

# The Art Economic Integration: Analysis on the Status Quo of Public Art Under Commercial Integration

## Taking Dale Chihuly's Glass Installation as an Example

Hui Tang<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts, Shanghai University, Shanghai 200040, China

\*Corresponding author. Email: 412556813@qq.com

### ABSTRACT

Dale Chihuly uses glass to create a large number of large-scale public art installations, including interior furnishings to landmark buildings and to branded entrepreneurial industrial cooperation. And the glass art has achieved "art economic integration" in methods and practices. Chihuly's art team is a knowledge- and capital-intensive organization that combines the production efficiency of blown glass with the symbolism of glass products under the form of public art, and focuses on the boundaries of the integration of commerce and art. This kind of artistic practice constitutes a super mixture integrating "value symbols, knowledge integration, technology inheritance, and economic manipulation", and also forms a cultural entrepreneurial industrial chain integrating art and economics.

**Keywords:** *Commercial integration, Blown glass, Public art, Cultural value.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Dale Chihuly (1941-) is an artist who cannot be ignored in contemporary glass art. He uses glass materials as a medium to create and display glass art all over the world. The artistic methods and practices formed in the process of creation have a wide range of influence on artists and society. The benefits and influence derived from the "art products" made of glass unify the commerciality and profitability of art.

Chihuly phenomenon in the field of art has never been a pure artistic phenomenon. The glass art has realized art economic integration in terms of method and practice. [1] Chihuly's glass art can be considered as a non-traditional form of public art. The main reason lies in the particularity of traditional glass materials. He freed glass objects from the "noble furnishings" of craftsmanship and reconstituted them into installations related to space and place. Since the 1990s, the huge size of his public art installations has continued to create hot spots for audiences and the media industry. Secondly, Chihuly has a large enterprise and

transportation company. These public art installations made of glass have made a lot of contributions to the local economy and the improvement of local per capita income, which can be said that "glass has driven art economics" for his hometown Tacoma. With the increased income of museums, the support of local governments, the establishment of glass art schools and the cooperation of various large-scale projects, the local income increases, and the employment problem of many people has been solved. The light-emitting blown glass forms a deep contrast with the surrounding architectural environment. For example, the federal court in Tacoma, Washington, the Bellagio casino in Las Vegas, and the glass castle in the light of Jerusalem in the millennium are representative cases of large-scale artistic creativity driving industrial economy and regional development. In addition, some typical landmark buildings are also the cooperation objects of public art exhibition of Chihuly, such as the Louvre in Paris and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The most famous are the architectural installations on the Venice Canal and square and the Olympic installations in Salt Lake City.

## 2. GLASS ART AS A CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRY

Culture is a part of value derivatives. In order to make the most of the benefits, the output of cultural value creation needs to be produced in industry.

Chihuly has a keen sense of social hot spots. He is good at creating visual pleasure for the public and enjoys being the "superstars" in the field of the glass art. His goal of public art is to win the public's artistic resonance by blown glass works and installations. He combines business and art, expands the influence of glass installations and obtains public attention and economic benefits at the same time. By displaying his art in museums, art galleries, societies, publications, conferences and other public forums and conferences, Chihuly has attracted the collectors and obtained the active investment of sponsors and the government. Chihuly's art explores the future of glass art through the pursuit of multiculturalism and elegant art, and stimulates the growth of art demand through the reform and innovation in the field of art education.

Dale Chihuly is the first person in the United States to operate the team artistically. And he has a team of about 30 people working for him. In addition, he has an art handling and installation company to carry out a large number of blown glass handling and installation and disassembly of exhibits for him. Also, Chihuly's innovative business marketing skills should be paid attention to. The marketing skills include customized art installation in places, cosmetics, jewelry, home furnishings, film festivals, chocolate brands, sports medals and other glass cooperation, limited distribution of its own publishing house, annual auction fundraising of Pilchuck Glass School.

Chihuly has built its own glass art brand, and glass has commercial attributes under the influence of Chihuly's brand.

Now, the individual and aesthetic scene in secular life restrict the formal characteristics of art, just as the religious belief and practice in the past restrict the formal characteristics of religious art. In the most advanced situation, the typical interest class in modern capitalist society will have this kind of art concepts. The art concept has been developed strongly in such urban centers as New York, Paris, London and Shanghai, where there are a large number of interest groups and a considerable number of luxury industries. The artists here undertake the roles that can realize production and develop individual personality

through the aesthetic value of art. The prosperity and expansion of the art market has led to the popularity of private galleries. Private galleries and orders provide artists with a certain degree of creation freedom and the right to make decisions. Through the exhibitions and the sale of art works, artists' works can be more widely circulated in the society, and the popularity of artists has been improved. [2]

The establishment of a compromise between commercial market and art is a necessary means for artists in the new era to make use of art media to create research hotspots in the commercial art market, and to establish their own personal art symbols through media communication. Artists are inclined to become art enterprises, with amazing ability to control art media, and also talents in the self-promotion. [3] In the developed capitalist society, it is obviously not a question of philosophy and aesthetics to decide what is beauty or truth, but the responsibility of the art system — an international and political super structure. [4] The fate of art works is determined in the circulation of acquisition and sales. The truth of art works is determined by law and contract. Therefore, even art criticism would be consumable goods. The trend of "art economics" in the global economic integration may be coming to all artists. The art order based on the commercialization and marketization of art is the most likely way for artists to be successful.

