

## ARTICLE

# The Callegenera urban expressions festival: The resignification of urban-mural and street art

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## Abstract

Urban art festivals are of great importance to strengthen the social and cultural life of communities, as they provide people with the opportunity to meet and enjoy various forms of creative expression, such as art, music, and dance, and also stimulate citizen participation. Evaluating the cultural and social impact generated by these festivals is essential to understanding their process and development, seeking future improvements, and ensuring their sustainability over time. For this reason, we have focused on the evaluation of the Callegenera Urban Expressions Festival, which has been held uninterruptedly in Monterrey, Mexico, from 2011 to 2022. Through qualitative research with in-depth interviews and life stories, the festival was explored as a space of introspection where boundaries are blurred to make room for art. We examined the emotional state of urban artists and graffiti writers, as well as the creative process through the intervention of space and economic aspects. In this way, we sought to understand the impact that this festival can have on the growth of the metropolitan area and its surroundings.

**Keywords:** Urban art festival; Artistic interventions; Callegenera; Monterrey

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**Citation:** Fernández AD, Gómez RL, Lahaba YN, Romeo ACG. The Callegenera urban expressions festival: The resignification of urban-mural and street art. *Arts & Communication*. 2025;3(2):2864.  
doi: 10.36922/ac.2864

**Received:** February 2, 2024

**1st revised:** March 8, 2024

**2nd revised:** March 21, 2024

**Accepted:** April 2, 2024

**Published online:** January 3, 2025

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## 1. Urban-mural art and the city of Monterrey

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the cultural field of urban expressions reflects the perception of life in the city, of the routines and figurations that tend to be related to the urban environment and that come to move or shake the conditions of life. In the city, urban art, such as graffiti, establishes a dialog with the city and the society that is built around it, transforming its space directly or indirectly. These expressions have emerged in legality through the participation of their creators in festivals, contests, and calls.

At present, there has been a boom in urban and street art festivals in the world, and Monterrey, Mexico, is no stranger to this entropy. This is how urban and street art progresses within the city that seeks in some way to claim a territory but also seeks to capture an identity, communicate, denounce, or beautify. In this work, it is described how

the Callegenera Urban Expressions Festival contributes to the resignification of urban-mural and street art.

Monterrey is a city located in the Northeast of Mexico. The metropolitan area is made up of nine municipalities, which are Monterrey, Guadalupe, Juárez, San Pedro, Santa Catarina, García, San Nicolás de los Garza, Escobedo, and Apodaca. It has a population of 5.3 million inhabitants. The city is characterized as a financial metropolis and the industrial capital of the country, in addition to having highly specialized hospitals and higher education institutions classified as among the best in Mexico.

This megalopolis has a rich and varied representation of urban-mural and street art. The city is a cultural mosaic and the perception of urban art and especially graffiti as a vandalism intervention is firmly anchored in society; however, it has gradually gained acceptance over time. Even Monterey boasts one of the only scripts of its kind in the world: the hook<sup>1</sup>.

## 2. Callegenera urban expressions festival

The Callegenera Festival recognizes diversity through a space where differences and similarities coexist, with agreements and proposals to build new networks, exchanging opinions and lines. It seeks to promote, connect, and spread the wide range of urban expressions that coexist in the city. "Callegenera aims to give greater value to urban demonstrations as well as to de-stigmatize the perception of it. It is a festival without censorship or political purposes" as stated by Rodríguez, Director of Development and Cultural Heritage.<sup>1</sup>

When referring to urban expressions, Callegenera alludes to the heritage that persists and that most of the time is hidden from the elite culture, due to its link with the so-called subculture. These expressions show a culture welcomed by urban groups, or so-called tribes, mostly made up of young people regardless of their social status, age, race, sex, or religion.<sup>2</sup> The expressions that they provoke in the streets of the city symbolize the Callegenera festival.

Callegenera marks a turning point within the urban artistic movements and the recognition of urban expressions in the state of Nuevo León. It provides spaces, selecting urban artists and writers to generate interventions, giving them a margin of legality by allowing and recognizing street dynamics, such as dance, skateboard competitions, mural interventions, and music. In this way, the festival is

consolidated as one of the most influential art forums and urban manifestations in the state and the country.

