

Media Arts and Technology & Urban Public Space

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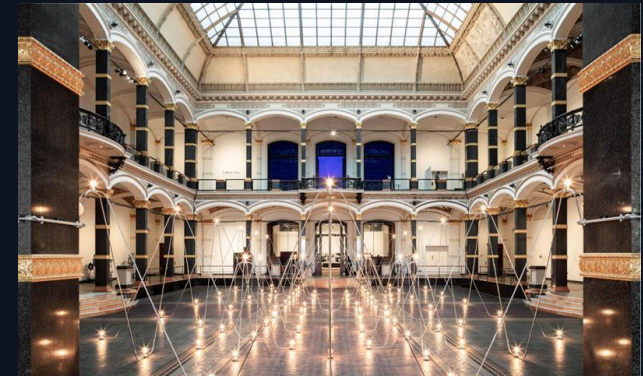
How can art installations in public spaces be **kept alive**?

1

The **process** of new media art and technology intervening in urban public space

1. Early Exploration Phase (Mid-20th Century)

- Technological Origins: Between the 1950s and 1970s, with the development of electronic technology and computer graphics, artists began combining technology with art. Media art installations were primarily confined to museums, galleries, and experimental spaces, involving only a few pioneering artists.
- Early Public Space Experiments: Visionary artists such as **Nancy Holt (U.S.)** and **Shigeko Kubota (Japan)** introduced light, sound, and video installations into natural or urban public spaces, exploring ways to interact with audiences.



Electrical System
Nancy Holt
1982

1

The **process** of new media art and technology intervening in urban public space

2. Integration of Technology and Public Art (Late 20th Century)

- Digital Technology Proliferation: By the 1990s, advancements in computer technology, projection equipment, and sensors enabled more complex and interactive media art installations.
- Art Installations in Public Spaces: Media art began merging with public art. For example:
- Christoph Wodiczko's projection works brought large-scale visuals onto urban architecture, engaging with social and political themes.
- TeamLab in Tokyo redefined public spaces through digital, interactive light installations.
- Social Awareness: Artists increasingly focused on the social, cultural, and historical significance of public spaces, using installations as a medium for expressing and addressing public concerns.



Hiroshima Projection
1999-2000

1

The **process** of new media art and technology intervening in urban public space

3. Digitization and Smart Cities (21st Century)

- Introduction of Smart Technologies: The 21st century saw media art installations incorporating IT, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and artificial intelligence (AI), driving the digitization of public spaces. Examples include:
- Time Square Midnight Moment (New York): Large-scale dynamic media art displayed on city screens.
- Serpentine Pavilion (London): Immersive digital designs enabling interaction with visitors.
- Community Participation: Installations increasingly emphasized interactivity and community involvement, such as Toronto's Nuit Blanche, which seamlessly integrates art with urban public spaces, drawing significant citizen engagement.



Times Square broadcast

1

The **process** of new media art and technology intervening in urban public space

4. Post-Pandemic Era of Sustainability and Inclusivity (2020–Present)

- **Green Technology and Sustainability:** Artists are incorporating eco-friendly materials and low-energy technologies to prioritize harmony between the environment and urban spaces.
- **Hybrid Spaces:** The pandemic accelerated the convergence of virtual and physical public spaces. For instance, projection and AR technologies allow art installations to exist both online and offline.
- **Enhanced Social Functions:** Media art installations serve as social connectors in urban spaces, fostering cross-cultural interactions through initiatives like global light festivals and interactive walls.



Portal



Pulse Portal
(Davis McCarty)

