

Memory Written on the Streets: Graffiti and Pixação as Knowledge Production in Rio de Janeiro

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ABSTRACT In this paper the author introduces graffiti in Rio de Janeiro as a method for creative activism, drawing on scholarly work and her experience since 2015 as a graffiti writer. Combining these elements, the author demystifies graffiti and untangles the multiple prejudices attached to this peripheral artistic culture. Locating graffiti within its roots in Hip Hop culture and drawing upon the memories and experiences of seven graffiti artists she introduces theories of memory and knowledge production to analyze the role of graffiti in constructing and deconstructing the city and its culture. The artists in this paper recount stories of how gender, race, and class have structured Brazilian graffiti and the reactions that it provokes, constructing a storyline stretching from the 1990s until today, a registry of knowledges about the culture of the city which have been constructed through an art which is always and already a form of activism from the periphery.