The Callegenera Urban Expressions Festival seeks to formalize the dissemination and expression of urban and street art to raise awareness and demonstrate the value of this type of avant-garde artistic expression. Through its exhibitions, it seeks to rethink the technique of graffiti on the wall, to raise awareness in society, and reinterpret this practice not as a form of vandalism but as an alternative expression since it not only serves to express but also manages to give a different aspect to the city, giving dynamism and personality to the environment, and it is in this context where new points of view and new perspectives can be found.

The detonating idea that Callegenera originated was an independent festival of art embodied in skateboards. The success and the quality of the works exhibited caught the attention of the authorities of the Council for Culture and the Arts of Nuevo León<sup>2</sup> (CONARTE), who decided to resume the idea, under their patronage, in the state of Nuevo León, Mexico.

Callegenera has been held uninterruptedly since 2011, featuring not only an exhibition of pieces and intervening walls but also music, skateboard competitions, break dance competitions, and bicycle competitions, accompanied by workshops, discussion tables, and conferences. It is, without a doubt, a record reference of everything that happens in the streets; therefore, it is the evidence of a sociocultural imprint of an intersubjective space that is founded and enriched by the existing dynamics and manifestations in the city.

The festival has managed to become a diffusion space for local, national, and international urban artists and therefore has offered it a certain legitimacy. At the same time, its contribution extends to beautifying city environments that have been forgotten, both by its inhabitants and by the government; in the same way, it has favored reducing prejudices toward street art and questioning and debating its origin, development, and current status of these expressions.

## 3. Callegenera generates a space for introspection

The first editions of the Callegenera Festival were held inside a closed space in the Parque Fundidora Generators Warehouse, which was configured due to the relationships and links with other institutions that have been formed

<sup>1</sup> The hook is a very elongated signature that tries to expand throughout the wall and appeared in the 90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the existence of large walls given the industrial character of the area. It still persists in the city.

<sup>2</sup> Public body of the State Government whose main objective is to promote and encourage the creation of different artistic manifestations within the state of Nuevo León.

over time. This is how the festival has maintained a close link and communication with the different media with which it interacts.

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This practice, in its beginnings, was treated as a laboratory for experimentation and discovery where a system of relationships such as the one that happened in galleries has been developed, breaking to a great extent with the evolutionary line or the art production system. Urban murals and streets limit its consumption, and in this particular case, its exhibition is very fleeting, as the walls are dismantled for new exhibitions since it lasts for a duration of approximately 10 – 30 days.

Callegenera, said Mr. Alejandro Rodríguez, Director of Development and Cultural Heritage, is a space in which respect for creators, and their proposals have been a primary factor for over a decade. “We have been very respectful in institutional terms; in these 10 years, we have never marked a thematic line, or we have never said “this expression is better than the other;” I think they have passed through the streets or the galleries of the Nave Generadores from tags, urban art, bombs. So, in Callegenera, it has earned respect in that sense because it has been very open not only to one type of urban expression.”<sup>3</sup>

It is important to underline that the artistic pieces and walls exhibited in the Nave Generadores are the result of the creative processes that took place at the festival, and they are the expressions of collegiate ideas that materialized not only in forms and esthetic representations but also in the evidence of abilities and skills of the artists; therefore, the magic of revealing the authorship of the pieces or works is lost, the hegemony of the organization is patent, and the privilege diminishes.

However, it must be recognized that the activities carried out at the festival help to understand and comprehend the evolution of urban and mural art typography, allowing the identification of its greatest exponents, revealing the practices, the mastery of the different techniques, as well as the styles, themes, and size of the production of the participants, at the local, national, and international levels.

The creations presented in the Nave Generadores are in most cases more complex works or pieces than those found in the streets. They are the product of the experimentation process that the Festival encourages. This process became

a reflection of the importance that innovation, creativity, and improvisation acquire in the current times, where the use of technology and the recycling of waste materials constitute important elements in today’s society.

In a society where the ephemeral also impacts knowledge, teaching is resignified as an act to transgress the forbidden. The instruction in this festival was a way to promote the creative search with new motifs, new explorations and with this to counteract the daily influence as a challenge to the social pressures that see urban and street art close to violence.

