

The role of public art has changed in recent times: a study

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RESUMEN

El arte público, contextualizado en la categoría de las artes visuales, tiene como objetivo principal la interacción entre la obra y el público. De todos modos, hay otros tipos de intervenciones en entornos públicos que están diseñadas para la participación de las personas. El término arte público se refiere a las obras de arte que son encargadas y patrocinadas -monumentos, memoriales, estatuas cívicas y esculturas- para ubicarse en el dominio colectivo por parte del gobierno, de las agencias y las organizaciones, que poseen un rol significativo dentro del mundo del arte. El término también se aplica, a veces, para aludir a las manifestaciones que se exhiben en un espacio comunal. Este tipo de creaciones son básicamente representaciones simbólicas, imaginarias e ilustrativas de valores históricos, políticos, culturales y cívicos del Estado. Cuando hablamos de esculturas públicas, a menudo lo hacemos solo aludiendo a su de su valor artística, es decir, siempre las observamos y estimamos únicamente como obras de arte. Sin embargo, no podemos menospreciar su importancia en la vida social, cultural y política. La presencia de estas obras de arte, en realidad, supone un reconocimiento cultural de la comunidad a la que pertenecen. Son como el índice de un libro que es suficiente para explicar todo su contenido. Estas esculturas se han convertido en parte integrante de nuestra vida cotidiana. Desde la época colonial hasta la era moderna, en la India, el arte público ha experimentado numerosos cambios. Las instituciones dedicadas al arte y al ámbito cultural, los medios de comunicación, los géneros y las formas de estas manifestaciones se han modificado con el tiempo. Así, en las dos últimas décadas, la especificidad del lugar, el compromiso público y las actividades basadas en procesos participativos han sido los principales focos artísticos de los espacios comunitarios. Se pueden distinguir dos tipos de espacios públicos. El primero se corresponde con el real como lugar, el emplazamiento y la ubicación de la pieza. El segundo es el espacio público discursivo, que es un área abstracta/conceptual, creada brevemente como resultado de la reunión de particulares para hablar o compartir temas importantes y controvertidos. Según Habermas, este espacio discursivo es la esfera pública, que incluye reuniones y encuentros de personas en lugares cotidianos como cafeterías, calles, centros comunitarios y parques.

PALABRAS CLAVE

arte público, escultura, arte contemporáneo

Recientes cambios en el arte público: un estudio

ABSTRACT

Public art which falls under the institutional category of visual arts primarily focuses on audience engagement and public representation. Additionally, there are other types of art in public settings that are designed for audience participation. The term Public Art means to those works of art commissioned and sponsored, monuments, memorials, and civic statues and sculpture installed in physical public domain by the Government and agencies and organization, which are especially significant within the Art World. The term is sometimes also applied to include and art which is exhibited in a public space these public art are basically symbolic, imaginary and illustrative representation on the Historical, political and cultural and civic values of the state. While speaking of public sculptures we often speak in terms of its artistic identity i.e. we always look at it and recognize merely as a piece of art only. We cannot undermine its importance in day to day social, cultural and political life. The presence of these pieces of art in any society holds a cultural recognition of that particular society. These are like the index or contents of a book that are sufficient enough to explain the entire subject matter. These public sculptures have become a part and partial of our day to day life. Since the colonial times to the modern era, in India, public art has undergone numerous changes. The institutions of public art and the public realm, media, genres, and forms of public art have all changed over time. Since the last two decades, site-specificity, public engagement, and process-based activities have been the main focuses of art in public spaces. Two types of public space can be distinguished. The first is the actual public space as a location, site, piece or thing. The second is the discursive public space, which is an abstract/conceptual area created briefly as a result of private individuals coming together to talk about or share important and light-hearted subjects. According to Habermas, this discursive space is the public sphere, which includes gatherings and encounters of people in public places like coffee shops, streets, community centers, and parks.

KEYWORDS

public art, sculpture, contemporary art

Introduction

Hypothetically, the term 'Public Art' refers to works of art in any media that has been considered and executed with the specific objective of being located or represented within the physical public realm, usually exterior space, easily reached to all.

The tradition of making sculpture in India was influenced by the British academic realistic style and Technique and these forms were accepted and adopted by the Indian sculptor in the pre and post-independent period. Earlier it has been discussed that sculptor Devi Prasad Roy Chowdhury was famous for the academic caliber he got. His education in art in British Academic Style so the academic realistic approach in making statues was initially introduced by British through art school and their creation of British personalities.

