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A PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE ON PUBLIC ART'S CHARACTERISTICS AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE URBAN FABRIC: A CASE STUDY IN TAIPEI CITY, TAIWAN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore the public's understanding of public art as well as their perceptions regarding this genre's ability to benefit a city/community in the ways its advocates have claimed. Two research questions are addressed: For the general public, what are the characteristics of public art? Does the public perceive public art as contributing to the community? Taking the related reference and case studies into account, this empirical study proposes two conceptual frameworks and then establishes measurement scales. It gathers data for analysis by means of questionnaires used to interview respondents. Through Principal Components Analysis of the data collected, this research identifies five latent constructs in regard to the social features of public art and titled them Aesthetics, Publicness, Site Specificity, Affordance, and Social Critique. Furthermore, public art's contributions are categorized according to seven latent constructs: Social Progress, Therapeutic Environment, Place Attachment, Social/Environmental Education, Environmental Amelioration, Tourist Attraction, and Economic Benefit. Analysis of the data collected from the general public substantiates these constructs. The finding suggest that the residents of Taipei City think that works of public art indeed benefit their living environment. Based on the empirical evidence gathered in Taipei City, this research finds that the public's own definition of public art can reasonably be summarized thus: Public art is an aesthetic form with a social function that is produced via a democratic process; its form and process of production disclose the relationship between the work itself and public everyday life; and it is this co-evolving relationship that affirms the quality of the work over time. In addition, it is reasonable to view public art as a gateway to community regeneration.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

What does public art mean to the public? Although it is often claimed that public art is created for the public, studies of this genre have paid little attention to the public's view and reception of this genre. For instance, there is limited empirical knowledge about how the general public defines public art, or whether the public perceives any benefit as accruing from public artworks in their neighborhoods.

This limited knowledge about the public's views and expectations of public art may result, one could argue, has resulted, in considerable negative impact on public art projects and the neighborhood in which they have been built For example, in 1983, *Infinite of Minimum* (Fig. 1.1) was installed in the public plaza near the Taipei Fine Arts Museum; it was far from being welcomed by the public. Specifically, the public disliked the red color of the artwork, seeing it as a symbol of mainland China if viewed from a certain aspect/angle. As a result of public pressure, *Infinite of Minimum* was repainted white. However, the artist, Zai-Qian Li appealed the decision on the grounds that it ran counter to the dignity of art; he won, and *Infinite of Minimum* was painted red once again.

Richard Serra's *Titled Arc* was not as lucky as *Infinite of Minimum.* When the *Tilted Arc* was placed in New York City's Federal Plaza in 1981, a huge controversy resulted. The Cor-Ten steel installation diagonally cut across the public plaza, dividing the plaza in half and thus changing the patterns of people's movements. People from the neighborhood quickly started to complain that this 120 feet long by 12 feet high weathered and rusted COR-TEN steel sculpture

caused too much inconvenience, and they demanded that it be relocated. Serra and others in favor of keeping the artwork at its original site, however, offered an opposing view at the public hearing, stating that

> History . . . teaches us that art, to be a valid expression of our culture, requires freedom for the artist to make his statement about the life and times in which the artist lives and works. . . . The removal . . . would set a dangerous precedent and erode people's confidence in the government's [commitment] to commissioning permanent works of art. . . . I don't think it is the function of art to be pleasing. Art is not democratic—It is not for the people. (Sherrill et al., 1987, p. 168)

Figure 1.1. Two public art projects that met with public opprobrium and were moved/modified. Right: *Tilted Arc* by Richard Serra, New York City. 1981. Left: *Infinite of Minimum* by Zai-Qian Li, Taipei City, 1983 (Photo © Xiao-Xiong Zhang).

During the testimony, Serra (as cited in Sherrill et al., 1987) further stressed his concept of "site specificity" as it applies to *Tilted Arc*. His argument ran thus:

> I don't make portable objects. I don't make works that can be relocated or site-adjusted. . . . The plaza was essentially used only as a place of transit through which people pass from street to building. Therefore, *Titled Arc* was built for the people who walk across the plaza—for the moving observer. *Tilted Arc* was constructed so as to engage the public in a dialogue that would perceptually and conceptually enhance its relation to the entire plaza. . . . The viewer becomes aware of himself and of his movement through the plaza. As he moves, the sculpture changes. . . . The experience of art itself is a social function. . . . To remove *Tilted Arc,* therefore, is to destroy it. (pp. 148–149)

Certainly, artists often have a strong rationale for their work, and as illustrated in his argument quoted above, Serra is no exception. However, despite his insistence on the "site-specific" quality of his work, many of his pieces have, in fact, been relocated and displayed at various museums/sites, such as MoMA. In the case of the *Tilted Arc,* its presence on the selected site collided with the ordinary lives of the taxpayers who lived in the "site-specific" dwellings and/or held "site-specific" jobs in the vicinity. Members of the neighborhood were irate; they protested that

> It used to be very pleasant to walk out of the building and see an open space . . . and see people sitting on the edge of the fountain or having lunch or sunning themselves. Now all we see is a very unattractive slab of discolored metal. . . . We are not here to discuss the merits of the sculpture, but only the place it was put. Its placement is, at best, hostile to its environment, and it negates the use of the open space. Mr. Serra's work of art . . . was designed to change, alter, and dislocate someone else's artistic creation. This is wrong. . . . They [who work in the building and live in the neighborhood] are not all ignorant dunces to be ignored and presented with a fait accompli. (Sherrill et al., 1987, p. 138)

If an art work, such as *Titled Arc,* is not democratic—"It is not for the people"—why should the people have to bear and support it? Shouldn't what the people want factor into the

decision-making that brings a feature into their everyday landscape? Such a model is certainly possible. Many land art and other large-scale environmental art works that inhabit public space are the result of the artist working with the public in the process of creation. However, it should also be noted that the artists who engage in such processes do not always intend to interact with the public; this is so even though the artists themselves sometimes use terms, such as architecture and environmental planning, that would at least seem to be relevant to an art that takes public views and use into account. For instance, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, well-known environmental artists, stressed at an interview that

> We create those works for ourselves and our friends, and if the public enjoys it, that is only a bonus but that is not created for the public. . . . everybody knows that they [the father and the mother] didn't create that child so that people will enjoy it. Each one of our projects is a child of ours. . . . It [the public] doesn't shape the work. It only shapes whether we get the permit, or not. It doesn't shape the work itself because we have never changed an idea, [and] we have only crystallized it and made it clearer. Our work is not just painting or just sculpture, even though it has elements of painting and sculpture, but it's also architecture, environmental planning, all these things. . . . Our work encompasses all these elements. . . . We tell them [the public] that we believe it will be beautiful because that is our specialty, [and] we only create joy and beauty. (Pagliasotti, 2002)

Most of the time discussion and criticism of public art does not attract much attention. Cases like the controversy over *Tiled Arc* do not occur often. In fact, the subject of public art has generally not merited serious consideration; instead, it is situated at a marginalized position in the disciplines of contemporary art and environmental studies (cf. Acconci, 2004; Miles, 1997; Wines, 1987). In terms of the current state of academic study, public art is relatively impoverished in comparison to the proliferating discussions and theories present in urban planning/design and architecture/landscape architecture; college curricula that focus on public art

are also limited. Despite the disputes that government-promoted public art efforts have engendered since the early twentieth century, serious research did not appear until the 1960s, with *Art in a City,* for example (Willett, 1967). More focused and sustained work began in the late 1980s, when a group of public art projects emerged and were labeled as new public (genre) art (cf. Lacy, 1995a).

With regard to the profession of environmental design/art practice, public art has remained on the margins of the mainstream. Public artwork, usually regarded as an inferior by-product of fine art, architecture, or landscape architecture, receives a relatively low budget. It is also subject to more subjective criticisms and taunts than architecture or landscape architecture projects. Furthermore, public art tends to attract less interest from artists due to the lack of autonomy it affords; a related factor in this lack of interest is that public art appears to have limited commodity value and little impact on the art market (Selwood, 1995). For most citizens, public art is less hegemonic and is routinely regarded as an ornament that decorates the streets—real art appears in a museum or a gallery.

Interestingly, however, public art has been expected to bring benefits to society and to individuals even though in general such claims have not been examined. It has been argued that, for instance, public art may significantly eradicate the sense of threat in the built environment and that it can educate people (Selwood, 1995). It has also been argued that it functions as "a means of reclaiming and humanizing the urban environment" (Lacy, 1995a, p. 21). Moreover, an artwork is generally regarded as superior to other objects in public space because it signifies "a degree of cultural sophistication" and often provokes media controversy that, in turn, has the potential to stimulate local business in markets such as real estate (Wines, 1987, p. 60).

Furthermore, public art may not only act as an artwork in the urban matrix, it may also serve as a vehicle that facilitates the social process (cf. Lacy, 1995a). On the other hand, there is also some research that casts doubt upon public art's ability to deliver expected benefits. For instance, for Wines (1987, p. 60), the myths attached to public art are many:

1. Public art can be created by any competent artist capable of working on a large scale.
2. Public art is a form of embellishment for architecture and public space that is intended to provide "pleasant accents" in our environment.
3. Public art is good for people because it exposes them to culture.
4. Public art helps our cityscape communicate with people.
5. Public art is a sound investment because, as the artist's reputation grows, so does the value of the work.

Interpretations of the possibilities and problems associated with public art, as current discussion shows, point to clear divisions not only in regard to the proper relationship between public art and a community, but also in terms of what benefits public art might confer. The present study is interested in exploring the issues inhering in the creation of public art as follows.

Problem Statement

Contemporary public art studies have shown little interest in understanding the public's views, and they have seldom gone directly to the public to gather the empirical data necessary for analysis. Most criticisms have been based on writers' individual beliefs or values, while actually collecting and utilizing empirical evidence has not been a focus. Although the public is understood as being the principal viewer of the genre, and the artworks intervene in public places, there is limited systematic knowledge about the public's perception of the genre or of its perception of individual pieces. It is still unclear whether the public supports the creation of

public art. Likewise, it is not known if the general public views such artworks as conferring any benefits. Nevertheless, in many modern cities, for instance Taipei, the government spends considerable quantities of tax revenue to promote public art projects, mainly based on the belief that public art may benefit community development. So far, it is the technocrats, art administrators, artists, and some academic theorists who have assumed that benefits will accrue from public art projects and who have proclaimed the success of such works. These advocates stress that the status of public art has shifted from that of art work to be exhibited in public space to artistic statement actively engaging with and contributing to public affairs. As sound as this new definition of public art may seem, such claims have yet to be supported by any solid research findings. It is certainly of concern that though public art projects have consumed substantial government monies, the claims that public art ameliorates environmental/social problems remains largely untested and unproven (e.g., Hall & Robertson, 2001).

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this research is to explore the public's understanding of public art as well as their perceptions regarding this genre's ability to benefit a city in the ways its advocates have claimed. To this end, based on the research problem and research purpose, one research question followed by two sub-questions are proposed as follows:

What does public art mean to the public?

1. For the general public, what are the characteristics/key elements of public art?
2. Does the public perceive public art as contributing to the community? If so, in what ways?

Need for and Significance of the Study

There has been little research into what the public thinks about public art; yet, ironically, the public is generally taken to be the primary audience of this genre.

On the one hand, although governments have devoted considerable money to promoting public projects, empirical studies that look at how public art is understood and how it functions are few and limited in scope. For example, quite surprisingly, systematic empirical evidence in regard to public art evaluation (e.g., post-occupancy evaluation (POE))—whether taking a quantitative or qualitative approach—is rare. Certainly, it should be a point well taken that investing considerable tax revenue in promoting public art projects, the benefits of which will be unknown for a long time, is at best a questionable policy.

On the other hand, academic research and discussion of public art is relatively unsound due to a lack of empirical evidence—most proposed research models and theories have not been tested by observation or experiment. For instance, the public's psychological and physical responses (e.g., perceptions, attitudes, behaviors) toward public art are yet to be understood in a scientific way.

The current research developed two conceptual frameworks and examined them in order to help understand the public's thinking in regard to public art. The results may generate contributions including but not limited to the following:

1. Provide government agencies with a reference to help support and validate decision-making in regard to city development policy.

2. Provide the design profession with more information about the user/observers' preferences and views.
3. Present fundamental academic theories to address the knowledge gaps in public art research.

Most public art reviews discuss the visual language of art design, as well as its background history. The current research, however, tends not to render aesthetic judgment; instead, it emphasizes a critique of social and community issues and public value. The result is a focus on evaluating the social–cultural role of public art. Such discussions may, in turn, influence the design profession to reflect on the potential of city sustainability and to contribute to emerging theories of public art.

Organization of Thesis Content

The research questions are answered through a critique of relevant critical literature and case studies, as well as through a consideration of social movements. The review and discussion sections of this research mainly focus on public art movements from the 1970s onwards. The thesis organization of each chapter is as follows:

Chapter 1 presents the research motivation, questions, and purpose to structure and develop the thesis.

Chapter 2 briefly outlines the evolution of contemporary public art, offering it as a reference background. Also, through literature reviews and case studies, this chapter crystallizes the contemporary critiques of public art's characteristics and its possible impact on community regeneration.

Chapter 3 explains the methods and procedures employed to answer the research questions. This chapter initiates two unproved frameworks/hypotheses about public art's characteristics and its impact on community regeneration, based on the results of the second chapter; it also describes how to test the two frameworks. The chapter discusses the profile of the study area, the model research model/framework development, the instrument used, data-collection methods, and related matters.

Chapter 4 presents results based on the data obtained from this investigation. The reliability of the research items is tested, followed by the examination and modification of the proposed conceptual frameworks.

Chapter 5 interprets the now tested/proved frameworks and summarizes the study's research findings.

Chapter 6 offers conclusions based on the research findings, discusses the implications for the design field and research limitations, and makes recommendations for future research in public art.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the literature reviews and case studies, this chapter crystallizes contemporary critiques based on two focal points: public art's characteristics and its contributions to a community/city. This review helps establish the two conceptual frameworks that will be introduced in Chapter 3.

The Characteristics of Public Art

Some studies have attempted to formulate a meaningful and clear definition, yet public art is "notoriously ill-defined" (Selwood, 1995). Sculptor Chris Burden commented that "public art is something else, I'm not sure it's art" (as cited in Gablik, 1995, p. 79). Even Brighton (1993) stated that public art is an oxymoron; that is, public art is simply not art. Although definitions of public art are fluid and still evolving with no clear-cut territory, it is generally regarded as artwork, including art installations, such as sculptures, monuments, and murals, and sometimes even a site itself in spaces with public access, such as plazas and parks (cf. Lacy, 1995a; Miles, 1997). The forms of art installation may include, but are not limited to, sculpture, monument, mural, relief, and even street furniture. It should also be noted, though, that most public artworks are situated in urban areas. From a broader view, however, new genres of public art are highly diverse and serve multiple agendas. As an art form, new genre public art may expand beyond paradigms of aesthetic appreciation, and it may also be ephemeral and temporal: it partakes in social planning, and it functions as social practice. Public art as a social practice challenges the traditional western view of artistic practice—permanent art for the expression of

universal values (Phillips, 1998). As contemporary public art evolves, its roles in the public realm may proliferate and become more important. Lippard (1995), for instance, notes,

> I would define public art as accessible work of any kind that cares about, challenges, involves, and consults the audience for or with whom it is made, respecting community and environment. The other stuff is still private art, no matter how big or exposed or intrusive or hyped it may be. (p. 121)

Given the divergent views on the subject of public art, as well as the markedly different visual languages and presentations used in its making (Fig. 2.1), the existing theory from disciplines such as aesthetics and sociology is limited to explicitly interpreting the phenomenon of public art. The result is arbitrary and varied definitions. Some criticism emphasizes artistic autonomy, such as Richard Serra's own critique of *Tilted Arc* (cf. Jordan, 1987); others stress the social process and the nature of publicness (e.g., Gibson, 1988). In general, in comparison with conventional public artworks to date, such as the so-called "cannon in the park" by Judith Baca (Lippard, 1997, p. 265), public art is more socially relevant to the urban context (cf. Deutsche, 1998). Some activists have even regarded public art "as a function not of art, but of urbanism" (Gibson, 1988, p. 33).

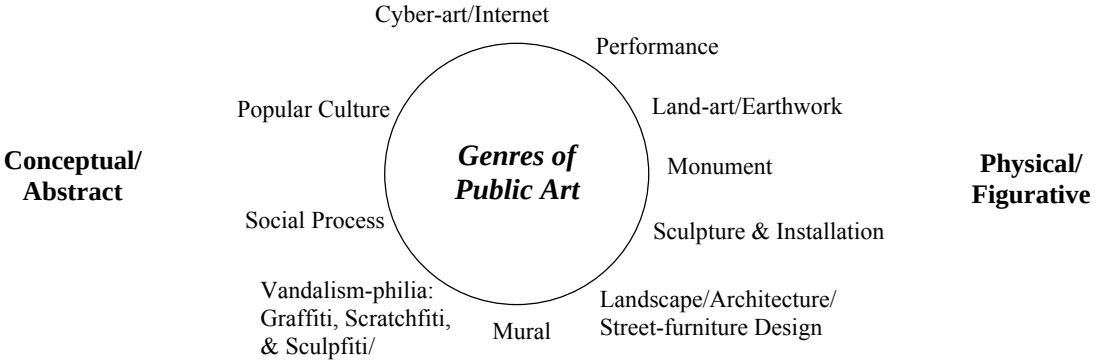

Figure 2.1. The genres of public art

As stated in the first chapter, this research intends to understand what public art is from the perspective of the general public. Because public art is not well defined and is, in fact, the subject of continuing and heated debate, this research focuses on the characteristics of public art instead. Although the genres of public art may vary, public artworks generally share a number of common features. Based on the literature review and case studies (please refer to the following sections), this research crystallizes five characteristics of public art: Aesthetic, Publicness, Site Specificity, Affordance, and Social Critique (cf. Deutsche, 1998; Lacy, 1995a; McGill, 1986; Wines, 1987).

Aesthetics

Many artists, critics, and philosophers have offered definitions of the term "art"; yet, no agreed-upon definition has ever merged. The term remains ambiguous. Theodor Adorno (1997) writes:

> It is self-evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident any more, not its inner life, not its relation to the world, not even its right to exist. (p. 1)

At present, it is respectable to consider everything to be art. Once Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* and Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box* had been installed in museums, ideas about art changed—that is, what constituted art was no longer self-evident (Danto, 1964, 2003). Analytic philosopher Morris Weitz, for instance, in "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics" (1956), claimed that art is indefinable because its nature inheres in practice and conceptual openness, and that the latter especially makes definition impossible. That is, an essential quality is that art evolves, and in doing so it continuously disrupts prior definitions. However, art is still often regarded as consisting of (e.g., making, altering, assembling, etc.) aesthetic characteristics in which the productive activity itself

may bring pleasure to the receiver. Beardsley (as cited in Wartenberg, 2002), for instance, proposed that

> An artwork is something produced with the intention of giving the capacity to satisfy the aesthetic interest. (p. 239)

Contemporary public art, though it may not always be regarded as "real" art (cf. Gablik, 1995; Gibson, 1988; Jacob, 1995), is generally expected to bring pleasure to the public. Although public art is not a creation taken for an outing from an art galley to a public open space (cf. Wines, 1987), it is still interested in that most traditional concern of art—aesthetics. Patricia Phillips (2003), in her *Public Art: A Renewable Resource,* stated:

> People generally experience public art when they are doing something else. Rather than a distraction or dilution of an art experience, this coupling of art with daily life can produce an enrichment of a pure, idealized, and increasingly rare concept of aesthetic contemplation. (p. 131)

Phillips further stressed that one of the essential roles of public art is to encourage people to become active participants in a profound aesthetic experience of public life. Indeed, public art is expected to evoke emotions, is expected to draw its audience into an aesthetic dialogue that brings pleasure with it.

