Chapter 7

Camilla Watson photography and its impact in the social production of public space in a neighbourhood (Mouraria) in the inner city of Lisbon

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Abstract

This research analyses the extent to which the photographic work of Camilla Watson has affected the social production of space in a district of the historical part of Lisbon. This particular public-art-in-place exhibits the elderly residents through pictures displayed in the neighbourhood’s public spaces. In a context of transformations that the territory is undergoing, the analysis aims to understand how far it contributes to change the way the area is socially produced in terms of spatial practice, representational space and representation of space. Two kinds of experiences were considered; that of the resident and the visitor, meaning two groups that perceive, conceive and live the place in very different ways. Based on the information from outside the neighbourhood as well as from residents involved in the project, the intention is to capture two different constructed realities and to compare the way the work is understood and felt in those contexts.

For the residents the artistic work has been accepted, approved and appropriated because it became part of their daily routine environment. From an external point of view, the analysed art project binds the old quarter with the new one. By being part of the new creative scene it links the new visitors with the longstanding residents, helping to redefine the way locals are perceived and how the area is experienced.

Keywords: space production, experience, public-art-in-place

1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the eventual impact of art in the social production of space, considering as a case study Camilla Watson’s photographs in Mouraria. It is public artwork developed with the community in an inner city neighbourhood of Lisbon.

Our hypothesis, considering this case study, is that the cultural production of urban space, intentionally or not, contributes to the transformation of the urban environment which affects how it is experienced and ultimately generates new practices.

In this sense the research question, based on Lefebvre’s theory, addresses how far Camilla Watson’s photography contributes to the production of space. Under this analysis it is important to understand the external perception of the territory, considering in what way this work became an intrinsic element of it, and to acknowledge the local population’s perception of being part of this project. The research starts with a brief description of Mouraria and the socio-spatial changes that have been taken place, followed by a description of the photographic interventions. Theoretically, three interrelated concepts were considered that frame the analysis: public art under the context of the social production of space and the way it is experienced.

The applied methodology aims to characterize and assess the potential contribution of this artistic intervention on the different perceptions of space. An analysis of the way this artistic project is referred to on the internet intends to capture the representation of the work. In parallel two different interactions to the place are analysed, that of the people who live and use this area on a daily basis and the visitor’s experience.
2. Mouraria in a Context of Socio-Spatial Transformation

The area that is being studied is a neighbourhood on a downhill slope with narrow and labyrinthine streets that has about 5,800 inhabitants. The territory received people from rural areas that came to Lisbon to work. They contributed to the development of a particular urban popular culture (Costa, 1999) that can be identified in the inner city neighbourhoods in Lisbon marked by practices like Fado music, the festivities to celebrate the day of the municipality, rivalry among different historic neighbourhoods, the religious procession, its narrow morphological layout, the traditional trade and the local organizations. These are all elements that nurture a strong connection between the locals.

Especially in the last decades, the territory has been receiving an immigrant population that has introduced a multicultural atmosphere that identifies this area in particular with people from south Asia and China who have opened stores and warehouses, restaurants, grocery shops and supermarkets. Currently the area is becoming attractive for new residents, including students and young people with high qualifications and artists, namely (European) foreigners, who are attracted to this environment in the historical part of the city.

Since 2011 a transformation process has been initiated, largely triggered by the municipality in financial and strategic terms. A multi-targeted program is being implemented because the territory was identified as a run-down area, affected by the deterioration of the public realm and buildings, as well as social problems that had to be addressed including many elderly residents, a local population with low qualifications and high unemployment, prostitution, as well as drug trafficking and consumption.

Fado, a music genre, developed during the nineteenth century in the popular neighbourhoods of Lisbon, is invariably part of Mouraria and as a central element of local identity, it was considered an important lever in the promotion of the territory.

