"Poeta sei tu che leggi": An Intermedial Analysis of the Italian Street Poetry Panorama

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Introduction: Between Poetry and Street Art

Poetic assault is an artistic phenomenon that occurs when poetry meets street art. Also known as street poetry or guerrilla poetry, it is a common contemporary expression that has not been sufficiently studied in the academic world (cf. Visconti, Cornacchione, Terzago, Vitali). This article aims to shed light on poetic assault as an artistic intermedial configuration. Through the analysis of the collectives *Poeti der Trullo* (PDT) and *Movimento per l'Emancipazione della Poesia* (MEP), and by using Rajewsky's theory as a critical reference, it highlights that poetic assault has a fundamental intermedial nature. It aims to show how poetic assault is a complex intermedial phenomenon that can imply different configurations such as medial transposition, media combination and intermedial reference (Rajewsky 51-54). This aspect is prominently explored within the context of PDT and MEP's poetic production. Moreover, this article intends to prove that poetic assault is more than an intermedial phenomenon *per se*: intermediality is not simply a formal characteristic, but it has a political function as well. This function is transmitted by the intermedial relation established between poetic assault and the urban setting. The political element is a peculiarity of PDT and MEP, since each has written a manifesto: The *Manifesto Metroromantico* (PDT) and *Manifesto per l'emancipazione della poesia* (MEP).

Poeti der Trullo

PDT is a poetic collective founded in 2010 in Rome, more specifically in the neighbourhood

of *Trullo*. It has seven members: Inumi Laconico, Er Bestia, Marta del Terzo Lotto, Er Quercia,

Er Pinto, Er Farco and A' Gatta Morta. They all hail from *il Trullo. Trullo* is a suburban

neighbourhood of the Italian capital characterised by micro-criminality and neglect. However,

PDT considers *Trullo* not only as a physical place but as a state of mind:

> Trullo is a state of mind and all the suburbs can be poetry's germs and fruits. We exist to
> prove it. We exist to dirty the passers-by and the neighbours with the colour that exploded
> inside us. We have decided to let it go and not to stop it.[1]

The engagement with a specific city or neighbourhood, which is also typical in street art, is

particularly clear in PDT's poetics. This commitment towards the city of Rome is exhibited on

a linguistic level. As pointed out by Vitali, PDT's street poetry production is mainly written in

Rome's dialect, a stylistic choice that is in line with the street art and hip-hop movement

(Vitali). PDT don't only compose their work in the neighbourhood of *Trullo*. However, they

only cover the territory of Rome which is the main expressive support of PDT's street poetry.

PDT is active on social media; they have their own website (*Poeti der Trullo*), where

information about the collective and its activities are available. Another crucial aspect to

consider is pseudonymity; at first imposed as a necessity for privacy and legal reasons, it has

now become a crucial matter of poetic identity. As Inumi Laconico, one of the founders of the

collective, states:

> […] our requirement is to pursue the words, the poetry, the tale or any kind of story, holding
> back, hiding people's faces and names […] A poetic choice, a choice of a different artistic
> presence in an age as ours where everyone is looking for 5 minutes of notoriety, the

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[1] All translations provided in this article are realised by one of the authors of the present article (R. Gusella). "Il Trullo è un luogo della mente e tutta la periferia esistente può essere seme e frutto di poesia. Noi esistiamo per dimostrarlo. Noi esistiamo per sporcare i passanti e i vicini del colore che ci è esploso dentro. Abbiamo deciso di lasciarlo fluire e di non arginarlo." (PDT, "Chi siamo")

obsession with our faces, selfies, to let poetry speak for itself seemed to us the best thing to do.[2]

Pseudonimity is mostly perceived as a political and poetic choice which makes room for the poetry itself as artistic experience instead of focusing on the personalities of the authors.

Manifesto Metroromantico

The Metroromantic Manifesto was conceived in 2015 and published in the poetic collection *Metroromantici*. The text is available at the beginning of the book and on PDT's web page (PDT, "Metroromanticismo"). The first aspect to note is how the local engagement is linked with an international one: the neighbourhood of *Trullo* is perceived as the origin, but Metroromanticism aims to be applied to any other city as well, since the corner stone of the movement is that poetry is everywhere. One of the goals of the Metroromantic Manifesto is to display the presence of poetry within contexts that are apparently and traditionally lacking lyrical strength.