Publicness

Art in the public realm can be democratic in nature—if it is validated by the people. Danto (1981) claimed that *x* is an artwork if *x* embodies a meaning. Further, the *institutional theory of art* argues that to be art, an artifact must have

> . . . had conferred upon it the status of candidate for appreciation by some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain social institution. (Dickie, 1974, p. 464)

Both Danto's notion of meaning and Dickie's *institutional theory of art* both imply a shift in authority from the *object* to the *subject* of art communication. They suggest that the object's autonomy is minimized, and that ratification of an artwork is the purview of the recipients/spectators. Although an artist may participate in "understanding in the making of a work of art" (Dickie, 1997), the public, not the artist, has the power to sanction and validate art in the public realm.

Art as displayed in a museum or private setting is perhaps offered and/or is perceived as being offered for the admiration of an elite. It is usually regarded as presenting the identity of the artists themselves—the presentation of an uncompromised vision. Situated in a place of prestige and power, the art expresses artistic *autonomie*; it is self-contained and exclusive. Art presented in such a way, then, plays a role in or at least reflects class polarization and antagonism, as well as ambivalence and distrust on the part of the general public in regard to art and artistic production. In terms of considering possible responses on the part of the public, it has been stated that the hegemony of art in such a context deters questions from "a heterogenous audience with mixed feelings" (Senie & Webster, 1998, p. 171).

Just as art situated in the public realm may represent domination, so it can easily be destroyed because its very dominance is a function of its accessibility—a social response may, therefore, destroy it. For instance, *Tilted Arc* fell to public outcry, while statues of Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan were literally torn down—these statues lost their place for reasons of public opposition. Senie and Webster stress (1998) that

> Art in the public domain, a sign of the power of its patrons, frequently becomes the focus for discontents that often have nothing to do with the art. . . . Public response to public art is also problematic when the form or subject of the art is not immediately accessible to the audience. It becomes even more difficult to separate the art and non-art issues. (p. 171)

Public art is likely to meet with less societal support if it does not engage the public; the implication is that the success of a public art piece is not constituted by the mere transplantation of private art to a public setting (Wines, 1987). That is, whether public art qualifies as art may not be the key question**.** Instead the important issue may inhere in the public's relationship with public art: What is public art if it has no interest in the public's reception of it? How will it survive if the masses vociferously reject it, such as in the case of *Tilted Arc*. The intrinsic and essential ingredient of publicness in public art implies the re-defining of the social process. That is, the artistic production and process must take into account public wishes. Actually, the new genre, in addition to offering aesthetic vision, engages with social, political, and environmental issues, such as race relations, warfare, toxic waste, cultural identity, etc. (Lacy, 1995a). Although the notion of publicness is quixotic, mutable, and flexible in the contemporary cultural environment (cf. Phillips, 1998), the territory of publicness may define the "public sphere" as a physical space or more broadly as an ideological public realm (Selwood, 1995) that takes into account notions of ownership, accessibility, interests, spectator characteristics and values, and even the relationship between the artist and spectator. Furthermore, the consciousness of publicness may be invented, interpreted, and re-created by different social groups.

Site Specificity—Site Specific vs. Site General

Site-specificity is in general regarded as an essential feature of contemporary public art (Kelley, 1995; Kwon, 2000; Suderburg, 2000). Most artists stress that their public artworks are *unique* creations *for* specific sites (Deutsche, 1998; Meyer, 2000). However, much public art is "site general." Some artworks, for instance, have been displayed at various parks for the public to view (Fig. 2.2). Many of Ming Ju's sculptures (such as the *Tai-Chi* series) (Fig. 2.3) and Henry Moore's artworks (*Vertebrae,* for instance), have been duplicated using various scales and situated in varied indoor/outdoor settings as both private and public art (Miles, 1997). Interestingly, in the late 1980s in Seattle *Vertebrae* was replaced with an art piece of an equal price based on city statutes, suggesting the potential of "site general" in public art. It is also worth noting that with few exceptions, site-specific works seem to be invested with characteristics of site-general artwork. Identical editions of George Segal's *Gay Liberation,* for example, have been situated in New York's Sheridan Park and on the campus of Stanford University (Fig. 2.4). The installations of site-general artwork tend to express the artists' icon/oeuvre rather than stressing social–cultural involvement (Miles, 1997).

Figure 2.2. Artworks displayed and circulated at various parks for the public. Knoxville, TN.

Figure 2.3. Various editions of the *Tai-Chi* series, by Ming Zhu, are situated in a museum, a park, and a public plaza and welcome by the public in Taiwan. (Photo © JuMing Museum.)

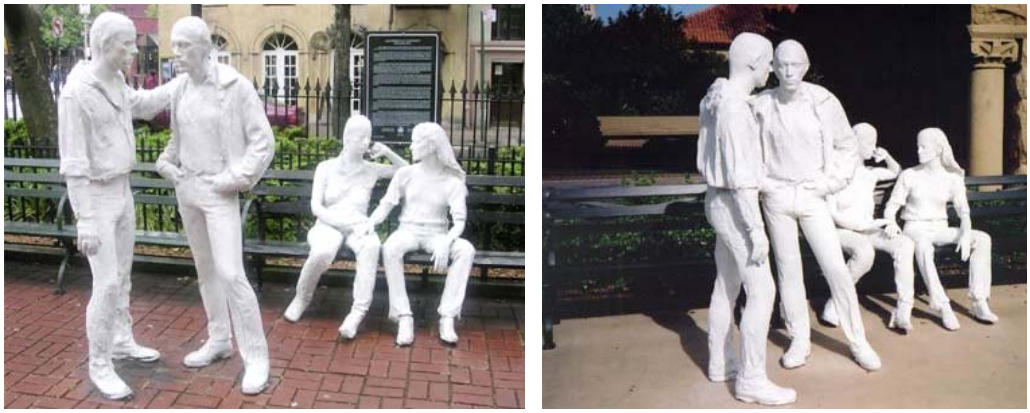

Figure 2.4. Two editions of George Segal's *Gay Liberation* in New York City's Sheridan Park (left) and on the campus of Stanford University in California (right). (Photo © Peter Benet & Helen Brooks.)

The notion of site specificity addresses the relationship between the artwork and its setting—the constructed physical and psychological civil space. Relating art to place was initially a way to incorporate art work into a site; the concept, discursively, might originally have derived from the minimalism of the visual art of the 1960s, which delineated the spatial relations

among the subject, spectator, and gallery space—a coexistence (Miles, 1997; Morris, 1998). Inheriting the concept from minimalism but rejecting the museum as a setting, the land art/earthwork of the 1960s and 1970s expanded the scale of presentation beyond the art gallery and investigated the dynamic and dialectical possibilities of sites where works of art are located—a "temporal rather than instantaneous perception" (Morris, 1998, p. 253). In this site-specific paradigm, the physical outdoor location of the artwork is part of the creation that expresses and (re)presents itself to create a unified experience (Miles, 1997). That is, "*site* in and of itself is part of the experience of the work of art" (Suderburg, 2000, p. 4). This concept was also adopted in the creation of public art.

The meaning of site specificity changed as the agenda of art altered, and accordingly the productions and discourses of public art have changed too: in the late 1960s, artistic autonomy and the tenets of modernism were questioned, and art as a social function was encouraged instead (Deutsche, 1998). The liberal progressiveness of modernism started to expose the public to the art world and also to establish the idea of public art. The notion of site specificity evolved in response to socio-cultural critique that called upon artists to produce art that would serve the public interest. According to Deutsche (1998):

> Critical site-specific art, as opposed to its academicist progeny, continued, however, not only to incorporate context as a critique of the artwork but also to attempt to intervene, through the artwork, in its site. The reciprocity between artwork and site altered the identity of each, blurring the boundaries between them and preparing the ground for a greater participation of art in wider cultural and social practice. (pp. 159–160)

On the one hand, through the social struggles and conflicts of the 1960s and 1970s, a *new urban sociology* emerged and interpreted city developments through a broader political–economic context (cf. Banfield & Wilson, 1963; Castells, 1978; Harvey, 1975). Through this urban social activism, concepts of equitable development, the right of all to the city, and social justice emerged as tenets of a well-organized urban system. To commemorate and express the struggles of racial and other social groups for equality, some works of public art were proposed for specific sites, such as George Segal's *Gay Liberation* in New York City's Christopher Park to commemorate the Stonewall Uprising of 1969.

On the other hand, public art has been installed at "specific" locations in a city to involve citizens in an experience of art and to structure a network of place identity (Hayden, 1998); such placement of art offers a shared experience of art to the public (Jones, 1998). Researchers and social activists in the 1960s started stressing the centrality of community identity and city identity to structuring a meaningful environment for humanity (cf. Jacobs, 1961; Linch, 1960; Tuan, 1977); public art—situated at a specific site and consisting of certain symbols—has been used as an instrument to construct a *sense of place* and encourage a grass-roots spirit (Miles, 1989).

To date, the notion of site-specificity considers the artwork's context, such as the site's symbolic and social–political–historical meanings in which the artwork, spectator, site, and all related contexts are situated (Deutsche, 1998). This notion implies the dematerializing of the site:

> The "work" no longer seeks to be a noun/object but a verb/process, provoking the viewer's *critical* (not just physical) acuity regarding the ideological conditions of that viewing. In this context, the guarantee of a specific relationship between an

> artwork and its "site" is not based on a physical permanence to be experienced as a repeatable and fleeting situation. (Kwon, 2000, p. 43)

Affordance

Affordance may be regarded as the sensation cues (e.g., visual or touch) of a given public artwork that suggest usefulness. For the public, the essential meaning of public art may be accessible through the concept of affordance—the invariant functional properties perceived as integral to an artwork. While a work of art is situated in the public realm, the public explores and experiences it in a variety of ways and thereby recognizes what it provides (e.g., Gibson, 1979). Because public art is viewed by a heterogenous audience with mixed feelings, it is necessarily the subject of "ambivalent distrust and admiration" (Senie & Webster, 1998). However, although definitions of public art differ from artist to artist, according to most, if not all, formulations public art is an attempt to fulfill functions that go beyond aesthetic expression (McGill, 1986). That is, the public validates public art by considering what it wants and what it can afford—the public asks how the art might benefit society.

Traditionally artists ask for or even insist on autonomy and freedom (a desire that may be irrational and perhaps even irresponsible), and their works, as Georg Baselitz has argued—"cannot not be used" (as cited in Gablik, 1995, p. 77). For instance, if one were to compare traditional artworks, painting or sculpture, with other objects in daily life, such as a building or a desk, and the artworks may be judged "useless." Public art, however, is regarded as architectural art that has utility beyond its aesthetic value. That is, though public art is defined by its aesthetic quality, it must also be a "useable object" in the perceptions of the populace: it is expected to "reconcile art, through its usefulness, with society and with the public benefit" (Deutsche, 1998,

p. 162). Hence, "use" is one of the primary issues in public art; the extent to which public art meets the criterion of being useful is, in fact, an essential gauge for determining its "quality" (Gibson, 1988). For instance, the controversy elicited by *Tilted Arc* consisted principally in the competing claims of the artist's view of his work as "site specific" (cf. Serra's testimony in Sherrill et al. (1987)) and the public's preference for something that would more closely take the lived experience of the site into account (e.g., *Function* by Deutsche (1998)). In this case, while Serra, as well as others, argued that *Tilted Arc* had been created specifically for the site, the public considered that everyday life had been overlooked in the pure pursuit of art within which "Serra's aesthetic preoccupations became meaningless outdoors" and only provided a "private art experience" (Wines, 1987, p. 89).

Public art to date, in addition to having artistic value, is expected to address itself to the nature of the urban environment within and through which the artwork connects with functions of the city, that is, the "activities and imperatives that condition the fabric of city life" (Gibson, 1988, p. 32). This view of public art—art as a public good rather than art imposed on the public—may bring, even aims to bring, benefits including strengthening community identity, providing visual pleasure and social education, contributing to economic development, and furnishing a place for leisure.

Social Critique

Public art often represents an artist's intention to comment on and perhaps even ameliorate critical social/environmental issues. As noted earlier, sculptor Chris Burden once argued that "public art is something else, I'm not sure it's art. I think it's about a social agenda" (as cited in Gablik, 1995, p. 79). Contemporary public art not only focuses on art installation, it

also often offers a process that aims to comment on, question, and challenge the socio-cultural status quo (Lacy, 1995a). According to Phillips (1995), public art "actually assists in the identification of individuals and groups and what separates them" (p. 69).

During the last few decades, accelerated changes in the values and expectations brought to bear on varied urban issues, together with the destruction of the hegemony of traditional art and of museum authorities, has begun to contribute to freer and more democratic representations of public art. In many cases, public art is created to address the dynamic social contradictions and mutability of public life; and artists and community participants approach public art from a variety of social critical perspectives and methodologies. Urban issues, such as environmental/social justice, health problems, violence, and political statements, provide plentiful source materials that fuel the performance of public art in many different settings (cf. Gablik, 1995; Gómez-Peña, 1995; Jacob, 1995; Lippard, 1995). Further, public artworks have been extensively adopted to express social identity, make political statements, and/or to remedy social/environmental crises.

Many murals on urban walls, for instance, reflect social conflicts and address civic rights, and these projects are usually the work of artists who though denied access to traditional gallery and museum channels are supported by community engagement and involvement (Prigoff, 2005). Take another example, this one by Wodiczko, who for the 1986 Venice Biennale created an installation that took direct critical aim at what he saw as the merciless cultural and economic terrorism of the tourist industry and the contemporary political policies and practices supporting it (Fig. 2.5). Wodiczko projected collaged images of missiles, cash, grenades, tanks, and cameras onto the historical buildings, sculptures, and campanile in the piazza San Marco (Wodiczko,

1986, 1999). Through these temporary projected images, Wodiczko stressed that his seemingly imaginary Venice would be more appropriately understood as an accurate picture of the Venice of today. In his view, the financial–military empire of past times had given way to an empire of tourism—an art-Disneyland and shopping-for-the-past plaza.

Figure 2.5. Krzysztof Wodiczko's *Venice Projections,* Venice Biennale, 1986. Images such as missiles, cash, grenades, tanks, and cameras were collaged and projected onto the historical architecture to dialogue with visitors about the nature of the tourist industry. (Photo © *October*.)

Hammons offered the pregnant statement that it is "part of an artist's role [is] to ruffle sacred feathers" (Jones, 1998, p. 283). The all-white crew of David Hammons, an African-American New York artist, once installed a 14 by 16 foot portrait of a blue-eyed, blond-haired, white-skinned man, painted on tin, with the words "How Ya Like Me Now?" (a line from a rap album by Kool Moe Dee) in the downtown parking lot of an African-American neighborhood. Only minutes after the installation had been set up, the work was attacked with sledgehammers by a group of black men who felt that the painting disparaged Jesse Jackson. The salvageable

portions of the artwork were later displayed in the Washington Project for the Arts (WPA) (Gamarekian, 1989; Jones, 1998) (Fig. 2.6). If the relationship between art and its audience can itself be considered a work of art, as Lacy suggests, this project was truly completed—or perhaps it even happened—during these few minutes of attack. Audience reactions in this case serve as a valuable component in deepening the social debates in which the artwork is involved and in verifying the importance of such issues.

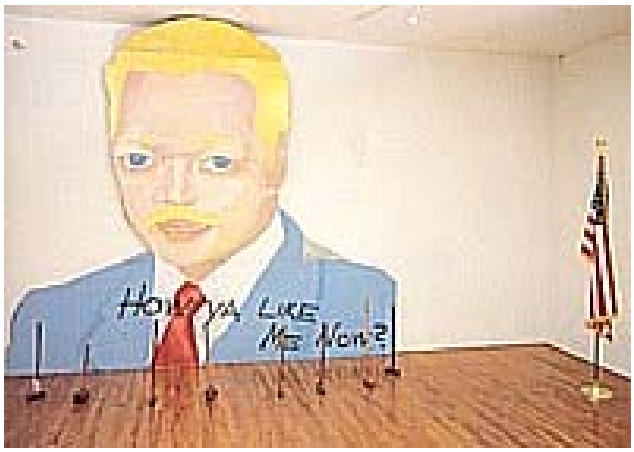

Figure 2.6. How Ya Like Me Now? David Hammons. 1989. The salvageable portions of the artwork were later displayed in the Washington Project for the Arts (WPA). (Photo © David Hammons.)

It is argued that the interaction between the artist and society is built on the "artist's intention and the meaning of his artwork to the constituencies" (Lacy, 1995b, p. 173). An artist who creates public art is expected to be an activist seeking the consensus of society; the artist is not only to play the role of experiencer of art based on Lacy diagram (Fig. 2.7). Lacy's notion is certainly reflected in the controversy over *Tilted Arc,* which inhered principally in the competing claims of the artist's view of his work and the public's view of it. Although Serra claimed that *Tilted Arc* was site specific (cf. Serra's testimony in Sherrill et al. (1987)), his remarks suggested

that he regarded the public sphere as a canvas appropriately used by an artist to produce a singular and uncompromised vision without regard for public opinion.

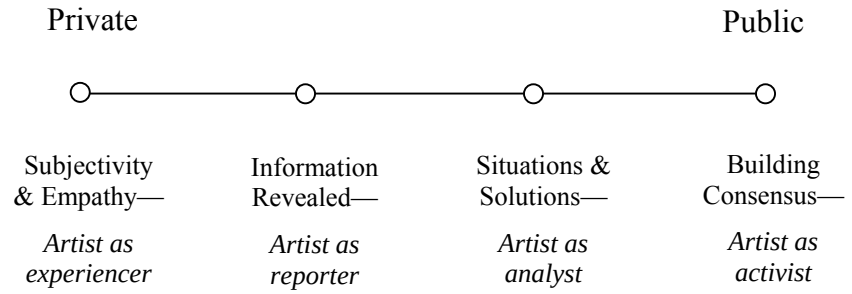

Figure 2.7. Artists' intentions and the work's meaning to its constituencies. (Adopted from Lacy 1995b.)

Public Art's Contributions to City/Community Regeneration

A city is inhabited and overseen by people with their own interests and agendas, and its social–cultural matrix and process is mutable and fluid. The complexity of public issues virtually guarantees that the concept and specific productions of public art will be met with a range of attitudes. Though art in the public realm has generally been seen as contributing to urban development and resurgence, its benefits are often in doubt, mainly due to a lack of sufficient evidence from empirical studies. This chapter examines some key arguments that focus on public art's impact on urban regeneration/development.

Public art is routinely expected to bring benefits to society and the individual by reclaiming and humanizing the environment, educating people, facilitating the social process,

signifying cultural sophistication, and often provoking media controversies that in turn can stimulate the local economy. For Dunlop and Eckstein (1994, p. 38), public art is a cultural investment with the benefits of helping solve environmental and economical problems in the following ways:

1. Contributing to local distinctiveness
2. Attracting companies and investment
3. Having a role in cultural tourism
4. Adding to land values
5. Creating employment
6. Increasing the use of open spaces
7. Reducing wear and tear on buildings and lowering levels of vandalism

Hall and Robertson (2001) also claim that public art projects prevent social exclusion, possess educational benefits, and promote community needs in terms of social change. Further, they suggest that public art helps to develop a sense of identity, a sense of place, and a sense of civic identity. For Selwood (1995), public art may stimulate urban and rural regeneration because it encourages a sense of emotional attachment on the part of its users, that is, those living near it, those who view it frequently. In this research, based on a literature review and case studies, a synopsis of the contributions that proponents of public art expect it to make to communities are categorized as follows: enhancing community attachment, improving economic and tourism development, stimulating community regeneration, enhancing social/environmental education, and contributing to environmental improvement (e.g., Dunlop & Eckstein, 1994; Hall & Robertson, 2001; Phillips, 1995; Rice, 1998; Selwood, 1995; Shaw, 1990; Swales, 1992; Wines, 1987).