Another important turning point is that these spaces give way to dialog, allow processes to be shown, and learn first-hand about the experiences of those involved. Urban and street art, being an art that is elucidated in anonymity most of the time, being of rapid execution, does not allow that contact with its creator, and oftentimes questions are conceived without corresponding answers. Somehow, the festivals give away this information, which is not only in the interest of the population but also of the artists themselves.

In this way, “Callegenera is about collective and collaborative urban art. All the events that take place are around an artistic expression that arises and is fed by what is seen and felt in the streets of our city. It also allows us to approach other demonstrations and have an audience in the Nave Generadores that is not necessarily with us the rest of the year.”<sup>4</sup> In general terms, what was relevant about the festival was that it became a space that socialized the currents and postures of the performers, where the participating community consumed a product characterized more by free intentions than by market criteria. This logic is visualized in the press when he referred to the freedom of creation that took place within a closed space “so that with complete freedom they can create what they normally do in the streets, only now from a space such as the Nave Generadores, a unique setting for this type of activity”<sup>4</sup> as a way of normalizing the belief in the vandalistic nature of this type of expression. Or when he mentioned that “to the amazement of the spectators, the skaters showed off their skateboarding skills, zipping through space. Meanwhile, the graffiti artists captured their imagination on the walls of this enclosure.”<sup>5</sup>

#### 4. Callegenera, undoing borders

The city is a symbolic construction, a system of representations and imaginaries that are constantly being re-elaborated and that have a notable impact on the very configuration of the physical space, on the political-administrative dynamics, both on the schemes of belonging and on the valuation of the city and the urban.<sup>6</sup>

Although it is true that the city is presented as a great piece of art where a mosaic of identities is built, transforming and implicitly communicating to its citizens, direct recipients of the interventions carried out by urban artists and writers, which allow a dialog with citizens. The city itself reflects the symbolic violence on the part of the state and the hegemonic groups who try to impose their tendencies and currents, sometimes rejecting or hiding these expressions.

However, something that can never be hidden, in its entirety, is everything that urban art and graffiti contribute to the city, a public space interpreted as a place of meeting and coexistence that contains and expresses the changes of humans in the different dimensions in which it acts, and invariably reflect a system of values, because going unnoticed is not a trend, nor is it an objective when using public space. It is, in turn, where all kinds of humans converge, almost always unknown to each other, but where they identify.

The public space is the place chosen by the creators to express their pictorial actions and writing, initially anonymous, but which quickly cease to be so due to the undeniable impulse to leave a mark that is unmistakable – an expression of identity and of the features that define a life and a context, making the public space an instrument of diverse creative value.

In this sense, contemporaneity can be visualized within the versatile space of society, which is a manifestation of various social aspects. However, the nature of the interventions in the social space has been called into question: is it urban art, is it graffiti, or is it simple vandalism? It is in the face of this same stigma that some interventions, especially graffiti and to a lesser extent urban art, have been linked to illegality and have been isolated from contemporary art. However, in practice, artistic interventions in the urban space have two aspects: legality and illegality, and the type of legitimacy it will obtain will depend on the characteristics of each of them.<sup>7</sup> In accordance with this vision and given the wealth that the city provides, the Callegenera Festival decides to venture into the streets, that is, and it is without a doubt, the 2014 edition that would mark a milestone in this outcome, although it has not been maintained systematically.

The city of Monterrey warily harbors a large part of the footprint left by the 2014, 2015, 2016, 2020, and 2021 festivals, making these creations coexist with advertisements, graffiti, and persistent urban-mural art in the city, that is, they have been returned to their natural habitat, to the public space, a place chosen by these artists and/or creators to capture their interventions, both pictorial and written.

In addition to the meanings provided by urban-mural art and writing, these interventions sought to revitalize the city; the reconstruction of an audience was also stimulated, generating symbols and networks of meanings, based on the co-participation and the creation of cultural experiences, not only of its inhabitants and passersby but also of the artists and volunteers themselves<sup>3</sup>.

