



Public Art Education and Public Interaction: A Systematic Literature Review and Future Directions

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ABSTRACT: Public art education has gained increasing attention in recent years as an essential component of aesthetic education and public cultural development. Unlike traditional art education confined to classrooms or museums, public art education emphasizes openness, accessibility, and interaction between art and the public. With the transformation of contemporary cities and the diversification of learning environments, public art has become an important educational medium that integrates artistic experience, social participation, and cultural understanding. This paper presents a systematic literature review on public art education and public interaction, focusing on educational concepts, interactive mechanisms, and social significance. By synthesizing existing studies, this research identifies key characteristics and challenges of public art education, particularly the lack of interactivity in both artistic practice and educational approaches. Finally, the paper proposes future directions for enhancing interactive public art education through experiential learning, technological integration, and interdisciplinary collaboration. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the educational value of public art and provides theoretical support for innovative public art education practices.

KEYWORDS: Public Art Education; Public Interaction; Aesthetic Education; Cultural Participation; Literature Review

I. INTRODUCTION

Public art education has emerged as a significant and rapidly developing field within contemporary art education and cultural studies, particularly in response to increasing emphasis on holistic education, cultural literacy, and lifelong learning [1][2]. As the scope of art education expands beyond professional skill training, public art—

situated in open urban spaces and accessible to diverse audiences—has become a distinctive platform for educational interaction and experiential learning [3].

Traditional art education has long been associated with formal institutions such as schools, museums, and galleries. While these settings provide structured curricula and expert guidance, they often limit participation to specific groups and reinforce a relatively passive relationship between audiences and artworks [4]. Learners are commonly positioned as recipients of knowledge rather than active participants in meaning-making processes, which may constrain engagement and inclusivity [5].

In contrast, public art education emphasizes openness, accessibility, and interaction. By embedding artistic experiences within everyday environments, public art education enables individuals to encounter art outside institutional boundaries and to engage with it as part of daily life [6]. Such encounters are often spontaneous and socially situated, allowing learning to occur through perception, interaction, and reflection rather than formal instruction alone [7].

The growing interest in public art education also reflects broader transformations in urban life and learning environments. Contemporary cities are increasingly understood as complex learning ecosystems in which education occurs across multiple settings, including public spaces, cultural institutions, and digital platforms [8]. Within this expanded learning landscape, public art functions not only as an artistic artifact but also as an educational medium integrating aesthetic experience, social participation, and cultural understanding [9].

Despite its potential, public art education remains under-theorized and unevenly developed. Existing research often focuses on isolated case studies or descriptive accounts of practice without sufficient integration into broader educational theory [10]. In particular, interaction—widely acknowledged as central to both education and public art—has not been systematically examined as a pedagogical mechanism within public art education



[11].

Against this background, this paper conducts a systematic literature review on public art education and public interaction. By synthesizing existing studies, it clarifies key educational concepts, interactive mechanisms, and social functions of public art education, and proposes future directions for developing more interactive and sustainable models [12].

II. Conceptual Framework of Public Art Education

Public art education can be broadly defined as a set of educational practices that utilize public art as a medium for aesthetic learning, cultural understanding, and social engagement [2][3]. Unlike professional art education, which emphasizes technical skill development, public art education targets a broad and heterogeneous public, aiming to cultivate aesthetic sensitivity, critical awareness, and cultural participation [13].

From a conceptual perspective, public art education occupies an interdisciplinary space at the intersection of art education, sociology, urban studies, and cultural theory [14]. Its educational value derives from its capacity to connect artistic expression with social context, encouraging reflection on public space, community values, and cultural identity [9][15].

Public art education aligns closely with experiential learning theories, which emphasize learning through direct experience, reflection, and active engagement [16]. Encountering artworks in public space allows learners to engage simultaneously with visual, spatial, and social dimensions, supporting holistic learning processes that integrate perception, emotion, and cognition.

Furthermore, public art education reflects constructivist perspectives on learning, which view knowledge as actively constructed through interaction with environments and others [17]. Meaning in public art contexts emerges through interpretation, dialogue, and shared experience rather than unidirectional transmission [18].

