

## TRAVELING ARTISTS' ROLES: AN ASYNCHRONOUS EMAIL INTERVIEW

KONSTANTINOS ANDRIOTIS

Department of Marketing, Branding and Tourism, Middlesex University, London, UK

---

This study uses as a case the dilapidated neighborhood of Lakkos in the city of Heraklion, Crete, Greece, to broaden the conventional view of traveling artists, as creative producers of artistic spaces with tourism potential. Through the use of secondary sources, observations, and asynchronous in-depth email interviewing having as a sample 24 traveling artists who voluntarily devote their time and effort to an art project outside their original countries, this study found that the traveling artists under study place emphasis on long-term travel schedules that allow them to perform three roles while visiting Lakkos: those of tourists, artists, and volunteers. These attributes distinguish them not only from mainstream tourists visiting the city of Heraklion and the island of Crete, but also from cultural, art, and creative tourists. The findings of the study are discussed in relation to the methodology of asynchronous email interviewing and the findings of past research.

**Key words:** Traveling artists' roles; Murals; Art tourism; Creative tourism; Voluntarism

---

### Introduction

While there is a plethora of studies highlighting the art–tourism relationship and recognizing the mutual benefits for both sectors (see, e.g., Cuyás & MacCannell, 2018; Hughes, 2011; Lester & Rakic, 2014; Riddering, 2018; Smith, 2003; Yan et al., 2019), tourism scholars have rarely paid attention to the role of traveling artists in this relationship, and the voices of artists visiting creative sites to voluntarily offer their art. Likewise, despite the scholarly attention paid recently to murals and tourism, there is a remarkable lack of disciplinary research on the act of muralism as a motivator for traveling artists.

Instead, scholarship on artists and tourism has been generally focused either on professional paid artists or on volunteers offering their art services to their own community. For instance, Pucciarelli and Cantoni (2017) explored working artists as creative residents who—motivated by place attachment—offer their artwork to their own community. Among the limited studies having explored various issues related to artists practicing art while traveling is Bell (2013), who studied peripatetic artists as tourists and transient professionals undertaking their own expert practices, and Valek (2020), who explored artists in art-residence at the Abu Dhabi Art Hub in the United Arab Emirates.

In the tourism literature there is a plethora of studies on the roles tourists perform while traveling (e.g., Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002; Keng & Cheng, 1999; Pearce, 1985; Yiannakis & Gibson, 1992). However, most studies on the topic of tourist roles are theoretical or have adopted a quantitative approach using large samples of tourists, while very few have attempted to operationalize the various forms of touristic behavior of a single type of non-mainstream tourists. Thus, there is a lack of research on the different roles particular types of tourists may perform. In fact, while research on tourists has classified tourists into many roles, it has not explicitly considered artists as tourists so far.

Taking under consideration past research negligence, it is the aim of this study to provide a thorough understanding of the traveling artists' phenomenon by paying attention to those artists who travel outside their original countries to offer their art voluntarily and while on a trip they perform multiple roles. These roles have been identified through a literature review (see, e.g., Brooks, 2002; Montgomery & Robinson, 1993), and have also emerged from primary data collection. This study is among the first attempts of a thorough investigation of traveling artists who are passionate to do their art no matter whether or not there will be a material reward. In reality, there is an increasing number of artists who use their art to express themselves and consider traveling abroad to participate voluntarily in specific art projects as a way to help communities lacking resources, while when at home, they have a part-time or full-time job to support their living.

This study adds to the knowledge of traveling artists' roles by extending the conventional view of artists as creative workers having a narrow breadth of motivations and examining their triple role not only as producers of artistic spaces with tourism potential, but also as travelers and volunteers. Despite the obvious advantages of murals that include beautification and gentrification of a building or neighborhood and income generation for a community (Koster, 2008) among others, the views of the traveling artists in relation to their willingness to produce murals and the distinct context of their trips are forgotten from tourism scholarship. Thus, the views of artists presented in this article are contextualized in terms of a number of distinct roles they perform

when visiting Lakkos, a neighborhood in the city of Heraklion, Crete, Greece, that is currently emerging as an artist destination. Lakkos has started only recently to be a secondary attraction, in the form of an open-air art gallery. It attracts only a small number of tourists who consider well worth exploring one of the most up and coming districts in the city of Heraklion. In contrast to those visitors who prefer popular destinations, Lakkos attracts culturally motivated tourists who want to interact with the islands past and present culture.

#### Tourists' and Traveling Artists' Roles

Specific segments of the travel market have unique motivations, needs, expectations, and preferences (Andriotis, 2011, 2016; Raj, 2012), which depend on several factors, such as personal, interpersonal, sociopsychological, etc. The plethora of studies exploring the motivations of several types of tourists are helpful to identify the roles these types of tourists perform while traveling. The motivation of the types of tourism that are related to voluntarism and arts, include volunteer tourists (Kitney et al., 2018), art tourists (Kim et al., 2018), creative tourists (Tan et al., 2013), cultural tourists (Ramires et al., 2018), and educational tourists (Sie et al., 2018). Despite these studies, there is a lack of research studying the motivations of artists functioning multiple roles while traveling and due to their multiple activities they do not acquire the characteristics of a single type of tourism.