Public Art for Enhancing Community Attachment

One role of public art is to "transform spaces into places, the public into people" (Miles, 1989, p. 4). It will only flourish when supported by enthusiastic members of the community (Selwood, 1995). McCoy (1997) puts it this way:

> If it [art] is accessible, affordable, and reflective of the diversity of the community, it can draw many people. Once people are in the room, the artistic experience generates new understanding, energy, and a sense of community that can be directly tapped and extended through face-to-face dialogue at the event. (p. 8)

Phillips (1995) stated that many communities install public art "as a confirmation of dominant ideologies, safe platitudes, spent recollections, or user-friendly aesthetics" (p. 65). Jones (1998) argues that "public art documents our place in time by visually rendering issues, ideas, traditions, and history" (p. 282). It is generally stressed by advocates that public art can strengthen bonds between people and place and enhance people's identification with the local landscape where history takes place and new cultures are born (Hall & Robertson, 2001). Hence, public art is not merely dedicated to a public geographical "space," a *physical site,* but is dedicated to the public to structure a "place," a *functional site,* with human narratives (also cf. Meyer, 2000).

Developing place identity and place dependence is regarded as closely related to, even essential to, community/urban enhancement and regeneration. Art projects created through community participation are generally regarded as being capable of fostering a sense of belonging to a neighborhood through strengthening social bonds, addressing common needs, and solving problems. All of which unite to ultimately create a grassroots reconceptualization of

place and a sense of community. In some cases, public art is a focal point of pride for residents, becoming over time an icon that represents the community, both its past and its future.

Regarded as an emotional bond with the environment, the notion of place identity implies that "the meaning of a place" lies in an affective tie between the setting and the actor. This basic relationship of the emotional bonds between humans and the environment consists of two complementary elements: space and character (Norberg-Schultz, 1979). In general, place is a setting that carries the meaning composed of space and people's experience. For a space to be a "place," it must elicit an individual's affection; that is, if a space becomes meaningful to a person, it may become a place (Tuan, 1976, 1977; Norberg-Schultz, 1963). The term "identity" carries broad meanings that traditionally illustrate the self-concept by forming information about the self and distinguishing who we are or want to be (cf. Clayton, 2003). Place and identity coalesce in the concept of place belongingness, depicting the "potpourri of memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas, and related feelings about specific physical settings as well as types of settings" (Proshansky et al., 1983, p. 60). This emotional bond may be interpreted with other concepts, for instance, dwelling (Heidegger, 1977), "appropriation of space" (Proshansky, 1976), or "a sense of place" or "Topophilia" (cf. Tuan, 1974, 1980).

Art may sharpen local distinctiveness (Dunlop & Eckstein, 1994), and thereby it may be employed as a symbol of city/community identity. Public art serves as a window into the process of both art making and of identity development for the local community (e.g., Selwood, 1995). Place identity may be generated from feelings of empathy toward the work of art. Lowe (2000) organized two community-art projects in low-income neighborhoods in Denver—one concentrated on murals and the other on plays, through empirical studies with field visits, focus

groups, and participation statistics. From this experience, he concluded that public art projects actually strengthen "community sentiment" and "solidify social bonds" in neighborhoods, and a sense of community thereby emerges. In Lowe's research, public art helped create a sense of community solidarity and identity; his research also points to the significant roles played by local community members who were neither artists nor professionals in fields related to art. Lowe (2000) points out that

> Community art is a form of public art that is characterized by its experiential and inclusive nature. With community art, artists work with non-artists in grassroots settings, creating art in the public interest. (p. 364)

Advocates of public art often claim that it is capable of creating a sense of community, of addressing common needs, and even of solving community problems (Hall & Robertson, 2001), but its success "entails a merging of individual with common interests, without contradiction" (McCoy, 1997, p. 4). By encouraging audience participation, artworks fill the gap between the art world and its general audience. In the end, a relationship between artist/artwork and audience in the neighborhood or community "may itself become the artwork" (Lacy, 1995a, p. 20) that contributes to place identity. The participatory spirit that accrues in creating a community artwork is unique to each piece, and the process of creation itself functions as both a metaphor for and a powerful container of meaning (Lacy, 1995a), such that artists should "engage the individual or group in the process of art" (Lowe, 2000, p. 364). As Jacob (1995) states,

> In fact, the audience-participation factor in the genesis of this public art gives the work relevancy within the community, not in the usual public art sense of promoting art appreciation, but by offering the potential for this art to affect the lives of those in and outside of the community. (p. 58)

Public art projects created through community participation are generally regarded as being capable of fostering a sense of belonging to a neighborhood through strengthening social bonds, addressing common needs, and solving problems. All of which may unite to create a sense of community and community identity and so contribute to community regeneration.

Public Art for the Economy and the Development of Tourism

It has been claimed that public art provides an impetus for both economic and tourism development. Economic decline is frequently cited as creating or exacerbating communal fragmentation (Hall & Robertson, 2001), whereas public art projects may attract companies and investment, create employment, and add to property value (Dunlop & Eckstein, 1994). Certainly, public art contributes to local distinctiveness that may attract tourists, and recreation and tourism directly and indirectly benefit the local community economy with outside revenue. Art is a relatively renewable resource that is easy to maintain for supporting community tourism development in comparison with other attraction properties. Also, public art usually requires less investment in public sector infrastructure than do many traditional tourist attractions. Residents receive economic rewards from visitors' lodging, dining, and other leisure activities (Murphy, 1985; Murphy & Williams, 1999). Especially for many rural communities with economic problems such as aging, unemployment, and/or natural resource exhaustion, the development of tourism is regarded as an important strategy for regenerating the economic viability of a community. Although public art rarely commands entrance fees of any kind, tourists who come to see it contribute to the local community by paying for transportation, meals, lodging, and other goods and services. Art itself is a renewable resource that can be enjoyed in a community context, thereby contributing to the ongoing well-being of an area. Due to a variety of confounding

parameters, it is difficult to quantitatively measure the contribution of public art to the development of tourism; however, some indirect evidence does provide an alternative way to gauge its effects.

In urban settings, take the example of the *Rocky Balboa* statue (Fig. 2.8). According to city officials, this prop for the 1982 film *Rocky III* is the second most-visited tourist attraction in Philadelphia after the *Liberty Bell* (Rice, 1998). Strauss (2006) conducted on-site interviews with tourists, one of whom was quoted thus:

> "I only came for Rocky, but, heck, why not go inside?" said Miller Redpath, a visitor from Minneapolis, there with his two sons. "Who figured Rocky would lead me to culture?" (p. 131)

The Philadelphia Museum of Art had originally rejected the proposal to attach the term "art" to this 1,500-pound bronze and welcome it into the museum's vicinity. For the museum, the statue's former function as a movie prop disqualified it from attaining the status of artwork. The museum's viewpoint did not convince Stallone and the public though: If Warhol's *Brillo Box* and Duchamp's ready-made modern urinal could be considered art, why not *Rocky Balboa*? The arguments among museum authorities, Stallone, and social critics reveal varied perspectives. For the public, Rocky represents an American dream/value, just as the nearby *Liberty Bell* does; he is also a hero even though he is not an actual historical person. When Rocky made his training run through the poor immigrant neighborhood of south Philadelphia, past the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, and up the steps (now known as the Rocky Steps) to the Museum of Art, where—with his arms jubilantly held up to the sky—he symbolized the possibility of the entire working class to realize their dreams (Fig. 2.8). Thus, many people identify with the character and are

encouraged by the Rocky story. Tourists enjoy getting in on the act; they too climb the Rocky Steps and make a similar gesture. As Strauss (2006) comments:

> On a recent windy Saturday, a half-dozen groups waited patiently outside the Philadelphia Museum of Art for their turn to have their pictures taken with a statue. It may not be great art, but the sculpture of Rocky, the fictional boxer portrayed by Sylvester Stallone in what seems like an endless series of movies, is definitely a great draw. (p. 131)

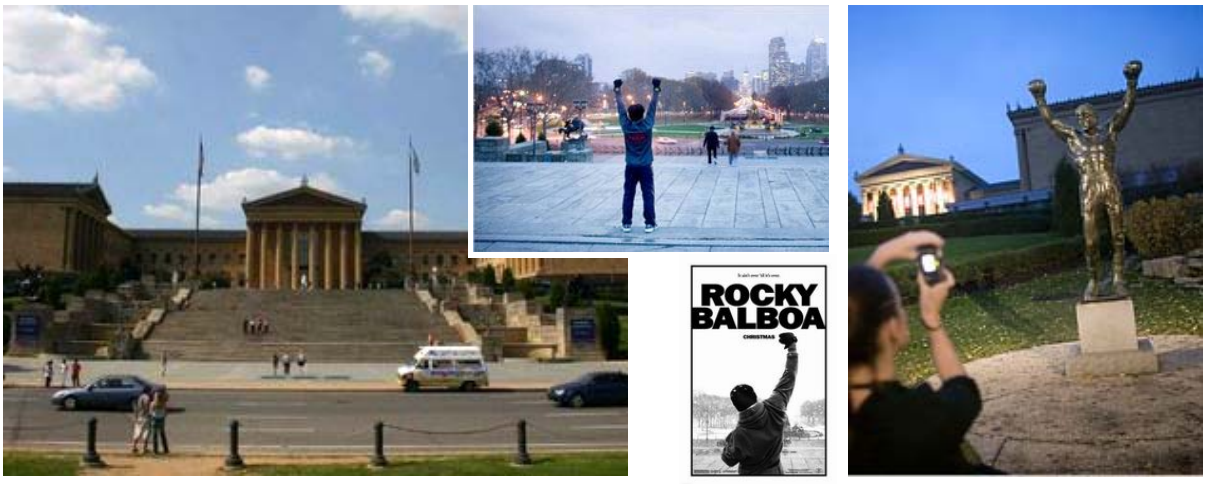

Figure 2.8. Rocky at the museum. Left: The Rocky Steps, as the front steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art have come to be known. Middle lower: *Rocky* movie poster. Middle top: A visitor strikes a Rockyesque pose at the top of the Rocky Steps. Right: The *Rocky* statue is a popular tourist attraction. (Photo © Robert Strauss & Ryan Donnell.)

Shuang-Xin Shi-Hu (SS) serves as another quite obvious example of public art's ability to support tourism—this time in a rural community. Art can enhance local cultural heritage, and so boost tourism and sustain the local economy. *SS,* built in 1937 on the seashore of the Penghu islands in Taiwan, is a traditional fishery, but has also become a place that is itself a kind of artwork for the public. *SS* was not created by an artist, and its first purpose was to increase the fish harvest and thereby support the community during the windy and chilly season. Unlike

hundreds of other traditional fishweirs, *SS* comprises two pot dikes and appears as a double-heart interlocking pattern, like a necklace on earth. As such, it captures the imagination of tourists by evoking romantic metaphors and legends through the symbol of love that is its shape (Fig. 2.9). Its shape, color, and gesture, blending with the matrix backdrop, combine to stir viewers' emotions.

In comparison with other public art projects, *SS,* though not initially created as an artwork at all, partakes in a significant cultural identity that goes beyond its beauty. The community has suffered due to decreases in ocean fish resources; therefore, the conversion of the traditional fishery industry to an industry based on public art and history enhances the community's prospects and self-image by providing tourist attractions that sustain community development. Due to its ideal synthesis of beauty and content, as well as its social–cultural importance, *SS* has attracted media attention, and has come to be regarded as a work of land art comparable with Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* of 1994 (Fig. 2.10) (Wang, 1994). It is now an icon for the National Land Art Festival and other events organized by the local government and social institutions. Though not created by an artist, *SS* functions as a work of art in that it is received as such. Further, the conversion of existing objects into artwork is relatively environmentally friendly provided that careful measures are taken not to impair ecosystems during the process of creating art. As an artwork, *SS* is also a relatively low-cost investment for the community and government, and it is easily promoted as a symbol of the islands' tourist industry.

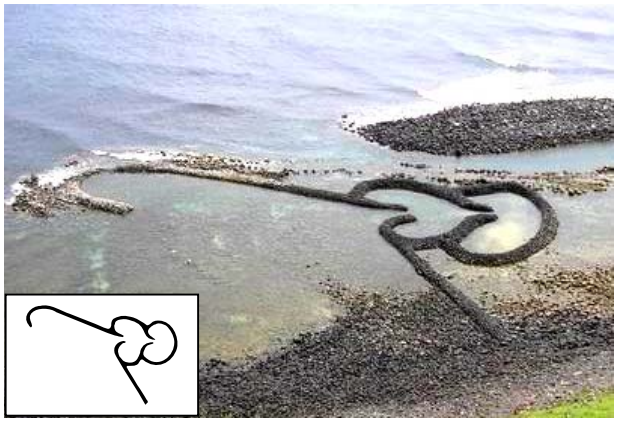

Figure 2.9. The earth necklace—*SS.*

Figure 2.10. Smithson's *Spiral Jett*. (Photograph courtesy of Ben Steiner.)

Public Art for Social/Environmental Education

Proponents of public art claim that it has social and environmental educational value for the public. It has been assumed that artworks themselves and/or the programs that accompany them may have the capacity to play an educational role that can benefit community development (Hall & Robertson, 2001; Shaw, 1990). As public art projects and social activist movements converge, public art takes on an expanded function as a possible producer of covert pedagogical dialogue. Many public art projects have joined with schools to address environmental and social controversies that affect the students and the community, using formats such as sculptures, ceramic murals, events, etc. "Public art thus offers insights into many dimensions of art beyond the expression of self" (Garber, 2006, p. 29).

Phillips (1995) argues that public art may play a similar role to what Giroux calls "radical education." Because both public art and radical education are interdisciplinary fields, though marginalized, they are powerful in connecting different concerns and asking the most critical

questions. In this new paradigm, the artist becomes the "spokesperson" for his/her own work, by not only creating but also interpreting the artwork for various audiences. Further, "processes are also metaphors" (Lacy, 1995a, p. 45). The process of artistic production, the politics inhering in it, political and social conditions, also have metaphorical import. They dictate the process of production. The relationships between an artist and the actuality of a location/site and the social conditions of the institutional frame constitute a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange, and cultural debate.

Most importantly, unlike in other pedagogical models, the educational site of public art is not "defined as precondition. Rather, it is generated by the work (often as 'content'), then verified by its convergence with an existing discursive formation" (Kwon, 2000, p. 44). From concrete public space to abstract public realm, from a place for art in front of a building to a place for art in the center of a debate about socioeconomic issues, either the educational site is conceived as dematerialized, or the concrete site and its abstract counterpart fuse to create a site at once real and notional.

In terms of social–cultural education, take the example of the Hai-An Road public art project (please consult the following subsection in this chapter), in which artworks have transformed community space into a street-museum of art (e.g., Hein, 2006), and thus restored a distinct sense of place to the area. In creating this sense of place, the extensive participation of residents was of great importance. Their involvement helped ensure that local history and narratives would be highlighted in the new project, and that this new story would explore both the failure of the government construction and the healing of the formerly ruined community. The street-museum demonstrates the possibility of postmodern pedagogy in neo-museum

practice, as audiences have access not only to exhibited works of art but to the art-making process itself (e.g., Tapia & Barrett, 2003; Walsh, 1992). The work of artist Suzanne Lacy presents another instructive example: together with an anthropologist, Lacy worked with youth, women, community leaders, and ex-gang members to help a community profoundly affected by poverty, gangs, and drug violence to heal social wounds via art. To share memories with the community, meaningful objects and stories were collected from local families and installed in a moving-museum that had once been a school bus (Garber, 2006).

In regard to environmental education, many public art projects intend to unite visual aesthetic and environmental concerns. Some artworks create living exhibits that illustrate ecological processes. A case in point is the 1990 Devils Lake project in North Dakota by Viet Ngo (Lemna International, Inc.). This project used a system that integrated both aesthetic and practical engineering considerations into the process of biologically purifying water and improving wetland quality. In addition, it worked with the community to design the signage that now helps visitors interpret the system and improve their understanding of the environment. Using the serpentine silhouette channel, together with the ecological function of water purification and visualization of duckweed growth (Fig. 2.11) in concert with its fundamental contributions to local needs, Ngo's wastewater-treatment system makes good on his intention of delivering art performance and environmental meaning to the local residents and the general public. Other projects, such as *Time Landscape of New York City* (1965) and of *South Bronx Hemlock Forest* (1977) by Alan Sonfist (Fig. 2.12), were created with the express intention of restoring the lost historical natural landscape (pre-Colonial stage) as art in the urban context. Sonfist cooperated with local residents/schools and scientists, and even invited local gang members to participate, in order to accomplish his site-specific and living artworks, which

deliver a strong message of concern for the environment to the community, as well as the general public.

Figure 2.11. The Devils Lake project by Viet Ngo in 1990 in Devils Lake, North Dakota. The wastewater treatment system contains a winding water channel with duckweed that creates a unique visual form.

Figure 2.12. Time Landscape of New York City by Alan Sonfist (1965–present), New York City. (Photo © Brian Dubé.)

Public Art as a Process of Community Regeneration

Contemporary urban problems are primarily social in nature, such that only providing new amenities like housing, parks, libraries, and/or health care does not guarantee urban/community resurgence in high-crime ghetto/slum areas. The hopeful construction and subsequent demolition of the 57-acre Pruitt-Igoe housing complex in St. Louis in 1972 is a case in point. Similarly, expecting a single artwork or art event to change a community would be quixotic. Significantly, however, art in the public realm does create a new media that allows a dialogical exchange between diverse social groups. In fact, public art has evolved as an arena for

activism that addresses wide-ranging and highly controversial social issues and civic concerns. Also, certainly, public art is both an expression of and an occasion for reflecting on government policies and city regulations.

The role of public interests in constructing and appreciating public art becomes important as contemporary public art evolves (Senie & Webster, 1998; Wines, 1987). As local geography, history, and community are given more consideration, public art enters social networks and is expected to function practically. To develop a sense of place is regarded as closely related to enhancing a community and even assisting in urban regeneration. Some research regards public art not as a noun/object, but as a verb/process or social intervention that functions as a vanguard form, attacking boundaries and providing a sensibility for social strategy (Kwon, 2000; Lacy, 1995a). Indeed, in some cases, public art acts as an intermediate form that contributes to community resurgence. Public art as a social practice challenges the traditional western view of artistic practice according to which art is at least partly defined by its being interpreted as having permanent and universal value. Because public issues and civic life are fluid and multiple, and likewise the ideology of the public is mutable and flexible, a contemporary public art project is not necessarily permanent (Phillips, 1998). Ephemeral and temporal works of art, therefore, are common and reasonable in the practice of public art, and some of them play a role as both symbols of and catalysts for city and community development.

A 1995 city business development plan created the Hai-An Road in Taiwan, which crosscut five streets in a densely populated old neighborhood that had once been one of the city's most commercially prosperous areas. The plan involved building an underground shopping mall in order to boost economic development. It failed, however, due to critical mistakes made in a

geologic assessment of the area: the results were disastrous. Years of construction/destruction and political disputes depleted the government budget and also used up the energy and patience of the neighborhood. Businesses closed, and local residents began to move out. In 2002, the mayor decided to make the road re-commutable, but spatial fragmentation, the collapse/sag of land surface stratum, and destroyed building fronts all challenged efforts to recover the cityscape. The Bureau for City Development experimented with an artistic approach, called Beautiful New Horizon, to try to compensate for the previous political and construction mistakes. As part of this initiative, a varied series of art performances and installations were begun and are ongoing in the open public space and also in the private parcels/buildings of the area (Fig. 2.13). Through this continuing process of art intervention, Hai-An Road has become a popular area for tourists, and new businesses have opened.

Artists, therefore, played a role in facilitating the new evolution of the community space. The intervention of art, initiated by the government, broke down the government hegemony itself and created a new landscape matrix and social–cultural context for local economic development. Artists once played a pivotal role in the process of creating art projects, embodying an absolute power because they were the only hope for using art to foster local community development. Nevertheless, art acts only as an intermediary during the transition process. After community businesses had become established and prosperous, however, some of the artists left the community and some of the public art works were removed as residents pursued other plans that they hoped would make their area more economically productive. Hence, the artists and their artworks found themselves supplanted by interests more directly related to economic viability. However, public art in this case showed itself capable of bringing vigorous strength to community regeneration efforts (Yu & Wang, 2007) (Fig. 2.14).

