

Original Research Article

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The need to use partition walls in the urban wall painting

Abstract

Problem definition: Wall painting as an ancient media can play an essential role in the improvement and purposefulness of the urban space by taking the advantage of the technology growth as well as the expressive capabilities of new materials. Meanwhile, the development of creative methods in designing the partition walls as a basis for the harmonious murals with the environment and the governing architecture, requires conducting a comprehensive study on the necessity of using these structures in the urban wall paintings as a visual interface (mural) between the body of the city and the citizens. Given this necessity, the urban partition walls and how to implement them in the urban space are the main subjects of the present research.

Objective: The present study aims to recognize the urban partition wall painting in order to develop these spaces in the urban environment.

Research Method: This research is a qualitative and practical one in terms of the purpose, which is presented in a descriptive-analytical manner with reference to the library resources and images, some of which have been prepared based on the field survey.

Results: The urban partition wall supposed to be a wall being independent of the architecture and environment while it is dependent on it, qualitatively. The history of the walls originated from the ancient and indigenous climates and cultures of different regions, such as the primitive life of tribes and even current nomads.. The need for these walls in today's life comes from the advancement of technology and industry in the urban life.

Keywords: City, Urban art, Wall painting, Partition wall

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Introduction

Mural, as an ancient media, has a direct connection with the city and its citizens in many cases. Since a mural in the urban environment today must interact with the human of its time, it certainly requires the use of technology as well as the expressive capabilities of novel materials. The walls which form a large part of the city's body, have a significant relationship with the murals, body of the city and citizens. Today, it seems that restrictions on the selection of architecture-dependent walls in order to move towards the activation of urban environments and murals, is an obstacle that requires more careful consideration by the relevant authorities and artists. Since the change in the architectural structure of cities has led to the diversity of the wall types, the necessity of studying in the context of urban murals and creating special walls commensurate with the environment and its governing architecture (partition walls) might be more interesting for the artists. Focusing on the necessity of using partition walls in the urban wall paintings, the present study aims to create innovative and architecture-independent walls for urban murals through identifying the capacities and functions of the environment and providing a suitable context. Therefore, in this study, wherever there is a discuss about creating a false visual space in urban wall paintings, the purpose is to create walls for urban murals which, despite being independent of the environment, are in perfect harmony with the architecture of the environment and audience as well. Hence, in this research, questions such as what is a partition wall and the need to create them in the urban space are mainly answered.

Research method

This research is a qualitative and practical one in terms of the purpose, which is presented in a descriptive-analytical manner with reference to the library resources and images, some of which have been prepared based on the field survey.

Research background

So far, many researches have been conducted in the field of urban murals on the architecture-dependent walls. Several books and articles have dealt with topics related to the characteristics of the wall paintings, materials in the contemporary murals, wall decorations in architecture, representation of urban adornments and murals, etc. In these researches, the connection between wall painting and aesthetic structure of contemporary architecture as well as different aspects of murals, expression of the characteristics and capability of wall paintings and their relationship with the urban environment have been carefully investigated. However, what needs great attention in today's urban space is the placement of partition walls as a platform for the murals in urban environments, which seems

to have not been addressed before. Therefore, the need to create special and architecture-independent walls in outdoor environments, parks, etc. in order to create new murals in interaction with the urban environment and today's audience is of high importance.

