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**CARCERAL AESTHETICS.  
ART AND EVERYDAY LIFE  
IN PRISON**

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# CARCERAL AESTHETICS. ART AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN PRISON

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## **Abstract**

The paper aims to focus on everyday life in prison following a double perspective, a historical and a contemporary one. First, the historical phenomenon of prison graffiti will be investigated in connection with one case study: the graffiti in the prisons of the Holy Office in Palermo. Subsequently, the effect of making art in today's prisons both on space and on inmate life will be taken into account. The overall aim of this twofold reading is to show to what extent making art in prison can be seen as a strategy of activation of those relational and familiarizing processes which bestow an aesthetic value on everyday life.

## **Keywords**

Everyday Aesthetics; artifice; carceral aesthetics; art in prison; graffiti.

## **1. Introduction**

Is there a forgotten everyday life within Everyday Aesthetics? Originated at the start of the new millennium, the philosophical movement of Everyday Aesthetics aims to enhance the aesthetic value of everyday life.<sup>1</sup> Although several different areas have been explored, research in this field has mainly embraced the point of view of the western middle class and, therefore, lifestyles falling outside its cultural and socio-economic standards have been so far left out. Nevertheless, as Ossi Naukkarinen has pointed out,<sup>2</sup> everybody has their own everyday life, and this latter changes over the years, inasmuch as it is defined by a given time and a given space. Accordingly, even the daily life of marginal social groups can be interpreted from the viewpoint of aesthetic experience. This essay aims to focus on a theoretical question that might appear paradoxical: can we speak of aesthetics in reference to life inside prisons?

In order to address this question I will focus on what Nicole Fleetwood calls “carceral aesthetics,” in reference to the “production of art under conditions of unfreedom.”<sup>3</sup> Although the phenomenon of artistic production – intentional or not – inside the prison has a long history, in this essay I will not discuss the quality of these works, nor their artistic acknowledgement within the traditional framework of aesthetics as philosophy of art. Quite the opposite, in view of Everyday Aesthetics, I will focus on the processes at stake, understanding “making art” as a way of living life in prison.

Prison detention is a period of suspension from normal everyday life. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the deprivation of freedom, of moments connected to affectivity and relations, of family space has been the core sentence prisoners must serve for crimes committed to the detriment of society.<sup>4</sup> However, even the life of inmates has its own routine, with its clear spaces and rhythms, and therefore this lends itself to an interpretation from the viewpoint of Everyday Aesthetics. Making the point of a debate started between 1990 and 2000, Yuriko Saito<sup>5</sup> states that aesthetics must not be understood only in honorific and positive terms. Also “negative aesthetics”<sup>6</sup> exists.

The subject is very broad and can be approached from a historical and diachronic perspective or from a contemporary and synchronic perspective. The historical perspective is a field for which Anglo-American aesthetics has little interest, as it does not match its mainly analytical approach. It is nevertheless rich in developments when investigated through the lens of Everyday Aesthetics.

Also based on a contemporary perspective, Everyday Aesthetics is able to provide important contributions to the current scientific debate and namely, provide theoretical models which allow us to aesthetically reassess life in prison, and thus inform research and action-oriented projects envisaging the direct involvement of inmates.

This essay will attempt to keep these two lines, the diachronic and the synchronic line, together, as its goal is not to develop an exhaustive account, but rather to simply outline a research methodology and a field of study yet to be explored. First, the historical phenomenon of prison graffiti will be investigated in connection with one case study: the graffiti in the prisons of the Holy Office in Palermo. Subsequently, the effect of making art in today’s prisons both on space and on inmate life will be taken into account.

The overall aim of this twofold reading – historical and contemporary – is to show to what extent making art in prison can be seen as a strategy of activation of those relational and familiarizing processes which bestow an aesthetic value on everyday life. An “aesthetics of the familiar” comes here to the fore. However, while employing this expression, I do not call upon Yuriko Saito’s theory and her book of the same title.<sup>7</sup> It is there sustained, in fact, that, in order to have an aesthetic appreciation of everyday life, one has to “defamiliarize the familiar,” that is to say, making extraordinary what is trivial and taken for granted. On the contrary, I aim to show that by making art together one can make even a strange space feel “familiar” and create forms of community. This strategy of familiarization of the extraneous (i.e., the prison cell and human relations in prison) can bestow aesthetic value on the life of inmates and sometimes make them better people.

