



A Study of Installation Art in Urban Public Space

Ziqi Wang

The High School Park of Shenzhen Experimental School, No.6 Zhenbi Road, Biling Street,
Pingshan District, Shenzhen, 518000, China

3095662064@qq.com

Abstract. With the acceleration of urbanization and the growing demand for culture and art, public art works are becoming more and more important in cities. As a type of public art, installation art makes positive contributions to highlighting the spirit of the city and improving the artistic quality of the city, and at the same time, it also brings endless artistic enjoyment to people. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the installation art in urban public space, analyze its development, concept and integration with urban public space. The article first reviews the history and theoretical basis of art installation, and then defines the concept and classification of urban public space. Through specific case studies, the article explores how art installations are integrated with public space, and how this integration enhances the cultural value and aesthetic experience of urban environments. The article analyzes from three perspectives: life elements, animal elements and abstract elements. Specific examples include "Spoon bridge and Cherry" and "Shoes on the Danube Bank", which demonstrate the integration of living elements; "Maman" and "Leap", which demonstrate the integration of animal elements; "May Wind" and "Moon on the Water" show the fusion of abstract elements. These case studies reveal the importance of art installations in shaping urban public spaces and how they become symbols of urban culture and identity.

Keywords: Installation Art; Urban Public Space; Life elements; Animal elements; Abstract elements

1 Introduction to Installation Art

With the development of the times and the advancement of science and technology, all kinds of modernized art forms have been enriched. Contemporary art forms have broken people's traditional perceptions of art, and brought people closer to art with richer and more varied works [1].

In terms of the development of installation art, the origin of installation art can be traced back to the end of the 19th century, when a French postman built The Ideal Palace with cement, stones and shells, which can be regarded as the prototype of installation art. At the beginning of the 20th century, the German artist Kant Schweitzer created the Pillar of Merz, which combined expressionist sculpture with the interior space of a building to create a spatial environmental work with a sense of movement

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and threat, which is considered to be the predecessor of installation art. To a large extent, installation art has been influenced by modern art. The emergence of some art schools from the late 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century has had a positive impact on the emergence and development of installation art. In the social background of the first industrial revolution, with the birth of photography technology, modern art's abstract extraction and generalization of natural phenomena and daily life objects were transformed into the direct appropriation of objects and images. The transition from two-dimensional to three-dimensional in space propelled installation art to rely on the field characteristics of space and to seek a connection between the artist, the work, and the audience, based on the real society. For example, at the exhibition held in the United States in 1917, the French artist Duchamp named a ready-made craft urinal "Fountain" and placed it in the fair as a work of art, which triggered great discussions. Another work of his, "The Large Glass", stacked all kinds of objects on the glass, completely getting rid of the traditional art form, transforming the artwork from just creating a picture to art that can be made with anything. This concept and method of creating artwork can also be said to be the presentation of the ideological concepts of installation art. The development of installation art is closely related to "Pop Art", "Minimalism" and "Conceptual Art". Jamie James, a researcher of Pop Art, believes that "art should erase the boundaries between works and life [2]. "To bring art closer to the people Under the impetus of commercial culture, creators collage and reproduce directly from daily life commodity wrappers, cartoons, posters, and so on, in their works. This presentation method is both a subversion of the traditional on-shelf presentation and a reflection on the way art is presented.

In terms of the concept of installation art, Chinese scholar He Wanli, in his *History of Chinese Contemporary Installation Art*, argues that: "Installation art" refers to the reconstruction of ready-made objects by means of phrasing, suspension, division, superposition, etc [3]. It is a form of artistic creation and display that is placed in a new place of display and given a new meaning and direction. Installation art refers to the reconstruction of ready-made objects by means of placement, suspension, division, superposition, etc., placing them in a new place of display, and giving them new meanings and directions. Installation art is resonant, it can let the ideas contained in the ready-made products reflect the creator's state of mind in different exhibition venues, triggering the viewer's thinking and resonance. 1961 American assembly art exhibition, the organizer of the exhibition, William C. Seitz said a definition of "installation": "Firstly, it is an installation of a piece of artwork, which is a piece of art that is not a piece of artwork. First, it is primarily assembled, not drawn, modeled, or sculpted. Second, it is composed in whole and in part of pre-formed natural or artificial materials, objects or fragments, and is not intended to use art materials. Third, the work has an irreplaceable relationship with the physical and cultural properties of the space in which it is displayed."

2 Introduction to Urban Public Space

Urban public space refers to the city or urban group, in the building entity of the urban public space for public interaction, held a variety of activities in the open place, between the existence of the open space body, is the city residents whose purpose is to serve the public at large [4]. American scholar Jane Jacobs believes that "the most basic characteristic of the city is human activity". The most dynamic place in the city is the public space of the city. Narrowly defined public space, including streets, squares, parks, green spaces, etc.; broadly defined public space refers to the urban business district, city center and other public facilities in the space, the image and nature of its direct impact on the public's psychology and behavior. The city's social, cultural and community residents' sports and fitness activities are inseparable from the public space. Urban public space is an important means to enhance the city's image, visibility and reputation.

