



RESEARCH PAPER

The Historical Origin and Public Manifestation of Public Art

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ABSTRACT

At present, there is no unified definition and interpretation of the concept of public art in the academic world, and opinions vary on its interpretation. As an open term, it is inevitably associated with social, cultural and political circumstances. Scholars in different countries have different understandings of public art due to differences in cultural background, social history, political education and other factors. The reason is mainly due to the pluralistic understanding of the "publicity" of public art. By analogy with the previous achievements of many scholars in the field of public art, this paper analyzes the diversified development and various publicity presented by public art in the course of its historical evolution on the basis of combing and induction, which will help us to further clarify the connotation of public art and deepen the development and construction of its content and disciplines.

KEYWORDS Diversification, Historical Origin, Public Art, Publicity

Introduction

Public art is a new art concept with the development of the city. It refers to the art placed in the public space. It not only includes those artistic works created by artists and beautify the public space, but also includes artistic works or artistic activities jointly created and completed by artists and the public and their clients, independent planners, designers, architects, and financial sponsors, which reflects the spirit and attitude of democracy, openness, communication and sharing of urban public space (Sun Zhenhua, 2003).

The core of public art is "publicity". According to the research of Jurgen Habermas, a famous German sociologist, the word "public" appeared in Britain in the middle of the 17th century, that is, "public" in English. By the end of the 17th century, the word "publicite" in French was borrowed from the written term "publicity" in English. In the public sphere theory, Habermas emphasized the characteristics of common and sharing, and understood "publicity" as a process of communication and open dialogue among citizens, a mechanism of public right to express opinions, and a process of free communication and rational dialogue among citizens (Jurgen Habermas, 2004). Hannah Arendt visually compared "public" to an essence in the field of public life, just like a link placed on the table among the people sitting around it, which has the property of connecting each individual without erasing their differences (Hannah Arendt, 1999). Since then, with the development of public art practice, scholars have summarized the basic characteristics of public art accordingly, First Art set in public places, which provides and allows the public to freely intervene, participate in and appreciate. Second Artistic works (including artistic landscapes, facilities and other art forms on public display composed of various media) have a general public spirit-caring for and

respecting social public interests and emotions; Mark and reflect the public will and spiritual ideals. There the selection, display and operation mechanism of artworks reflect their public nature. Fourth works of art are here to be shared by the public as public resources (Weng Jianqing, 2004). But as an open term, it is inevitably associated with social, cultural and political circumstances. Therefore, scholars in different countries have different understandings and historical traces of public art due to differences in cultural background, social history, political education and many other factors. Generally speaking, there are four different statements as follows:

Literature Review

Aesthetician Ellen Dissanayake believes that from the Stone Age to the present, art in traditional society is rarely made to satisfy personal enjoyment or private aesthetic, nor is it the expression of a lonely artist's self-personality or to express his personal reflection. Prehistoric paintings painted on rock walls may have been seen only by a few people, such as hunters, pledges, or men, but they reflected the beliefs, needs, and knowledge of the community. The huge monuments and props used in the ceremonies of the Neolithic civilization were built to honor some leaders, or were exclusive to the priests, but the buildings were visible to everyone at the time, or the props were visible in the public places of the ceremonies. Although in modern museums, masks, sculptures, and paintings from prehistoric civilizations or small societies are placed in glass cases or suspended high above the walls to isolate them from the audience, as in modern art, they were originally made so that they could be used in public places and seen by members of other communities attending ceremonies (Ellen Dissanayake, 2001).

