

## NEW VOICES IN CLASSICAL RECEPTION STUDIES

Conference Proceedings Volume Two

### **Myth on the Wall: Images of Antiquity in Contemporary Street Art**

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#### ABSTRACT

This article presents the reception of classical antiquity in contemporary street art as exemplified by five large-scale, public murals: *Waiting for a New Prometheus* (Sándor Rácmolnár), *The Care of Knowledge and The Root of Evil* (MP5), *Leda and the Swan* (PichiAvo), and *Bomb Damage/Niobe* (Banksy). Each of these murals draws on the generative and syncopated narrative strategies of classical mythology to formulate new and fluid connections between narratives of the deep past and the concerns of the popular present, from international politics to domestic violence. Similarly, each of the case studies presented in this article illustrates a different aspect of the process by which artists are absorbing and transfiguring classical narratives. This communication is facilitated by the multi-dimensional relationship between the classical source material, the street artist, and the audience of the public street, which allows for polyvalent meanings to be experienced at the point of reception. Exploring the ways artists communicate these relationships through myth provides an opportunity for reflection on broader issues of boundaries, accessibility, and authority within classical studies.