

Pictures that denounce? In the Jungle of Calais, Banksy and the Hearts of Cardboard

Damien Darcis



Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/articulo/3863>

DOI: 10.4000/articulo.3863

ISSN: 1661-4941

Publisher

Articulo - Revue de sciences humaines asbl

Brought to you by Université de Liège



Electronic reference

Damien Darcis, "Pictures that denounce? In the Jungle of Calais, Banksy and the Hearts of Cardboard", *Articulo - Journal of Urban Research* [Online], 19 | 2019, Online since 04 February 2019, connection on 25 July 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/articulo/3863> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/articulo.3863>

This text was automatically generated on 25 July 2021.

Creative Commons 3.0 – by-nc-nd, except for those images whose rights are reserved.

Pictures that denounce? In the Jungle of Calais, Banksy and the Hearts of Cardboard

Damien Darcis

Introduction

- 1 In this article, I will question the political power of pictures in the urban space, starting from the confrontation between two types of artwork created in a specific context: the city of Calais, which is now associated with the “migrant problem”. I will analyse four works by the “artist” Banksy: The first, on a rescue post on the beach, depicts a child looking at England through a telescope on which sits a vulture. The second, on the wall of 15 rue de la Tannerie, next to the Office of Immigration and Integration on rue Charost, a few steps from the belfry and the Hotel de Ville, reimagines a famous art historical reference, Géricault's *Radeau de la Méduse* (the Raft of the Medusa). The third, at the entrance of the Calais Jungle, represents Steve Jobs as a migrant. Finally, the fourth, painted in front of the French embassy in London, denounces the situation of migrants, this time representing Cosette, the heroine of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, with her eyes in tears due to tear gas. I will contrast this with the study of anonymous pictures in remote, less visible places including works found on the walls, doors, and even windows of “squats” such as the Vandamme squat, a former ferrous waste processing plant located in the industrial zone of Calais inhabited by migrants and others. As in the streets of Calais or in the Jungle itself, these often represent, naively or in almost a childish way, people holding hands, flowering trees, doves, hearts or stars, with poetical references or maxims evoking the existence of “humanity” as an indivisible community (see <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x227ycm>).
- 2 While Banksy's pictures send out a political message that blatantly denounces the migrants' situation – a message warmly welcomed by many media outlets, from *Le Monde* to *The New York Times* – they have provoked a range of reactions. Despite their “critical

content”, they were very quickly embraced by both art lovers and political authorities. The Mayor of Calais is known for her severity towards migrants, in particular for her denouncement of the founding of camps or squats and her threats of prosecution for everyone that would be tempted to “*feed the illegals*” (*Huffington Post*, 2/3/2017). She almost immediately split from this attitude in a statement in which she announced that she would protect these pictures by covering them with plexiglass sheets to “*preserve*” them so that everyone could enjoy them (*La Voix du Nord*, 12/12/2015). Banksy's pictures, in Calais and elsewhere, are not only visible but also the subject of constant attention by the authorities. In January 2016, only a month after the pictures were produced, *La Voix du Nord* announced that:

At first, the graffiti will be referenced among the tourist sites 'Les incontournables' of Calais: the church Notre-Dame, the town hall, the Burghers of Calais or the Tour du Guet [...]. In a second time, in July and August, the 'Banksy' will be part of the circuit of the summer guided tours. (*La Voix du Nord*, 15/01/2015)

- 3 The director of the tourist office concluded the article by pointing out that Banksy's works were a godsend for the city: “Banksy is a world famous artist. The English know him well. It can also attract new tourists.” (*La Voix du Nord*, 15/01/2015) However, these pictures were equally quickly the object of “damage”. Taking advantage of the visibility offered by Banksy's graffiti, anonymous writers inscribed superimposed slogans. For example, “Steve Jobs as a migrant” was covered by “Because everything is vain” and then surrounded by “London Calling” in gigantic letters – a reference to the eponymous song of the punk rock band The Clash. These additions were erased. Before a cleaning, one of the works read: “The authorities are more concerned about Banksy's pictures than migrants”. Unlike the works by Banksy, the anonymous pictures – the “hearts of cardboard” to use an art brut expression to designate popular works – studied here contain no direct political message but simply represent “unifying” symbols. However, they are erased from the walls of the city or rendered inaccessible.
- 4 It would be easy to explain this paradox by saying that the authorities' approach is dictated by the wish to preserve the pictures of one of the world's leading artists. However, Christophe Genin stresses that it is street art, more broadly, that in recent years has been the subject of indisputable institutionalization (to which Banksy has largely contributed as asserted by Denis Saint-Amand [Saint-Amand 2016: 241-242]), especially in the academic world (Genin 2015: 11), and can therefore explain the attention paid to certain works. As such, if “*The term 'Street art' can not be defined definitively, since what it designates is constantly negotiated*” (Blanché 2015: 13), today, however, it is considered an official category in the history of scholarly art, including a series of historically identifiable sub-movements (Fusaro 2016: 2, Blanché 2016: 11-12). These different elements could thus explain why today Banksy's works have captured the attention of the political world and aesthetes. Such attention could, to a certain extent, explain why protecting the works of street artists serves to legitimate the erasing of the naive interventions of anonymous others. In fact, the institutionalization of street art has important consequences for more general perceptions of the graphic representations made in urban areas, i.e., the aesthetic research precisely designates such representations as art. In other words, the institutionalization of street art does not imply an integration of all that appears in the street; on the contrary, it tends towards replaying the border between art and non-art or, in some cases, between art and vandalism among graphic representations in urban spaces. This is evidenced by a recent phenomenon: on the one hand, a large number of street artists have insisted that the artistic character of their

interventions must be distinguished from a non-artistic mode of expression, whereas on the other hand, some of them, the so-called “*guardians*” of a certain radicality or “*purity*” of street art, will claim vandalism rather than art (Genin 2015: 38). Denis Saint-Amand reminds us that a certain street art, “*more informal, resistant to institutionalization [...] defends at all costs its illegality: we think of the flagship title of rappers Marseillais Fonky Family, fans will remember that the only ‘street art’ graphic it evokes is the ‘tag’, placed ‘on vans [...], on trains, dirty walls and where it sucks, like on palaces or police stations*” (Saint-Amand 2016: 229-230).