We return to the idea of Lefebvre<sup>8</sup> when he explained that, in the spontaneous scenes of the street, one is at the same time a spectacle, a spectator, and also an actor, so in the same sense, the street and its spaces are the places where the city itself manifests itself, seizes places and makes appropriate use of time-space, hence the importance of intervening in the walls that shelter the city's public space.

This space "is the stage on which the drama of community life unfolds."<sup>9</sup> In short, the walls intervened by Callegenera have somehow conquered the daily fabric and have become part of the identity of the neighborhoods; it has given legality to what has been produced, which has led to its conservation, care, and recognition.

It is important to point out that Mexico is the only country to have several *Meeting of Styles* venues<sup>4</sup> that Monterrey for the first time in 2014 was the venue for this meeting of graffiti artists, who were in charge of intervening in the city's Metro stations, in a legal manner, and it is this meeting that allows Callegenera to undo the borders of the experienced space, understood as a place (Generators Ship), to venture into a key point of the city, reaching a greater number of public and a greater permanence in time. In Monterrey, 10 stations of the Monterrey Collective Transportation System were intervened.

On the other hand, in 2015, it was special, because, for the first time, all of the walls where artists intervened were located in public spaces in the city of Monterrey. The production of 20 murals had the collaboration of the participants of the 42<sup>nd</sup> International Cervantino Festival, specifically on one of the main roads of Monterrey. It featured the participation of well-known Neolones urban artists: Ácaro, Beo Hake, Bern, Blast, Drom, Dose, Eskat, Homie, Hosier, Real 3, and Smok – eleven artists from Monterrey who carried out an intervention with a length of 130 m and a height of 7 m. Plastic artists Adrián Procel and Orlando Maldonado, national urban art artists such as X83, Osley, and Buytronick, and even international artists such as Jade, Cy, Saile, and Stinkfish also worked.

<sup>3</sup> Assistants to urban artists in interventions in public spaces, chosen by calls launched by the festival itself.

<sup>4</sup> International meeting of graffiti artists whose idea arose in Germany in 1995, but the current name dates from 2002.

In 2016, the interventions were directed to the spaces of the Cuauhtémoc station of lines 1 and 2 of the Monterrey Metro, seeking once again to position themselves in the so-called “no place,” a term introduced by Marc Augé (1992), that is, in those spaces of transit, which do not have history, identity, where human relations tend to become colder, standing out, at all times, in anonymity; in these spaces of the Metro, each visitor conceives it as the passage or the journey to their destination, whose route sometimes becomes their daily routine; therefore, the relationship with space and time is very different from what happened in the neighborhoods of the city.

Alfonso Reyes, director of operations of Metrorrey, declared to the press that the Metro has a daily influx of 530,000 people.<sup>10</sup> It is important to mention that some of the intervened walls can be seen by passersby and motorists since the mural work also covers the exterior walls of the Metro. Sixty-two urban and collective artists were the protagonists of such work.

In 2020 and 2021, despite the public health emergency due to COVID-19, the festival’s advisory council decided to continue with the activities that characterize Callegenera, interventions on walls in public spaces; and the conferences, talks, discussion tables took over the networks to promote all that discourse, reaching very distant contexts.

The year 2020 was very significant because Callegenera celebrated its first 10 years, participated by 13 artists: Al Sahir, Buffon, Chamula Cruz, Chanate, Gser Cruz, Guire, Narval, Nirvana, Libre HEM, Vera Primavera, Anahid Hernández, Drain VRS, and Sanzcrak who left their works in the streets of the city. The works were largely medium format, except for the Libre HEM’s mural, entitled “Perpetual nature of change,” worked in acrylic, where the author shows a group of migrants at night, with blankets, jackets, hats, warming up with bonfires, people who seek to reach the border between Mexico and the United States and fulfill the long-awaited American dream when crossing the border.