From the beginning, the idea of *movement* is seen not as artistic or literary avant-garde, but as a poetic approach to daily life. Poetry can therefore express itself in many different forms and media:

> […] this is why the word "poetry" does not mean style, verses but an approach that finds in verses a possible expression and embraces also prose, aphorism and it may include other artistic universes such as music, painting, drawing, theatre, cinema. Poetry is a way of seeing the world not a way of telling it.[3]

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[2] "[…] La nostra esigenza di portare avanti la parola, la poesia, il racconto o comunque la storia, mantenendo comunque dietro, nascosti i volti, i nomi delle persone […] Una scelta di poetica, una scelta di presenza diversa, perché in un'epoca come quella nostra, tutti cercano quei 5 minuti di celebrità, l'ossessione per i nostri volti, i selfie, ci sembrava comunque la cosa migliore far parlare la poesia." (Laconico)

[3] "[…] Per questo la parola 'poesia' non indica lo stile, la scrittura propriamente in versi, ma un approccio che trova nei versi una delle sue possibili manifestazioni e abbraccia anche la prosa, l'aforisma e potrebbe includere tutti gli altri universi artistici, come la musica, la pittura, il disegno, il teatro, il cinema. La poesia è un modo di guardare il mondo, non di raccontarlo." (PDT, "Metroromanticismo")

This emphasizes the intermedial nature of poetry expressible in every artistic medium. The intermedial nature of poetry is perceived not only as condition but as an analytical category of the phenomenon itself, since poetry is described as a way of seeing the world, a possible perspective applicable to every media, from music to cinema. As common practice within the manifesto's tradition, PDT take a political and poetic stand towards previous poetic traditions. Metroromanticism has its origins in nineteenth-century Romanticism. It shares many features with Romanticism, such as the sensation of infinite loneliness with respect to nature and the sentiment of melancholia. Nonetheless, the Metroromantics dissociate themselves from the Romantic tradition, since the poetic force, the images and the themes belong entirely to the urban context. The inspiration of street art and poetry and its stories come from the suburbs and they are told in the language of the suburbs, where *il Trullo* itself is both greatest example and metaphor. Metroromantic poetry has a double contextual nature because the images start from *il Trullo* but are universal. Poetry is, therefore, conceived as popular and democratic since it is accessible to everyone.

Metroromantic poetry has two different channels of circulation: the street and the web.

> The Metroromanticism is spread and diffused through two channels. The internet and city's walls. Metroromanticism belongs to the street and the city is perceived as an immense canvas for making poetry, in which also the metropolitan objects, alive, together with the buildings and the monuments reveal their own souls through poetry.[4]

The city is perceived as an immense canvas and every object within the urban context is re-evaluated and assigned an aesthetic poetic force. The city is used as a medium and part of the poetic material. At the same time, this intermedial relationship expresses a political function of democratization of poetry as a genre that belongs to everyone and every place.

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[4] "Il Metroromanticismo si espande e si diffonde attraverso due canali. La rete e i muri della città. Il Metroromanticismo appartiene alla strada e la città è concepita come un immenso foglio bianco su cui fare poesia, in cui anche gli oggetti della metropoli, vivi, insieme a edifici e monumenti rivelano la propria anima attraverso la poesia." (PDT, "Metroromanticismo")
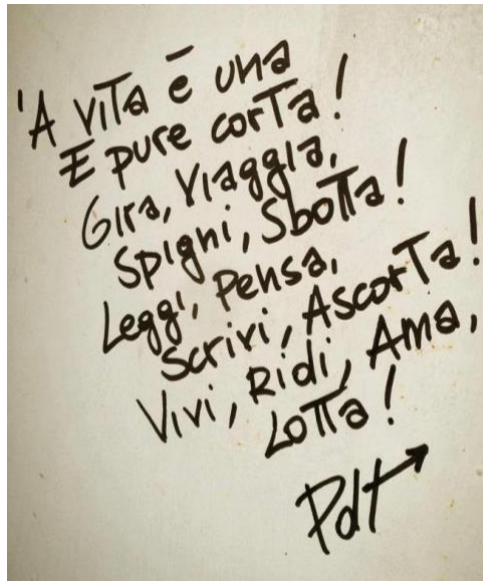
Fig. 1. (PDT, STREET POETRY #67, Rome) [5]

