

Spatial Narration of Urban Public Art and the Strategy of Urban Historical Context Continuity

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Abstract: This article takes the urban public art as the research object, unifies the spatial narrative theory, and inquires into the relationship between it and the continuity of the intrinsic link between the urban historical context. This paper explores the theoretical connotation of narration of urban public art space, analyzes various practical problems existing in the process of inheriting the historical context of public art, probes into the space narrative design method of combining artistic expression with cultural inheritance, and puts forward systematic optimization strategies. Based on the background of urbanization, this paper tries to break down the barriers of artistic creation and cultural inheritance, and to retain urban cultural memory by means of the space narrative function of public art.

Keywords: Urban public art; Narrative space; Historical context; Inheritance strategy

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1. Introduction

Urban public space is the main field of citizens' life, communication and perception of urban culture, and public art, as a cultural symbol in space, plays an important role in interpreting urban details and conveying regional spirit. Under the background of rapid urban renewal, a large number of old spaces are rebuilt, many cultural elements bearing historical memory are gradually weakened, the urban appearance tends to homogeneity, and there are faults in historical context. The space narrative regards the space as the narrative text, relies on the artistic form to narrate the urban development story, and becomes the link between the present and the past in an effective way. In this context, it is of great practical significance to explore the value of public art space narrative and explore scientific and feasible ways to protect urban culture and enrich urban spirit.

2. Theoretical connotation of the narrative nature of urban public art space

2.1. Core concepts and essential characteristics of spatial narrative

Space narration breaks the boundary of traditional literature narration, transforms the narrative carrier from text to entity space, and takes urban public space as the narrative carrier that can be interpreted and perceived. Different from ordinary

art creation, space narrative does not take a single work as the core of expression, but relies on the overall space layout to create an immersive experience and let the audience actively participate in the narrative process. It weakens the one-way content output, emphasizing the interaction between people and space, works of art, so that every public space has the ability to tell the story of the city, as a carrier of emotion and memory.

Spatial narrative has three typical characteristics: openness, localization and continuity. Openness is embodied in the fact that there is no fixed interpretation of the answer to the narrative content, and the audience with different life experiences and cultural cognition will read different urban stories from the same space art. In the local request narrative, content clings to the native place culture closely, refusing to separate from the city foundation, the generalized expression. Continuity pays attention to the connection and echo between spaces, so that the public art scattered all over the city can form a complete narrative chain and gradually show the development of the city.

2.2. Elements and expression carriers of public art space narration

The space narrative of public art is composed of three core elements: narrative subject, narrative content and narrative scene. The main body of narration, namely, various public artworks, is the direct medium of story expression; the narrative content corresponds to local resources such as historical events, folk culture and the development process of a city, and is the core of narration; the narrative scenes cover squares, streets, parks, waterfront spaces and other urban public areas, providing physical places for narration. The three elements cooperate with and support each other, each of which is indispensable to construct a complete space narrative system, which determines the final presentation of narrative effect.

Different types of public art bear the narrative function of differentiation, but also form a pluralistic expression carrier. Solid art works such as sculptures, murals, landscape installations, etc shall use intuitive visual images to restore historical style and features and depict humanistic images; modern art forms such as lighting art, interactive installation, etc shall use technical means to enrich narrative levels and enhance the sense of experience; environmental arts such as street landscapes, architectural decoration, etc shall be integrated into daily space to achieve normal infiltration of narrative contents. Various carriers broaden the expression form of space narration and make urban narration more vivid.

2.3. Intrinsic relationship between public art space narrative and urban context

The historical context of a city is the cultural summation accumulated in the long-term development of the city, including historical tradition, folk customs and humanistic spirit. In essence, the space narration of public art is the artistic translation of urban context, which relies on the content material and spiritual core, all of which originate from local historical context. Without the support of context, the space narration will become empty and boring, lose its cultural foundation, and can not arouse the resonance of the citizens.

Public art space narrative is also an important way to continue the urban context. If the historical context is preserved only in historical documents, it will be difficult for ordinary citizens to perceive and inherit it. Instead, spatial narration transforms abstract cultural connotations into concrete spatial scenes and artistic images, and integrates them into the daily travel and leisure scenes of citizens^[1]. In the process of contacting public art and interpreting spatial stories, people have a subtle understanding of urban history, identify with local culture, and let the historical context jump out of books, and pass it from generation to generation in the real space to realize the living inheritance.

3. The Realistic dilemma of continuity of Chinese context in urban public art

3.1. Abuse and superficial expression of historical and cultural symbols

At this stage, many cities in the creation of public art, the simple use of traditional historical and cultural symbols, did not delve into the cultural connotations and historical stories. The creator only chooses the patterns, images and patterns with high visual discrimination to do the stacking and splicing, and regards the cultural symbols as simple decorative elements. This kind of creation mode seems to be integrated into local culture, but in fact, it is only a formal imitation, unable to

convey the deep value behind the context, and difficult for the audience to understand the urban memory carried by symbols.

