

Andrea Baldini. *A Philosophy Guide to Street Art and the Law.* Brill 2018. 106 pp. \$84.00 USD (Paperback ISBN 9789004394032).

Andrea Baldini's *A Philosophy Guide to Street Art and the Law* is a book-length analysis of the relation between street art and the law. We can distinguish two main threads in the book's investigation of this relation: first, its impact on the definition of street art; and second, the role that the law should play in the protection of street art and artists.

Baldini's view is that street art is an aesthetic-political practice, aimed at challenging the 'corporate regime of visibility,' that is, the commodification of public spaces (7). Legally sanctioned uses of public spaces sustain this regime: visibility on the street can be purchased in the form of billboards; spontaneous recreational activities are increasingly subject to restrictions; public spaces are progressively being reduced to physical facilitators for financial transactions. Street artists reclaim public spaces by challenging these implicit or explicit norms.

Given this analysis of street art's main purpose, one might think that Baldini ought to consider illegality to be necessary for a work to count as street art. He actually does not, and he offers an interesting argument in support of this position. If illegality were to be considered essential to street art, then a court of law could turn an artwork into a non-artwork, or vice-versa, just by deeming the relevant work legal or illegal. This, Baldini plausibly contends, is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the view (24).

Illegality is also insufficient for something to count as street art, as illegal practices carried out in public spaces could have purposes that are quite clearly at odds with that of challenging the corporate regime of visibility—from the sale of counterfeit goods or illegal advertisement.

Baldini subsequently addresses the relation between street art and vandalism. His view is that vandalism, much like illegality more generally, may be used as a tool to generate subversiveness. Therefore, while vandalism is not necessary to street art, sometimes street art is art *because it is vandalism*.

As mentioned above, the relation between street art and the law also animates the book's other main theme, namely the question of how legal strategies should be employed in order to protect street art and artists, with particular reference to the debate over copyright protection. The question here is a normative one: rather than discussing whether existing copyright law protects street art and artists, Baldini is interested in determining whether and how it should do so. (64)

In considering these issues, Baldini's concern is that copyright may put street art's subversive nature at risk (65). It follows from his answer to the definitional question that any form of legal protection that challenges street art's subversiveness would also threaten its main goal. More generally, Baldini argues that copyright should not be considered a gold standard of cultural value and recognition. In assessing the opportunity of its extension to street art, one has to carefully evaluate the consequences of this move. Baldini questions arguments relying on overly optimistic views of such consequences.

He first criticizes the creativity argument, according to which copyright protection fosters creativity, in that recognition for one's work may constitute a source of personal motivation. According to Baldini, the history and practice of street art belies this claim. In fact, the emergence and rapid flourishing of street art occurred in the absence of any sort of legal protection, and was in fact met by open hostility (66-67).

Baldini then goes on to discuss two arguments in favour of copyright protection, both due to Enrico Bonadio. According to the profit argument, copyright could help artists generate revenue from