Figure 2.13. Public art on Hai-An Road. Top right: The doorplates of the torn-down houses were installed on the wall by artists. Top left: Part of the community still retains the traditional architecture and space syntax of the Ching Dynasty (refer to the right part of the picture). Artists create murals on the torn-down traditional buildings that reappear in the images of old-fashioned life styles (refer to the left part of the picture). Left: An artwork, *Blue Print*, shows the imagined indoor space with perspective. Right: The prosperous new businesses of the local community.

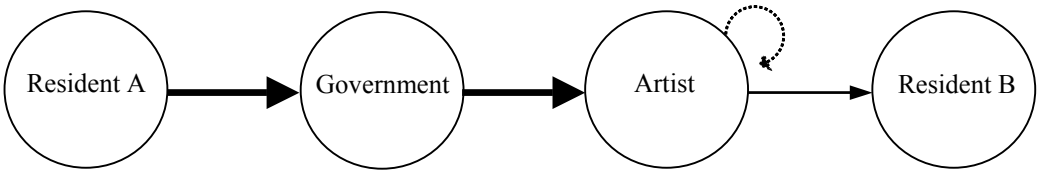

Figure 2.14. Succession of sense of place-dominator. The intervention of art facilitated the evolution of community space and created a niche for economy resurgence. Artists once embodied an absolute power because they were the only hope of the local community, but they retreated after businesses had become established in the community because the residents became intent on taking more control of local development.

Public Art for Environmental Amelioration

"The ability of art to enhance public spaces such as plazas, parks, and corporate headquarters was quickly recognized as a way to revitalize inner cities, which were beginning to collapse under the burden of increasing social problems. Art in public space was seen as a means of reclaiming and humanizing the urban environment" (Lacy, 1995a, p. 21). Although there is little substantiating empirical evidence, it is often claimed that public art has the capacity to enhance the environment in many and profound ways: It is said to contribute to a safer environment, allaying fear, reducing vandalism, ameliorating dismal spaces, enlivening bland lives, and fostering well-being and health in a city. It is also employed to increase the use of open spaces, to cultivate an environmental aesthetic, to make places culturally sophisticated, and to reduce wear and tear on buildings (e.g., Dunlop & Eckstein, 1994; Hall & Robertson, 2001; Selwood, 1995; Swales, 1992; Wines, 1987). For instance, the *Leonhardt Lagoon* (or *Fair Park Lagoon*) project, completed in 1986 by Patricia Johanson was created with the express intention of linking ecology (e.g., site restoration/reclamation) and public use (such as social centers and recreational facilities) through an art installation (Fig. 15). She worked with scientists and the Parks Department to restore the polluted ponds using a labyrinthine water-lily-bud-like path, and native plants and fish as a halcyon refuge for wildlife. Also included was a recreational and educational area for visitors.

Figure. 2.15. The *Leonhardt Lagoon,* Dallas, Texas, completed by Patricia Johanson in 1986. (Photo © Brandon Marshall.)

The aforementioned literature review and case studies support the idea that public art can be a catalyst for urban and rural development. In addition, public art can at least view itself as a catalyst for political action—whether it succeeds in its aims is another question. Although the idea of public art seems to have merit, it remains controversial. Hall and Robertson (2001) argue:

> Public art, it has been claimed, can help alleviate a wide range of urban, social problems … however, … these claims remain largely untested and unproven. Indeed it has shown that the critical apparatus required to address this is largely absent from public art research. (p. 22)

First and foremost, the few existing empirical studies do not adequately support the claim that public art can play a meaningful role in solving problems; moreover, community attitudes toward and behaviors in regard to public art have yet to be carefully documented and analyzed in a scientifically valid way. Also, the social impact of public art on the city/community needs to be examined in a longer-term timeframe. In fact, research has indicated that the urban social and spatial context is highly complicated, and that public art's incorporation into the matrix, therefore, is never a simple matter (e.g., Sharp, 2007).

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter explains the methods and procedures employed to examine the research problems this study sets out to address. It discusses the profile of the study area, methodologies, instrument development, data-collection methods, and related matters.

Rationale for Applying an Empirical Quantitative Approach

Most contemporary public art research has relied on qualitative criticism with less support from empirical evidence. Such research has, however, contributed significantly to explorative knowledge. Although quantitative field studies are few and far between, those that are available tend to focus on discussions of very limited public art objects and are likely to describe individual experiences. To compensate for the drawbacks of studies of major contemporary public art, this research adopted a quantitative approach and focused on the public art pieces at a larger scale (a city) in order to confirm the untested hypotheses proposed in some of the published studies to date. This study, therefore, provides a better description of the characteristics of a population in regard to public art in a city in general rather than of responses to a particular piece. As mentioned in the section on research limitations, focusing on the scale of the city may result in the loss of a degree of internal validity, but it will also result in a higher external validity (cf. Shadish et. al., 2002). Hence, the results are more likely to convince the policy-makers.

Research Design and Operation Process

The research operation process is shown in the flowchart (Fig. 3.1). To answer the research questions, the conceptual frameworks/hypotheses (as described in detail in the following subsection) were developed based on the literature review and case studies.

A questionnaire consisting of both structured and open-ended questions was developed and employed as the instrument for collecting data from the general public (Appendix). Before the formal survey, interviews were conducted with people unfamiliar with the methodology used in this reseach in order to improve face validity (a qualitative measure).

After data collection was complete and the data were coded, the Equivalence Reliability Test using the Split-Half Method was performed to ensure the reliability of the data. The value of Cronbach's α was chosen to filter out questions that would have decreased the reliability of the data.

After the reliability test, the qualified question items went through the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to explore the latent constructs. During this process, the Orthogonal Varimax Rotation was adopted to maximize the variance of the squared loadings within factors across variables. Scree-plots and component-plots were used to help with judgment on the conceptual frameworks. Also, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were applied in order to determine if the data would be appropriate for factor analysis.

All the coding and analysis of quantitative data was examined with the programs of SPSS. The statistical unit is a person in this study.

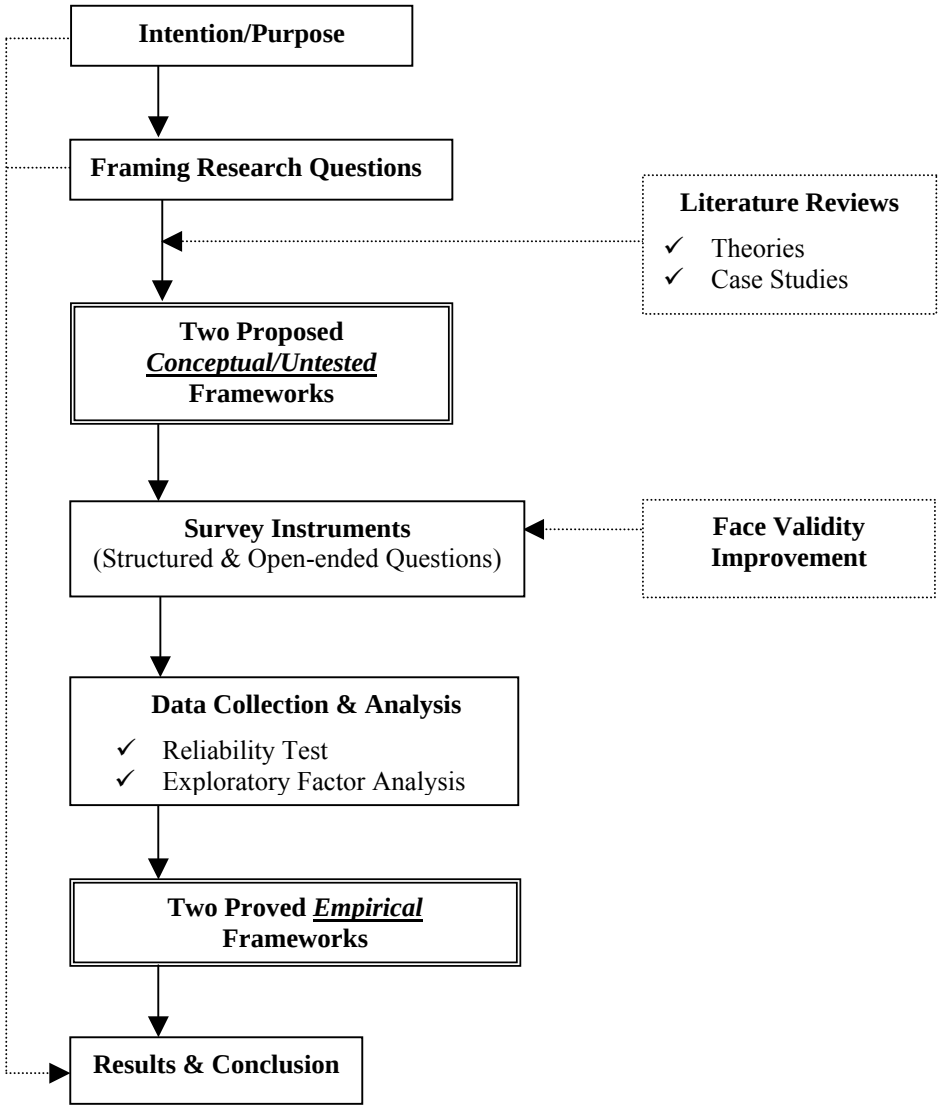

Figure 3.1. Research process.

Research Frameworks and Instrument Design

The Development of the Research Framework

Based on the literature review and case studies in Chapter 2, two conceptual research frameworks were developed in order to obtain the general public's answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of public art?
2. Does the public perceive public art as contributing to the community? If so, in what ways?

This research systemized five characteristics of public art: Aesthetics, Publicness, Site Specificity, Affordance, and Social Critique (Fig. 3.2). Also, the constructs of the benefits of public art were identified as enhancing or facilitating Place Attachment, Economic/Tourism Development, Environmental Amelioration, Social/Environmental Education, and Social Process (Fig. 3.3).

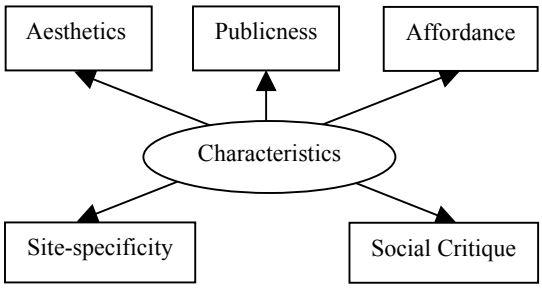

Figure 3.2. The conceptual framework of the characteristics of public art.

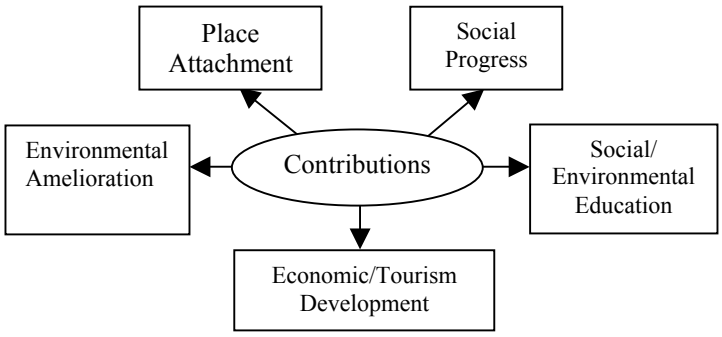

Figure 3.3. The conceptual framework of the contributions of public art to community development/regeneration.

Instrument Design

The instrument for collecting data from the general public was a questionnaire containing structured and open-ended questions (refer to the Appendix). Based on the constructs/sub-concepts shown in the conceptual frameworks (Fig. 3.2 & Fig. 3.3) and the measurement structure (Table 3.1 & Table 3.2), questionnaire items were developed using a 5-point Likert scale to gather opinions from the general public. Each measurement construct was measured by at least three questionnaire items.

The open-ended questions were designed to collect more in-depth data that might not be detected by the structured questions. Socio-demographic questions, such as gender, age, level of education, major/occupation, and location of residence were also asked to structure an overall subject profile. In addition, questions focusing on the participant's knowledge of art and urban development decision-making processes were also asked.

Table 3.1

The Measurement Structure of the Characteristics of Public Art

Constructs	**Variables/Scales/Questionnaire items**
Publicness	It should be created for the public.
(Selwood, 1995; Lippard, 1995; Gibson, 1988; Prigoff, 2005)	Decisions regarding public art should be settled by public selection.
	The making of public art should involve public participation.
	The public should have the right to ask for public art to be modified.
Site Specificity	It should be specifically designed for the place.
(Deutsche, 1998; Kwon, 2000; Kelley, 1995; Miles, 1997; Suderburg, 2000)	It should be created to suit the place.
	It should be bound to or interrelated with the location.
Affordance	It should be functional for popular use.
(Senie & Webster, 1998; McGill, 1986; Miles, 1997)	It should satisfy a public need.
	It should contribute to the common good.
Social Critique	It questions the socio-cultural status quo.
(Cresswell, 1998; Deutsche, 1998; Jacob, 1995; Lacy, 1995a; Prigoff, 2005)	It is a social process of value finding.
	It addresses a variety of community and urban issues.
Aesthetics	It should possess aesthetic merit.
(Lacy, 1995a; Wines, 1987)	It should provide a sense of beauty.
	It should express artistic creative skill or mastery.

Table 3.2

The Structure for Measuring the Contributions of Public Art to Community Development/Regeneration

Constructs	Concepts	Scales (Questionnaire Items)
Place Attachment (Bricker & Kerstetter 2000; Hall & Robertson, 2001; Lowe, 2000; Moore & Graefe, 1994)	Sense of identity Sense of dependence	It means a lot to me. I feel like it is part of me. I identify with it. It is a focal point for community pride. It pleases me more than other urban amenities do.
Economy/Tourism Development (Arts Council, 1991; Selwood, 1995; Wines, 1987)	Property value Investment Employment Tourist attraction	It increases the property or land values of the neighborhood. It stimulates more investment or business in the neighborhood. It helps create employment. It attracts visitors. It attracts people's attention.
Social Progress (Lacy, 1995a; DEFRA-UK, 2008; Deutsche, 1998; Disponzio, 1998; Miles, 1997; Zukin, 1995, 1996)	Social criticism Social transition/change Justice/Inequality Social marginalization	It gives marginalized people an opportunity to speak out. It addresses or helps solve social problems. It facilitates the social transition. It helps create social bonds among a variety of groups.
Social/Environmental Education (Hall & Robertson, 2001; Hungerford & Yolk, 1990; Klein & Merritt; 1994)	Foundations Awareness—issues/values Investigation/Evaluation Action skills	I understand its meaning. It helps me be aware of social/environmental problems. It helps me identify social/environmental problems. It lets me become more involved in social problems and the environment.
Environmental Amelioration (DEFRA-UK, 2008; Deutsche, 1998; Dunlop & Eckstein, 1994; Hartig & Staats, 2006; Hartig et al., 1997; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1995; Lacy, 1995a; Miles, 1997; Májozo, 1995; Selwood, 1995; Swales, 1992; Wines, 1987; Zuckerman, 1977)	Visual aesthetic Amenity Cultural ambiance Socialization Sense of security Healing environment Environmental concern	It makes the place beautiful. It makes the environment comfortable. It provides an opportunity for leisure. It makes this place culturally sophisticated. It reduces environmental vandalism. It encourages people to visit the public space. It eliminates the sense of threat in the surroundings. It makes me feel relaxed. It helps relieve my depression. It decreases my mental fatigue. It shows a consideration for natural protection.

Public Art Movement in Taiwan and the Study Area

The study area of this research was Taipei, Taiwan (Fig. 3.4), which is located in the north of the island of Taiwan with a population of approximately 3 million and an area of 105 square miles. Contemporary public art research has taken place in many countries, and many of the ensuing research results/theories have been promptly published globally, making them easily accessible worldwide. Actually, a series of professional books written or translated by Taiwanese scholars has introduced to Taiwan the public art developments of many countries such as France, Italy, Japan, Russia, Spain, the UK, the US, etc. Such global knowledge may also have influenced the trend of public art research/installation on a local scale in many cities in Taiwan, including Taipei City (cf. Chapter 2). Due to this close relationship between easily accessible research and art trends, these global theories are examined in Taiwan in this research. The following section briefly introduces the public art movement in Taiwan.

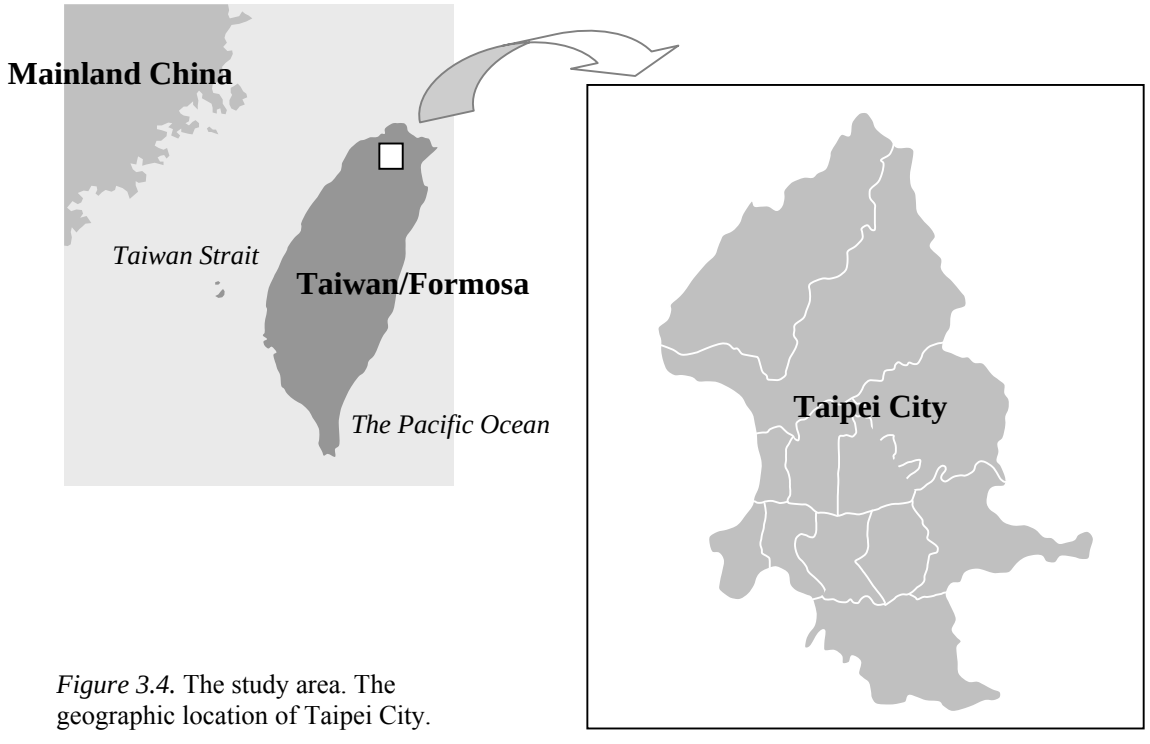

Figure 3.4. The study area. The geographic location of Taipei City.

The Movement of Public Art in Taiwan

This subsection briefly reviews the evolution of public art in Taiwan in order to map the terrain of public art development in Taipei City in particular. It is worth noting that any analysis of the history of public art must necessarily engage with the problem of adequately defining the term. In addition, public art did not develop from a single perspective or in a linear fashion. Given the broad scope of what is considered public art, it was necessary to select a manageable focus for this work; therefore, this research focuses on several pivotal nodes of the contemporary movement.