PDT's poetic assault, as depicted in figure 1, displays the common trends of the collective's poetic action: a graffiti-like poem written freely by hand with a marker on a neglected wall. According to Rajewsky's study on *Intermediality* (2005), it is possible to designate three different intermedial critical categories: medial transposition (when a shift between media occurs, as in the case of adaptation), media combination (when more media are combined together such as opera, for instance) and intermedial references (when a medium speaks through another, as in the case of a description of a work of art) (Rajewsky 50-54). STREETPOETRY #67 can be considered an example of media combination that merges poetry and street art since the poem is displayed in accordance with the typical techniques of graffiti art, one of the most prominent branches of street art. This clearly shows how poetic assault combines poetry and street art in a single medial artistic configuration. Moreover, it is important to consider that the composition is exposed in the streets. Indeed, the classic intermedial notion of medium changes by applying it to public space. The aesthetic choice of writing a poetic assault on a neglected wall in a suburban zone of the city adds an important

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[5] "Life is one and even short. Go around, travel, push, burst! Read, think, write, listen! Live, laugh, love, fight!"

intermedial element. The wall speaks directly to the viewers giving advice on how to live; the most important and final suggestion is to fight, to stay strong. The city's neglected wall is a further medial support that adds a new political function linked to the words' meanings; seen together, the visual support (graffiti and suburb's neglected wall) and the poem invite the audience to experience life and not to give up.

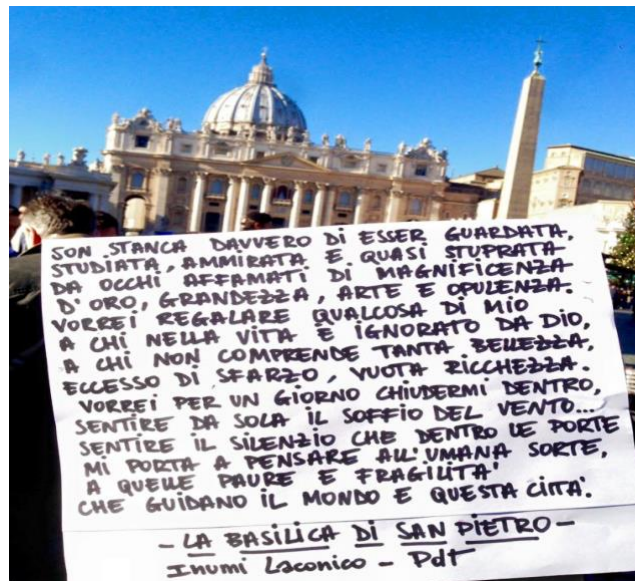Fig. 2. (PDT, #sepotesseparlare, Rome)   Fig. 3. (PDT, I. Laconico, #sepotesseparlare, Rome)

Figures 2 and 3 are examples of a specific poetry related to the Roman poetic tradition of the *pasquinate*.[6] This series of poetic assaults is entitled #SEPOTESSEPARLARE and the main monuments or symbols of the city talk in rhyme.

In figure 2, it is the Colosseum that speaks; it shares its story and laments its state of abandon. This poetic assault exemplifies the in-between nature of this poetic phenomenon since it displays two intermedial configurations at the same time. The first one is the intermedial reference; a not so simple process of anthropomorphosis is applied to the monument, which is the lyrical voice, but the monument itself serves as the material and content support. The second

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[6] The *pasquinate* is a typical form of poetry of Pontifical Rome where brief satirical compositions where exposed on symbolic statues and attributed to these sculptures as spokespersons.

category involved is the media combination since the composition is exposed in front of the Colosseum in the form of a poster, which is a specific kind of visual art (poster art) mostly related to street art.

A similar intermedial *ensemble* is traceable in the poetic assault entitled "La Basilica di San Pietro" in figure 3. The composition is written with a marker on a white poster just nearby the Saint Peter's Cathedral, one of the greatest symbols of the city and of the whole of Catholicism. This time it is the church itself that 'speaks'; it complains about being stared at all the time by ignorant eyes that only see the splendour and the ostentation. *La Basilica* would prefer to take a moment for itself to be able to think about the human weakness which is the reason that brings people closer to Vatican City, to religion, and that makes the world spin. This poem tackles a problem that has always been central in the city's history: the coexistence of Rome and the Vatican in the same geographical space and the influence of Catholic religion on the inhabitants. Media combination is clearly involved in both figures 2 and 3 in the merging of poetry and poster art. The category of intermedial reference is also prominent since the poetic voice is the anthropomorphized Saint Peter's Cathedral. The church has a lyrical strength; it is a monument, an artwork itself, and this reference adds meaning and lyrical power to the entire poetic composition. It could be stated that installation art is also involved in the series #SEPOTESSEPARLARE, since one of the definitions states that:

> […] installations […] unlike traditional street art are often three-dimensional and move the focus from the city as a canvas to the city as an environment. The street installation is designed for a special spot and can consist of several materials and techniques. (Carlsson and Louie 105)

In the case of "Il Colosseo" and "La Basilica di San Pietro," even if the support is bi-dimensional (the poster), the meaning of the location is crucial; it reflects on the poetic strength and complexity of the urban Roman and political context. Although installation art may partially be considered involved in the intermedial analysis, it is important to clarify that in this

present case, these works are not considered as traditional performances. In the proper sense of the term, performance implies an audience and it is not the case here because it would be in opposition to pseudonimity, which remains one of the main elements.