## 3. THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC VALUES IN THE BUSINESS CHANGES

In the field of public art installation, Chihuly refines public consciousness and finds resonance in art and public values. Chihuly transfers the glass art from the interior space to the natural and urban exterior space, challenges the glass art in the most severe environment, and then returns the "conflict" and "recreation" bred in the public environment to the interior space of the museum and private collection. At the same time, Chihuly makes use of a new art form to present a diversified scene by integrating glass handicraft art, performance art and environment into public art.

Since the 1950s, or even over longer periods of time, the number of public artworks created by artists has sprung up as cultural mold. There are a variety of artistic media, such as large independent metal sculptures, colored murals mounted on walls, ceramic mosaic flat, mixed foam and glass fibre installations, neon lamps fixed on building concrete

with bolts, etc. Some forms of public artistic expression seem to be appropriate, while others have been criticized. Even the "outstanding" public works of art at that time will be mercilessly forgotten by the public with the continuous emergence of new things. Public art has no lasting power for the imagination of the public. The problem lies in the mediocre works, the wrong ideas or the poor creative methods. There are differences among works. However, from the spirit, emotion or aesthetics of art, as well as the curiosity or participation consciousness of the audience, it also means that these public artworks have not established any contact with the audience. What's more, it did not create meaning for the public, nor did it boost the local economy and culture. ("Figure 1")



Figure 1 "Glass tower and fireworks on ceiling", "Indianapolis Children's Museum".

a Chihuly's Studio, 2006. (<https://www.chihuly.com>)

The autonomy of public art and the dominant position of its aesthetic function and value are related to the relationship between public art and reality — nature and society, and a new connection is reconstructed after constantly destroying this relationship. With the self-orientation of art and the characteristics of aesthetic and value, art, as an extremely important medium of life, tentatively has a new form and eliminates the old form. This form can adapt to the development of social forms and new reality, or at least seek the possibility of such adaptation.

The artists cannot create public art in the environment outside the society, because some social pressure has affected them, and some critical opinions have influenced their thoughts. The artist can't help but wonder that what artistic viewpoint he represents and who he create art for. He understands his own artistic ideas, and knows other artists, especially those in their own moral codes

and aesthetic fields. There is nothing special about the world the artist lives in, and artists have no special foresight and erudite knowledge of the geographical environment. Artists want to become a recognized working member in the process of public art creation, hoping that their creation will be recognized by the public, and most people are willing to appreciate and accept their works.

Most people "like" or "don't like" public art according to the experiential influence of the form and theme of public art and the relationship between the architecture and environment. No matter what people think of a work at present, there must be people who have developed strong enough impression of personal beliefs to embody their values in a tangible way.

There are two visual systems associated with public awareness. One is advertising. Advertising is a commercial public art that all people are constantly input. No matter whether people want it or not, advertising is always everywhere. This is a necessary condition for capital to drive the society with consumption. This kind of commercial public arts penetrates into people's lives and daily decisions. No one can escape from this propaganda. However, to make this special public art effective, it is necessary to constantly change and update it to keep the ideology novel forever. Novelty has evolved into an advertising machine and made public art in a state of continuous generation; another visual system related to public consciousness is public art in museums, art galleries, art history and art departments, with the "formal" and "elite" as the characteristics of consciousness. It is worth noting that for the development of arts, especially public arts, the content of fine arts in form and history is constantly changing, but the quality and work state are not linear. Once the "paint" of the artwork dries, the public sculpture and mural will be "out of date". The current public arts will be the arts in the future. Artworks are distributed around the community in a sparse way. Therefore, it is really difficult to form a critical line that can affect the quality of life in the community and people's consciousness. It is required to re-coordinate and persuade the decision-makers who participate in the public art cause, and carefully create and retain the public arts with the significance of social reflection.

#### 4. CULTURAL RESOURCES AND IMAGINATION INNOVATION: BOOSTER OF PUBLIC ART

Modern artists compete in the open market, and they realize that his works must have outstanding novelty and uniqueness. When the modern artists realize that the situation and attitude depend on the characteristics of modern society, they change works and obtain new artistic ideas.

Public policies are most often discussed about "the economic impact of art". Business decision makers often consider "the economic impact of art" when evaluating public art programs, and will use data analysis and artificial intelligence optimization methods to determine the optimal art location, so as to contribute to the local economy. Viewing from economic effect, artwork has value as a commodity, but it can't evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of value.