Urban public space is scattered in various locations in the urban structure, with different functions and characteristics. These different urban public spaces construct different images and temperaments of the city. Urban public space is usually categorized according to three ways: physical space, functional type, and nature of the land". Physical space is mainly divided into: street space, square space, park space, green space, node space, natural corridor space. Functional types of space mainly include: residential space, work space, transportation space and recreational space. The space of land use mainly contains: residential land, urban public facilities land, road and square land, and green space [5].

3 Integration of Installation Art and Public Space

The relationship between installation art and urban space is getting closer. Installation art, as a form of expression, combines aspects of environment, architecture, and urban form to express language in public space, and integrates and grows together with public space. This symbiotic relationship emphasizes the importance of art installations in shaping urban public space, where they exist not only as works of art, but also as carriers of urban culture and spirit.

3.1 Installation Art Embodying Life Elements

Installation public art is an art form that integrates artworks with public space. In the design method, the elements of daily life are appropriated and transplanted to be used in another scene, and their expressive power and influence are amplified through the artist's approach, which, combined with the historical and cultural background of these objects themselves, also gives a deeper meaning to the artwork. Such works can not only attract the audience's attention, but also trigger their thinking about daily life and symbolic meanings. Through this method, installation public art can fully combine the characteristics of public space, interact and communicate with the audience, reflecting the value of art and social significance [6].

Artist Claes Oldenburg and his wife Coosje van Bruggen established Spoon bridge and Cherry in Minneapolis, USA, in 1985 (shown in Figure 1), an installation that draws on the elements of spoons and cherries that are most common in people's daily lives. "Spoon bridge and Cherry" (shown in Figure 1) is an installation that draws on the elements of the spoon and the cherry that are most common in people's everyday lives. The design of the spoon was inspired by Oldenburg's habit since 1962 of doodling spoons, which began when he saw a spoon leaning against a piece of fake chocolate. The cherry design, on the other hand, was the idea of van Bruggen, who wanted to use it to balance out the subdued layout of the rest of the garden. The stems of the cherries also act as fountains, with water spraying into the bowls of the spoons and flowing into the pond below, adding interactivity and interest to the work. The pond itself is shaped like a linden seed, directing attention to the linden grove planted nearby and showing the harmony of the work with its natural surroundings.



Fig. 1. Spoon bridge and Cherry

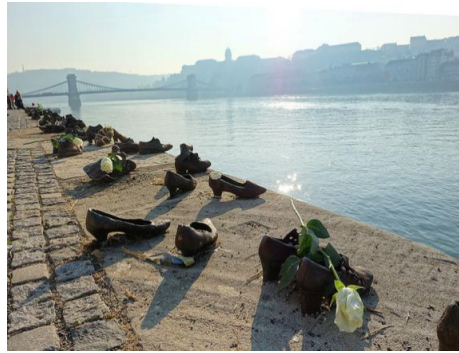


Fig. 2. Shoes on the Danube Bank

The sculptor Gyula Pauer and the film director Can Togay created the monumental sculpture "Shoes on the Danube Bank" (shown in Figure 2) in the Hungarian capital Budapest. Between 1944 and 1945, about 600,000 Jews were murdered in Hungary, which is 70% of the Jewish population in Hungary. During this time, Hungary was occupied and controlled by the far-right organization Arrow Cross, who persecuted the Jews and shot many of them and threw them into the Danube. Everyday shoes were chosen as the main part of the sculpture because at that time, after the Jews were shot, their bodies were thrown into the river and the shoes were left behind because at that time shoes were a valuable commodity that could be traded on the market. Such shoe sculptures also symbolize the last foothold of the victims; they are abandoned on the riverbank as if their owners had just taken them off and disappeared, a strong visual impact that reminds one of the innocent people who were persecuted and killed. Through such public artworks, people are reminded to respect and protect every life and oppose any form of violence and discrimination.

3.2 Installation Art Embodying Animal Elements

In installation public art, "space" is not only a physical concept, but also a way for artists to express their emotions. Louise Bourgeois' works intervene emotionally in the space and strengthen the artist's ideology through the display of space. Louise Bourgeois's sculpture *Maman* is a profound tribute to motherhood and motherhood in which the artist chose the element of the spider (shown in Figure 3). Artist Bourgeois's childhood was unfortunate, with the outbreak of war, her father's betrayal, and insecurity with her mother, so she excels in using personal experience as inspiration to inspire creative concepts, and emotional changes in self-experience to soothe psychological trauma, in anticipation of an emotional resonance with the public. In the sculpture's shape, Louise enlarges the spider's legs, which are thin and sturdy to support its thin body, and its huge size looks down at the pedestrians, adding strong visual tension and reflecting the motherhood and the power of female strength. From the physiological characteristics of spiders, as animals, spiders have the characteristics of nomadic and sedentary, usually do not take the initiative to attack, but when danger comes, they will not hesitate to take the initiative to attack, and the characteristics of spiders are exactly the image of a mother's greatness and strength in the childhood of Luis.



