



Understanding Public Art: A Review on History, Revolution and Importance

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ABSTRACT

In India all form of art has always had a very important role and place in the lives of people. Right from the Cave Painting to modern contemporary art, it has great influence on public. The art is essential element of healthy society that benefits the nation even in difficult social and economic times. Based on previous study papers, this review is about what public art is. History of public art, its role and importance to community. It showcase the positive impact public art can have on a community. The outcome of this paper is hoped to provide a better understanding of public art for better quality of public realm.

KEYWORDS: public art, public place, awareness, social expression, Mexican mural movement, earthwork.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since you were a child, you must have seen Advertisements, Pictures, Painting and Installations on the street of your city. A Street with this active and dynamic cultural scene and beautiful artifacts looks more attractive. What kind of art is that? What is its importance to our society? That art compels person to stop, observe, think, listen, and respond (Shreyash & dhara, 2017). Artist tries to reach people to convey their message or to interact with people through their art. From prehistoric to modern Contemporary; art is important factor that has always been and will continue as a tool of expression and social activism. Advancement in art changed the definition, material and techniques of art.

This review paper contains all about form of art named 'public art', which is playing important role in art world since very ancient age. This paper is about understanding the public art.

History and origin of public art, its role and importance to community. This paper also includes case studies to showcase the positive impact public art can have.

II. WHAT IS PUBLIC ART

What is public art? Public art is a form of artwork that installed in public space for public view (Mohd Fabin, 2021). It is broadly designate artistic works that have been specifically released within/ for the public realm (Sarnelid & Wilson, 2018) In the ancient age public art was introduced to public to appreciate and view as one of religious and social art virtues (chris,2011) As time flies, the function of public art has also expanded and evolved. Public art exists not just as a visual aid, but it also serves for public enjoyment (Ainul A., Annur R., &Khalilah Z., 2014) it should be used as a tool to promote local identity, since it claims to create sense of place and enhance the spatial experience of the public (miles, 1997) Everyone noted public art according to their perspective. There is no specific definition of public art is written anywhere. According to study; basically, public art is an art done for society to enrich the environment, to spread a message/ awareness, to make statement and also to express views on particular subjects. This art excludes all places that are private territories: Streets, yards, parks, hospitals, stations, market, malls, etc., that's why it is accessible to all. We can say public art is one of the important tools to stimulate people's reaction and call out response to any issue.

II.a) History and Revolution in Public Art

Social art firstly being viewed in Greek cities and appreciated by the community at large. Example of super ancient Greek art is the Parthenon (c.447 – 422c.) on the Acropolis at



Athens. Later those Roman authorities produced statues of Roman Emperor in all corners of the emperor, to demonstrate the majesty of Rome. This concept of aesthetic has been later implemented by Christian communities. Most of churches being beautified with beautiful religious art including statues, mosaic art, relief sculpture, stained-glass art. These monumental buildings were working as public work of art. Specially design to inspire to the community with religious observance. Italian renaissance was known as golden era of public art. The entire art was sponsored by church or civic authorities. Giotto's chapel fresco at Paaua, Michelangelo's marble sculptures pieta and David, was the most beautiful example of renaissance public art. 17th century was the last year of religious propaganda campaign, churches has been reformed by using dramatic style of baroque art in its architecture. Bible subjects were inspirational to communicate its message to churchgoers across Europe. During 18th century and 19th century patronage by Catholic Church was reduced and new work of urban architecture was confined largely in the west. Public art pieces exemplified by beautiful large buildings of America, Smithsonian institute of Washington, st. cathedral in New York. In Europe public art had wide range of structures like Neo- classical national gallery London. Public is changing day by day due to social, environmental, cultural and another issues. It is revolving continuously in 20th and 21st century public art functions, form and media widened dramatically. Role behind public art become changed. Political development is one of the most important functions during 1920s and 1930s, painter like Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and clement Orzoco created Mexican mural movement in which public buildings were decorated by large scale murals, fresco paintings, with political message. During 1970s and 1980s public specially designed for political agenda. Novel form of public art in 19th century is Land art. It contains earthwork like spiral jetty, double negative, etc. Land art is a form which is made directly in landscape by using natural material such as soil, rock, twigs, etc. Building murals and architectural forms are most open form of public art in 20th century. Now modern technology had given us very new and updated techniques like graffiti, guerrilla art, installation art, flash Mobbing, video projection and many other forms of street art. Among all the ages aim of public art is constant that is spreading awareness.