- 5 From the first perspective, the anonymous pictures' destruction could be explained by their lack of aesthetic qualities. However, the meaning of their erasure is not as simple as that. The works of anonymous people – especially when they constitute, as in the case of the Fort Galloo squat, real ensembles – could also find their place in the history of art and be valued as testaments, for example, of popular art or art brut. This is all the more true given that, on the one hand, the environments of art brut, more widely the artistic environments that for a long time now have been the object of real consecration (Marpsat 2006) and that, on the other hand, unlike street art, the political dimension of art brut, although explicitly developed by members of the group CoBrA, especially by Pierre Alechinsky and Christian Dotremont in their controversy with the surrealists and representatives of the Communist Party (Miller 1994, 1996), is today set aside, if not widely ignored. However, it seems to me that this contradiction ultimately had to do with the question of the political power of pictures. This last hypothesis does not imply a reduction of the political power of pictures in the message they convey; otherwise, the situation should simply be reversed: Banksy's interventions should be censored, and the anonymous works highlighted. To develop this hypothesis, I will mobilize the concepts of the French philosopher Jacques Rancière. Briefly, the interest in Rancière's political philosophy is partly due to the importance it gives to space and time. According to Rancière, the police order (Rancière 1995: 29, 32, 33) or the order of domination (p. 11) always relies on a hierarchical division of the places, roles and functions required in the control of individuals or groups of individuals. Rancière's originality is to then pose, as I will show below, that this order of domination is not imposed on the majority by a few, but it is exercised in the division of space (its segmentation, its arrangement, its functional configuration, its opening to some, its closure to others) and time (in terms of hours and rhythms of circulation). Because these divisions of space and time constitute the frame of everyday life, and because the sharing of places, roles and functions is confused with the shape of everyday life, the order of domination will in some instances appear to be natural (Rancière 1995: 11) or “*normal*” (Rancière 2000: 65). In this sense, in a previous work, we designate this order of the police as a daily order of domination [“*quotidien ordonné de la domination*”] (Darcis and Hagelstein 2018).
- 6 From there, Rancière develops a very specific approach to art: art precisely creates a gap or a break from the ordered domination of daily life. It creates a new space-time – one does not wander around a workplace such as a factory or a school; the time of contemplation is not the same as that of work or daily life – within which hierarchies and prosaic differences between humans are cancelled out in the exercise of a shared power to feel and think (Rancière 2004: 49). Simply put, a person is affected by a picture and can interpret it without anyone being able to say what to feel and what the meaning of the picture is. In this sense, *the aesthetic experience is at the same time an experience of equality*. However, the deviation from the established order that makes this equality possible is

conditioned by the *indeterminacy* of the object we have before us, by *the impossibility of being able to identify it as an object of art*. This indeterminacy prevents the confiscation of art, for example by a class of scholars authorized to speak about it, which would make art, and the capacity to speak of art, a socially determined property. At this cost, art gains *autonomy* from the orderly daily life of domination (Rancière 2004: 24).

- 7 Rancière is thus led to rethink the relationship between art and politics. He opposes two widely held ideas. The first idea is derived from work by Theodor Adorno, which posits that art is politically effective as it is clearly distinguishable from objects that are found in everyday life, mass culture or merchandise (Rancière 2004: 59-63; Adorno 1962; Darcis 2018). Schoenberg's work, for example, asserted that “*to better denounce the capitalist division of labour and the embellishments of the commodity, it must be even more mechanical, more 'inhuman' than the products of mass capitalist consumption*” (Rancière 2004: 59). Art then consists in a “*struggle to preserve the material difference of the art from everything that compromises it in the affairs of the world: trade in mass exhibitions and cultural products that make it industrial enterprise to make profitable*” (Rancière 2004: 61). However, by reconstituting “a front line” between art and the ordinary merchant, including the products of communication, culture and mass arts, we “*somehow reconstitute the Voltairean opposition between two forms of sensitivities*” (Rancière 2004: 59), one educated and one critical, which allow for the appreciation of works of art and otherwise, regardless of whether we regret it, or whether such objects are coarse or refined, and we are forced to consume goods stupidly. Because it loses its indeterminate character, art is no longer the unprecedented domain of an experience of equality, but rather it becomes a socially determined, protected sphere of scholars and authorized speech.
- 8 The second idea opposed by Rancière asserts that an art coming out of the museum would in principle be a political art (Bourriaud 2001: 99-10, Ardenne 2002). For Rancière, it is the opposite:
- Art is not political at first by the messages and the feelings that it transmits on the order of the world. It is not political either by the way in which it represents the structures of society, the conflicts or the identities of social groups. It is political by the gap that it takes with respect to these functions, by the type of time and space that it institutes, by the manner in which it cuts this time and populates this space. (Rancière 2004: 36-37)
- 9 Therefore, if the museum is, to use Michel Foucault's concept, a *heterotopic place* (Foucault 2004: 18), that is to say, a place that suspends the orderly daily life of domination to establish another relationship to space and time, *in situ* art (hence, certain forms of street art), is risked because it is *localized* and because it *targets* and *adapts* to social groups occupying a particular place in the ordained daily life of domination. Thus, *in situ* art tends to reproduce and even perpetuate a society's structures (Rancière 2004: 84; Alliez 2008; Hagelstein and Darcis 2018). In this paper, I make use of these Rancierian concepts to question both Banksy's interventions and those performed by anonymous others. I must specify that these concepts first serve to construct a perspective, a view or, to formulate it more sharply, a philosophical point of attack. Here, I am approaching an object not addressed by Rancière. This is especially the case in the last part of this paper, which deals with marginal spaces. To closely question these objects, I do not hesitate to engage concepts from Rancière and from other critical thinkers such as Étienne Balibar and Michel Foucault. I will use the concepts of the aforementioned authors less for themselves but more as *tools* to problematize a situation. For the analysis of conditions of life in the Jungles located near Calais, I relied on Sophie Djigo's very interesting book, *Les*

migrants à Calais. Enquête sur la vie en transit, which the author has conceived not as “an overarching analysis of the condition of migrants” but as a work in which they are considered “as subjects of speech and thought” (Djigo 2016: 17). Finally, I also refer to information from militant websites and press articles, mainly from the regional newspaper *La Voix du Nord*.

