revealed that the value of SA is defined both in the practice, and from the perception, of street artists and by its public. The expectations from this RQ were to uncover similar concepts to those highlighted from the literature, since street artists provided interesting insights on their practice. However, data analysis contributed to further understanding regarding who the actors are that contribute to the legitimation of SA, with interviewees providing an interesting account on how SA is legitimised and valued.

To understand who the actors are that contribute to the legitimation and valuation of SA, one must look at the features of SA in terms of context, legality, styles, purpose, and language, as discussed in the literature (Castleman, 1982; Certeau, 1986; Dew, 2007; Ferrell, 1996; Hansen, 2005; Irvine, 2012; Lefebvre, 2003). The literature above discusses both graffiti and SA showing that graffiti is a less artistically evolved practice where authors have little interest in explaining what they have done, which technique they used, and the motivations behind their interventions. The legitimation of graffiti comes from within the community, whereas the current study

expands our understanding of SA by showing that there are a larger set of actors intervening in the valuation and legitimation of SA. This is mainly due to SA having a wider remit as a practice compared to graffiti. Indeed, the findings showed that street artists have much more interest in interacting with the context and in fostering relationships with the spectators viewing their artworks. This attitude of street artists gives a more artistic and cultural element to the practice of SA, and starts including the context, and a general audience, as initial interlocutors (as pointed out by Irvine, 2012).

Beardon (2006) and Dew (2007) stated that one of the main characteristics of SA is that its artworks are *authorised* - as opposed to graffiti that are illegal - whereas Hansen (2005) and Stewart (2008) said that part of the value of SA depends on the institutional codes followed by the authors to perform street artworks, and Pasternak (2010) states that the value of SA depends on the visible drawing technique as well as on the ability to promote social change in an area. These authors have, therefore, identified some actors that intervene in legitimising and valuing SA. The findings not only support the concepts available in past work but also add to the literature in relation to the authorization aspect of SA, i.e., that it comes from the commissioning institution which can be either a public authority, businesses, or an educational institution. In this sense, the findings expand the current understanding of SA as a language understood by everyone (Conklin, 2012) by showing that the variety of styles and techniques of SA, graffiti, and urban art allow them to be used in different contexts and for different purposes. Hence, in the digital era, SA is used in advertisement, decoration, urban renovation, commissions, charity, and political interventions, and can be produced both spontaneously and under agreements between parts. This finding is particularly

important because it shows how different actors recognise the power of street art to generate relationships that can be exploited by business organisations.

The legitimation and valuation of SA is also linked to technical aspects and styles of street artworks, and on the complex aesthetic, direct, and symbolic perception by different audiences (Colbert, 2007; Luonila & Jyrämä, 2019; White et al., 2009). According to Stewart (2008) and White (2018), street artworks have both a neatness and complexity in terms of style that is lacking in graffiti. These stylistic differences appeared when the artistic elements of graffiti started to be showcased in books during the 1980s and 1990s (Cooper and Chalfant, 1984) and when graffiti became SA on authorised walls and on different media, including the internet, in the early 2000s (Ross et al., 2017). Overall, the analysis identified the actors already identified in the literature. Interviewees indeed believe that the value of SA depends, in part, on the context where it is appreciated. Therefore, while graffiti "should not be in a gallery", SA can appear in institutionalised contexts like galleries apart from the more traditional context for SA: the streets.

Opposed to the value coming from authorised SA is the aspect of illegality that SA inherited from graffiti (Irvine, 2012, Ross et al., 2017). The findings showed that street artists can be either concerned with, or embrace, the aspect of illegality related to their practice. Indeed, some street artists execute street artworks that are "not too illegal looking" so as to avoid being associated with graffiti. Rather, old school street artists are still attached to the aspect of illegality of their practice - and its output - because it is considered "fun" having to perform the artwork "in a hurry" to avoid being caught by the police.

5.2.1.1 The Actors Involved in Street Art

The literature explained that SA started its journey into mainstream media when photographers published pictures of artistic graffiti (Cooper and Chalfant, 1984). However, the findings showed that in the UK, the boundaries between graffiti and SA are still blurry. This is particularly true if one considers that street artists often define themselves just as artists, without necessarily labelling their practice. Indeed, the findings show that the creative practice of SA can be articulated in three forms of expressions. These are (1) graffiti, which is an illegal activity based on the repeated writing of names and tags, (2) SA, which can take different forms and "should also be illegal", and (3) "new mural culture, that everyone is just calling street art".

Within this triple practice, street artists create crews composed of other street artists, photographers, connoisseurs, and other actors as shown in Table 5.1 below. SA crews are social organizations similar to what the literature refers to as gangs (Cooper and Chalfant, 1984 to 2015; Stewart, 2008), where street artworks are viewed, criticised, discussed, shared, and promoted by peers and other actors, as briefly discussed above. The presence of crews is, therefore, an important element of validation and valuation of street artworks which supports the understanding of SA as a community-based practice (Irvine, 2012). However, this study expanded the understanding of SA crews because it showed that the members of these crews promote, inspire, distribute the creative output of street artists, and participate to the value co-creation of street artworks.

Legal SA is widely used by institutions and businesses in neighbourhood planning, advertising, and within galleries' exhibitions (De Melker, 2011; Friedman, 2008; Lu, 2015; Stewart, 2008). On the other side, local authorities frequently sanction

and/or destroy illegal SA appearing in the streets (Beardon, 2006 ; Dew, 2007; Hansen, 2005 ; SpearIt, 2016; Weisel, 2002). The current study supports these practices by demonstrating that business organizations use SA as a language to attract specific audiences and demographics and advertise their products and services. However, the study also provided further nuances of this relationship by showing that Street artists are aware that SA "sells very well" and have learned to "play the business game" by shaping their creative practice both in order to achieve high numbers on SNSs, and with elements that attract commissioning organizations, as shown in Table 5.1.

Photographers are the other type of actor that has accompanied the evolution of SA from its conceptual and stylistic birth (Cooper and Chalfant, 1984)[65] and influenced its legitimation and valuation. This study adds to SA photographers the role of gatekeepers since they distribute street artworks on SNSs, allowing an initial digital circulation/distribution of street artworks towards wider audiences, contributing to collaborations and business, and interacting on SNSs. Another type of actor that is closely related with photographers - and sometimes can also be a SA photographer - is bloggers who, as discussed below, are able to bring more information about street artworks, and are used by street artists as a gateway to reach a specific online public.

Curators in old school SA are not that present apart from the rare - if not unique - experiences at events such as the exhibition at the Galleria La Medusa in 1979, as well as contributing to the shift of old school SA from city walls to gallery walls during the whole of the 1980s (Bambic, 2014). Whereas if we consider the general role of curators with visual arts, their notable role is that of facilitating "the encounter between artworks and their audience" (Edmonds et al., 2009, p. 143). This study supports

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[65] Distributing graffiti works via publications.

viewing curators as intermediaries between different subjects, but expanded the understanding of their actions, since interviewees mentioned that curators perform "the legwork" by securing the permission needed by street artists to paint a wall, amongst other features. This role of curators has the second highest impact on the legitimation of SA, after that of photographers. A further exploration on SA curators revealed their work of creating collections for galleries and museums which, in turn, can bring an artist to popularity and to consolidate this popularity, respectively, as discussed in more detail in RQ3 below.

The discussion above shows that, apart from the stylistic, legal, linguistic, practical, and contextual elements impacting on the value of SA, its legitimation and valuation also depend on the different actors that take part in the phenomenon, as shown at the bottom of Table 5.1 below. Although the focus of this study is SA, Table 5.1 also shows the articulation of the elements that influence legitimation and valuation in graffiti for two reasons: (1) because this is how interviewees told their story; (2) because it helps to understand that SA has a larger set of actors that influence its value given its wider remit. The elements in the table below include what we already knew from the literature - as discussed in this subsection - as well as the additional knowledge this study produced in order to answers RQ1. The different roles of the actors in the valuation of SA and their position in the co-creation process are discussed in more detail in the following subsections.

Table 5.1.

Features and Actors that Contribute to the Legitimation and Valuation of Street Art

	Street Art	Graffiti
Context	Can be in galleries - global	Not in a gallery - local
Legality	Can be legal/commissioned	Illegal → more fun
Styles	Many - done for *selling out*	Repetition of names & tags
Language	Universal and more digestible	Limited to the community
Purpose	Promote social change and interaction in the UE	Communicate mastery of spray-painting skills and ownership of neighbourhood
Actors involved	• Street artists & their crews • Sanctioning local authorities • Commissioning organizations • Photographers • Curators • Bloggers (and SNSs managers) • Festivals • Galleries • Museums • Scholars • General audience	• Taggers and crews • sanctioning local authorities • Few photographers

5.2.2 RQ2: *What are the Roles of These Different Actors in Defining the Value of Street Art and to What Extent is This Value Defined Online?*

RQ2 emanated from reviewing the literature on the history of SA and aims at understanding the different roles of the actors identified above in defining the value of

SA. The literature showed that different actors contribute to defining the value of SA. For example, photographers in the 1980s and 1990s contributed by removing the illegal heritage tag from SA and started to showcase the different styles that stimulated its appreciation (Cooper and Chalfant, 1984; Ferrell, 1993; White, 2018) through media. We have SA crews discussing street artworks within the community and inspire their peers (Dew, 2007; Stewart, 2008), and we have galleries that value street artworks before displaying them. Street artists indeed use the city as a source of inspiration (Certeau, 1986; Ellin, 2007; Irvine, 2012; Lefebvre, 2003) and enrich the UE (Hansen, 2005) stimulating public debate (Dew, 2007) with their creativity. Finally, (Ellin, 2007; Irvine, 2012; Certeau and Rendall, 1984) showed that the general audience is an important actor because of its role of interlocutor with SA.

Reviewing the literature suggested looking further into the street artworld in order to unveil a greater significance to the role of street artists, peers/crew members, curators, and photographers and to find the meaning of any other type of actors that contributed to defining the value of street artworks. However, the literature consulted did not provide an understanding of how much and in what ways these value contributions are related to the interactions happening online. A summary of the actors identified by reviewing the literature is available in Figure 5.1 below. The discussion that follows below shows how this study added knowledge to the actors listed in Figure 5.1 and allowed the development of Figure 5.2. A full list of actors involved is available in Subsection 5.3.1, in Table 5.1 above, as well as available in Figure 5.2 below. The role of each actor in defining the value of street artworks varies according to the actions performed and is discussed below in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of SA.

Street artists get inspiration from the physical UE in which they live, from the street artworks that circulate on SNSs where they navigate, from the physical interaction with their peers and crew members, and from the wider SA community available on SNSs[66]. The type of interaction that happens within and beyond SA crews resembles that of a participative community where different relationships generate narratives that influence the value of artworks (Kerrigan et al., 2011; Lee & Lee, 2019; Preece & Kerrigan, 2015), as explained in more detail in below.

Figure 5.1.

Actors That Influence the Value of SA Identified in the Literature
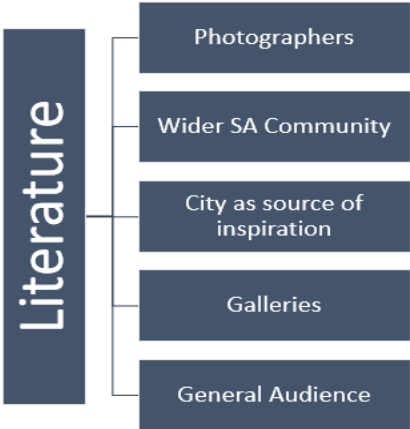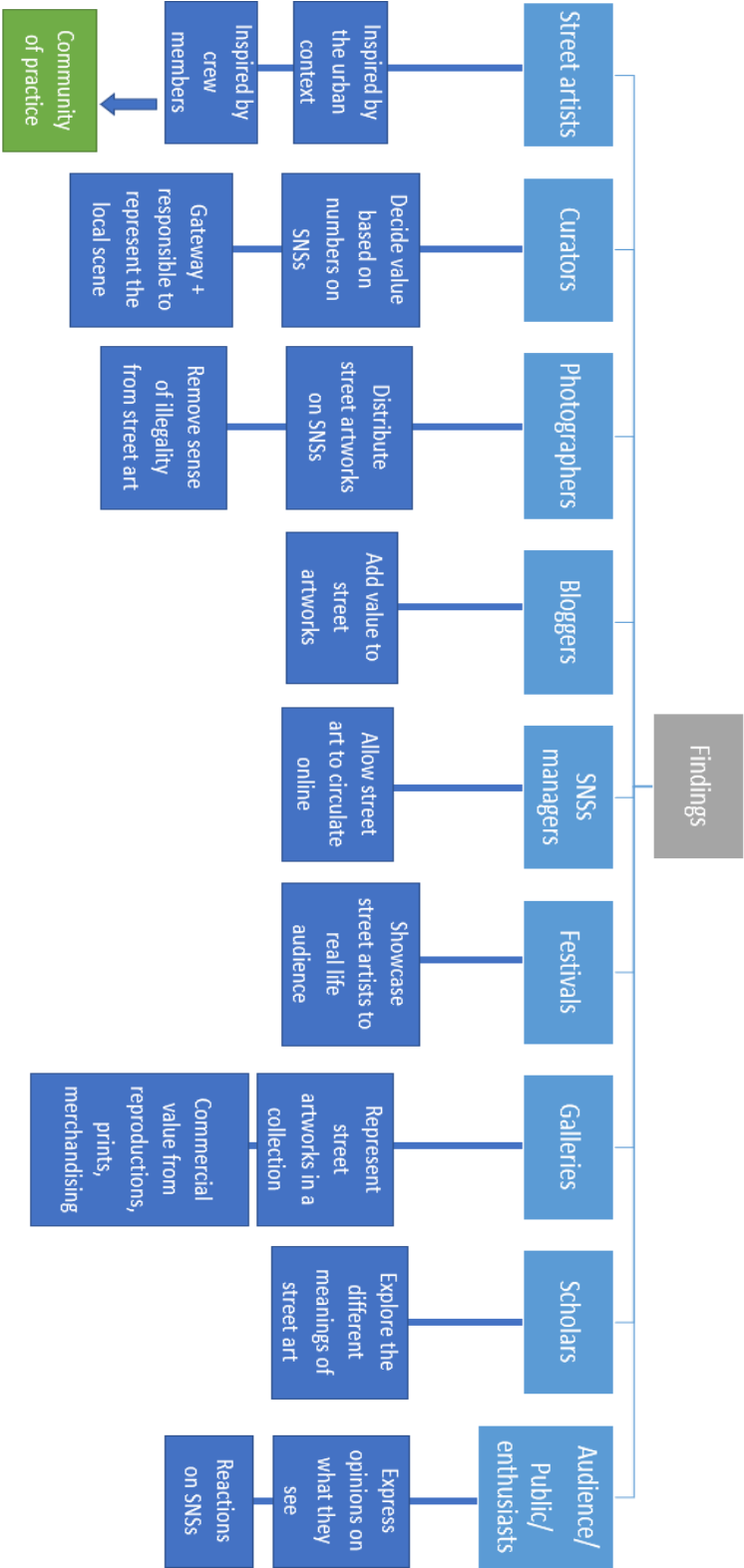

Source: the thesis author.

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[66] The wider SA community is the global network of street artists, curators and SA connoisseurs such as festival organisers and photographers.

Figure 5.2.

Actors that Influence the Value of SA According to the Findings

Source: the thesis author.

The value of being part of a community comes from having an initial "critical" view on their output and from the possibility for street artworks to start circulating within the community of peers, thus acquiring further visibility and the potential to become known by other actors. Curators have an important role in determining the value of street artworks. The analysis showed that curators make decisions about which street artwork to include in an exhibition basing their choice on the numbers of reactions that street artworks have received on SNSs. Also, since curators use SNSs to share information about SA, they have a role in "spreading the news" about new street artworks. Other actors interact with curators asking them to be featured on their social media pages, using them "as a gateway" to access specific audiences. Finally, the analysis showed that SA curators have a role in defining the value of street artworks because they do not just make collections of artworks based on genre, but also have a responsibility to represent "the best of the local scene" on SNSs.

SA connoisseurs are the other category of actors that contributes to defining the value of street artworks. As specified in the Findings chapter, by connoisseurs we refer to the photographers, bloggers, administrators of SNSs, festival organisers, critics, and scholars - as shown in Figure 5.2 above - where SA circulates. Photographers contribute to defining the value of SA by taking pictures of street artworks and putting them on SNSs where they are exposed to different audiences. The findings highlighted that photographers contribute to removing the sense of illegality from street artworks through their activity as "chroniclers". Bloggers add value to street artworks when they share their reasoning on the execution and on the styles of street artworks, adding more "spicy information" about street artists. Administrators of SNSs are those managing social media pages and digital fora where street artworks are displayed to,

and discussed by, different audiences - both professional audiences and general ones as discussed in the next subsection - and thus become renowned.

Galleries also play a role in defining the value of street artworks. Sometimes galleries are the organising structure that SA crews give themselves, therefore they work as a place where street artworks are showcased and where relationships between street artists are created. The findings highlighted the role of SA galleries showing that those are the places where "street artists make money" because they sell reproductions, prints, gadgets, and merchandising related to SA. SA festivals allow street artworks to be exposed to a wide audience in real life - as opposed to digital audiences on SNSs - including other SA crews and curators that may be looking for inspiration and new ideas. SA festivals also allow street artists to expand their digital audience by exploiting the social media promotion of festivals themselves. Scholars are researchers and academics who study SA and explore its meanings in the social world. They contribute to the understanding of different aspects of SA and divulgate the knowledge to both an academic and a general audience.

The data analysis showed that the general audience (far right of Figure 5.2 above) also contribute to defining the value of street artworks. Indeed, the users on SNSs can express their views on, and engage with, what they see, impacting on the personal satisfaction of street artists, on the choices made by businesses that search for viral content online to promote their products, and on the selection criteria of curators involved in building a collection. The general audience can, therefore, "make or break an artist". How the members of the general audience engage with street artworks is explained in Subsection 5.3.5 below.

5.2.3 RQ3: *How is the Audience of Street Art Composed? Are There Differences Between Online and Offline Audiences?*

RQ3 aims at understanding how the different actors that interact with street artworks might be considered as an audience. The concept of audience in SA is not to be limited to the number of people who view street artworks, either in the streets or online, but has a more articulated meaning. Indeed, the findings highlighted that most of the actors identified and discussed in RQ1 and RQ2 can be both viewers and promoters of street artworks. That is to say, in the phenomenon for which street artworks become renowned in the digital era, every actor that experiences SA in a virtual or analogue setting is also able to influence the value perceived by the next actor seeing the street artwork. Therefore, the study adds to the knowledge of SA in identifying the active audiences contributing to cumulatively co-create the value of SA.

