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The Impact of Public Art on Urban Open Spaces

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ABSTRACT

Public art is the physical form of artistic expressions produced in urban open spaces such as streets, squares and parks. Art products produced in such urban open spaces contain features that affect individuals, stimulate their emotions and attract their attention. Thus, these products ensure a connection between people and the space. This relationship could help transfer the space into a place, improve the quality of the place, create a sense of place, lead to high-occupation and lively places, and establish social relationships among people. Therefore, public art allows the changes in the space and physical changes in the space, improves the quality and aesthetic value of the space, as well as improving the sense of community, social relationships, avoiding social exclusion and meeting the social requirements. Thus, there are several important correlations between public art and urban open space that require further investigation. Only a few studies, however, have acknowledged the critical relationship between urban open spaces and the art built into these spaces, and therefore there is a lack of evidence to support these claims. The present study aimed to contribute to the gap in the literature through determination of the relationship between the occupant, urban open space and art with an experimental approach. Thus, occupant views on art examples available in urban open spaces were obtained. As a result, it was determined that the places where public art is available tend to be occupied at a higher level and strengthen social relations
Keywords: Urban open spaces, Public art, Sense of community

INTRODUCTION

Public Art

It is difficult to describe the city-user relationship in general because city contains more than people's perception and experience and is also loaded with personal memories and meanings. Public art is a concept that helps us understand this relationship for us because public art could play a vital and active role in place making and it could affect the way of citizen's experience in a place [1, 2]. Thus, spaces where public art is made can offer opportunities for building space- user relationships by offering innovative cultural perspectives and meanings, opening new ways of seeing, feeling and experiencing the world [3, 4].

Contrary to being performed in private spaces such as houses, public art is an art work being performed in public spaces such as streets, parks, squares, facades used by everyone in city [4, 5]. However, the first thing to state for public art is that there is not specific form of art. Public art has various practises such as land- art, site-specific art, design of urban furniture and tiling, performing arts from exhibitions of sculptures in open areas to public wall paintings [6]. Regardless of which of these practices, public art takes on the role of Landmark with its attractiveness and difference in its position [7] because the places where public art is made have the feature of making a more lasting effect on the minds of the users, the places they see and the city.

Accordingly, refreshing and conspicuous art works help people to contact into the places. Public art products have features that enrich the space, strengthen the identity of the space and increase the diversty of the public space [8]. Therefore, it can be said that public art increases the quality of the place, creates a sense of place and adds identity to the place. It also provides cultural satisfaction, development, awareness raising or psychological relaxation of people through visual interaction [9, 10]. The places

where public art is held also allow various activities to be held together, making it a more lively and social place [11].

However, Hall and Robertson (2001) clarify its various benefits such as

- developing a sense of community,
- increasing sense of place and urban identity,
- responding to community needs,
- overcoming and improving social exclusion,
- providing educational value and promoting attitudes that promote positive social change [12]

As a result of all these definitions about the benefits of public art, we can also say that

1. Not only does it provide to increase quality and aesthetic value, the changes made in the space with the physical change of space

2. But also it has become an important issue in terms of social characteristics such as improving the feeling of being a society, developing social relations and overcoming social exclusion, meeting the needs of the society. (Figure 1)

Application forms of public art

The most common forms of art in the public sphere can be classified into six groups: Placement, surface painting, urban furniture, outdoor exhibitions, performance and play [6, 8, 10, 13]. Within the scope of this study, placement as public art, surface painting and urban furniture were discussed and their effects on people's evaluations were revealed.

1. Installment: Installation, which is one of the most common types of public art, emerges mostly in the form of abstract sculpture or plastic object placed in space (Figure 2). The art should be able to change its environment and the environment should be able to give its real meaning [14]. Two things must be considered for this. The first is the relationship between the environment and the art of installation. The installation art that is unique to that place, that suits its soul and adds meaning to it, can have a positive contribution to urban outdoor spaces. The second is the human scale [8, 15].