Fig. 3. *Maman*

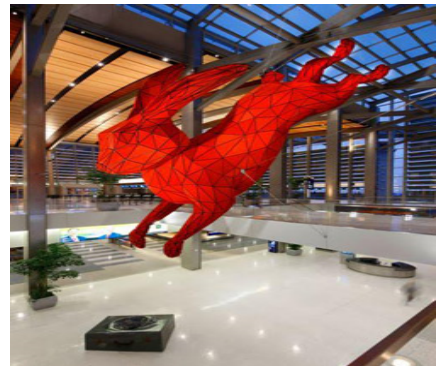


Fig. 4. *Leap*

Lawrence Argent, a sculptor known for his whimsical and monumental works in public spaces, created *Leap* (shown in Figure 4), a giant red rabbit sculpture at the Sacramento International Airport in California, which is presented in a leaping position, as if it is about to jump from the exterior of the building into the interior of the airport. The work consists of a 56-foot-long red rabbit that appears to be jumping into a granite suitcase on the ground, which appears to have a liquid swirling opening at the top. For many, *Leap* has become a symbol of homecoming. When people return to Sacramento from out of town, the sight of 'Leap' signifies arrival home.

3.3 Installation Art Embodying Abstract Elements

When artists create installation public artworks, they emphasize the interdependence and integration between the works and the natural environment. On the basis of on-site observation and research, the expression of materials and the echoing of shapes, the scale of proportions and the mastery of rhythms are taken as the basis of creation, and they are integrated into the spatial atmosphere of nature. Chinese artist Huang Zhen created "Winds of May" (shown in Figure 5), an iconic sculpture located in Wusi Square in Qingdao, Shandong Province. The historical background of The Winds of May is the May Fourth Movement, which shocked China and abroad. The May Fourth Movement was a patriotic movement whose main goal was to oppose imperialism and feudalism. The sculpture with the rotating and rising "wind" shape and the main color of Chinese red, fully embodies the patriotic spirit of the May Fourth Movement against imperialism and feudalism. The sculpture shows the rising national power, symbolizing the unity and strength of the Chinese people in the May Fourth Movement. The sculpture adopts a combination of spiral upward steel plate structure, with a refined technique, simple lines and heavy texture, showing the image of "strong wind" rising up in the air, giving people the shock of "force". The fiery red color of the outer layer of the sculpture symbolizes the passion and vitality of the May Fourth Movement, as well as the fervor and fighting spirit of the Chinese people.



Fig. 5. Winds of May

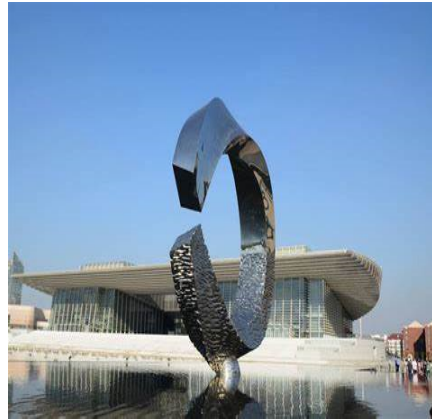


Fig. 6. Moon on the Water

Moon on the Water (shown in Figure 6) is a large stainless steel sculpture by Chinese sculptor Zhu Shangxi, located on the shallow water platform of the Tianjin Cultural Center. Zhu Shangxi was inspired by his childhood memories of white clouds playing with the sun in a rice field, and his interest in materializing the sculptural language of "shadows in the water". Through the sculpture, he hopes to visually transform the plaza space into an "underwater space" and stimulate the public's imagination. Moon on the Water is an abstract sculpture that expresses the magnificence and beauty of the moon in a new light, and has become an important symbol of Tianjin's cultural center. Through its mirror polishing process, the work reflects the sun-

light, blue sky, architecture and water environment, realizing the visual effect of clear and transparent or flowing, providing the public with high-quality spiritual enjoyment. The shape of the opening circle of "Moon on the Water" is exactly the capital letter "C", which coincides with the initials "Culture" and "Center" in English, symbolizing the connection between the work and the environment. This symbolizes the close connection between the work and the cultural center of Tianjin.

4 Conclusion

Through an in-depth study of installation art in urban public space, this paper draws the following conclusions: art installation as a form of art, its history and concept have evolved over time, and it has become an indispensable part of urban public space, adding cultural depth and artistic value to the urban environment. Art installations are integrated with public space by extracting life elements, animal elements and abstract elements, and this integration enriches the connotation of urban space and enhances citizens' sense of belonging and identity. By analyzing "Spoon Bridge and Cherry", "Shoes on the Bank of the Danube", "Maman", "Leap", "Winds of May" and "Moon on the Water", this paper shows how these works have become symbols of urban culture and how they have stimulated public thinking and discussion. With the acceleration of urbanization, the role of art installations in urban public space will become more and more important. Future research should focus on how art installations can better integrate with the urban environment and how they can contribute to sustainable urban development and social progress.

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