Interacting with different audiences influences the value of street artworks according to stylistic qualities and to where the interactions occur. The literature showed that galleries are one of the actors that place artworks before the public (Riggle, 2010) prompting an aesthetic interaction with the artworks (Bolter and Grusin, 2003). The consulted literature only described the audience as viewers of art (Bolter and Grusin, 2003) instead of providing a detailed understanding of the types of audiences and their role in influencing the value of artworks. Therefore, RQ3 demonstrates how different audiences influence the value of street artworks, since different authors (Bach, 2001; Doezema, 1977; Duchamp; 1957; Knight, 2008) highlighted that the general audience can be considered as part of the artwork (Phillips, 1989) and are sometimes also the subject of artworks (Philips, 1996).

The expectations deriving from reviewing the literature were to construct a more comprehensive understanding of the general audience in terms of compositions and platforms used to experience art, but the analysis brought up a more nuanced conceptualisation of audience for SA - as introduced above - that includes types of audience, actions, and interactions. This integrated and inclusive understanding of audiences in SA is of particular importance for this study since it sets the basis for the specific value co-creation structure of SA, and because it suggests looking at audiences when studying how value is created in creative industries.

Indeed, different types of audiences have been identified with data analysis. The first type of audience of SA is the community of peers made up of the members of the wider community of which street artists are a part. The peers view street artworks both online - on SNSs such as social media platforms - and offline - in the streets, as well as participating in the execution of the artworks. These viewings happen both visibly and privately on SNSs. The next type of audience is photographers referred to as "chroniclers" that wander the urban spaces looking for street artworks to photograph. Photographers are an active audience in the sense that they do not just witness street artworks, but also contribute to their dissemination on SNSs. Similar to photographers - and sometimes covering both roles - are bloggers. Bloggers view street artworks either on or offline and reproduce them in their blogs. With the diffusion of street artworks on blogs and other SNSs, creativities are exposed to further SA connoisseurs, which is an audience made up of other photographers, bloggers, administrators of SNSs, festival organisers, critics, and scholars. Connoisseurs are the most diverse audience because they use SA for different reasons such as showcasing

street artworks to curators, who represent another type of audience with a professional approach to SA.

Next are galleries who become aware of street artworks through their interactions with curators and connoisseurs on SNSs. Finally, we have "museums who are consolidating artists' popularity". All these audiences also have a relationship with the general audience as shown in Figure 5.3 below and in Figure 5.4 below, because they contribute to the dissemination of photographs of street artworks on different platforms. The general audience is also an active audience in the sense that they do not simply witness street artworks passively. Indeed, the findings revealed that when the general audience interacts with street artworks on SNSs by liking, following, commenting, or sharing them on UGC available online, these interactions generate "numbers" that are considered as a measurement of popularity by different actors.

Moreover, street artists said they get a sense of validation when they get many interactions from the street artworks shared online; SA festival organisers produce the line-up of their events according to the numbers on SNSs attracted by street artists; curators compose their collections also considering these numbers; businesses make similar judgements when having to assess the best street artist for a commission. The role of the numbers on SNSs related to the general audience is shown in the light blue text box in the interactions row at the bottom of Figure 4.5.

Figure 5.3.

The Different Audiences of Street Art
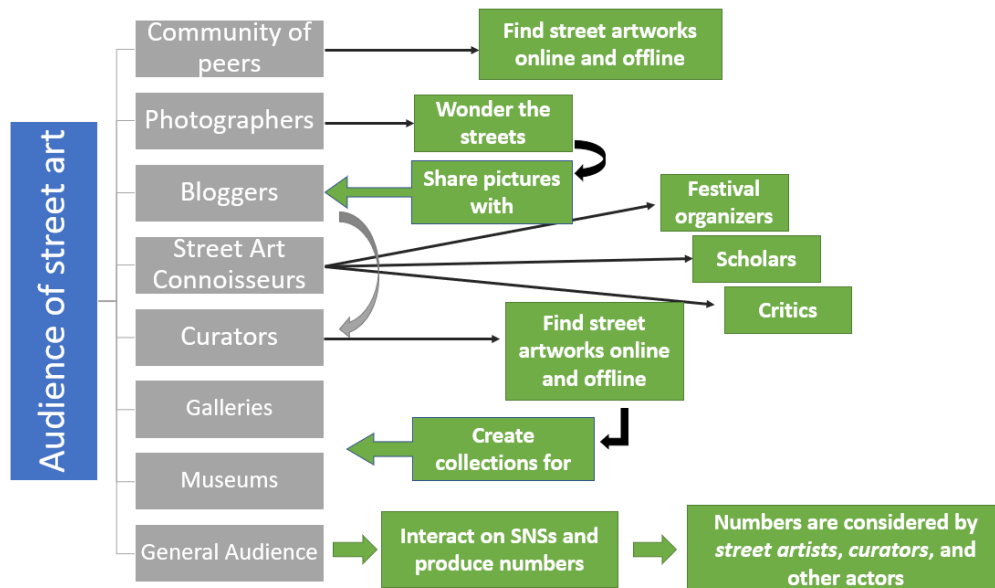
Source: the thesis author.

5.2.4 RQ4: *To what extent is the value of street artworks defined in a co-creation process taking place on digital platforms? What does this process consist of?*

This RQ arose from reviewing the literature on co-creation, crowdsourcing, and collective intelligence. Reviewing the literature on these themes provided an initial understanding of how different actors might collaborate to create value. The concept of co-creation adopted in this study considers that value in businesses can be co-created between producers, consumers, and any other stakeholders (Storbacka & Nenonen, 2008). The literature showed that co-creation can happen between two separate entities - producers and consumers - and between producers and large groups of actors that execute small parts of the original activity (Darmody, Yuksel & Venkatraman, 2017).

The literature on co-creation suggests that value in SA can be co-create as a collaboration between street artists and the general audience, or between street artists

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and other actors. Instead, the data analysis provided a new and detailed understanding of a complex co-creation process made up of different actors and actions, as explained below. The data analysis illuminated RQ4 by showing that the different actors identified above co-create the value of SA cumulatively with actions performed by different actors occurring both on and offline (Goulding et al., 2013)[67].

In SA, value co-creation begins with street artists initiating a street artwork. At this point, the co-creation consists of street artists getting inspired by the creativities they see on SNSs. Once the street artwork is finalised, discussion amongst peers[68] starts on its features. This discussion can happen at a worldwide level because street artists use SNSs to share their creations, as well as at a more local level, during SA exhibitions, festivals, and other events. This last aspect is particularly important because it adds to the understanding of SA as both a local and a global phenomenon that situates itself in both analogue and digital spaces (Irvine, 2012). The discussion happening within the SA community is important for value co-creation. Indeed, the value street artists get from being part of this community comes from the opportunity to access knowledge, hints, and suggestions on the shared practice to achieve renown-ness, to get acquainted with the right gatekeepers, and to share stories on how to overcome the difficulties related to being a street artist, as shown in Figure 4.10. The interactions occurring within the wider global SA community can be seen as co-creation within a creative crowd characterised by cooperation amongst the different parts (Lakhani & Panetta, 2007; Riggs & von Hippel, 2005, West & Altink, 1996).

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[67] The reader must note that the co-creation referred to in this thesis specifically relates to the value of a street artwork, and not to the material act of creation. However, the findings reveal that street artworks are often created collaboratively within crews.
[68] Peers can be either single persons or SA crews.

However, value co-creation in SA is not limited to crowd interactions. Indeed, as seen in Figure 5.3, photographers take pictures of street artworks they consider "good work" and share them on SNSs. Photographers co-create value by photographing street artworks based on the perceived aesthetic value of what they see (Osborne, 1986) and make new collections of street artworks, sharing them to the public. Moreover, the role of photographers unveiled in the study supports the view for which they are seen to enable the diffusion of SA within the audience, and thus begin to legitimise it as a form of art (Cooper & Chalfant, 1984).

According to the findings, bloggers also contribute to the value co-creation of SA. Bloggers are usually collaborating with photographers in identifying and selecting street artworks, or are photographers themselves, and engage with SA by writing blogposts and creating engaging narratives around creativities to make them more attractive to digital users on SNSs, as discussed in Section 5.3.2. The actions performed by both photographers and bloggers have been qualified by interviewees as the actions of gatekeepers, as explained in further detail in Subsection 5.3.6 below.

The next type of actors that co-create the value of SA is curators. Curators' traditional role is to "facilitate the encounter between artworks and their audience" (Edmonds et al., 2009, p. 143). This role is also to be found in SA curators, since the findings show that curators do not just build collections of artworks, but put themselves forward as a mediator between artists and their audiences. Indeed, curators explore the street artworld both in the streets and on SNSs looking for value useful to build collections that will be displayed online, in galleries, museums, books and SA tours, and then convey their perception of value via exhibitions or media. The value perceived by curators is partially related to street artworks' numbers on SNSs. However, the value

coming from interactions and numbers on SNSs is only one of the elements influencing the value of street artworks that curators consider and is related to the artwork's potential in terms of attracting audiences during the exhibition/event.

The other type of actor that contributes to SA value co-creation is SA festival organisers. These actors work similarly to curators, but with a stronger focus on the digital popularity of street artists. This happens both because SA festivals are often created in collaboration with curators, and because the purpose of SA festivals is to attract as many festival goers as possible. The findings highlighted that festivals and street artists collaborate in the sense that they use each other's media coverage to expand their reach to a wider audience - referred to as a "network effect" and a "social media game" by interviewees. Indeed, street artists get the benefit of being exposed to the festival audience in the social media pages and during the festival, while SA festivals get the benefit of exploiting the media coverage and established renown-ness of street artists, and thus promote their event to wider audiences.

The discussion above suggests that value co-creation in SA occurs hierarchically with different actors intervening in the value co-creation process at different stages. The findings support Preece et al.'s (2016) view of value co-creation in the arts for which it is a complex socio-economic network where value is co-created amongst actors in a cumulative way rather than occurring between producers and consumers. This is what comes out of the findings about SA: different actors perform different actions with different motivations and contribute to the value co-creation of creativities. The value co-creation hierarchy of SA can be seen in Figure 5.3 and has been discussed in the current subsection.

5.2.4.1 Aspects of Crowdsourcing and Prosumption in Street Art

Estellés-Arolas & Gonzalez-Ladron-de-Guevara (2012) define co-creation in crowdsourcing as an interaction that brings mutual benefit to both the crowdsourcer and the crowd. This is something that can be found also in SA if one considers the general audience as the crowd that performs a task. However, the mutual benefit consists of SA connoisseurs/curators and street artists exploiting each other's digital coverage. The findings show that members of the general audience are attracted to specific features of street artworks and will engage - both on and offline - if the creativity displays specific features[69]. Two main types of value are co-created in this engagement. One is the personal satisfaction felt by those who posted the picture on the SNS and by the author, which sees the numbers on SNSs rise; the other being the value that curators and festival organisers draw from these numbers to make a judgement on which artworks to consider for events.

A relevant aspect of value co-creation in SA[70] is the use of different platforms where value is created, distributed, and consumed: social media pages and blogs are part of the SA infrastructure. The presence of platforms where value co-creation occurs supports Banks & Deuze's (2009) and Palacios et al.'s (2016) view on the need to use platforms where value is generated and distributed to be able to identify a co-creation system (also mentioned by Flew, 2010, and Liao, 2014). To these digital platforms, we can add the already mentioned (Friedman, 2008; De Melker, 2011) analogue settings: museums and galleries. Hence the current study expands the settings where the value of SA is appreciated and discussed.

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[69] How audiences engage with creativities is explained in the Findings chapter as well as in Subsection 5.3.5 below.
[70] See Figure 5.5 for a clearer picture of the actors that participate in the co-creation process.

The analysis revealed that the value of SA is co-created by actors different than street artists. With this view, it is possible to see the similarities of SA with businesses that decentralise the production towards their peripheries to benefit from consumers/users' contributions to the production process (Von Hippel, 2005; Lakhani & Panetta, 2007) as creative crowds. In particular, the value co-creative actions performed by the different actors involved in SA can be classified both as production - creating the street artwork, writing the blogpost, taking photographs, organising a collection/exhibition, organising a festival - and as consumption - viewing street artworks in the street, viewing street artworks on SNSs, viewing street artworks in galleries, reading blogposts. Recognising the production and consumption actions performed allows for the framing of SA within the *Prosumption Continuum Framework* (Ritzer, 2014 & 2015; Toffler, 1984). This framework demonstrates that consumption and production can be ubiquitous and that there can be different activities performed by different actors located within the continuum at different points (Darmody, Yuksel & Venkatraman, 2017), as occurs in SA.

Moreover, the value co-creation in SA is characterised by mutual service, knowledge transfer, and cooperation/collaboration in different forms (Frow et al. 2008; Sheth and Uslay, 2007) amongst the different actors identified above, features that characterise the creation and the transference from one end to the other of a production system organised as crowdsourcing, as specified by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000) and Payne et al. (2008 and 2011). This helps in identifying the crowdsourcing features of SA as a co-creation process made up of producers, consumers, and prosumers of value.

In light of the literature discussed and considering the findings of this study, it is clear that co-creation is an important aspect of SA today. This is because the many actors involved in the production and consumption of SA have blended roles that help with co-creating the value of street artworks and contribute to their renown-ness. As discussed earlier in RQ3, co-creation in SA seems having a cumulative nature where different actors contribute with their own practices to the composition of value of SA (Cova & Cova, 2012; Collins, 2010; Luonila et al., 2019; Perera et al., 2020) as discussed in the numbered list below[71]. For example, the general audiences of SA plays an important role for being not just passive audience/viewers of SA, but having "many hats" and responsibilities in both viewing, influencing, and promoting the value of artworks to wider audiences. The many hats worn by the audience and other actors of SA can be seen in Figure 4.7. This diagram is evidence that the value co-creation is achieved at different stages of the production of SA:

(1) Street artists create street artworks that are daring, disruptive, questioning, bold, and fresh in order to stimulate viewers to take pictures of the artworks and share them online (left part of Figure 4.7), where further discussion happens.

(2) Street artists use standardised topics in their creativity because they have learned how to play with both on and offline contexts.

(3) Engaging with audiences, however, is not a linear process, and reaching renown-ness means to engage with different "circles of legitimation" (right side of Figure 4.7) meaning engagement with photographers who put SA online, bloggers who add "spicy information" to the story, critics and scholars who further discuss the

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[71] The analysis revealed that users refer to this cumulative nature of value co-creation of SA as *circles of legitimation*.

features of street artworks, and every other type of audience that impacts the value of artworks, from the closest peer to museums.

(4) As discussed above, achieving numbers on SNSs is important because both SA festival organisers and SA curators consider the value coming from these numbers when making a judgment on which street artworks to consider for their events.

The multiple-stage value co-creation in SA goes well with what has been considered to be the socio-cultural perspective of art valuation (Luonila & Jyrämä, 2019), which has been originally applied to contemporary art but can be relevant also beyond the institutionalised artworld. Indeed, the findings of the thesis show that SA has both characteristics in common with other forms of art such as the fact that the value of artworks can be related to its aesthetic properties and to the people involved in the valuation processes, the presence of communities that develop styles and techniques, the presence of institutional actors such as galleries, museums, and curators; and that SA can be taken as example to investigate the instances of participative and cumulative value-creation in other visual arts/creative industries. In this sense, the findings of this study suggest adopting a socio-cultural view to art in order to understand how the value in creative contexts is created in the digital era.

The findings of the study support the view of SA as a co-production value-creating experience where technology aids the interaction amongst users (Bonet & Négrier, 2018; Crawfort et al., 2014; Luonila, 2017; Walmsley, 2019). However, SA has its own features that allow a re-conceptualization of value co-creation in the arts. Indeed, the findings reveal a value co-creation process for SA characterised by both pan-digital communities and tribes organised around experiences of consumption, as well as by different other actors that approach SA for professional or amateur reasons,

who can be considered as stakeholders contributing to the cumulative value co-creation of SA. Therefore, the current study advances the theory on value co-creation in the arts by referring to, on one side, the concepts of digital communities that generate value through consumption (Goulding et al., 2013; Irvine, 2012; Luonila & Jyrämä, 2020), and on the other side to the multiple actors that carry an interest in the creativity (Preece & Kerrigan, 2015). A further articulation of how value is co-created in SA, as well as the specific contribution to co-creation theory, are available in Section 5.3 and Section 6.3, respectively.

The above discussion examined the findings vis-a-vis with existing theory on co-creation. However, the way value is co-created in SA goes beyond the existing literature on the matter. Indeed, although previous work acknowledges that value co-creation in SA has aspects of crowdsourcing, prosumerism, and distributed knowledge (Benkler, 2006; Deuze, 2007; Lakhani & Panetta, 2007; von Hippel, 2005; Nakajima, 2012; Rodrigues & Horvath, 2020; Saragih, 2019; Walmsley, 2019) the current study showed how, in semi-institutionalised creative contexts such as SA, value co-creation works cumulatively considering the professional and non-professional progressive contributions of the actors involved. Therefore, the current study re-conceptualises and expands the applicability of co-creation theory by identifying the actions that create/distribute value performed by different actors, and also sets the basis for further studies in creative industries aimed at understanding how the rich social participation in creative work/contexts defines value.

5.2.5 RQ5: *What is the Value Chain of Street Art and to What Extent Does it Include Digital Elements?*

The discussion of RQ4 showed that, in SA, the value of street artworks is co-created by different actors from producers (street artists) to final consumers (the general audience). This part of the findings was also useful to determine whether the creation of value in SA can be situated within the framework of the value chain, as presented by Porter (2008) who indicates a series of activities that determine the value for which a commodity is delivered on the market. The value chain is originally seen as a vertical/linear process from producer to consumers, with the commodity in the middle that acquires value progressively (Porter; 2008; Pratt, 2008). The expectations from the analysis were to reveal, in the value co-creation of SA, aspects of the creative value chain (Liao, 2014; Pratt, 2004; Hartley, 2004) that support the view for which consumers and other actors have an impact in at least one element of the value (Keane, 2009; Pratt, 2009) of artworks - the price. Moreover, the literature showed that, in creative industries, value generally starts being created by "groups of actors" (Madudová 2017, p. 231) before the commodity is produced, in an infrastructure of "creative distributors" (Miles, 2009 in Madudová, 2017, p. 234).

The study revealed who the actors are that make up the value chain of SA, where they are placed on the value chain, and re-conceptualised the SA value chain as a value eco-system. Nevertheless, although the study produced a new concept of creative value chain, a more specific study could be made by focusing only on the value chain and its application to SA. Indeed, here we explored the general sense of value as it is perceived by members of the street artworld as well as from the

observations on SNSs, but does not focus on developing a totally new concept of creative value chain.

The findings highlighted that different actors are placed between the production and consumption of SA, and they perform different actions, as discussed above. Figure 4.5 in the [Social Process section of Chapter 4](#) shows in visual terms the different actors, their actions and interactions, and the impact these have on both the value and the renown-ness of street artworks. Each step of Figure 4.5 is an occasion to create and share the value to further actors in the SA value chain. After street artists/crews create an artwork, the value is modified and enriched by photographers, bloggers, connoisseurs, and curators in a co-creation system referred to by participants as "circles of legitimation", as we have seen in RQ4. The analysis also showed that the value chain of SA does not always include all the different actors identified in Figure 4.5, but sometimes can be shorter according to how many intermediate actors there are between the production of a street artwork and its consumption by the final, general audience. The length of the value chain also depends on the reach each actor has: some bloggers may have a more "niche" following of professional street artists, while other social media pages may have hundreds of thousands of followers as their general audience. The paragraphs below illustrate the different steps of the value chain of SA, which can be followed by reading Figure 4.5 from left to right following the four steps in the figure.