Scholars who support this view believe that human beings have a long history and a large number of places of interest, among which various components mainly composed of patterns and shapes are huge and contain rich art. The history of human art includes more "public" art than private art. From the discovery of primitive cave paintings and rock paintings in Spain and the south of France, we understand the daily life of ancient people and animals. The crude stone tools and bones found there reveal images of animals captured and scenes painted and painted. Passing through the low, narrow and dark cave passageway into the deep side of the mountain, the sight of totems so vivid in front of the eyes, even now can be called a strange experience. Obviously, these mysterious ancient sites are not just simple decorations for the place, but their worship of pictures and images is a serious and serious common belief. They believe that the relationship between their tribal groups and animals is a ritual-like spiritual existence, so they paint it on the cave walls. Such phenomena and symbolic forms show the "public" signs. From this point of view, public art can be traced as far back as prehistoric cave paintings and any form of art shared by primitive tribe members. Whether it is prehistoric rock paintings or cave paintings, totems, sacrificial idols and monument buildings in primitive tribal villages, dances, performances, masks, body decoration art and other works of art used as ceremonial props in public ceremonial occasions of primitive tribes, or even myths, legends and historical stories sung by members of the same ethnic group from generation to generation, all can be regarded as public art. Moreover, compared with contemporary public art, art produced in primitive societies with homogeneous ideology or social structure has higher publicity. In addition, Wu Hong, a scholar who studies the history of ancient Chinese art, also believes that before the collapse of the Han Empire, independent artists and private art did not appear in China. Therefore, bronze ritual vessels, monument buildings and tomb art can also be called ancient public art, because they not only have public functions. It also has a high

public character as a public symbol that is understood by the audience in connection with a common idea (Wu Hung, 1995).

We can say that these historical sites are "public art" in a broad sense. However, in order to distinguish them from public art in a real modern sense, some scholars refer to them as "pre-public art", that is, "public art" that was completed before the concept of modern public art was proposed, but in line with the characteristics of public art. Of course, many people have doubts about this. The main play is that the concept of "public" from the west came into being much later than "pre-public art", and its definition cannot cover the content that existed before its appearance, thus denying its possibility of becoming public art. However, human culture has its own continuity or historical value structure. If we take "pre-public art" and its symbolic space as a part of the general history, it is prone to a transformation. In the transformation, the meaning of "pre-public art" of such space begins to relate to the concept and judgment of public art in the current time. "Pre-public art" develops in a diachronic and synchronic way, corresponding to our understanding and judgment of the nature of public art, so we can affirm the nature of its public art from the aspect of external effects. This is enough to explain why our prehistoric rock paintings, carvings, religious art, mausoleum art can today be classified as public art, which can be seen as art in a symbolic public space (Wu Shixin, 2005).

On the Origin of Public Art in Ancient Greece

This view traces public art back to the ancient Greek tradition of placing public statues in public squares. In ancient Greece, with the emergence of city-state and public sphere, the concept of civil society and public life was gradually formed, and a relatively open slave democracy was formed. The "sunshine square" of the city-state, allowing citizens to openly discuss and exchange public affairs and opinions. Relatively free and open public space appeared, public consciousness began to sprout, public sphere rudiment appeared, public sphere and private sphere began to divide. Although this division is an absolute master-slave relationship, in which the public sphere is dominant and the private sphere is subordinate, it is because of this relationship that social division occurs. This distinction reflects the separation of public and private rights. Citizens form the public rights of the city-state through discussions in the public sphere. Citizens use this right mainly to maintain the common interests of the city-state public, rather than to seek personal interests. In *The Age of Public Art*, Sun Zhenhua believed that the city-state of ancient Greece was a place where people could openly discuss and exchange opinions on public matters in the square. It was on the basis of such an enlightened democratic system and relatively open and free public space that the public art of ancient Greece emerged (Sun Zhenhua, 2003).

Zhong Yuanbo believes in the Concept Formation and Historical Evolution of Public Art that the development of public art is closely related to the evolution of urban culture and artistic trends, and its growth environment is formed in the process of continuous development and construction. From the perspective of sociology, the origin of the growth of public art can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome (Zhong Yuanbo, 2009). From the perspective of historical development, the art of ancient Greece was superior and free, with relatively open public space and enlightened democratic system. The main embodiment of public in Ancient Greece is that citizens jointly grasp public rights and use them for public purposes. Of course, the publicity at this time was very limited. Although city-state, public sphere and citizens could constitute public rights, the citizens of city-state here did not refer to all people, but to those who could

participate in public political affairs and governing institutions, and the power of free dialogue did not belong to those who belonged to the slave class.