## **2. Graffiti in prisons: a historical perspective.**

Prison graffiti – a term used here as a collective label including both actual graffiti and wall drawings and writings – is a particular form of writing on walls and also one of the most

recurrent writing methods in history.<sup>8</sup> In fact, graffiti, drawings and writings are frequently found on the walls of secular and ecclesiastical prisons and on the walls of the dungeons of towers and castles in various parts of the world.<sup>9</sup> Here, we will focus on the graffiti of the prisons of the Spanish Holy Office in Palermo, since with its cells distributed over two floors, it is an excellent example of this particular type of graffiti. These graffiti can be found in the Steri<sup>10</sup> – named after the *Hosterium* – the “fortified palace,” expropriated from the Chiaramonte family, where from 1600 to 1782 the Tribunal of the Holy Inquisition was active. Despite the reports and declarations of some authoritative scholars,<sup>11</sup> municipal authorities have paid little attention to these graffiti, which have been plastered over every time the building has changed its intended use. Only in the years 2000–2007 with the restoration of both the detention cells and the dungeons was the phenomenon brought to light in its entirety and complexity.<sup>12</sup>

Although admired today by tourists and visitors, the graffiti should not be seen as works of art, even when they display some artistic and literary merit.<sup>13</sup> These are not quickly made, clandestine graffiti, like those of contemporary street artists, but works that took time – they must have been tolerated by the jailers – and transformed the prison space.

As a philosophical discipline Everyday Aesthetics takes distance from the artistic object and it effectively shifts the philosophical focus on everyday actions and environments. I will therefore attempt to account for prison graffiti based on the following key elements: time, space, and community making.

In prison, time passes slowly, excessively slowly, and the daily action of writing or drawing becomes a survival strategy in order not to go mad. In reality, the repeated daily activities – which for Kevin Melchionne are the object of study of Everyday Aesthetics<sup>14</sup> – do not always have alienating consequences. Repeating the same gestures serves to release the tension built up by anxiety or stress, or to regain self-control in moments of panic; consequently, according to Melchionne, inasmuch as it is psychologically soothing, a positive value can be credited to repetition.<sup>15</sup>

The daily act of writing or drawing inside the prison can be understood precisely within this framework. Deprived of freedom and of the possibility of communicating externally, prisoners find that writing and drawing is a way to pull themselves together as subjects,<sup>16</sup> to reaffirm their own identity, which civil society instead wants to forget and erase; consequently, graffiti is a means of resistance, of release and consolation. The walls of the cells become the support on which the prisoners leave a sign of their existence. By engraving their name, they reclaim their denied identity. The representation of objects and practices connected to their daily, professional or devotional life serves the same purpose. Frequent subjects are, for example, boats, weapons, saints, and crucifixes. It has been remarked that the drawings are repetitive. This repetition confirms that drawing in this context is not an exercise of imagination or a practice of

artistic production, but rather a language through which one's own story is told. And these are stories of ordinary life. In this respect graffiti have been defined as "speech(less) acts."<sup>17</sup> Through these simple gestures, prisoners could express their pain and suffering. But they are also a way of measuring time, transforming a hostile space into a familiar one, and creating forms of community inside the prison.

Time is a key element in Everyday Aesthetics. Its contributions have indeed focused both on ordinary and routine moments and on extraordinary and special moments, as well as on the relationship between the two.<sup>18</sup> Although the time of imprisonment is a suspended time, a bracketing of ordinary life, prison detention also has its own rhythms. Prisoners do not fail to leave traces of their ordinary life – recording a change of cell, the deterioration of water quality, the harshness of prison conditions – and those moments that we could call "extra-ordinary" – to paraphrase Leddy with a negative inversion – because particularly hard and dramatic. One can then also record interrogations, tortures, or the event of the *autodafé* (act of faith), that is to say, the solemn proclamation of the inquisitor's sentence, followed by a public ceremony of abjuration or sentencing of the heretic to burn on the stake.