Mouraria is being used to market the image of a multi-cultural, open and tolerant cosmopolitan city. Several events are being held such as the Festival for Everyone (Festival Todos) initiative - Walk of the Cultures, which has taken place every year since 2009 and, as stated by the city council, aims to define Lisbon as a city committed to the dialogue between cultures, between religions and between people of diverse backgrounds and generations. According to the municipality it has contributed to the destruction of territorial ghettos associated with immigration, opening up the city. (http://festivaltodos.com/intro/home).
Apart from the key actors undertaking socio-cultural interventions like local charities, numerous players were attracted to the territory due to a sudden recognition of its potential. An area that was previously not recommended to walk through is now becoming trendy and causing a ripple effect in the surrounding area. These newcomers are creating new spaces for leisure and consumption attracting new residents and visitors as well as devolving a new sense of security to the territory. There is an increasing presence of guided walks and other tourists that wander around in the area.

3. The Empirical Object - A tribute to the People of Mouraria

Camilla Watson settled in Mouraria by chance in 2007. On her way to São Tomé e Príncipe the photographer made a stop in Lisbon. She became enchanted with the area where she bought an apartment and has her workplace. She began to establish a relationship with her neighbours who passed by her studio, which is always open. In 2009 she had the idea of putting pictures on the street’s walls, either directly or on wood.

One of the projects, financed by the multicultural Festival Todos is called Tribute: a way of thanking the hospitality received since moving to Portugal and honouring her neighbours. Based on the same technique, the photographer also did two other projects. One was called Inside Out and does not exist anymore. The aim was to document the renovation of a building as well as to photograph the people in the area. The other project was about Fado done in 2013, both were commissioned by the city council.

According to the artist the intention of all these works, apart from its aesthetic concern, is the collaboration with the local community. It was a cooperative process in which those involved accepted to be part of it and chose the images that went on the walls. In the case of the Fado project the people in the borough, the families that have been there for generations, all have some link with Fado. About eight of the people in the exhibition have already died so the photographer worked with the relatives to find old images. The twenty-six exhibited musicians and singers have some link to Mouraria and in this sense it is a project about the community, its history and its music. Watson’s photographic work Tribute consists of prints of elderly people from the community displayed on the rough textured walls, reflecting the people that have themselves been marked by their tough lives. The aesthetic quality of time is reflected in her work, merging real people and real buildings, reinforcing the image of its unity and dependency.
This photographic work is an example of art created and generated in and for the public realm of Mouraria. Her material is the ordinary people and buildings; the images capture an imprisoned reality of the daily lives of its residents enhancing perceptions and meanings of this particular neighbourhood.

There is a continuity between the experience of the work of art and the everyday lives of the residents. It gives an introduction to the neighbourhood, an unexpected insider’s perspective for the visitor of the community’s atmosphere, revealing the lives of the local residents and getting closer to them. The photographer states that the feedback has been very positive:

They really like it and the people on the walls they loved it, they wanted to be on the walls so it’s a success in terms of a collaboration (…) Their response would be I was born here, I lived here, and all my family is here so I think it gives a sense of territory which I think it is really good when so much is changing. We have a lot of new people moving, it gives them a sense of their history. These people are the ones who made the area what it is. (…) some people think it is negative but interestingly not the people who have been here a long-time, they [the newcomers] don’t like the tourists that come and see the pictures (…) There are three or four people that I know who complain about tourists all the time but it is not the people who have been here for generations (…) I think they mind [the longstanding residents] when the prices go up, that’s the down side, there is no control over the rents, that’s the only down side I think. That’s how cities change unfortunately.

People are celebrated on the old walls of the neighbourhood that are comprised of successive sediments of centuries of the city of Lisbon, printing onto them an additional memory. The work has a humanizing character in a territory that has been successively forgotten and neglected. It depicts neighbours who seem to have been caught up in their daily lives in ordinary clothes without make-up or staged scenarios. Ordinary people become part of the urban fabric establishing a connection between the photographed and the walls.

Interestingly nobody tried to destroy or vandalize the work. Once someone wrote on a picture and then somebody from the area cleaned it and it all came off.

Although commissioned for a particular event, Watson considers Tribute to be a hobby and the project as being part of her community. For the photographer this is an ongoing project. The artwork will stay alive so long as people keep requesting new photographs to be displayed.

But it is also an ephemeral project. In a context of change, in which many transformations have been occurring in the area, this could seem like a form of eternalizing the longstanding residents and to preserve the past, but as stated by the photographer the pictures only have a limited durability and then they will fade.