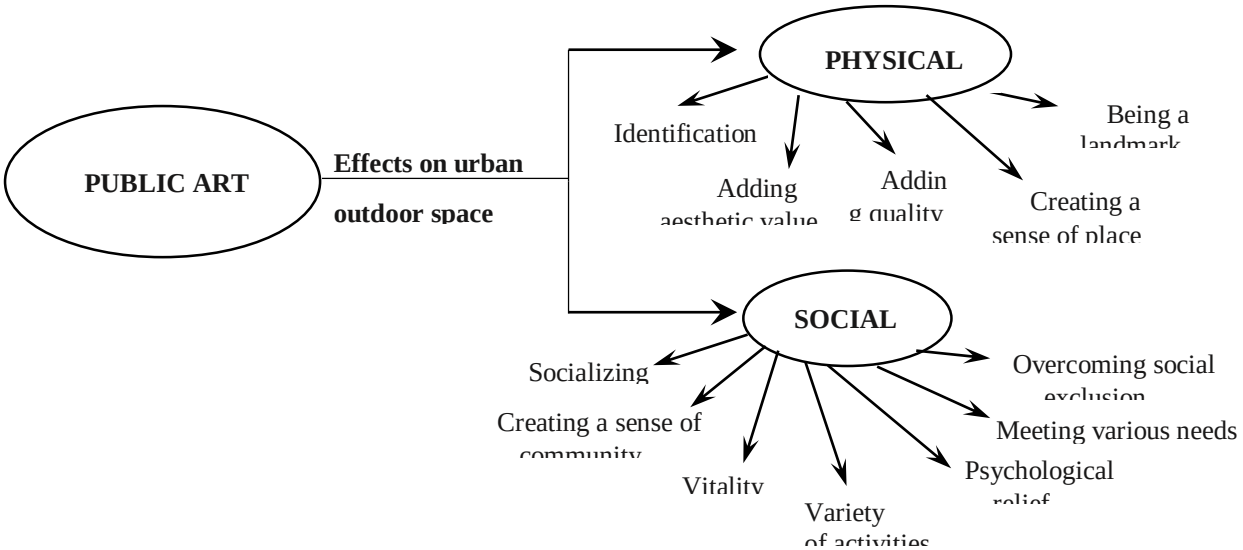


Figure 1. Effects of Public Art on Urban Outdoor Space



Figure 2. Examples of public art with installation

A work, placed completely disregarding the environment and the human scale, causes people to be unable to contact to it, which means that the space is neither physically (urban identity, aesthetics, quality, sense of place, etc.) nor socially (creating a sense of society, socialization, etc.) contributes to gain a value.

2. Pavement painting: Surface painting includes paintings on the flooring, walls and building facades of the urban space (Figure 3). Surface painting can be developed in harmony with the whole as part of the space in the design of the public space, or it can be in the form of legal or illegal interventions made later in the space. Illegal or opposing interventions on public surfaces are defined as graffiti [6]. Within the scope of this work, art of surface painting which is made to be a source of peace and joy to the city is discussed.

3. Urban furniture: Urban furniture (bus stops, seating elements, bicycle parks, directional signs, limiting elements, lighting elements, trash cans, street lights, mailbox, parking clock, etc.) is all important functions of the visual environment together with all functions [14]. These furniture in the public spaces of the city can contribute to the aesthetic appearance of the city if it is well designed or treated as a work of art (Figure 4) [16] Therefore, public space can become a creation space where the artist not only deals with the installation but also the urban elements that make up the space. The artist can be creator of these elements as an industrial designer. However, s/he should share his/her creativity with engineers, technicians and planners [6, 14].



URL 6



URL 7



URL 8

Figure 3. Examples of public art with surface painting

METHOD

Three different public spaces including public art examples made with placement, surface painting and urban furniture and a sample of a space without any public art (Table 1) were shown to the people and asked to evaluate these places by questionnaire method. Evaluation was done using a 5-point Likert Attitude Scale. In the questionnaire, a total of 10 questions were asked, describing the physical and social characteristics of outdoor spaces. The purpose of using 4 examples where there are different forms of public art and where there is no public space art is to try to determine whether differences have any effect on people's assessment of space (in terms of their physical and social contributions to public spaces).

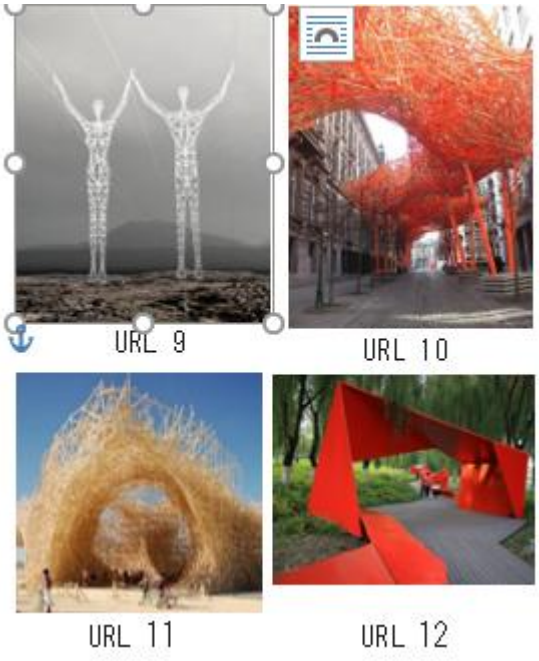
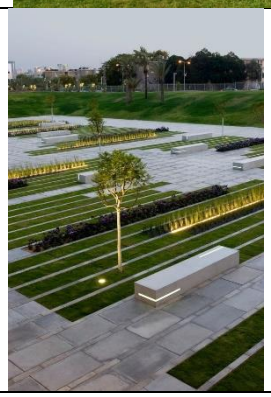


Figure 4. Examples of public art with urban furniture

Table 1. Examples of public art and questions in the survey

Installment (1)	 URL 13	1. This place has a unique identity. 2. It is visually impressive and has an aesthetic value. 3. This place has remarkable features that distinguish it from other places. 4. This is a catchy place with its own spirit. 5. This place is a meal that I will enjoy to stop and spend time. 6. I prefer this place to meet friends and acquaintances. 7. This is a place where I can interact with other people. 8. This is a place where people can often use and spend long time. 9. This is a place where I can meet my various needs. 10. This place is peaceful and relaxing.