Urban wall painting

The wall has been formed in different periods and cultures according to the economic facilities, indigenous-ethnic requirements, climatic conditions, etc., which can be varied quantitatively and qualitatively. This diversity can be observed not only in the shape of the walls, their stability, mobility, smallness or largeness, regularity and irregularity, state of being vertical, oblique and parallel to the horizon, but also in their materials and fabrication technology. Therefore, this concept of wall in wall painting has a pragmatic role that is supposed to serve as a suitable context in interaction with the audience, environment and space as an environmental and urban effect to convey a special message or beauty in line with visual and urban identities. In the field of visual arts, the definition of a wall can take on another aspect, and that is a function in addition to its conventional use, which is referred to as a fence in the "Dehkhoda Dictionary". From this point of view, the visual structure of the wall is important and the quantitative and qualitative structure of the wall can be examined specifically as a platform and frame of mural in the urban environment, which requires the observance of certain principles. In urban spaces, as needed, the walls are sometimes designed in such a way that they have different and special capabilities which move forward as far as a specific feature. For example, the partition walls or architecture-independent walls that are created in the urban space for the sake of beauty in parks or public areas, can be grown and changed, or mobile ones such as buses and city trains in which mobility and stagnation is a practical principle in them that is important in itself and certainly have certain conditions as a wall and platform for the mural painting. However, what is certain is that all these issues depend on one urban place or space. Therefore, urban wall paintings should be considered as murals that are formed for the city and in direct relation to the urban spaces and special places. What is commonly discussed in various definitions of murals and achieved in a general conclusion is that the originality is not with the material and subject in the murals, but also in the usage of wall and the coordination between the artwork, audience and environment, then. In urban murals, these three components (artwork, audience and environment) are specific to the city and it is very important to pay attention to the characteristics of urban art as well as the fundamental factors in urban wall painting and its features.

Fundamental factors of the urban wall painting

1. The artwork universality

Just as the walls of urban spaces are visually dominated by audiences and citizens, the artworks that are created on them are also in public domain and ownership. Therefore, paying attention to the universality of the work should not be ignored. Therefore, in order to create and realize the idea through the artwork in a public environment or place, the artist must certainly identify the culture and tastes of the citizens and pay attention to them in the performance.

For example, the following sample is a mural in which the Spanish artist "Jaume Plensa" took advantage of the technology capabilities in making interactions with the audience and environment (Figure 1).



Figure1.
Jaume Plensa (2004), Millennium Park,
Chicago, USA. Source: cityofchicago.org



Figure2.
An example of sound walls.
Source: oogle.comsearchsa.

2. Audience

It is important to know where, with whom, what needs, what culture and how much visual literacy is an urban mural talking about and seems to be decisive in the attitude type of the artist for his ideation. This is mainly due to the fact that when a mural is formed in a public environment such as urban spaces, it certainly interacts with the cultural space around it in the position of a dynamic media. Therefore, in addition to the artwork approach, it is necessary to pay attention to the individual and collective characteristics of the audience and their perception or interest in understanding the subject which forms a large part of the cultural space governing the artwork (Figure 2).

3. Outdoor (spatial geography and regional topology)

One of the features of urban wall painting is the placement of the artwork in outdoor, urban and public spaces, which includes the spatial geography of the wall and topology of the area. In this regard, paying attention to the location of the wall relative to the audience and also its geographical location with respect to the equator, direction of the sunlight at different times of the day and how the shadows are located are the external factors, each of which is considered as a basis

in the formation of urban murals that must be examined by the artist before taking any action.

4. Architecture

The relationship between architecture and wall painting is such that sometimes it is impossible to separate them from each other. For example, one can point out to the mirror-works of holy places in Islamic architecture or the artworks of "Gaudi", which are special murals that are tied to the architecture.

5. Environment

The most significant difference between the wall and easel paintings is associated with the relationship and interaction of the mural with the wall, architecture and surrounding environment. Therefore, the architecture and governing environment of a mural are factors which can link the artwork and elements of the environment with its audience (Figure 3).

Features of the urban wall painting

The characteristics of urban wall painting are described by Kafshchian as: "being commensurate with the form, dimensions and type (fixed or movable) of the wall, proportionality of the artwork's materials with wall bed's ones, not changing in terms of the functional role of the wall, being in harmony with the wall environment, proportionality of the artwork durability with the life of the wall, proportionality of the implementation method with the texture of the wall and aesthetic structure of the architecture governing the wall, being commensurate with the wall horizon in the location, culture governing the region and audience, considering the fixed and movable visual factors in the environment, paying attention to the situation and position of the audience while observing and reading the mural (paying attention to the movement speed and time that the audience has for reading); the mural location should be chosen in such a way that it does not lead to an accident or danger" (Kafshchian, 2004, 72).