Yiannakis and Gibson (1988) and Gibson (1989) were the first who made a significant contribution to the understanding of tourist roles. By using past conceptualizations of Cohen (1979) and Pearce (1982, 1985) they identified 13 leisure-based tourist roles (the sun lover, action seeker, anthropologist, archaeologist, organized mass tourist, thrill seeker, explorer, jetsetter, seeker, independent mass tourist, high class tourist, drifter, and escapist). Following these pioneer studies, a study by the same authors (Yiannakis & Gibson, 1990) added to the existing list of tourist roles the sport lover. In addition, Gibson (1994) renamed the sport lover to sport tourist and added the educational tourist increasing the number of tourist roles to 15. Following these studies several authors have explored various issues related to tourist roles such as relationship between

psychological needs and tourist role preference patterns (e.g., Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002) and the classification of vacationers into four tourist roles across the novelty–familiarity continuum (Keng & Cheng, 1999), etc. In the case of cultural tourists, despite the problems identified by Mousavi et al. (2016) in defining cultural tourists, several studies have attempted to group them. For instance, Stebbins (1996) divided cultural tourists into two main categories (specialized and general) and McKercher and du Cros (2002) identified five groups of cultural tourists (purposeful, sightseeing, serendipitous, casual, and incidental).

As far as traveling artists/muralists' roles are concerned, to the knowledge of the author there is limited scholarly attention and only superficially has been mentioned in the literature. To overcome past research negligence this study deals with the three roles of traveling artists producers of murals, namely touristic, artistic, and voluntary. First, as supported by Badhman (2017), visual artists producing murals outside their original countries can be considered as a new form of cultural tourism. This is backed up by Martini and Michelkevičius (2013, p. 12), who assert that the line separating tourism and the artistic trip is very thin, and Kenins (2013), who by giving the example of artists moving to Berlin, wonders whether these artists can resist taking on the role of tourists during their art trip. In a similar vein, Creative Tourism Network (2013) gives the example of artists who stay in an art residency searching inspirations by its creative environment and counts them as one of the subcategories of creative tourism. Other studies, while they do not include traveling artists in any form or subform of tourism, found that travel artists blend work and travel roles in the pursuit of inspiration (Bell, 2013).

Second, those traveling artists who visit an urban or rural space to produce a voluntary mural acquire not only touristic, but also an artistic, role identity. While artists may look for destinations “off the beaten track” where they can experience arts in a different way, travel to art destinations can be a rewarding experience, providing them several opportunities to escape their daily grind and immerse in creative learning experiences. At the same time, they actively experience and make contacts and networks with fellow artists from around

the world (Whitting & Hannam, 2014, p. 71). For many, money is not always important, but production of art is largely nonpecuniary. As Menger (1999) reported, artists' employment lifestyle offers direct satisfaction from the art itself, and therefore artists respond differently than other workers to economic incentives (Montgomery & Robinson, 1993, p. 17). Thus, inspired by the intrinsic motive of self-satisfaction they may prefer nonmonetary rewards to produce murals, such as to create something new and fulfilling (Leavell, 2016).

Third, while mainstream tourists have several sociopsychological motives, such as the desire for escaping from everyday life and entertain themselves (Andriotis, 2016; Brown & Lehto, 2005), the motives of artists and volunteers when traveling are diversified from the typical pattern of leisure seeking. Both may have common motives, such as to develop new skills and educate themselves, as well as to explore career opportunities that will aid their future employment or career advancement, and traveling to contribute to others and develop or improve some aspects of the host community offers them meaningful experiences (Brown & Lehto, 2005; Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2017). Paraphrasing Brown and Morrison (2003), artists, depending on the time they spend on voluntary artwork, can be either volunteer-minded traveling artists who dedicate most or all of their vacation time volunteering, or vacation-minded volunteer artists who devote only part of their vacations to volunteer artwork. Thus, painting a mural can be only a part of traveling artists' activities and not the sole motivation for visiting a place. In fact, the voluntary production of a mural can be only the beginning or part of a trip to a host community.

### Methodology

This article reports on the roles of traveling artists who participate in an art project, called “Lakkos project,” aiming at creating visually exciting murals on the walls. To develop a greater understanding of the phenomenon of traveling artists' roles, this study used various data collection methods. At first, various secondary sources, such as books, scholarly journal articles, reports, and posts on the internet, were explored to establish background information. While these sources mainly

correspond mainly to the society and context in which they are written, when analyzed carefully they can indicate their relevance to the study.

A triangulation approach was adopted by analyzing and combining secondary sources with primary ones. At first, observations and informal discussions with a small number of artists were undertaken. Following this, recruiting an adequate representative sample of traveling artists that could best inform the research was essential. In this context, the decision was made to interview all elements within the traveling artists' population having produced murals in Lakkos. Following the limitations of face-to-face interviews, such as that they are time consuming, the high cost involved, and in particular the difficulty to access geographically dispersed interviewees (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014), this study used a web-based semistructured qualitative method. Since the study was exploratory, the interview questions emerged after the author's informal discussions with the traveling artists.