At the same time, the spirit of citizenship also emerged in the public sphere of ancient Greece. The public space was a place for citizens to participate in political life, where they could jointly participate in the management of the city-state. Essentially, this was determined by the relationship between citizens and the city-state (Liu Hanchao, 2015). In ancient Greece, the city-state was the foundation of a community of free men (Aristotle, 1995). Citizen is the organic composition of city-state, civic life and political life of city-state are highly unified, the political life of city-state is also civic life. In their eyes, citizens must participate in the political life of the city-state. Only by participating in the discussion and decision-making of city-state matters can they have the meaning of survival. It is in the experience and discussion of city-state public life that the spirit of citizenship is nurtured and germinated. Moreover, the ancient Greeks have made brilliant achievements in public buildings and sculptures, such as the social temples, theaters and arenas. The construction of the Parthenon by the Greeks has applied the "Corrective vision", forming the rhythm of life with the legendary golden ratio. The present people have a sense of sublimity and awe from the bottom of their hearts, thus forming a unique spirit of public place.

Some scholars believe that the initial form of public art was born on the basis of the emergence of cities and the construction of facilities for large cities. For example, many large cities in Ancient Greece and Rome were already equipped with the conditions for the development of public art. During the Roman Empire, city squares became the sites for emperors to erect monuments and write legends. Many public monuments and statues of emperors thus became the earliest public art (Shi Xiangdong, 2006).

Although this view is not recognized by most current scholars, it is not groundless. As Winckelmann said, the Greeks began to use art to depict human images to commemorate their ideals from a very early time, and this way is open to any Greek (Winkelmann, 2001),

Therefore, the sculptures set in the city squares in ancient Greece have the accessibility and openness characteristics of public art to some extent. For another example, in his book *The Archaeology of Fine Arts -- The Century*, Michaelis indeed mentioned that in the first half of the fourth century AD, an unimaginable number of public sculptures were set up in the city streets of Rome, and from his description of these sculptures, it can be seen that they are incomparable in form and scale to public sculptures in modern cities (Michaelis, 1998).

On the European Origins of Public Art

Scholars who agree that public art originated from Europe believe that the most exemplary public sculpture of modern public art was established between the end of the 19th century and the outbreak of the First World War. Sergiusz Michalski, a professor of art history at the University of Duingen in Germany, believes that the embryonic form of public art was born in Europe in the 16th century, when simple monuments began to be combined with public decorative sculptures. Europe's first public memorial statue designed entirely for public space was erected in 1572 in the town of Messina in Sicily, Italy, to pay homage to Don Juan of Austria, who defeated the Turks at the Battle of Lepanto (Compiled by Britannica, Inc, 1999). This statue marks the beginning of a three-century-long development process of public memorial sculpture in Europe, which not

only means that memorial statues from medieval castles and courts have moved into the common civic space, but also in this process, the newly born statues have broken away from the previous functional limitations of showing respect and obedience to individuals such as monarchs and nobles. Increasingly, it was used to commemorate historical figures and patriotic events of more public significance (Michalski, 1998).

Then the "Enlightenment thought", born in Europe in the 18th century, liberated people's minds and made them gradually realise the importance of the human spirit beyond art. It was during this period that public art was gradually integrated with the market, taking the form of commodities and becoming a culture for discussion. It gradually integrated into the life of citizens and became more interesting. Numerous cafes also became the first choice places for people to discuss various art topics. In the mid-18th century, the emergence of art criticism built an invisible bridge between artists and the public, making art more widely concerned by the society. Through the acquisition of knowledge and liberation of mind and spirit, more citizens are more capable of challenging the ancient authority and noble privilege, thus establishing the important concepts related to public art—publicity and public sphere, and laying the foundation for the emergence of contemporary urban public art (Zhang Yujie, 2016).