For prisoners, counting the days that pass is a routine action which helps them not to lose the orientation of time. When prisoners know the day of the month and the month of the year, they write it down with extreme precision next to their drawings, or else the measurement of time is achieved by marking vertical lines crossed (or under marked) lengthwise on the wall. An unusual "artistic" calendar which identifies the days with the image of the corresponding patron saint was found in the prisons of Palermo. It was probably carried out by the cleric and scholar Francesco Baronio, imprisoned in 1647 for having participated in the anti-Spanish revolt that year. Thanks to his theological training, this prisoner could in fact identify the days through religious festivities. He then created a personal liturgical calendar that took into account official celebrations but also popular devotions.<sup>19</sup> Usually calendars differentiate the extra-ordinary days of the festivities - devoted to rest and (for believers) prayer - from the working days. Instead, in Baronio's liturgical calendar there is no distinction between festivities and ordinary days, as in prison every day is the same as the next. Baronio's calendar can be interpreted in the light of everyday aesthetics not so much because it is an iconographic calendar, but above all because the drawings of the saints provide a visual support to the prayer that marks the rhythm of the days, offering consolation to the suffering prisoners. Thanks to this "artistic" way of measuring time, a dark, humid and unhealthy cell can become a comfortable place in the spiritual sense of the word.

As a result, prison graffiti are an important tool for transforming space and could be seen as a peculiar phenomenon of artification. In the last decade, artification has been understood to

indicate the transformation of something that is not art into art according to different theoretical perspectives.

The French sociologists Shapiro and Heinich<sup>20</sup> have assessed artification as a dynamic process by means of which objects and practices are given artistic legitimation by several social actors (i.e., critics, institutions, markets, audiences) and, among various examples, they also mention graffiti and wall paintings. Based on this reading, one could claim that prison graffiti have been the object of a process of artification, inasmuch as nowadays they are often appreciated by tourists within museum exhibitions. However, closer to the goal of this essay, the theorists of Everyday Aesthetics have developed a different concept of artification, understood as the transformation of environments and behaviors which, through art, can improve the quality of our daily life.

In particular, Thomas Leddy has distinguished a superficial kind of artification, which transforms the space in a decorative sense, and a deep one, which affects people and behaviors. Although in reference to contemporary practices, Leddy interprets graffiti as “a shallower form of artification,”<sup>21</sup> in the case of prison graffiti, what is at stake is not making the cell artistically and aesthetically pleasing. In fact, these graffiti should not be understood as works of art or as decorations like the murals that revive blighted urban spaces. By depicting objects, habits, and moments of everyday life, the images make an extraneous space look familiar.

Arto Haapala and Yuriko Saito have focused on the concept of familiarity in order to emphasize the positive value of an idea usually connected to something trivial, routine, and consequently not worthy of aesthetic consideration.<sup>22</sup> In an extra-ordinary but negative situation, prison graffiti show how what is familiar can transform a hostile space and make it more comfortable. This transformation of the space through writings and drawings is an act of deep artification, which not only affects the psychological and emotional state of inmates, but also activates relational processes and creates forms of community. By writing on the walls, the prisoners “appropriate” the space, communicating their emotions, their history, or expressing their religious beliefs. Furthermore, this action has consequences for some groups of people. In particular, drawing a sacred image becomes a “foundational” gesture for a community identifying itself as such through the rite of prayer. In fact, according to Christian doctrine, saints share their faith with believers and intercede for them with God, by virtue of that communion – according to an article of the Apostles’ Creed – which makes saints and believers members of the same family, namely part of the mystical body of the resurrected Christ.