However, it is important to note that an ideal value chain for SA begins before the artwork is placed on a wall and/or is exposed to any audience as we have seen in RQ3. Indeed, the findings highlighted that the idea and the inspiration to execute a street artwork - representing its initial value - begins when street artists navigate both

the digital and the analogue world and interact with their peers. This element of the findings is of particular importance for this study since it supports the view by Madudová (2017) where the value begins its journey in the chain even before the artwork is created and is shown in the left part of Figure 4.7 underlining how the value of SA is affected, and affects, the context. Once created, photographers take pictures of SA and share them on SNSs, exposing the street artwork to more audiences online. Among these online audiences there can be either curators, which further distribute the artwork towards galleries or in published media, or connoisseurs such as SA festival organisers who might decide to feature the street artwork in their events. Galleries organise exhibitions to exhibit SA to wider audiences, and the same happens for galleries and museums.

The synthesis from the findings above suggests that the value chain for SA may comprise different steps, but each of them has a connection with the final/general audience as shown in Figure 5.4 below and indicated by the green and blue arrows at the bottom of Figure 4.5. Indeed, as mentioned above, street artworks can move directly from their authors to the general audience, or they can take all the intermediate steps (as shown in Figure 4.5) where further value can be added by crews, photographers, bloggers and SNSs, curators, SA festival organisers, galleries, and museums. This also works along the view by Madudová (2017) from which the value in creative industries moves along the chain and is transmitted to other consumers/audiences via the creative distributors. Moreover, the presence of different steps and actors placed in the value chain, also allows a re-conceptualization of the chain as an "eco-system", as pointed out by (Preece et al. (2016) where the different actors are both consuming and producing value. Indeed, the analysis revealed that the

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Figure 5.4.

The SA Value Chain
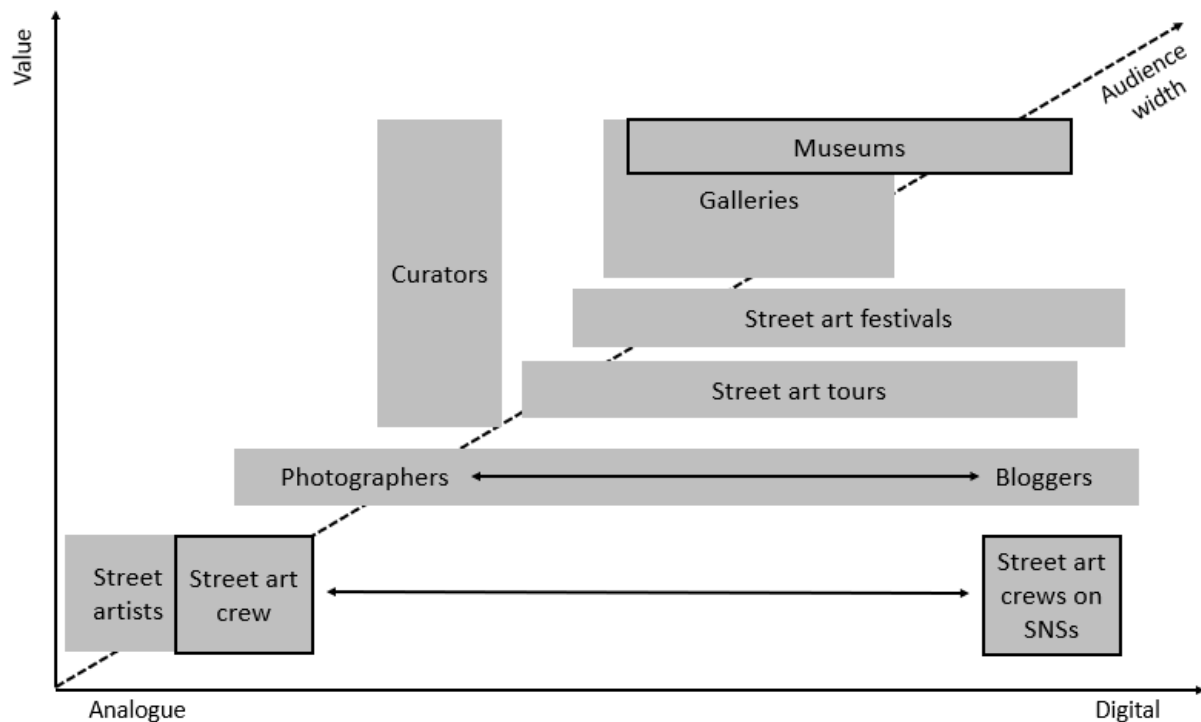
Source: the thesis author.

value of SA does not come only from the linear relationship between street artists and the general audience but occurs collaboratively and/or competitively amongst different actors, which contributes to conceptualising the SA value chain as an eco-system rather than a linear model.

Comparing the findings with the literature on the creative value chain/eco-system allowed the definition of a proposed value chain model for SA with specific characteristics. For example, there are three axes in the value chain of SA: the vertical axis shows the increment of value, the horizontal axis shows the difference between analogue and digital, and the oblique axis is referred to the audience width. The value aspect joins the chain at the bottom left corner of Figure 5.4: when street artists have executed an artwork. However, before the street artwork is executed, value is created resulting from the interactions between both the street artist and their crew - analogue

side of Figure 5.4 - as well as between the street artists and SA crews on SNSs - bottom-right corner of Figure 5.4.

After execution, street artworks first appear in the streets, and this corresponds with a very low level of digital-ness. The number of viewers at this point is very narrow because it is formed by SA crews (step 2 of Figure 4.5) which often participate in the creation of the artwork, and by the passers-by viewing the street artwork in the street. This is also why the SA crews box overlaps the street artists box in Figure 5.4. The next step (Step 3 in Figure 4.5) in the value chain consists of photographers taking pictures in the analogue world and sharing them with bloggers/on SNSs. This action increases both the audience width, the value of street artworks, and the level of digital-ness. At this point, the pictures of street artworks available on SNSs are accompanied with text that "put more spicy information about the artists themselves and push the popularity up". Therefore, value is further increased. There is a bi-directional arrow between photographers and bloggers in Figure 5.4 because often the two roles correspond and because there is frequent interaction amongst them, especially on SNSs.

Once the artwork has been presented on blogs/SNSs, curators notice them. Curators are very important because they can promote the value of street artworks at different levels and within different professional practices. Curators, indeed, "make or break an artist" by selecting street artworks for SA tours, SA festivals, galleries, and museums, as shown in Figure 5.4. The value increases from SA tours to museums for different reasons: (I) SA tours are a local showcase of street artworks, (II) SA festivals are local showcases at either regional, national, or international level, (III) galleries have a more permanent scientific organization of street artworks compared to SA

festivals, and (IV) museums are consolidating the popularity of street artworks. We are now moving across Steps 3 and 4 at the right of Figure 4.5.

As visible in Figure 5.4, SA tours, festivals, galleries, and museums have a more consistent digital component than street artists because they make relevant use of SNSs and digital tools to promote events[72]. Museums are higher in value than galleries because galleries bring an artist to popularity while museums consolidate artists' popularity. Figure 5.4 below shows how the value of street artworks changes from the execution of an artwork to its appreciation, with audiences getting wider - oblique axis - as we move along both the vertical and the horizontal axes. The figure produces an original view of the SA value chain using the existing literature as a basis, and answers RQ5 because it shows the different horizontal components related to the collaboration occurring amongst the actors involved in SA. However, there are other elements influencing how the value of SA is created in practice that did not find their way into the discussion of the findings around the concept of value chain. These further practical elements are discussed in section 5.3 below because it appears that RQ5 does not capture all the richness of the data, and because the concept of the value chain seems not to be fully applicable to the case of SA.

An important finding that is also visible in Figure 5.4, is that there is only one axis that measures the value of SA. This is because the value of street artworks can be understood by every actor present in the chain since SA speaks a universal language and is, therefore, accessible to everyone. This also supports both Knight's (2008) view on the universality of art placed in the streets, and Preece and Kerrigan's (2015) multi-stakeholder approach. Moreover, to move from street artists to the general

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[72] Also, due to the recent COVID-19 global crisis, all these events have frequently been moved to a digital mode (virtual tours of museums, galleries, and exhibitions).

audience, street artists know that they must get viewers to interact with street artworks on SNSs, therefore they learn how to convey value digitally, as illustrated in Figure 4.7 as well as discussed above. How street artists do that is shown in Subsection 5.3.5 below. Another aspect that can be discussed is related to the level of digitization of the value chain. Indeed, if we change the axes by measuring the value on the oblique axis, it is possible to see how the more value increases, the more digital the value chain.

5.3. Answering the Overarching Research Question

The discussion on the five RQs above answers the overarching RQ: *How do street artworks transform from being unknown to becoming renowned in the digital era?* However, it is important to clarify at this point that the concept of renown-ness considered in this study goes beyond the mere element of fame. Indeed, a renowned street artwork is something that is celebrated simultaneously within the wider SA community by all actors identified in the current study, and not just within their closest peers group, the general audience, the curators, or any other group of actors.

To answer the overarching question and add to the discussion in section 5.2, this chapter moves on to addressing the different questions in the *black box* that first appeared in Chapter 1 and is available in Figure 5.5 below. The subsections below discuss mainly, although not exclusively, elements emerging from the study that were not foreseen as topics to explore in the literature. These emerging elements include the shared creative practice of street artists, curators, and connoisseurs, the difficulties of being an artist, the concepts of narratives influencing the value of creativities, the

Figure 5.5.

Illuminating the Black Box by Answering Different Questions
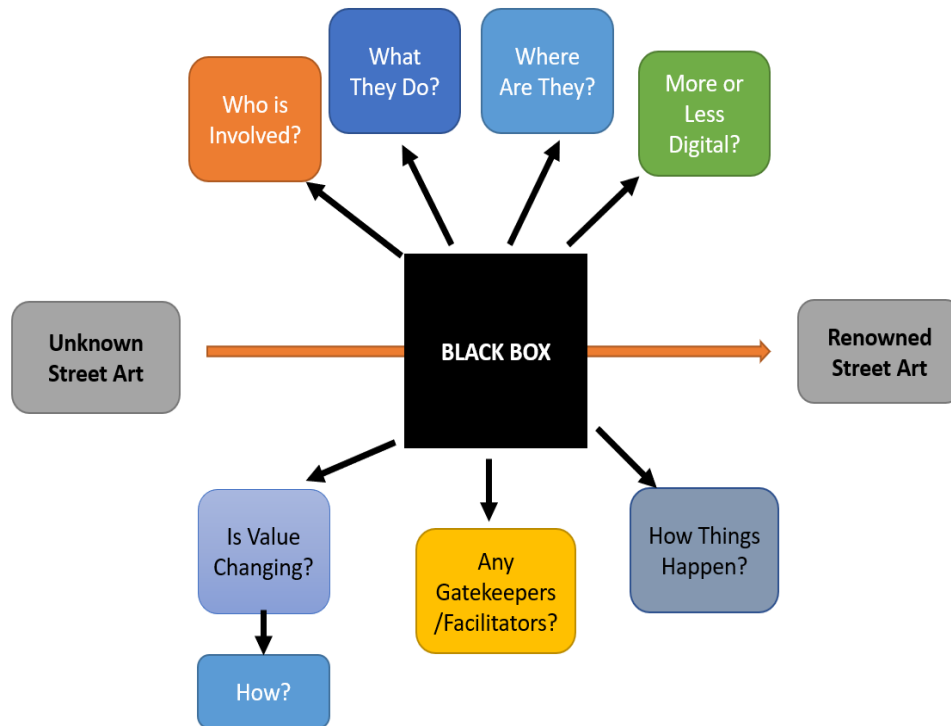
Source: the thesis author.

participative community practices, the tribal consumption elements, , and the presence of gatekeepers. The current section is, therefore, organised in seven main subsections[73].

5.3.1 (I) Who is Involved?

The study identified different actors in the phenomenon for which street artworks become renowned, these are listed below:

- street artists, working alone or as part of a crew;

- SA curators, working alone or as part of an organization;

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[73] The seven subsections are related to the questions in the black box: (I) Who is Involved? (II) What they Do? (III) Where are They? (IV) More or Less Digital? (V) How Things Happen? (VI) Any Gatekeepers/Facilitators? (VII) Is Value Changing? How?

- SA connoisseurs, they can be photographers, bloggers, administrator of fora on SNSs;

- galleries;

- SA festivals;

- scholars;

- public, either on streets or on SNSs;

- SA enthusiasts.

The role of each actor in defining the value of street artworks has been explained in RQ2. The multitude of actors and human experiences identified in the current study expands the understanding of the urban space as a *dense space* (Batista, 2017; Irvine, 2012) where different actors contribute to the phenomenon of SA to a varying extent.

5.3.2 (II) What They Do?

The *what they do?* question can be answered by considering figure 4.5. The contents in the figure expand the knowledge on the actions performed by the various actors listed above. For example, street artists create street artworks and interact with their peers - on and offline - to gain inspiration and to compare their work. SA crews discuss the quality of street artworks created by their peers, share street artworks on SNSs, and interact with other street artists/crews worldwide thanks to SNSs. Photographers, bloggers, and administrators of SNSs document the creative activity of street artists on SNSs, adding further information and therefore value to street artworks. Curators create SA collections and sell them during events in galleries and museums, or write a book on SA, or collaborate with SA festivals. Galleries and museums promote, launch, and run events on SA such as exhibitions and tours, and

use SNSs to promote the events. Both the analogue and digital public engage with street artworks displayed in the streets and on SNSs according to the specific function of the digital platform, as shown in the Actions and Reactions subsection.

5.3.3 (III) Where Are They?

According to Bieber (on Klanten and Huebner, 2010), SA subverts the traditional logic of experiencing art within a container - such as a museum or a gallery - and converts the urban context from an anonymous place to a place where art could be experienced (Klanten and Huebner, 2010). Debord (on Knabb, 2006) agrees with this view by saying that art genres, like public art, use the context differently from what authorities have officially decided, and therefore transposes pop art from inside to the outside of institutionalised walls. The current study further expands this view by adding that SA is indeed experienced at street level, but the findings highlighted the frequent use of other platforms where the visual components of SA can be assessed, where interaction occurs between different actors, and where the value of creativity is co-created. The most commonly used platforms are Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, where interaction is possible, but also webzines, Pinterest, digital fora, and blogs, where interaction is less obviously present/visible.

The findings support the view for which the availability of SA on SNSs is the final stage of the transformation that first saw art being removed from institutional walls and performed in the streets (Debord on Knabb, 2006), and then was taken from the street, and put onto "pan-digital media platforms" (Irvine, 2012, p. 238) for everyone to enjoy. Moreover, the presence of SA on SNSs where interaction occurs can be seen as an innovative element required to identify a co-creation process (Skaržauskaitė, 2013). Indeed, as shown in Figure 4.7, the findings highlighted that street artists use SNSs to

share their output directed at different professional and non-professional audiences, which will draw in their interactions that will subsequently influence the value of street artworks.

5.3.4 (IV) More or Less Digital?

SA has been defined as a post-internet and post-medium phenomenon since it functions perfectly in both real and digital spaces (Irvine, 2012). Moreover, the production of arts and media is often characterised by co-creation between different actors that use digital platforms in order to manage the value of distributed communities (Aitamurto, 2017; Benkler, 2006). The analysis showed that the phenomenon for which street artworks become renowned is characterised by both on and offline aspects, and each actor identified in the subsections above are involved in either analogue or digital actions that influence value. The study expands the knowledge on SA showing that the process starts offline with the street artwork being performed on walls but is then influenced by other online aspects such as inspiration from SNSs. Then, photographers get involved, they take pictures of street artworks in the streets and then share them online using digital means. After that, the pictures of a street artwork can be shown in blogs, in galleries and museums, on magazines and webzines and on specialised SNSs. Therefore, from the digital-to-analogue creative act to an artwork becoming renowned within both digital and analogue audiences (see Figure 5.4), there can be both digital and non-digital actions.

5.3.5 (V) How Things Happen?

SA usually happens in areas of a city that are not considered suitable for artistic presence and is frequently performed in places that become museums without walls (O'doherty, 1999; Foster et al., 2016). Moreover, SA has different genres, but usually

has a global uniformity that unites the different SA crews worldwide (Irvine, 2012). The data analysis revealed, instead, that SA happens also in areas that have been dedicated to it, where local and non-local crews perform street artworks relating to different topics. Street artists and SA connoisseurs indeed said that SA festivals and other events frequently get the exclusivity of areas/walls where SA can be freely performed. However, there is still a lot of SA that keeps the value of illegality and appears illegally on walls, public property, and in unauthorised areas. SA is, therefore, a phenomenon that can happen either legally/conventionally, or illegally in the urban context.

Hansen (2005) and Dew (2007) said that street artists believe their intervention in the urban context contributes to making an area more beautiful and stimulates public debate. This view has been both supported and contrasted by interviewees believing that a well-executed street artwork can either beautify the UE, or have little effect on the local context since street artworks are part of the global network of SA rather than being pinpointed to a specific location. Legally executed street artworks are usually possible because a curator has achieved permission to paint the walls. This also allows street artists to work without the worry of being caught.

5.3.5.1 Changing Genre According to the Purpose

Street artists create artworks following a specific genre/style, according to Conklin (2012), even though the genres in SA refer more to the execution technique as shown in Appendix A rather than the belonging to any art movements. The findings revealed that the execution genre varies according to the intention of the authors, and according to whether they are doing it to express themselves, or as commissioned work. Indeed, the data analysis showed that street artists divide their creative activity

to produce art "for art's sake" or to execute decorative and/or commissioned wall paintings for businesses. The genre changes according to the commission, and also SA adapts when it is to be sold as merchandising/a gadget. Therefore, the value of the creative output is defined by the purpose of street artists.

5.3.5.2 The Many Hats of Different Actors

Once street artworks are available in the streets, they can also be reproduced on traditional and online media thanks to photographers. The literature shows that photographers were the first actors who allowed the conversion of graffiti from a marginal language of a subculture to something to be appreciated from an artistic point of view (Cooper & Chalfant, 1984 to 2015) and contributed to the appreciation and dissemination of SA. The analysis expanded our understanding of the role of photographers. First, they might also be street artists. Second, they can be members of the general audience who share it on their personal pages. Third, photographers can also be bloggers who use the photos for their blog and share them on specialised SNSs. This aspect of actors having "many hats" is mentioned frequently across all professions available within the street artworld, as already highlighted in the discussion of RQ4 above.