4. Three Main interrelated Concepts

4.1 Public-Art-In-Place

Public art is considered to be art that takes place outside conventional spaces like museums and galleries, put in the physical public domain intended to be accessible to everyone and in this sense it has to consider the relation between the artistic object and the public context (Miles, 1997, p. 1; Finkelpearl, 2001, p. 5; Januchta-Szostak, 2010, p. 80). It invariably affects the urban space, individualizing it, building a new identity of place and contributing to the creation of spaces (Sharp, Pollock & Paddison, 2005, p. 1004; Januchta-Szostak, 2010, pp. 81-82). The latter refers to the way that the unique form of artworks makes them stand out from the surroundings. Art provides spatial tags helping with orientation and navigation and also as anchor-points on mental maps of the inhabitants and tourists.

The act of placing art in a certain space tends to give meaning to the object and the space itself. For Remesar (2005, p. 134), there is a clear distinction between spaces for art and public art in place with the latter, in its global sense, being a process with three phases: recreation, approval and appropriation by the user of the place.
Public art works as a symbol, generating and enhancing cognitive and/or abstract meanings of space. In addition to an aesthetic perspective, public art has an urban component that establishes a reciprocal relationship with the surrounding socio-spatial context. It occurs between two poles in view of public space: on the one hand it is art regarded as a public object (a subject of beautification detached from the environment), on the other it is art within the city (art as reciprocally connected to its surrounding dynamics).

Currently, urban artistic interventions are a recurrent instrument of territorial requalification. By redefining the urban environment, it triggers or emphasizes the social transformation of urban spaces. Miles (1997, p. 2) refers to its significance in the context of the convivial city and related strategies of place making and the redefinition of public space. Sharp, Pollock & Paddison (2005, p. 1004); Hall and Roberson (2001, p. 5, 10) critique the use of public art in urban regeneration and question the extent to which they really help communities in run-down inner city areas.

In the present case study, the focus is on the relationship between public art and the place making, particularly in the context of physical up-grading of a territory and how far it has contributed to the way the territory is characterised.

4.2 The production of Space

The social production of space, is a socially produced reality in the context of a particular society. Its spatial production, according to Henri Lefebvre (1991 [1974], pp. 33, 38, 39) arises from the interconnection of three processes:

- **Spatial practice**, meaning the material and social dimension of an activity. Closely associated with the perceived space;
- **Representations of space**, as the dimension of spatial conception and description, connecting perception and lived space, becoming an organizing factor or framework with impact on spatial practice;
- **Representational space**, concerns the meanings and the relationships established with the lived space. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects.

In this article we intend to approach the neighbourhood and the experience of the public realm where the intervention stands through the re-appropriation of these processes, analysing it as a social production process. The production of space exists as a complex and multidimensional reality. So, in the same way Lefebvre addresses three moments of social space with a phenomenological character centred in the body’s experience: the perceived, the conceived and the lived. The three dimensions of the production of space are auto-productive of the individual and society (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974], p. 40).

4.3 The Experience

Access to the artistic intervention is not restricted to a specific materiality but to a reality felt and thought as an experience. Quoting Yi-Fu Tang (2007 [1977], p. 8) “experience is a cover-all term for the various modes through which a person knows and constructs a reality”.

This study concerns two types of experience, the resident or quotidien experience and the visitor experience. They represent two distinct ways of constructing realities and the production of space. As Rapoport (1990 [1982], p. 15) states, the activity’s components or the details of the activity (proper way of doing it, associated activities and meaning), are determining factors when sharing the perceived attributes and meanings associated to them. The daily experience of residents has a prevailing functional aim, which results in them having a more operational perception of place (Appleyardd, 1973, p. 109). This condition is dominated by a body-memory and the cognitive abstraction from the environment granted by the repetition of routines. There is a physical and emotional stability, a reliable connection with the environment, which allows a state of obliviousness (Seamon, 1979, pp. 103-105). The visitor’s experience is focused around leisure activities and is therefore dominated by a responsive and inferential perception of place. The visitor gazes the public realm with an open and active attitude, watching it and comparing it with their expectations (Appleyardd, 1973, p. 109). The perceptive attitude of watching is an active external attention (Seamon, 1979, pp. 103-105).
Another important distinction between the quotidian and leisurely experience of the environment is that, as Yi-Fu Tang (1990 [1974]:64-65) states, the visitors evaluation, the view from the outsider, is essentially aesthetic. The outsider judges by appearance, by some formal canon of beauty. Although superficial, it is a fresh view often able to perceive merits and defects in an environment that are no longer visible to the resident.