At the same time, a large number of famous thinkers emerged in the Enlightenment, the most representative of which is Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, collectively known as the "three swordsmen of the French Enlightenment". Montesquieu proposed his famous "separation of powers" theory. He believed that the powers of the state should be divided into three types: legislative, executive and judicial, and they bound each other. This is also the founding principle of the basic political system in many countries today. Jurgen Habermas believes that the public sphere of the bourgeoisie emerged in the period of liberal capitalism. With the emergence of modern countries and the development of commercial trade, the public sphere in the modern sense began to take shape, also known as the public power sphere (Jurgen Habermas, 2004). Driven by the French Enlightenment in the 18th century, the formation of the concept of public sphere and publicity gradually matured, which laid an ideological foundation for the emergence of public art in the future.

At the end of the 19th century, with the outbreak of bourgeois revolution in Europe, public memorial sculpture has become a kind of carrier of bourgeois political culture and a symbol used by the bourgeoisie to express their political ideas and demands. Thus, in the 40 or 50 years or so leading up to 1914, a distinct "Denkmalkultur" (culture of monuments) emerged: In France, public monuments and public memorial sculptures have become the front for Republicans to spread elitist historical knowledge, implement enlightenment education and publicize democratic and republican ideas to the public. Especially during the period of the Third Republic of France, various ideas and political factions carried out public exchanges and dialogues in the form of statues in public space. This led to the rise of a popular "Statuomania" in Paris (Michalski, 1998); At the same time, Germany also built public art known as national or national monument. These works of art promoted the belief of national victory, set up a strong sense of national confidence and superiority among the people, and strengthened the national cohesion (Michalski, 1998). They all have a social function and become a public means of education. Sergiusz Michalski, professor of art history at the University of Duingen in Germany, believes that these public monument statues had a great influence on the later construction of public statues in European countries.

The American Origins of Public Art

Most contemporary public art researchers believe that public art in the real sense originated from the United States, but there are some differences on the specific time division. For example, in *American Public Art Review*, Hilde S. Hein, Huang Jianmin and most other contributors believe that the embryonic form of public art can be traced back to the construction of the Washington Monument launched by Congress to celebrate independence and symbolize the national spirit of the United States during the American War of Independence. After the founding of the United States, the government promoted science and art as part of the public good, honored those who died in the form of monumental sculptures, and decorated the Capitol and other public buildings with many sculptures and giant historical murals to remember the fallen and educate the next generation. These works are either used as a symbol of the American spirit, or to promote certain public values, or to commemorate and describe important historical figures and historical events, so it can be said that they are the origin of American public art (Hild S. Hein, 2006).

Cher Krause Knight argues that the earliest private institution for public Art was founded in 1872 in the United States as the Fairmount Park Art Association, which was dedicated to public art and urban planning (Cher Krause Knight, 2008). In the United States, policy-oriented public art linked to government behavior dates back to a series of art projects under Roosevelt's New Deal in 1933. These programs were designed to alleviate the social contradictions brought about by the Great Depression. Their core themes were relief, reform, and recovery. The Roosevelt administration believed that culture and art were the expression of national civilization and competitiveness, and artists were also important resources for the country. At first, the government launched the Public Works of Art Project (1933-1935 PWAP for short) in the New Deal, and then gradually set up the "Federal Art Project" under the Works Progress Administration (FAP, 1935-1943). It mainly subsidizes artists' creations, such as murals, sculptures, paintings, printmaking, photography and sculpture, and places them in schools, hospitals, charity organizations and art galleries. It also requires artists to be responsible for the guidance of art courses, participate in the administrative work of community art centers, and handle exhibitions, lectures, art viewing and other activities. By the outbreak of World War II, there were 25,000 public murals and 108,000 easel paintings, as well as 18,000 sculptures, 250,000 prints, 2,000 posters and 500,000 photographs funded by the Federal Art Promotion Program (Zhang Gan, 2007).

