

Public Art Dialogue

Kexin Liu^{1,*}

¹Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts, Shanghai University, Shanghai, China

*Corresponding author. Email: Giusy_1997@163.com

ABSTRACT

The construction of public art is not only to leave a work of art in the public space, but to make the work penetrate into the lives of the public and into their hearts, so as to arouse emotional interaction and communication, and interact and influence with people, society, and the environment. From this point of view, public art is more like an art that balances various social relationships, which requires that it always have a dialogue relationship with the city, the community, and the public, and find a context of integration. Once out of touch with it, it will not only affect the appearance of the city, but also cause public dissatisfaction and controversy. This paper takes the public art dialogue as the starting point, and discusses the social meaning of the 2019 Urban Space Art Season held in Shanghai from the three aspects of the dialogue between public art and the city, the community and the public.

Keywords: public art, urban image, the Urban Space Art Season, Yangpu Riverside Park, public participation

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of public art was introduced from the West. After 30 years of evolution in China, its development trend has shifted from modern art represented by elitism to contemporary public art that emphasizes public participation and dialogue. In the field of public art, public participation and dialogue reflect the freedom and equality of art. Public art builds a bridge for public participation in art, allowing the public to think, communicate and interact freely and equally in the public domain. With the continuous in-depth study of public art dialogue in China, publicity, the core of public art, has gradually received widespread attention. This paper explores the social meaning of public art dialogue in the contemporary context through the study of the 2019 Urban Space Art Season, that is, how public art engages in dialogue with cities, communities and the public and promotes the development of cities and society, as well as the connotation of publicity and the relationship between publicity and public art dialogue.

II. THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC ART DIALOGUE

Public art is a developing concept. This term appeared in the 1960s, and then gradually attracted wide attention from various Western government departments, and related laws and regulations were promulgated, and various organizations were established. In the mid-1990s, the anti-monument-style public art school emerged, and the ways in which public art was involved in public space gradually diversified. Public participation, dialogue, relationship, and interactive art became new synonymous with

public art. Compared with traditional art, as a contemporary art form, public art has to solve new contemporary historical, social and cultural problems. As scholars have said, public art is neither an art form nor a unified style or genre. It is a way of thinking based on the meaning of contemporary culture that enables art in public space to have a relationship with the public, and it also reflects the spirit and attitude of democracy, openness, communication and sharing in public space. [1]

In short, public art is an art that balances various social relations. It must always have a dialogue relationship with the city, the community and the public, find ways to integrate with each other, and provide an equal dialogue platform for all participants. This dialogue environment is multi-dimensional, between cities, communities, the public, artists and the public art works. Cities and communities provide physical spaces for public art dialogue, and the public and artists are interactive elements in the material space. Public art works are a dialogue bridge connecting the material space and interactive elements. Therefore, public art dialogue is an artistic activity developed by artists based on the interrelationship between physical space, the public, and art works. Public art dialogue contains multiple meanings. First, it can be a dialogue between viewers caused by a public art work. This is an ordinary dialogue that can be triggered by every work. Second, in these public art works placed in physical space, dialogue becomes part of the work. The work itself contains controversy and dialogue, which is one of the social meanings of public art dialogue, and also the publicity of public art. As David Haley once mentioned in his speech entitled "Dialogue with Oyster — The Art of Cooperation":

"Dialogue sometimes requires a cooperater, and this is exactly the role that an artist can play. The dialogue itself can be a piece of work, or it can be the basis for producing other works."

In addition, while public art intervenes in society, it also triggers various other social dialogues and interactions, and thus produces a series of works.

In 2019, Shanghai hosted the Urban Space Art Season, which created a shared urban cultural context. This Art Season was a dialogue with the city, communities and the public in Shanghai in the process of urban renewal. It incorporated public participation into the urban cultural practice, and realized the dialogue between public art and the city, the community and the public in a diversified form, in order to realize the interaction and communication among people, environment and culture. In addition, these considerable permanent public art works that are accessible to everyone and public art activities in which everyone can participate in the creation also reflect the equality and publicity of public art. They allow people of different classes to meet, engage in dialogues and communicate, and have the meaning of public attributes to promote the development of the city.