Outdoor partition walls

To step into the main subject of the research, the importance of the wall and its quantitative and qualitative relationships with the governing visual space are examined through a classification. According to Diagram 1 and the classification made, more types of outdoor partition walls are described.



Figure3.
A wall of carpet. Source: Authors.

1. Walls depending on the outdoor architecture

As shown in the diagram above, the walls have different shapes that are created in different places and with different applications. Some of the walls are associated with the urban constructions, which are sometimes created as a barrier and separator of two environments and sometimes as a carrier in the residential or office buildings in cities. In this research, this type of walls is referred to as architecture-dependent walls. The walls that are sometimes installed on the main wall of buildings with distances from a few centimeters to a few meters for various purposes such as calming, beautifying and harmonizing the environment or making the environment special, might be classified as the partition walls. Therefore, in this research, these types of walls have been conventionally considered as partition walls along with other samples (Figures 4 and 5).



Figure4.
 A wall with the benefit of the environment capabilities.
 Source: www.pinterest.com

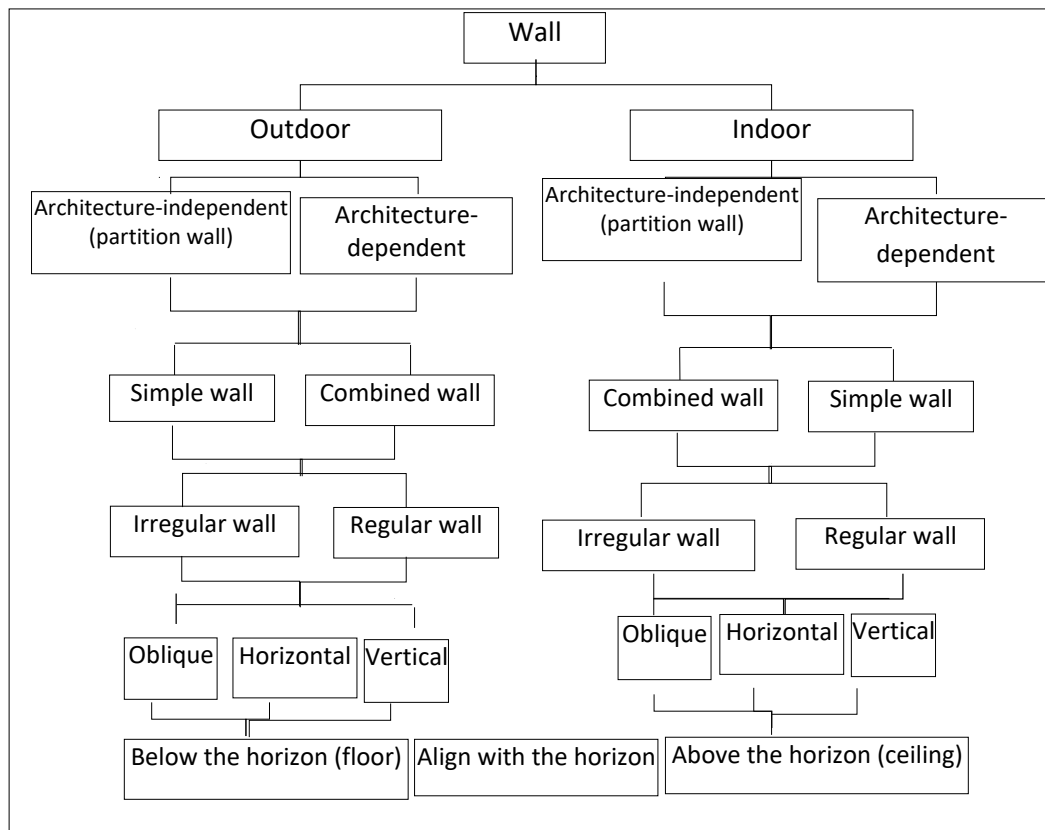


Diagram 1.
 Various partition wall types. Source: Kafshchian, 2006. 44.