The use of periodization to categorize the development of public art in Taiwan is arbitrary due to its interlaced evolutionary threads and the mutability and uncertainty of the definition. If one takes a broader view, the appearance of art works in public space might be traced to the beginning of human history—for example, in the form of stone/wooden carvings by the indigenous Taiwanese. However, the discussion of the public art movement in this section mainly focuses on its history since the late nineteenth century, and since then, the close relationships/communications that exist between Taiwan and other countries in regard to public art research and creations (Fig. 3.5). It can be said that public art had become fairly widespread by the mid twentieth century. During the period of colonization by Japan between 1895 and 1945, Japanese and Western European influences dominated in Taiwan. After WWII, the development of public art showed the impact of the cultural and aesthetic values of Mainland China. Since the 1950s, Taiwan's close economic and political relationship with the United States affected trends in public art development in Taiwan. Due to the effects of rapid globalization after the 1980s, public art works became more diverse and numerous studies on the

subject were published. Contemporary public art has been nurtured by both institutional and cultural environments, and its evolution and current incarnation is linked as well to architecture, urban planning, government policy, patronage, and social critique. Further, public art has played an important role in expressing the prosperity and cultural advances in Taiwan.

Figure 3.5. Public artworks by a local Taiwanese artist, Yuyu Yean. His artworks have been installed in many cities worldwide, including New York City and Taipei City.

The development of contemporary public art in the urban context in Taiwan can be traced back to the era of Japan's colonization of the island in the late nineteenth century. Artworks in public space consisted mainly of commemorative sculptures and paintings, most of which were created by Japanese artists and evinced a mixed aesthetic language that was Japanese and Eastern European in nature; some sculptures were even imported to Taiwan directly. Many of the monuments in the cities were built in memory of the Japanese soldiers who had died serving their country. Most of those works were torn down after WWII.

After Japan's fifty-year colonization of Taiwan, President Chiang Kai-shek of the Republic of China (ROC) lost Mainland China and moved to Taiwan, as did many members of

the artistic elite. In the late 1940s and 1950s, the regime of the ROC central government was still unstable. As part of a campaign to bolster its power, the government erected public art aimed at fostering a resurgence of national pride and identity. Thus, numerous sculptures and murals relevant to political leaders and the army appeared in public urban space, where they reflected the expansion of national power and the ascendancy of democracy. In addition, some artworks were interested in depicting the struggle of local daily life and experience. Due to the economic depression and the scarcity of materials, the commissioning and development of public art works remained at a low ebb. During this era, public art in the West reflected the explosive impact of modernism. In the US and Western Europe, the pragmatic focus of modernist and International Style architecture dispensed with traditional decorative gestures, such as embellishing a building with sculptural forms and paintings. Adolf Loos (1998), for instance, stressed the idea of ornament as crime, and Le Corbusier (1931) advocated purist rules for refining and simplifying design that radically repudiated ornamentation. However, in general, major urban public artworks in Taiwan still expressed allegiance to the idea of traditional artistic values and styles and would be appropriately thought of as conventional visual art pieces.

From the 1960s to the early 1980s, Taiwan's speedy economic development and its close relationship with the US benefited the development of public art. The use of ornaments such as sculptures and paintings was encouraged to decorate architecture and streets in order to create visual variety and enrich the cityscape (Fig. 3.6). Advanced visual art concepts, such as abstract expressionism, pop art, and minimalism, were introduced to Taiwan to redefine the beauty of the cities; yet lack of local social context and experience made their reception uncertain. Some public art in urban space in Taiwan used abstract expression, especially those works created according to the edicts of minimalism (Fig. 3.7). The abstruse artistic vocabulary that the art

pieces conveyed intervened in the citizens' daily space, but often remained unintelligible to the public. Thus, such art works did not always win the citizens' appreciation. Neglect of the public's preferences raised then as now intense social disputes whereby the singular vision of the artist was pitted against the public's interest in the aesthetic value of their own lived existence. Limited interest in the public's views and expectations of public art resulted in public art projects receiving a poor reception in some areas; therefore, the need to conduct research into public art started to become apparent.

Figure 3.6. From Agriculture To Industrial Society (1969) by Shui-Long Yan is about 100-m long; it is a series of mosaics composed of fragments of china utensils. (Photo © Kai-Shao Chen.)

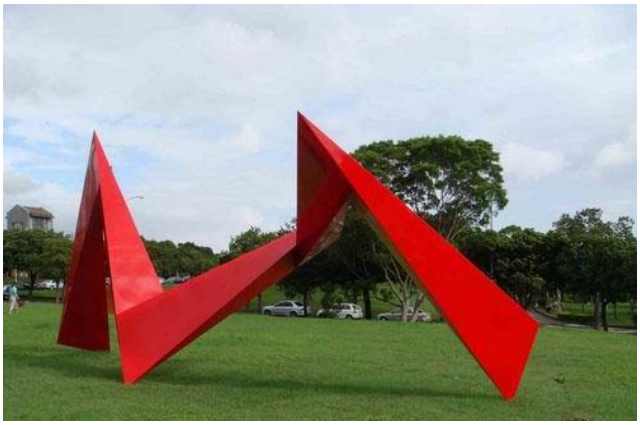

Figure 3.7. Infinite of Minimum by Zai-Qian Li, Taipei City, 1983. (Photo © Xiao-Xiong Zhang.)

However, during this epoch, some artists and architects in Taiwan did explore new ways of communicating with the public via their projects, and through their work they began to redefine ideas of the beauty of a city. Further, the concept of "site-specific art" started to attract more interest and was applied to public art design. Architect/artist Yuyu Yang, for instance, proposed the creative concept of lifescape sculpture, which proposed that public art should bind with its setting and concern itself with the thoughts and lives of its audiences. In the early 1960s, he started to experiment with a new way to connect architecture and relief. Expressing related concerns about the inseparability of the artwork and its context, architect Chi-Kwan Chen regarded architecture as artwork originating from and germinating at its site (Fig. 3.8). Their art and architecture/art attracted positive local and international attention. Similarly, in the US, James Wines, for example, articulated art as a means of "commenting on architecture," and he worked to integrate *art* into the public domain (Wines, 1975, 1987). He intended to demonstrate a new paradigm, termed Arch-art, that conceived of public art not as an ornament on a building or in a park but as the building or park itself. Maya Lin, in her *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (1982), also presented a new paradigm for memorial design, one that invites visitors to interact with the environmental artwork in order to transform the site into a healing place of pilgrimage.

Figure 3.8. The *Luce Memorial Chapel*, designed by Chi-Kwan Chen in 1960 at Tunghai University.

Since the late 1980s, the golden era of wealth and prosperity, abundant patronage from the Taiwanese government and enterprise allied with the comprehensive help of government policies and regulations initiated an explosion of public art development. The commissioning of public art was regarded as an essential tactic for community revitalization and urban renewal, and matching government grants were often available. The public art policies of other countries were used for reference and study by the Taiwanese government. Taiwan's Department of Cultural Affairs reviews international policy every year to better understand the experiences of other countries and to improve public art policy-making. For instance, by considering the Percent for Art Program, an early 1980s program in U.S. cities, the Taiwanese government decided to enact legislation and enforced a law in 1992 whereby 1% of the budget for eligible construction projects would be spent on public artworks. Artists are invited and commissioned to create artwork in various public spaces, such as parks, plazas, and transportation facilities. In addition, the incentives of ordinances on zoning/density also encouraged real-estate developers to take advantage of the inclusion of open space and public art to promote the image and aesthetic quality of the enterprise. In the 1990s, then, public art installations became increasingly visible throughout Taiwan. And, certainly, the visual language of public art had by this time become increasingly diverse and in doing so participated in the momentum of post-modernism; likewise, the scale of the art became bigger and the settings more varied. In 1994, Taiwan's Council of Cultural Affairs launched the 1st Annual Public Art Demonstration—a decisive plan aimed at promoting experimentation with a new version of public art. Not surprisingly, this initiative attracted significant media attention. Since then, many cities and many related programs have also been initiated with a view to encouraging the general public to become educated viewers of public art. In addition, a series of books/research related to public art has been published.

By the late 1990s, the characteristics and social role of public art had experienced a significant change. Although it was generally expected that public art was to integrate artworks with a social and cultural context, some public art gave rise to significant social criticism and debate nevertheless. The fabric of society consists of varied groups each with their own particular interest in and view regarding public art; issues regarding the selection process as well as the nature of what constitutes good public art are also problematic. The controversy over certain artworks revealed the gap between the public's views and other stakeholders' views of their own interests related to it. The public started to question the function and meaning of public art in relation to issues of community development. The concept of "new genre public art" from the US was also introduced, which referred not only to those projects that focus on audience participation and process, but also to art aiming to comment on, question, and challenge the socio-cultural status quo (e.g., Lacy, 1995a). The practice of public art became a significant arena of activism. It spoke to the intensified racial and gender discrimination, heightened health problems, and violence, as well as other environmental/social/political issues. For some commentators, the end product, namely the artwork, is less important than the effects on the community of participating in the processes of creation. Moreover, as an art form, new genre public art should be considered beyond paradigms of aesthetic appreciation and art history. It not only reflects and represents, it partakes in social planning. It is a social practice that challenges the traditional view of artistic practice in Taiwan—art created as permanent vehicle for expressing what are considered to be universal values. However, since public issues and civic life are fluid and multiple, a public art project is not necessarily permanent (e.g., Phillips, 1998). Ephemeral and temporal works of art, therefore, are common and reasonable in the practice of public art (Fig. 3.9).

Figure 3.9. Large-scale temporal lighting sculptures, located in Taipei for the New Year celebration events. (Photo © Zhan-Yuan Lu.)

Many well-known international artists and critics have been invited to create artworks (e.g., Soto, Narcissus Quagliata (Fig. 3.10), and Lutz Haufschild) (Fig. 3.11), to join seminars and lectures (e.g., Suzanne Lacy and Catherine Grout), and to direct long-term studios/camps (e.g., Virginia Scotchie) at universities or in local communities in Taiwan. These international interactions benefit public art developments in Taiwan, including research and creation of public art. Actually, in addition to some studies of public art projects in Taiwan, several books have been written or translated in a timely matter that are aimed at disseminating information about public art developments in a number of countries. Some public art educational programs/activities are even read in elementary schools to help children better understand public art.

Figure 3.10. Dome of light by Narcissus Quagliata, 2008, in the subway station (R-10), Kaohsiung, Taiwan. The interpretive system is provided for the public (Left). The subway entrance (Up). (Photo © KRTC, Kaohsiung.)

Figure 3.11. Emerald Laminata by Lutz Haufschild, 2008, in the subway station (R-4), Kaohsiung, Taiwan (Right). (Photo © KRTC, Kaohsiung.)

Public Art in Taipei City

Since the 1990s, the Taipei government has emphasized that public art is an essential aspect of urban development. The legislation of the Percent for Art Program was enacted that enforced a law in Taiwan in 1992, whereby 1% of the budget for eligible construction projects would be spent on public artworks. Not surprisingly, this initiative attracted significant media attention, and since then, Taipei has spent millions of U.S. dollars each year on public art creations (Fig. 3.12 & Fig. 3.13). Also, many public art–related programs have been initiated with a view to encouraging the general public to become educated viewers of public art. In Taipei City, for example, the "routes for touring public art," map guides, books, postcards, and

books have been published. There are also some special vivid publications on the subject aimed at school children, and some related educational activities are offered at elementary schools in Taipei. Hence, this city offers an excellent site for the study of public perceptions of public art.

Figure 3.12. Images of Taipei, including some traditional and modern-style architecture, including *Taipei-101* (the far right)—the world's tallest fully occupied building at the present time. (Photo © Taipei City Government.)

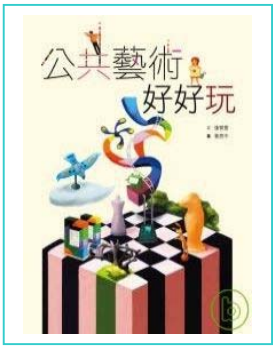

Figure 3.13. Public art in Taipei City. A children's book for understanding public art (left). (Photo © Taipei City Government.)

Data Collection

The survey process was conducted during the period of October 11–25, 2008. It was mainly self-administered, and questionnaires were fixed on a clipboard to facilitate the survey process. A systematically stratified random sampling plan was adopted on weekdays and weekends, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., to ensure that different segments of the population would be adequately represented. Subjects were recruited at various public locations in each city district, such as bus stations, parks, and community centers. All subjects were 18 years of age or older, and the enrollment was equitable; no attempt to encourage participation was made beyond simply asking. Subjects were approached and interviewed in order to ascertain their willingness to participate. Recruitment did not involve any use of promotional material, and the survey was anonymous in order to preserve confidentiality. Questionnaires were dispatched by the investigators.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents details regarding the major findings of this investigation. The first section provides a descriptive profile of survey participants; the second section mainly presents the results of the reliability examination and factor analysis.

Sample Description

Notwithstanding the unavoidability of some missing data, a total of 111 surveys were collected with sufficient information to be used in further analysis for this study. The information on respondents' socio-demographic backgrounds is provided in Table 4.1.

Of the 110 respondents, 68 informants were female (61.8% of the sample population) and 42 were male (nearly 38.2%). The age frequency of the 108 respondents was mainly distributed between the 20s and 40s. The largest group was the 30–39 age category—about half of the survey population (51.9%); the second-largest category was the 20–29 age group (30.6%), followed by the 40–49 age group (14.7%). Based on sampling, approximately 55% of the respondents were either current college students or had received at least an undergraduate college education, and around 37.8% were pursuing a master's degree or already had a master's degree. Of the 104 respondents, most (90.4%) had neither majored in art/environmental design nor held an art/environment-design-related job. Of the 110 respondents, overall they considered themselves to be less informed about art (mean scores = 2.83 on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 through 5), and they regarded themselves as having little knowledge of urban development decision-making processes (mean scores = 2.32).

Table 4.1

The Socio-demographic Profile of Respondents

Socio-demographic Variable		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	
Gender				
	Male	42	38.2	
	Female	68	61.8	
		110*	100.0	
Age				
	Less than 20 years old	1	.9	
	20–29	33	30.6	
	30–39	56	51.9	
	40–49	16	14.7	
	50 years and older	2	1.9	
		108*	100.0	Mean = 33.08 S.D. = 6.60
Education				
	High school	5	4.5	
	College	61	55.0	
	Master's	42	37.8	
	Doctorate	3	2.7	
		111	100.0	
Job/Major				
	Art or Environmental Design	10	9.6	
	Others	94	90.4	
		104*	100.0	

Knowledge about art	Mean = 2.85 S.D. = .776 Skewness (-.460) n = 110 (based on a 5-point Likert scale)
Knowledge about urban development decision-making process	Mean = 2.32 S.D. = .818 Skewness (-.145) n = 108 (based on a 5-point Likert scale)

Note. *The same size is less than 111 due to missing data.

Measuring the Characteristics of Public Art

What are the characteristics of public art? To answer this research question, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted to identify the latent constructs of the measurement items (Table 3.1). Before performing PCA, this study examined the overall internal consistency of the 16 measurement items via a reliability test.

Reliability Test on the Measurement Items of the Characteristics of Public Art

There are several methods for examining research reliability, such as split-half reliability, test–retest reliability, etc. In the current study, the value of Cronbach's Alpha score was used to evaluate the degree of consistency among measurement items. Listwise-deletion for dealing with missing data was applied to all variables (16 measurement items) in the reliability test procedure. The results showed an Alpha value of .764 (Table 4.2) for all items, suggesting a high reliability of the data set suitable for further analysis (cf. Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Factor Analysis for Measuring the Characteristics of Public Art

All the missing values of each question item in the questionnaire were replaced by the mean of the corresponding item for factor analysis. The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) Measure was used to examine the sampling adequacy of the data, and Bartlett's Test was employed to measure the homogeneity of the variances across samples (cf. Snedecor & Cochran, 1989). The value of KMO is .69, and the Bartlett's Test verified the assumption of equal variances across samples (sig. = .000; DF = 120), suggesting fitness for conducting factor analysis (cf. Kaiser, 1974; Snedecor & Cochran, 1989) (Table 4.3).

Table 4.2

The Item-Total Statistics of the Reliability Test Based on the Question Items Measuring the Characteristics of Public Art

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
It should be created for the public.	.758	
Decisions regarding public art should be settled by public selection.	.759	
The making of public art should involve public participation.	.755	
The public should have the right to ask for public art to be modified.	.757	
It should be specifically designed for the place.	.748	
It should be created to suit the place.	.747	
It should be bound to or interrelated with the location.	.750	
It should be functional for popular use.	.747	
It should satisfy a public need.	.739	
It should contribute to the common good.	.749	
It questions the socio-cultural status quo.	.752	
It is a social process of value finding.	.745	
It addresses a variety of community and urban issues.	.750	
It should possess aesthetic merit.	.756	
It should provide a sense of beauty.	.763	
It should express artistic creative skill or mastery.	.758	
All Items		.764

Note.

Sample size = 111; Valid case = 107; Excluded = 4.
Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 4.3

KMO and Bartlett's Test of the Question Items about the Characteristics of Public Art

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.694
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	524.656
	DF	120
	Sig.	.000

Five latent constructs were extracted via the Varimax Rotation Method with eigenvalue greater than one (Kaiser, 1960) (Table 4.4); together they accounted for 64.20% of the total variance (Table 4.5). The scree-plot also showed that the decision to derive five factor components was rational, since thereafter the slope gradually became flatter (Fig. 4.1). Measurement items with higher factor loadings in each component were grouped together, and the five latent constructs were titled Social Critique, Site Specificity, Aesthetics, Affordance, and Publicness, based on the items of higher factor loadings that each component comprised. The internal reliability of each construct was further examined to test the unification among the items, and all Cronbach's Alpha values were higher than an acceptable value of .6 or so (Table 4.6) (cf. Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 4.4

The Rotated Component Matrix of Principal Component Analysis Based on the Question Items about the Characteristics of Public Art

Scales (Questionnaire Items)	Component*				
	1	2	3	4	5
It is a social process of value finding.	.853	.043	.039	.083	.153
It questions the socio-cultural status quo.	.840	.108	.011	.029	.036
It addresses a variety of community and urban issues.	.801	.065	.053	.228	-.104
It should be specifically designed for the place.	.007	.816	.164	.086	.175
It should be created to suit the place.	.036	.807	.180	.050	.190
It should be bound to or interrelated with the location.	.318	.684	.101	.167	-.158
It should provide a sense of beauty.	-.022	.151	.876	.050	.141
It should possess aesthetic merit.	-.051	.237	.810	.098	.107
It should express artistic creative skill or mastery.	.172	.061	.656	.094	-.120
It should be functional for popular use.	.107	.022	.032	.862	.085
It should satisfy a public need.	.097	.166	.068	.798	.168
It should contribute to the common good.	.105	.047	.123	.630	.136
The making of public art should involve public participation.	.207	.024	-.031	.067	.750
Decisions regarding public art should be settled by public selection.	-.103	.057	.087	.148	.717
The public should have the right to ask for public art to be modified.	.025	.070	-.046	.283	.593
It should be created for the public.	-.069	.345	.288	-.081	.475

Note.