Although graffiti, writings and drawings are found in all places of detention and punishment, in the prisons of the Holy Office, sacred images recur more often than elsewhere because it is a tribunal of faith, created to prosecute heresy. At that time, when religious sentiment was strong and devotional practices scrupulously observed, the images of the saints had the power

to generate poles of attraction and create forms of community finding comfort in prayer. In public places of the city votive shrines, placed at crossroads or in small alleys, protect the community that gathers there to pray. Likewise in prison devotional images transform the cell into a “sacred space,” a meeting place where ceremonies and ritual acts can be hosted.<sup>23</sup>

However, even non-devotional graffiti have a similar transformative power on space and people. By leaving their mark on the walls, individuals rejected by society no longer feel alone and marginalized, but become part of a “textual community”<sup>24</sup> that unites authors and readers in shared suffering. In fact, writing and drawing on prison walls activates a polyphony of voices including other contemporary, previous and subsequent witnesses, and establishing a dialogue even between prisoners who have never met. The production of graffiti thus becomes a strategy to rediscover a new and different sense of life in the hell of prison.

### **3. Making art in prison in the contemporary era**

Moving to the contemporary world, I will attempt to apply the same tools of Everyday Aesthetics employed for the historical account. One should bear in mind, however, that, whereas the graffiti of the Holy Office sacralised the space and created a community of prayer, nowadays the artistic production of inmates has lost this devotional dimension, and is mainly connected to educational projects approved by penal institutions. Once more, my goal is not to focus on the artistic quality of the so produced works of art, nor on the acknowledgement of their artistic value in the Art World, but rather on how making art can be a way of creating a community and activate relational strategies with a positive impact on the life of inmates. Prison detention is no longer considered a form of punishment but of rehabilitation. Consequently, whereas in the past spending life without aesthetic stimuli was considered part of the sentence, today there is a tendency to favor the practice of those artistic activities (visual arts, music, singing, theatre, and creative writing as well) that can offer compensatory aesthetic stimuli to the state of deprivation and isolation in which inmates live.<sup>25</sup>

Responding to the human need for creative self-development, autonomy, and self-expression, artistic activity reduces the level of aggression and promotes focus on achieving certain goals. Furthermore, it allows inmates to gain greater confidence with the possibility of introducing change in their lives. Artistic activities therefore prove effective in rehabilitation programs. They provide useful skills for the reintegration into society<sup>26</sup> and help individuals develop self-control in overcoming violent instincts. In fact if these instincts persist, they can compromise relational life even long after their release.<sup>27</sup> This is why programs envisaging the involvement of inmates in artistic projects are strongly promoted both by the institutions of the European Union<sup>28</sup> and in the United States of America.<sup>29</sup> In US prisons, precise guidelines even regulate the production,

distribution and sale of works of art created by inmates.<sup>30</sup> However, the existing scholarly literature focuses above all on the psychological, therapeutic and educational effects of making art. A philosophical account investigating prison life in terms of its aesthetic quality is still missing. In other words, an inquiry that pinpoints, for example, the negative effects of “aesthetic deprivation”<sup>31</sup> and the positive consequences of “aesthetic engagement”<sup>32</sup> still needs to be explored.

Not being able to deal completely with such a vast and complex topic here, I will simply try to point to a line of investigation. I wish to apply the same interpretative tools used above, on the historical and diachronic level – namely, space, time, and community making – on the contemporary and synchronic level.

In this respect, Yuriko Saito’s thoughts on the artification<sup>33</sup> of the workplace are particularly to the point. In fact, Saito remarks how a pleasant environment has direct repercussions on the well-being of workers and therefore on their productivity. The same can be said for prison space, where artistic projects aimed at creating colourful paintings and murals have proved effective in achieving therapeutic and rehabilitative goals.<sup>34</sup> As we have already mentioned in the case of prison graffiti, the realization of murals in prisons is not merely decorative, inasmuch as, by transforming the space, it affects individuals. It can therefore be seen as a form of deep artification, according to Leddy’s distinction mentioned above.