The notion of public sculpture for the British was basically to put up certain important personalities like Generals, Lieutenants, and Governors, etc. As the head of the 'State', it is a tradition that was continued from the Roman tradition of erecting the statues of high as a part of power and strength, which is still noticed in the city side of India. While Kala Bhavana established by Rabindranath Tagore in Santiniketan, in 1922 played a revolutionary role in initiating modernism in Indian art. The school was independent of the Nationalist Bengal School and Colonial Art Education; the Students and artists were provided full freedom to art practices. Kala Bhavana encouraged the liberation of art from the colonialization of art. 1935 Ramkinkar Baij sculpted 'Sujata' in front of Black House in Kala Bhavana. It may be the first sculpture in pre-independent India, which is not a monument or statue commissioned by any authority. It is an image of a common girl and is site-specific and environmental. Santhal Family, Mill Call, and Harvester are also environmental sculptures. The Santhal family and the Mill Call both are sculpted addressing the public of the nearby road that goes to the Santhal village.

In contrast to Kala Bhavana, the practices of the public and in India were mainly based on the National Heroes, Freedom Fighter, Religious Saints, and colonial rulers in the name of the social reformer.

Some examples: Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1899), Roy Krishnadas Pal Bahadur (1894), Vidyasagar was a universally respected

person in Bengal for the attempt to promote literacy and education in Bengal. He was also a social reformer and his statues were erected in Sanskriti College and College Square in Calcutta. Krishnadas pal was a renowned journalist, elocutionist, and statesman of the 19th century. This statue stands at the junction of College Street and Mahatma Gandhi Road in Calcutta. Another statue that was of Sir Ashutosh Mukhopaddhay (1934), was done by Debi Prasad Roy. It was erected at the junction of Chowringhee avenue Calcutta.

The period of modernization of India is coeval with two hundred years of colonial rule. Thus, the History of British colonialism is a part of the history of Indian modernism, too. The growing forces of modernism were what combated British imperialism in India. In this period Ramkinkar Baij sculpted Sujata (1935) in front of Kalabhavan it may be one of the first outdoor Sculptures in India. The Santhal Family is very unique Sculpture. It is the most successful Sculpture (1938) the Sculpture was made in 1938 when India was still a Colony. Ramkinkar's 'Yaksha and Yakshi' Sculpture in front of the Reserve Bank of India has been contextualized contradictory social characters through money, community, poverty and showed the opposition of classes.

The idea of the colonial rulers has mainly occupied the urban space of Indian culture. Primarily in Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta artists are tried to expose their sculptural art in a Victorian domain with high quality of naturalism, which they learned and borrowed from the British-made art school. The works of D.P.Roy Chowdhury can be referred to in this context.

While speaking of these public sculptures we often speak in terms of their artistic identity i.e. we always look at it and recognize it merely as a piece of art only. We find it to undermine its importance in our day-to-day social, cultural and political life. The presence of these pieces of art in any society holds a cultural recognition of that particular society. These are like the index or contents of a book that is sufficient enough to explain the entire subject matter. These public sculptures have become a part and partial of our day-to-day life. This not only gives an artistic identity to the society but also provides a platform for cultural, moral, ethical, and spiritual values. The establishment of these public sculptures itself is like giving recognition to the society's morals values, codes, and ethics in conformity to those which are considered as universally accepted as

true and correct. These public sculptures also provide a religious identity of the society and thus explain the religious character of a society.

Basically while installing any public sculpture, the place plays a very significant role in its utility. Especially open spaces like market, three-way road, four-way road, official buildings, sports ground, parks, etc. are used to install these public sculpture. It is done so because these spaces capture the attention of the viewer on a large scale. Also while entering into any community or town the presence of such public sculpture provides a cultural identity to the particular community or town.

Another importance behind the establishment of such public sculpture of the national icons provides a platform for the moral and cultural development and value addition to the children and especially to the youth because the children lack the interest of reading or studying about these great persons. But these public sculptures ignite and arise in them the interest to know and learn about those persons and their contribution to society.

These public sculptures also act as a strong binding force to society. The statues of the national heroes and that of the social thinkers always portray about their sacrifice and contribution to the society and thus, this acts as a source of inspiration to the society to become united and act collectively for the promotion of healthy and peaceful existence.

Public Art in Contemporary time

Since the 1950s modern artists have been taking art outside the gallery and museum. The term 'public art evolved in the 1960s was exhibiting non-representative, no-utilitarian, and primary geometrical readymade objects and spaces. Emphasis was given on the dialogue delivered by industry-made materials and surfaces, minimizing the role of artistic craftsmanship and the artist's privacy, ownership, and identity as a creator. Art becomes independent of its creator and appeared as the real object.