5. The Method

This chapter presents the methodology used to determine how far the cultural production of urban space, deliberately or not, contributes to the transformation of the urban environment. Based on the premise sustained by the theoretical approach, it is considered that the experience of the public realm is determined not only by the socio-spatial dimension and the individual characteristics of the walker, but also by the specificities of the experience.

To take into account external references, different online reports (from the national and international press, blogs, city guides) were considered as they provide a huge amount of current and up to date information. The intention was to capture the symbolic representations projected in the last few years about the territory and the particular photography projects, through an exploratory research and content analysis. This sought to answer the following questions: how often are the pictures referred to? What is transmitted about these projects and by whom?

Visitors were questioned about characteristics of the neighbourhood in the past, how it has changed, as well as the aspects that have persisted. Within this framework the respondents were also asked how the artist’s work is perceived. Socio-demographic information like the age, gender, nationality, profession and level of education of the interviewees was also taken into account.

Some of the photographed were interviewed in order to understand how they dealt with the process of being exposed and becoming, materially speaking, part of the neighbourhood buildings. The aim was to understand how their lived experience of the streets had changed. In this context the questions addressed whether they photographic portraits were recognized by their neighbours and the visitors and how they felt about it. Locals were also asked about what has changed and what has stayed the same in the area.

6. Data Analysis

6.1 Camilla’s Work on the Web

Online travel articles from newspapers and magazines, travel sites and personal blogs, offer an enormous amount of insight about Mouraria and Camilla Watson’s work. The analysis of this online material reflects the evolution of a territory in transformation, from a run-down area to an area increasingly themed around leisure and travel. Her work is an example of someone who breaks the stigma that still affects this historic neighbourhood of Lisbon, claims a website in 2011. (https://vimeo.com/23090337).

“Walks in the inside” written by an inhabitant of Lisbon, reveals the use of the street as a stage by making the photographic production an outdoor installation, in a natural environment. The relation with the local community is enhanced. It explains that during the work, the photographer contacts and links with the inhabitants, rebounding the “local soul”: “Mouraria with open arms”. The art is reincarnated in the urban landscape. The artist’s technique is also exposed: the photographs are developed in a prefabricated atelier, a darkroom with black plastic using a handmade process (http://myguide.iol.pt/profiles/blogs/passeios-ca-dentro-camilla).

Also in 2011 the Guardian writes about street art in Lisbon saying that “Her exhibits have proved popular with locals and visitors, and will remain in place indefinitely, funding permitting”(http://www.theguardian.com/travel/2011/ jan/29/graffiti-street-art-lisbon-portugal).
Some online accounts of her work refer to the fact that it immortalizes local inhabitants and preserves local identities. A blog in 2012 talks about “the historic, sleepy district of Mouraria (...) it’s rare to find older ordinary folk given the limelight in works of art. I hope that these pieces will leave the legacy they intended to create and that they will be preserved and treasured by the community and tourists alike”. (http://www.foodandthefabulous.com/recipes/cheddar-cheese-parsley-beer-bread-exploring-the-birthplace-of-Fado-mouraria/#sthash.e0DF21jm.dpuf).

In the following years Mouraria has increasingly become a reference in the context of the city of Lisbon. So have Camilla Watson’s pictures, in particular the work with the elderly residents. In a French article from 2013 “Lisbonne, ça bouge, mais où?” this street art was called urban poetry (http://www.lxfactory.com/ficheiros/noticias/imprensa_pdf_5148b424d3bd6.pdf).