Police Order, Calais and the Migrants

- 10 Before understanding how a picture may suspend or question the police order, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by these terms. From Jacques Rancière’s perspective, the word *police*, in summary terms, does not refer to law enforcement agencies, but it refers to “the law, generally implicit, that defines a party’s share or lack of it [...] an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise” (Rancière 1999: 29). The term exists in a society where as Rancière points out, *every form of community or being-together is ordered*, in the sense that it is based on a *distribution of functions and places* [*partage des fonctions et des places*], for example, the professors, students, members of administration, or technicians within a university. These distributions are of course not politically neutral. They involve *power* or *domination*: some people have the power to make decisions about the organization and the “life” of the community, whereas others are deprived of it and must comply, willingly or unwillingly, with what others have decided for them. In other words, the police order is based on the *separation* or *division* of humanity into subgroups that are endowed with roles, status, and specific competences (Rancière and Monferran 1999).
- 11 Contrary to what one might think, this order is not imposed by violence (or *not only* by violence), nor by words, but *in the division of the times and spaces of daily life*, as for example in the organization of working times and workplaces. Spaces are configured in such a way that not only enables the exercise of a function, role or competence but also, at the same time, prohibits others *de facto*. There are places that are dedicated to production such as the factory’s production line that are designed in such a way as to leave neither room nor time for politics. These types of workspaces do not allow any political debate as found, exemplarily, in collective assembly. In *Malaise dans l’Esthétique*, Rancière writes: “Artisans, says Plato, have no time to be elsewhere than at work. This ‘elsewhere’ where they not be, it is of course the assembly of the people. ‘The absence of time’ is in fact the naturalized prohibition, inscribed in the forms of sensory experience” (Rancière 2004: 38). This division/organization of worktimes and workplaces shapes specific behaviours, which are gradually integrated into each other or, in other words, they produce something similar to what Pierre Bourdieu, in *La misère du monde* (1993), called place-effects [*effets de lieux*]. To formulate clearly formulate this idea, a person is an *employee*, for example, in his workplace, a *consumer* in the supermarket, and a *tourist* on the beach; however, in these roles, he is involved in little or no policy because, as it were, the strictly political spaces and the time necessary for debate are forbidden to him and because politics is, as such, absent from the spaces in which it evolves. Here, I must insist on a fundamental point: in this perspective, the political stakes are not directly or not necessarily related to the policy that is put in place by a government, a department or a city, but to the reconfiguration of the divisions constituting the established order.
- 12 In Calais, *one group is the object of all attention*, beginning with Banksy. This group, within the police order, is in a specific situation that is “more problematic” than others: that of

migrants – a category that, in Calais, as we show below, takes on a particular meaning because it is assimilated into a particular representation, that of the “jungle”. Contrary to what one might think, the police order does not exclude individuals by refusing any place to them but by *enclosing them in one place* more than others. In *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous identities*, Étienne Balibar defends the thesis according to which the populations destined for economic over-exploitation or the undesirable populations must systematically be presented negatively, as inferior, excluded from “*the national set*” to be treated differently than the others. Following Balibar, the issue of anti-immigrant racism in France is exemplary: “*to mark with generic signs populations which are collectively destined for capitalist exploitation - or which have to be held in reserve for it*” (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991: 213). He shows how the exclusion of a certain section of French youth involves putting them in a genealogy that then produces specific modes of designation such as “*Français d’origine étrangère*” (French of foreign origin), “*jeunes issus de l’immigration*” (children of immigrant parents) or, worse, “*immigrés de deuxième génération*” (second generation immigrants). The widespread interest in Balibar's thought, especially for space specialists, is to show that these labels are an inseparable part of a process of fixation and chaining to a particular space that is itself presented as a *foreign territory* in the French Republic: “*les banlieues*”, or the “*suburbs*” (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991: 213). In short, the approach is “*to keep 'in their place' [...] those who have no fixed place*” (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991: 213).

- 13 This last formula is particularly true for migrants in Calais. They are *undesirable* (Agier 2008); they are *too much*. Because of the impossibility of “suppressing” migrants, it was necessary, even more so than for the other groups, to fix them in a place, in a “territory” cut off from other places. It is in this context that the Jungle concept is particularly important. If, to follow Sophie Djigo, the places occupied by the migrants of the Pas-de-Calais formally resemble not a Jungle but two forms of camp, that of a “ghettoised camp” and that of a “refugee camp” (Djigo 2016: 11). However, not without reason, the first term will gradually become imperative: “*the semantic history of the term reveals a misunderstanding, which is also an index [...] of the representations that the French nationals associate with the Migrants*” (Djigo 2016: 37) While the term “Jungle” was first used by the migrants themselves to refer simply to the forest, the wood (Djigo 2016: 37) in which they were first forced to live, in the West, the term reactivates the colonial imagination (Djigo 2016: 37-38, Vieillard Baron 2011) and refers to “*elsewhere, the exotic, a place where no projection of human life is possible, with which any identification is broken*” (Djigo 2016: 39). Thus, the mediatization of the camps and the political interventions of left and right factions will very quickly accentuate this representation of the Jungle as a *wild animal universe in every respect different from a human world* – it is a place for robberies, rapes, fights and violence. The idea was, in a way, to spread the thought that the jungle was at first a *dehumanizing* place: in the absence of being bad and dangerous when entering the jungle, men would become so after some time living in these conditions. To better maintain the migrants in the jungle, that is to say, to better keep them in their place while preserving the order that labelled them, a particularly salient danger is emphasized by some politicians and relayed by the media using various purported facts: *the possibility of seeing the jungle overflowing and contaminating Calais*. The representation of migrants has thus been constructed in relation to the jungle. Indissociable from each other, they are characterized by the same evils, the most serious being their inhumanity, their animality and their dangerousness.