Since the 1970s, new alternative approaches to public art were initiated by public agencies and institutions in the United States and Europe. A new kind of public art was founded – one that directly engages people of different communities who do not belong to the art and artist community, with the sociopolitical issues

related to these people. Public art adopted some new alternative approaches to initiation art projects in the public interest and art projects in the public domain. These new alternative approaches were: Artist working with no artists; issue-oriented community art projects; using the commercial spaces; using the medial, etc.

These projects were sponsored and funded by programs like the CETA Artist project (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act); organizations like FCA (Foundation for the Community of Artists), CCF (Cultural Council Foundation), and issue-oriented group like the Art Workers Coalition. These public art projects are issue-based, contextual, and art in the public domain. They are performative, activity-based, process-based, and transitory. Most of the time these alternative public art practices in the public domain have a conceptual existence rather than the material existence. These art activities exist in the photographic and video documentations which are granted as bi-products of the activities. Art in the public domain is directly dealing with the real space Public art also adopted media like radio, TV, Internet in its alternative approaches to the public space.

One of the popular public commissions in India is as: Kerala-born Subramayan perhaps the best-known products of Santiniketan, he becomes a brilliant theoretician, essayist, and craftsman. One of his numerous public commissions, and most remarkable is the monumental terracotta mural (1962-1963) for a theatre in Lucknow named after Tagore. A mammoth undertaking, it involved 13000 individual pieces of fired clay which were assembled into a nine-feet (2.7 meters) high and eighty-one-feet (24.7 meters) long spectacle on an exterior wall.

Another project was 'Renewed Intensity' it was organized by Lalit Kala Akademi Regional center, Bhubaneswar. It is public and a site-specific art project by ten young artists was held between 20th and 27th January 2010. The project was supported by Sanskriti Gallery, Lalit Kala Akademi Regional center, Bhubaneswar, and the Foundation for Indian Contemporary Art (FICA) New Delhi. 'Renewed Intensity' was speculative in approach towards the changing time, culture, urban attitude, and their intermingling within the urbanized space.

The seven-day-long schedule included the workshop public interaction, slide presentation by participating artists, and the preview.

The project 'Renewed Intensity' was held in a place like Bhubaneswar.

The project aimed at exploring the possibilities of varied aesthetic influences and expressions based on interactions, performances, and installation that can potentially shape a new language.

In India also some residencies and artist initiatives are *khaj public*. Art Ecology and another community-based project; Jaaga's graffiti project in many parts of Bangalore and 'Urban Avant Grade'

In recent times (Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagar Palika) took upon the task of painting a large part of Bangalore's public. two years ago a cement conglomerate based in Hyderabad came forward to sponsor sculptures in six traffic junctions and BBMP sportingly accepted the offer and in early 2012 the sculpture was unveiled with many people. In British Cantonment areas towards the railway station, in between a matrix of traffic signals, several cement animals are installed. Another work is an abstract geometrical structure near Chalukya Circle, four-horse it is made in cement at Race Course Circle. Another vibrant work at Mekhri Circle, a cement tree circled by a human chain of life-size cement children.

ART+PUBLIC interrogating every day at Guwahati was an experiment set within the public space in Guwahati a week-long public art workshop held between 24th -30th march 2010 jointly initiative by Lalit Kala Akademi Delhi and Periferry Guwahati.

It was a huge barge floating on the river Brahmaputra, an immense potentiality for public intervention and participation, where along with the artist, tourist, laborers, boatmen, and fishermen to become a part of their project and event.

More recent time in Guwahati February 2012 initiative by Kankhowa and Black Rice named as "Regional Art, Performance, and Events (RAPE), 2012", which comprised of public art, installation, and performance. These events explored several public and private places across the city. These were the multiple discipliners' events of visual art and performance art platforms.

Conclusion

There is also a certain connection with the iconic state of these sculptures and the dimension with which they are made. The over-

life size sculpture in the outdoor is glorified in their formal values, their gestures and postures amidst the crowd on the pedestal make their presence glorifying and sometimes dominating. The material used also have changed over the recent years to make them strong and enduring to the climatic and weather condition apart from metal fiberglass and cement and sometimes stone become popular in executing and exhibiting among the common mass. These icons in the form of sculpture act as a discipline, order, and representative of a particular thought, ideology, and action. Their presences act as a contribution to history and mankind and therefore acts as a guideline to the common people, young and in the society.

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