A list with names and further details of all artists who produced murals in Lakkos up to October 2018 was available at the webpage (<https://lakkosartistsresidency.weebly.com/projects.html>). This list was updated by Mathew Halpin, the originator of the Lakkos project, as well as informal discussions with the artists. The small number of Greek and foreign artists who produced murals in Lakkos and stay permanently in Crete was not included in the sample because they could not be considered as traveling artists searching for various forms of experiences in an unknown place. Based on these criteria in total 36 foreign traveling artists received an email for participating to an interview.

To develop rapport with the sample, the researcher explained the purpose and expectations of the interview. In more detail, interviewees were initially informed about the study's aim and importance via a motivation letter. Following this, nine responses were received with a response time from emailing the research instrument to receiving the responses varying between 2 and 10 days. After 1 month a reminder was sent to nonresponders. This proved to be productive since in total 15 artists responded, increasing the number of respondents to 24 (63.9% of the 36 of traveling artists who received an interview request). Following the acceptance of interviewees to participate, each of them received the

research instrument. The first section of the research instrument explored the motivations of the sample to produce murals in Lakkos; the second was focused on the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample (age, gender, marital status, nationality, education); and the third on the touristic profile (number of people in traveling party, previous visits, length of stay, and activities at destination).

Since there was no room for clarification, all questions were self-explanatory. However, once the responses had been received, rather than sticking to the agenda of the original interview schedule, several follow-up emails were sent to collect data on points that had been seemingly overlooked or only briefly responded during the first stage of the interview. This allowed the author to build a relationship with every interviewee and each interviewee to revisit the research instrument and think about his responses as well as any issues that had slipped out of view through the course of the first interview. After receiving all responses the next step was to transcribe them. Transcribing was much easier compared to face-to-face interviews, since a file with all the email content was created for each interviewee.

To identify the essence of the phenomenon all data were thoroughly read and reread, bracketed, and compared and were coded into the various themes and subthemes that emerged from the literature review, as well as any additional ones that emerged during the coding process. By adopting this process, themes that recurred as commonalities in most traveling artists were found and used to explicate the roles traveling artists perform. In order to support a more interpretive discourse, links across the relevant literature were sought. To enliven the text by making the more general experiences available to the reader, the most powerful and eloquent expressions of verbatim excerpts that speak directly to the phenomenon of traveling artists roles are provided.

## Findings

### *Profile of Traveling Artists*

Before analyzing the views of the traveling artists interviewed, this study presents their sociodemographic characteristics and their touristic profile

(Table 1). Due to the nearly absence of empirical and secondary data, no particular profile of traveling artists producing murals appears to be evident in the literature, a fact that prevents reliable comparisons. This is due to the fact that this study is among the first attempts to explore the profile of artists traveling to produce murals.

While there are no statistics about the share of women in the profession of traveling artists, and therefore no generalizations can be made, a study by Valek (2020) used as a sample 305 international artists who spent 4 weeks working in an artist residency in Abu Dhabi found that 53% of her respondents were males. As a result it can be said that the sample of this study is overrepresented by female respondents (22 out of 24). Interviewees' ages range between 21 and 71 (mean 42.04). In more detail, 4 are early careers (between 21 and 30), 12 midcareers (between 31 and 50), and the remaining 8 late-careers (above 51). The finding that only 4 respondents were early careers means that artwork in Lakkos Artist Residency, where all interviewees stayed, does not attract entirely young artists who wish to educate themselves further by developing new skills after their graduation, as somebody would expect. The sample was well-educated. Among the respondents 19 had earned at least a college or university degree with 11 of them having undertaken postgraduate studies. All

artists, with the exception of 1 student and 1 retired, were paid art professionals (mainly employed or self-employed). There was a minority (5 in total) who had teaching arts as a primary or secondary job, while at the same time they were active artists. In order to earn a living, there were 2 early career artists who combined their art practice with a non-art-related job, such as a 25-year-old female who worked as bartender.

Singles comprised nearly two thirds of the sample and only five interviewees were married. In contrast to mainstream tourists that in 2017 stayed in Crete on average 8.4 days (Statista, 2018), the artists under study stayed for longer periods (on average 19.42 days). This result makes evident that traveling artists under study travel longer not only from tourists visiting Crete but also from Bell's (2013) peripatetic artists who generally stay up to 3 weeks. The majority of artists (15 in total) stayed between 3 weeks and 1 month and only one less than 1 week. It is clear that there is a relationship between length of stay and the main reason to visit Lakkos and Crete. In particular, those whose production of a mural was the main motivation stayed fewer days, as was the case of a 33-year-old American male artist who stayed only for 5 days. On the other hand, those who stayed longer had more chances to combine their artwork with other activities. An extreme example was one 60-year-old female artist who stayed in Lakkos only for 2 weeks, although her stay in Crete was much longer, in total 75 days.