- 14 It seems important to note that this process is not self-evident and can be considered in contrast to another. If some politicians have succeeded in giving the impression that Calaisians can only have hostility towards a foreign population presented as wild and dangerous, it must be remembered that a law was needed to penalise all aid to migrants and to create convictions to reduce the support that had been provided to them. Migrants had found, more often than not, a haven of a garage, a guest room or a garden shed, an open bathroom or a sink to wash, hot meals and drinks; the provision of such support was made illegal. Various articles have recently highlighted the barriers faced by migrant relief associations. *Le Monde* wrote: “Calais: associations complain of obstacles to helping migrants” (*Le Monde*, 01/06/2017). It should also be noted that the images broadcasted from the jungle in some media always show a dirty and muddy camp, thus helping to emphasize this representation of the jungle as a dehumanizing universe. However, the jungle is also a restaurant open to all, a school, an art college, a mosque, a church, and a library. “The book of the Jungle” lists cultural spaces such as concert halls – one of which has been painted blue and renamed “Espace Maxime Le Forestier” in tribute to the blue open house of Le Forestier’s song *San Francisco* (*Le Monde*, 27/11/2015). From this point of view, the political and media use of the representation of the jungle *has the direct effect of establishing or fostering a relationship of hostility towards migrants to the detriment of another relationship, one that is more open.*
- 15 Conversely, we can inversely redefine *political emancipation* as the moment when those who were excluded from common affairs by the so-called distribution of the sensible, those who are condemned to obey and to remain silent, succeed in showing that they have intelligence equal to any other (Rancière 1999: 29). It designates the moments when these excluded people “*break with the distribution of functions and places to which they are naturally assigned to take part in the elaboration of the commons: “politics exists when the natural order of domination is interrupted by the institution of a part of those who have no part”*”, when the logics of identification, of placement and fixation of individuals are scrambled (Rancière 1999: 11; Rancière and Monferran 1999). Therefore, there may be some political emancipation on the condition of creating a gap or a departure from the police order, which makes it possible for it to be reinvented. From this perspective, the emancipatory political power of a picture is less a function of the discourse it holds, of the situation it claims to denounce, than of its capacity to create a sphere of specific experience different from that instituted by the distribution of functions and hierarchical places that constitute the established order. In Calais, the migrants themselves have intervened in many ways to try to make their world exist, to constitute themselves as subjects in their own right, including in a particularly striking way. In our opinion, this is not only to “*protest against the dismantling of the Jungle*” (*Le Monde* 2016) but also to try to emphasize that on March 3, 2016, migrants sewed their mouths and paraded in front of their ruined shelters carrying placards on which was written, “we are human”. Sophie Djigo insists on the need to “*sew the mouth to be heard*” (Djigo 2016: 178). *The question then is how to blur the daily order of domination.*

Banksy in Calais or Criticism from within the System

- 16 Banksy's pictures in Calais are not random. He chooses precise places of intervention that, in our view, constitute a whole. The first picture, the young child with the telescope on which sits a vulture, is painted on a rescue post on the beach of Calais. Banksy thus

reaches out to a particular audience: tourists or the inhabitants of Calais who come to spend a little time on the beach, that is to say, more generally, the *popular* public. The image is there to remind them that if the sea is a playground or a pleasant landscape for some, for others it represents an impassable, perhaps lethal, border. From this perspective, in absence of a better term, one could say that this first work is in the register of a “denunciation” in the sense that it seeks to draw the attention of the public to a problem that it would prefer to ignore. With this work, Banksy therefore does not seek to create a gap or a break from the situation in Calais, for example, a gap that would give the problem a different view, but it “denounces” or “reveals” what all already know perfectly well. Paradoxically, it can therefore only be effective if it is addressed to individuals in a place where they are supposed to be lost in their leisure or their selfish distractions. In other words, it can be effective only if it is inscribed, *without questioning*, in that particular space, assimilated within the distribution that structures the established order towards stupidity or rather *popular ignorance*.

- 17 The second picture, parodying Géricault’s *Radeau de la Méduse*, in a street near the National Office of Immigration and the town hall, must be analysed alongside the fourth, the tearful Cosette of the French Embassy in London. These two pictures are realized in immediate proximity to places dedicated to politics. Although they are visible to passers-by, Banksy engages a specific interlocutor: the political world. These pictures do not work in the register of denunciation – the politicians, including the main leaders, are constantly emphasizing that the issue of migrants must be solved – but its main objective is to confront the political world with its responsibilities. However, if one considers the location of the pictures as well as their content, this political world does not appear to be a divided world. It is traversed by singular political tendencies, some of which perhaps more than others contribute to aggravating the problem, but this world is posed as indistinct. To formulate this idea more sharply, one could say that these two pictures address the political world just as they might address a function or a status, that of the *leading function*: *it is the political world, including the main leaders, that is provoked to react*.
- 18 The last work – Steve Jobs as a migrant – depicted at the entrance of the jungle as if he were escaping from it, has provoked more published responses than the others. Through one of his representatives, Banksy reveals its meaning in the New York Times, as relayed by various French newspapers: “*We’re often led to believe migration is a drain on the country’s resources but Steve Jobs was the son of a Syrian migrant. Apple is the world’s most profitable company, it pays over \$7bn (£4.6bn) a year in taxes – and it only exists because they allowed in a young man from Homs*” (*Le Figaro*, 26/01/2016). At first glance, the work seems to show migrants differently by showing that each of them could be an exceptional character such as Steve Jobs. Thus, this idea has provoked a debate, as reported in the article “*Banksy’s Steve Jobs mural misses the point about refugees*” on the American website *Wired*:

Still, in a lot of ways, the message Banksy’s sending misses a crucial point about the refugee crisis. Yes, there are among the 60 million people fleeing war or persecution from Syria to Sudan plenty of people destined for the singular greatness that Jobs achieved. But there are also millions more who aren’t—millions of people who, like the rest of us, will not turn out to be the next Jobs, or the next Albert Einstein, or any of the other famous refugees whose names have been tossed about as proof that refugees are worthy of our help. Millions of ordinary human beings are suffering. They may not change the world, but they’re no less deserving for it. (*Wired* 12/11/2015)

- 19 I set aside this controversy to note that, again, the location of the work has importance in the reception of the picture. The entrance to the jungle is a border in itself, extremely controlled and, in many respects, mediated: in fact, there are as many policemen and perhaps journalists as “illegals”. The “Steve Jobs as a migrant” artwork remains right at the *entrance* of the jungle, *at the border*. The work does not put the border in question but suggests what we have already been shown: *the limit beyond which it is something else*. There are countless press photographs that juxtapose Steve Jobs, the image of social success, and a migrant, poor, dirty and sad. The Jobs picture thus tends to function as counter-employment. The figure of the migrant appears as that of *an unfortunate impossible desire, the very impossibility of which precisely constitutes the danger, that of the migrant’s potential to overthrow in hatred and violence*. The Steve Jobs work at the entrance to the jungle marks the limit at which everything can tilt; however, in doing so, it affects neither the representation of the jungle as such nor that of the migrant. The representation of the limit is always dangerous.
- 20 Last but not least, an ultimate figure remains for consideration, that of the *artist-author* himself. Banksy’s works are systematically identifiable (Bertini 2015: 4-5). Contrary to what one might think, *Banksy is not an anonymous artist*: he frequently expresses himself, authenticates his pictures and comments on them. From this perspective, the fact that one cannot put a face to the man does not mean that he has no individualised existence or rather, in this case, that there is no *author* of the works. He has, in the sense that Michel Foucault confers to the concept in *The order of discourse*, “*an identity which has the form of individuality and the self*” (Foucault 1981: 59). This is the remarkable nature of Banksy’s publicity stunt: it preserves in appearance a relationship to the anonymity that may have characterized certain forms of urban art in which he is engaged, except that *it confines and weakens all the subversive power* to make it the cause of a “celebrity game” such as those found in magazines urging their readers to recognize the star. Far from being anonymous, the works in Calais were immediately authenticated by their author on his website. They were then “commented” upon through spokespersons with Banksy specifying the meaning he had wished to give them.
- 21 This authentication of Banksy’s pictures has an important effect on their political power. First, when they are *ascribed to an author, placed within in a history*, these works now have a precise meaning conferred on them by *this* author and/or *this* history (Foucault 1981: 59). The *commentary* or the *exegesis* tends to impose itself to the detriment of creative reprisals which, by definition, imply a displacement of meaning (Foucault 1981: 57-58). Second, this authentication also has an impact on the materiality of the pictures and, more broadly, on its environment: as authenticated pictures; they can be the object of a protection as well as their environment. They were surrounded by claims of migrants taking advantage of the visibility effect of these pictures while in a way they could have “spread” through various creative deployments such as new graffiti *grafted* onto the first. Today, the walls welcoming the Banksy works are blank. What tourists come to contemplate are not works that denounce a situation, a denunciation that would draw its strength from its ability to make everyone who views it think. Rather, tourists are led to the conclusion that it is *Banksy who denounces a situation*. If we admit that *this situation as such is already the subject of all denunciations and attention from left to right*, what we come to appreciate is ultimately *Banksy himself*. In a similar perspective, Yves Gonzalez-Quijano shows that the representations of the Walled Off Hotel in Bethlehem strictly maintain the separation between Israelis and Palestinians to first address the tourists: “*We will thus arrive at ‘doing’*

Banksy's Walled Off Hotel, as we 'made' the other Holy Places of the country, as part of an experiment ultimately more aesthetic than militant" (Gonzalez-Quijano 2017).

- 22 It is clear that, with the series of pictures in Calais, Banksy not only denounces, such as others, a complicated situation, but also *replicates the distribution of the functions and places of the police order*: the ignorant person is reminded, in case he could have forgotten, that people suffer while he is distracted; politicians are called upon to fulfil their ruling function; migrants continue to exemplify the dangerous frontier between humanity and violence. Without further addressing the very thing it represents, Banksy appears, in the most classic sense of the term, as an artist-author ready to integrate into art history books. In short, *everyone remains in his place*. This is, in fact, what "Steve Jobs as a migrant" also means: Steve Jobs is the figure of an economic and social success inseparable from the most pitiless capitalism; criticism does not in any way target the system or the police order by showing, for example, that this system or order is perhaps a constituent part of the problem, but it consists of a call to correct a problem which, if pursued to the end, is not that of migrants as such, but the inability of this system to take advantage of this situation – an unknown Steve Jobs could pay 7 billion tax dollars. These last points, probably much more than the aesthetic qualities of his interventions, explain why Banksy is the object of the attention of the authorities of Calais, its tourist office and, broadly, of the political and the ruling worlds.