The findings highlighted the multiple hats of photographers and showed that, when photographers are also bloggers, the photo is displayed online with a detailed account of the location, the authors, and the technical qualities of the artwork. According to interviewees, this adds "more spicy information" about artworks and contributes to the overall renown-ness. As seen in RQ5, once street artworks have been considered by bloggers, they have already acquired a consistent level or renown-ness and have been exposed to a reasonably wide audience, but there are further

steps that need to be taken in order for artworks to become renowned. This is when curators and SA festivals step in.

According to Edmonds et al. (2009), in an interactive art system, curators form an intermediate step between an artwork and the final audience, and artists are usually those who initiate the creative process to produce an artwork. However, the results of this study add to the understanding of the interactive art system showing that curators get permission to paint a wall, and SA crews both on and offline provide inspiration to street artists. Therefore, the SA creative process starts before the artist creates the work.

The data analysis showed that curators look for street artworks that are aesthetically pleasing, but their valuation also considers whether street artworks may be of interest to an audience. Therefore, curators look at all aspects of artists and their careers, including: the ability to tell a story that might be exploited to create an exhibition in a museum or a gallery; the numbers that street artist has achieved on social media; the quality of interactions on SNSs; the popularity of an artist; the genre/type of street artwork; and other physical characteristics. This last aspect adds to Coslor and Spaenjers' (2016) notion related to the *preference* by curators of certain artworks over others, because they belong to the average, most accepted and appreciated art genre/technique instead of being the most beautiful aesthetically. The reason why curators - and SA festival organisers - consider numbers and popularity of an artist over their aesthetic merit, stands in the need to create a successful event. Galleries, museums, and SA festivals are, indeed, organizations that need an income to sustain themselves, and curators should make sure their exhibitions are successful.

Therefore, the way the value of SA is conveyed also depends on the "many hats" worn by producers, promoters, or consumers of street artworks.

5.3.5.3 Engaging with Audiences

After all the stages discussed above, street artworks have become renowned amongst the general audience. However, when members of the general audience engage with street artworks, this further contributes to their renown-ness. According to the literature, viewers have homogeneous emotional reactions - stimuli - from artworks even if they are not arts-savvy (Dutton, 2001; Silvia, 2006). The perception of stimuli by viewers depends on a series of physiological, social, cultural, and social factors that influence how sensory information is acquired, interpreted, selected and organised by audiences (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008).

The current study expands the understanding of these stimuli, and shows that audiences react to street artworks when they feel interested and recognise something familiar. For example, SA old school audiences react to street artworks that show outstanding technical features, whereas a more modern public is more likely to be attracted to visuals that represent popular topics/subjects. Moreover, the data showed that street artists refined their practice in order to stimulate viewers' engagement. The common aspects of this practice are (I) using a trending topic; (II) using a popular topic within a demographic; or (III) using metadata to link the creativity to locations, events, VIPs. These aspects have been illustrated in the left part of Figure 4.7 showing that one aspect of the value co-creation is represented by street artists embedding their creations with either standardised topics that can be easily recognised, or with specific qualities in order to stimulate engagement with the audience. For example, street artists may want to be noticed by old school SA audiences and become renowned

within a crew/SA community, hence they would create street artworks with outstanding technical features. Otherwise, street artists may want to reach the general audience and/or curators who are working towards an event, therefore they will make sure to embed their street artworks with trending topics, cultural references, and/or metadata to stimulate engagement with the general audience.

The diffusion of street artworks within the general audience is also aided by street artworks becoming either replicas, prints, merchandise, or end-products of live painting sessions during festivals. The literature (Deitch, 2021; Günes & Yýlmaz, 2006) showed that this is another factor that contributes to recognising the artistic value of SA. The findings support this view and shed more light on the activities performed by street artists to make their oeuvre renowned. Indeed, interviewees mentioned merchandising, replicas, or live painting occurring as collaborations with galleries, festivals, and other actors as activities able to generate income by exploiting the commercial value of SA. Indeed, street artists said that SA today is valued - by street artists and other actors - also because it can be used in advertising, as commissioned wall painting, in education and media production, which help street artists to sustain themselves financially.

The current study shed light on the challenges faced by street artists while using social media. Jones et al. (2015) and Kane and Clark (2019) said that, despite using social media allowing a visual representation of a business premises and helping the overall marketing strategy of a small business, the effective use of social media requires skills that are frequently evolving, are time consuming, and are difficult to measure. Furthermore, social media platforms seem to have different outcomes from viewers according to the wants and needs of the users (Jones et al., 2015), and those

who manage small businesses are not always keen on using digital tools. The use of social media for marketing purposes is also limited by the resources that a business can invest in it. Indeed, despite the use of social media by small businesses being quite extensive (He et al., 2017), it is difficult to find the time, the skills, the financial resources, and the content that can be shared on different platforms to attract and retain customers (He et al., 2017).

The findings support some of the aspects listed above, while present an updated view of the use of social media in SA. Indeed, it is clear from all interviews and conversations on SNSs that street artists do use social media to communicate with audiences and showcase their work, however, the analysis also gave important insights into how street artists use social media. For example, street artists frequently start using social media to convey the value of artworks to a more local audience and then move to a higher-level audience once local fame has been achieved. Moving from a local to a higher-level of fame is done by street artists to achieve renown-ness by "playing the social media game". This game consists of employing specific digital skills: performing context-specific actions that target a local public on social media; executing street artworks with already popular topics to attract audiences; and collaborating with galleries, photographers, and SA festivals online. However, because employing the skills above requires time and resources, many street artists frequently give up using social media or, if they are lucky, receive help from curators and SA connoisseurs as discussed in the next chapter.

Interviews revealed the collaboration between street artists and SA curators and connoisseurs in selecting the content to publish on SNSs[74], having a regular presence

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[74] For example: photographers and photographer-bloggers who take pictures of street artworks and put them on SNSs.

on social media, and engaging with digital users. This collaboration is extremely important for street artists who know that, to get any online engagement, they must possess digital skills that go beyond the mere use of social media technical functions. The analysis shows that, to get renowned, street artists must possess different skills such as photography, social media manipulation, understanding hashtags, copy writing, and networking.

This collaboration between street artists and other actors is the result of the need to employ specific skills and to the understanding of what Kane and Clark (2019) said regarding small businesses that seek the help of third-party organizations to help with the management of social media, which is often considered a time-consuming activity, despite being needed, to promote a business. Analysing interviews and conversations on SNSs contributed to further understanding of how actors overcome these difficulties, discussed in the practical implications section below.

5.3.5.4 Communities and Co-Creation in Street Art

As discussed earlier, the analysis brought up how value is co-created amongst the different actors that participate in SA. However, to understand more comprehensively how value is co-created in SA as well as to explain those elements of SA that were not previously explored in Chapter 2, further theory has been brought into the current chapter. Hence this subsection discusses the findings in relation to the theories on creative communities, on consumer tribes/subcultures, and on the power of narratives on the value of brands.

Different authors (Peñaloza & Venkatesh, 2006; Preece & Kerrigan, 2015; Rodner & Thomson, 2013) highlighted the importance of narratives in influencing the value of brands in general, and creative brands in particular. In the marketing literature,

narratives are defined as the stories built around a brand that are shared or co-created by companies together with consumers (Mills & John, 2021). The literature on branding narratives shows that the value and meaning of brands can be built with narratives produced by different actors/stakeholders - recognised adopting a socio-cultural approach (Preece & Kerrigan, 2015) - and is particularly important in the current study because it shows how multiple actors can participate in the generation of a story. Hence, in SA we can highlight the presence of multiple actors, and we can look at what they do as narratives able to influence the value of SA (Goulding et al., 2013).

Indeed, the analysis showed that the actors identified in the study produce and share comments and opinions both on and offline, collectively contributing to the value definition of SA. These opinions can be looked at as the narratives that contribute to the development of brands' value as identified by Brown et al. (2003) and Närvänen and Goulding (2016). In SA, the available narratives are those developed around the interactions between street artworks and their authors, as stories shared online by photographers and bloggers, as materials supporting the collections created by curators and SA festival organisers, and as stories, and interactions generated by the audience consuming SA on SNSs, as well as by members of the SA community[75]. With particular reference to the last two examples, the current study shows that stories and narratives are produced by actors that consume[76] SA. Therefore, the consumption experiences and the generation of narratives by some actors involved in SA, contribute to the making of the value of the consumed object.

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[75] We remind the reader the articulation of SA communities as local and global crews thanks to the use of SNSs.

[76] Watching street artworks can be considered as an example of consumption.

The analysis revealed the existence of two main communities that, through their consumption behaviour, generate narratives capable of influencing the value of SA. However, adopting a marketing/branding approach in this study would require assimilating street artworks as brands, as well as categorising both the SA general audience and the local/global community of peers as one of the three types of consumption communities identified by Goulding et al. (2013)[77]. The findings show that part of the value of being a street artists is related to how creatives position themselves in the practice. Indeed, street artists described their connection with the SA community in relation to the genre of SA they produce, the categorisation - street artist, mural artist, graffiti, old school graffiti artist, or a combination of them - of their activity, and the purpose of their practice. This is particularly interesting in terms of the value-creation power of professional practices, and expands the understanding of how identity is built within subcultural communities.

There is, therefore, multiple-identity characterising the community of street artists, which is also one of the main features of subcultures according to a study conducted on the British rave subcultural community (Goulding et al., 2002). However, the findings of the current study show that the multiple-identities of street artists are not exclusive and contribute to the definition of the value of the creative output. The fragmentation of street artists' practice supports the idea of multiple identities within subcultures, but also extends our understanding on how subcultures are formed. Indeed, if Goulding et al. (2002) demonstrated that subcultural communities arise over specific consumption behaviours as well as around "common bonds and experiences"

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[77] Goulding et al. (2013) identifies subcultures of consumption, brand communities, and consumer tribes as communities capable of generating entrepreneurial opportunities, brand value, and customer engagement from the consumption behaviour of their members.

(2002. P. 279), our study adds that they can evolve around the value of a specific practice.

Moreover, the current study illuminates the subcultural aspects of the *communities* as well as the multiple identities in SA by showing that (I) the different actors in SA can be simultaneously part of any of the groups identified in Figure 5.3; that (II) being part of a subgroup is not necessarily linked to performing professional work, but can be based on a common interest; that (III) connections amongst members of the community are generated spontaneously rather than professionally; that (IV) groups can be transient and emerge according to the need of the moment - such as during SA festivals, within SA crews, in digital fora feeds; that (V) the grouping of street artists, SA enthusiasts, and audiences can be used for entrepreneurial needs; and that (VI) it is difficult to understand and harness the power of communities that develop around SA.

Adding to that, we already know from the literature that SA can be considered a subculture since Goulding et al.'s (2002) defines them as groups of people organised around the opposition to dominant cultures. Moreover, the subcultural aspects of SA listed above show how the different actors can reunite in communities capable of influencing the value of creativities as well as the value related to being part of the community. However, these aspects expand the understanding of how subcultural communities and tribes (Goulding et al., 2013) develop in a creative context suggesting that communities can also base themselves on professional practices other than a shared consumption behaviour (Goulding et al., 2002). Nevertheless, interviewees described SA as an informal community where continuous learning takes place in terms of techniques, styles, approach to interactions, social media skills, and business

opportunities, which is one of the founding elements of consumer tribes according to Goulding et al. (2013). The findings show that the professional a non-professional communities in SA have the power of constantly re-imagining both themselves as well as the meaning of street artworks, making it difficult for companies to have managerial control or exploit the entrepreneurial opportunities otherwise available within emotional consumption relationships (Cova & Cova, 2002; Kozinets, 2002).

Finally, we must acknowledge that the different reproductions of street artworks as merchandising and gadgets, the use of SA as communication tool in advertising, the sale of SA in arts auctions, the diffusion of SA in charities, the SA tour business, and the political use of SA can be recorded as the "entrepreneurial ventures" occurring in SA needed to identify consumer tribes as described by Cova et al. (2007). This view is also supported by Goulding et al. (2013) highlighting that business opportunities can stem from the consumption experiences of consumer tribes. However, the current study expands on this by showing that entrepreneurial opportunities emerge not only from consumption behaviour, but also from the multiple professional and non-professional occasions and relations occurring within a complex community like the SA one.

The dimensions emerging from the findings of the current study required acknowledging the multi-disciplinary nature of the studied phenomenon. Hence, the need to incorporate the literature on creative communities, narratives, and consumption tribes to support the interpretation of the emerging findings identified above. However, although our findings may be in line with the literature on tribes and consumption communities, we must acknowledge that the consumption perspective discussed in the current subsection is only one aspect of the novel value co-creation

framework resulting from the current study, which is the sequential process characterised by multiple actors performing different co-productive and co-creative actions.

5.3.6 (VI) Any Gatekeepers/Facilitators?

The literature stated that when art is placed outdoors, this can facilitate its diffusion within the audience (Bach, 2001; Hein, 1996). Interviews, instead, showed that there are actors/structures that contribute to the diffusion of street artworks within the general audience, and call them gatekeepers. These are the "big blogs", "Instagram pages", the crew members, and the general audience. The findings revealed "big blogs'" importance since they are webpages visited by thousands of SA enthusiasts, curators, photographers, and artists. Therefore, they allow street artworks to become renowned very quickly, even though the audience of SA blogs is a more specialised audience. *Instagram* and other social media pages have a wider reach online compared to blogs, because they share pictures to more generalised audiences. The crew members can be gatekeepers because they share pictures of street artworks with other crews and with curators. The general audience is a gatekeeper because their presence and engagement with street artworks - calculated in terms of numbers on SNSs - is one of the values considered by curators to make a choice on which street artwork to select for a collection, as shown in more detail in the next subsection.

5.3.7 (VII) Is Value Changing? How?

Studies on contemporary art revealed that the making of an artwork requires engagement of the author with both the audience and the context (Edmonds et al., 2009). This suggests the involvement of different actors in the making of the value of art. When the artwork is created, it is then exposed to different audiences that perceive

the value according to aesthetic, cognitive, and emotional components of artworks (Baltissen & Ostermann, 1998; Osborne, 1986; Silvia 2005a). Then, the artwork can also be assessed by curators, who not only consider the technical and visual aspects of street artworks, but also take into consideration the multiple reactions and interactions that artworks have with the audience and with the context (Candy & Edmonds, 2002; Candy et al., 2018).

The analysis revealed that street artists get inspiration for new artworks from the works produced by their peers/crew members and by looking at what is happening worldwide courtesy of SNSs. Moreover, interviews revealed that curators and connoisseurs consider the numbers on SNSs to assess the suitability of street artworks for an event. The numbers on SNSs are achieved when street artworks are able to attract the attention of users because they play with the value-perception of audiences as discussed above. These elements are related to visual and textual aspects that the author, or the photographers, decide to include in the posts on SNSs, as we have seen in Subsection 5.3.5. Therefore, it is possible to say that SA curators and festival organisers consider not only the value related to the visual element of the street artwork, but also that related to the visible interactions on SNSs, adding to what is available in the literature.

The value of a street artwork is changing from when the artists are unknown to when they become renowned according to the different actors that start interacting with it. Indeed, following the discussion in RQ5, it is possible to see the value of street artworks changing from the ideation of the subject until the exposure to the general audience. The numbers related to the engagement on SNSs are what curators and SA

festival organisers look at in order to value the suitability of street artworks for festivals, gallery and museum exhibitions, books, etcetera.

5.3.8 Illuminating the Black Box

Figure 5.5 shows seven questions related to the *black box*. Answering these seven questions meant showing how the findings illuminate the different aspects of the black box that were not addressed in the literature review. Indeed, we have seen that the dense space where SA happens is made up of different actors, each of which cumulatively influences the value of street artworks, making them renowned. The value of street artworks is co-created by each actor intervening in the process: (I) street artists get inspiration from their peers; (II) bloggers add further information online; (III) curators consider both the visual elements and the digital performance (numbers on SNSs) to create collections; (IV) viewers respond to visual and emotional stimuli to engage with artworks; (V) gatekeepers facilitate the diffusion of street artworks within audiences. The involvement of the different actors happens both on and offline and their relationships create different types of value. Finally, the analysis showed that the way street artworks become renowned follows a cumulative sequential process where different actors engage with each other co-producing and co-creating the value of street artworks until they become renowned.

5.4 Concluding Thoughts

The current study shed new light on the understanding of SA. The main theoretical contribution is a new conceptualisation of co-creation within the creative industries that goes beyond the existing literature. Indeed, this study identified an articulated value co-creation process in SA where different actors - other than just producer and/or consumers - contribute to the legitimation and valuation of SA,

explained the roles of these actors in influencing the value of SA both on and offline, unveiled the composition and the roles of on and offline audiences of SA, and described the actions that co-create the value of street artworks from their creation to their *non-consumption*[78] on the market.

With the current chapter, the study addressed the overarching RQ "*How do street artworks transform from being unknown to becoming renowned in the digital era?*" by explaining how interaction occurs around SA, who takes part in the interaction, whether some actors facilitate the circulation of street artworks among different audiences, and how the value of creativities is co-created. However, it must be noted that the new way of conceptualising co-creation emerging from this study can be applied to further research on creative industries and visual arts, where different actors/stakeholders characterise a phenomenon. The next chapter - Conclusions - summarises the main findings of this research, reflects on the data collection and analysis procedures, discusses the theoretical and practical contributions of the study, and makes recommendations for further research work on the topic of SA.

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[78] We have seen how the body of work of street artworks available on SNSs constitute a starting point for street artists to get inspiration for new creativities.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

The current chapter summarises the principal findings and their implications drawn from this study, and illustrates any limitations whilst suggesting future research opportunities. Chapter 6 is organised in five parts. The first part reflects on the research conducted that led to the identification of the limitations of the study. The second part answers the main RQ and discusses the contributions to theory of this thesis. The third part presents the practical implications of the study conducted, and the fourth part discusses the limitations and presents future research opportunities. The final part draws together the current study and further summarises the main argument.

6.2 Reflection on the Study Conducted

As discussed in Chapter 1, the way I approached the study of SA was informed by both my professional experiences in media crowdsourcing and the study of arts management. I started exploring the street artworld by formulating a research proposal where I looked for signs that could justify the inclusion of digital platforms in the investigation that I was proposing to perform. After engaging with the extant literature, I started to better situate my study giving it a more precise scope. Hence, the research focus shifted to understanding how street artworks become renowned, whilst considering the wider implications resulting from the interactions happening both on and offline. By rationalising the scope, I formulated an overarching RQ that influenced my approach to the study in terms of theoretical background research, philosophical and methodological choices, and implications of the results.

After formulating the overarching RQ, I started reviewing relevant literature. The literature search followed three different strands with the purpose of providing the study with a solid background knowledge on (1) the social structure surrounding SA, (2) the practical and theoretical examples of art valuation, and (3) the models of distributed knowledge and co-creation that would explain how different actors interact on digital platforms and create value. The three literature strands reviewed in this research have been grouped in two "pillars" because of their metaphorical function to support the theoretical underpinning of the study and the structure of the RQs discussed in Chapter 5. In the first pillar I explored the history of graffiti and its evolution into SA highlighting the importance of the practice in defining the value of SA and revealing the complex social structure underpinning the phenomenon. Moreover, reviewing the literature in the first pillar prompted further exploration to identify the actors that legitimise and valuate SA.