Lakkos artists arrive from diverse nations in total from 13 countries and can be described as a multicultural group. In more detail, with limited exceptions interviewees were from Western developed countries representing four continents. The fact that the majority of artists originated from Western countries is presumably because Western artists have higher income, allowing them the expense associated with a self-financed artistic trip. In fact, all traveling artists with the exception of two that had some sort of funding, had to pay the bulk of the costs themselves, including accommodation at the artist residency. Also, some of them carried their tools and paintings for the murals. It should be acknowledged that slightly more than half originated from long-haul countries and therefore it is assumed that their flight expenses were high, not

Table 1  
Profile of Traveling Artists

	<i>N</i> (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	22 (91.66%)
Female	2 (8.33%)
<b>Age</b>	
21-30 years	4 (16.66%)
31-50 years	12 (50.00%)
51+ years	8 (33.33%)
<b>Education</b>	
No degree	5 (20.83%)
Undergraduate degree	8 (33.33%)
Postgraduate degree	11 (45.83%)
<b>Employment</b>	
Paid art professional	22 (91.66%)
Retired	1 (4.16%)
Student	1 (4.16%)
<b>Marital status</b>	
Single	19 (79.17%)
Married	5 (20.83%)

possible to be covered by underpaid artists. The majority of artists (seven in total) were from the US, followed by Australia (five) and Britain (two), as well as one artist from Italy, Spain, Ireland, Cyprus, Belgium, Switzerland, Netherlands, Russia, Singapore, and India, respectively.

Among the interviewees, nine had a great deal of international muralistic experience. The majority claimed that their decision to produce murals in Lakkos was affected mainly by the internet (19 in total) and only a minority had learned about Lakkos from a third party (two from colleagues and two from friends and relatives), as well as one from previous visit. Thus, the internet was a valuable travel tool in the choice of their artistic trip, as has been also found in other studies exploring noncultural forms of tourists (see, e.g., Davidson & Yu, 2004). Only one third of the traveling artists had previous knowledge of Crete by having visited the island before this trip.

#### *Artistic Role*

As Whiting and Hannam (2014, p. 73) reported in their study of working artists' journeys to other places, these journeys often act as escape from their daily grind, something attributed usually to mainstream tourists. Based on this, initial questions were focused on the artists' main motivations to produce murals in Lakkos. From the responses it was evident that all interviewees, in an attempt of gaining inspiration from new and different places, participate in art opportunities as and when they arise, as also reported by Bell (2013). In their role as traveling artists their trip to Lakkos enabled them to participate in an art project and to draw with confidence on their knowledge and experience of mural making. As has been reported by a 40-year-old female:

I was looking for a cool artist residency in an interesting and warm island in Europe to take new inspirations for my art.

Their involvement in an art project while in Lakkos was clearly valued, and it was their role as artists that brought them to the town in the first instance, as has been vividly explained by a 60-year-old female:

I am always an artist wherever I go, producing watercolour and sketches while travelling. As a foreigner, I am a tourist, however I did produce three paintings and had an exhibition at the Heraklion Polykedron, Municipal Art Gallery.

In a similar vein, a 31-year-old female artist explained that when she was looking for residencies she saw that the Lakkos Project had a focus on creating murals for the community and that appealed to her due to her street art background. Thus, the existence of the artist residency in Lakkos has proliferated the visitation of traveling artists, since as the Working Group of EU Member States Experts on Artists' Residencies (2014) reported, artists tend to use residencies to take "time out" as a midcareer break and to obtain creative learning experiences.

Driven by changes in artists' demand, which have resulted in increases in a growing focus on education and self-development as motives for their travel, all artists want to absorb the situated knowledge within the local communities they visit and to use this knowledge to successfully prepare their own artworks. Studying different "art worlds" provides for them ideal contexts. This was evident from the interviews when participants stated that they stayed at the artist residency due to their positive features associated with developing learning experiences that facilitate self-actualization and creativity. As a 31-year-old female stated:

the trip was for my professional life as a painter. I applied for the residency as a way of developing my own practice so in a lot of ways its more about education.

The Lakkos artists' residency allowed them to produce work out of the galleries, and explore the urban environment. In line to constructionism that is "an approach to teaching and learning that emphasizes active knowledge construction through experience, vs. passive knowledge" (Burlson, 2005, p. 438), all artists under study used their trip to extend learning. Artists' creativity is not only enhanced through formal educational institutions, but through informal learning systems, such as those offered in an artist residency. Their participation in learning experiences associated to the particular characteristics of the destination has helped them to apply their knowledge to develop their own

skills. In fact, from the interviews it was evident that for all interviewees visitation of Lakkos was an engagement in an independent self-development of their art skills in pursuit of personally chosen creative goals as well as to get involved in activities to improve their artistic skills. In their responses they talked about how they benefited from their stay in Lakkos in terms of learning new skills and how these skills were instrumental in pursuing new careers, as the following quotes exemplify:

This is my third mural. I am now quite motivated to organize my website to highlight my wall work. In the US, there are many opportunities to apply for public art commissions and I haven't for some time. I now feel more confident to do so. (56-year-old female)

I think any opportunity I have to make artwork in a different place is always going to help me inform my art practice so that I can always improve, which is helpful for my art career and being in the art community. (31-year-old female)

In practice, artists' residencies are types of enterprises that offer artists time and space away from their usual working environment and obligations, and typically satisfy specific needs that combine temporary living space with work into new cultural settings, which may offer them new inspirations and chances to research, develop, and produce new creative work (Badham, 2017). The following statement from a 36-year-old female interviewee exemplifies these interpretations:

I wanted to be part of an artist residency, and wanted to work in an environment that is new for me. . . . I'm active as a street artist and to make a wall pretty was just natural for me

and another one explained:

I see it as making art as part of an art residency, that's a different category for me (31-year-old female)

Interviewees (in total 19) indicate that they chose Lakkos because of its location characteristics related to artwork, rather than for the non-art aspects of the trip. The following example from the field notes demonstrates that artists were motivated to visit Lakkos by its lack of touristification:

it was a wonderful experience and I like Lakkos and Heraklion because it is very unique and different from most touristic cities. (31-year-old female)

In fact, for the majority of interviewees the main reason for undertaking the trip was pure artistic as explained by a 50-year-old female artist:

I wanted to expand my artistic creativity, strengthen my professional reputation and my international connection with other cultures, artists, and natural environments.

### *Touristic Role*

Even for those artists who declared arts as the main motivation to visit Lakkos, they did not simply visit Lakkos to produce a mural and then returned back home, but all of them visited significant sites on the island of Crete. In fact, all interviewees undertook several touristic activities besides to their artistic work. For this reason artists were requested to report the activities they undertook during their stay in Lakkos and Crete. From the findings it was evident that all interviewees in this study were engaged in traditional activities of cultural tourists. In particular, the most popular activities undertaken by all artists were based upon the exploration of the archaeological sites and historical places of the island. This finding confirms that the historical and archaeological resources of Crete are very important components for the attraction of artists, as has been also found by various studies (e.g., Apostolakis & Jaffry, 2007; Polyzos et al., 2007), who explored the ways that tourists in Crete and Greece interact with the past and present culture, mainly the archaeological sites and museums.

While higher priority was given to sites that were in close proximity to Lakkos, such as the historical and archaeological museums of Heraklion and Knossos Palace, many interviewees (14 in total) visited distant archaeological sites, such as the Palace of Festos. In addition, slightly more than half visited other towns of Crete, mainly the Venetian towns of Chania and Rethymnon. It is also interesting that 10 respondents visited the coastal village of Matala where during 1960s and 1970s hippies in protest against industrial society used to sleep in the caves of its beach (Andriotis, 2013). Following

these attractions a minority of artists visited nature reserves and religious sites (five and four, respectively). On the other hand, activities characterizing the mass type, such as swimming and sunbathing, were mentioned only by a minority of respondents (three in total).

From the findings it was evident that there was no consensus on whether traveling artists considered themselves as tourists. In fact, there were three main groups based on their responses. Travel artists in the first group (12 in total) did not accept the label of tourist to themselves, but instead they considered themselves as working artists. As a 51-year-old female stated:

no—the majority of my time was spent working and visits to attractions were work related. Not specifically—I would like longer to get to know the island better.

Artists in this group were critical about the tourism industry by adopting antitourist perspectives and viewing negatively the mass type of tourists visiting the island of Crete. A 31-year-old female artist perceived that tourists in Crete have the wrong types of tourist behavior and probably that was the reason that artists in this group denied the label of tourist for themselves:

My work in the art residency consisted in commenting on the tourist industry on the island and a comment on our self-obsessed way of traveling. I was profoundly shocked and saddened while I was on the island by seeing masses or red people that had little to no consideration for the culture of the island. I was marked by a bus trip towards Ellenica by seeing fat red people swimming in swimming pools in-front of the sea instead of enjoying the actual sea. Also the touristic architecture has little to no understanding of aesthetical value, respect for heritage and thinking only of profit and cheapest way that profits only big touristic companies but brings very little value to anyone else in the system.

The second group (eight in total) was the partial tourists who demonstrated how their trip to Lakkos integrated mobility for pleasure with artwork and a desire to gain inspirations from the elsewhere. In fact, this group integrated through their mobility the “artistic gaze” with the touristic one. While their main purpose of their trip was an instrumental

one (i.e., art), at the same time they devoted part of their free time to tourist-like activities. As two of them replied to the question on whether they considered themselves as tourists while in Lakkos:

not exactly . . . I spent a great deal of time in the Heraklion Museum but more in the nature of study. Maybe two or three days I ventured out of the city to sight see. (71-year-old female)

and

no not really . . . being on an artist residency in Lakkos didn't feel so much a tourist but yes in the visiting of other places in Crete, yes. (57-year-old female)

From these two quotes it is evident that these artists differentiated their role of artist from the one of tourist as was also the case of a 33-year-old female in this group who accepted the label of tourist, but always in conjunction to her capacity as an artist:

My objective at the time of visiting Lakkos and Crete was closer to work and academic situation than to tourism, but there were moments in which of course I became a tourist, traveling the island for the pure pleasure of knowing and discovering even trying that all would serve to develop my artistic work.

The third smallest group (six in total) was tourism-oriented artists who devoted most of their time in a creative working holiday rather than just to go to the beach and see the sights. This is also confirmed by the following quotes:

yes sure I was totally a tourist on the island and felt like it. (31-year-old female)

and

yes, I would consider myself a tourist and a resident artist because I had never been there before and I wanted to take in the surroundings. (25-year-old female)

There was also an artist in this group who considered herself as a working tourist:

sure I was a working tourist, I don't like being a tourist so I love to work on places and I did feel like a working tourist. (36-year-old female)



and another 31-year-old female who felt that her stay in Lakkos was more like a business trip.