Pavement painting (2)		URL 14
Urban furniture (3)		URL 15
Non-public art (4)		URL 16

FINDINGS

With the evaluations of the users, the average values obtained in terms of physical characteristics such as identify aesthetics, landmark and social characteristics such as socialization, vitality and peace of mind were calculated. Anova test was used to determine whether these averages differ according to the application of public art in outdoor spaces or not (Table 2).

According to the One Way Anova test, the"Sig." Value of all questions asked for the contribution of public art to urban open space is 0.000<0.05. In other words, the differences between criteria according to whether or not public art is done and the way of application is meaningful. According to users' evaluations, these differences were mostly 'Landmark' ($F_{(3-316)}$: 517,546, p<0.01), 'Aesthetic contribution' ($F_{(3-316)}$: 497,0015, p<0.01) and 'Identity' ($F_{(3-316)}$: 395,137, p<0.01)

- For example, where public art practice is performed by placement; It has been found that it contributes to the city both physically and socially at a high level. The greatest contribution to the city was determined in terms of physical: Identity (4,59) and Aesthetic Value (4,58), Social aspects of time to spend a place a to enjoy (4,56) and Psychological- Relaxation- Peace (4,44).
- It has been found that painting and public art application contributes to the city at high level physically and moderately at the social level. It is determined that the greatest physically contribution to the city is Aesthetic Value Adding (4,56) and Identity Adding (4,54) and socially Relieving Psychological-Relaxation (4,39) and preferring to meet people (3,16).
- It has been found that the example in which urban furniture and public art are performed contributes to the city at a high- level socially, but it also contributes to the high level even though it is lower in

terms of physical aspect than the social aspect. It is determined that the greatest contribution to the city is the Landmark (4,96) and Adding Aesthetic Value (4,01), Socially a Place to Enjoy Time Spending (4,55) and meeting various needs (4,46).

- It is found that there is no art practice and the sample has the lowest value in terms of both physical and social aspects. The highest physical values are Landmark (1,44) and Earth spirit (1,42) and socially; Psychological Relaxation- Peace (3,31) and Social interaction (2,88).

Table 2. The values of the samples in terms of their contribution to urban outdoor space

Contribution of public art to urban open space	Installment 1 (n:80)	Painting 2 (n:80)	Urban furniture 3 (n:80)	Non-public art 4 (n:80)	
Physical	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	**ANOVA**
Identity	4,59	4,54	3,68	1,39	$F_{(3-316)}$: 395,137 **sig:0,000**
Aesthetics	4,58	4,56	4,01	1,31	$F_{(3-316)}$: 497,0015 **sig:0,000**
Landmark	4,55	4,53	4,96	1,44	$F_{(3-316)}$: 517,546 **sig:0,000**
Sense of place	4,50	4,50	3,87	1,42	$F_{(3-316)}$: 39, 743 **sig:0,000**
Social	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	ANOVA
Spending time	4,55	2,84	4,56	2,53	$F_{(3-316)}$: 157,820 **sig:0,000**
Preference	4,39	3,16	4,43	2,73	$F_{(3-316)}$: 85,087 **sig:0,000**
Social interaction	4,26	2,85	4,04	2,88	$F_{(3-316)}$: 65,268 **sig:0,000**
Frequency of use	3,90	2,45	4,43	1,96	$F_{(3-316)}$: 274,326 **sig:0,000**
Variety	3,93	2,84	4,46	2,03	$F_{(3-316)}$: 146,729 **sig:0,000**
Psychological relief	4,44	4,39	4,36	3,31	$F_{(3-316)}$: 40,811 **sig:0,000**

RESULTS

The public space does not only include a physical structure that the urban designer has designed with walls, seating units, pavements and floor coverings. It is also a living social structure in which people can spend time, engage in activities and meet their various needs. Therefore, public space should be more than a spontaneous space. In other words, after the physical structure of the designer, it should be able to produce social features. At this point, it is clear that public art will contribute to this structure as a creative process of artistic action.

In addition to this, while designing public spaces, it is also important to create environments with high aesthetic quality that people will enjoy, prefer and feel comfortable in as well as responding to user needs of the space. Public art is also an important concept to meet the aesthetic needs of people and to contribute to the experience of public space. The use of art in public outdoor spaces makes space more exciting and lively, thus contributing to positive effects on urban identity.

As a result of the experimental study, it has been shown that public art has a significant effect on identity, aesthetic value and landmark characteristics of outdoor spaces. In addition, it has been found that it strengthens social characteristics such as social cohesion and social interaction. For this reason, public

art should be taken into consideration both in order to create better quality environments and to create unity and strengthen the feeling of being a society in a world where everyone is increasingly alienated. As a result, administrations, urban designers and people who can realize public art should come together and make planned works.

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