For the second pillar, the objective was to situate the study within contemporary art valuation practices as well as value co-creation theories. The reason for this being understanding how art is valued today, as well as how value is created collaboratively by different actors. In the second pillar, I also explored the concept of the creative value chain in order to have a picture of how the value of commodities changes as it moves up the chain. Reviewing the literature was an exciting journey for me because I discovered aspects of theory that I had only vaguely explored in my previous studies and because it allowed me to identify gaps and objectives that were addressed in this study, such as verifying the value co-creation pattern of SA as well as its value chain.

I used the gaps identified in the literature review to inform the design of a multi-method qualitative study capable of gathering the perspectives of different actors

involved in SA. The data collection followed a procedure illustrated in the Method chapter. I contacted dozens of potential participants, but very few of them agreed to take part in the study. This was one of the most frustrating parts of my PhD journey, since the data collection proceeded very slowly at the beginning. After reflecting on this issue, I changed the approach to negotiate the access to both potential participants and digital content. Fundamental, in this phase, were the contacts I have had with initial participants who kindly acted at gatekeepers to reach further participants, as illustrated in Chapter 3.

Although I was able to reach participants, another issue arose during the data collection. Indeed, as more interviews were conducted, the gender of participants followed specific patterns. Street artists identified themselves predominantly as cisgender males (14 out of 15), curators were predominantly cisgender female (11 out of 15), and *SA* connoisseurs were more evenly distributed (7 female and 8 male). I reflected on this issue as the patterns were revealing before me, and I started to consider whether I should have changed my sampling approach in order to reach a more balanced gender distribution amongst participants. In the end, I decided not to intervene since this would have modified the access strategy in the middle of the research project, compromising the consistency of the whole data collection procedure. Therefore, I took note and promised myself to consider this issue for future studies.

Another characteristic of the data collection was the use of technologies to conduct interviews. I used digital means because of both the main focus of this study and the ease to reach geographically distant participants. Indeed, I used Skype, Facebook and WhatsApp together with emails to conduct interviews, which were both

synchronous and a-synchronous. However, the interviews I performed online did not allow me to include information and nuances resulting from the context and from the attitudes of participants (Saunders et al., 2019).

As discussed in the Method chapter, I conducted interviews with three types of participants using three interview schedules. The articulation of interview schedules was done in order to gather the subjective perspectives of three different groups of interviewees that use SA in different ways and influence its value. Hence the interview schedules aimed at understanding how street artists create artworks, the use of SNSs by street artists to discuss and promote their artworks, the criteria used by curators to determine the value of street artworks, and the way different actors understand how street artworks become renowned today. Moreover, I collected secondary/archival data on SNSs via both Google search and following the indications of interviewees. This allowed me to identify archival data that were able to corroborate the narratives of interviewees and to demonstrate the effect of interactions happening online regarding the value of SA.

After - and during - data collection, I conducted data analysis. Analysing the data revealed a system of concepts, themes, and dimensions (available in Figure 4.1) that enabled an explanation of how street artworks become renowned in the current era and, in turn, illuminate the black box diagram first seen in Figure 1.1. However, as the analysis proceeded, I realised that some features/questions related to the so-called black box needed to be re-designed. These features/questions are the *Who is Involved?* orange box on the left, and the *Any Gatekeepers/Facilitators?* yellow box at the bottom of the diagram. Indeed, the *Who is Involved?* box provided a much richer understanding of the different actors involved in the process for which street artworks

become renowned, and added to the original assumption that the general audience was the only other actor that influenced the value of SA. Then, the *Any Gatekeepers/Facilitators?* box was originally called only *Facilitators*, but its name was changed when interviewees referred to these actors as *Gatekeepers*. Moreover, answering the question of the *Any Gatekeepers/Facilitators?* box/question was originally believed to provide an understanding of intermediaries that took part in the process for which street artworks become renowned, but allowed the emergence of an aggregate dimension of the phenomenon that was initially not included in the study: Community.

Although the analysis was itself a long, intense, and challenging journey, writing the discussion chapter was the most difficult part. Indeed, it took a long time to consider all aspects of the findings that could have supported, expanded, or contrasted with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Indeed, populating Chapter 5 was a challenging task for me in part because I had never done it before, and in part because the richness of my findings goes beyond the gaps formulated in the RQs. However, I was able to complete the discussion by making sure that all the relevant empirical aspects were considered to answer the five RQs as well as to illuminate the *black box* with the emerging themes. This was also possible thanks to the encouragement and guidance I received from my supervisors and by using CAQDAS to create connections within sections, concepts, and nodes.

6.3 Answering the Overarching Research Question and Contributing to Theory

This section presents the overall answer to the overarching RQ *How do street artworks transform from being unknown to becoming renowned in the digital era?*, and

illustrates the theoretical contributions of the current study. Based on a qualitative analysis of the personal accounts of three types of actors as well as of conversations on SNSs, it can be concluded that the way street artworks become renowned in the digital era is far from being wholly digital and is characterised by value generation amongst different actors interacting at different levels of a cumulative value co-creation process. This process starts with the ideation of a street artwork and ends with the same artwork becoming renowned within professional and non-professional audiences, as shown in Figure 4.5. In addition, the study revealed that the interactions happening in this cumulative process can be either formal or informal, that street artworks acquire further value and get exposed to wider audiences as we sequentially move along both the digital and analogue processes[79] and that more actors get involved in the process as the value of street artworks changes.

The current study reveals that the value of street artworks start being formed when artists interact with their peers and/or discuss the element of an artwork with commissioners. This initial value-definition discussion happens before street artworks are executed and ends when street artists/SA crews create street artworks. When SA appears in the streets, it is exposed to different audiences: crew members, passers-by/general audience, photographers/bloggers, and curators. Once these audiences view street artworks, they start interacting with them according to aesthetic stimuli, personal interest, professional attitudes, and other factors. Indeed, crew members may take pictures of street artworks and share them with their worldwide network of street artists on SNSs, where further narratives are created and shared; passers-by view

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[79] This is referred to as "circles of legitimation" shown in Figure 4.7 and in Figure 5.4.

street artworks both in the streets and on SNSs[80]; photographers navigate the urban space and act as "chroniclers" that document SA and collaborate with bloggers for the creation of stories shared on SNSs. These actions and interactions expand the audience of SA and contribute to the definition of the value of street artworks, adding to the initial value intended by street artists. This study has, therefore, answered the main RQ by explaining how value is co-created, defined, and distributed within the street artworld, but has also expanded the knowledge by addressing the theoretical gaps identified in Chapter 2. The gaps identified are related to the lack of or insufficient literature on: (1) a value co-creation model suitable for SA; (2) the composition of the audience of SA; (3) the composition of the value of SA; (4) valuation systems for complex artworlds, such as SA; and (5) an interpretation of the creative value chain for SA.

Over and above what we already know in the literature, the thesis extends theory in five areas. The first and main theoretical contribution is made towards value co-creation. Indeed, an initial understanding of co-creation in this study came from exploring the literature which defined it as a process where producers, consumers and other stakeholders contribute to create value in businesses by executing small portions of a task (Darmody, Yuksel & Venkatraman, 2017; Pieters & Jansen, 2013; Jansen & Pieters, 2017; Storbacka & Nenonen, 2011). The investigation contributed to framing SA within co-creation, but also extended the application of co-creation within the arts with a model that can be generalised and applied to further creative fields. Indeed, the findings revealed that the value of SA is co-created amongst different actors interacting both on and offline, and that the way this interaction works supports the concept of

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[80] members of the general audience also take pictures and share them on their personal SNS page such as social media networks.

creative crowds identified in the literature (Lakhani & Panetta, 2007; von Hippel, 2005, West and Altink, 1996). However, the findings revealed a much more complex value co-creation system in SA. Indeed, the study allowed the identification of different actors - as summarised both above and in Figure 5.5 - that interact co-creating and distributing the value of street artworks amongst different audiences. Therefore, the current study expends our understanding of co-creation by showing that there can be more than just two types of actors - crowdsourcer and crowd, producer and consumer - that can participate in a single co-creation process, and extends the applicability of co-creation within the creative industries (Banks & Deuze, 2009; Benkler, 2006; Deuze, 2007; Hartley, 2009; Jenkins & Deuze, 2008; Lakhani & Panetta, 2007; von Hippel, 2005) by demonstrating how creative networks can be assessed and understood from a socio-cultural perspective that considers the different actors needed to compose the total value of creativities (Preece & Kerrigan, 2015; Rodner & Thomson, 2013).

Moreover, the study shows how co-creation in the arts goes beyond the traditional dichotomy of producer and consumers/crowds and suggests considering all the actors taking part in this cumulative co-creation process. This contribution is of particular importance because it suggests looking at creative industries with the expectation of finding complex socio-cultural systems where the value of creativities is co-generated through the multiple interactions, motivations, and narratives that occur amongst the actors of a specific representational genre.

As a second contribution, this study extends the knowledge on the composition and roles of audiences in visual arts. In this sense, the studies in contemporary art had already explained how audiences ceased to play a passive role (Bach, 2001; Doezema, 1977; Duchamp; 1957; Knight, 2008) and started contributing to both the

meaning and the value of artworks, especially if placed in the streets[81]. Other authors underlined the importance of audiences as part, or subject of, an artwork (Phillips, 1989; Phillips, 1996). However, this study identifies both a new role and a composition of visual art audiences in the digital era. Indeed, the findings revealed that, at different stages of the process for which street artworks become renowned, there are different types of either professional or amateur audiences. The first one is the community of peers[82] that view SA in the streets and on SNSs, where the authors have shared them. The second audience is the chroniclers, which can be either photographers, bloggers, or both, that wander the streets looking for SA to photograph and share on SNSs. Chroniclers, then, contribute to showing SA to connoisseurs[83], who use SA for different reasons such as organizing festivals, showcasing artworks to curators, and further contributing to the distribution of SA towards wider audiences. The next type of audience is curators that organise collections/select art. In SA, Curators are both a type of audience and a distributor because of their job of organizing collections of SA for both events and media publications. The final type is the general audience, which is composed of non-specialised/amateur public viewing SA in the streets and on SNSs.

While providing a richer understanding of the different audiences of visual art and SA in particular, this study expands the understanding of how different audiences influence the value of art and make the infrastructure of the novel value co-creation model provided by this study. The consulted literature highlighted the importance of photographers in conveying the artistic value of graffiti to wider audiences through media (Cooper and Chalfant, 1984 & 2015; Ferrell, 1993; White, 2018); the role played

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[81] As it happens in public art and SA.
[82] Street artists.
[83] This study identified festival organisers, critics, and scholars as connoisseurs.

by crew members while discussing street artwork with their peers (Dew, 2007; Stewart, 2008); the importance for street artists of navigating the UE looking for both inspiration to execute street artworks (de Certeau, 1984; Irvine, 2012; Lefebvre, 2003), and an interlocutor for their creativity (Dew, 2007; Ellin, 2007; Irvine, 2012; Certeau & Rendall, 1984). However, these authors have not provided a structured understanding of how the different actors mentioned above influence the value of SA online.

Hence, the current study provides a structured view of the audiences of SA, which suggests that the value is cumulatively co-created by the different actors identified above. [Figure 5.2](#) in Chapter 5 lists all those audiences that this study identified as able to influence the value of SA and/or distribute it to further viewers. The results show that (I) street artists are inspired by the urban context, but interviewees' accounts showed that the inspiration can come also from virtual contexts - SNSs - where narratives are generated amongst other actors. The study shows that (II) curators decide which street artist to include in their events/collections by looking at the digital performance of street artworks on SNSs as well as at the possibility to exploit the existing narratives. Photographers (III) remove the sense of illegality from and contribute to the diffusion of graffiti as SA but also extensively use SNSs to distribute their work and establish professional relationships with other actors, such as bloggers. (IV) Bloggers are important for the creation of narratives on SA since they add further information to the street artwork and convey this on SNSs, exposing SA to further specialised and general audiences. Administrators of SNSs (V) act both as gatekeepers by deciding which street artworks can appear on their webpage, and by facilitating a platform where SA is discussed. SA festivals, galleries, and museums, (VI) also have a role in defining and distributing the value of SA. They can create and

establish artists' popularity, but they also exploit another form of value. Indeed, interviewees witnessed the frequent use of SA in merchandising during SA festivals, at SA exhibitions and in museum stores. Finally, the (VII) the general audience influences the value of SA. Indeed, the study shows that the digital interactions of the general audience have a triple effect: they feed the ego of street artists; they are considered as a measure of success by curators; they generate narratives exploited by professionals.

As a third contribution, the thesis shows the components of the value of SA. The literature shows that the value of art available in the streets is related to the creative practice of its authors, the meaning, the style, the platforms used, and the purposes of the practice (Cooper and Chalfant, 1984 & 2015; Beardon, 2006; Dew, 2007; Hansen, 2005; Irvine, 2012; Stewart, 2008; McCormick et al., 2010, White, 2018; Ross et al., 2017). This study expanded our understanding of *value* in the street artworld. For example, the findings show that street artists consider their practice as SA, graffiti art, mural art, or a mix of all these. Differentiating their practice is important for street artists in terms of both identity and in terms of value of their creative practice. Indeed, street artists today dedicate their time to both the production of SA for art's sake, and SA for the purpose of business/commissions. Within this dual practice, we have SA crews acting both as a source of inspiration for creativity, and as an opportunity for networking and to generate further business opportunities. The value of SA also depends on the attitude of institutional actors towards the practice. Indeed, expanding on the knowledge of local authorities' antagonism towards illegal SA (Beardon, 2006; Dew, 2007; Ferrell, 1996; Hansen, 2005; SpearIt, 2016; Weisel, 2002), the study shows that

different organizations use SA both as a language to access a specific demographic and as one of the tools to regenerate abandoned areas.

Another component of the value of SA identified in this study is the value street artists get from being part of a worldwide community, and the value of using digital skills to successfully engage with different audiences and actors on SNSs. Indeed, the findings show that street artists value being part of a global community where styles, topics, and genres are showcased, discussed, and used as inspiration for further creative output. Furthermore, the analysis showed that street artists have learned to use social media in order to stimulate reactions on SNSs. These reactions are in turn considered by curators who need to assess the suitability of street artworks for exhibitions. Although exploring the concepts of community and social media skills were not necessarily the purpose of this study, they may be the subject of future research with the aim of exploring the global SA community and the professional use of social media to convey value.

The current study also extends our understanding of the role of photographers in SA. Indeed, previous literature underlines the role of photographers in making graffiti accessible and appreciated as SA (Cooper and Chalfant, 1984). However, this study shows that SA photographers have a more incisive role in promoting circulation/distribution of SA on SNSs as well as exposing creativities to both professional and non-professional audiences. The study supports the view of curators as facilitators of the encounter between artworks and audience (Edmonds et al., 2009), but also extends the understanding of curators' role in SA, generating relevant practical implications, as discussed below. The findings indeed highlighted the role of curators

in achieving permission to use a wall for SA, and in facilitating the access of street artworks in galleries and museums.

The fourth contribution has expanded the limited research on the concept of the creative value chain in SA. The literature (Liao, 2014; Pratt, 2004; Hartley, 2004; Madudová 2017; Miles, 2009) indeed suggested that in creative industries the value is generally created before the commodity is even produced, and that different actors can influence the value of a commodity (Keane, 2009; Pratt, 2009). This study gave relevant insights on the understanding of the creative value chain and its adaptations to SA. Indeed, as visible in Figure 5.5, the findings allowed the development of a model of value chain for SA that considers three dimensions and can be seen as a value eco-system: the value, the level of digitization, and the audience width.

The final contribution extends our understanding of art valuation practices with references to SA. The literature showed that the "interactive art systems" (Edmonds et al., 2009), the idea of "art machine" (Rodner & Thomson, 2013; Thornton, 2009), and the discussion on the economic factors that influence the value of art (Coslor, 2016; Coslor & Spaenjers, 2016; Robertson, 2005), could be used as a starting point to make sense of how SA is valuated. However, this study showed that valuing street artworks requires curators to aim for a global understanding of how street artists are perceived that includes aspects of style and reputation, and also to consider the numbers on SNSs to make a judgement on which street artwork to include at an event.

The theoretical contribution of this study has been transposed in visual terms in Figure 6.1 for ease of access. The figure shows the articulation of the different contributions discussed above and presents the conceptualisation of value co-creation in SA as it articulates within Chapters 4 and 5. The figure lists the different values

related with SA that have been identified in the current study, the identified actors related to each value type, and their actions that influence the value. How the value co-creation occurs in terms of steps can be seen in Figure 5.4 which explains what the SA value chain/ecosystem is.

Figure 6.1 shows the novel way to look at value co-creation in SA. However, the figure also includes references to the concepts of active audiences and art valuation as discussed in the current section. Although specifically designed for SA, the value co-creation model illustrated in Figure 6.1 can be applied to different art forms in the digital era. Indeed, the circulation of content on the internet exposes creativities to wider audiences and allows the participation of different actors in the creative process. This allows different actors to be part of a creative phenomenon and to influence the value of creativities.

Figure 6.1.

Value Co-Creation: Contributions of the Study

Value Co-Creation in Street Art: Contributions of the Study

Value Types	Position	Community	Commercial Value	Aesthetic Value	Platforms	Additional Value
Who	Street Artists, crews	Worldwide community of street artists	Businesses, organizations, curators, SA festivals	General audience, galleries, SNSs, street artists, crews	Museums, galleries, SNSs, social media pages	Bloggers, photographers, curators, specialised SNSs
Doing What	Street artists position themselves by deciding the genre, style, and technique of their artworks. Street artists also decide which audience to aim to, as well as the purpose of their creative practice.	Street artists get value from belonging to a worldwide close-knit community of creatives. They get inspiration for street artworks, and events on SA.	These actors consider the value of street artworks in attracting specific demographic for business purposes. Create and SNSs bring artists and/or audiences for narratives that are shared on SNSs and museums picked up by other actors.	React to visual stimuli and engage with the production of SA either on or offline. Galleries and artworks that are to popularity, consolidate by other artists' popularity.	They allow the circulation and re-production of SA on and offline. SNSs bring artworks value of street contribute to the dissemination of SA towards audiences.	These actors create and exploit narratives on SA. They expand the value of street artworks and contribute to the further audiences.

Source: the thesis author.

6.4 Practical Implications

The results of this study support the view of SA as a complex world made up of relationships and professional dynamics other than creativity. The research was conducted by interviewing three main actors of the street artworld, and the analysis thereof supported the view of the street artworld as an interactive system (Edmonds et al., 2009). There are practical implications specifically for the three interviewee types: **(I) Street artists; (II) SA curators;** and **(III) SA connoisseurs.**

The current study provides five main practical implications for **street artists**.