However, it is worth noting that both poetic assaults are also shifted into pictures and posted on social networks. This practice could also be thought of in terms of an additional intermedial configuration, such as medial transposition. Indeed, the composition is photographed, therefore adapted or re-mediated (Bolter and Grusin qtd. in Rajewsky 61) into a new medial support that is typical of the contemporary technological age. The picture is then posted on social networks which function not only as the *fora* but they may also be interpreted as an additional artistic filter. This practice of posting poetic assaults on social networks may make us reflect on the intermedial fluidity that this genre is capable of, especially in the contemporary digital society.

Movimento per l'Emancipazione della Poesia

The *Movimento per l'Emancipazione della Poesia* (MEP) is a poetic collective founded in Firenze in 2010. The movement started on the 10th March 2010 with only a few members (mainly students) and acquired 100 poets by the end of the year. Now the movement has gained so much success that it holds a new census every year. Due to its massive expansion, MEP is divided into units all over Italy, and there are three units in Denmark, France and the Netherlands. Every year a general assembly ("La Nazionale") is held to discuss the most important matters regarding the movement's actions. First and foremost, MEP is a militant collective. L.32, one of MEP's members, defines the objective:

> There is a general matter which involves art: the fact that everything is merchandise, that every kind of art has to fit in a capitalistic model and structure, this is MEP's argument but also that of many other contemporary artists as well. MEP concentrates on poetry. […] Let's say that MEP grew out of this necessity, the need to declare to people, even

arrogantly, that poetry is still there. There are still thousands of poets who write, who write every day and write worthy things.[7]

The emancipation of poetry is a concept that involves society and politics at the same time. It stands against the commercialization of art fostered by capitalism. Therefore, emancipation is meant as a liberation from the economic power of publishing houses and authorities. Moreover, it also offers a new way of presenting poetry, often perceived as traditional, conservative and elitist: the goal is to make people understand that poetry is alive. In line with their political and poetic objective, MEP's poets have embraced anonymity since its very beginning; members are given a registration code consisting of the initial letter of the poet's name followed by a serial number based on when they joined the collective.

The Manifesto for the Emancipation of Poetry was written in 2018. It is the second version of the original Manifesto written in 2010 upon the foundation of MEP. The Manifesto is a detailed description of the poetic and political reasons that brought about the activity of the collective. From the very first paragraph onwards, it is clear how poetic action is perceived as a social and political action. The nature of the movement is explained as a "non-partisan movement of social and political action."[8] The second paragraph constitutes the core of the Manifesto's structure. It explores the social and political reasons that contributed to the conception of the collective, which is perceived as "esigenza collettiva" (MEP, "Manifesto"). This "collective need" stresses the cooperative nature of MEP. The rhetorical technique to oppose a cohesive group against the *other*, where the *other* is seen as the opponent, is often used in manifestos. In this case, the cohesive group is represented by MEP, that stands against capitalistic society with its poetic action ("the present, consumerist and inattentive society").[9]

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[7] "Un discorso di fondo che vale per l'arte in generale: il fatto che tutto sia mercificato, che ogni tipo di arte debba rifarsi a un modello e una struttura capitalista, questo è il discorso di fondo del MEP come di altri movimenti e artisti contemporanei. Il MEP però si concentra sulla poesia. […] Diciamo che il MEP nasce proprio da questo bisogno, il bisogno di affermare anche con prepotenza alle persone che la poesia esiste ancora, ci sono ancora centinagli e migliaia di poeti e poetesse che scrivono, che scrivono tutti giorni e che scrivono cose valide." (L.32)
[8] "movimento apartitico di azione politica e sociale." (MEP, "Manifesto") The entire text is accessible online.
[9] "[... l]'attuale società consumistica e disattenta." (MEP, "Manifesto")

The *other* is clearly perceived as the cause of devaluation of art. MEP tries to stop the depreciation of poetry carried out by the established system and to propose new media for poetic expression and fruition.

