

## “Give me a wall and I will change the world”: Exploring the Remediation of Quito Graffiti Art

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There is a local saying in Ecuador: “*No hay muros blancos*/There are no blank walls.” The presence of graffiti on buildings and walls of public spaces is nothing new; however, in Quito it has emerged as a form of social and political commentary. The city’s graffiti artists have adopted a simple, poetic form that has allowed graffiti to become a vernacular of Quito: an anonymous space where people freely express their beliefs.

At the same time, though, graffiti in Quito is also considered an act of vandalism, and it is often removed and painted over after several days. However, technologies such as cameras and the internet have given this temporary art form a permanent home in the digital online world. Through LARC, I would like to pursue a research project that focuses on what happens when graffiti art is remediated into such a globally accessible space. I would like to explore its effect on Ecuadorian culture and society and the role it plays in the world. More broadly, I hope to deepen my understanding of the relationship between contemporary social revolutions and technology.

My interest in Quito graffiti art stems from my “Cultures of Mexico and Ecuador” class in which I am enrolled this semester. The course introduced me to Ecuadorian street art, and as a class we compared different forms of writing found in such media as books and newspapers with graffiti in order to understand the cultural stakes of this art form. The work done in class has helped develop my ability to compare two media forms and identify their unique qualities which will be a valuable skill in my LARC research. Furthermore, I am also in the process of applying to study abroad in Quito during the Fall 2013 semester. Although my LARC research would be completed prior to my departure, spending six months in Quito would deepen my understanding of Ecuadorian culture and allow me to gain firsthand experience with contemporary graffiti art. My time abroad would also give me the opportunity to photograph and document Quito graffiti in order to build an archive of this art form.

Technology is changing the world with faster, more efficient forms of communication. My participation in the LARC program is essential to my future goals because I would like to understand the impact of these changes in Latin America. As a Spanish and Latin American Studies double major, it is important that I have a relevant understanding of how globalization affects Latin American cultures, societies, and identities. As a sophomore, the research done through LARC could contribute to thesis work as well as give me the opportunity to share and supplement my experiences with the program on campus. This is also a great opportunity to collaborate with professors and students who share a passion for the impact of technology on society and culture.