### *Voluntary Role*

Through a literature review it is evident that despite the fact that volunteer work plays an essential role in several communities by contributing to economic output, particularly in the nonprofit sector, as well as to community development (International Labour Organization, n.d.), there is a lack of clarity about which activities can be included in volunteer work. To clarify this issue and identify whether the artists under study can be considered volunteer workers or not, this study adopts one of the most cited definition that defines volunteer work as “activities performed willingly and without pay to produce goods or provide services for others outside the volunteer’s household or family” (International Labour Organization, n.d.). This definition applies in the case of traveling artists in Lakkos. While in many occasions financing of street art projects may be provided by different sources, mainly by public agencies, particularly local governments (Simpson, 1980), all interviewees under study with the exception of a Spanish respondent who had won an award from the Museum of Pontevedra, Galicia, Spain, and a Singaporean one who was partially financed through European Union funding, all other artists were self-financed, indicating the voluntary nature of their trip and that the Lakkos project emerged without significant support by the public sector.

While the trip was self-financed by the vast majority of artists and none of them was paid for the production of artwork, when they were asked whether they considered their trip voluntary most of them (16 in total) did not agree, as the following quotes prove:

The painting was voluntary but I didn’t necessarily see it as a volunteer trip. (29-year-old female)

No, although they were done gratis due to the Greek economy. (60-year-old female)

Even if I did the projects without pay, I still would not consider it “volunteer work,” but more of a “mutual aid” type of relationship. (56-year-old female)

In fact, volunteering in the case of Lakkos involved an organized art project aiming to help the neighborhood of Lakkos to improve some aspects of the host community and also to develop the host community and its culture, as explained in the following interview excerpt:

I think that as we can see in many other places also outside of Crete and Lakkos, art and specifically the murals, can help not only to beautify, but also to regenerate neighborhoods in situations of decay, abandonment or simply little visited, thanks to the enrichment of its streets with urban paintings. All this has a clear effect on tourism and attraction to the place. The neighborhood of Lakkos has become even more interesting thanks to Lakkos project. (33-year-old female)

Twenty-one interviewees considered the production of their mural as obligation of their profession and as a desire to help the local community, and felt good about helping communities in need, although they acknowledged their trip as a part of artwork rather than volunteer work. As a 56-year-old female explained:

it is a work trip because I see myself as a professional artist. We don’t always get paid for our work but I don’t think of that as volunteering either.

In addition to producing a mural while in Lakkos a few respondents undertook additional voluntary activities, as was the case of a 71-year-old female who shared her creative experience to benefit the local population by coordinating drawing lessons:

I also gave free drawing lessons to local people. I was not paid and it was my idea. I enjoy teaching and am good at it and I like meeting local people. It was fun. They were a very sweet group. My last day we put up an exhibit of their work, my work and the other artists and all their families came and it was absolutely lovely. I think I will do it again.

In brief, in the context of the present study, learning seemed to be a part of volunteer artwork since several artists, mainly the younger ones, considered their mural production as a form of unpaid work contributing to their future employment or career advancement.

### Conclusions

To identify the roles traveling artists perform while traveling this study collected narratives of 24 traveling artists who voluntarily devote their time and effort to an art project outside their original countries. Through the use of secondary sources, observations, and asynchronous in-depth email interviewing, involving multiple email exchanges, this study identified what motivated traveling artists to produce noncommercial murals and the roles they perform. Lakkos, as an artist destination, offered to the traveling artists under study different artistic attributes compared to those offered by most mass urban destinations, such as the lack of conventional tourist attractions and mass consumption spaces. These attributes facilitated for traveling artists an artistic exploratory visit. By exploring the main elements of their trip, this study identified three main roles of traveling artists, the positioning of which was reflective of Lakkos optimal characteristics.

Mural production by the sample can be considered a much broader phenomenon which touches a wide range of tourism activities, something which has been also identified by Csapó (2012) in the case of cultural tourists. As a result, the roles of travelling artists identified in this study correspond to Stebbins' (1996) specialized cultural tourists and to McKercher and du Cros (2002) purposeful cultural tourists, although some days of their stay in Crete can be also considered as sightseeing cultural tourists.

From a methodological perspective, among the main conclusions of this study is that while the aim of asynchronous email interview is not to replace traditional face-to-face interviews, it can be used as a qualitative research method with unique benefits. These benefits include that it is cost efficient, reduces the time required, interviewees have the intimacy of their home environment, meaning that they are able to describe their feelings and express themselves better in writing, as well as have more time to move back and forth through their writings and to think their responses and to reflect on them (Mann & Stewart, 2000; Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014; Schiek & Ullrich, 2017). In effect, asynchronous email interviews helped the researcher to obtain denser responses and interviewees to provide

an enriched interview. Nevertheless, despite of the advantages of asynchronous email interviewing, its main disadvantages include that it lacks spontaneity and nonverbal and paralinguistic cues (Hamilton & Bowers, 2006). Thus, electronic communication should not be used as a cheap alternative to face-to-face interviews.