In reality, prison space is not only the architectural form made up of high walls, bars on windows and small cells. From a phenomenological point of view also the “atmospheric” space should be taken into account. According to the input provided by the philosopher Gernot Böhme, the atmospheric space is the result of the motor and synaesthetic relationship that the perceiving subject establishes with the perceived environment.<sup>35</sup> When we apply this concept to space in prisons, it is clear that the atmosphere connected to serving a sentence is made up of silence, screams, the screeching of bars, oppressive smells and above all of isolation.<sup>36</sup> Isolation is a defining element of the “atmosphere of punishment” and characterizes both the space and the time spent in prison, with all the psychological consequences deriving from it in terms of alienation, stress and the deprivation of needs; all these consequences can persist and affect relationships and life in general, even after release.

Isolation is made up of invisible barriers. In fact, as Fleetwood points out, “penal space” is not just an architectural concept, but also refers to “the disruption of family relations and domestic space.”<sup>37</sup> By reporting on interviews with inmates and stories shared by them and their relatives, Fleetwood shows to what extent art, understood as relational practices, dismantles barriers and builds up connections. After reviewing several artistic projects carried out in prisons in the United States, she concludes that such relational practices are effective “to forge community with other incarcerated people, to communicate with nonincarcerated allies and the



public, to connect with relatives and loved ones, and to cultivate subject positions that cannot be eviscerated or fully managed by the carceral status.”<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, isolation also affects time. Whereas time for inmates is suspended, mainly defined by waiting times (e.g., waiting for the next visit, for the end of the sentence, etc.) and punctuated by the rhythms of the prison, for the inmates’ families and friends time goes on: they find a job, they get married, they start a family, they move elsewhere. As a result, those who get out of prison encounter a family and friend environment that is different from the one they had left. Often ex-prisoners experience difficulties in re-entering society from a professional and relational point of view, and keep feeling a condition of isolation. From this perspective, making art turns out not only to be a way to compensate for that state of aesthetic deprivation that characterizes prison life, but also a sort of aesthetic engagement, opposing resistance to the state of isolation. Displaying or selling works of art, performing with musical instruments, in plays, or public readings of prose and poetry offers inmates the opportunity to engage in productive exchanges with the community before and after their release.<sup>39</sup> Although they are not professional artists, this aesthetic engagement has a transformative power on them. It is capable of turning ordinary life in prison into an extraordinary moment of glory. Inmates cease to be a number; they become famous inside and sometimes even outside prison. This helps fuel their self-esteem and self-awareness and, in some cases, reveals artistic skills that could be practiced at a professional level after their release.

Nevertheless, the expression “making art” should not be taken restrictively in reference to the art system, but also widely according to John Dewey’s understanding of it. In *Art as Experience*,<sup>40</sup> Dewey’s account is prompted by a naturalistic theory. Human beings are seen as organisms radically dependent on the environment in which they live and in which they develop natural, social, and cultural interactions – both with the environment and with other human beings – that are essential to life itself. Consequently, every experience – not only that of artwork – is “aesthetic,” inasmuch as the organism experiences pain or pleasure while interacting with the environment to which it belongs and to which it is exposed. As a result, the notion of art adopted by Dewey, in line with his pragmatist philosophy, is not that of a finished product handed over to aesthetic contemplation – as the 18th-century theory of the system of fine arts would have it – but rather a – not necessarily artistic – praxis and the way to realize a better life in interaction with the environment.

By making art together, inmates feel part of a community within which they are recognized and appreciated. Therefore, making art in prison can be interpreted as a relational strategy, that fosters friendship among inmates and sometimes even between inmates and prison

staff or educators (art teachers)<sup>41</sup> and restores that family and domestic dimension that prison isolation tends to break.

#### 4. Conclusion

The art produced in prison has often been seen as a strategy of consolation and of survival. One might want to think about the so-called “prison literature,”<sup>42</sup> mainly featuring letters and memoirs, less often narrative texts; to this, one should add the production of small objects and also the production of graffiti and mural paintings. This artistic production, previously achieved with improvised tools, has seen a continuous increase in the contemporary world. Nowadays there are many artistic projects carried out by inmates, independently or under the guidance of professionals (artists, educators).