(I) The findings suggest that, when street artists engage in collateral activities such as reproductions, replicas and participation in live painting sessions - supporting the current literature on the matter (Blanché, 2015; Deitch, 2011; Günes & Yýlmaz, 2006) - as well as in collaborations with photographers/bloggers, they can achieve both a higher diffusion amongst audiences and further business opportunities. Moreover, the findings suggest that the use of replicas of street artworks as merchandising and other reproductions can help the renown-ness of street artworks, indicating the need for street artists to engage in collateral activities if their purpose is to achieve renown-ness and commercial success.

(II) A relevant practical implication of this study relates to the use of social media/digital skills by different actors in the street artworld. Indeed, the literature (Jones et al., 2015; Kane and Clark, 2019; He et al., 2017) suggests small business operators to learn how to use social media in order to address the wants and needs of digital users. This study highlighted not only that the above is true for SA, but also that street artists - who often consider SA as "running a business" - have progressed their social media skills in order to stimulate engagement with online audiences and achieve

the numbers that curators and SA connoisseurs seek. However, the skills of street artists must not only consist of using the basic functions on social media, but should include the ability to understand photography, branding dynamics, and using hashtags. Moreover, street artists can also employ their digital skills to catch the attention of peers, curators, and connoisseurs, and as a digital portfolio to showcase their creativity to curators amongst other professionals.

(III) This study also generated relevant professional implications for street artists in knowing how they might shape their creative practices to become renowned. Indeed, the findings outlined a shared practice amongst a number of street artists used to stimulate the engagement on SNSs. The shared practice consists of (I) using a trending topic; (II) using a popular topic within a demographic; and/or (III) using metadata to stimulate engagement on SNSs. Street artists can, therefore, consider this practice in order to stimulate online engagement, achieve numbers on SNSs, and be considered by professionals for events.

(IV) This study shows that street artists usually divide their practice in two: SA for art's sake, and SA/mural art produced for commissions. This finding has a practical implication because street artists may want to position themselves and their practice according to both the type of value they want to convey, and the purpose of their practice. Therefore, street artists can approach the practice depending on what they aim to achieve: recognition from their local and global peers, income source, or both. The issue of position within the SA practice also influences the genre/style of the creative output. Indeed, the analysis revealed that street artists need to make a set of decisions on different aspects of the practice: the aspect of authenticity of their output with the original meaning of graffiti, SA, and/or mural art; the question to be part of a

crew based on styles, networking, business opportunities, and personal affiliations; the question of being loyal to the old school SA community or going against them; the acceptance of curators and other institutional players within the community; the style and use of tools such as spray-cans, chalk, brushes, stickers, stencil etc.[84]; the use of digital platforms. Therefore, being a street artist means taking a position on which ethos to represent in the practice and which value elements to include in one's creative output.

(V) Another valuable practical contribution for mostly street artists and SA curators from this study is represented by the benefit for street artists, curators, and connoisseurs of collaborations at different levels. As discussed in the RQ4 section, this study showed that street artists can benefit from collaborations with a variety of professionals. For example, street artists may want to establish connections with both local and global[85] peers to get inspiration and ideas for new artworks, to receive introductions to potential business occasions - via networking - or to execute artworks collaboratively. Other examples of beneficial collaboration for street artists are those established between street artists and photographers, between photographers and bloggers, and between street artists and curators. The collaboration between street artists and photographers is very useful because photographers allow street artists to "get out globally" and lose the sense of illegality frequently attributed to SA, other than creating a digital body of work for everyone to consult. Moreover, the collaboration with SA bloggers and administrators of SNSs has been identified in the findings as crucial for street artists who aim at becoming renowned. Indeed, despite the physical

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[84] See Appendix A for a detailed list of popular SA genres.
[85] Global collaborations happen aided by SNSs, as showed with this study.

presence of street artworks on a wall exposing them to passers-by, the global exposure they get by being online is much greater.

The need to establish different types of relationships with different actors is also the main practical implication for **curators**, as well as the other implications discussed below.

(I) A first implication is that SA curators can use SNSs to judge the suitability of street artworks for events. Indeed, the analysis showed that curators consult SNSs and value the numbers of followers, likes, comments and reactions of users on the visual representations of street artworks[86]. Consulting SNSs can be useful for curators not just to discover and/or value street artworks, but as a way to establish relationships with photographers and bloggers who posted the content online.

(II) Curators should consider the numbers of street artworks on SNSs not only to understand the value of street artworks, but also to anticipate the media coverage on social media platforms that a collaboration with a street artist could bring to an event. Indeed, as discussed above, both curators and SA festival organisers engage in the "social media game" where street artists and event organisers can benefit from the mutual exploitation of the social media coverage. However, the mere numbers on SNSs should not be the main driver of curatorial policy, but one of the indicators of commercial success of SA events and/or SA merchandising.

(III) Another relevant practical contribution of this study stands in the professional opportunities that arise for curators in taking care of street artists' online presence. Indeed, the findings revealed that street artists feel the need to curate their online presence, but doing so would take time from their creative practice. Therefore,

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[86] SA curators build collections for gallery and museum exhibitions and contribute to the organization of SA festivals, the editing of books on SA and other professional activities.

SA curators and connoisseurs can engage in such activities and curate street artists' online presence. Therefore, it is important that SA curators learn how to use social media and do the promotional work so that street artists can dedicate their time to creativity.

(IV) Practical implications for curators are also related to the expectations street artists have towards their role in the community. Indeed, although fulfilling the traditional role of developing collections, this study showed that street artists expect curators to represent the local SA scene both on and offline. Therefore, to achieve a higher level of trust from street artists, curators should organise their work in order to provide an adequate representation of the local SA scene. Doing this would also soften the general averseness of street artists towards curators and their practice.

(V) The findings show that the job of SA curator is complex and requires high versatility. Indeed, interviews showed that SA curators have become both very versatile in their practice, and wary of the need to embrace further skills to keep up with the changes of SA. This has been referred to by interviewees as the *many hats* worn by SA curators, which is a concept that could be developed in a dedicated study, as discussed below.

As seen in the previous chapters, this study used the term **SA connoisseurs** to include different actors that gravitate around SA. The study produced five main implications for the different connoisseurs.

(I) Photographers can benefit from equipping themselves with audio-video instruments that enable the documentation of the execution of street artworks as engaging stories on SNSs. The findings indeed have shown that the most successful street artists on SNSs are those able to convey the making of their artworks via video

storytelling, and this can be usually done by collaborating with professionals such as photographers and/or bloggers.

(II) Bloggers, administrators of webpages on SA, and photographers that interact with both street artists and other photographers on and offline, should be aware they can shape their blogposts in order to present further information to online users. This would stimulate the engagement of digital audiences, but also - and more importantly - present the artworks to curators that are looking for new street artworks for collections and events. Analysing conversations on SNSs, indeed, showed that the more information shared on social media about authors, photographers, making-of sessions, models, location, and context, the more digital users engage with the content. Therefore, achieving digital interactions on SNSs depends on the ability of those who post online of providing further information that stimulates the engagement between street artworks and audience(s).

(III) SA festivals are important for street artists. This is because there can be locally-based festivals or international/global festivals that showcase SA to different audiences. Indeed, data analysis underlined how emerging street artists tend to appear in local SA festivals in order to catch the attention of curators and connoisseurs who are looking for new material, and hopefully thereby reach the bigger SA festival network. Therefore, small/emerging SA festivals should focus on representing the local emerging SA scene.

(IV) A further practical implication of this study concerns the SA *chroniclers*[87] who are aware of their role of gatekeepers for street artworks and expose them to further audiences[88]. Indeed, this study shows there can be a collaboration between

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[87] Photographers and bloggers as referred to by interviewees.
[88] Both professional audiences such as curators as well as the general audience.

photographers and bloggers in the activity of adding "more spicy information about artists" and street artworks. This suggests there is a need for these actors to establish relationships both among themselves and with street artists, curators, and other connoisseurs, to develop professional and business opportunities.

(V) The final implication for connoisseurs rests in acknowledging that professional roles in SA are not well-defined. Indeed, as happens both with street artists and curators, being a SA connoisseur means to be frequently crossing professional boundaries since photographers are also bloggers, bloggers are also scholars, administrators of SNSs are also photographers, SA festival organisers work as curators, and any other possible combination of these roles and that of street artists.

6.5 Limitations and Future Research

Reflecting on the current study has allowed the identification of its limitations and future research directions. First, exploring the street artworld and selecting of participants followed a non-probability sample technique for which interviewees and conversations on SNSs were considered according to what is useful and credible as well as what can answer the RQs (Patton, 2015). As the interviews were performed and participants suggested other potential participants[89] it became clear that two of the three interviewee subgroups were characterised by gender concentration. This is a limitation since the purpose of this study was to explain how street artworks become renowned in a context of digital interaction, and not to develop a gender-concentrated study. Indeed, participants were contacted according to their occupation, not because of their gender. Therefore, it would be useful to conduct further studies that take into consideration the gender of participants as well as including questions in the interview

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[89] Referred to as *snowballing* in Chapter 3.

schedule aimed at understanding why such gender concentration exists amongst street artists and SA curators. The question of gender in SA has been addressed from the production point of view (Pinto, 2020), and highlight the lack of recognition/visibility of female street artists. Studies conducted in such a direction would corroborate the results discussed in this thesis and provide a more complete understanding of the street artworld.

Second, the use of VOIP technologies to collect data can be considered a way to access distant participants (Saunders et al., 2019). Moreover, given the sensitivity of the topic[90] and the averseness shown by street artists towards institutional actors such as researchers, conducting electronic interviews seemed to be the ideal means to collect data from these types of actors (Pearce et al., 2017). However, a more analogue/ethnographic study of the street artworld could contribute to the understanding of the interactions that happen offline allowing street artworks to become renowned[91].

However, the opposite could also be true: future studies on SA could be conducted as a pure netnography (Kozinets et al., 2014) in order to focus exclusively on the interactions happening within online communities and in engaging online with these communities. Indeed, a relevant aspect of the findings discussed in the previous chapter is the need for street artists to have social media skills developed in order to better interact within the community. Therefore, a pure netnography study would allow both a more thorough exploration of street artists' practice in terms of the digital/social media skills they need to operate in the street artworld, and the exploration of the street

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[90] Many street artists refuse to disclose their identity for professional and deontological reasons.
[91] Such a study would allow researchers to immerse themselves within the everyday life of specific cultural groups - street artists, SA curators, SA connoisseurs or others - objects of study, and produce an account of their lives in relation to the research focus (Cunliffe, 2010).

artists' global community. Indeed, as Kozinets (2015) said, a pure netnography requires a participative and "socially and emotionally" engaged approach of researchers to the object of the study (Kozinets, 2015, p.96) which was not achieved in this study due to time constraints. A more netnographic/digital orientation of future studies would also allow deeper exploration of the digital aspects of SA mentioned in this research in terms of data sources and analytical approach. For example, blogs and SNSs would be considered not just as sources of archival data/content, but as contexts where researchers engage with the members of communities and generate netnographic insights/data that would shed further light on the cultural lives of street artists.

Third: despite the focus on SA, this study did not produce a visual analysis. Indeed, the focus of this study was on the interactions happening around the digital representation of street artworks on SNSs in the form of conversations. Therefore, analysing the data showed that street artists, curators and other actors included in the study, have different reactions to what they see online against what they view in the streets. Hence, a more specific study on the visual elements of SA with a dedicated visual analysis method would shed further light on the use street artists perceive of their works, and how the visual elements trigger actions/reactions in one of the audiences that have been identified in this study.

A fourth limitation mentioned in <u>Section 6.2</u> is the focus on three main actors[92]. However, future studies could be focusing on curators, expanding the knowledge of their practices, and developing further professional implications in curatorial work. Moreover, as discussed in the previous sections of the current chapter, data analysis

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[92] Street artists, SA curators, and SA connoisseurs.

brought up a characteristic of curatorial practice that interviewees referred to as the "many hats" of SA professionals. Despite being a very interesting aspect of the curatorial practice, this was not the focus of this study and leaves room for further investigation, perhaps with a dedicated study on professional practices in SA. Another type of study could be conducted on SA festivals in order to verify whether these can be considered as temporary clusters where street artists learn skills and techniques offline, adding to the knowledge of street artists learning skills and getting inspired online as discussed in Chapter 5. Indeed, the role of creative industries festivals at local level as knowledge communities/clusters where participants learn skills, expand their professional networks, and access business opportunities has been highlighted by studies on the matter (Comunian, 2016), but have not focused on SA in general or SA festivals.

Another element that has been frequently mentioned during interviews is the use of SA as a media tool for advertising. Indeed, among street artists that receive commissions, they are frequently invited to produce SA to promote products or services. A dedicated study on the use of SA in advertisements would corroborate the studies and knowledge on SA as a form of media circulating on social media platforms (MacDowall, 2008; Widewalls, 2014).

A fifth limitation of this study considers its geographical complexity. Indeed, as discussed in the Method chapter, the investigation was limited to the UK as a geographical limit. However, although exploring the UK street artworld has provided enough data and insight to discuss the theory, further studies could be conducted in different countries in order to verify the "global and local" characteristics of SA as identified in Chapter 2 (Irvine, 2012) and thus begin a strand of comparative studies -

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as encouraged by Bengsten (2016) and taken as advice for the next upcoming conferences on the matter (Glocal Street Art Event, 2022) - on how street artworks become renowned in different contexts. Performing a cross-country analysis of SA would allow the emergence of the differences and similarities in terms of actors involved, interactions, co-creative aspects, and other elements.

Finally, the theoretical contribution of this thesis with the conceptualisation of a novel value co-creation model for SA can have a wider resonance and explanatory power in other forms of visual art/creative industries and generate future research possibilities. Indeed, understanding SA as a complex social world where value can take different forms, and can be co-created, distributed, and consumed by different professional and amateur audiences, sets out the starting point to perform similar studies in other creative fields. As discussed in Chapter 2, co-creation and interactive valuation are frequent themes in both the visual art context and in the service-dominant logic, but there is room to conduct studies able to generate value co-creation models for other forms of creativity in the digital era. Moreover, although the study revealed the existence of different communities/tribes that generate narratives while consuming SA either on or offline, this thesis did not take a consumption-focused approach. Therefore, future studies may be conducted to explore the tribal/consumption behaviour of the communities within the street artworld in order to expand the understanding of value co-creation in SA mediated by consumption communities.

6.6 A Final Word

This thesis has examined the multi-dimensional nature of SA with the purpose of identifying how street artworks become renowned in the digital era. It is possible to say that the current study contributes significantly to improving our understanding of

the complexity of the street artworld by revealing the composition of the different audiences of SA, by explaining the roles of the different actors in defining, influencing, and distributing the value of street artworks, and by highlighting the importance of SNSs where actions and interactions take place. The study explains that street artworks become renowned by going through an incremental process where different actors intervene both on and offline influencing the value of what is being seen on the streets as well as on SNSs. This social process has aspects of co-creation that were identified in the literature but presents specific features that distinguish it in terms of the number of actors involved, actions performed, and analogue-digital ambiguity of actions. The different actors involved in this incremental process can intervene in the process both formally and informally: street artists, curators, and connoisseurs are usually professionals that benefit from the renown-ness of street artworks, whereas the general audience spontaneously reacts to stimuli embedded in both their analogue and digital experience.

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Appendix A - Genres of Street Art

SA can be represented in a series of styles and genres. The most popular forms and techniques are briefly described below (Conklin, 2012; Singh, 2015; 10 Types of Street Art, 2019):

1. *Graffiti*: they are writings on the wall that can be conventionally made of spray paints and markers. They can be simple tagging or calligraphed writings or also elaborated works of painting. Graffiti can be used to communicate within gangs/crews or can be aesthetically pleasing.

2. *Sticker art -* also known as *sticker bombing/tagging* or *sticker graffiti -* is a form of SA generally associated with a political purpose. They can take different forms and can happen both on static supports such as poles, billboards, benches, doors, and walls, and on moving objects such as public transportation vehicles.

3. *Stencil Graffiti*: a form of graffiti whose main feature is to be easily reproduced in series because they are made of paper or cardboard. The design is created by cutting the paper form, and then transferring it to a wall using spray paint or a brush.

4. *3D Street Art*: realistic paintings whose characteristic is to create an optical illusion in the eyes of the viewers. They can be artistic reproductions made with chalk, spray-paint or roll-on-paint.

5. *3D graffiti:* similar to *3D Street art* but representing tags and writings. These are executed by giving the feeling that the writing is emerging from the wall in a three-dimensional illusion.

6. *Video Projections*: often used in multi-disciplinary performances and in interactive forms of art. In this technique lights and moving images are projected onto both public and private walls and other surfaces forming animations.

7. *Art interventions*: this is a form of self-stimulating artistic activity because it is used to bring a change in an already existing artwork or in a specific area.

8. *Flash mob*: by some considered as a form of SA since they are a performance executed in the public space.

9. *Street installations*: installations can be made of anything; they can be permanent or temporary. They can even be human made and they always use three dimensional spaces.

10. *Street posters* or *poster art*: street posters can be handmade or printed in series. They are usually made of 2D drawings and can be printed in large quantities, so to be attached to public walls.

11. *Sculptures*: SA sculptures can be made of any material that can be carved in order to give a specific look. Contemporary street art sculptures are usually put outside of a museum or other public building. It is indeed one of the most frequently used form of *public art*. 3

12. *Wheat paste*: those works are made with a mix of flour and water and generally are a detailed version of street posters.

13. *Yarn Bombing/installations*: as the name suggests, this type of graffiti employs knitted and crocheted yarn and can be placed around public/common objects. It is frequently placed around trees.

14. *Moss art*: this form of SA uses moss and plants as media. They usually represent words in the form of calligraphy and are executed on walls.

15. *Guerrilla Gardening installations:* authors use plants, dirt and a container to create a piece of garden in a public place.

16. Spray paint murals - also known simply as *murals*: the most commonly known form of SA. They happen when street artists paint on walls - either public or private - using a wide variety of subjects.

Visual examples of the genres above can be found below with their related numbers.

Figure A.1.

Graffiti

Source: Britannica.com
Author: Kalle Kolodziey/Fotolia

Figure A.2.

Sticker Art

Figure A.3.

Stencil Graffiti

WE COULD BE
HEROES

356
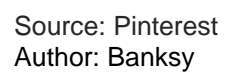
Figure A.4.

3D Street Art.

Source: Kelle, 2020

Figure A.5.

3D Graffiti

Figure A.6.

Video Projection

Figure A.7.

Art Intervention

Figure A.8.

Street Installation

Source: Widewalls.ch

Author: Banksy

Figure A.9.

Street Poster

Source: (Mullen, 2020)

Figure A.10.

Street Art Sculpture

Source: Shoreditch Street Art Tours, 2015

Figure A.11.

Wheat Paste

Source: Rigney, 2015 on Hookedblog, 2017
Author: Eddie Colla

Figure A.12.

Yarn Bombing

Source: Conklin (2012)

Figure A.13.