*1 = Social Critique; 2 = Site Specificity; 3 = Aesthetics; 4 = Affordance; 5 = Publicness
Sample size = 111.
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Table 4.5

The Total Variance Explained of the Five Factor Components of the Characteristics of Public Art

Components	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Social Critique	3.863	24.142	24.142
Site Specificity	2.216	13.852	37.994
Aesthetics	1.777	11.106	49.100
Affordance	1.311	8.197	57.297
Publicness	1.104	6.903	64.200

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

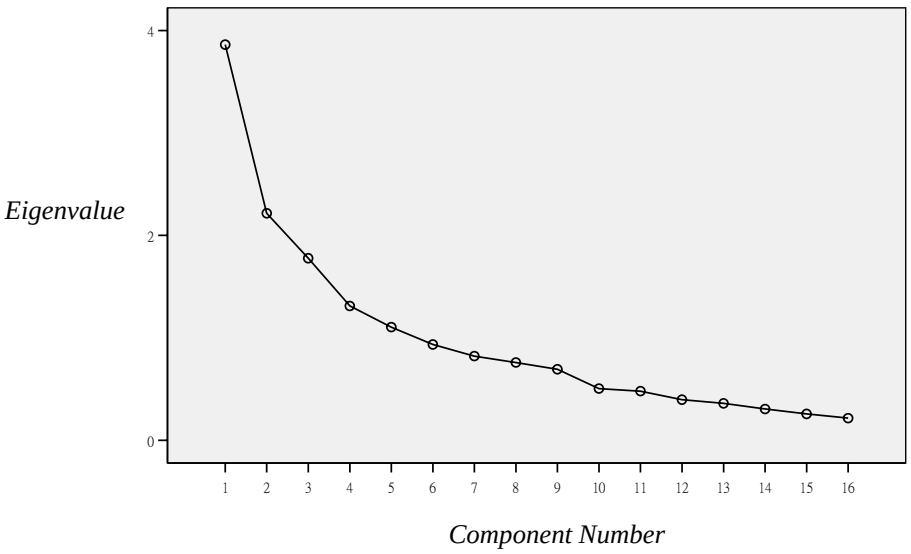

Figure 4.1. The scree-plot of Principal Component Analysis for the question items measuring the characteristics of public art.

The first latent construct, Social Critique, consisted of three measurement items and explained the largest proportion (24.14%) of the total variance (Table 4.5). The three items were identical with the items proposed in the measurement structure (Table 3.1) and presented a good internal consistency in the construct (Cronbach's Alpha value = .809) (Table 4.6). The mean of the three items was 3.45 on a 5-point Likert scale (3 = neutral; 4 = agree) (Table 4.6, Fig. 4.2 & Fig. 4.3).

Site specificity, consisted of three measurement items, and it accounted for 13.85% of the total variance (Table 4.5), and the three items were the same as the items proposed in the measurement structure (Table 3.1). The Cronbach's Alpha value of the measurement items was equal to .745, which showed a high unification in the construct. The mean of the three items was 4.37 on a 5-point Likert scale (4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree).

The Aesthetics construct explained 11.11% of the total variance, and it included three measurement items that were the same as the items proposed in the measurement structure (Table 3.1). The internal consistency of the subscales was good (Cronbach's Alpha value = .734), and the mean scores of the three items were high: 4.38 on a 5-point Likert scale (4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree) (Table 4.6, Fig. 4.2 & Fig. 4.3).

Affordance comprised three measurement items that accounted for 8.20% of the total variance. The three items proposed in the measurement structure in Chapter 3 were loaded in the same dimension again, and they presented a high internal consistency in the construct (Cronbach's Alpha value = .718). The mean of the three items was 3.48.

The last latent construct, Publicness, included four measurement indices and represented 6.90% of the total variance (Table 4.5). The internal consistency of the subscales was a bit low (Cronbach's Alpha value = .590), but still acceptable (cf. Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The mean scores of the four items were 3.53 on a 5-point Likert scale (3 = neutral; 4 = agree) (Table 4.6, Fig. 4.2 & Fig. 4.3).

Table 4.6

The Mean and Other Statistics of the Five Factor Components of the Characteristics of Public Art

		Social Critique	Site-specificity	Aesthetics	Affordance	Publicness
Mean		3.45	4.37	4.38	3.48	3.53
Std. Deviation		0.67	0.49	0.49	0.60	0.54
Variance		0.45	0.24	0.24	0.36	0.29
Skewness		-0.15	-0.16	-0.27	0.06	-0.10
Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)		.809	.745	.734	.718	.590
N	Valid	109	111	111	111	109
	Missing	2	0	0	0	2

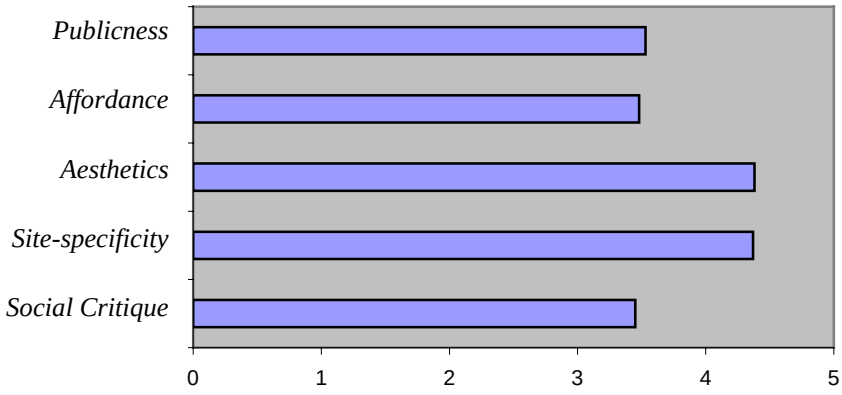

Figure 4.2. The mean histogram of the five components of the social characteristics of public art (based on a 5-point Likert scale).

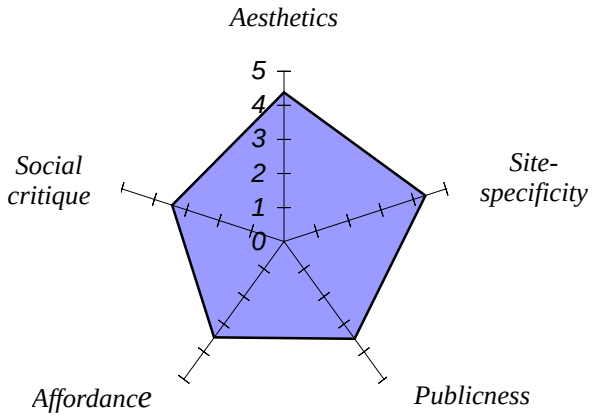

Figure 4.3. The mean of each perceived characteristic of public art (based on a 5-point Likert scale).

Measuring the Perceived Contribution of Public Art to Community Development

Does the public perceive public art as contributing to the community? If so, in what ways? To answer this research question, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted to identify the latent constructs of the 30 measurement items (Table 3.1). Before performing PCA, this study examined the overall internal consistency of the measurement items via a reliability test.

Reliability Test on the Measurement Items of Public Art's Contributions to Community Development/Regeneration

Listwise-deletion for dealing with missing data was applied to all 30 variables in the procedure of reliability test. The Cronbach's Alpha value was .95 (Table 4.7) for all items,

suggesting a very strong internal consistency across the measurement variables (cf. Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Factor Analysis for Public Art's Perceived Contributions

Examination of the KMO Measure and Bartlett's Test

All the missing values of each question item in the questionnaire were replaced by the mean of the corresponding item for factor analysis. The value of the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) Measure is .87, suggesting the sampling adequacy of the data; the Bartlett's Test also verified the assumption of equal variances across samples (sig. = .000; DF = 435), suggesting fitness for conducting factor analysis (cf. Kaiser, 1974; Snedecor & Cochran, 1989) (Table 4.8).

Table 4.7

The Item-Total Statistics of the Reliability Test Based on the Question Items about Public Art's Contributions to Community Development/Regeneration

Scales (Questionnaire Items)	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
It means a lot to me.	.949	
I feel like it is part of me.	.949	
I identify with it.	.948	
It is a focal point for community pride.	.948	
It pleases me more than other urban amenities do.	.949	
It increases the property or land values of the neighborhood.	.948	
It stimulates more investment or business in the neighborhood.	.948	
It helps create employment.	.949	
It attracts visitors.	.949	
It provides an opportunity for leisure.	.949	
It is a unique attraction.	.949	
It attracts people's attention.	.948	
It gives marginalized people an opportunity to speak out.	.949	
It addresses or helps solve social problems.	.949	
It facilitates the social transition.	.948	
It helps create social bonds among a variety of groups.	.948	
I understand its meaning.	.951	
It helps me be aware of social/environmental problems.	.948	
It helps me identify social/environmental problems.	.948	
It lets me become more involved in the social problems and the environment.	.949	
It makes the place beautiful.	.949	
It makes the environment comfortable.	.948	
It makes this place culturally sophisticated.	.950	
It reduces environmental vandalism.	.949	
It encourages people to visit the public space.	.949	
It eliminates the sense of threat in the surroundings.	.949	
It makes me feel relaxed.	.948	
It helps relieve my depression.	.948	
It decreases my mental fatigue.	.948	
It shows a consideration for natural protection.	.949	
All items		.950

Note.

Sample size = 111; Valid case = 107; Excluded = 4.
List-wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 4.8

KMO and Bartlett's Test of the Items about Public Art's Contributions to Community Development/Regeneration

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.869
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2528.639
	DF	435
	Sig.	.000

Construct Extraction of the Measurement Items

Seven latent constructs were extracted via the Varimax Rotation Method with eigenvalue greater than one (Table 4.9); together they accounted for a high 73.89% of the total variance (Table 4.10). The scree-plot also showed that the decision to use seven components was also reasonable (Fig. 4.4). Measurement items with the highest factor loadings in each component were grouped together, and the seven latent constructs were titled Social Progress, Therapeutic Environment, Place Attachment, Environmental Amelioration, Social/Environmental Education, Tourist Attraction, and Economic Benefit, based on the items that each component comprised. The internal reliability of each construct was further examined to test the unification among the items (Table 4.11), and all Cronbach's Alpha values were higher than an excellent value of .8 (cf. Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 4.9

The Rotated Component Matrix Based on the Question Items about Public Art's Contributions to Community Development/Regeneration

Scales (Questionnaire Items)	Component*						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It gives marginalized people an opportunity to speak out.	.848	.171	.057	.151	.028	.075	.144
It addresses or helps solve social problems.	.841	.167	.230	-.025	.152	.100	.135
It facilitates the social transition.	.710	.146	.189	.107	.168	.279	.114
It shows a consideration for natural protection.	.482	.144	-.005	.438	.062	.155	.264
It helps create social bonds among a variety of groups.	.474	.415	.088	.169	.327	.015	.283
It helps relieve my depression.	.166	.901	.143	.121	.074	.158	.075
It decreases my mental fatigue.	.192	.866	.095	.133	.140	.182	.062
It makes me feel relaxed	.185	.772	.239	.192	.218	.191	.021
It encourages people to visit the public space.	-.009	.470	.176	.378	.420	.125	.210
I feel like it is part of me.	.089	.142	.886	.115	.126	.128	.059
It means a lot to me.	.139	.165	.852	.180	.172	.032	.097
I identify with it.	.201	.156	.733	.145	.263	.364	.102
It pleases me more than other urban amenities do.	.076	.198	.589	.139	.022	.240	.465
It is a focal point for community pride.	.184	.094	.475	.380	.180	.273	.219
It makes this place culturally sophisticated.	.057	.069	.121	.822	.044	.152	.009
It makes the place beautiful.	.092	.110	.181	.804	.101	.208	.032
It makes the environment comfortable.	.146	.406	.194	.697	.104	.187	.177
It eliminates the sense of threat in the surroundings.	.094	.438	.085	.466	.344	-.093	.345
It reduces environmental vandalism.	.221	.418	.164	.435	.038	.125	.283
It helps me be aware of social/environmental problems.	.383	.093	.083	.204	.777	.160	.099
I understand its meaning.	-.183	.161	.222	-.020	.695	.089	.047
It helps me identify social/environmental problems.	.515	.184	.120	.072	.691	.053	.109
It lets me become more involved in the social problems and the environment.	.290	.133	.182	.132	.642	.087	.315
It is a unique attraction.	.133	.135	.275	.276	-.033	.758	.074
It attracts visitors.	.116	.175	.028	.135	.178	.755	.289
It attracts people's attention.	.223	.205	.288	.277	.172	.714	.118
It provides an opportunity for leisure.	.115	.401	.309	.073	.099	.456	.215
It increases the property or land values of the neighborhood.	.216	.138	.289	.093	.240	.174	.765
It stimulates more investment or business in the neighborhood.	.239	.149	.121	.113	.212	.377	.742
It helps create employment.	.540	.010	.064	.164	.084	.108	.619

Note.
* 1 = Social Progress; 2 = Therapeutic Environment; 3 = Place Attachment; 4 = Environmental Amelioration; 5 = Social/Environmental Education; 6 = Tourist Attraction; 7 = Economic Benefit.
Sample size = 111.
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Table 4.10

Total Variance Explained Based on the Seven Factor Components of Public Art's Contributions to Community Development/Regeneration

Components	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Social Progress	3.703	12.343	12.343
Therapeutic Environment	3.698	12.326	24.670
Place Attachment	3.416	11.386	36.056
Environmental Amelioration	3.200	10.665	46.722
Social/Environmental Education	2.860	9.534	56.256
Tourist Attraction	2.724	9.081	65.336
Economic Benefit	2.565	8.550	73.887

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

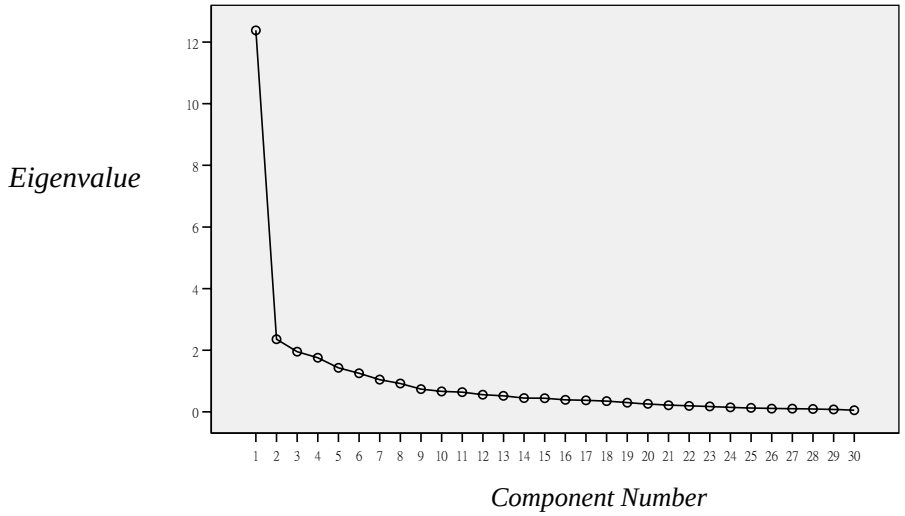

Figure 4.4. The scree-plot of the Principal Component Analysis of the question items about public art's contributions to community development/regeneration.

Table 4.11

The Mean and Other Statistics of Seven Factor Components of Public Art's Contributions to Community Development/Regeneration

		Social Progress	Therapeutic Environment	Place Attachment	Environmental Amelioration	Social/ Environmental Education	Tourist Attraction	Economic Benefit
Mean		3.14	3.54	3.25	3.58	3.09	3.69	3.08
S.D.		0.69	0.65	0.65	0.57	0.61	0.58	0.72
Variance		0.48	0.42	0.42	0.32	0.37	0.34	0.52
Skewness		-0.78	-0.35	-0.18	-0.84	-0.35	-0.67	-0.42
Cronbach's Alpha		.855	.896	.890	.835	.825	.841	.875
N	Valid	110	111	111	110	111	110	110
	Missing	1	0	0	1	0	1	1

The Social Progress construct consisted of five measurement items and explained the largest proportion (12.34%) of the total variance (Table 4.10). Only one item—"It shows a consideration for natural protection"—was added to this construct in comparison with the items proposed in the measurement structure (Table 3.2). The Cronbach's Alpha value is .855, suggesting a good internal consistency in the construct (cf. Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) (Table 4.11). The mean of the five items was 3.14 on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) (Table 4.11, Fig. 4.5 & Fig. 4.6).

Therapeutic Environment, consisting of four measurement items, accounted for 12.33% of the total variance (Table 4.10). This construct was not proposed in the measurement structure (Table 3.2), and all its measurement indices were derived from the other proposed constructs. The Cronbach's Alpha value of the measurement items was high at .896, showing a very strong unification in the construct. The mean of the four items was 3.54 on a 5-point Likert scale.

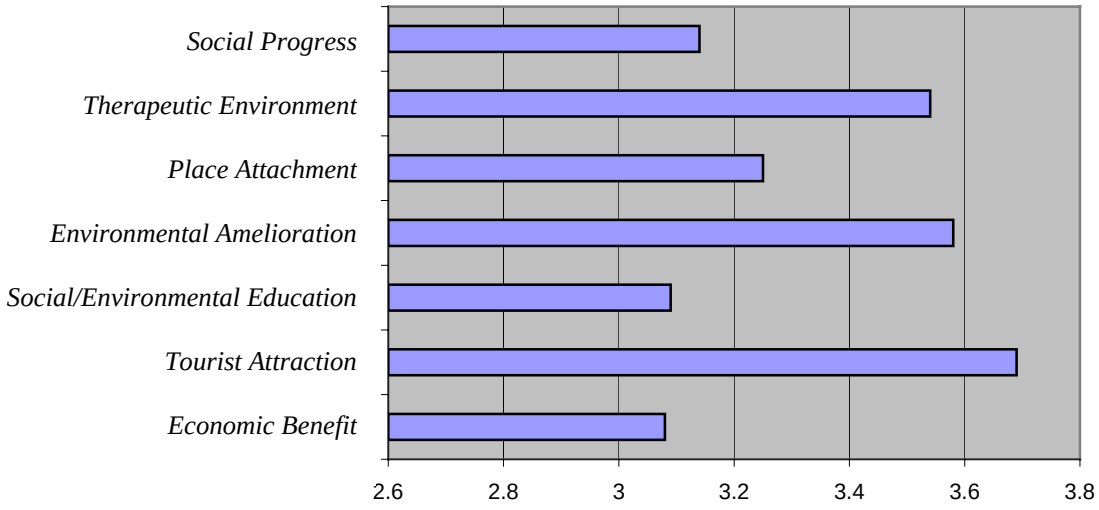

Figure 4.5. The mean histogram of seven components of public art's perceived contributions to community development/regeneration.

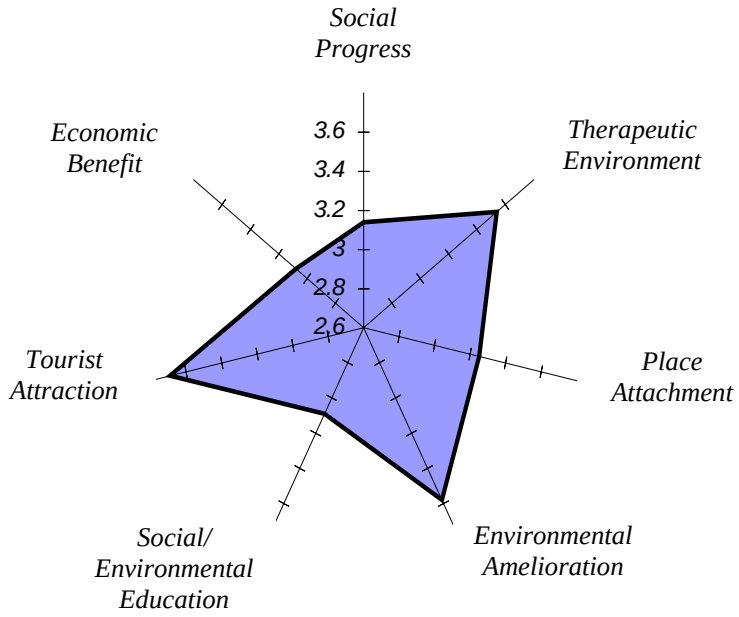

Figure 4.6. The mean of seven components of public art's perceived contributions to community development/regeneration.

Place Attachment comprised five measurement items that accounted for 11.39% of the total variance. All five items proposed in the measurement structure in Chapter 3 were loaded in the same dimension again, and they presented a high internal consistency in the construct (Cronbach's Alpha value = .890). The mean of the three items was 3.25 on a 5-point Likert scale.

Environmental Amelioration, included five measurement indices and represented 10.67% of the total variance. The proposed theoretical construct in the initial measurement structure consisted of 11 items (Table 3.2), but some items were excluded in this empirical study. The internal consistency of the subscales was high (Cronbach's Alpha value = .835), and the mean score of the five items was 3.58.