An article from 2013 recognizes the duality of Mouraria where “Some of the white walls were peeling while others had fresh paint”. Beyond the interpretation of the pictures, interviews with the photographer were also undertaken where she gives her own understanding of the connection between the elderly and the walls and the wish to break the barriers of a gallery: “Here, everyone’s a part of it. Everyone appreciates it because it’s outdoors”. In her opinion the visitors like it very much because the expression in the photos is between the subjects and her, and in this sense it is a form of getting closer to the community (http://matadornetwork.com/notebook/lisbons-walls-an-interview-with-photographer-camilla-watson/). Considering how Watson approached the people that were photographed, she says that the locals were open to being photographed. When the idea of putting the pictures on the walls came up, the first person that was asked was someone whom everyone liked. Using liquid emulsion she tried to print images directly onto the walls which failed completely, so she decided to print on wood and kept on developing her technique. (http://www.tasteoflisboa.com/eng/blog/facebook/article/72#.VqDNNvmLRdg).

In 2015 most of the buildings in the square where she has her studio were regenerated and tourism became a constant presence. A visitor that stayed there in an apartment wrote: “Each building on the street has a portrait of the elderly residents who live there, a series called ‘A Tribute to Mouraria’ by the photographer Camilla Watson. And even though there are a lot of tourists, and every now and again a walking tour goes through our square, there’s a sense of community and a laid-back way of life here that’s so appealing” (http://peekingduck.co/welcome-to-mouraria-lisbon/).

6.2 The Visitors

People who had recently been in Mouraria, that were living in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, were asked to answer a questionnaire. Many said that although they live in Lisbon, they had never visited the area or only did so when they were very young.

We received 22 questionnaires of people that visited Mouraria recently, 14 women and 9 men. The ages were within 50-34 years old. All of them have at least a college degree.

In terms of nationality, the majority are Portuguese and four were foreigners. When asked about the first trip to the neighbourhood the answers were very diverse, and as for the last time they visited, everybody answered 2015 or even 2016.

As mentioned by most of our visitors, Mouraria was seen as a closed, ‘no-go’ area; a kind of ghetto, an inaccessible location (narrow streets and no parking facilities with very bad access), unknown, and intriguing; not visitor friendly and definitely not a touristic place. The image they have does not come from a personal experience but from a shared public image of this territory.

The visitors’ answers about what the neighbourhood was like in the past, were dominantly descriptions of its social-cultural and economic character. Three related images of the neighbourhood stand out:

- The run-down Mouraria, related to drug trafficking and consumption as well as prostitution; old and poor residents living in dilapidated buildings as well as dirty and dark streets.

- The authentic Mouraria, the old neighbourhood, the cradle of Fado, with genuine Lisbon residents. A non-touristic area with local shops and small restaurants.
The multicultural Mouraria, with its migrants mainly from Africa and Asia, living in this affordable part of the city. When asked about the present characteristics of this neighbourhood, the Mouraria that was described was the one currently experienced and perceived. Nevertheless, this perception has probably been influenced by the new users and the media. An evolutionary process is evident where the three images persist but with a different importance:

- The authentic Mouraria, the neighbourhood of the old residents and strong community relations, is now accessible and valued as the main characteristic of the area. The perceived atmosphere of the old traditional neighbourhood, the typical small restaurants (tascas) and the Fado are all highlighted. The old buildings now became the reflection of the authenticity of the neighbourhood, not yet affected by the tourist industry and main commercial brands.

- The multicultural Mouraria stands out now as a tolerant ambience and culturally rich with new restaurants and events associated to the different communities.

- The run-down Mouraria that still exists and is actually reinterpreted. Although problems with crime are still identified by the local population, it does not seem to have a big impact on the visitors not only because it is probably less visible in the areas where the visitors move, but also because their attitude enhances the positive features.

Mouraria, as it is revealed to the outside, is undergoing a process of change: as underlined by the visitors, new people come because it is cheap, there is a new vitality, a new kind of public and tourists, there are more social and cultural events like dinners, concerts, open air cinema, exhibitions and commodities. Restaurants and cafes of a higher quality and price range are now on offer. Those interviewed also mentioned the fact that now there was more diversity and more young people. It became safer both by day and night, which brought more people in from outside. It is becoming a trendy area where people go for leisure.