But they will try to cross a geographical, physical, but not artistic border, since urban art serves as a denunciation of the social phenomenon, both on the one side and on the other side, as the Malaysian artist Snaketwo also reveals in his painting “Migration,” which contains a motley of electronic elements in bright colors and with a pictorial comic treatment, denoting the bewilderment of the various human beings who migrate because they seek a better life, which was exhibited at the Kuala Lumpur National Art Gallery within “The Wall: Dinding Bandar Art Exhibition” in January 2019.<sup>9</sup>

In 2021, interventions occupy two important spaces: one is line 3 of the Monterrey Metro and the other is public

spaces, in neighborhoods. Twelve artists participated in the latter: Gibrán Turón, Eder Salas, ECKS, Andy Graves, DMON, Ácaro, El Pura, Maga, Vale Valencia, Tercer Mundo, María Conejo, and Asero Rodríguez. All these interventions were of medium format. This year, the Metro was adorned with medium- and large-format works. Of medium format, the walls of Adans Sánchez, Fando Criez, Greometry, Marcos Ríos, Anahid Hernández, Guillenart, Rocío Darynée, Belinda Salasar, and Tatería stand out, and the large-format walls were in charge by Chanate Cruz, Beo Hake and in collaboration were Dario Diario/Vicent Mutant, plus Nirvana and Naval.

The results in these years of intervention in the public space were evident, where the practice of intervention and the discourses that emerge in the space managed to have a significant impact on everyone who observes it. Since those gray spaces gained in color and figures, his designs captivated the gaze of the traveler and passersby. The risk of this reflection is, of course, a celebratory contemplation of these murals, which gained popularity given the diffusion of the festival in the media, who could not avoid covering it, thus allowing the creation of a note as a reference to what would be present or learned during the time that Callegenera lasted. Without going into details, in some way, these interventions contribute to stimulating the sense of belonging, reinforcing the identity of the neighborhood, and beautifying the spaces; thus, understood in this way, it is assumed that a feature to be highlighted in the city revitalization projects, in any sense (social, cultural, economic, and urban), is to be decentralized, participatory and aimed at promoting social dialog.

Regardless of the fact that the interventions in these years took the city as the main stage in parallel, other dynamics of the festival were carried out such as discussion tables, talks, workshops, conferences, and cinematographic exhibitions, which coexist as a space of discursive construction, seeking to think about the conceptual and visual dilemmas of urban expressions; and the skateboard, break dance, and bicycle competitions were viewed as a cultural space. These activities had various stages such as the Nave Generadores, the Center for the Arts, the House of Culture of Nuevo León, and the Civil College Centro Cultural Universitario.

## 5. Focusing attention on street artists and graffiti writers

Artistic production and writing invade, little by little, the city. “Powerful” images have become interfaces that stimulate reflection or simply please or shock, images that in some ways are also part of life, of everyday life, that could go unnoticed, but really there is always an interaction, no

matter how subtle this be. Hence, knowing the experiences of these “owners” of the public space, or at the time, of the festival participants, could help describe the impact of Callegenera.

To do this, we used the in-depth interview and the life story. Two festival organizers, Luis Alberto Méndez and Edgar Favela, were interviewed, and a total of 16 interviews were conducted with short- or medium-career urban artists. In the same way, the life story of three artists with an extensive curriculum was told. Due to the COVID-19 emergency, we were unable to do fieldwork and thus resorted to using the *Zoom* video call platform, telephone calls, and written means to conduct the interviews. These arguments became interesting and blur the nuances of this connection with the festival.

Before recounting the findings, it is important to remember that Callegenera has had two important moments of intervention in its history: one with an experimental nature and diffusion in the Nave Generadores, and two, when it spreads to public spaces, *that is*, the city. The comments revolve around these moments.

On the one hand, Nave Generadores became a gallery during the festival, offering the artists some comfort, since they move away from the ravages of the weather, and on the other hand, it allows the spectators to enjoy the interventions in the same space as the artist and interact with them. However, at the end of the festival, these are replaced by digital media.

When the interventions are manifested in the street, the walls are reappropriated and reinterpreted by passersby and neighbors, taking over the dynamics of the street. It is in this scenario that urban art comes to life, recovers its essence, and remains at the mercy of time and people, achieving a more extended presence over time, compared to that exhibited in the halls of the Nave Generadores.

What do we discover?

### 5.1. First part: Callegenera and emotional state

In this part, the impressions that the festival offers artists and writers are added, that is, we review the guided emotions, feelings, and thoughts, which are influenced by participation in the festival as a creator Andy Graves (urban artist) mentioned that “I felt very happy to share the workspace with such talented friends, that is always very enriching. Above all, the total freedom of expression, attention, and the challenge I had when I was assigned a larger wall than I was used to is appreciated.”