Social/Environmental Education, consisting of four measurement items, accounted for 9.53% of the total variance. All four items proposed in the measurement structure in Chapter 3 were loaded in the same dimension again, and they presented a high internal consistency in the construct (Cronbach's Alpha value = .825). The mean of the three items was only 3.09 (Table 4.11, Fig. 4.4 & Fig. 4.5).

Tourist Attraction, accounted for 9.08% of the total variance, comprised four indices, and was a new dimension that mainly derived measurement items from two theoretical constructs: *Economic Development* and *Environmental Improvement* were proposed in the measurement structure in Chapter 3 (Table 3.2). This construct showed a high internal consistency across items (Cronbach's Alpha value = .841). The mean of the four items was 3.69 on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

Economic Benefit, consisting of three measurement items, accounted for 8.55% of the total variance (Table 4.10). All three items were derived from the proposed construct of the measurement structure (Table 3.2), and they presented a high internal consistency in the construct (Cronbach's Alpha value = .875). The mean of the three items was 3.08 (Table 4.11, Fig. 4.5 & Fig. 4.6).

Overall, survey participants were slightly satisfied with the quality of public art projects in Taipei City, with a mean of 3.14 on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12

Overall Satisfaction with Public Art Projects in Taipei City

Question Item			
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of it.	Mean		3.14
	Std. Deviation		0.69
	Variance		0.48
	Skewness		-0.78
	N	Valid	110
		Missing	1

Chapter 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

What does public art mean to the public? This study asked two research questions:

1. For the general public, what are the characteristics of public art?
2. Does the public perceive public art as contributing to the community? If so, in what ways?

Two conceptual frameworks are confirmed based on the empirical data. Based on these two research questions, and the related reference and case studies, two conceptual frameworks were proposed (Fig. 3.3), followed by the establishment of measurement items (Table 3.1 & Table 3.2) in the questionnaire. After data collection and Principal Component Factor Analysis, the findings were detailed as described in the following paragraphs.

What are the characteristics of public art? This research is interested in understanding what public art is. How to properly define public art has been a question debated for decades both in academic and professional practice (e.g., in architecture and art), yet it is still not well defined (cf. Miles, 1997; Selwood, 1995). Considering the difficulty of arriving at a precise definition, this study asks instead what the general public perceives as public art's characteristics. Based on the empirical data, this study concludes that a public artwork should be generally defined by five characteristics as follows: aesthetics, publicness, site-specificity, affordance, and social critique. That is, these are five key elements that help the public identify and validate a public artwork. Critics have long questioned the aesthetic value of public art, while the artists

who produce it are often proclaim the validity of their visions. Members of the public have their own opinions. Whose opinions are important in determining what constitutes aesthetic value, therefore, is a matter of great debate. However, in this research, the focus of *aesthetic value* elicited public agreement; further, public art was expected to evince the quality of *publicness,* expressed in ways such as public participation in the project. Moreover, the public considered that a public artwork should offer a social critique, such as questioning the socio-cultural status quo. Such an emphasis confirms a trend by which art is expected to express and encourage critical reflection and social involvement in political and more recently ecological concerns.

Does public artwork bring any benefit to the community? Although some critiques have assumed that public art has done much to ameliorate community environmental/social problems, such claims not only remain unproved, they are seriously in doubt (cf. Hall & Robertson, 2001). Actually, public art stakeholders (e.g., Public Art Fund, Cultural Affairs, etc.) have argued for the importance of empirical studies to support policy-making for public art. Based on the empirical data, the general public agreed that public art may bring some benefits to communities, such as providing a therapeutic environment, strengthening place attachment, enhancing environmental improvements, providing social/environmental education, creating tourist attractions, and producing economic benefits. The results of this study demonstrate that public art may be a gateway to community regeneration. Certainly some public art pieces may not be accepted by the public and may not make a positive contribution; yet by and large the general public was convinced that the installation of public artworks did contribute to local development. The benefit of public art has been doubted by contemporary criticism, but the findings of this study provide evidence in its favor: the creation of public art may benefit the community regeneration.

Perceived Characteristics of Public Art

Based on the information collected from the public, this research used Principal Component Analysis (with eigenvalue greater than one through the Varimax Rotation Method) to identify five latent constructs in regard to the social features of public art: Aesthetics, Publicness, Site-specificity, Affordance, and Social Critique. The five constructs represented 63.45% of the total variance of the 16 measurement items. Hence, the empirical framework derived from the field data was identical to the proposed conceptual framework (refer to Fig. 5.1). In addition, the public's opinions represented positive supports to these constructs (the mean of each construct was greater than 3 on a 5-point Likert scale). The internal reliability of each construct was either high or acceptable based on the Cronbach's Alpha value of each (cf. Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

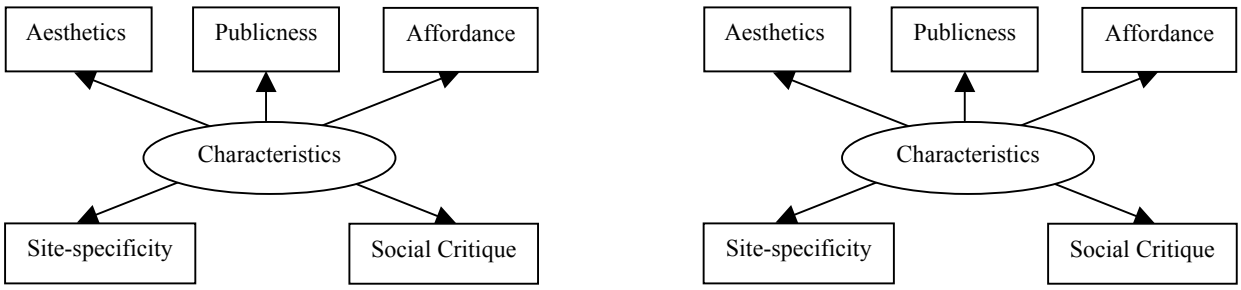

Figure 5.1. Two frameworks for presenting the characteristics of public art. The empirical/tested framework (Right) is identical to the proposed/hypothesized conceptual framework (Left).

Public Art as Social Critique

According to some proponents, the work of public art should go beyond focusing on the finished product of the art installation; it should also offer a process that aims to comment on, question, and challenge a given social problem (Lacy, 1995a). During the last few decades, accelerated changes in the values and expectations brought to bear on urban issues, together with the destruction of the hegemony of traditional art and museum authorities, has begun to contribute to a public art that is both freer and more democratic in terms both of style and the subjects chosen. Artists and community participants approach public art from a range of social critical perspectives and methodologies. Urban issues, such as environmental/social justice, health problems, and violence provide plentiful source materials to fuel the performance of public art in varied settings (Prigoff, 2005). Art in the public realm creates a new media that provides a platform for a dialogical exchange between diverse social groups. It seems that public art has evolved as an arena for activism that addresses wide-ranging and highly controversial social issues and civilian concerns. That is, public art is both an expression of and an occasion for reflecting on government policies and city regulations.

According to this research, respondents also strongly regarded Social Critique as one of the features representative of public art (construct mean = 3.45 on a 5-point Likert scale, accounting for 24.14% of total variance). Respondents generally regarded public art as a social process of value finding that reflects on civic life as well. In addition, respondents indicated that public artworks should question the socio-cultural status quo and address a variety of community and urban issues. Public art, not merely an aesthetic performance, is expected to be actively engaged with and reflect on critical social/environmental issues.

Public Art and Site Specificity

Site specificity suggests a necessarily close relationship between the artwork and its setting; that is, the artwork needs to demonstrate a connection to either the built environment or civic life. Being site specific is commonly believed to be an essential characteristic of contemporary public art (e.g., Kwon, 2000). It is claimed that public art should consider the artwork's context, such as the symbolic and social-political-historical meaning with which the site is already invested (Deutsche, 1998). The site is significantly embedded in the overall experience of art (Suderburg, 2000, p. 4). As many artists have stated, their works were created for specific sites (Meyer, 2000).

Based on the data analysis, the public supported this concept (construct mean = 4.37; 13.85% of the variance counted). In general, the respondents indicated that public art should be specifically designed for the place it is to occupy. A successful public artwork must be creative in style/content, and it must be bound to and interrelated with its context. An artwork that lacks relevance to its setting is not likely to receive an enthusiastic welcome from the local people. Public artworks must be integral to the site or at least relate to it.

Public Art and Aesthetics

The current study shows that public art is expected to have aesthetic value and to bring an experience of pleasure to those who view it. Although previous research has stated that public art does not necessarily qualify as art (cf. Gablik, 1995; Gibson, 1988; Jacob, 1995), this research argues that one of the essential roles of public art is to encourage people to become actively

involved in profound aesthetic contemplation by experiencing a connection between the artwork and their public daily life (e.g., Phillips, 2003).

Based on the data analysis, aesthetic merit is the most important characteristic to consider in judging the quality of a public artwork. The public supported this concept (construct mean = 4.38; 11.11% of the variance counted). In general, the respondents indicated that a successful public artwork must be creative in style/content, and it should have aesthetic value. Public art is something produced with the intention of providing an aesthetic experience. Public art, with the capacity to evoke emotions, is expected to draw its audience into an aesthetic dialogue.

Public Art and Affordance

Public art is not merely art for art's sake, it is also concerned with function, such as manifesting a quality that will further the common good. For the public, the essential meaning of public art may be accessible through the concept of Affordance. That is, while an artwork surely is situated in public everyday life, the public is concerned with the nature of that intervention and the possible benefits it could contribute to community life. When art is displayed in a museum or private setting, it tends to be regarded as solely within the purview of an elite. It is also regarded as representing the identity of the artists themselves—an unfiltered and uncompromised depiction of an individualistic vision. Situated in a place of prestige and power, the artistic *autonomie* is self-contained and exclusive; as such, it plays a role in or at least reflects class polarization and antagonism, as well as reflecting ambivalence and distrust regarding the art work on the part of the general public (e.g., Senie & Webster, 1998). Yet, when displayed in public space, the work of art is open to public review. The public is empowered to argue about what the message of the work is, to challenge that message, and to inquire about how it impacts

public life. Inherent in the question of how public art might benefit a community is the notion that art can have a function that goes beyond aesthetics and/or that an aesthetic might itself play a functional role. McGill (1986) stressed that public art is invariably art plus function. This view of public art, that is, art as a public good rather than art imposed on the public, may bring, even aims to bring, benefits including improving community identity, providing visual pleasure and social education, contributing to economic development, and furnishing a place for leisure.

This study found that the public sustained the concept of Affordance (construct mean = 3.48, accounting for 8.20% of total variance). In general, the citizens expressed the opinion that public art should satisfy a public need and contribute to the common good.

Public Art and Publicness

Publicness constitutes meanings beyond physical public space, ownership, and accessibility (e.g., Phillips, 1998; Selwood, 1995); it is concerned with the critical issues of the democratic process, such as public participation. What is public art, if it has no interest in the public's reception of it? How will it survive if the masses vociferously reject it? Surely, public art must transcend the very simplest definition that calls any art piece situated in a public place, "public art." Simply transplanting private artwork to a public setting does not qualify a work as public art, and it may certainly fail to function as such (Wines, 1987). The artistic act should respond to public needs and wishes and in so doing fulfill what publicness is calling for.

Interestingly, according to the data analysis, overall the respondents considered themselves to be ill-informed about art (mean score = 2.83 on a 5-point Likert scale); they also regarded themselves as having little knowledge about urban development decision-making

processes (mean scores = 2.32). However, the public positively supported the concept of Publicness (construct mean = 3.53 on a 5-point Likert scale, explaining 6.90% of total variance). In general, the respondents indicated that the making of public art should involve public participation. Also, decisions regarding public art should be settled by public selection, and the public should have the right to ask for public art to be modified.

Artists may have faith in the quality of their work, may be committed to expressing a particular vision; yet, residents generally think that public art should be created for the public, and theirs tends to be the final decision on the matter. Public art eliminates the artist's hegemony. Public art is democracy— the "Democracy of Art" is inherent in public artworks. Certainly, public art must eventually be received by the public, who may or may not approve of it. Successful public art, because it relies on public reception in a public sphere, is art that functions as an activist/facilitator for the building of social consensus.

Perceived Contributions of Public Art to the Community

The public believes that public art can make a positive contribution to the community. Contemporary critiques put the idea that public art can benefit the community in doubt; however, this study's findings provide evidence in support of the idea that public art can confer benefits on the community. The residents of Taipei City find that works of public art in the city indeed benefit their living environment; it may even facilitate community regeneration.

Through Principal Component Analysis (PCA) based on the measurement items with the highest factor loading, seven latent constructs were identified: Therapeutic Environment, Place

Attachment, Environmental Amelioration, Social/Environmental Education, Tourist Attraction, and Economic Benefit.

The empirical framework contains two more constructs than the conceptual framework (Fig. 5.2): Therapeutic Environment and Tourist Attraction. The internal consistency of each construct was very high based on the Cronbach's Alpha value of each (cf. Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

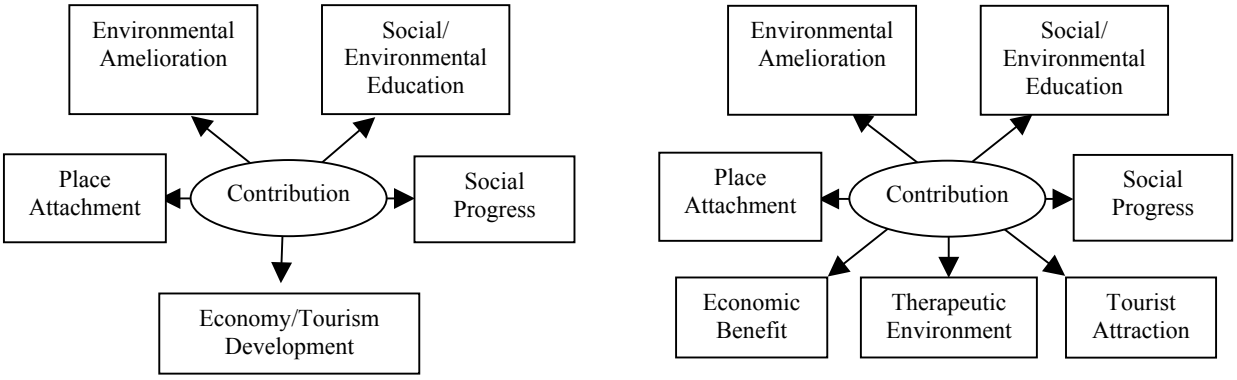

Figure 5.2. Two frameworks for presenting public art's contributions to community development/regeneration: The proposed/hypothesized conceptual framework (Left) and the empirical/tested framework (Right).

Public Art for Environmental Therapy

Public art may provide a therapeutic or healing urban environment in urban contexts. The data collected indicated that participants viewed public art as relieving depression, decreasing mental fatigue, and imparting a feeling of relaxation, etc. (construct mean = 3.25, accounting for 12.33% of the total variance). Certainly, art pieces, such as paintings, have been used as a health-

care intervention to guide patients along a path of personal growth, insight, and transformation. It has also been claimed that art helps patients recover from pain or traumatic losses, offers relief from overwhelming emotions, and reduces stress levels (Malchiodi, 2003; Simon, 2005).

In the urban public space, the possible effects of public art on public health are not well understood. The findings of this research, though, offer some preliminary knowledge, suggesting that public art is at least viewed as playing a role in promoting mental–psychological health. That is, public art may contribute to a healing environment that benefits citizens' health.

Public Art for Enhancing Place Attachment

Public art is able to transform spaces into places, and is able to convert strangers into neighbors in a specific community. Some argue that sincere support from the local community is crucial to a public art project's success (Selwood, 1995). Swales (1992) argued that public art might create fundamental value for community, such as shared history, needs, identity, and aspirations; for Hall and Robertson (2001), public art may revitalize public culture and help develop a sense of community.

The results of this research partially substantiate these claims. In general, survey participants agreed (construct mean = 3.25, explaining 11.37% of the total variance) that they identified with the public artworks, and that these artworks held a special meaning for them. The respondents also felt that public art provided a focal point for community pride.

Public Art for Social/Environmental Education

Advocates of public art claim that public artworks possess social/environmental education value for the public that may contribute to community development (Shaw, 1990).

Kwon (2000) stressed that public art, unlike other pedagogical instruments, may transit itself into an educational site for its reviewers. Phillips (1995) argued that public art may play a similar role to radical education. Also, many public art projects have joined with schools to address environmental and social controversies that affect the students and the community (Garber, 2006). In Taipei City, for instance, schools have developed activities to assist in appreciating public artworks, and children's books have been written for the same purpose.

Based on the data analysis, respondents slightly agreed that public art contributed to the community's social/environmental education (construct mean = 3.09, explaining about 9.53% of total variance). Respondents felt that public art somewhat assisted them in becoming aware of social/environmental problems; they also felt encouraged to become more involved in solving these problems.

Public Art for Social Progress

It is assumed that public art acts as an intermediate form that contributes significantly to community resurgence. That is, public art may be regarded as a verb/process or social intervention—instead of a noun/object. It functions as a vanguard form, attacking boundaries and providing a sensibility for social strategy (Kwon, 2000; Lacy, 1995a). As local geography, history, and community are given more serious consideration, public art enters social networks and is expected to function practically. Within these networks, the role of public interests in constructing and appreciating public art becomes important as contemporary public art evolves (Senie & Webster, 1998; Wines, 1987), and such an idea of public art as a social practice challenges the traditional western view of artistic practice.

The study's findings indicate that the respondents regard public artworks as capable of playing a role in facilitating community evolution (construct mean = 3.14, explaining 12.347% of total variance). Public art may help solve social problems, create social bonds among a variety of groups, and give marginalized people an opportunity to speak out, etc.

Public Art for Environmental Amelioration

Public art is seen as having the capacity to enhance the environment (e.g., Dunlop & Eckstein, 1994; Hall & Robertson, 2001; Selwood, 1995; Swales, 1992; Wines, 1987). According to this study's findings, respondents supported this idea (construct mean = 3.58; 10.67% of total variance counted); they regarded public art as able to cultivate environmental aesthetics, make places comfortable and culturally sophisticated, and eliminate vandalism and a sense of threat.

Public Art for Tourist Attraction

Tourism development is assumed to be one of the major benefits generated by public artworks (e.g., Arts Council, 1991; Selwood, 1995; Wines, 1987)—a view that respondents supported (construct mean = 3.69, accounting for 9.08% of the total variance). According to the empirical data, respondents felt that public art offers a unique tourist attraction.

Public Art for Economic Profit

Public art is seen as having a positive impact on the local economy (Dunlop & Eckstein, 1994), such as attracting companies and investment, creating employment, and adding to property value. According to the study data, the public slightly supported these claims (construct

mean = 3.08, explaining 8.56% of the total variance). They regarded the public artworks in the community as increasing the property and land values of the neighborhood, stimulating more investment and business, and helping to create more employment opportunities.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

What does public art mean to the public?

Public art is difficult to define; yet the question of whether it is successful may best be answered by understanding and appreciating public opinion. Based on the empirical evidence gathered in Taipei City, this research found that the public's own definition of public art can reasonably be summarized thus: public art is an aesthetic form with a social function that is produced via a democratic process and both its form and process of production discloses the relationship between the work itself and members of the public in their everyday lives. And, it is this co-evolving relationship that affirms the quality of the work over time. Although the genres of public art vary, they generally have several features in common, including contributing positively to urban development as in Taipei.

