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Editorial Note

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Transformation Urbancreativity.orgGraffiti

Transformation is one of the most profound and enduring concepts in human thought. It transcends disciplines, eras, and cultures, standing as a central pillar of how we understand both the universe and our place within it. From Heraclitus' ancient assertion that "everything flows" (*panta rhei*), to the modern literary explorations of identity and change by writers such as Franz Kafka or James Baldwin, the idea of transformation weaves through history as a narrative of perpetual motion and renewal. In this issue, *Transformations*, we delve into this rich and multifaceted idea, examining the processes of change that shape not only physical spaces but also the human psyche, social structures, and our ways of seeing the world.

At its core, transformation is both a philosophical and practical phenomenon. For the ancient Greeks, the idea of change was inextricably tied to the concept of becoming. Heraclitus' notion of constant flux challenged the idea of permanence, presenting the world as a dynamic interplay of opposites. This same philosophy echoes in modern existentialist thought, where transformation is not merely a passage from one state to another, but a continuous act of creation and redefinition. It is within this context that this issue seeks to situate its inquiries: as explorations of transformation not as a conclusion, but as an ongoing negotiation between stability and fluidity, between what is and what might yet become.

In *The Graffiti-Game and the Ubiquity of Resistance: Getting Up as Oppositional Agency*, transformation emerges as a defiant act—a reshaping of public space and a reclaiming of agency. This exploration of resistance echoes the ancient understanding of transformation as struggle,

as seen in the myth of Prometheus, who defied the gods to bring fire to humanity. Resistance, in this sense, is not a rejection of transformation but its very engine, driving change through acts of confrontation and persistence.

Similarly, *Tagging the Writer's Trace: How Computational Social Science Shaped (My) Freight Graffiti Research* explores transformation through the lens of technology and methodology. Here, the act of tagging trains becomes a metaphor for the way data and digital tools reconfigure how we study and interpret human behavior. This interplay between tradition and innovation reflects the broader human experience of grappling with change, where new tools often challenge established ways of knowing, leading to a reimagining of both subject and method.

The physicality of transformation is further explored in *Buffing: Unintentional and Independent Urban Painting*. In this article, the act of erasing graffiti—of buffing—reveals itself to be a creative process in its own right. Much like the Renaissance sculptor Michelangelo, who saw his role as releasing the form already present within the marble, this act of erasure inadvertently gives rise to new forms, textures, and meanings. Transformation here is unintentional yet unavoidable, a reminder that change often occurs outside our control, shaped by forces larger than any one individual.

In *Frequency and Distribution of Protest Stickers: An Ethnographic Study at a University City in the South-West of England*, the ephemeral yet potent nature of transformation is brought to light. Protest stickers, fleeting and often unnoticed, act as small yet significant agents

of change within the urban fabric. They challenge the notion that transformation must be monumental, instead highlighting the power of the subtle and transient to shift perspectives and catalyze dialogue.

The psychological and social dimensions of transformation are equally central to this issue. In **The Gift, Graffiti, and Punitive Masculinity**, transformation unfolds as a negotiation of identity and power within subcultural practices. The act of gifting—a concept deeply rooted in anthropological studies, from Marcel Mauss to modern critical theory—is juxtaposed with the reinforcement of masculine norms, showing how transformation can both disrupt and reinforce social hierarchies.

Transformation also extends to the realm of media and representation, as explored in **Proximity and Complicity: Graffiti and the Cinematographic Apparatus**. Here, the interplay between graffiti and cinema reveals how art forms influence and reshape each other, creating new hybrid modes of expression. This mutual transformation is a reminder of the interconnectedness of creative processes, where boundaries blur and new possibilities emerge.

Finally, in **Use of Street Art in Augmented Reality and Copyright Issues**, the concept of transformation takes a technological turn, exploring the fusion of physical and digital realities. As augmented reality reshapes how we interact with space and art, questions of ownership and authorship emerge, challenging traditional frameworks and prompting us to rethink the very nature of creativity in the digital age.

This issue of **Transformations** is an invitation to reflect on change in all its forms. It challenges us to consider how transformation operates not only as an external process but also as an internal journey—one that redefines how we engage with the world, with others, and with ourselves. By drawing on ancient philosophy and modern innovation, the articles in this issue remind us that transformation is not a singular event but a continuous process of becoming, one that is as inevitable as it is essential.

We hope that the explorations presented here inspire you to see transformation not as an end but as a beginning—an open field of possibility where the boundaries of the known are constantly redrawn, and where each moment carries the potential for reinvention.