Extensive scientific literature – produced by criminologists, neurobiologists, psychologists and educators – is already available. However, it examines therapeutic and rehabilitative aspects; a full investigation on the aesthetic quality of inmate life is still missing. *Everyday Aesthetics* is best suited to fill this gap thanks to its pragmatic and ameliorative declination deriving from its roots in Dewey’s approach. *Everyday Aesthetics* can offer a theoretical framework for multi-disciplinary research and action-oriented projects foreseeing the involvement of staff and prisoners.<sup>43</sup>

According to Dewey, making art is a relational practice, namely a way to realize a special and enlivening experience in the interaction with the environment and others. In relation to prison life this goal can be pursued by means of an aesthetic engagement aiming at “familiarizing the extraneous.” This aesthetic engagement can develop along three directions. First, it can make a hostile space feel familiar and make it more comfortable. Then it can give rhythm to time by means of daily rituals. It is a fact that the quality of life – i.e., the possibility to feel well or feel bad – revolves around ritualized gestures reassuring people and making them feel part of a community. This is the sense of the “positive repetition” emphasized by Melchionne. Finally, the aesthetic engagement can develop in collaborative and relational activities. These produce connections, create communities, and can change the life of prisoners not only within prison but possibly also after their release.

This topic is huge and it cannot be dealt with in a complete way here; however, it is possible to trace a forgotten, or better, not yet explored road within *Everyday Aesthetics*.

<sup>1</sup> Yuriko Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Yuriko Saito, “Aesthetics of the Everyday”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2019, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aesthetics-of-everyday/> (last view: 24 June 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Ossi Naukkarinen, “What is ‘Everyday’ in Everyday Aesthetics?”, *Contemporary Aesthetics*, n. 11, 2013. <https://contemporaryaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=675> (last view: 24-06-2021)

<sup>3</sup> Nicole R. Fleetwood, *Marking Time. Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration* (Cambridge, Mass.-London, England: Harvard University Press 2020), 25.

<sup>4</sup> Within the scope of criminal law, prison was not contemplated as a sentence in itself until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Previously it was the place where the accused awaited judgment and the convicted awaited the execution of the sentence. Fernando J. Burillo Albacete, *El nacimiento de la pena privativa de libertad. Siglos XVI-XX* (Madrid: E.DER.SA, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Saito, “Aesthetics of the Everyday,” par. 4 titled *Negative Aesthetics*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aesthetics-of-everyday/> (last view: 24-06-2021).

<sup>6</sup> In his book *Estetiikka* (2000) the Finnish scholar Aarne Kinnunen was among the first to reflect on negative aesthetics. In this line see the subsequent contributions by Arnold Berleant, *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2010) and *Aesthetics Beyond the Arts: New and Recent Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012); Katya Mandoki, *Everyday Aesthetics: Prosaics, the Play of Culture and Social Identities* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Yuriko Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar. Everyday Life and World-Making* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017).

<sup>8</sup> On the graffiti in places of confinement (not just prisons) see the large report with examples and references by Giovanna Fiume, “Soundless Screams. Graffiti and Drawings in the Prisons of the Holy Office in Palermo”, *Journal of Early Modern History* n. 21/3, 2017, 88-215.

<sup>9</sup> For the rich literature on prison writings, see the following studies: William Zammit, *Printing in Malta, 1642-1839. Its Cultural Role from Inception to the Granting of Freedom of the Press* (Malta: Gutemberg Press, 2008); Juliet Fleming, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Brian A. Harrison, *The Tower of London Prisoner Book. A Complete Chronology of the Persons Known to have been Detained at Their Majesties Pleasure 1100-1941* (Leeds: Royal Armouries 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Today it is the seat of the Rectorate of the University of Palermo.