Figure5.
 Architecture-dependent partition wall. Source: www.inhabitat.com

2. Outdoor walls independent of the dominant architecture (partition walls)

Given that the variety of partition walls in the urban environments is great in terms of the type of function and material, they will be discussed in the following. These walls are of two types: 1. Moving partition walls that are independent of the

surrounding environment, such as the city buses and trains, being beyond the scope of the present study. 2. Architecture-independent partition walls. In terms of the physical function, partition walls have no relationship with the surrounding building walls or the architecture-dependent ones. However, they are qualitatively related to the prevailing architecture and urban environment, and sometimes they can be related and coordinated in terms of the material type, and vice versa. This is determined by the idea and purpose of the creator of the wall and the mural, which will be discussed later. In terms of the lifetime, partition walls may have much less durability in some cases than the architecture-dependent walls, sometimes called as temporary ones. The design of partition walls as a platform or the mural itself is very important and requires further introduction and knowledge. Artists must study and examine the geographical location, recognize the expressive and visual capabilities of the wall and features of the urban murals for the partition walls with the same finesse and accuracy. One of the features and advantages of a partition wall is the artist's open hand in making innovation and creating a new wall with capabilities in addition to the existing ones in the environment. The creation of a partition wall, potentials for using and including the environment elements in the heart of the artwork and creation of newer spaces are considered as a basis for making diversity and creativity in the type of performance. However, it should be noted that the foundation of many of these innovations is realized by the correct selection of location and wall-forming materials. These issues sometimes make the partition walls more modern and appropriate for creating the murals.

The authors believe that the partition walls should not be called imposed wall, because imposition is when something or an element is imposed on something else like an awkward patch. However, such walls, if properly located in the right place, can meet the shortcomings and needs so that if removed after a while, the audience feels their absence in the environment and there will be a need to return or revise. Therefore, due to the specific conditions of the partition walls in the current research, it is necessary to explore their characteristics in more detail. The growth and development of cities has sometimes caused the walls in urban spaces to be designed with different and special capabilities as required. These capabilities are capable of progressing to a specific feature. Therefore, it seems that the realization of this task in the urban wall painting requires investigating the characteristics of murals whose platform is formed by the partition walls.

It should be noted here that whatever has been presented as the feature of urban murals is also true of the partition walls, with the difference that the latter is superior to the architecture-dependent walls in urban murals due to the advancement of material technology in the implementation and ideation. These advantages include the material, texture, color and flexibility. The material of Partition walls include all of the architecture dependent wall species, plus materials for these types of walls such as the gases, light, trees, plant species, ice,

etc., each of which can be independently considered as a wall and even sometimes can be designed in such a way to be murals at the same time. This capability of the partition walls has led to the freedom of action in the idea generation, expression of the ideas and necessity of creating these types of walls.

Partition wall and its practical aspect in everyday life

There does not seem to be a clear and documented definition of a partition wall. According to the current research, the partition wall is a wall independent of architecture and environment, while being qualitatively dependent on them. The partition walls originate from the ancient and indigenous climates and cultures of the region, such as the primitive life of the tribes and even the current nomads. However, the partition walls in the contemporary life are undoubtedly the result of the advancement of technology and industry and considered as a necessity for today's urban life.

Partition walls have different functions depending on whether they are external or internal. These walls have been used in different cultures in terms of different shapes and applications. In the past, the partition walls mainly had a practical role, and in addition, they have taken on a decorative aspect and visual appeal. For example, in the nomadic culture of Iran in the regions of Khorasan, Kermanshah and the Turkmens, the nomadic tents which are their refuge and place of residence can be considered as walls having the role of fender and decorated with very beautiful decorative motifs, taken from their weaves. These walls can be considered as good examples of the partition walls, which, while acting as walls, are also very beautiful murals (Figures 6 and 7).