Moss Art

Source: Listsurge, 2019

Figure A.14.

Guerrilla Gardening

Figure A.15.

Spray Paint Mural
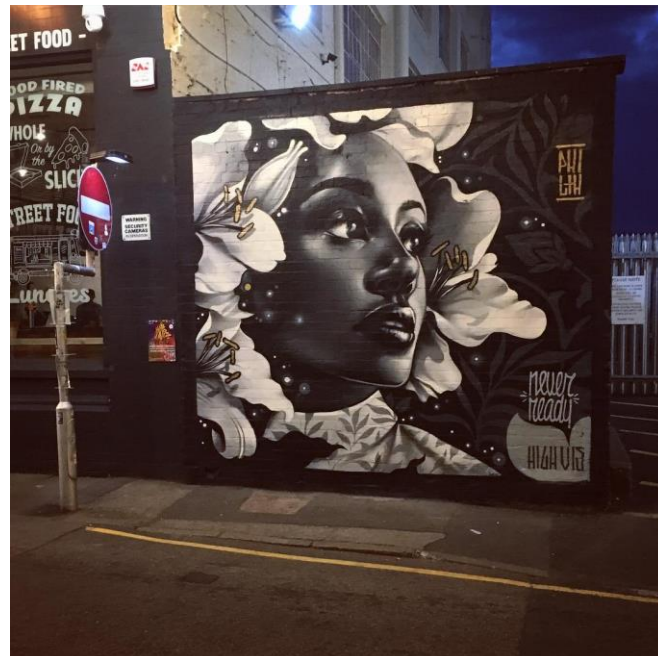
Appendix B - Interview Data Extracts

1) Evidence of actors' behaviour in monothematic groups:

Group2_No2 referred to groups when they said that "'especially on Facebook, there are street art groups". One of these social groups is referred to as admins and Group2_No2 said they are "playing their own light game with our artwork", suggesting there is a group of admins on social media that exploit the value of street artworks to engage with online communities.

2) Playing the follow-unfollow game on social media:

Group3_No7 said: "you just follow like a thousand people, 200 follow your back. Then you unfollow everybody, and you are left with the followers", but also said that some artists "don't want to go that way. They want to grow organically and naturally, not to the point where it hurts their own business". Finally, Group3_No7 said that "playing that kind of game in social media […] would make a load of help them get like a contract work that makes them money".

3) Group3_No17 on the premier league:

"There's the main Premier League which is Banksy and all that. You can't attain that; you could never break into that. That's like a closed door now".

4) Group3_No20 and Group3_No6 on monothematic groups:

Sometimes if I've done something based on Liverpool Football Club, it tends to go around the little football supporters and things like that. So, I think it depends where you're aiming there as well. It's easy for someone to get fame nowadays: you just need a little stencil, a cute bear or a cute dog. You could get more likes with that than doing a crazy piece of graffiti.

Street artists "don't necessarily have to be good at art" because they only have to find something that creates hype and they just have to keep doing it in order to achieve renown-ness. "If you did cats all the time, you stick to that. So, people can recognise your stuff".

5) Quotes of interviewees commenting on value misjudgement on SNSs:

Group2_No4: online recognition and visibility don't always lead to popularity, particularly in a social media environment where likes and followers can be bought.

Group2_No6: People now always look to see what kind of following you have but since followers can be bought, it's misleading.

Group3_No4: I think it has to do with the algorithm.

Group3_No7: we have so many fake accounts on Instagram. And it is so easy to attract them. I would say 70% or even 80% of the likes and comments that I get are from bots.

6) The power of the public on SNS:

Group3_No1 stated that "it's very personal and risky for someone to put their work in the public domain because they can be loved by the public, but at the same time, they can be scrutinised by the public". Therefore, interviewees are aware of the effects of the public scrutiny on artworks but effects in terms of consequences for the street artist, whom is able to use that recognition to their advantage: "if I happen to be celebrated online, I can now charge twice as much for an event" (Group3_No12).

7) Group1_No2 on the value of specific engagements on SNSs:

"You have people like ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ who everyday may share new artworks from around the world. If they pick up your artwork, then it gets shared by a lot of people, and this can be very valuable".

8) Group1_No5 on having a niche:

Within the niche, street artists can "reach people as much as possible to tell them the story on how the artwork is created" and make the public engaged.

9) What curators consider to value street artworks:

Group3_No18Double who stresses the importance of a global understanding of the creative practice of an artist. They, indeed, said:

It's not just about how many followers or how many likes you have. You need to really have a good technique with style, you need to be years active on the street. So, I think the curator is the person who looks like has an overview of what's going on and then filters it.

10) Group1_No2 on how a global videogame brand used their street art as advertisement:

I painted a commission for ▮▮▮▮▮▮ and it was shared on reddit and received such a huge following from people in Japan that the owners of ▮▮▮▮▮ came to England, and they met me because it had become so famous in Japan

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[93] A major videogames organization from Japan.

11) Connoisseurs commenting on the effect of showing skills on SNSs - related to category 6 reaction:

Group3_No12: I followed this guy while he was doing graffiti and I took some photos. And then I asked him whether I could post these pictures because I thought that his work was great.

Group3_No14: In social media you always have that kind of effect that makes things go viral easily, because it shows certain kind of skill that only few people have.

Group3_No17: Shareability is very much connected to style and skill.

Appendix C - Data Organization

Extracts from the first spreadsheet.

Complete List:

number	Name	URL
1	**ukstreetart.co.uk**	http://www.ukstreetart.co.uk/
2	**Graffitilife.co.uk**	https://graffitilife.co.uk/
3	**streetartnews.net**	https://streetartnews.net/
4	**Streetart360.net**	https://streetart360.net/
5	**GraffitiStreet**	https://www.graffitistreet.com/
7	**londoncallingblog.net**	https://londoncallingblog.net/
8	**graffoto1**	http://graffoto1.blogspot.com/
9	**End of the Line**	http://www.endoftheline.co/about-us/
10	**ArtUK**	https://artuk.org/
11	Hooked Blog	http://www.hookedblog.co.uk/
12	BlocalTravel	https://www.blocal-travel.com/ for street art connoisseur
13	UrbaniteWebzine	http://www.urbanitewebzine.com/category/street-art-2/
14	I support Street Art	http://www.isupportstreetart.com/about-us/ info about street artists and art connoisseurs
15	Little Observationist	http://www.littleobservationist.com/
16	Jenikya	http://jenikya.com/blog/ marginal
17	Memoirs of a Metro Girl	https://memoirsofametrogirl.com/ marginal
18	Looking for heroes	https://lookingforheroes.co/ marginal
19	Inspiri ngc ity	https://inspiringcity.com/
20	Www.Fac ebo ok	https://www.facebook.com/thepalettepages/?ref=hl discussions
21	Www.Thep ale ttepages	http://www.thepalettepages.com/flux-exhibition/
22	Pinterest Barbara Picci	https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/60242688762 4766487/?ln=true
23	Global Street Art	https://news.globalstreetart.com/
24	Londoncitygraff	http://londoncitygraff.blogspot.com/
25	Louis Masai	http://louismasai.com
26	ArtPeopleGallery	www.artpeoplegallery.com
27	Graffiti Kings	https://graffitikings.co.uk/graffiti-kings/
28	NotBanksyForum	https://notbanksyforum.com

Example of entries in the first spreadsheet:

Number	Name	URL	Activity	Contacted?	Notes
1	StreetArt News	https://streetartnews.net/	Contacted their webmasters	Yes on 10/01/2019	contact@streetartnews.net and
			Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/StreetArtNews	
			Youtube	https://www.youtube.com/user/StreetArtNews?sub_c	
			Twitter	https://twitter.com/streetartnews	
			Instagram	@streetartnews	

Name	URL	Activity	Contacted?	Notes
NotBanksyForum	https://notbanksyforum.com	Contacted their webmasters + registered on the forum	Yes	Introduced myself on the forum and contacted the webmasters
		Facebook		No Facebook
		Youtube		
		Twitter	https://twitter.com/notbanksyforum	Similar to graffoto forum
		Instagram		No Instagram - only forum

Example of website (blog) homepage:

Extracts from the second spreadsheet.

Example of first group (street artists):

Name	Social	Email	Example of relevant artwork online	Status	Recontacted	Consent Form
	https://www.facebook.com/			does not see the messages	Recontacted on 1st february and 11	
	https://www.facebook.com/	On Facebook		Interviewed on 26th January 2019		Consent form sent via FB
	Saw artworks in the street	On Facebook	n/a	Interviewed on 24th January 2019		in paper
	https://	st.		Go to them		Oral consent.
			https://www.instagr	Contacted	Recontacted on 1st February 2019	Oral and email consent
	https://www.instagram.com/drzadok/?fb		https://www.instagram.com/p/_g7mzivD	does not see the messages	Recontacted on 1st February 2019	
	Facebook: https://www.facebo			Interview questions sent on 9/2/2019	Recontacted on 1st February 2019	Gave consent via email
				Gave consent for conversation	on 5th February 2019 via mail and	Gave consent online
	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter	On Facebook https://www.facebo	https://www.facebook.com/DanKitchene	Contacted	Recontacted on 12th February	
	All			not active	on 5th February 2019 via mail and	
	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter			Interviewed 12 March 2019	recontacted on Facebook and	Oral consent.

Example from second group (curators):

number	Name	Email	Status	Social	Outcome
1		on Facebook	Contacted	https://www.face	Recontacted on 7th June 2019
2			Contacted		Answered - interview performed
3			Contacted		not responding
4			Available - interview on the 17th June		Interview performed online
5		contact@	Contacted		Recontacted on 10th June 2019
6		art@	Contacted		recontacted 10th June 2019
7	https://www.facebook	cue@	Contacted		not responding

Examples of observational field notes:

Interview with Group1_No7 📌

One of the most frequent comments in street artworks from users is "Fresh". Walls where street artists have permission to paint are often called permission walls.
Ask Group1_No7 interviewee about the charcoal ▭ mural.

Exploring the field 📌

Street artists do not respond online when I introduce myself myself.

Exploring the field 📌

Online conversations are usually almost always positive. So there is not any negative comments in terms of quality. It is more a fact of whether there is discussion or not...

Exploring the field 📌

Curators are not very present on conversations
street artists only reply to good comments and compliments

Exploring the field 📌

street artists are generally not happy when the conversation is about their presence on social media.

Exploring the field 📌

https://www.facebook.com/ ██████████ ony or Eye Ronny has interesting works that can be considered for the conversation. Contact him and see if he can tell you which work of art has gone viral in the past.
https://www.facebook.com/magicstreetart/?__tn__=kC-RH-

qWBf9-SvskMV is an interesting link Facebook page to find conversations - try to find the ██████████ picture as example of viral artwork

Exploring the field 📌

Use the example of ██████████████ to show that you don't have to have a bit amount of followers to be successful as an artist (in terms of how much you sell out in a mainstream gallery).

Exploring the field 📌

There are blogs where if you are not know they do not respond to you. Then there are social media pages on SA where there are more chances of getting replies and comments if you post.

Exploring the field 📌

Street artists are also curators that are also managing social media pages. This is very common.

Examples of reflective field notes from analysis

Insights from Analysis 📌

It's common for curators and street artists to complain about the fact that people tend to not notice things in the street because they are looking at their phones, but consume street art on social media.

Insight from Analysis 📌

Street art renown-ness is related to reputation which goes hand in hand with digital following.

Insight from Analysis 📌

support in the community is very important. "Even if you don't like the work of somebody, you tend to keep a contact with them and show support".

Insight from Analysis 📌

People who photograph street artworks and post them on social media can be defined chroniclers

Insight from Analysis

you have to be multitasking and use all the tools to become a known artist. So you cannot just do art for arts sake.

Insight from Analysis

finding other street artworks on social media: usually happens for cities that you don't live in. And then the more frequently you see them, the more you want to check the works out.

Insights from Analysis

Street art and graffiti have become fused with so many things today: advertising, commissioned wall painting,

Insight from Analysis

Many artists, even when doing disruptive works to make them famous, do traditional commissioned work to sustain their lives

Insights from Analysis

artists consider themselves as one of the gatekeepers that contribute to determining the value of their work.

Appendix D - Conversations on SNSs

The six Conversations on SNSs used in this study are illustrated in more detail in this appendix. Each Conversation has been represented how it appears on the social media platform it was taken from, and it contains both the visual element and the accompanying caption from the author, if available. All authors have been asked whether they agreed to the use of their content for this study. All street artists but one agreed to the use of their content for this study and requested to be credited together with the photographers that took the photo.

Conversation 1

This content has been taken from Instagram. The author of the picture is a photographer which participated in this study as interviewee. The picture shows a *work in progress* of a mural artwork where the artist is being observed while executing the artwork. The subject being painted on the wall is a popular VIP and its name has been included by the post author in the caption together with a series of hashtags, mentions and location information. Both the artist and the photographer have been credited in the picture below.
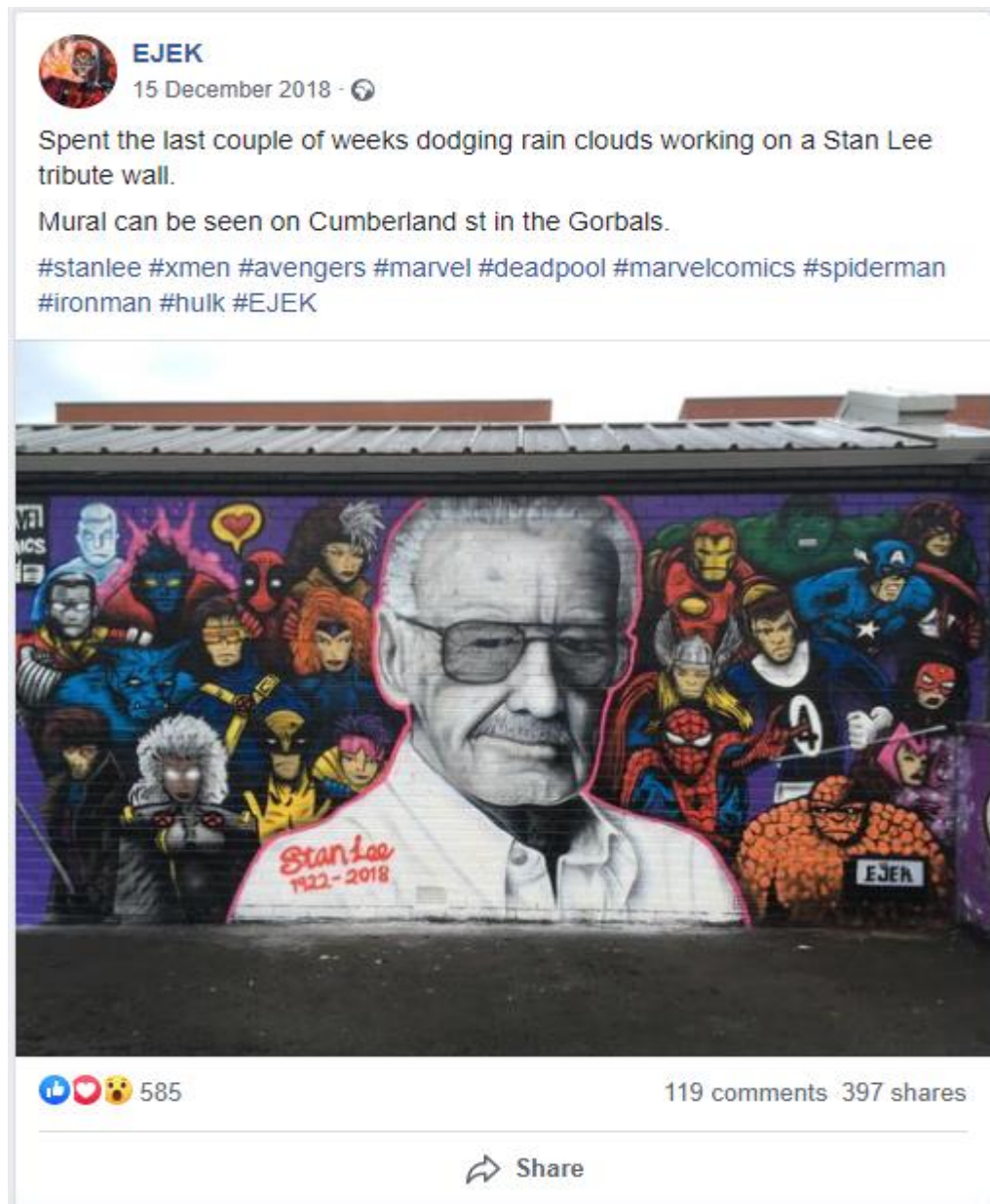
Figure C.1.

Conversation 1

Source: artist's Instagram page.

Conversation 2

Conversation 2 is content available on Facebook. The author of the picture is the street artist and is the owner of the social media page. The picture shows the completed street artwork which is related to a trending topic: the death of a VIP. The author of the post has included hashtags to connect the picture with further popular topics. The author of the post requested to be credited.

Figure C.2.

Conversation 2

Source: artist's Facebook page.

Conversation 3

Conversation 3 is also available on Facebook. The author of the picture is a specialised SA page. The shared content shows a list of 23 pictures of street artworks available in London in 2019.

Figure C.3.

Conversation 3

Source: SNS Facebook page.

Conversation 4

Conversation 4 comes from Instagram. The author of the picture is the street artist, who is also the owner of the social media page. The shared content shows the restoration progression of their artwork which had been damaged. The author included hashtags and information on the context/location where the artwork is visible. The author requested to be credited. Table C.1 below shows the five photos of Conversation 4 in detail.
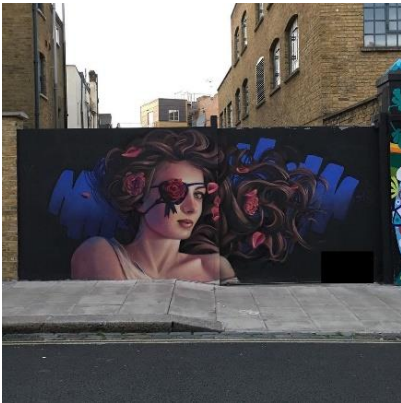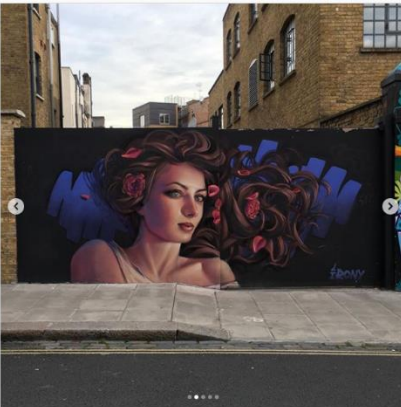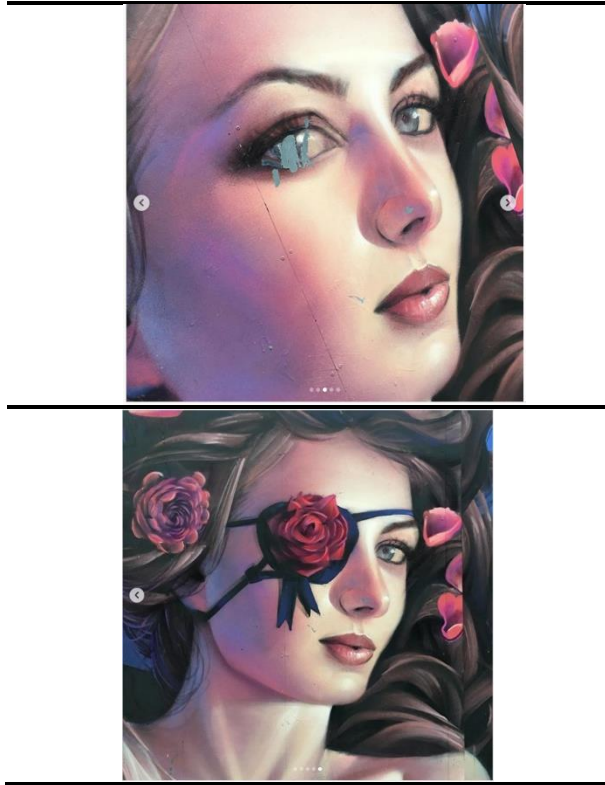
Figure C.4.