From a practical perspective, this study presents new insights by identifying traveling artists' roles and illuminated some aspects of the scope of the phenomenon of traveling artists in which voluntary artwork and tourism interact. While this study does not claim that the use of artists staying in a single artist residency represents the global situation of traveling artists, since all interviewees were artists having produced murals in a single Greek neighborhood and 24 out of 26 interviewees were females, it was found a diversity of roles artists painting murals perform. However, this study faces several limitations. According to Hicks (1994), research "proceeds better through structure comparisons of cases that differ on the values of their outcome variables than it does through a succession of single-case studies" (p. 90). Nevertheless, through a literature review it was evident that past research is quite narrow and sporadic. Therefore, further research about traveling artists would assist in solidifying the phenomenon under study. While this study reflected larger travel trends of a particular travel personality, those of traveling artists, there is still a great need for research on other traveling artists' destinations to determine whether the findings of this study can be generalized. Only when the findings of this study are corroborated by further observations will they provide some tentative answers to the understanding of the complex phenomenon of traveling artists as they naturally occur

### References

- Andriotis, K. (2011). A comparative study of visitors to urban, coastal and rural areas: Evidence from the island of Crete. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 4(2), 93–108.
- Andriotis, K. (2013). The 'antinomian' travel counterculture of Gavdos. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 40(1), 40–58.
- Andriotis, K. (2016). From nudism and naturism tourism to 'natourism': Defining natourism and exploring natourists' motivations. *Tourism Analysis*, 21(2–3), 237–249.
- Apostolakis, A., & Jaffry, S. (2007). The effect of cultural capital on the probability to visit cultural heritage

- attractions. *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, 1(1), 17–32.
- Badham, M. (2017). *The social life of artist residencies: Working with people and places not your own*, Seismopolite. *Journal of Art and Politics*, 18, 1–6.
- Bell, C. (2013). Peripatetic artists: Creative mobility and resourceful displacement. In S. Cohen, M. Thulemark, & T. Winter (Eds.), *Lifestyle nobilities and corporealities* (pp. 21–34). Ashgate.
- Brooks, A. C. (2002). Artists as amateurs and volunteers. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 13(1), 5–15.
- Brown, S., & Lehto, X. (2005). Traveling with a purpose: Understanding the motives and benefits of volunteer vacationers. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 8(6), 479–496.
- Brown, S., & Morrison, A. (2003). Expanding volunteer vacation participation. An exploratory study on the mini-mission concept. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 28(3), 73–82.
- Burleson, W. (2005). Developing creativity, motivation, and self-actualization with learning systems. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 63, 436–451.
- Cohen, E. (1979). A phenomenology of tourist experiences. *Sociology*, 13, 179–201.
- Creative Tourism Network. (2013). [http://www.kreativreisen.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Service/Info-Creative-TourismNetwork-ENG.pdf](http://www.kreativreisen.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Service/Info-Creative-TourismNetwork-ENG.pdf)
- Csapó, J. (2012). The role and importance of cultural tourism in modern tourism industry. In M. Kasimoglu (Ed.), *Strategies for tourism industry: Micro and macro perspectives* (pp. 201–232). InTech.
- Cuyás, J. D., & MacCannell, D. (2018). Art, tourism and authenticity. Dean MacCannell in correspondence with José Díaz Cuyás. *Journal of Tourism History*, 10(2), 165–182.
- Davidson, A. P., & Yu, Y. (2004). The internet and the occidental tourist: An analysis of Taiwan's tourism websites from the perspective of western tourists. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 7(2), 91–102.
- Gibson, H. (1989). *Tourist roles: Stability and change over the life cycle* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Connecticut.
- Gibson, H. (1994). Moving beyond the “what is and who” of sport tourism to understanding “why”. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 9(3), 247–265.
- Gibson, H., & Yiannakis, A. (2002). Tourist roles: Needs and the lifecourse. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(2), 358–383.
- Hamilton, R., & Bowers, B. J. (2006). Internet recruitment and e-mail interviews in qualitative studies. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16(6), 821–835.
- Hicks, A. (1994). Qualitative comparative analysis and analytical induction: The case of the emergence of the social security state. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 23(1), 86–113.
- Hughes, H. L. (2011). *Arts, entertainment and tourism*. Routledge.
- International Labour Organization. (n.d.). Volunteer work. [https://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/statistics-overview-and-topics/WCMS\\_470308/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/statistics-overview-and-topics/WCMS_470308/lang-en/index.htm)
- Keng, K. A., & Cheng, J. L. L. (1999). Determining tourist role typologies: An exploratory study of Singapore vacationers. *Journal of Travel Research*, 37(4), 382–390.
- Kenins, L. (2013). Escapists and jet-setters: Residencies and sustainability. *CMagazine*, 119, 8.
- Kim, S. S., Chung, J. Y., & King, B. (2018). Intra-Asian performing arts tourism—the motivations, intentions, and performance preferences of Japanese visitors. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 43(3), 372–388.
- Kitney, S., Stanway, A. R., & Ryan, M. M. (2018). Volunteer tourism motivations of the marine conservation Cambodia project. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(10), 1091–1096.
- Koster, R. L. P. (2008). Mural-based tourism as a strategy for rural community economic development. In A. G. Woodside (Ed.), *Advances in culture, tourism and hospitality research* (pp. 153–292). Emerald.
- Leavell, J. P. (2016). Motivations in the fine-art market: A self-determination theory approach. *Atlantic Marketing Journal*, 5(2), 115–125.
- Lester, J.-A., & Rakic, T. (eds.). (2014). *Travel, tourism and art*. Ashgate.
- Mann, C., & Stewart, F. (2000). *Internet communication and qualitative research. A handbook for researching online*. SAGE.
- Martini, F., & Mickelkevicius, V. (2013). *Tourists like us: Critical tourism and contemporary*. ISSUU.
- McKercher, B., & du Cros, H. (2002). *Cultural tourism: The partnership between tourism and cultural heritage management*. Haworth Hospitality Press.
- Menger, P.-M. (1999). Artistic labor markets and careers. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 25, 541–574.
- Montgomery, S. S., & Robinson, M. D. (1993). Visual artists in New York: What's special about person and place? *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 17(2), 17–40.
- Mousavi, S. S., Doratli, N., Mousavi, S. N., & Moradiahari, F. (2016). Defining cultural tourism. Paper presented at the *International Conference on Civil, Architecture and Sustainable Development (CASD-2016)*, Dec. 1–2, London.
- Paraskevaïdis, P., & Andriotis, K. (2017). Altruism in tourism: Social exchange theory vs altruistic surplus phenomenon in host volunteering. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 62, 26–37.
- Pearce, P. (1982). *The social psychology of tourist behavior*. Pergamon.
- Pearce, P. (1985). A systematic comparison of travel-related roles. *Human Relations*, 38, 1001–1010.
- Polyzos, S., Arabatzis, G., & Tsiantikoudis, S. (2007). The attractiveness of archaeological sites in Greece: A spatial analysis. *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, 1(3), 246–266.
- Pucciarelli, M., & Cantoni, L. (2017). A journey through public art in Douala: Framing the identity of New Bell neighbourhood. In J. Skinner & L. Jolliffe (Eds.), *Murals and tourism: Heritage, politics and identity* (pp. 149–164). Routledge.