Asero (AU) said that “This event opened doors for me, and it was an important step in my career because with the first Callegenera I decided to give my work a professional

touch and give myself 24/7 to my proposals.” Asero (AU) likewise mentioned that the festival has given him a position on the map of Nuevo León, getting him considered by projects and festivals in the Mexican Republic.

Cixmugre (AU) explained that “It is a very well-organized festival. I love how it works in the street, but it also works in a museum that is in the Fundidora. I was able to find a great curator. It is one of the best festivals I have gone to from my point of view, and from my point of view of the country.” Dario Diario (AU) said that “It’s cool, I learned several things there, the artists do it with the desire to teach and share what they know.”

Drs. Three (AU) cheered that “It was very pleasant to participate in such a good festival.” Faime (graffiti artist) is grateful for the recognition that the festival gives to women<sup>5</sup>. Marisol D’Estrabeau (AU) was pleased with “the experience of being part of a mature and lively project that results in professional and personal growth.” Treka (AU) highlighted the importance of “this type of platform that professionalizes and gives projection to many artists, which in turn makes them realize that their work is important and has a unique value.” He also added that “it is natural to feel that in these types of events, you have more projection and more people know your work.”

Vinalay (AU) pointed out that “I felt overwhelmed. I longed to participate. It was super cool. I really liked that you start to meet a lot of people, they start to locate you more. A lot of people saw my work, the simple fact of leaving my signature on the mural I painted put me at a point where certain people can recognize me... in terms of artist visualization support, showing the urban artist is very cool.”

Kitty Ramos (AU) said that, for her, “Callegenera is running into friends and colleagues. It has its own flavor; it is always a very happy time.” Peste Burner (graffiti artist) said that “Callegenera has been a link between people outside graffiti and urban expressions. It allowed them to learn about the subject and be seen by many with different eyes, opening the way to knowledge and tolerance. People who would never turn to look at graffiti.” Pyro (Grafitera) agreed that the festival has helped expand his work, apart from the fact that it has helped him grow and be more receptive to other challenges and projects.

On the other hand, others considered that the festival breaks with the natural dynamics of the interventions,

<sup>5</sup> The Callegenera 2017 festival was dedicated to women. “We were like 30 but from different branches, but we were like 30, very few women, but when it came to graffiti women, it was just me. There were women, but from other branches. I don’t know them, but they did murals or something like that.” (Faime)

turning this concern into one of the weak links of the festival. One of the creators, El Pura (graffiti artist), said that “The truth is that I have never liked it very much Callegenera, for the same reason, which is not on the street. What the street generates should be in the same street.”

Similarly, Silvestre Madera (cartoonist and AU) considered that the current projection of the festival is not adequate. “Before, the best artists from Monterrey participated, some nationals, and foreigners, and each time it has been going down because the direction of the festival has been more focused on meeting an institutional parameter than with the demand of society. Sometimes, it seems that he is more focused in that sense than towards urban artists and art.”

## 5.2. Second part: Callegenera and critical basis

After holding the festival for 11 years (2011 – 2021), it is time for a critical evaluation to reformulate new strategies. These forms of socialization and intervention plus the analysis of consumption practices are essential to understanding an impact. If you may have noticed, no reference has been provided to the intervened walls, participating artists, attending public, central theme of each of the meetings, or economic resource used, among other indicators that could help to understand in depth the object of study: Festival of Urban Expressions Callegenera. Therefore, this work constitutes a preview of the first approach to the meeting, hence the interest of focusing only on what we consider significant for this moment.

The artists and writers have a shared vision in relation to two points of transcendental importance: one, the use of the intervention space, which has already been alluded to, and two, the economic resource, translated into the contribution of material to the artist/writer, on the one hand, and on the other, the gratification to the artist for the intervention.

What do the creators think about the space? El Pura (graffiti artist) commented that “the first impression I had regarding Callegenera was that it was a platform that was going to encourage painters to stand out, with support, I don’t know, from spaces, on the street, not in a closed space that not all they see it, only certain people. I’m from San Bernabé, from Fomerrey 116, and many people didn’t know that the center for the arts, the film library, and much less Callegenera were in the fundra park. It would be cool if the band were encouraged to paint things outside of a closed place.”