The other examples of this type of wall can be observed in the culture of Japan, China and South Korea, where temporary and mobile partition walls are designed inside buildings in the urban life. Perhaps these countries are among those that have benefited the most practical use of partition walls in everyday life and indoor environments. Due to the presence of decorative forms, sometimes fractals and sometimes special paintings, these walls can be considered as a successful indoor mural further to being used as a fender. Therefore, the partition walls can have different functions in different situations (Figure 8).

Following what has been presented in the current study, the question that may be raised is whether it is possible to employ such an approach in order to create walls in outdoor spaces in accordance with the needs of the environment and prevailing culture and benefit them based on a new approach to reduce visual pollution, relaxation, beautification or many other functions in the urban environments. With further study and contemplation, it seems that achieving the mentioned goals is necessary and logical. On the other hand, these types of walls have their own conditions that must be examined. In addition, wall painting on such walls

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also has special features and capabilities, knowing and paying attention to which can be a great help in creating a new atmosphere in dealing with the ideas.



Figure6.
Partition walls in the nomadic life. Source: www.britannica.com.



Figure7.
Architecture-dependent partition wall. Source: www.merriam-webster.com.



Figure8.
Architecture-dependent partition wall. Source www.amazon.com.

The mural features on the partition walls

Alakhani has described several characteristics for the wall painting, including no restrictions on the material selection, the possibility of using the wall itself as a mural in special cases such as steel walls, water, etc., ability to coordinate more easily and better with the environment, special design of wall form in order to make it compatible with the environment's architecture, physically comprehensive connection of the partition wall with the environment and vice versa, existence of a wall as an aesthetic form or mural in the environment (some of these types of walls have two or three faces, each of which has its own capabilities and can create an active environment, ability to change rapidly in the urban environments (Alakhani, 2016, 33). It is obvious that the above-mentioned features and capabilities for the partition walls can all be advantages which further highlight the need to create these structures. However, there are other reasons for this necessity, which are discussed below.

The necessity of creating partition walls according to the conducted in the research

1.Reducing the visual pollution of the environment through building partition walls in harmony with the environment

In the worn out texture of the cities, there are sometimes walls that have made the appearance of the city unpleasant due to the inconsistency between them and the new ones around. It seems that a more modern and consistent space can be created in the environment by designing and creating partition walls and installing them on the old ones. However, this does not mean that such walls are used only in old buildings, but depending on the type of need and proper design of the environment, architecture governing the walls and culture of the audience, they can be used along with their capabilities for the beautification purposes.

2. Innovation in the urban environments

Being designed for the urban environments, the partition and architecture-independent walls have the possibility of using materials with modern technology that provide an appropriate suitable for making innovation and creation of new spaces in the environment.

3. The need for a better relationship between the audience and the environment

Sometimes the relationship between the environment and the audience becomes so cold and repetitive so that the need to renovate the environment is felt. The creation of partition walls with a special design can make this relationship (the relationship between audience, environment and artwork) closer and create an attractive and active environment. For example, one can point out to the creation of interactive walls in the urban environments using capabilities of contemporary technology (Alahkhani, 2016, 33).

Conclusions

The urban partition wall which is a wall independent of architecture and environment while being qualitatively dependent on it, originates from the ancient and indigenous climates and cultures of different regions, such as the primitive life of tribes and even current nomads. In today's living, these walls are the result of the advancement of technology and industry and considered as a necessity for urban life. With the proper placement and creation of the partition walls, the environment and public space of metropolises that suffer from congestion and visual pollution can be transformed from depression and repetition into dynamic and beautiful environments with modern expression. Despite the lack of a suitable wall to express the idea, this goal can be achieved in any area and place of the city according to the needs of the environment. It might lead to the creation of a partition wall, in accordance with the governing architecture and in harmony with the idea. It is clear that these types of walls are no longer just a platform, and in many cases the wall and its special design can be considered as a mural, which is one of the most important features and capabilities of the partition wall. Dynamism, novelty and excitement hidden in these types of artworks, which have been originated from the creative ideas of artists along with using the expressive capabilities of modern materials and technology, are considered as the most important features, paying attention to which is recommended both in the education sector and in the executive system of developing cities.

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