- Raj, R. (2012). Religious tourist's motivation for visiting religious sites. *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, 4(2), 95–105.
- Ramires, A., Brandão, F., & Sousa, A. C. (2018). Motivation-based cluster analysis of international tourists visiting a World Heritage City: The case of Porto, Portugal. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 8, 49–60.
- Ratislavová, K., & Ratislav, J. (2014). Asynchronous email interview as a qualitative research method in the humanities. *Human Affairs*, 24, 452–460.
- Riddering, L. (2018). The art of development: Economic and cultural development through art in San Juan la Laguna, Guatemala. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 16(2), 123–137.
- Schiek, D., & Ullrich, C. G. (2017). Using asynchronous written online communications for qualitative inquiries: A research note. *Qualitative Research*, 17(5), 589–597.
- Sie, L., Phelan, K. V., & Pegg, S. (2018). The interrelationships between self-determined motivations, memorable experiences and overall satisfaction: A case of older Australian educational tourists. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 9(3), 354–379.
- Simpson, E. (1980). Chicano street murals: A sociological perspective. *Popular Culture*, XIII(3), 516–525.
- Skinner, J., & Jolliffe, L. (2017). Murals and tourism: Heritage, politics and identity. In J. Skinner & L. Jolliffe (Eds.), *Murals and tourism: Heritage, politics and identity* (pp. 3–24). Routledge.
- Smith, M. K. (2003). *Issues in cultural tourism studies*. Routledge.
- Statista. (2018). *Average length of stay of visitors to the Greek Island of Crete in 2017*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/880609/average-stay-tourists-visiting-crete/>
- Stebbins, R. A. (1996). Cultural tourism as serious leisure. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23(4), 948–950.
- Tan, S.-K., Luh, D.-B., & Kung, S.-F. (2013). A taxonomy of creative tourists in creative tourism. *Tourism Management*, 42, 248–259.
- Valek, N. S. (2020). Word-of-art: Contribution of artists-in-residence to a creative tourism destination. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 18(3), 81–95.
- Whiting, J., & Hannam, K. (2014). Journeys of inspiration: Working artists' reflections on tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 49, 65–75.
- Working Group of EU Member States Experts on Artists' Residencies. (2014). *Policy handbook on artists' residencies: Work plan for culture 2011–2014*. European Union.
- Yan, L., Xu, J., Sun, Z., & Xu, Y. (2019). Street art as alternative attractions: A case of the East Side Gallery. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 29, 76–85.
- Yiannakis, A., & Gibson, H. (1988). *Tourist role preference and need satisfaction: Some continuities and discontinuities over the life course*. Paper presented at the Leisure Studies Association Conference, Brighton, England, June 29–July 3.
- Yiannakis, A., & Gibson, H. (1990). *Some further developments in tourist role research* [Unpublished paper]. Research Laboratory for Leisure, Tourism, and Sport, University of Connecticut.
- Yiannakis, A., & Gibson, H. (1992). Roles tourists play. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 19(2), 287–303.