When the visitors were asked what they thought about the photographs, some did not pay much attention, did not notice, or had no opinion, either because they usually go by night or the photos do not represent a reference for them. Most respondents were quite positive and clear about the purpose of this art intervention and three main characteristics were mentioned:

1. The opinions enhanced the social meaning of exhibiting residents, with an important significance for residents and visitors. According to the statements, this is a form of presenting the neighbourhood from within, honouring the longstanding residents, showing that they matter and making them feel proud of their history and thus preserving as much as possible their authenticity by strengthening and increasing their identity. As underlined by this statement “I Like them because they show us the neighbourhood from within, the people that really live there; and it’s good for those people, to see that they matter and that each neighbourhood is made of the people that live there, they are the most important thing, whoever they are, age, gender...”. Another testimony says “It is important for residents and for visitors. Actually when we were there some residents proudly showed us the photos. Clearly it is strengthening and increasing their identity.”

2. Respondents frequently mentioned the way the work contributed to the perception of public place, for instance enjoyment (lively, stimulating, and interesting) as well as pleasantness (attractive, beautiful, pleasant, and inviting) were enhanced. Interestingly, it was felt that the work transmits a sense of intimacy and awakens a curiosity to find more photographs.

3. When asked if they felt that this art was an anchor-point for Mouraria, although not everybody agreed, the ones who gave a positive answer made not only a spatial reference but also a temporal one. The photos were seen as a spatial reference in the area, becoming part of the street and of the neighbourhood landscape. An interviewee said that this work represents something which makes Mouraria stand out from other neighbourhoods. For the passer-by it feels like entering a community with familiar faces, which can be reassuring. In view of the temporal dimension it was pointed out that, “they act like a bridge between knew and old, acting as a way of communication between different cultures and between different generations.” It is interesting that the ephemeral character of this work is not perceived or is often forgotten by the observer who refers to this work as a form of suspending a certain time on the walls, “a legacy to be preserved and treasured”, “it crystallizes moments in time that soon will disappear, taking into account the age of the photographed” and that “they will always be a historical and cultural reference”.

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6.3 The Residents

Five residents were interviewed, four residents that participated in the artistic work and finally someone, that approached us. She was pleased to provide information about the photographer, the people who were photographed and about the neighbourhood. When asked if she was represented on the walls, the old lady stated that she was invited to participate but did not want to. Although living there for a long time, she likes to keep a certain distance. As she explains, “I do not like to spend my time in the streets and in the cafés, chattering about each other, and exposing my life.” The other four interviewees all have in common the fact they have worked in local commerce (tavern, shoemaker, drugstore and restaurant).

When questioned about the evolution of Mouraria in recent years, it is interesting to note that although some start by saying that everything has changed and one states it all remains the same, by the end there is an overall concordance in their points of view.

The character of the old quarter, the human relations and the lack of parking areas are aspects that according to these longstanding residents remain. Although there have been some improvements, the lack of security and continuing problems associated with drug trafficking were also referred to.

According to the interviewees, the prevailing feature of the new neighbourhood is the existence of a temporary population. Bearing in mind that the respondents work in local trade, tourism is generally seen as positive, but they think that the proliferation of apartments for temporary use by tourists may affect the community. Traditional commerce has been substituted by restaurants as well as other types of outlets or is being run by immigrant communities that are present in the area. Another mentioned aspect was the rise of rents.

From these interviews, and taking into account the fact that all the contacted people were elderly with a long-standing relationship with the neighbourhood, it is interesting to note that when talking about the past, different periods are referred to. This can be seen in the following quotation from a resident that has lived in Mouraria for forty years and has worked there for seventeen:

Practically everything has changed. There was the traditional trade, most of these houses closed. A few years ago it had a lot of life, then it died, everyone was stuck in their homes. Now we have customers who are here until midnight, the styles are different than before. I hope there will be no bars, it is a pity if that comes to this area with everything it brings – here there is still a little bit of security - I don’t mind more trade, more restaurants...