Public art in an urban context is part of public daily life. The aesthetic merit of public art has been widely disputed; it has even been argued that public art is not art at all, but merely a mode of social movement. However, this research finds that the public desires and even expects public art to deliver emotional and cognitional aesthetic pleasure (Fig. 6.1). Beardsley (1958) regarded art as an aesthetic production (cf. *Aesthetics*: *Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*). Likewise, in this study, aesthetic merit is seen as the most essential feature qualifying a piece as a work of art. Interestingly, Theodor Adorno (1997), in his *Aesthetic Theory,* stated that nothing concerning art is self-evident any longer, not its inner life, not its relation to society or the world;

yet, aesthetic merit, a quality that has always been expected of art, continues to be expected by the public. Public art that has the capacity to evoke emotion encourages its audience to participate in an aesthetic dialogue about art and public everyday life and become actively involved in the profound aesthetic contemplation of the art in Taipei City.

Figure. 6.1. Swimming by Shui-Long Yan. This artwork was created in 1969 on the wall of a swimming stadium that had been built during the Japanese colonization but was torn down in 2003. However, the whole art piece was preserved and restored on the wall of a new building in 2007. The art piece, a relief using local materials, is appreciated as it displays the mature artistic skills and aesthetic values of 1960s and 1970s Taiwan—a new style mixing traditional Taiwanese art with western modernism. This public art work is part of the common experience and memory of the residents in Taipei City; it is also a great source of community pride. (Photo © Kai-Shao Chen.)

As stated, it is the interrelationship between the public and the artwork that determines whether any given public artwork is successful. Public artworks that are well received are not only artworks created for public spaces, but artworks that concern and are for the public. The relationship between the artwork and its spectators unifies the manifold experiences that accrue from the process of artwork creation in the city and the interactions between the two that occur

thereafter. Without this relationship, there would be no work of art, only a material object persisting as a relic of times gone by—the work itself thus merely presenting its "thingly character" and "untouched actuality" (cf. Heidegger, 1971). Heidegger asked, "Where does a work belong?" In answer to his own question, he claimed that a work uniquely belongs "within the realm that is opened up by itself. For the work-being of the work is present in, and only in, such opening up." Heidegger's view sheds light on the public's understanding of a public artwork as a form that has the potential to contribute positively to the interrelationship between the artwork and the public; this relationship not only discloses the being of the artwork but also engenders pleasure on the part of the public (the preserver). The empirical analysis offered by this study shows that a successful relationship is established by a democratic process (e.g., public participation) in which the traditional artist's hegemony is eliminated. That is, the "art of democracy" is inherent in a successful public artwork—public art is democratic. The democratic process, such as via public participation and/or involvement in the making of a work of art, may equip the public with the codes to interpret meanings and assess the quality suggested by an artwork. From a broader perspective, the participatory public can be regarded as a phalanx of art co-creators, whose ideas, feelings, and memories contribute to artwork production, and are, therefore, also part of the *matter* that is "the substrate and field for the artist's formative action" (Heidegger, 1971).

This democratic process warrants an affective bond between the public art and the audiences of Taipei City (Fig. 6.2). If a democratic process of decision-making and production, the audience is part of the context, and the characteristic of site specificity is naturally inherent in the artwork. Through such a democratic process, the public may identify with and become emotionally attached to the artwork—an interrelation of *belongingness* (cf. Norberg-Schultz,

1979). For the public, *x* is an artwork if *x* embodies a meaning, as Danto (1981) has claimed. However, whether a piece has an aesthetic quality that brings about beauty and pleasure is conditioned by a careful consideration of site specificity. A successful public artwork in the city not only has to be creative in its style/content, it also has to be bound to and interrelated with the context of the city. In other words, an artwork that is visually appealing but is irrelevant to its physical setting is not likely to receive an enthusiastic welcome from the local people. That is, the aesthetic appearance must fuse with the social–cultural fabric to create positive outcomes for communities in the urban context. Hence, art sharpens local distinctiveness, and the affective bond of the local people with it likewise strengthens the identity of the artwork. The relationship between the artwork and public everyday life evolves through time in the city.

Figure 6.2. Shi-Dong, by Shunlong Lin and Mingfeng Zhang. This artwork was installed in the Shi-Dong elementary school in 2004. Communities play a significant role in the conception and creation of public art projects, and in this case students and community residents participated in the design process—a process through which the public's positive relationship with the work was established and the sense of place strengthened. (Photo © DOCA, Taipei.)

However, the fusion of the public artwork with the community is underpinned by social reflection (Fig. 6.3 & Fig. 6.4). If public art is to be governed by a democratic aesthetic, it must take the public realm into account. A democratic work naturally implicates public life; that is, the artwork replicates and refracts empirical life while it accepts and transcends what is denied in the outside. The intention of involving critical social–environmental issues is inherent in successful public art. That is, public art actively engages a role as a "social antithesis of society" (cf. Adorno, 1997), and it presents a dialectical tension between itself and the contradiction of outside social/cultural systems in the city. Likewise, Herbert Marcuse (1978), in *The Aesthetic Dimension,* stressed that aesthetic merits, as a conceptual independence, may represent an indictment of society and lead to a world of happiness. Many public artworks in Taipei City, for instance, explore and critique historical events such as the 228 Incident of 1947 in which thousands of civilians who participated in a popular uprising and were killed by the Taiwanese government in that action. The socio-cultural status quo is commented on and challenged in art presentation. In fact, the empirical evidence of this research shows that public art is a media for social critique and commentary—public art is not merely for art's sake but also for the common good.

Figure 6.3. River by Pu Zhuang, 2004, located in the community plaza, was created for the purpose of encouraging recycling. This piece was created to argue that using concrete to replace the river that had once run nearby had significant negative ecological consequences for the area. The historical river pattern, together with the waterscape, as shown in the artwork illustrates concerns about ecological integrity. This project is an instructive example of how public art can use site-specificity to proffer a social critique and in this case environmental education. (Photo © DOCA, Taipei.)

Figure 6.4. Taipei 228 Monument, by Junxiong Wang et al., 1997. It was created to reflect the social–political tragedy of the anti-government uprising in February 22, 1947, which resulted in the brutal killing of thousands of people. Relatives of the victims and members of many social groups were invited to submit their design ideas and participate in the artwork selection process. The artwork was well received and remains an important feature of the city because it presents the values of democracy via a democratic design process in public art. It is a remembrance of those who gave their lives to effect a sea change in the country—it marks oppression, the danger of social conflicts, and the bravery of those who fell. (Photo © MOFA, Taiwan.)

In Taipei City, public art is expected to play a role in building and/or facilitating social consensus via a democratic process. The interaction between the artist and society is established on the foundation of the "artist's intention and the meaning of his artwork to the constituencies" (Lacy, 1995a, p. 173). An artist creating public art is expected to be an activist who seeks the consensus of society. Although there may be many different opinions among members of the public regarding the desirability of any given planned piece, achieving a consensus may still be possible. Indeed, although it is inevitable that some aesthetic disagreements will be generated from "the different humours of particular men" and "the particular manners and opinions of our age and country," they are not sufficient to "confound all the boundaries of beauty and deformity" (Hume, 1757, p. 19). In Hume's view, the general principles of taste or susceptibility are universal in human nature, that certain features or qualities of artworks may even please all humans. He also stressed that

> It is natural for us to seek a *Standard of Taste*; a rule, by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least, a decision afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another. (p. 5)

Indeed, from a broader view, the existing public artworks in Taipei City are products under the negotiation and agreement of society. It is the public who validates or refuses to validate an artwork, which, to a certain degree, must reflect the tastes of society.

Evidently, public art artworks are relevant to public life (Fig. 6.5). The public acknowledges that public art, as a genre, positively contributes to the community of Taipei City. Beyond the physical space where it is installed, public art can impact other aspects of social life too. It is thought, for instance, that artworks have done much to ameliorate community

environmental/social problems by providing a therapeutic environment, strengthening place attachment, enhancing the environment, providing social/environmental education, creating tourist attractions, etc. Thus, it is reasonable to view public art as a gateway to community regeneration.

Figure 6.5. Music by Yunshan Li, 2003, located by a subway station in Taipei. In addition to its aesthetic value, the artwork is also a piece of street furniture for people to sit on.

Delimitations and Limitations

The research findings are delimited to data taken from a sample of the population who agreed to participate in a survey in Taipei City, Taiwan, between October 11 and 25, 2008. The data was collected with the instruments developed by this research. The discussions of this study emphasize the characteristics and contributions of public art as it functions in the urban context. It is important to note that this study was designed to explore the public's perception of public art as a whole in a city; therefore, its results may not apply to any particular public artwork project (cf. the concept of *ecological fallacy* (cf. Robinson, 1950)).

This study evinces a concern in terms of its research extent and the grain-size for the given research question. That is, the study is situated as a starting point for systematically understanding the characteristics and contributions of public art based on an empirical quantitative approach; hence, the research focuses more on issues pertaining to public art at a city scale, instead of in regard to an individual public art project. The latter is, however, a suggestive focus that should be pursued in the light of the current research project. The former method is likely to have higher external validity, but lower internal validity; the latter is likely to contribute lower external validity, but higher internal validity (cf. Creswell, 2008; Shadish et. al., 2002). Similar to the method used in Linch's study (1960), the respondents were asked to express their perceptions about and attitudes towards contemporary public art installations in their neighborhoods (no specific artwork was invoked). Although different public art works might have elicited different responses, the overall opinions were recorded and then averaged. Though the degree of bias is unknown, the quality of data and research results would have improved had a larger sample been obtained.

The study aimed to select participants at random in order to minimize statistical bias; however, this optimal situation may not have been achieved due to limitations, such as the inability to precisely control interview times for each respondent, the difficulty of selecting/asking the target respondent in a group, etc. Also, participants were asked to answer the survey questions as thoroughly as possible. However, they did not necessarily do this, which may have resulted in biases in the data.

Suggestions for Future Research

In-depth Studies and Improving External Validity and Reliability

This study answers the research questions posed using a large-scale approach. The findings offer systematic prime knowledge that can benefit further research into public art and its effects on communities; however, the two empirical frameworks require further study. Improvements to the external/internal validity and reliability measures are also suggested; for example, conducting similar research in varied demographic contexts (e.g., race, gender, age, and culture) or focusing on specific public artworks may improve the frameworks' robustness. It is suggested that future research directions include the development of measurement variables. While the limitation factors, such as the time span of the interviews, were taken into account in this research, the chosen variables for the field survey may not adequately represent all the characteristics or benefits of public art. It is necessary to conduct more studies in order to strengthen the robustness of the measurement scale. It is also worthwhile to consider alternative approaches, such as experimental or quasi-experimental methods that may elucidate more precise interactions between public artworks and human response, including perceptions and behaviors.

Also, this research is situated as a starting point for systematically understanding public art via an empirical quantitative approach. The study object is interesting in that it explores a landscape scale of public artworks in a city, instead of focusing only on a couple of public art projects. The latter is, however, a necessary focus that should be pursued in the future in the light of the current research project; such a focus would be instructive in helping planners and critics better understand the likely public reception of specific artworks; that is, whether the public is likely to see a given piece as conferring benefits on a community or bringing problems to it.

Public Education about Public Art

How to read a public artwork? To suggest answers to this question would require examining why in the popular press and academic journals, public artwork is not subject to extensive critique and why few calls for accountability are made. Compared with other constructs posited in this study, the function of public art in educating the public regarding social/environmental issues was less supported. Key questions here center on determining, understanding, and approaching the intended audiences for any given piece: Who are the audiences? What do they appreciate and value? Moreover, what level and what kind of education or professional training is required to be able to interpret a public artwork? This last, of course, engages with the problematic issue of who determines what is aesthetically valuable.

The ability of the general public to interpret contemporary "art code" and the visual languages of "public art" is a theoretically troubling question. For example, Frederick MacMonnies's *Civic Virtue,* erected in 1922 in New York City, has been ridiculed by a public that failed to understand the artist's attempt to present the abstract concept of the oppression of women through an actual figure (Bogart, 1998). In such a case, does the art code itself function as a vehicle of social/cultural exclusion? The further question then must be asked, has the public failed to understand or has the artist failed to communicate? In addition, how is public art and by whom is public art properly created? We often see interpretation posts/devices on nature trails. Might not public art be created in a similar way?

Green Art in Public

Much art is preoccupied with representing and understanding nature. Many visual and literary inspirations/fantasies that underlie the presentations in public art express *relations* with nature. Some artists vehemently pursue a spiritual-like fusion with nature and include metaphysical references in their projects and performance that speak to themes such as natural rhythms and ecological crises. While public art projects may certainly speak to the specific questions of sustainability and preservation, whether they can also themselves, when built on a large scale, be green is another question. More discussions regarding the relationships between public art creation and environmental sustainability are necessary.

The Controversy of Oppression and Gentrification

Ironically, although participating in a larger social agenda is often a closely held desire of the public artist, the vision of an artist may stand in tension, even opposition to, what the public values and understands such that the artist may feel compromised and the public dissatisfied. This tension between artistic production and social effect is magnified in regard to public art, which offers in its very name to bridge or at least express the possible opposing viewpoints of artist and viewers. Inhering in this tension, of course, is the notion that art itself is a project for and a symbol of the elite, whereby the potential of an artwork to present a viable challenge to social privilege and so play a role in alleviating social oppression may be limited. Actually, historically, public art has frequently been used to demonstrate and critique the effects of hegemony and space territoriality; likewise, it has also been used to create exclusion in terms of geography, economy, and social class. Art has not only played a role in social purification, but ironically it has also represented that control. In China, European countries, and the US, some

public artworks offer a statement of national identity. Artworks, especially monuments, in the public realm generally function as a "collection" that tells a story relevant to matters or morality and the sacrifices and glory of war. Persuasive and polemical, such artworks further legitimize the control and surveillance of the public by the dominant structure or body such as the government and/or the prevailing religion. Public art of this nature represents a unifying authority (cf. Miles, 1997). In the US, for example, an atmosphere of distrust in regard to public statuary had surfaced after World War I (Bogart, 1998) and given rise to statuary of this kind. In regard to Europe, Jo Hanson (as cited in Lacy, 1995a, p. 33) put it thus:

> Public art in the Eurocentric cultures has served the value systems and the purpose of an unbroken history of patriarchal dominance that has despoiled the earth and its inhabitants and seriously threatens the future.

Many critics have also viewed urban/community regeneration as the dress of gentrification and class exclusion. Likewise, Pinder's questions are these:

> How can artists criticize and resist the remaking of public spaces by powerful interests? How can they question the complicity of the arts in socially divisive urban development programmes, where they are often used merely to add gloss to urban "renewal" projects through anesthetization in the form of sculptures or individual art objects? (as cited in Sharp, 2007, p. 274)

Public art might be complicit in the refusal to address difference that is embedded in the social system itself. Rather than addressing local needs, public art may act as the accomplice of unjust and/or irresponsible urban planning. Battery Park City, for example, shows how urban design and public art together displace original residents and invite a high-income population to move in (Deutsche, 1998; Phillips, 1995). Such gentrification through arts-led development

increases property values and creates a chic neighborhood, and those regarded as undesirable, as polluting the social environment, such as marginalized minorities and the homeless are pushed out (Miles, 1997). Consequently, the new art neighborhood is fragmented and isolated from its social–cultural context. In the SoHo area of New York, art was adopted in the public realm as part of an initiative to regenerate the community. However, due to the high rent, most of the traditional stores have been replaced by elite commercial businesses that close in the evening. Ironically, some artists themselves and some local residents have also gradually been excluded from this area. During the process of creating this wealthy neighborhood, art clearly did not bring the community together. As Baca (1995) states,

> Public art often plays a supportive role in developers' agendas. In many instances, art uses beauty as a false promise of inclusion. Beauty ameliorates the erasure of ethnic presence, serving the transformation into a homogenized visual culture: give them something beautiful to stand in and for the loss of their right to public presence. (p. 133)

In an appeal to democracy and in the name of public interest, then, public art is at odds with itself: it may become a means to reinforce the inequity and injustice of the power system. The function of beautifying an area sometimes masks the real problems and the problematics produced.

Management Strategies

The management of public art generally receives little attention. However, there are critical issues inhering in maintaining contemporary public art. Further, many cities/communities, the backdrop of public art, are undergoing dramatic changes in terms of their social–cultural context. Also, many contemporary public art projects are ephemeral, and both the

conceptualization and the visual languages of public art are constantly evolving. Such ongoing change raises questions regarding the purpose and lifespan of any given artwork. For example, should a piece be maintained as a historical representation of a community as it had once viewed itself, and as a connection to that past or, should an artwork be viewed as temporary—an expression of a moment in time, always ready to give way to some new approach?

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Appendix

The Survey Questions Used in the Research

(Translated from Chinese)

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gain a better understanding of public opinion regarding public art in Taipei. The information you supply will be used in a research study that will address public art management issues and concerns. The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes. Answers are strictly confidential. Your opinion is important to us, and we truly appreciate your assistance.

Professor James Wines and Po-Ching Wang

Contact e-mail: puw100@psu.edu

To What Extent Do You Agree With The Following Statements?

(Note: ① = strongly disagree ② = disagree ③ = neutral ④ = agree ⑤ = strongly agree)

A. What do you think about public art?

1.	It should be created for the public.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	Decisions regarding public art should be settled by public selection.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	The making of public art should involve public participation.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4.	The public should have the right to ask for public art to be modified.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5.	It should be specifically designed for the place.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6.	It should be created to suit the place.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7.	It should be bound to or interrelated with the location.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8.	It should be functional for popular use.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9.	It should satisfy a public need.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10.	It should contribute to the common good.	①	②	③	④	⑤
11.	It questions the socio-cultural status quo.	①	②	③	④	⑤
12.	It is a social process of value finding.	①	②	③	④	⑤
13.	It addresses a variety of community and urban issues.	①	②	③	④	⑤
14.	It should possess aesthetic merit.	①	②	③	④	⑤
15.	It should provide a sense of beauty.	①	②	③	④	⑤
16.	It should express artistic creative skill or mastery.	①	②	③	④	⑤

B. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about public art in this neighborhood?

1.	It means a lot to me.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	I feel like it is part of me.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	I identify with it.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4.	It is a focal point for community pride.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5.	It pleases me more than other urban amenities do.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6.	It increases the property or land values of the neighborhood.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7.	It stimulates more investment or business in the neighborhood.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8.	It helps create employment.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9.	It attracts visitors.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10.	It provides an opportunity for leisure.	①	②	③	④	⑤
11.	It is a unique attraction.	①	②	③	④	⑤
12.	It attracts people's attention.	①	②	③	④	⑤
13.	It gives marginalized people an opportunity to speak out.	①	②	③	④	⑤
14.	It addresses or helps solve social problems.	①	②	③	④	⑤
15.	It facilitates the social transition.	①	②	③	④	⑤
16.	It helps create social bonds among a variety of groups.	①	②	③	④	⑤
17.	I understand its meaning.	①	②	③	④	⑤
18.	It helps me be aware of social/environmental problems.	①	②	③	④	⑤
19.	It helps me identify social/environmental problems.	①	②	③	④	⑤
20.	It lets me become more involved in the social problems and the environment.	①	②	③	④	⑤
21.	It makes the place beautiful.	①	②	③	④	⑤
22.	It makes the environment comfortable.	①	②	③	④	⑤
23.	It makes this place culturally sophisticated.	①	②	③	④	⑤
24.	It reduces environmental vandalism.	①	②	③	④	⑤
25.	It encourages people to visit the public space.	①	②	③	④	⑤
26.	It eliminates the sense of threat in the surroundings.	①	②	③	④	⑤
27.	It makes me feel relaxed.	①	②	③	④	⑤
28.	It helps relieve my depression.	①	②	③	④	⑤
29.	It decreases my mental fatigue.	①	②	③	④	⑤
30.	It shows a consideration for natural protection.	①	②	③	④	⑤

C. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1.	I consider myself to be informed about art.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	Public interest should be more important than freedom of artistic expression.	①	②	③	④	⑤

More About You

A. Are you: (female __) or (male __)?

B. Year of birth: _____

C. Highest level of education: _____

D. Occupation:

☐ Art ☐ Environmental design (Architecture, Landscape architecture, Urban design, etc.)

☐ Environmental protection ☐ Social studies ☐ Other (Please explain)_____