*"Amazing and a Must See in Seattle!"*

AMAZING! We loved visiting and the gardens were our favorite. We would recommend this to anyone visiting Seattle. We would suggest the Space Needle, Chihuly and MoPOP all in one day. The Chihuly can take as little as an hour to visit and we had no wait.

Figure 2 Ticket price and slogan of "Chihuly Garden".

a The picture is from the official website of Chihuly garden, 2020. (<https://www.chihulygardenandglass.com>)

According to the ticket price and slogan of Chihuly garden, it shows Chihuly's public art. On the home page of Chihuly glass garden, there are comments of tourists extracted from the tourism website, and Chihuly Garden Museum ranks first in Seattle Attractions for Fun. Chihuly garden is located near the Space Needle, which is one of Seattle's most iconic landmarks. Superior geographical position has brought the local artist idol effect to Chihuly. Chihuly's glass art is applied in the commercial field, and his glass installation "growing near the Space Needle (the landmark building of Seattle) forms a value symbol of public art. As the practice of Chihuly glass industry, Chihuly garden has become one of the most popular tourist attractions in Seattle ("Figure 2"). This is undoubtedly a successful case of public art. The combination of glass art and commercial projects helps to achieve "cross-border" creation of public art, which promotes the possibility of coexistence of commerce and art. This kind of public art creation method not only helps to reduce the pressure of artists, but also helps to change the stereotype that "artists' creation is only valuable after their death", and helps to change the situation that "handicraft has been unable to enter the contemporary context". Such cross-border creation of public art may be a mixture of higher compromise of "value symbol, knowledge, philosophy, technology and economy".

This problem is on the cross-operation process of public art and commerce. The prosperity of art market has led to the popularity of art institutions. The public support of art institutions also provides artists with certain freedom of creation and the right to make decisions, and promotes the artists' works to be more widely circulated in the society, so as to improve the popularity of artists.

As an artist, Chihuly is deeply influenced by the sense of community in public art. When he was a child, he watched the blown glass workers in Europe and realized that the synchronous teamwork reflected the collective identity of members in a closely connected community. To some extent, social consciousness links with "family consciousness". Chihuly applied this understanding to the creation of his own blown glass team and the public consciousness of creating in a specific local environment. Chihuly has made great contributions to the development of Seattle and its surrounding areas. [5] His efforts in public art in his hometown of Tacoma, Washington, promote economic and social revival.

Since his retirement, Chihuly and his team have created and sold artworks worth more than \$29 million. Chihuly permanent collectibles are distributed in 32 states, including: Makers Mark Distillery (Kentucky), University of Wisconsin, St. Petersburg Church, Rockefeller Center, Bellagio Hotel (Las Vegas), Mayo Clinic (Minnesota).

In public art, Van Gogh's "lonely consciousness" and aesthetic alienation are undoubtedly not suitable for public art. Chihuly's "art theory" will not exist independently from the link between public art and commerce, because there are a lot of financial supports for the volume and size of Chihuly's glass installation and the circulation exhibition at designated places. Therefore, Chihuly's creation must be inseparable from the support of art business and art market. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to create commercial hot spots and gimmicks for his artistic creation to be well known.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The art mode in the future is the integration of multiple industrial chains, which refers to the concept of "creative art industrial chain" of multiple art media. This is a viable industry, because art creation itself will grow with the leap of artists' imagination. The dynamic intersection of interdisciplinary, cross-industry, and cross-technological frontiers of thought is where research and practice are needed, so as to harness this creativity to realize and sustain artistic creation. For artists, the society and cities are facing a transformation from an industrial society full of spirit and attaching importance to the registration system to a creative society of participation, communication and sharing. Artists need to re-examine their roles and goals in response to dramatic economic, social and cultural changes. [6]

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper is independently completed by Hui Tang.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Wang Yuan. "On the Dale Chihuly's Use of Blown Glass in Public Space" [J], China Academy of Art, 2016. (in Chinese)
- [2] Wang Ying. "Looking at Art and Commerce from Takashi Murakami" [J], China Academy of Art. (in Chinese)
- [3] Weng Yichao, Yu Jie, Weng Zhiqiang. "A Brief Talk on the Relevance and Operation Mode of Art and Economy" [J], "China Economist". (in Chinese)
- [4] Shi Hong. "Openness and Prospect — Integrated Marketing Communication of Artworks" [J], Zhejiang University, 2010. (in Chinese)
- [5] Shi Yongzhi. "The Influence of Western Handicraft Movement on Chinese Academic Handicrafts", "China Economist" [J], 2016, Issue 2. (in Chinese)
- [6] Zhuang Xiaowei. "Cultural Resources and Imagination: The Raw Materials and Power of Museum Design", Science Education and Museum, Issue 1, 2016. (in Chinese)