In the following paragraphs, the idea of street poetry as a dialogic attempt is furthermore expressed; dialogue is free and ongoing ("Il Movimento si struttura come un discorso in divenire"; MEP, "Manifesto"). Street poetry is considered as a way of re-evaluating poetry, bringing it closer to citizens and freeing it from the capitalistic market. Strikingly, the word "militanti" (militants; MEP, "Manifesto") instead of poets is used to refer to MEP's members. The link with the semantic field of emancipation exhibits an expressive choice not only in line with the writing of a manifesto but also with the political significance linked to the exposition of poems on public walls.

MEP does not apply any criticism or censorship. As L.32 clarifies: "MEP has a more libertarian than liberal conception towards the freedom of poetic publication."[10] Everyone is completely free to express themselves and everyone is responsible for their own freedom. What is important for the collective is not the result of the dialogue between people and poetry but making this exchange possible in the first place. The outcomes of this dialogue are multiple. People may decide to only read the poems, or to write or even draw something on them; they may tear the poster away or take a picture of it. The emancipation of poetry occurs when people do not need any notoriety or money to read or appreciate poetry. It should be accessible to everyone.

In MEP's poetic action the city is perceived as a symbolic environment for artistic dialogue and exchange. The insertion of poetry in public common ground makes poetry a public common good. This is the political function added to the intermedial nature of MEP's poetic assaults. Figure 4 embodies the common trend of MEP's poetic assaults on visual and

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[10] "Il MEP è più una concezione libertaria che liberale rispetto alla libertà di pubblicazione poetica." (L.32)

content levels. It is presented as a typical poster that characterises MEP's poetic street action: poster in classic black font on an A4 sheet of paper. Even if it is impossible to introduce a content analysis of the collective's entire production due to the overwhelming number of members, figure 4 shares an important element of MEP's poetry – an invitation to engage in dialogue. This is clearly expressed in the Manifesto: "The movement is built as a dialogue in progress based on the active and constant contribution of a heterogeneous multitude of militants."[11]
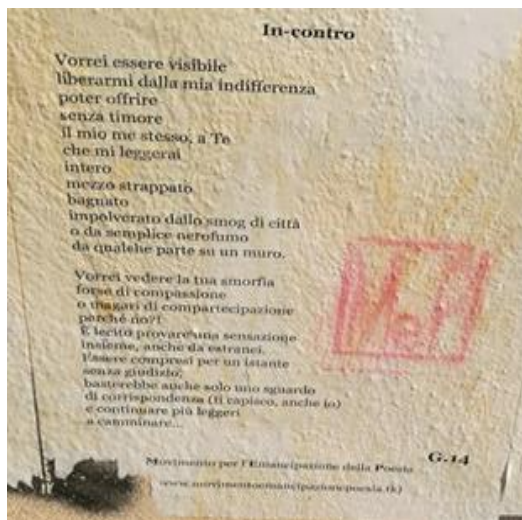

Fig. 4. (MEP, 11/07/2018, *Movimento*)   Fig. 5. (MEP, November 2018, Rome)

In figure 4, this desire for dialogue is expressed not only in terms of form but also in terms of content. Through a meta-fictional comment, the poetic assault directly addresses the audience by inviting the viewers to find it on the walls and to take a moment to experience something different from their daily routines. The attempt to launch a dialogue is expressed in a sophisticated intermedial way. The composition is based on the motif of the encounter: a match between strangers mediated by the poem on the wall. The wall itself is a further medial support that engages the idea of exchange since the urban element is accessible to all and it adds an

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[11] "Il Movimento si struttura come un discorso in divenire basato sull'apporto attivo e continuo di una moltitudine eterogenea di militanti." (MEP, "Manifesto")

additional factor to the perception and interpretation of the entire poetic composition. The poetic assault on the poster represents a clear example of media combination. The poem attached on the wall speaks about itself and about its viewers' reaction; the poem's themes of dialogue and empathy are developed through the motif of the encounter between strangers and through the meaning of public exposure in the streets.