This not only saved artists from disaster, but also led to a large number of artists emigrating to the United States after World War II, which laid the foundation for American leadership in Western art in the future (Erika Doss, 2002). In 1934, the Treasury Department issued the Painting and sculpture regulations, which stipulated that about 1 percent of federal construction costs should be used for artistic placement in buildings, this move heralds the transformation of public art from the embellishment of buildings into an independent growing art culture. At the same time, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the New World, Chicago held the city beautification movement. The artworks set in public places were actually part of the legislative implementation of the United States government at all levels, which had a significant impact and contribution to the city life. Later, in 1959, Philadelphia became the first city in the United States to adopt a Percentage Art Act when it approved a "Percentage Art" ordinance, requiring that no less than one percent of the building budget be allocated to the installation of art. Michael von Moschzisher, the initiator of the policy, proposed that the policy aims to give the urban landscape environment a

personalized image, which is in line with the public interest, thus starting the climax of public art construction in Philadelphia's urban landscape. In 1964, Baltimore also issued a policy related to "percentage art", which was strongly supported by the municipal government. Mayor William Donald Schaefer realized that public art plays an important role in urban development. When it comes to the issue of urban beautification, He said rich art forms add new vitality to stiff buildings, bringing new life to people and cities.

On September 3, 1964, President Johnson approved the establishment of the National Council on the Arts. In September 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) was established with the purpose of communicating art to American citizens. Realize national and cultural identity through art. The establishment of the National Art Foundation of the United States is the first time in the history of the United States to use taxpayer funds for the construction of national and local public art, which also makes the development of public art in the United States a new financial guarantee. In 1967, NEA established "Art-in-Public Places" (A-i-P-P), which fully supports literary and artistic activities and creation, and promotes the development of contemporary culture and Art. It has become A Public art project in the most typical stage of the federal government in the United States. Therefore, some scholars identified the emergence of "public art" in the A-i-P-P project in 1967. For example, Suzanne Lacy wrote in her book *Mapping the Terrain: New Types of Public Art*. The new genre public art holds that Contemporary Public Art originated from the Art-in-Public-Places [A-i-P-P] program established by the National Endowment for the Arts [NEA] in 1967 (Lacy, 1995). Subsequently, Los Angeles in 1967 and San Francisco in 1969 successively implemented the "percentage art" policy to stimulate urban culture and improve the quality of life of citizens through this act. As a result, the percentage art policy gradually spread to state governments in the United States. Hawaii and Washington adopted the policy, and other states followed in the late 1970s and 1980s. All cities, states and districts have achieved good results in the orderly construction of public art. "Percentage art" thoroughly reflects the practical nature of "art for the public" in the United States. It has brought real welfare to people, improved the overall aesthetic accomplishment of the people, and brought considerable benefits to the city and the country while driving economic development.

The Embodiment of Multiple Publicity in Public Art

It can be seen from the origin theories of public art from the above four viewpoints that scholars' understanding of different origins actually reflects their different reference objects selected in their research and their different understandings of publicity. Obviously, the public nature involved in the first view is relative to the private nature of private art, art in art galleries or museums in later generations. It refers to the public nature in the sense of ethnic and cultural sharing based on common ideas and beliefs, open to and shared by members of the same ethnic group, and visible in public ceremonial occasions. The second view on the origin of public art represents the recognition of free civil rights in the ancient typical "public sphere" based on democratic politics said by Habermas. The third theory of European origin refers to the public nature of criticism of social opinion in the public sphere of bourgeois society about the conflict between various political statements and ideological discourse, and the public nature of strengthening national recognition and national cohesion in the formation of nationalism in European countries (Guo gongmin, 2017). The disagreement on the fourth American origin theory also reflects the recognition of the different publicness embodied by different art modes in the process of American public art practice. The national spirit and the public nature of social integration were shaped in the differences and conflicts before and after the independence of the United States. Government Paternalism during the

