

This thesis examines contemporary street art and its exhibition in galleries and museums in connection with Walter Benjamin's concepts of aura and authenticity in the postmodern period. Street art is posited as a marginal art evolving out of the tradition of 1970's New York graffiti that can be made to function as a type of anti-spectacle within the spectacle of the mainstream. Situationist theory and concepts within the agenda of Unitary Urbanism (psychogeography, the *dérive*, and *détournement*) are used to evaluate contemporary street art as anti-spectacle. Photography, as a primary method of documenting street art, is considered as a mechanically reproduced medium bringing into play discourses of repetition and originality, which are in turn related back to Benjamin's concepts of aura and authenticity. Andy Warhol, his Pop Art iconography, and practice of seriality are also considered as an influence on contemporary street art's imagery and underlying practice. Warhol's promotion of an "art star" persona is also related to such contemporary street art "stars" as Banksy and Mr. Brainwash.