Figure 5 represents a slight variation of MEP's typical artistic expression. The variation clearly concerns the format of the poetic assault which is printed and assembled through many sheets of white paper. Evidently the font is bigger so the impact on the viewers is more direct. The technique of assembling more posters in order to create a bigger format is called *grand'atto*. Figure 5 displays a short poem where "I" addresses an unknown "you".[12] The dialogical construction, a classic poetic trend, changes the poem's perception when published in the streets; "you" is the poem's addressee, reader and city's passer-by at the same time. The composition compares the lyric voice to a blind cocoon and the recipient to spring's cruelty. The location and the content of the poetic assault engage in a mutual lyrical relationship since the neglected wall contrasts with the bucolic reference, adding a more tragic meaning to the metaphor. The urban context is completely inseparable from the whole poetic composition through the establishment of an intermedial relationship with the poem. This consequently alters the perception of the artwork. The *grand'atto* in figure 5 is another example of media combination which clearly shows how the urban context re-mediates the poetic assault on a formal and content level. The idea of the city as the location for exchange repeats itself again in the praxis of poetic assault through the overlapping dialogical structure transmitted by the streets which are part of the poem's lyrical strength.

Even if posters are the main means of expressions, installations are also used. Figure 6 for instance is an example of poetic installation. The writing of the "poems" is performed on a

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[12] "For my coarse blind cocoon, you were the cruel spring."

three-dimensional support such as a paper box. This is an example of how poetic assault is an intermedial phenomenon that conveys poetry and street art in its entire expressive fluidity.

Fig. 6. (MEP, 21/03/2018, *Movimento*)

Poetic assault is basically displayed as media combination, but it is remediated through the urban context which denotes the poetic composition with further significance and function. The placement of the poetry box on a public handrail insists again on the motif of the exchange as free transition.

Poetic Assault, Intermediality and Politics

Poetic assault is perceived by both PDT and MEP as a media combination that merges street art and poetry in one medial configuration. Nonetheless, the forms of expressions and the techniques involved in the establishment of this peculiar intermedial relationship are not the same for the two collectives. PDT's poetry blends street art mainly through graffiti art: clean handwriting with a marker on walls or other urban contextual elements (benches, garbage dumpsters or traffic signs). Posters are only involved in the project #SEPOTESSEPARLARE. They are conceived in a graffiti-like way: black or blue marker handwriting on a simple white sheet of paper. MEP's compositions on the other hand, use poster art almost exclusively which appears to be political in an old-fashioned way; no handwriting is used, just simple black font

on white A4 sheets of paper. Though this is the common format, there might nonetheless be some variations in proportions (figure 5). MEP sometimes uses installations as a three-dimensional way of displaying poetry, as shown in figure 6.

In the poetic assaults of both collectives, intermediality is a formal strategy that conveys a political function. The urban context is part of the poetic composition and constitutes an intermedial support charged by a strong cultural and political meaning. The city is a common good, and the exposure of poems on public spaces involves a political engagement that questions the normality of artistic and poetic fruition. This political function transmitted by the intermediality of poetic assault is the strongest element of PDT and MEP's poetry. This is further enhanced through the choice of writing a manifesto, typically a political textual genre. As stated by the poets themselves, the poetic gesture is experienced as a political one:

> [...] the practical gesture of taking a marker and writing on a wall is absolutely a political gesture, it is first of all a political gesture and then a poetic one, because anyway you make a great choice, you are at that moment deciding to express yourself on a city wall that is completely accessible to everyone and therefore it is a gift, […] in any case, it is still a gesture similar to what happened with graffiti, with everything that came before street art, with the preparation for street art, so poetry as we interpret it, it is an act of rebellion against the system, because writing on a wall, even if street art is mostly accepted by everyone, is still a gesture of vandals [...] So yes, it is absolutely a social and political gesture. There is no doubt about it. We have always felt this way.[13]

And one of MEP's members claims:

> Poetry belongs to everyone, everyone. I believe that poetry as art manages to transcend social class, race, sexual orientation, gender, it goes beyond all this and the MEP is born from this will, and it was born with the desire to give life to poetry for free, to not get paid for it as everyone wants and above all to give poetry without any lines of interpretation. Attaching posters is not just an arrogant gesture because since you attach it on the street, it

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[13] "[…] il gesto pratico di prendere un pennarello e scrivere su un muro sia un gesto assolutamente politico, è come prima cosa un gesto politico e poi poetico, perché comunque fai una scelta grande, tu stai in quel momento decidendo di esprimerti su un muro della città che è assolutamente accessibile a tutti e quindi è un regalo, […] però è comunque un gesto che rientra un po' in quello che è successo con il graffitismo, con tutto quello che è venuto prima della street art, con la preparazione alla street art, quindi la poesia così come la intendiamo noi è un atto di ribellione al sistema, perché scrivere su un muro è ancora tutt'ora che la street art è accettata da tutti, rimane comunque un gesto da vandali […] Quindi si, è assolutamente un gesto sociale e politico su questo non c'è dubbio. Proprio l'abbiamo sempre vissuta così." (Laconico)

is a political choice; in the second manifesto we define ourselves specifically as a political movement.[14]