<sup>11</sup> Among them Giuseppe Pitrè, senator of the Kingdom and historian of folk traditions, and the writer Leonardo Sciascia. Giuseppe Pitrè, Leonardo Sciascia, *Urla senza suono. Graffiti e disegni dei prigionieri dell’Inquisizione* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Giovanna Fiume, Mercedes García-Arenal (eds.), *Parole prigioniere. I graffiti delle carceri del Santo Uffizio di Palermo* (Palermo: Istituto Poligrafico Europeo, 2018), 9-10.

<sup>13</sup> There are also poetic compositions (sonnets, lyrics in Sicilian or Italian) that echo literary texts such as Dante Alighieri’s *Inferno* and show “an intimate relationship between incarceration and literary invention, prison and poetry.” This is why the prison has been seen as a “Muses abitation,” in relation to the many poets hosted in it, and therefore as a site of cultural production. Molly Murray, “Measured Sentences: Forming Literature in the Early Modern Prison,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 72, n. 2 2009, 147-167, in part.147.

<sup>14</sup> Kevin Melchionne, “The Definition of Everyday Aesthetics”, *Contemporary Aesthetics*, n. 11, 2013, ( <https://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=663> ) (last view: 24 June 2021).

<sup>15</sup> Kevin Melchionne, “The Point of Everyday Aesthetics”, *Contemporary Aesthetics*, n. 12, 2014, (<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/ca/7523862.0012.017/--point-of-everyday-aesthetics?rgn=main;view=fulltext>) (last view: 24 June 2021).

<sup>16</sup> Fleming, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England*, 41-42.

<sup>17</sup> Johann Petitjean, “Inscribing, Writing and Drawing in the Prisons of the Inquisition: methodological issues and research perspectives on graffiti”, *Quaderni storici* n. 157, 2018, 15-37.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Leddy, *The Extraordinary in the Ordinary: The Aesthetics of Everyday Life* (Peterborough (ON): Broadview Press, 2012); Yuriko Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar. Everyday Life and World-Making*.

<sup>19</sup> Valeria La Motta, *Prigionieri senza causa di fede. Il caso di Francesco Baronio Manfredi*, in Fiume, García-Arenal (eds.), *Parole prigioniere*, 257-290, in part. 286.

<sup>20</sup> Roberta Shapiro & Nathalie Heinrich, “When is Artification?”, *Contemporary Aesthetics*, n. 4, 2012, edited by Y. Saito and O. Naukkarinen (<https://contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=639>). (last view 24 May 2021)

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Leddy, “Aesthetization, Artification, and Aquariums”, *Contemporary Aesthetics*, n. 4, 2012, article n. 6 edited by Y. Saito and O. Naukkarinen part. I, 1 ( [https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts\\_contempaesthetics/volo/iss4/6?utm\\_source=digitalcommons.risd.edu%2Fliberalarts\\_contempaesthetics%2Fvolo%2Fiss4%2F6&utm\\_medium=PDF&utm\\_campaign=PDFCoverPages](https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts_contempaesthetics/volo/iss4/6?utm_source=digitalcommons.risd.edu%2Fliberalarts_contempaesthetics%2Fvolo%2Fiss4%2F6&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages) ) (last view 24 May 2021).

<sup>22</sup> Arto Haapala, “On the Aesthetics of Everyday: Familiarity, Strangeness and Meaning of Place”, in Andrew Light and Jonathan M. Smith (eds.), *The Aesthetics of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 39-55; Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar*.

<sup>23</sup> Giovanna Fiume, *Visibile parlare. Scritte e disegni delle carceri segrete*, in Fiume, García-Arenal (eds.), *Parole prigioniere*, 207.

<sup>24</sup> Ruth Ahnert, *The Rise of Prison Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 29-42.

<sup>25</sup> Przemyslaw Piotrowski and Stefan Florek, “Science of Art in Prison”, in Tadeusz Marian Ostrowski, Iwona Sikorska, and Krzysztof Gerc (eds.), *Resilience and Health in a Fast-Changing World*, (Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2015) 93-106. On music, see Mary L. Cohen’s contributions, in particular: “Choral Singing and Prison Inmates: Influences of Performing in a Prison Choir I”, *Journal of Correctional Education*, Vol. 60, No. 1, 2009, 52-65.