III. DIALOGUE WITH THE CITY

Public art is located in the urban environment and doesn't exist as an isolated individual. It is to be in the context of integration, to have a dialogue with the city, and to be recognized by the public, in order to better reflect the value of public art, and be more conducive to the development of the city, and ultimately realize the symbiosis of the city and art. Yangpu riverside has been in dynamic changes since the planning of the Shanghai Urban Space Art Season. Public art, as a new "business

card" of the city, continuously gives this place new decorations.

A. *Creating a city's business card*

As the "business card" of the city, public art has become the carrier and symbol of urban culture, representing the image and aesthetic orientation of the city. The issuance of the "Percent for Art" Act in the United States clearly uses one percent of the construction funds for the construction of public art. This move shows that public art has been integrated with urban planning and has a huge effect on the promotion of urban image.

In Yangpu Riverside Park, the original rusty shipyard ("Fig. 1") is used as a music performance venue for the opening ceremony of the Art Season. Under the renovation of the architect Zhang Ming, the shipyard will become the largest public art work in the Art Season. The super-scale space has a sense of place and shock, and it may become a "T stage" for art performances in the future. The "rusty field" has truly become a "show field". In the past, the shipyard was a place for building and repairing ships. Its mission has been completed with the advent of modern civilization and is now abandoned. In order to highlight the cultural characteristics of this place, the architect Zhang Ming brought back the evacuated industrial components to highlight the industrial characteristics of Yangpu. The ruins of these cities bear the thickness of time. When the audience goes down to the shipyard space, they can see the mottled wall after repeated painting, and feel the heavy sense of industrial history preserved through the baptism of years. Whether it is the rusty parts, the shipyard door, or the steel sheet piles on both sides, the viewer will be greatly shocked.



Fig. 1. Shipyard.

^a The picture is taken by the author; Shipyard; 2019; Yangpu Riverside Park.



Fig. 2. "Mothball Memory".

In addition, the artist Liu Jianhua's art installation "Mothball Memory" ("Fig. 2") is placed in the shipyard. These machines are made of discarded industrial steel plates, being stacked here like old televisions. A part of the steel plate is selected to place a display screen, looping the old Chinese movies from the 1980s. At night, the cold light around the installation will emit cold light, and the cold light will appear slightly in the night, making the audience have a kind of respect for history spontaneously. This huge work of art has a strong industrial color, highlighting the industrial characteristics of the Yangpu riverside area. Contemporary civilization and historical culture collide and dialogue here. Someone once said that it would be a great pity if they never visited the dock during the Art Season. This proves that the shipyard has become a characteristic business card of Yangpu riverside, giving the city a distinctive character and highlighting the city's unique industrial style.

B. Producing urban catalyst effect

Public art needs to rely on the historical context of the city, seek the dialogue relationship between the old and the new cultural forms with an equal attitude, inherit the characteristic culture, and form the cultural

^{a.} The picture is taken by the author; Mothball Memory; 2019; Yangpu Riverside Park. identity of the city. An excellent public art work can play a positive role in the cultural development of the city, preserve the cultural memory of the city, and form a cultural identity. This driving effect can be called the "urban catalyst theory".

The 20 public art works placed along the riverside are a series of local creations based on the local culture. Now, 10 of the works have been completed, standing on the bank of the riverside in a dialogue attitude, facing Lujiazui on the opposite bank. The work "Huangpu Cargo Hold" ("Fig. 3") is a set of dazzling red steel pipe installations. Richard Wilson used the materials from the local disused ships to assemble and present a brand new work. Under the new look, the discarded materials are constantly reminding the history here, and the dialogue with the surrounding environment is constantly taking place. A city is a container for accumulating history and culture. [2] Historic culture is the soul of the city. Through the intervention of this public art, an atmosphere of dialogue between history and the present is formed in the urban space. It is not only a dialogue with the industrial civilization of Yangpu in the past, but also a dialogue with the current public and the future of Shanghai.

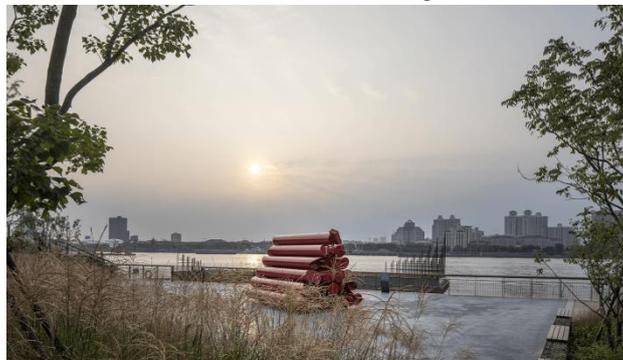


Fig. 3. "Huangpu Cargo Hold".