The superficial expression of culture is also embodied in the homogenization and one-sidedness of the narrative content. Partial public art creation takes fragmented historical fragments unilaterally, lacks combining and presenting the overall context of the urban context, and the narrative content is scattered and chaotic. At the same time, a large number of cities follow the trend of popular traditional cultural symbols, ignoring their own unique regional characteristics, making different cities' public art style convergence. In the long run, it cannot only not achieve the continuation of context, but also digest the uniqueness of local culture, aggravating the lack of urban cultural identity.

3.2. Separation of public art creation and urban spatial texture

Some public works of art in the planning and design stage did not fully consider the original urban space texture and overall layout, resulting in incompatible problems between the artworks and the surrounding environment. Urban spatial texture is a spatial pattern formed by long-term development, which includes architectural layout, road direction, functional zoning and so on. Some artists treat public art in isolation, simply pursue the artistic effect of the work itself, forcefully implant large art installations in the original space, and destroy the original scale, rhythm and overall aesthetic feeling of the space^[2].

The imbalance of spatial layout further affects the integrity and coherence of the spatial narrative. Urban public space is an interconnected whole, and the public art distributed in different regions should form a coherent narrative system. But now most of the works are independent, there is no logic between the regional narrative, space and art, art and art between the disconnect. The audience cannot form a coherent reading experience when walking through the urban space, and the fragmented works of art cannot form a complete urban development story.

3.3. Value conflict between tradition and modernity in the context of inheritance

In the field of public art creation, the collision of traditional aesthetic concepts and modern art trends has produced an obvious contradiction. Some of the works stick to traditional art forms and expression methods, and the style is old and uniform, which cannot meet the aesthetic needs of contemporary citizens and attract young people's attention to local history and culture. This kind of work is rigid in form, does not match the modern urban space atmosphere, and is gradually ignored by the public, so it cannot assume the role of heritage context, resulting in a communication dilemma for traditional culture.

Another part of the creation of excessive pursuit of modern art trends, blindly pursuing avant-garde shape, new forms, deliberately weakening or even abandoning the traditional context elements. Creators blindly learn from foreign art styles, respect vanguard, personalized expression, leading to public art completely separated from local cultural roots. The traditional historical culture is marginalized, the modern art form loses its spiritual core, and the tradition and the modern cannot realize the organic fusion. The value conflict between the two makes it difficult for public art to find a correct position between the inheritance of context and innovation of the times, and the development of public art is in a dilemma.

4. Narrative design method of public art space based on context continuity

4.1. Extraction and symbol translation of urban historical and cultural genes

Before the creation of public art, it is necessary to sort out the history of urban development and explore the core cultural genes such as local historical events, folk culture, humanistic spirit and regional features. Through sorting out local historical materials, visiting residents, investigating traditional folklore, etc., we shall screen out the cultural contents that can best represent the characteristics of a city and have the value of inheritance, distinguish the core elements of mainstream culture from those of fragmented folklore, clarify the core theme of space narration, lay a solid foundation for the follow-up artistic creation, and avoid creating empty contents and disorderly materials.

After the extraction of cultural genes, it is necessary to translate artistic symbols into visual artistic symbols. The translation process is not a simple reproduction of traditional images, but is simplified, reconstructed and innovated on the basis of preserving the cultural core and combining with modern aesthetics^[3]. Traditional patterns, characters, and historical scenes of art processing, so that cultural symbols not only retain local charm, but also meet the visual needs of modern space. Through scientific translation, history and culture can be presented in a completely new artistic form and adapted to the context of contemporary public art.

4.2. Arrangement and scene construction of spatial narrative structure

Unifies the city's spatial distribution pattern, carries on the overall arrangement to the overall narrative structure, establishes a clear level, and a logically coherent narrative frame. According to the time sequence of urban development and the division of culture, different narrative units are divided, and the narrative theme and content of each spatial area are defined. Reasonably plan the primary and secondary narrative nodes, focus on showing the main historical context of the city in the core area, and supplement the folk customs and life narrative content in the small space, so as to form a clear and progressive narrative system in the public space of the whole city. Relying on the narrative structure to carry out the construction of the scene, the narrative content is placed in the physical space environment. According to different narrative themes with the corresponding works of art, landscape facilities and space atmosphere to create immersive narrative scenes. Consider both the function and narrative of space, so that citizens in leisure, traffic, and activities are in the process of natural integration of narrative scenes. Break the boundaries between artworks and the use of space, make space itself become a part of the narrative, let the audience feel the history of the city in the scene, strengthen the appeal of space narrative, and sense of immersion.