Silvestre Madera (AU) also mentioned that “a group of artists decided not to participate in Callegenera anymore, mainly because it contradicts its foundation,” referring to the closed-space Nave Generadores, as they consider it “a

closed space, which is within another space, so I think that takes away, steals a lot of the spirit of urban art.” Today, the organizers of the festival recognize it as a point for consideration, making an effort so that these interventions take place in the public space, a fact that has already been shown previously.

Asero (AU) commented that “interventions are in the street (a place where the capacity of visitors cannot be counted, but which contributes to the whole of society and to people who have the culture of going to a museum or gallery). This way catapults Neo-Leonese artists with quality work, intervening buildings, and walls on a large scale, opening renowned spaces for individual exhibitions, support, and scholarships.”

El Pura (graffiti artist) said that “There are so many walls, so much blank space, so many spaces that political parties use for their advertising and campaign, and there remain their dirty ugly colors. Moreover, it would be cool to revive those spaces. Normally I like to paint in places that are very messy or have ugly graffiti. Not graffiti that is already installed there, but that is no longer understood. I like to give and renew those spaces. I would be cool if Callegenera did that; look for more spaces and create more walls, and that they will last. Not that they painted a wall and erased it at a certain time. What is the use of spending on paint and time and ideas, to make a wall, and have it erased?” Kitty Ramos (AU) considered it important that Callegenera continues to be on the streets, “Hopefully she can be seen on the streets again.”

Marisol D’Estrabeau (AU), who was faced with the destruction and loss of wall interventions, proposed that “I would like the murals that were made again inside Nave Generadores to be on fabric; these fabrics could end up in schools or hospitals. All materials and time were invested in it. I think it could continue to live and generate its mission, to undertake souls. There are so many spaces without anything yet!” Treka (AU) proposed “to extend the meeting a little more, in the sense of adding venues and activations at different points to reach more people.”

Another latent concern is economic remuneration as a way of recognizing the work of the artist/writer. El Pura (graffiti artist) mentioned that “They don’t pay, I’m not saying they pay either, but at least they should support with a little more attention or material. It would be cool.” Peste Burner (graffiti artist) suggested that “there could be at least a symbolic payment for the artist.”

Vinalay (AU) agreed and mentioned that “There is something that if I didn’t like it outright, and it’s the financial support, the artist doesn’t get paid anything.” Silvestre Madera (AU) insisted on the recognition of the

urban artist and the writer through payment. Separately, El Pura (graffiti artist) referred to an important aspect in relation to the material: “they try to give you more paint than aerosols. And it is like learning to make something nice, a mural, and stop doing graffiti.”

Peste Burner (graffiti artist) recounted that “the issue of quality should be taken care of a little more, that is, not inviting people because it is what it is. If not, because of the great difference in quality of work and activity on the streets. Whether pieces, characters, or Street art. That they be active, original people with a commitment to quality. In order not to lose the status of the event and not be just another expo. That it be recognized for quality and respect. And whoever wants to be there, prepare and work to earn a place. And that they don’t invite you, because it is what it is or because there is no budget to invite someone else.”

## 6. Looking forward for a broader perspective

The contrast between temporality and the temporal landscape inside and outside Callegenera is evident. We can assert that there is a disruption in the festival in the space and main stage of urban art, in which the artist continues to generate his works, but the environment is designated and closed. It goes from stationary, open public spaces, where the works have a social temporality, to a stationary, closed public space, with a limited temporality.

By not occupying public spaces with interventions, the festival is limited to the reappropriation of public spaces by artists and the city, and a disturbance is produced in the main objective of urban art, which is to generate visual memories, as well as the appropriation and democratization of space.

On the other hand, there is a transformation in the symbolic space used by the artists when they intervene pictorially and graphically on the walls of the Nave Generadores. However, there is still a significant contribution within this change. Yes, the relationships in space and their correlations are no longer analogous to what they are in the street, new relationships are also created, especially those that are cemented between urban artists working in the same area. In this way, the space is configured toward one of creation, exchange of ideas, and artistic techniques. Thus, a spatial autocorrelation is conjugated between agents that have similar objectives, where a reciprocal space of knowledge is generated.