^{a.} The picture is taken by Tian Fangfang; Huangpu Cargo Hold; 2019; Yangpu Riverside Park; official website of Shanghai Urban Space Art Season.

"Huangpu Cargo Hold" is a public art work created with industrial waste materials as raw materials. As far as the work itself is concerned, it not only reduces unnecessary waste of resources, but also sets a flaunt for the construction of an ecologically civilized city and reminds the public to cherish resources. In addition, the way of art tells passers-by the story of the city's past, which not only continues the industrial memory of the city, but also activates the cultural ecology of the urban space.

To sum up, public art is actually a kind of interactive art, and its interactive nature attracts the public to put aside their electronic products, enter the public space from the virtual network world, and approach public art. Public art uses a face-to-face dialogue and interaction to trigger public recognition and understanding. Not only that, through the dialogue between public art and the city, it not only helps to create a distinctive city card, beautify the city image, but also continue the historical heritage of the city, form urban cultural identity, build a platform for communication with urban space public relations with a unique visual image, and activate the culture and economy of urban space.

IV. DIALOGUE WITH THE COMMUNITY AND THE PUBLIC

Through dialogue with the community and the public, public art enhances the public's awareness of the physical space in which it is located, and then generates the participation identity of behavior, and finally can stimulate the public's emotional experience identity. In the community, the public is no longer the last viewer of the artwork, but as a participant, intervening in discussions and getting involved from the beginning of the community's art planning. Residents have stimulated their emotional identification with the community by participating in community public affairs. Public art design is no longer a static result, but is transformed into an interaction, communication, multi-participation, and process-led design framework that allows self-repair. Therefore, community art is also called "dialogical art" or "community engagement". [3] This also shows the importance of dialogue between public art and the community and the public.

A. Community place creation

The community has rich forms of artistic activities, and public art is regarded as one of the ways of expression. As the creator of community space, public art is also the leader and advocate of community public culture. Public works of art in the community firstly need to be closely integrated into the daily lives of community residents to help residents find a sense of belonging to the community. Secondly, it's needed to respond to issues related to the community.

Corresponding artistic methods should be adopted according to the background and culture of the community, emphasizing the interaction between the local public and the works, enhancing the public's artistic literacy, allowing residents to transform into artists, actively participate in artistic creation, and create a good artistic atmosphere, and enhancing the community vitality.

The practical case of "Jing'an Pengyuepu-Community Remodeling Waterfront Public Art Site" starts from Wenshui Road to Guangzhong West Road, renews the original dilapidated wall, and carries out a series of thematic creations around the story of Pengyuepu. The new look of the wall and the guide system ("Fig. 2") beautifies the living environment of the surrounding residents, and makes the residents be happy physically and mentally and always feel the improvement of the quality of life in the waterfront space. The artistic method of using picture books to tell the story of Pengyuepu is novel and vivid, which not only evokes memories for adults, but also attracts a large number of children to better understand the local past with concise and clear painting language. This case exhibition abandons the unrelated and mechanical creation of the community environment in the past, and is based on the community history. It values the emotional dialogue and interaction between the community and the public, and dialogues with Pengyuepu's people, water, history, and culture. Activities such as the public interactive video art participation plan and the introduction of the good reputation into the community create a warm and meaningful community space for the public, arouse symbiosis and interaction between public art and the community, arouse the resonance of viewers, gain public understanding and tolerance, increase the sense of belonging and place of community residents, and improve the spiritual and cultural life quality of community residents.

B. Strengthening community cohesion

At present, due to the development of the urban economy, the mobility of community population has increased, and the population and cultural background of the community has become more diverse and complex. Community residents' sense of belonging to the community has gradually weakened, their participation in community management has gradually decreased, and people have become indifferent and alienated. Yamazaki Ryo, a well-known expert in community construction in Japan, puts forward in his book "Community Design": "What is more important than design space is the connection between people." [4] Therefore, how to promote the interaction of community residents, enhance community cohesion, and improve collective awareness has become the focus of community art.