4.3. Innovative design of narrative experience with multi-media integration

Relies on the traditional art media to tamp the narrative foundation, simultaneously unifies the modern science and technology method to enrich the narrative form, and realizes the multi-media fusion utilization. Traditional sculpture, fresco, landscape sketch, and other classical media, with the ability to create lasting visual presentations, frame the classic historical picture, retaining long-term cultural memory. On this basis, modern media such as acoustooptic devices, digital projection and interactive screens are integrated to break the limitations of static narrative and transform spatial narrative from a single visual experience to a multi-dimensional experience mode combining vision, hearing and interaction^[4].

Based on the needs of the audience, experiential innovative design should be carried out to strengthen the interaction between people and narrative space. Changing the former one-way viewing mode, designing public works of art with interactive functions to guide the audience to participate in the narrative process actively. The audience can trigger the corresponding narrative content by means of touching, scanning and action sensing, and explore the urban historical stories independently. Diversified interactive experience can promote the participation of the public, especially the young people, shorten the distance between citizens and urban historical context, and make space narrative really popular.

5. Optimization strategies for urban public art to promote the continuation of the historical context

5.1. Building a local public art creation mechanism

Establish a creative mechanism with local culture as the core, clarify that public art creation must be based on local urban context, and incorporate cultural inheritance into the basic requirements of creation. In the preliminary stages such as project initiation and scheme design, cultural examination and approval links shall be added, local cultural and historical researchers and folklore experts shall be invited to participate in the scheme review, the cultural core of works shall be controlled, abuse of cultural symbols and separation of contents from local areas shall be eradicated, and the deep binding of public art and urban historical context shall be ensured from the source.

Build a local creative team with multi-collaboration, integrate art creators, local cultural scholars, urban planners and representatives of the public. Art creators are responsible for the design of art forms, cultural scholars control the accuracy of cultural content, planners coordinate the spatial appropriateness, and citizens' representatives give opinions in light of their life experiences. Multi-party cooperation can take into account the artistic beauty, cultural connotation, and public needs, so that public art not only meets professional art standards, but also meets local cultural temperament and public aesthetic.

5.2. Strengthen the symbiotic integration of public art and urban space

The layout of public art shall be planned as a whole at the level of urban overall planning, and public art design shall be incorporated into the overall planning system of urban space to achieve the coordinated development of art creation and spatial texture. Combined with the city's original building style, road pattern, functional zoning planning works of art location, volume and style, control works of scale, shape, color and the surrounding environment. Respect the long-term spatial pattern of the city, do not blindly transform the original space, so that public art is naturally embedded in the space environment, to achieve a harmonious co-existence of the two.

Pay attention to the linkage between different spatial nodes and create an integrated narrative space system. Combining the context of urban public space, connecting the public art scattered in the streets, parks, waterfront, traffic nodes, etc., strengthens the content and style of works according to narrative logic. Linear spaces such as landscape corridors and pedestrian streets are used as narrative links to connect different independent narrative scenes so that citizens can continuously receive coherent narrative content and form a complete cultural perception chain^[5].

5.3. Establish a context-oriented public art evaluation system

Set up a comprehensive evaluation standard with context extension as the core, and change the previous evaluation mode with artistic aesthetics and project quality as the core. It takes the expression of cultural connotation, the restoration of historical context, the display of regional characteristics, and other contents into the core evaluation indicators, and simultaneously takes into account the dimensions of artistic expression, spatial adaptability, and public recognition. In order to standardize the whole process of the creation and landing of public art, it is necessary to refine the scoring rules and evaluate the cultural value and narrative effect of public art.

It is not the end of creation, but the starting point of context communication, to construct a normal mechanism of operation, maintenance and dynamic evaluation in the later period. Carry out regular follow-up research on the status of works, narrative effect and public feedback, and collect opinions and suggestions from the public on artistic works and cultural expression. Based on the needs of urban development and cultural communication, some works are optimized and updated so that public art can adapt to the rhythm of urban development and play a long-term role in space narrative and cultural heritage.

6. Conclusion

Urban public art transforms invisible historical context into perceptible and experiential space culture by means of space narration, which is an important carrier of urban local culture. Focusing on the theoretical connotation of space narration, this paper analyzes problems such as superficial symbol expression, insufficient space fusion, traditional modern imbalance, etc. The continuation of the urban context is a long-term work, and the development of public art also needs to constantly explore innovation. Only by sticking to the local culture foundation and balancing the relationship between artistic innovation and cultural inheritance can public art give full play to the value of space narration.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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