II.b) Types of public art

Public art can be defined in any style and any size and any form, from large too small. Sculptures and murals are common public art forms, but the term 'public art' does not explicitly apply to any particular art style or art form. (Eden Gallery, 2021) Public art has survived from various types since ancient age – that is, funerary monuments, statues and other religious or architectural sculpture. Today, however, the category of public art includes a huge range of works from the fine, decorative into earthworks or making structures in the landscape using natural or man-made materials. Public art can include many different styles of art. Across the world and throughout history, public art has included murals, sculptures, memorials, public architecture, or landscape architectural work. Modern forms of public art can consist of crowd sourced community art, digital new media, experiential art, performances, and even festivals. (Eden Gallery, 2021). It also includes transient displays or temporary architectural constructions. Artist also creating artwork by using waste materials like old cloths, destroyed metal, automobile waste, medical waste, plastic, garbage, etc.

II.c) Public Art in Indian Perspective

The earliest form of public art could be cave paintings done in caves like Bhimbhethka, Ajanta, Bagh and Sittanvasal and also the rock cut architecture found at Ellora and Badami. Rock columns of Ashoka could also be thought of public artworks made to exhibit his power. Indian festivals are more connected to public art form because festivals provide a platform to engage with large and diverse audiences. ... And festivals are also critical in providing access to the arts in local communities and a chance for the artists to meet the public, and vice versa. (dreamfair.org) Festivals are a cultural highlight in many townships, cities and countries worldwide. Celebrations of the richness and diversity of culture and creativity, they often encompass a variety of contemporary and traditional art forms — dance, music, theatre, arts and crafts. Culturally, they offer a unique snapshot of a community's identity, both providing an opportunity to revitalize and preserve cultural practices, and often serving as a creative laboratory for contemporary performers. Socially, they are a means of strengthening intercultural dialogue, promoting deeper. Understanding through shared experience (Brigitte Vézina, 2012) and spreading messages too. According to a survey done by



Christopher and Selase, 45% peoples said the celebration of the festival is for stock taking and honoring of ancestors. Furthermore, 38% people said the main art forms showcased during the celebration of the festival were visual art and performing arts (30%) (I.e. drumming and dancing). The main role art forms played in the celebration of the festival is attraction and beautification of the festival. The celebration of the festival serves as thanks giving to God, merry making and discussion of developmental projects of the area. (Selase G. R., Christopher M., 2013) our cultural festivals are platform of public participation, so we can relate it to public art form.

III. ROLE OF PUBLIC ART

Public Art is the art exhibited externally in public areas, open for people to view and appreciate. It has many functions including artistic expressions, community dialogue and enjoyment. It provides with physical infrastructure and built environment, which enables the public space to act in multifunctional ways with several activities around to accommodate different age groups. (Parikh, Shreya & Dave, Dhara. 2017) "Art can help drive social change, empower public, and can be used as a platform for spreading awareness on social and community issues." "Street art is an integral part of the urban experience. It is also a great medium of communication," says Giulia Ambrogi, the Creative Director of St+art India Foundation. Public artworks help beautify a local neighborhood and to attract visitors. It contributes visual quality to the urban environment. Places get empowered with their own icons and creates landmark. Engaging in public art generates excitement and ultimately leads to increased foot traffic, which benefits surrounding businesses. Many public artworks are major tourist landmarks because of which the transport business, restaurants, hotels and local crafts business flourish hence it is cause of **Economic growth**. When an old building or an abandoned site/place is used for public artwork then it can help uplift its condition. It can also help to reduce illegal dumping of material and helps in **Redevelopment**. It can be strong medium to propagate or **spread message**. It holds power of creativity and can aesthetically express cause, value or an issue that the society embraces. Art represents life in many ways. When community members see themselves reflected in social spaces, they feel a sense of respect, ultimately allowing for people to identify with the place they are from, live in, or are visiting. Art brings people together. Displaying art in public

places and making it accessible to everyone inspires engagement and a feeling of belonging to a community. The artwork reaches too many people and helps artist to understand public mentality. Public art can't be ignored it evokes emotions within the community and helps to achieve a greater positive response and scope for interaction with audience.

