

*GRAFFITI: AN ACT OF RECLAMATION IN  
ROME*

*RAQUEL KRANIAK  
MAY, 2025*





## *INTRODUCTION*

While Rome is a city rich with historical sights and acts of preservation, graffiti overflows more surfaces than not. The painted markings resist tourist driven controlled spaces that previously were public amenities. The many artistic styles and phrases painted on the city walls bring representation to those who can no longer afford life in apartments close to the city's center. Graffiti in Rome is an act of reclamation and infusion of character throughout the collaged city.

Through short film clips, I captured the diverse style and complex symbolism of graffiti throughout Rome. These clips also contrast preserved historical signs and tags of graffiti artists in the city.

As an artist myself, I recognize the beauty and conversation reflected in the city walls

layered with graffiti. I aimed to amplify the artists who call out the loss of public space for people living Rome. It was once a city centered on a culture of community. As portrayed in Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1962 "Mamma Roma," people came together in city markets, churches, and packed neighborhoods, filling the city with life. The now privatized spaces and heavily monitored streets driven by consumerism limit this culture.

This concept expands into the city's center, where once social, public spaces have been privatized into ticket-only destinations due to increased tourism. For example, the Spanish Steps in the city's center were once a public space for people to sit and rest on their passage throughout the streets of Rome. Now the steps are closed off and a ticket is required to enter the popular tourist destination. Steps that

fostered togetherness in Rome now merely serve as a backdrop to a post on social media.

The graffiti captured outside the outskirts of the city reflects the loss of expression and color of life in the city's center. To some, the markings may seem ugly and damaging to historical buildings, but these markings are an act of resilience that has existed in Rome for centuries.

Exploring the city's aqueducts and underground frescoes, I captured symbolic art that dates back to the 6th century. Artistic expression in Rome is portrayed in many forms, styles, and generations throughout the city, and it continues to reflect the voice of the people of Rome, reclaiming the city from consumerism.







*\_Pushed outside the walls,  
\_I walk.  
\_Stone trees shut their eyes,*



*\_or become overgrown by scaffolding,  
\_so constant it can't resist my paint;*



A mark that blurs the city veins,  
and the clamor of those who prefer private transport.



*My voice will be heard,*



*\_louder than the street signs,  
\_and vessels in which we once belonged.*





*\_Send our message.*



*\_Develop a new sacrality,*





in each mark we paint.



*\_An ongoing battle of reclamation,*

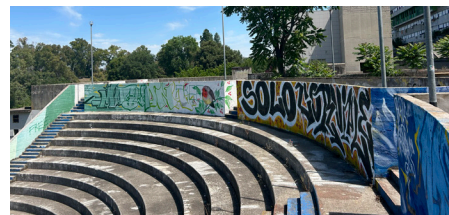




*\_New marks unite with the old.*

*\_in the ransacked spaces we called our homes.*





*\_Symbolic to each district outside the city center,*





*the paint infiltrates the spaces of a new generation*



*\_The past is almost forgotten, brushed by as we become consumed in our day to day.*



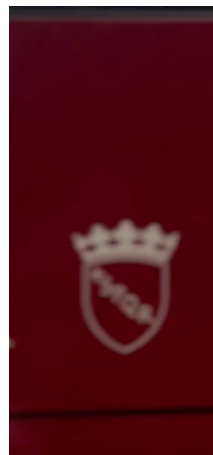
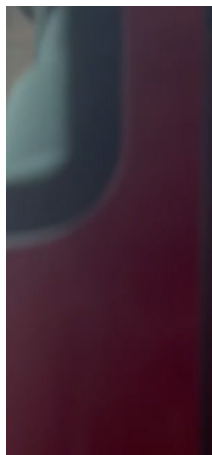


*\_We must be reminded of Rome's underground paintings that are the base of our resilience.*

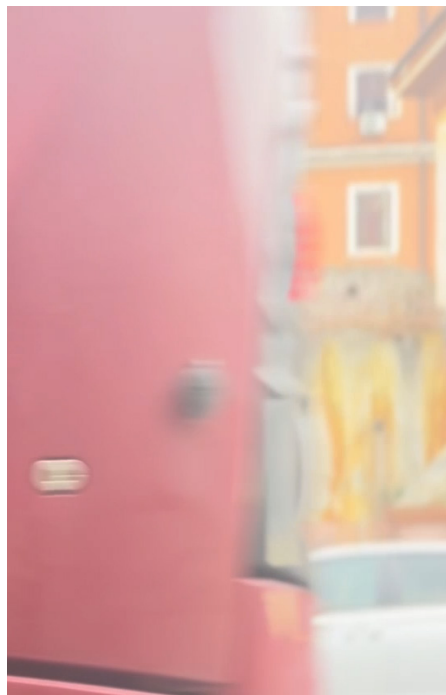
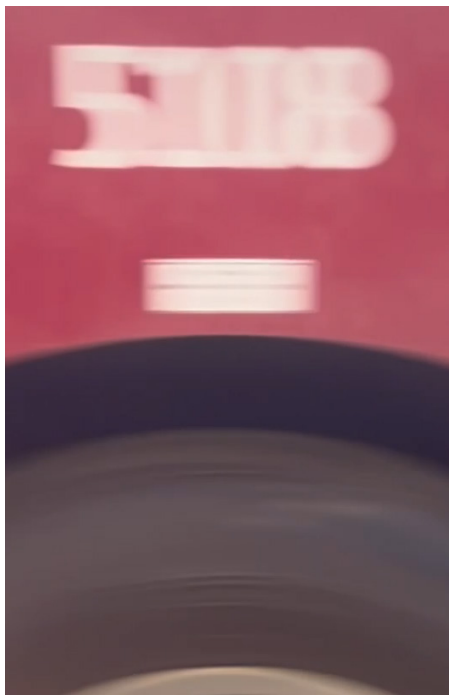


*And here I now live,  
a collage of growth, ruin,  
and color.*





*\_Watched,  
\_hit,  
\_collapse.*



*\_I lay still.  
\_A quick wind revives me,*



*\_and the light shines again.*



*I am what is left of the city.*

*Pushed outside the walls,  
I walk.*

*Stone trees shut their eyes,  
or become overgrown by scaffolding,  
so constant it can't resist my paint;  
A mark that blurs the city veins,  
and the clamor of those who prefer private transport.*

*My voice will be heard,  
louder than the street signs,  
and vessels in which we once belonged.*

*Send our message.  
Develop a new sacrality,  
in each mark we paint.*

*An ongoing battle of reclamation,  
in the ransacked spaces we called our homes*

*New marks unite with the old.  
Symbolic to each district outside the city center,  
the paint infiltrates the spaces of a new generation*

*The past is almost forgotten,  
brushed by as we become consumed in our day to day.  
We must be reminded of Rome's underground paintings  
that are the base of our resilience.*

*And here I now live,  
a collage of growth, ruin,  
and color.*

*Watched,  
hit,  
collapse.*

*I lay still.  
A quick wind revives me,  
and the light shines again.*

*I am what is left of the city.*

