



## Recreate the city

Article, Pooya Kazemi Esfeh



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)  
Published in print: December 4 2015; Published online: December 15 2015 © CMAJournal

---

### Artist Statement

The walls are not just ordinary surfaces. They are maintaining multiple implications. In other words, they are meaningful in the context of the city. They are principal elements of the public sphere, which evolve for dominances. In this regard, they are employing the walls in order to allocate for advertisements, mural paintings, or propaganda. Hence, they could be operating in reproducing hegemonic ideologies.

Despite this, modern cities identify as localities of interactions between diverse forces, which each of its spaces and objects could be scenes of dynamics confrontation variation powers. In this respect, walls would not belong to authorities solely. Thereby, the walls could be elements of the contrarities between hegemonies and non-hegemonies. From this perspective, the marginalized groups (subcultures, minorities, and the subaltern) would seek to engage the walls as a medium to express themselves. So, it is conceivable to assess graffiti on the opposite side of advertisements and other pervasive visualizations in the public sphere.

The history of graffiti in Iran goes back to the emergence of the hip-hop subculture in Iran. Simultaneously, with the appearance of the first generations of singers, the graffiti artists start their work. Meanwhile, the new generation of young artists was utilizing this medium. Nowadays, and despite the regulations, graffiti products are getting popular among youths generations in the middle-class, gradually.

The "recreate the city" project took formed during 2019-2020. The project indicated graffiti, as an element of the hip-hop subculture, which refers to the youths' identities, believes, and values. Extensively, the project outcome eminent from a long-term exploration of diverse

visual representations in Tehran. The study initiated with observations of mural painting and advertisement billboards. Meanwhile, I was endeavoring to comprehend the content of these pictures in their social contexts encompassing urban surroundings, their histories, and their implications based on the visual culture. During the time, I detected the unofficial forms of representations located in marginalized spaces, one of them was graffiti. Afterward, I began an exploration of graffiti. In Addition to other conceptual elements, in this photographic study, I attended to graffiti concerning their potential in creating alternative forms of visual representation against dominant representation regimes of visual culture.

Eventually, these sorts of depicting created by ordinary individuals are momentous, as they recreate the city, form it again, affect occupied spaces, or grab it for their own. Also, these representations suggest the principle of the self-expression forms in popular cultures, have the potentialities to study based on cultural identifications and could expand our knowledge with respect to them and their employers.



*Recreate the city*, Pooya Kazemi Esfeh, 2019-2020.



*Recreate the city, Pooya Kazemi Esfeh, 2019-2020.*



*Recreate the city, Pooya Kazemi Esfeh, 2019-2020.*



*Recreate the city, Pooya Kazemi Esfeh, 2019-2020.*



*Recreate the city, Pooya Kazemi Esfeh, 2019-2020.*



*Recreate the city, Pooya Kazemi Esfeh, 2019-2020.*



*Recreate the city, Pooya Kazemi Esfeh, 2019-2020.*



*Recreate the city*, Pooya Kazemi Esfeh, 2019-2020.



*Recreate the city*, Pooya Kazemi Esfeh, 2019-2020.

---

## About the Author

Pooya Kazemi Esfeh is a B.F.A. graduate in Photography at Tehran University of Art (TUA). He was the editor of Calotype Magazine (the specialized photography journal at the TUA) during 2018-2021. Additionally, He published several essays in journals like Calotype, IZ, Cheshmak, and Darz Art. He has been working on photographic projects since 2017, in which a number of them are exhibited. Currently, He works as a freelancer writer at the Darz Art magazine (the Iranian Art Platform).