IV. EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC ART

i. coffee cup and DNA, New York

Creative Time has commissioned this series of artist designed daily coffee cups to spark public imagination around genetic research and how it will radically impact our daily lives. Why the daily coffee cup? That "first cup of the day" ritual offers a direct line into the waking minds of the public. What better way to inspire thoughts on how genetic research is impacting so many different areas of human endeavor? Also, this every day, urban paper cup holds rich potential for inspiring NYC coffee and tea drinkers to consider what they are ingesting into their bodies, thus inspiring multiple associations that range from genetically modified food to new DNA specific drugs. As you go through life, you leave your DNA behind. It can be copied and 'read' like a genetic software program detailing your exact construction. What if someone decides to decode your DNA to get information on you or patent some of your genes because they might have a market value? What action can you take? **YOU DO NOT OWN YOUR GENES**. That is to say you have no personal authority to prevent your genome (your unique DNA sequence spelled out in genetic code) from being replicated by others for a variety of potential uses. Five artists have decorated coffee cups with messages about DNA. There are many good legal and ethical questions to be raised about the Genetic Revolution. The cups were distributed in New York cafes and deals with the goal of stimulating public dialogue about the implications of genetics research for our daily lives. The work was commissioned by Creative Time, a public art organization based in New York, which has funded other projects on this topic. The cups was part of the exhibition.

ii. Sassoon Dock

Sassoon dock art project is one of the important public art projects in Mumbai, which took place during November and December 2017 as a part of the st+art Mumbai 2017 Urban Art Festival. For the event 30 national and international artists gathered to make beautiful artworks like site



specific installations, mural, audio-visual experience, talks and curated tours. Sassoon dock is one of the busiest commercial docks in Mumbai in the last 142 years. Sassoon Dock Art Project tries to reflect upon the tropes surrounding cultural dynamism, identity, gender roles, occupation, social and spatial integration, of a space entrenched in history and of its people as inheritors of a history. (Khorshed Deboo Dec 08, 2017) The aim of the Sassoon Dock Art Project is to unlock an area which is ready to be discovered, enlightening its narratives through art interventions of international and unique Indian artists. The Sassoon Dock Art Project is an ecosystem of its own to experience in an overall dialogue between the finest contemporary global urban art and the deepest local traditions.” (Giulia Ambrogio-) Observing the purpose and effect put into an action on this occasion, it appears that art festival converted the historical maritime into a particular ‘place valorisation’ (brighenti2016) The project giving visibility the local fishing community known as ‘koli’ the art interventions transformed the public space into a unique art project. It functions in more ways than just an exhibition – a spot for practice and prefiguration, a workshop, a studio, a space to rehearse, perhaps all at the same time. While the argument of an impending gentrification is not a new one to be made, the sudden opening up of the dock might lead to a sense of vulnerability among those living there; a fear of the otherness and elsewhere within their own space, within a fragile ecology that is their source of sustenance.(Khorshed Deboo,2017)

iii. 48 degrees Celsius, Delhi

First interesting example of public art art in India is represented by the art festival, 48 degrees c. public held in Delhi in December 2008. Main purpose of the festival was to interrogate “the teetering ecology of the city through the prism of contemporary art.” Aim of this festival was to bring a clear visual appellation to citizen with

contemporary art and start social debate on the theme of global warming and complex environment in Delhi. The Yamuna Blues by Haubiz +Zoche, Roshanara’s Net by Mary Miss, the stainless-steel Bucket by Subodh Gupta, Crane +tree by krishnaraj Chonat, Flotage by Vivan Sundaram and some other artworks were part of this exhibition. Festival organizer aimed to present a balance of work that was accessible to all who were unfamiliar to contemporary art and to draw people’s interest in it. Project attracted audience and was successful in engaging different audience. Artist opened a new experience to people. It was completely new to people.

V. CONCLUSION

Public art is one of the important art form throughout the centuries. It is not simply placed outside, it has its goals and desire to engage with its audience. Public art communicates visually, rises awareness on social, natural, political, religious, cultural and many other issues happening around. Public art is good concept to get something out of the society as soon as possible. It brings awareness among society and gives a space for their expression. There are variety of forms that are architecture, sculpture, painting, stain glass, ceramic, mosaic, tapestry, earthwork, assemblage, installation, performing art, etc. Public art benefits society in various ways, make things more interesting and beautiful. It gives special identity to the place, attracts people, increase tourism and automatically help to grow economically. Public art meant for conveying message and beautification. Public art is an art form taken from western art but we have a great history of public art in Indian History too. Public art is indigenous. But it has lost its significance in many parts of the country. It must be revived. Public art is not just a piece of art its a whole guide about area, society, culture and perspectives. Public art is an expression of the society. It strengthen the society.

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