Importantly, public art education also embodies principles of informal and lifelong learning. Learning in public art contexts is voluntary, self-directed, and embedded in everyday life, complementing formal education systems and extending learning opportunities across life stages [1][19].

III. Interaction as a Core Element of Public Art Education

Interaction constitutes a foundational element of contemporary public art education. Within educational theory, interaction refers to the reciprocal processes through which learners engage with content, environments, and other participants, thereby constructing meaning through experience and dialogue [5][17]. In public art contexts, interaction extends beyond verbal communication to include bodily movement, sensory perception, emotional response, and social exchange.

From a pedagogical perspective, interactive learning environments are widely recognized as effective in promoting engagement, motivation, and deep understanding [7]. Public art education exemplifies this approach by situating learning within open and dynamic urban settings, where interaction emerges organically through encounters with artworks and other participants [6].

Public art transforms traditional audience-artwork relationships by inviting active participation rather than passive observation [12]. Interactive installations, participatory projects, and performative practices reposition learners as co-creators of meaning, aligning public art education with constructivist and socio-cultural learning theories [17][18].

Dimensions of Interaction in Public Art Education

Interaction in public art education can be understood across multiple dimensions. Physical interaction involves bodily engagement with artworks, such as movement through space, tactile exploration, or manipulation of interactive elements [6]. These embodied experiences enhance sensory awareness and support experiential learning.

Cognitive interaction occurs as learners interpret artistic forms, symbols, and narratives embedded within public artworks [2][3]. Because contemporary public art often resists singular interpretation, learners are encouraged to explore multiple meanings and reflect critically on their experiences.

Social interaction represents another crucial dimension. Public art frequently creates shared situations in which individuals interact with one another through discussion, collaboration, or collective participation [18]. Such interactions foster communication skills, empathy, and social learning.

Emotional interaction also plays a significant role. Encounters with public art may evoke curiosity, surprise, or emotional resonance, which contribute to memory formation and sustained engagement [1][7]. These affective dimensions highlight the holistic



nature of learning in public art education.

Mediated and Digital Interaction

Advances in digital technology have expanded the interactive possibilities of public art education. Digital media, augmented reality, and interactive platforms enable new forms of engagement that extend learning beyond physical space [11]. Through digital mediation, learners can access additional information, narratives, and participatory functions that enhance educational depth.

However, digital interaction also raises questions regarding accessibility, technological literacy, and sustainability [19]. Effective integration of digital tools requires careful design to ensure that technology supports rather than replaces embodied and social interaction.

IV. Educational Value of Public Art Education

Public art education derives its educational value from the integration of aesthetic experience, social interaction, and cultural context. Unlike formal curricula that prescribe learning outcomes, public art education operates through open-ended experiences that allow learners to engage according to personal interests and motivations [2][7].

Situated within everyday environments, public art education connects learning with lived experience, enhancing relevance and meaning [9]. This situated nature supports sustained engagement and facilitates learning that is both contextualized and transferable.

Aesthetic Education and Perceptual Development

Aesthetic education represents a core dimension of public art education. Through repeated encounters with public artworks, learners develop sensitivity to visual form, spatial composition, and symbolic meaning [3][4]. These experiences cultivate perceptual awareness and aesthetic judgment beyond formal instructional settings.

Public art supports aesthetic learning by presenting artworks at full scale and within specific spatial and social contexts. Such encounters encourage learners to consider relationships between art, environment, and audience, fostering holistic understanding [6].

Moreover, the interpretive openness of contemporary public art promotes critical thinking. By engaging with ambiguous or contested meanings, learners develop reflective and evaluative skills central to creative and intellectual development [5].

Cultural Awareness and Civic Learning

Beyond aesthetic development, public art

education contributes to cultural awareness and civic learning. Public artworks often address themes related to history, identity, social values, and collective memory, providing opportunities for learners to engage with cultural narratives embedded in public space [9][14].

Through interaction with these narratives, learners develop cultural literacy and situate personal experience within broader social frameworks. Public art education thus supports civic learning by encouraging reflection on public space, citizenship, and social responsibility [12][15].