A motivational discontinuity between theory and practice is denoted. The motivations are centered on the individual and their need for catharsis, rather than being political. Circumstances are also present in which the

creation of the wall is driven by economic issues. The motivations are reflected in the festival, including the creative and expressive ones, because the festival generates a platform and gives a space for the works, as well as economic ones because it gives positioning in the artistic field and diffusion to the artist.

Callegenera could be perceived as a shared laboratory for artists, where various expressions, styles, and techniques come together. There is a constant relationship and influence within this space and the conjugation of artistic relationships. The artist ceases to be isolated in the street in terms of identity and surrounds himself with peers: urban artists and writers. In this way, the artistic language is modified in certain cases, when techniques are shared and interpenetrated.

Most of the artists show a positive reaction to Callegenera, as a platform that comes to legitimize, destigmatize, and give greater diffusion, despite the fact that there have been censorship events during the festival. The struggle to achieve cultural and social capital is still present on the city’s stage. Callegenera also seeks to obtain it, as has been seen in the interventions in the city, which has caused the struggle to continue.

## 7. Final considerations: New uncertainties?

In short, festivals of this type in direct connection with the growth of metropolitan areas and intermediate cities in Latin America are generating a paradigm shift in terms of our vision as a region, inviting us to question how we can adapt to the new urban standards without losing our identity. The rise of urban art in Latin America in the last decade is largely the product of our society facing this transformation, where the intervention of space is no longer just a rebellious act, but a desperate appropriation of the environment to fight against the homogeneity imposed by modern urbanization.<sup>11</sup> We can conclude that Callegenera is considered the largest, longest, and most international festival of its kind in Mexico – it is the only one that covers most of the musical genres, movements, and urban artistic expressions that exist in the city and in the country. This is achieved through its various exhibitions, interventions, and activities.

There is no doubt that the city is the original channel for these expressions, and when analyzing it together with society, it allows us to find a thought, a form of action, cultural, esthetic, and even philosophical norms. The works that appear in the city allow us to identify a social reality, hence the importance of analyzing it from its contexts and in its natural habitat, and above all from a decolonial vision. Urban and street art then becomes a process of appropriation of territory, understood as the

process of interaction of people with the environment,<sup>12</sup> since it is in turn a generator of identity and a social space cathartic. However, this territorial appropriation at the same time can play a role in breaking down borders, as is the case in the city of Tijuana, in the Mexican state of Baja California, where the artist Enrique Chiu painted an 18,000-m mural lake in 2018, squares with countless helpers, migrants from both Mexico and Central and South America, entitled “Mural de la Hermandad,” in which Chiu expresses through art his idea of the annihilation of the border between Mexico and the United States, in favor of a world without barriers or obstacles between humans.<sup>13</sup>

Following the natural course of these works or pieces, production (legal and illegal) and conservation (vandalism, destruction, or conservation), exhibition (public or private open spaces), depending on the origin (graffiti artist, urban and mural artist or institutional sponsor or community), among other variants of analysis in connection with economic, cultural and social capital, turns this urban production into an object of study of interest for sociology, the arts, architecture and philosophy, as well as other disciplines.

It is a complex reality that must be analyzed from an interdisciplinary perspective to know the true impacts that these interventions are capable of causing both for the artist or writer and for the community and the urban context.

## Acknowledgments

The authors extend the acknowledgments to Popular Cultures of CONARTE, especially to Lic. Alberto Méndez, for allowing them to venture into this fascinating world, and especially to the artists and writers who have given their support in the present work.

## Funding

The current work stems from the research project titled “La creación muralista del Festival de Expresiones Urbanas CALLEGENERA como consumo artístico cultura” funded by the Programa de Fomento a Proyectos y Coinversiones Culturales, under the 35-2019 issue.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

## Author contribution

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## Ethics approval and consent to participate

The artists, in writing and verbally, have given their consent to participate in the interview.

## Consent for publication

The artists have given their consent to incorporate their information and opinions in this paper.

## Availability of data

Not applicable.

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