However, the political function displayed by the intermedial nature of poetic assault is exploited for different political purposes through different intermedial interpretations of the urban context. PDT displays a strong engagement with the neighbourhood of *Trullo* and the city of Rome. The city and its suburbs are the places where poetry grows. As clearly explained in the last paragraph of the Metroromantic Manifesto, PDT's street poetry perceives the city as a canvas or a large field of poetic experimentation. It also states that part of poetic action involves the spread of poetry not only in the streets but also on social networks:

> 8. STREET POETRY pursues the goal of bringing poetry to the streets, where everyone can enjoy it in everyday life, but, since it is ephemeral and temporary, it spreads and circulates thanks to the internet and social media. Beauty and importance stand in the documentation, so it is photographed and posted.[15]

Indeed, taking a picture to re-mediate the poetic gesture which has already been mediated through the graffiti and the city itself, is a complex aesthetic intermedial choice. Metroromantic poetry is conceived as being popular in style, content and diffusion. Compositions are written on walls and shared on social networks to guarantee the greatest possible expansion and fruition of an urban poetry that lives, performs and grows from the suburb's backgrounds.

In PDT's conception of street poetry, the political function involved in the intermedial relationship established between poetic assault and the city is the democratization of poetry as a genre:

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[14] "La poesia è di tutti, tutti quanti, io credo che la poesia, l'arte riesca a trascendere tutto ciò che è classe sociale, razza, orientamento sessuale, di genere, va al di là di tutto questo e il MEP nasce da questa volontà qua, e nasce con la volontà di dare la poesia gratuitamente, non fartela pagare come vogliono tutti e soprattutto di dartela senza linee di lettura. L'attacchinaggio non è solo un gesto prepotente perché o attacchi in strada, è una scelta politica: nel secondo manifesto ci definiamo proprio come movimento politico." (Anonymous)

[15] "8. Lo STREET POETRY ha lo scopo di portare la poesia nelle strade, dove tutti possono usufruirne nella realtà quotidiana, ma, poiché è per sua natura provvisorio e temporaneo, trova diffusione e circolazione grazie alla rete e ai social network. La sua bellezza e importanza consiste nell'essere documentato dunque fotografato e condiviso." (PDT, "Street Poetry")

Poetry is for everyone. […] There are a lot of people who have poetry inside and they are not aware of it, lots of guys are real poets, but in everyday life they are plumbers, bakers or pizza makers. Here is the view to see the world, the poetic view. Because poetry is in things. Poetry is perceived as rhyme, technique, hendecasyllables, seven-syllables scheme and all that beautiful stuff which I really appreciate, and I have studied it myself, but we must remember that poetry is everywhere. We just need to see it. Therefore, to bring poetry back to the streets is like saying to people: "Poetry is all around you, it exists, see it, write it, spread it, do not let it go unnoticed". This is a message of absolute democratization; poetry belongs to everyone and exists for everyone. Then the movement grew in popularity. Lots of people, lots of kids, have started to write. This is the peak of poetry's democratization.[16]

On the other hand, MEP's street poetry is to a certain extent more evidently linked to political activism than PDT's. Poetic and political actions are inseparable, as stated in the first paragraph and clearly visible in the language of MEP's manifesto. Even if MEP does not engage with a specific city, the relationship with the city is established on a metaphorical level, which concerns the human conception of the city as a meeting place. The streets are public and exchange places *par excellence.* Proposing compositions in public common ground is conceptualized as giving poetry for free to people without any economic profits or labels. There is a clear anticapitalistic intention in MEP's poetic assaults cited in the manifesto which goes against literary elitism, notoriety's rules that drive the artistic market of publishing houses. The commercialisation of art, in this case poetry imposed by a consumerist society, is the main element that MEP decides to fight. The fight is engaged on every level, which is why MEP refuses to publish on social networks since it would collaborate with the collection of data by capitalistic institutions such as Facebook:

[…] we do not want to collaborate and provide content to those who collect and sell data derived from the activity of their users to third-party companies, through an attractive means and only apparently free from market logic. For now, we are willing to give up the