2

The way media art and technology intervene in urban public space

1. media art & technology with its own carrier intervenes in public space

a. Two-dimensional plane presentation



glasses-free 3D



b. Three-dimensional plane presentation



Bloomlight

c. Wearable presentation



Zhuhai Chimelong Paradise sky curtain



Louis-Philippe Demers & Bill Vorn: 《Inferno》

2. Media art & technology without carrier intervenes space and interface

a. Urban vertical interface - building facade



ENCOR STUDIO 3D mapping show

b. Urban horizontal interface - street, square, bridge deck, roof

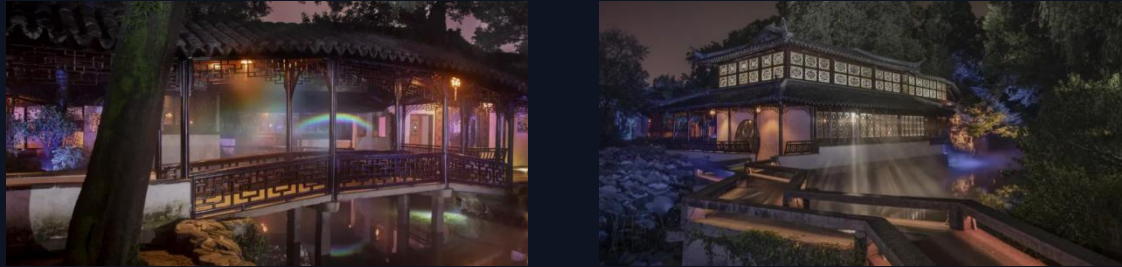


Great Tang All Day Mall



Vertical river

c. Invisible interfaces - water, atmosphere, plants



Elegant Humble Administrator's Garden

3. New media art events intervene to activate the space

a. Linkage of art events - regional linkage



Shenzhen Light and Shadow Art Season

https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/sfFFr7RD_FiJ4sDKg7m9Ow

b. Multi-dimensional art events-spatial multi-dimensional



The virtual art gallery "NFTism", launched by internationally renowned Zaha architects at art Basel Miami, creates a place for social interaction in a virtual world. The venue combines massively multiplayer online games and interactive technologies to build a virtual space for the occurrence, dissemination and interactive communication of art events.

3

Challenges of Placing Art Installations in Urban Public Space

1. Adaptation to Space and Environment

Public spaces often have unique geographical, climatic, and cultural characteristics, making the design and implementation of art installations a challenge. Ensuring that the artwork blends harmoniously with the surrounding environment while avoiding disruption to the existing spatial order is a key task.

Challenges:

- Different urban environments may have **specific requirements for the materials, form, and theme of art installations.**
- The compatibility between space and artwork may be low, potentially **causing visual conflicts or interfering with the everyday function of the space.**

2. Public Space Management and Maintenance Issues

Once art installations are placed in public spaces, **long-term maintenance** becomes necessary, especially for **outdoor installations that are vulnerable to weather, pollution, and vandalism**.

Ensuring that the installations maintain their artistic value and functionality over time is an ongoing challenge.

Challenges:

- **Outdoor installations are prone to damage**, especially under harsh weather conditions such as heavy rain, snow, or extreme temperatures.
 - Regular cleaning, repairs, and replacements are required, **adding to the burden of public space managers**.
-

3. Limited Funding and Resources

Creating, installing, and maintaining art installations often requires **substantial funding**, but governmental or private institutions may have **limited budgets** for such projects. Insufficient funding can lead to **lower quality or poor maintenance, affecting the long-term success of the installation**.

Challenges:

- Balancing the distribution of limited financial resources between art creation and public space management is difficult.
- Some art installations require long-term investment, and the benefits may not be immediately apparent.

4. Audience Acceptance and Cultural Differences

There are often **cultural differences** in the acceptance of art in different cities and communities. Some art installations may struggle to meet the needs of diverse audiences, leading to lower understanding and recognition, or even rejection of the artwork.

Challenges:

- Urban residents have varied cultural backgrounds and interests, so some art installations may not resonate with a wide audience.
- Public art installations can trigger controversy, especially when they involve sensitive topics such as politics, religion, or social issues.



Italian sculpture, a complete palm, with four fingers cut off, leaving only one middle finger. More people felt offended, criticizing it as "disgusting", "discrediting Italian art" and "disgrace the country"

love

5. Public Safety and Prevention Issues

Art installations are often open and accessible, which could pose safety risks. Ensuring the safety of the installations and preventing accidents due to poor design or improper use is an important consideration.

Challenges:

- Some large or complex art installations may pose safety risks, particularly when people can touch or enter them.
- Public art installations may be subject to damage or vandalism, impacting public safety and social order.

6. Lack of Community Involvement and Feedback

Art installations in public spaces are often designed and decided upon by artists, curators, or government bodies, without fully considering the needs and opinions of the local community. Insufficient community involvement can lead to artworks that fail to meet public expectations or even cause rejection.

Challenges:

- The artwork may not reflect the local cultural characteristics or needs, resulting in low public acceptance.
- A lack of effective public participation mechanisms and feedback channels makes it difficult to adjust and improve the artwork in a timely manner.

7. Balancing Art with Functionality

Public spaces are not only places for displaying art but also serve various **daily functions and activities**. Finding a balance between art installations and the practical use of the space, ensuring that art and other functions coexist, is often a difficult task.

Challenges:

- Art installations may **interfere with the normal use of public spaces**, such as obstructing pedestrian flow, disrupting traffic, or occupying excessive space.
- The exhibition and viewing of artwork might **conflict with the space's other functional requirements**, such as for rest, gatherings, or recreational activities.