The art season joint exhibition walks into the daily life of the neighborhood. One of the works "Blossoming in Shanghai" ("Fig. 3") touches more than 60 community gardens and more than 500 mini gardens in Shanghai, and triggers the public to actively participate in the improvement of communities in front of their homes. The joint exhibition mainly organizes the public to participate in community management and maintenance in the form of interactive participation, integrating multiple resources including students, residents committees, residents, community construction experts and scholars, etc. Through a rich dialogue with the community, it creates a space for communication and interaction, bringing the possibility of dialogue to the originally isolated communities and residents, letting them take the initiative to get out of the house, eliminating the sense of distance between the community and the public, enhancing the collective awareness and community cohesion of community residents, and also increasing the public's professional knowledge about green space, natural culture, and making them have a deep understanding of the value of land in public spaces. This public art activity not only focuses on the construction of spiritual civilization, but also the construction of ecological civilization, which has shortened the relationship between man and nature, and the community has become more lively and vivid.

Public art, as a link between art and the public, makes art no longer a superior art of elites, but tends to be popular. The public is no longer a viewer and receiver, but a participant and creator. The process of public participation in creation is not just a simple participation in urban public affairs. It is the communication and dialogue between the heart and the surrounding environment, constantly fusing and rubbing to resonate.

The cases mentioned above are excellent cases of dialogue between public art and the community and the public. Their significance and impact to the community and the public are very far-reaching, providing a model for the future development of other communities. In short, to carry out public art projects in the community, it's necessary to choose different ways of dialogue according to different communities, and one can't treat different things as the same. Successful community public art must be a local creation based on the dialogue between the community and the public. It can trigger the resonance of the public and gain understanding and support, which in turn will cause dialogue and interaction between the community and the public, create a good atmosphere for community art education, and enhance the cohesion and attractiveness of the community.

V. THE PUBLIC CONNOTATION OF PUBLIC ART

The core concept of public art is the appeal for publicity. [5] The manifestation of this publicity is not only the sharing in the physical space, but also the joint participation, sharing, and thinking in terms of spiritual connotation. As Catherine Grout believes, the basic purpose of art's intervention in public space is to make certain scenes, events, and concepts arouse widespread concern and thinking in society through a certain perceptible form, and to show the publicity of things.

Therefore, the publicity of public art is first reflected in the interactive participation of the public in public art. The approachable characteristics of public art can make a group of strangers have a sincere dialogue here. The space created by this Art Season can accommodate people from all over the world to interact and participate here. It is open and tolerant, regardless of nationality and age. This kind of equal communication and interaction is one of the embodiment of its publicity. Secondly, it is reflected in the value judgment of public art. Since the birth of a work of public art, its publicity contains controversy and dialogue, different people have different evaluations of it, and whether these evaluations are good or bad, they are a part of public art. In 2011, a sculpture was exhibited on Michigan Avenue Square in Chicago, titled "Forever Monroe", by artist Seward Johnson. Since the date of its exhibition, there were constant voices and controversies. Most citizens couldn't accept this work, believing that it reduced the artistic quality of Chicago, so it was removed in 2014. This work has become public since it appeared in the public eye, and has attracted a series of criticism and controversy. As Habermas believes, "publicity" is a state system principle in the public sphere under the liberal economic model or a critical principle derived from the public. [6] Therefore, the existence of critical dialogue and disputes is the basis for the realization of public art.

VI. CONCLUSION

All in all, compared to other art forms, public art is more about exploring public relations in urban spaces and constructing an ecological space for harmonious dialogue and symbiosis. Public art constructs a dialogue and interaction platform between the city, the community and the public. Through dialogue with the environment, interaction and communication between people, people and the environment, and people and culture can be realized. Public art takes on the important mission of activating the urban cultural ecology and rebuilding the urban environment through dialogue with the city, and promotes urban development. At the same time, the implementation of public art projects in the community can inject new

vitality into the development of the community, awaken the public's sense of identity and belonging to the community, improve the interaction and participation between the public and the city and the community in a gentle and warm way, realize the interaction and communication between people, people and the environment, and people and nature, and also convey the concept of equality for all and open communication and dialogue. All of the above shows that public art dialogue has multiple social meanings, and it has a major role in promoting the development of cities and communities.

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