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[16] "La poesia è di tutti. […] C'è molta gente che c'ha la poesia dentro e non lo sa, molti ragazzi in realtà sono poeti però magari fanno gli idraulici, fanno i panettieri o i pizzaioli, qui sta lo sguardo nel vedere il mondo, lo sguardo poetico. Perché comunque la poesia è proprio nelle cose, la poesia intesa come rima, come tecnica, endecasillabo, settenario e tutta quella roba bellissima, a me piace tantissimo e sono il primo ad averla studiata, però ricordiamoci anche che la poesia è anche ovunque, basta solo vedere. Quindi riportarla alle strade è come dire alla gente è intorno a voi la poesia, c'è, vedetela, scrivetela, diffondetela, non la fate passare inosservata. Questo è un messaggio assolutamente di democratizzazione, la poesia è per tutti, di tutti. Poi il movimento ha preso piedi, vuol dire che moltissima gente, moltissimi ragazzi, hanno cominciato a scrivere, l'apice della democratizzazione della poesia." (Laconico)

benefits that derive from the use of similar channels to still bet on real places of communion such as the street and human relationships. Aware that the presence of poetry on social networks will not be affected by our inactivity, we always claim a neutral space where we can continue to reflect and act. See you in the streets.[17]

The emancipation of poetry is the political target of MEP's poetic assaults. The city is perceived as a symbolic environment for free poetic exchange, not an economic one:

> [The action is] political because it involves the invasion of public spaces, and it is social because it creates a bond between people, a meeting point, I see things in this way. It is an appropriation of public space; we are constantly bombed by everything, to simply read a poem, it is pleasurable. The time people spend reading trash they spend it reading something beautiful.[18]

The city is thus viewed as the mediatic support that in the first place instils the idea of emancipation in every one of MEP's compositions.

Conclusion

The intermedial complexity that characterises street poetry is a unique example of communicative expressionism that provides an original contribution to the field of intermediality. With regards to Rajewsky's theory, it has been shown that street poetry is an intermedial genre that combines poetry and street art. Poetic assault mainly involves media combination. Nonetheless, it is a fluid phenomenon that can imply other subcategories, such as medial transposition and intermedial reference (Rajewsky 51-54). It can involve adaptation and re-mediation: for example, to photograph a poetic assault changes the support (the wall) and the media (the streets) to digital ones, so that it becomes another piece of art, in this case

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[17] "[…] Non vogliamo collaborare con e fornire contenuti a chi raccoglie e vende i dati derivati dall'attività dei propri utenti ad aziende terze, attraverso un mezzo appetibile e solo apparentemente svincolato da logiche di mercato. Siamo per ora disposti a rinunciare ai benefici che derivano dall'impiego di simili canali per scommettere ancora su luoghi reali di comunione come la strada, come le relazioni umane. Consapevoli che la presenza della poesia sui social network non verrà inficiata dalla nostra inattività, rivendichiamo come sempre uno spazio neutro all'interno del quale poter continuare a riflettere e agire. Ci ritroviamo in strada." (MEP, "Il Movimento")

[18] L'azione è "politica perché si tratta comunque di un'invasione, dello spazio pubblico, sociale perché crea un legame fra le persone, un punto di incontro, io la vedo in questo senso. È un'appropriazione dello spazio pubblico, siamo bombardati da tutto un a poesia fa piacere. Il tempo che uno impiega nel leggere spazzatura lo impiega nel leggere qualcosa di bello." (G.162)

photography. It can also imply intermedial reference as viewed in the many examples of speaking monuments (cf. figures 2 and 3).

This article demonstrates that when intermediality is applied to public space, such as streets, the city re-mediates the piece of art by adding a further meaning to the composition. In the case of PDT and MEP's poetic assaults, the intermedial relationship established with the city implies a political function. Indeed, for both collectives the poetic action is also a political one, as is made clear in their manifestos. Historically the manifesto is both a political and literary genre. In this case the writing of a manifesto on poetic assault clearly underlines the political intent spread by this peculiar kind of intermedial poetry which incorporates the city in the poetic creation and fruition. The political function can be interpreted directly by the intermedial nature of poetic assault; however, manifestos are tangible evidences of this political engagement that represents an innovation in the perception of intermedial poetry.

It is worth considering how the intermediality typical of an urban artistic expression such as poetic assault engages in a complex relationship with artistic support and media modifying the artwork's perception. The city is part of the composition itself and, in this case, the occupation of public space becomes at the same an artistic expression and fulfils a political function. To conclude, the intermedial analysis of an unconventional genre such as poetic assault not only casts light on a new and rich artistic dimension, but it breaks new ground in the perception of urban art and the field of intermedial studies.

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