The "hearts of cardboard" or the possible invention of a new collective space

- 23 From another perspective, we are faced with pictures made by anonymous artists. In Calais and elsewhere, increasing numbers of street artists intervene in places chosen for their visibility. These anonymous creators, probably both French and migrants, *intervene each time as clandestinity requires at the margins of "l'espace quadrillé du pouvoir"*, in the words of Michel Foucault (Foucault 1975: 171), that is to say *where they are not expected*: in an old factory, a disused warehouse or an abandoned house. Calais is, from this point of view, a singular city, as it is for a large part composed of residential areas close to, or even mingling with, fairly large industrial areas, including many abandoned or underused sites but also areas dedicated to transport (roads) lined with green spaces, most often composed of marshes and bushes or wastelands. In the city centre, from the town hall, going up towards the harbour, along the rue Royale, with its bars and restaurants, near the docks and the parking lots of the Boulevard des Alliés, to the edge of sea, these interstitial spaces also exist in large numbers, although sometimes of smaller size. Clearly, Calais is particularly rich in interstitial and neglected areas. That is why, if the newspapers focus most often on the wall "intrusion" one kilometre long and four metres high, extending thirty kilometres of wire mesh topped with twisted barbed wire, built to prevent migrants to gain access to the "Shuttle" and the Calais port area, the authorities also conduct, with the help of concrete and grates, the incessant work of the suppression of all interstitial zones interior to the city (see <https://passeursdhospitalites.wordpress.com/2014/03/20/calais-ville-fantome-2/>).
- 24 In this sense, these anonymous creations do not arise by chance but within the dominating squared space as "lines of flight" [*lignes de fuite*] (Deleuze and Guattari 1980), or particular spaces beyond its control. This leads to a preliminary thought. In some

ways, the images reveal, in “*the space designed, that of scientists: planners, urban planners, technocrats 'cutters' and 'fitters'*” (Martin 2006: 12), the clandestine spaces themselves. In my opinion, these clandestine spaces are spaces of indetermination in the sense that, neglected, they make possible behaviours other than those induced by the order of domination, the logics of identification and placement of individuals. However, it is not enough for the suddenly suspended established order for the “identities” to be blurred. It is precisely on this point that anonymous pictures deserve to be taken into consideration. The first thing that strikes one upon viewing these anonymous’ pictures is the relationship they maintain to space: they are not inscribed on the walls as if on classical surfaces of expression such as linen or a wooden panel, but they seem to *mark the space* in which they are inscribed. To be more precise, these creations are superimposed or juxtaposed one to another, overlapping each time on a piece of wall and running over a corner of door or window, as if the first hearts, first trees, or first doves drawn on a wall summoned others. If we take a closer look at these creations, it is possible to say that they are in many respects “unclassifiable,” not in the sense that they do not exhibit certain traits that could be found in other pictures – they are, as I have already written, very similar to the pictures that the members of CoBrA have described as *popular art* (Miller 1996: 214) or those that Georges Dubuffet helped to bring together in the (floating) art brut category (Dubuffet and Moreau 2014: 20) – but in the sense that they fall outside the categories of the history of scholarly art: they are not spontaneously considered to be pieces of art.

- 25 Two elements characterize these works. First, these creations mobilize simple references – hearts, trees, doves. Second, they do not show specific ability. Of these two elements, we can say that they favour everyone’s potential to be creative, to express themselves with others on a section of wall, thus contributing to the multiplication of these creations. However, they also give the pictures another power: *they tend to erase or to render indistinct the cultural and social differences, most often held to be “factual”, between people*. While these pictures are produced by French and migrant people from all over the world, they show no difference between people. It is impossible to know whether they were made by one or several individuals, by the inhabitants of Calais or migrants, doctors, artists, or workers, by men, women, or even children. One might reply that these works are punctuated by maxims or scraps of poems written in specific languages, which would make the differences reappear, especially national divisions. Except these maxims operate more in terms of *writing or calligraphy* than in terms of meaning. Or, better still, *they work on these two reading levels and give rise, behind the specificity of languages and the meaning of words, to the human power that sustains them*.
- 26 From this perspective, these anonymous works make possible a double experience of the spaces in which they are inscribed. First, because they are inseparable from them, because they blend into them until they become confused with them, they make these spaces themselves *the object of an aesthetic experience*. These spaces then present themselves as common spaces and radically break with those of well-ordered domination (Rancière 2004: 52). To put it differently, the anonymous works make these spaces of indeterminacy heterotopic places, in every respect *foreign* to those that constitute the everyday. They *tear them away* from the everyday life of domination. Second, by making indistinct those who made the creations, by erasing or complicating each other’s identities, as evidenced by the game mentioned above, between language and writing, these creations express “*a way of inhabiting a common space*” (Rancière 2004: 46), again

foreign to the orderly daily life of domination: everyone is, in this space, *a human being and at the same time equal to all others*. In a way – but this last statement must be nuanced – to extend this second, these creations are part of a process of appropriation of space in the sense of Henri Lefebvre, that by which “*a new society, appropriates itself, that is, organizes for its ends the pre-existing space, modelled before*” (Lefebvre 1974: 32). Hearts and doves do not dress-up a message or a claim; however, they are similar to the many *traces of the movement by which a community invents itself at the same time as it invents its environment or, better, reinvents it* since such communities take possession of places that already exist – the factory or the old warehouse. Such places are neither a type of museum created out of nothing for simple contemplative purposes, *nor* are they new spaces for collective and concrete life, but they are both one *and* the other.

