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Appropriation, negotiation and insurgency of space: A study of street artists and skaters in Johannesburg

Phasha, Potsiso

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Abstract

Street skating and street art are visible characteristics of most cities across the globe. In Johannesburg, the two activities are marginal which have grown increasingly visible over the past few years. This study looks at how space is appropriated, negotiated and made insurgent by street skaters and artists in the city for their own needs. It does this by exploring the relationship between planning/planners, Johannesburg as the space and the skaters and artists as occupants of that space. The study argues that planners do not adequately understand spontaneous communities in the city and that street skaters and artists stand as two gateways in beginning to interact with this spontaneous aspect of life in the inner city. Through autophotography and film, the study reveals how physical infrastructure, negotiations with security guards and the police and the convenience of the inner city are all examples of some of the factors that influence the processes of how and why space is appropriated, made insurgent and negotiated over.