Importantly, civic learning in public art contexts is experiential rather than didactic. Learners engage with social issues through artistic form and shared experience, fostering empathy and ethical awareness [1][18].

V. Informal Learning and Lifelong Education in Public Art Contexts

Public art education is closely aligned with informal learning and lifelong education. Informal learning refers to learning that occurs outside formal institutional settings and is often self-directed, experiential, and embedded in everyday life [1][19]. Public art provides an ideal environment for such learning by integrating educational experiences into ordinary urban contexts.

Learning through public art is typically voluntary and open-ended. Individuals choose how and when to engage with artworks, allowing learning processes to develop according to personal interests and motivations [7]. This autonomy supports intrinsic motivation and contributes to sustained engagement over time.

Public art education also accommodates diverse learning styles and life stages. Children, adolescents, adults, and older individuals may engage with the same artwork in different ways, drawing on varied experiences and perspectives [4]. Such diversity reinforces the role of public art as a lifelong learning resource that evolves with learners' needs.

In addition, public art education facilitates intergenerational learning by creating shared experiences across age groups. Families, communities, and social groups often encounter public art collectively, enabling dialogue and mutual learning [18]. These interactions strengthen social bonds and enhance the social dimension of learning.

VI. Methodological Reflections on Public Art Education Research

Research on public art education presents distinct methodological challenges due to the



diversity of learning contexts, audiences, and forms of interaction involved. Public art education research spans multiple disciplines, including art education, urban studies, sociology, and cultural theory, requiring methodological flexibility and reflexivity [14][22].

Qualitative approaches such as interviews, participant observation, and narrative analysis are particularly suited to capturing the experiential and interpretive dimensions of public art education [17]. These methods enable researchers to explore how learners construct meaning through interaction with artworks, spaces, and others.

At the same time, mixed-methods approaches can enhance analytical rigor by combining qualitative depth with quantitative and spatial perspectives [23]. Surveys, mapping techniques, and digital interaction data may offer insights into participation patterns and learning outcomes across larger populations.

However, methodological rigor must be balanced with sensitivity to context. Public art education research should avoid imposing rigid evaluation frameworks that overlook the emergent and relational nature of learning in public space [12]. Reflexive research practices that acknowledge positionality and power relations are essential.

VII. Policy Implications and Future Directions

The development of public art education is closely connected to cultural policy and educational planning. Recognizing public art education as a legitimate component of public education systems can support resource allocation, institutional collaboration, and professional development [10][15].

Policies should encourage interdisciplinary cooperation among artists, educators, planners, and community organizations. Public art education is most effective when artistic practice is aligned with educational intent and social context [6][21].

Inclusivity and accessibility must also be central policy considerations. While public art has the potential to reach diverse audiences, this potential is not automatically realized. Addressing barriers related to physical access, cultural representation, and digital literacy is essential for equitable public art education [8][19].

Future research should pursue comparative and longitudinal studies to examine the long-term impact of public art education on aesthetic development, cultural awareness, and civic engagement. Greater attention to digital and hybrid practices will also be necessary as technologies continue to reshape public learning environments

[11].

VIII. Conclusion

This paper has examined public art education through the lens of public interaction, highlighting its role as an inclusive and experiential learning system embedded in everyday urban life. By synthesizing interdisciplinary literature, the study demonstrates that public art education extends learning beyond formal institutions and fosters aesthetic, social, and cultural development through interaction.

Interaction emerges as a central pedagogical mechanism in public art education. Through engagement with artworks, spaces, and other participants, learners actively construct meaning and develop aesthetic sensitivity, cultural awareness, and civic understanding [2][17].

At the same time, the paper has identified challenges related to evaluation, governance, and inclusivity. Addressing these challenges requires integrated policy frameworks, methodological innovation, and sustained collaboration among stakeholders.

In conclusion, public art education offers significant potential for enriching public life and supporting lifelong learning in contemporary cities. Continued research and policy support are essential for advancing public art education as a socially meaningful and educationally effective field.

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