- 27 In this regard, these hearts of cardboard or maxims that affirm each man's humanity, the equality of all men, could be laughable if they did not constitute an indeterminate, autonomous space that communicates a simple idea; however, increasingly *subversive* is that things can be other than what they are, people are always something other than what we would like them to be. Cardboard hearts are not associated with difference, although they should be, because it would change people's relationship with migrants; cardboard hearts assert that “*we are talking like you, we are reasoning like you*” (Amalric and Faure 2013: 85), that is, more radically, a “*we are*” who opposes the division of humanity into subgroups, or even the exclusion of those who are migrants from this humanity. The political power of these anonymous pictures is thus as follows: the places they create induce a sensible *tension* between humanity or the equality they establish and the order of the domination from which they deviate or, simply stated, between the human community or equals they institute and the hierarchically ordered community of everyday life. This sensitive tension tends to denaturalize, to unrealize, to highlight the artificiality of the divisions structuring the daily life by opening the way to their criticism, if not to their reconfiguration (Rancière 2004: 48). This is, in my opinion, why the political authorities in Calais are trying to avoid the multiplication of these clandestine spaces.
- 28 Starting from the confrontation between these two types of pictures produced in the city of Calais, I have tried to show that art, according to Rancière, is not political due to its message, or its “*critics*” (Rancière 2004: 37), or, simply, as we often hear, because it is shown in “*public space*” rather than on the bare wall of a museum. By shifting the analysis of the content of the pictures to their relationship to their location, to their mode of realization and particularly their materials and to their performative aspects, in particular concerning the anonymity question, I have sought to show that art or, more generally, pictures, are primarily political due to their capacity to suspend, for a time, the divisions and arrangements of the police order to create an experience plan that eludes this order and allows the possibility of reinventing relationships between men. More fundamentally, in the double case of Banksy's pictures and the cardboard hearts flourishing in the neglected spaces of the city of Calais, I have sought to show that, on a certain level, pictures have a political power that is stronger, or rather more effective, because they do not directly concern problems or political issues. This is undoubtedly the political force of the cardboard hearts: they do not resist *by opposing head-on an order deemed problematic, but by inventing another time, another space, other places* to derealize the world that we are presented each time as a fact. Of course, this stalling of the police order within a clandestine place does not solve the immigrant problem. However, there is

undoubtedly a political stake in creating these frames, to make them as open as possible, not to realize a great unified human community, but because, from their own place, they can undo the oppositions of everyday life, move them, reconfigure them. Except that to create these frames, to confer on them a true political function of derealization and reinvention of the daily, implies the confrontation, the opposition, of the daily order of domination whose logic is that of reproduction. When one views these works, everything is done to prevent the beginning of this type of setting, especially, as I have shown, in a city such as Calais. In other words, giving these clandestine cadres a true political function, to make them the instrument of a reinvention of daily life, first implies dismantling the order of domination, transforming it, and thus, paradoxically, of confronting or opposing the “representatives” of this order.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adorno T. 1962. *Philosophie de la nouvelle musique*. Paris, Gallimard.
- Alliez É. 2008. Post-scriptum sur l'esthétique relationnelle : capitalisme, schizophrénie et consensus. *Multitudes* 3(34): 121-125.
- Amalric D, Faure B. 2013. Réappropriation des savoirs et subjectivations politiques : Jacques Rancière après Mai 68. *Dissensus* 5, <https://popups.uliege.be:443/2031-4981/index.php?id=1334> (retrieved May 22, 2018).
- Vieillard-Baron E. 2011. *La jungle entre nature et culture : un imaginaire socio-spatial de l'antimonde*. Paris, Université Paris 7, unpublished PhD diss..
- Balibar É, Wallerstein I. 1991. *Race, nation, class. The ambiguous identities*. London, Verso.
- Balibar É. 2011. Racisme et politique communautaire : les Roms. *Lignes* 34: 135-145.
- Bertini M J. 2015. Figures de l'anonymat. De quoi Banksy est-il le non ? *Cahiers de Narratologie* 29, <http://journals.openedition.org/narratologie/7398> (retrieved March 17, 2018).
- Blanché U. 2015. Qu'est-ce que le *Street art* ? Essai et discussion des définitions. *Cahiers de Narratologie* 29, <http://narratologie.revues.org/7397> (retrieved August 28, 2017).
- Blanché U. 2016. *Banksy. Urban Art in a Material World*. Merburg, Tectum.
- Bourdieu P. 1991. *La misère du monde*. Paris, Seuil.
- Deleuze G, Guattari F. 1980. *Mille Plateaux*. Paris, Éditions de Minuit.
- Darcis D. 2018. La fonction sociale de l'art en question. Genèse critique des arts relationnels. *MethIS* (in press).
- Darcis D, Hagelstein M. 2018. Les représentations sociales en question. La critique ranciérienne des identités. *MethIS* (in press).
- Deschambre V. 2008. *Traces et mémoires urbaines, enjeux sociaux de la patrimonialisation et de la démolition*. Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes.
- Djigo S. 2016. *Les migrants de Calais. Enquête sur la vie en transit*. Marseille, Contre-Feux.

- Dubuffet J, Moreau M. 2014. *De l'art brut aux Beaux-Arts convulsifs*. Strasbourg, Éditions L'Atelier contemporain.
- Dubuffet J. 1986. *Asphyxiante culture*. Paris, Éditions de Minuit.
- Foucault M. 2004. Des espaces autres. *Empan* 54(2): 12-19.
- Foucault M. 1981. The order of the discourse, in Young R (ed.) *Untying The Text : A Post-Structuralist Reader*. Boston, Routledge.
- Foucault M. 1975 *Surveiller et Punir*. Paris, Gallimard.
- Fusaro E. 2016. Compte rendu. Ulrich Blanché, Banksy. Urban Art in a Material World. *Cahiers de Narratologie* 30, <http://journals.openedition.org/narratologie/7527> (retrieved March 17, 2018).
- Genin C. 2015. Le *street art* : de nouveaux principes ? *Cahiers de Narratologie* 29, <http://journals.openedition.org/narratologie/7396> (retrieved March 17, 2018).
- Lefebvre H. 1974. *La production de l'espace*. Paris, Persée.
- Marpsat M. 2006. La légitimation de l'Art Brut. De la conservation à la consécration, in Mauger G (ed.) *Droits d'entrée. Modalités et conditions d'accès aux univers artistiques*. Paris, MSH.
- Martin J Y. 2006. Une géographie critique de l'espace du quotidien. L'actualité mondialisée de la pensée spatiale d'Henri Lefebvre. *Articulo - Journal of Urban Research* 2, <http://articulo.revues.org/897> (retrieved August 28, 2017).
- Miller R. 1996. Art expérimental et Transnationalisme de Cobra. *La Part de l'œil* 12: 206-225.
- Place J M (ed.). 1980. *CoBrA 1948-1951*. Paris.
- Rancière J. 1999. *Disagreement. Politics and philosophy*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- Rancière J. 2000. *Le partage du sensible*. Paris, La Fabrique.
- Rancière J. 2003. *Les scènes du peuple. Les révoltes logiques. 1975-1985*. Horlieu, Paris.
- Rancière J. 2004. *Malaise dans l'esthétique*. Paris, Galilée.
- Rancière J. 2011. *Aesthesis. Scènes du régime esthétique de l'art*. Paris, Galilée.
- Saint-Amand D. 2016. Le mur et le masque. *MethIS* 5, <https://popups.uliege.be:443/2030-1456/index.php?id=463> (retrieved March 17, 2018).
- Seurat A. 2005. Penser à la limite : pour une lecture critique de Jacques Rancière. *TRANS-1*, <http://journals.openedition.org/trans/96> (retrieved March 17, 2018).