Conversation 4
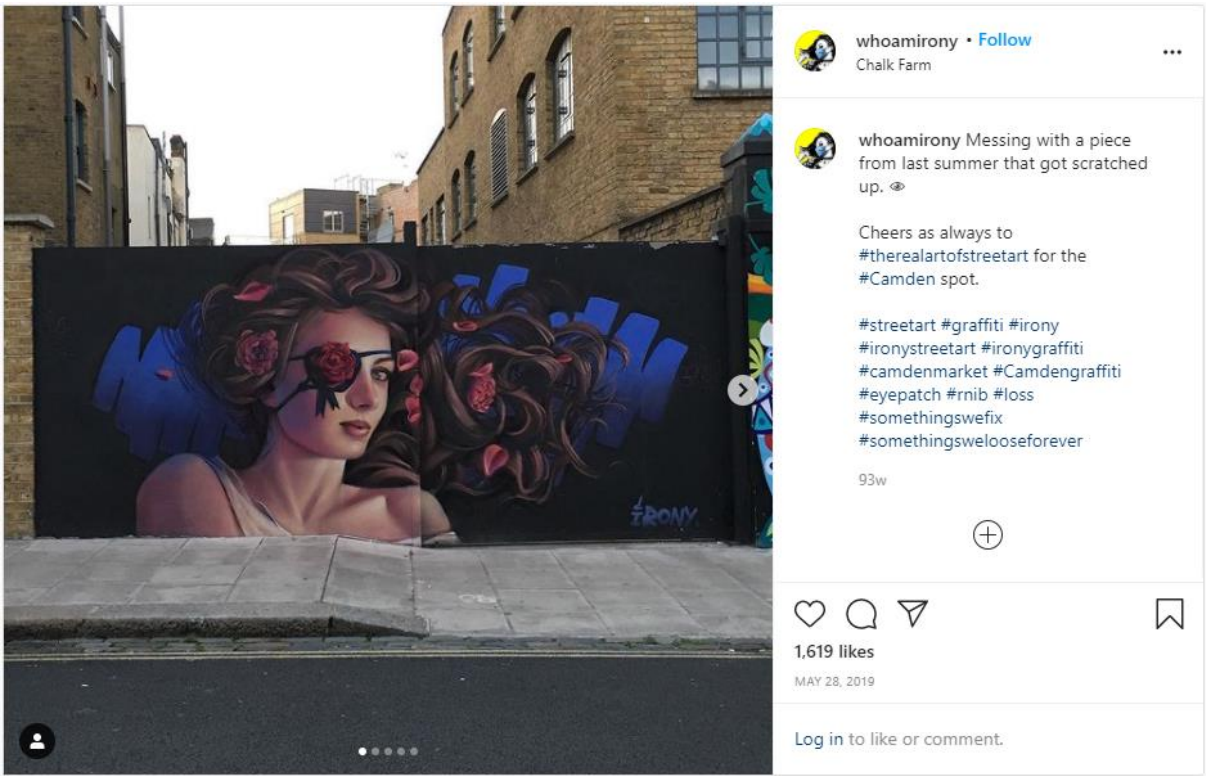
Source: artist's Instagram page.

Table C.1.

Progression of Five Photos in Conversation 4

Source: artist's Instagram page.

Conversation 5

Conversation 5 has been taken from Instagram. The author of the picture is the street artist. They presented the artwork together with a series of hashtags and mentions that attract audiences and connect the artwork to a SA festival where it is showcased. The author has credited the model in the picture, the photographer, and the SA festival. This author has not responded to the contact message; therefore, both the visual part and the captions have been blurred to guarantee anonymity.

Figure C.5.

Conversation 5

Source: artist's Instagram page

Conversation 6

The content in this Conversation is related to two pictures of the same street artwork. One picture has been taken by a photographer interviewed in this study, while the other picture is a re-post done by a SA specialised page, also consulted in this study. Both pictures are available on Instagram and they present a street artwork executed by a Mexican street artist. The original post by the photographer mentions the street artist as well as a list of hashtags that connect the post on social media with popular topics. Conversation 6 has been used as example to show the ability of photographers to distribute street artworks to wider audiences and their collaborations with blogs/specialised SNSs pages.

Figure C.6.

Conversation 6

Source: artist's Instagram page.

Appendix E - Interview Schedules, PIS, Consent Form

Outline of semi-structured interview themes and questions with the three groups of interviewees.

1. **Aim:**

   Confirm and verify the aspects arisen in the Literature review themes, confirm, and improve the information not available or partially available in the secondary data records.

2. **Interview duration:**

   Individual semi-structured interviews of 30 to 60 minutes for all three types of interviewees.

3. **Interview location:**

   Interviews will be performed through VOIP/using Skype or any other VOIP support as well as in person.

4. **Interviewees:**

   - Group 1: Street artists (15 interviewees)
     - o Identified according to the indication from websites' owners
   - Group 2: Museum managers + curators (15 interviewees)
   - Group 3: street art connoisseurs (15 interviewees)

5. Interview Design:

Group	Outcome of the interviews
Street artists	1. Understand the artists' understanding and extent of use of social media networks and blogs/the web to communicate about their work. 2. Understand the artists' perception of the artistic valuation process(es) around their artworks. 3. Understand to what extents street artists interact with their audience(s) on social media & blogs/the web. 4. Find out about the perception street artists have about the extent to which digital interaction contribute to the renown-ness of their artworks.
Museum managers + curators	1. Understand what criteria is used by museums and galleries/exhibitions when they choose certain street artists. 2. Understand whether the presence of the artworks on digital means like social media, blogs and websites is relevant for museum managers and curators in terms of their exhibition choices/professional process. 3. Understand what effects has the perception of the artist by the online audience on the determination of the characteristics of exhibitions and galleries' events.
Street art connoisseurs	1. Comprehend the audience's way of appreciation of street artworks. 2. Understand the audience's use of digital technologies for the consumption of visual art and street artworks. 3. Understand the audience's knowledge of the digital street art scene. 4. Understand how the audience got to know famous artists.

6. Interview Outlines:

The topic schedules in the following pages are designed according to the three themes of the research. Therefore, each topic schedule is related with a group of interviewees.

Group No. 1 interview schedule	Street artists

1. Introduction:

Briefly introduce the topic and the reasons of the interview. Explain that the interview is for the research project and that all information given will be treated in confidence. Refer to the digital copy of the consent form sent to the interviewee in advance and ask for permission to record the interview.

- What type of street art do you produce and where are you based, and why?
- Once you produce a street artwork, how do you understand or consider it as successful?
- How do you disseminate your work and reach audiences?
- What is the role of digital media in the dissemination of your work?
- How do you interact with your audience? Do you prefer offline or online media for it, and why?
- If your artwork ended in a museum or a gallery exhibition, would it be your ultimate goal? And can you describe what would you wish your artworks to become?

2. Information on the perception and understanding of digital means available for street artists to communicate about their work:
    - Can you tell me if you consider the use of digital means to interact with your audience?
    - Which digital means do you use to communicate with your audience?
    - Can you share your personal experience regarding the use of digital means, social networks, blogs or forums for the dissemination of your artistic work?

3. Understand to what extents street artists interact with their audience(s) on social media & blogs:
    - Do you know whether there is digital discussion around your artistic work on social media networks, blogs, forums, or other discussion platforms?
    - Do you have regular interaction with your digital audience?

- Can you tell me if any of your street artworks have become famous as such, or renowned, as a result of digital interactions? How did this happen?
- Can you describe one or more examples where the interaction with digital audiences has played an important role for the artistic fostering of your artwork?

4. Find out about the perception street artists have about their success in terms of digital interaction:
   - To what extents do you interact with digital users about your work as a street artist?
   - Do you think it is important for street artists to engage with their digital users?
   - To what extents is the success of street artists related to their level of interaction with their digital audience?
   - To what extents is the fame of a street artwork due to digital interaction of users, artists and other gatekeepers?

5. Understand the artists' perception of the valuation process(es) around their artworks;
   - How do you think your work is valued by the audience?
     • Are there online and offline differences?
   - What types of people are involved in the valuation process of your artwork?
   - How are your artworks valuated? *For example, are there established techniques that professionals use to formulate the value of your artworks?* Or *Are the public able to shape the artistic value of your artworks?*
     o Is there a difference between the processes used by professionals and those represented by the general public/audience?
   - Do you think online presence is relevant for street artists, and why?
   - Do you think interaction with online users is important for the success of your artwork?

6. Final considerations:
   - Is there anything you would like to add, or any comments regarding the use of digital media and the digital interaction with online users?

END OF INTERVIEW

1. Introduction:

Briefly introduce the topic and the reasons of the interview. Explain that the interview is for the research project and that all information given will be treated in confidence. Refer to the digital copy of the consent form sent to the interviewee in advance and ask for permission to record the interview.

  - What is the place of street art in your curatorial work?

2. Information on museums' criteria on selection of street artists:

  - Can you tell me the criteria for the selection of street artists that get an exhibition in museums and galleries?
  - Can you share your personal reasoning on how street artists gain popularity?
  - Can you tell me whether or not the popularity of artists and their presence in museums/galleries depends on their success amongst their audience?
  - Can you tell me if curators consider the digital popularity (on social & digital media) of a street artist to determine their suitability for an exhibition?
  - What is the main criterion to determine the artistic value of street artworks and their suitability for an exhibition? Does the digital audience have anything to do with it?
  - What is the main factor that drives curatorial attention towards a brand-new and unknown street artwork? Is the audience relevant in this process?

3. Information on the relationship between artists and audience and its effects on the determination of the characteristics of exhibitions.

  - Can you tell me how is the value of street artworks assessed? Does it include the popularity of the street artist?
  - Can you tell me which is the main gatekeeper or facilitator for street artworks?
  - For the determination of the artistic value (fostering) of new street artworks, is the general audience important? How?
  - What is the role of the audience in the success history of street artists?
  - What is the meaning of street art for you and how relevant is the audience - or the digital audience - in the meaning of street art?

- Can you tell me how do you think artists become famous in the digital era?
- To what extent the interactions (if present) between artists, artworks and audiences contribute to the artistic legitimation of artworks?

4. Understand whether the presence of the artworks on digital means like social media, blogs and websites is relevant for museum managers and curators in terms of their exhibition choices:

- Do you know many street artists that are present and active on digital/social media? Would you think that there is a prevalence of street artists who are engaging online with their audience, and why?
- Do you think their presence and their interaction with the public on both offline and online networks are relevant for their success as artists?
- How do decide whether a new artwork is art or not? Does the level of digital interactions on pictures of the work play a role in this decision?
- Is the online presence of an artist relevant for you when deciding whether to include the artworks in an exhibition?

5. Final considerations:

- Is there anything you would like to add to or further elaborate on the way street artworks become popular and/or suitable of curatorial interest?

END OF INTERVIEW

1. Introduction:

Briefly introduce the topic and the reasons of the interview. Explain that the interview is for the research project and that all information given will be treated in confidence. Refer to the digital copy of the consent form sent to the interviewee in advance and ask for permission to record the interview.

2. Understand how audiences appreciate artworks:
   - Are you a regular street art "consumer"?
   - How do you consume street art - for example visiting cities, going to festivals, online, magazines, webzines… ?
   - How do you generally learn about new street artworks?
   - How many of the new street artworks you frequently see online become high-end artworks?
   - What is a high-end street artwork for you?
   - What is your perception of the process for which unknown artworks become known? What is the role of digital audiences in this process?

3. Understand the use of digital technologies to access and consume visual art:
   - What means do you use to get informed about street art?
   - What place have social media, blog, websites in you keeping informed about street art and street artists?
   - Do you follow/like any street artists online? What level of interaction do you have with them?
   - Can you describe your use of social media to interact with other street art connoisseurs?
   - Can you describe your level of engagement in online conversations with street artists and their audience on social media and blogs?
   - Have you ever discovered a street artists/artwork thanks to people sharing the content on social media? What happened after that?
   - Have you ever contributed to the dissemination (sharing) of content related with unknown artworks? How? What was the result?

4. Understand the knowledge of the digital street art scene:
   - Do you think the audience/public has a role in determining the legitimacy of street artists? Why?
   - Do you think that museums and curators have a role in determining the fame of a street artwork?
   - Can you tell me what is your personal idea on how street artists become famous in a context of digital interaction?

5. Understand how audiences get to know their favourite artists:

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- How did you learn about/get to know about your favourite street artists?
- Have you *discovered* any of your favourite street artists thanks to social media?
- Do you think that social media has a role in the dissemination of street artwork?
- When you share visual content with your social media connections about street art? Why? What is the reaction from the audience?

6. Final considerations:
- Is there anything you would like to add to or further elaborate on the way street artworks become popular and/or suitable of curatorial interest?

END OF INTERVIEW

Participant Information Sheet - PIS - for Interviewees

Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

Research project title: Exploring the dynamics of co-creation of street art in the digital era: how the value of street art is transformed from the ghetto to the MOMA

Dear [name],

As part of my research for the PhD course in Management at the University of Birmingham, I am conducting interviews with different groups of people involved in the creation and artistic legitimation of street artworks. The aim of this study is to gather different perspectives and insights in order to understand how unknown street artworks become renowned in a context of digital interaction. In particular, my purpose is to look at digital conversations on social media and blogs to understand the role of the audience is in this process.

As part of the research, I would like to invite you to participate in a semi-structured interview to discuss this topic. The interview will last from 30 to 60 minutes and will be audio recorded for accuracy. In case you accept to participate, please be aware that **your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and confidential.** You can be considered for this study only if you are over 18 years old. You are free to decline my invitation and/or to stop your participation at any time before the data analysis starts, which will happen by the 30th of June 2019.

Information collected throughout this project will remain confidential: I will not share any of the personal information collected through this research with anyone outside my research supervisors. Each respondent's identity is going to be anonymised through number and/or letters. Illegal activity or facts are not relevant for this research, therefore, any information gathered from any of the users that regards illegal activity will be deleted from the records.

Should you be willing to withdraw your consent and request to delete the recording of your interview or get hold of it, please contact me at MXB635@student.bham.ac.uk before the 30th of June 2019. At the end of the project, I will prepare a summary of the research results which will be available to be shared amongst all the participants. Please let me know if you wish to receive such summary and indicate the most appropriate contact to receive such document.

If you agree to participate, please fill-in the consent form accompanying this information sheet. Due to the specificity of some questions, you will receive a copy of the interview schedule before the date set for our interview.

Thanks for your consideration,

The PhD student:

Mattia Boscaino
MXB635@student.bham.ac.uk
10th Floor Muirhead Tower
University of Birmingham, Edgbaston
B15 2SB Birmingham

PhD Supervisors:

Dr. Caroline Chapain	Dr. John Gibney	Dr. Margarita Nyfoudi
c.a.chapain@bham.ac.uk	j.gibney@bham.ac.uk	m.nyfoudi@bham.acu.uk

University of Birmingham, Edgbaston
B15 2TT Birmingham

Participant Information Sheet - PIS - for Webmasters and Website Owners

Webmasters and Website owners (PIS)

Research project title: Exploring the dynamics of co-creation of street art in the digital era: how the value of street art is transformed from the ghetto to the MOMA

Dear user,

As part of my research for the PhD course in Management at the University of Birmingham, I am using digital conversations of different online users involved in the creation and artistic legitimation of street artworks. The aim of this study is to gather different perspectives and insights in order to understand how unknown street artworks become renowned in a context of digital interaction. The purpose of this study is to understand how digital interactions over street artworks can influence the value of artworks and contribute to the fame of street artists and their artworks.

As part of the research, I would like to consider the conversations available on your website/blog, such as those available at this link: [URL].

The participation of users and street artists whose artworks are present in and/or connected with your website is entirely voluntary and confidential. They are free to decline my invitation and/or to stop their participation at any time before the 30th of June 2019, after which date the data analysis starts.

Information collected throughout this project will remain confidential: I will not share any of the personal information collected through this research with anyone outside my research supervisors. Each respondent's identity - names and nicknames - is going to be anonymised through number and/or letters. Any of the used digital conversations will be made anonymous and impossible to track by modifying the wording and deleting any reference to their authors.

Should participants be willing to withdraw their consent and request to delete the record of their artwork, or get hold of it, they will be able to contact me at MXB635@student.bham.ac.uk before the 30th of June/start of data analysis. At the end of the project, I will prepare a summary of the research results which will be available to be shared amongst all the participants, including website owners and webmasters. Please let me know if you wish to receive such summary and indicate the most appropriate contact to receive such document.

The PhD student:
Mattia Boscaino
MXB635@student.bham.ac.uk
10th Floor, Muirhead Tower
University of Birmingham, Edgbaston
B15 2SB Birmingham

PhD Supervisors:

Dr. Caroline Chapain	Dr. John Gibney	Dr. Margarita Nyfoudi
c.a.chapain@bham.ac.uk	j.gibney@bham.ac.uk	m.nyfoudi@bham.acu.uk

University of Birmingham, Edgbaston
B15 2TT Birmingham

User Consent Form

Consent Form for the research project:
Exploring the dynamics of co-creation of street art in the digital era: how the value of street art is transformed from the ghetto to the MOMA

I agree to participate in this research project by allowing the use of the transcript of my interviews. I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time before the deadline of the 30th of June 2019, after which data analysis will start and it will be impossible to withdraw from the project. I understand that the research involves the collection of screenshots of online conversations where I have taken part, for accuracy. I understand that my identity is anonymized and that any identifying information is not included in the final output of the research thesis unless I specifically request it to be.

☐ I confirm I am 18 or more years old
☐ I agree not to share any information related to illegal activities
☐ I wish to receive a summary of the project

Participant signature

Name (printed): _____

Name (signature): _____

Researcher signature

Name (printed): _____

Name (signature): _____