When asked about the photographic intervention they all consider to be positive, highlighting its importance for the people visiting the neighbourhood. As time goes by the inhabitants seem to have got used to the pictures on the walls. The two men interviewed stated that to be exhibited had no great significance for them, and according to one of them it is something that only people from outside the neighbourhood value. The female residents interviewed appeared, in a rather discreet way, to be pleased about being part of the photographic work. One admitted that the suggestion of putting an image of her on the wall came from herself: “I do not like to see my photos but I found the idea of having our photograph on the wall funny. I really like seeing the dispersed photographs, I think it’s nice... Some of the people have passed away…”

One of the interviewees stated that she likes to show the photographic work to people, in particular her picture to family or friends who visit her. She also stated that she likes the photos, the interest that the tourists show and the fact of being recognised by them.

Given that over time the pictures will disappear, this is viewed with pity but accepted as normal. When asked if it would bother her if the photographs would no longer exist, one of the interviewees stated, in a pragmatic way, that nothing lasts forever. Focusing on the importance to the character of the street, another resident said that it would be a shame to let the photos “die” because they give a certain interest to the streets, something that awakens the attention to the people passing by.
7. Discussion: Does Watson's Work have an Impact on the Production of Space?

The present analysis of an artwork in the public realm happens in a context where the place which hosts the projects, the neighbourhood of Mouraria, is undergoing socio-spatial transformations. The city itself is going through profound changes, becoming fashionable and increasingly noticed in the international context as a tourist destination, enhancing its traditional and historical character but at the same time the creative and trendy scene. In this context old neighbourhoods have continued to gain prominence as territories for consumption where the whole landscape is to be gazed upon and where visitors search for the “picturesque”, the “authentic” and the “typical”.

The same space is practiced in different spatial and social realities that often overlap but do not coincide. The Mouraria practiced by the residents is predominantly during the daytime routines rooted within the space and the social surroundings. The Mouraria practiced by the visitor is shallower but fresher and frequently occurs by night. The way the intervention of Camilla Watson affects the experience of space in terms of how it is perceived, conceived and lived is connected above all with the relationship that is established with the neighbourhood, for some it takes place within the routine spaces of their daily lives, for others in their places of leisure.

7.1 The visitor's Experience

The artistic intervention, by its particular characteristics and by the way it merges with the space, interferes with the visitor’s *representational* dimension of space. For the visitor they gain visibility, by the unusual act of having pictures exposed outdoors or by the disclosure given to this work. Whether for its artistic or social interest, this photographic work undeniably participates in the new image of the neighbourhood.

The spatial concentration of the intervention within a particular part of Mouraria overlaps with one of the zones with more restaurants and new outlets (art galleries, ceramic shop, vintage shop), regenerated houses and renewed public spaces, defining a welcoming and safe part of the neighbourhood.

The images released by the media combined with leisure experiences of space, confirm the quarter as more open, authentic, multicultural and creative. The art participates in the space cohesion, linking the area within the neighbourhood and in the identification of the genuine but secure space.

7.2 The Resident's Experience

The artistic intervention in this study appears to be clearly integrated in a particular setting, which more than hosting this particular art project, is the element of its production. As we were able to capture from the interviewed residents, it does not seem to affect the way they perceive and practice space in their daily lives.

It is interesting that before the presence of people from the outside, the images gain value as an element of pride, representing a narrative about the neighbourhood, affecting the meaning given to that space (representational space) and the way the space is described (representation of space).

The photographs apparently end up having a similar function to family portrait in a living room of a home, exposing moments with visitors, giving clues about the identity of those who live there and also those who have left.

7.3 Conclusion

Watson's photographs seem to be inevitably part of the way the neighbourhood is presently experienced, since her work is seen as something which makes Mouraria stand out. The work is an intrinsic element of the past, by exposing the longstanding residents, creating an empathy with this community, and the new representation associated with a trendy scene. Her work, particularly the one dedicated to the elderly, became invariably a reference point in the area and is often referred to in the touristic circuit as one of the main points of interest in the territory.
This artwork is experienced by visitors in an emotional way, firstly by breaking the image of a run-down area, and secondly by creating a level of proximity with the older residents. In this way it fulfils its imaginary of being closely connected to the local identity of Mouraria.

Over the course of this neighbourhood’s transformation, the artistic intervention of Camilla Watson participates in the different dimensions of the production of space by being part of how this continuous process of neighbourhood change is experienced. In this way it has generated new narratives, creating images that validate and ultimately consolidate the social representation of space.

References