Newspaper articles

- Berthelier, A. 2017, March 2. Natacha Bouchart, la maire de Calais, interdit la distribution de repas aux réfugiés. *Huffington Post* http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2017/03/02/natacha-bouchart-la-maire-de-calais-interdit-la-distribution-de_a_21871914 (retrieved March 17, 2018).
- Fabre C. 2015, November 21. Dans la jungle de Calais, une fabrique d'art. *Le Monde*, http://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2015/11/27/dans-la-jungle-de-calais-une-fabrique-d-art_4818708_3246.html#WTqftEXhrpXvAPhs.99 (retrieved March 17, 2018).
- Gonzalez-Quijano Y. 2017, March 21. La dystopie du g(r)affeur (2/2) : Banksy et le Walled Off Hotel de Bethléem. *Hypothèses.org*, <https://cpa.hypotheses.org/6215> (retrieved March 17, 2018).

- Lapowsky I. 2015, December 14. Calais. Pourquoi la fresque de Banksy sur Steve Jobs et les réfugiés rate le coche. *Le Courrier International*, <http://www.courrierinternational.com/article/calais-pourquoi-la-fresque-de-banksy-sur-steve-jobs-et-les-refugies-rate-le-coche> (retrieved March 17, 2018).
- La Voix du Nord. 2015, December 12. Migrants de Calais: la Ville veut 'sanctuariser' les œuvres de Banksy. *La voix du Nord*, <http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup%3A%252Fregion%252Fmigrants-de-calais-la-ville-veut-sanctuariser-les-ia33b48581n3215825> (retrieved March 17, 2018).
- La Voix du Nord. 2016, January 15. Migrants de Calais: les graffs de Banksy inclus dans les visites de l'office de tourisme. *La Voix du Nord*, <http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup%3A%252Fregion%252Fmigrants-de-calais-les-graffs-de-banksy-inclus-dans-les-ia33b48581n3271590> (retrieved March 17, 2018).
- La Voix du Nord. 2017, September 8. Pourquoi le Radeau de la Méduse de Banksy a disparu ? *La Voix du Nord*, <http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/222407/article/2017-09-23/pourquoi-le-radeau-de-la-meduse-de-banksy-disparu> (retrieved March 17, 2018).
- Le Monde. 2016, March 3. Calais : des migrants se cousent la bouche pour protester contre le démantèlement de la Jungle. *Le Monde*, http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/video/2016/03/03/calais-des-migrants-se-cousent-la-bouche-pour-protester-contre-le-demantelement_4875642_3214.html#ubTUqAo5m8jtfYWU.99 (retrieved March 17, 2018).
- L'Humanité. 2016, January 25. À Londres, Banksy dénonce la violence contre les migrants de Calais. *L'Humanité*, <https://www.humanite.fr/londres-banksy-denonce-la-violence-contre-les-migrants-de-calais-596831> (retrieved March 17, 2018).
- Provost L. 2015, December 15. À Calais, Banksy rappelle que Steve Jobs est le fils d'un migrant syrien. *Huffington Post*, http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2015/12/11/calais-banksy-photos-oeuvres-steve-jobs-pochoir-jungle-refugies-migrants-syrie_n_8782810.html (retrieved March 17, 2018).
- Rancière J, Monferran J P. 1999, June 1. La politique n'est-elle que de la police? *L'Humanité*, <http://www.humanite.fr/node/208383> (retrieved March 17, 2018).

websites

<http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x227ycm>

<https://passeursdhospitalites.wordpress.com/2014/03/20/calais-ville-fantome-2/>

ABSTRACTS

In this paper, I would like to question the political power of images in the urban space. To do this, I rely on the confrontation of two types of images displayed in Calais, a city now associated with the "migrant problem". On the one hand, I will study four interventions by street artist Banksy. On the other side, I will analyse images made by anonymous artists, in remote, less visible sites, on the walls, on the doors or on the windows of squats including migrants. While Banksy's images convey a political message denouncing the situation of migrants, politicians in Calais have said they want to protect these paintings. Conversely, anonymous images, which do not convey any political message, are systematically erased or rendered inaccessible. Based on the work of Michel Foucault, Jacques Rancière and Étienne Balibar, I would like to show that this paradox is perhaps explained less by the celebrity of Banksy than by the relation of images to

space: Banksy's murals maintain, even perpetuate, the divisions of space and the relations between social groups constituting the established order, whereas anonymous images suspend them for a while, to make heterotopic places exist.

INDEX

Mots-clés: Aesthetics, politics, police, space, migrant, Calais, jungle, Banksy, street art, popular art

AUTHOR

DAMIEN DARCIS

PhD in philosophy from the University of Liège in 2010, holder of a DEA in Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art, Damien Darcis now directs the department "Arts and Techniques of Representation" of the University of Mons. He is responsible for teaching and research in philosophy of art and political philosophy. In this field, his work falls within the field of political aesthetics and rely in particular on authors like Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Étienne Balibar and Jacques Rancière. Contact: damien.darcis@umons.ac.be