New Deal (Hild S Hein, 2006). Publicity under the social welfare construction mode of funding artist groups and art serving the public; And in the 1960s, laws and regulations were formulated to ensure that art became an integral part of public construction, encourage the public to participate in the process of public art construction, and promote the publicity of the interaction between art landscape and the public. As described by Hild S. Hein in the historical review of American public art in the *Way of Thinking of Public Art Different from Museums*, American public art has experienced different stages of development, and the practice mode of public art and its publicity are different in each stage (Hild S Hein, 2006).

However, these four public art origins represent only the most important modes of public art. In fact, if we expand our horizons beyond the United States, we will find that even government-funded "public art" developed earlier in other countries, some even earlier than in the United States. For example, after the Mexican Revolution in 1920, the Mexican mural Movement was launched in 1921. The beginning of this movement was directly related to the government's mural plan. In 1936, in order to solve the unemployment problem, the French government tried to write the percentage art clause into the law, but it was not until 1951 that the 1% *artistique* was successfully promulgated. Sweden also started a percentage program (Public Art Agency Sweden) in the 1930s; Italy and Germany began to implement the "2% art law" (*Legge del 2%*) and the "Kunst AmBau" (Architectural Art Law) in 1949 and 1952 respectively. In 1988, Britain proposed the "percentage Art" Act and so on.

Therefore, different theories on the origin of public art can only prove the difference in the reference objects selected by researchers and the diversified understanding of "publicity". However, such differences and diversity in understanding are still of great significance. They just objectively prove the origin of the diversification of public art and the coexistence of various publicness. Instead of identifying an "authentic" art model as a reference standard, we should regard it as the historical evolution in the process of practice along with the progress of society. Then, from a broad perspective: regardless of the nature and degree of the public nature of the object, as long as it is different from purely private art, but also set in the public space, involved in the field of public social life, and has a certain public value and public direction of the works can be regarded as public art.

Conclusion

Since the German artist Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) put forward the concept of "expanding art" in the 1970s, art has developed into a kind of social activity based on objects and people without any form of restriction (Wang Hongyi, 2009). The role of art has also changed from the sacred and classic way to the carrier of effective expression and communication of modern people, and the relationship between art and the public is closer. Some eye-catching social issues began to become the focus of art, such as race, natural disaster, gender, green environmental protection and disadvantaged groups. These have become the object of artistic attention, but also become the inexhaustible source of public art creation (Sun Zhenhua, 2003). Postmodernism's emphasis on the relationship between man and nature and between man and society directly gave birth to public art in the contemporary sense. In the public art case of the Tilted Arc made by American sculptor Serra for Federal Square in New York from 1981 to 1989, the Tilted Arc was dismantled in the face of public criticism. This artistic event once again expanded the extension of the relationship between public art and public rights, and reflected that public recognition is the prerequisite for "art serving the public". Once an

artist's work is in the public domain, the artist has no right to make any changes to the work (K.E.GOVER, 2011).

It can be seen from this that the concept of public art and its public characteristics have always been in a dynamic process of change in the historical development, and have been continuously extended with the progress of human society. Even up to now, the concept connotation, work form, operation mechanism and value function of public art are still in continuous change and expansion. In this process of continuous development and evolution, public art has been extended from a cultural welfare policy to a universal cultural concept and artistic spirit, which represents a new orientation of the relationship between art and the city, art and the public, art and society, mainly through art to intervene in the daily life of society, the city and the public, to maximize the function of art. Finally, it points to the realization of modern civil society with openness, publicity and democracy.

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