<sup>26</sup> Lee Michael Johnson, “A Place for Art in Prison: Art as a Tool for Rehabilitation and Management”, *Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice*, 5 (2), 2008, 100-120, in part. 100.

<sup>27</sup> Janine Blacker, Andy Watson, Anthony R. Beech, “A Combined Drama-Based and CBT Approach to Working with Self-Reported Anger Aggression”, *Criminal Behavior and Mental Health*, 18, 2008, 129-37.

<sup>28</sup> See Jo Hawley, Ilona Murphy, Manuel Souto-Otero, *Prison Education and Training in Europe. Current state-of-play and challenges. A summary report authored for the European Commission by GHK consulting. European Commission* (2013).

<sup>29</sup> See the essay by Larry Brewster and its extensive reference list: Larry Brewster, “The Impact of Prison Arts Programs on Inmate Attitudes and Behavior: A Quantitative Evaluation”, *Justice Policy Journal*, Vol. 11, 2 (2004), 1-28.

<sup>30</sup> Fleetwood, *Marking Time*, 8.

- <sup>31</sup> Hilary Moss and Desmond O’Neill (“Aesthetic deprivation in clinical settings”, *The Lancet*, 22 March 2014) draw attention to the negative impact of aesthetic deprivation in hospital settings. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(14\)60507-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(14)60507-9/fulltext) (last view 24 July 2021).
- <sup>32</sup> Arnold Berleant, “What is Aesthetic Engagement?”, *Contemporary Aesthetics*, n. 11, 2013. [https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts\\_contempaesthetics/vol11/iss1/5/](https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts_contempaesthetics/vol11/iss1/5/) (last view 24 July 2021).
- <sup>33</sup> Yuriko Saito, “Everyday Aesthetics and Artification”, *Contemporary Aesthetics*, n. 4, 2012. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/ca/7523862.spec.405/--everyday-aesthetics-and-artification?rgn=main;view=fulltext>. (last view 30 July 2021).
- <sup>34</sup> One example is provided by the projects “The Labyrinth of Freedom” and “The Horizon of Freedom”, for which inmates had to create murals on the topic of freedom. Przemyslaw Piotrowski, Zbigniew Bajek, Stefan Florek, “The Artistic Statements of Inmates about Freedom: the ‘Labyrinth of Freedom’ Project and Its Possible Applications”, *Art Inquiry. Recherches sur les arts*, XV (XXIV) 2013, 213-229.
- <sup>35</sup> Gernot Böhme, *Atmospheric Architectures: The Aesthetics of Felt Spaces*, (London-Oxford-New York: Bloomsbury, 2017).
- <sup>36</sup> On the atmosphere of prisons, see Molly McPee’s essay on a theatre piece staging it: Molly McPee, *Miasmas in the theatre: Encountering carceral atmospherics in Pests* (2014), “Ambiances” 6, 2020, <https://journals.openedition.org/ambiances/3698> (last view 10 September 2021).
- <sup>37</sup> Fleetwood, *Marking Time*, 38.
- <sup>38</sup> Fleetwood, *Marking time*, 255.
- <sup>39</sup> Johnson, “A place for art in prison”, 107.
- <sup>40</sup> John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Capricorn Press, 1958).
- <sup>41</sup> Fleetwood, *Marking Time*, 18.
- <sup>42</sup> See Thomas S. Freeman, “The Rise of Prison Literature” and Rivkah Zim, “Writing behind Bars: Literary Context and the Authority of Carceral Experience”, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 72, n. 2 2009 (special issue), 33–146 and 291–311.
- <sup>43</sup> Following this line, I am interested in some art projects that are being developed in Palermo. See <https://acrobazie.org/larte-della-liberta/> (and the catalogue *L’arte della libertà. Diario di un modello inclusivo*, edited by Elisa Fulco and Antonio Leone, Acrobazie Edizioni 2020) and a project carried out by the University of Palermo: *GAP. Graffiti Art in Prison* (2021).