During the Paris Commune of 1871, activists tore up paving stones to erect barricades; They used paving stones to spread the sand bed, thus giving birth to the "Sous les pavés, la plage!" ("Under the paving stones, the beach!") (This sentence.



8. Commercialization and Entertainment of Art Installations

As art and commerce increasingly converge, some art installations may become overly commercialized, losing their artistic purity and turning into tools for attracting tourists and increasing commercial value. This can lead some audiences to question the artistic integrity and value of the work.

Challenges:

- Commercialization may cause art installations to cater excessively to market demands, lacking depth and intellectual engagement.
- Overemphasizing commercial appeal may diminish the cultural and educational significance of the artwork.

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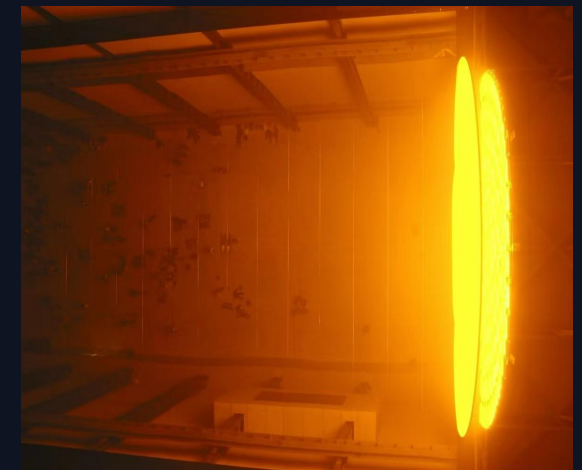
How can art installations in public spaces be kept alive?

1. Creating Interactivity and Engagement

Art installations that allow interaction with the audience can continuously attract interest and avoid visual fatigue. By incorporating feedback mechanisms or allowing visitors to engage with the artwork, it keeps the experience fresh.

Example:

Olafur Eliasson's "The Weather Project": This installation at the Tate Modern in London featured a giant artificial sun. Visitors could interact with the lighting and the space, creating an immersive environment that drew large crowds and kept them engaged.



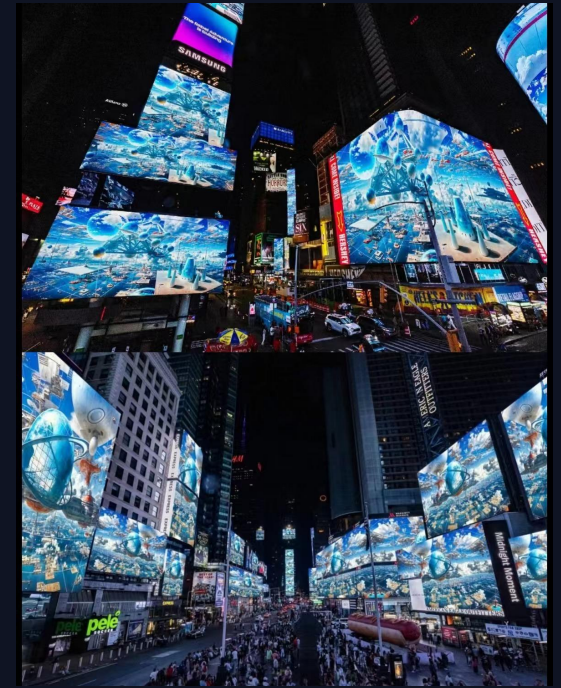
The Weather Project

2. Using Technology and Environmental Adaptation

By utilizing digital technology or adaptable designs, art installations can change according to the seasons, holidays, or special events, ensuring they always feel fresh and new.

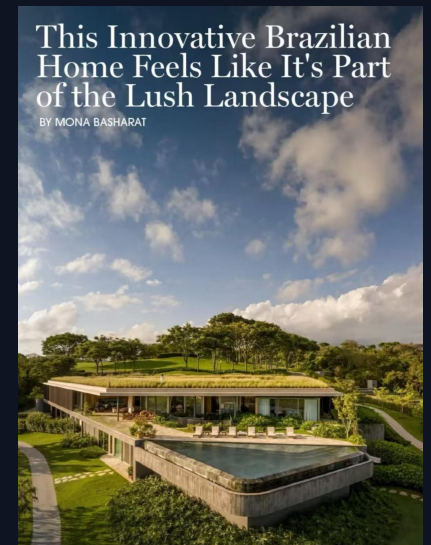
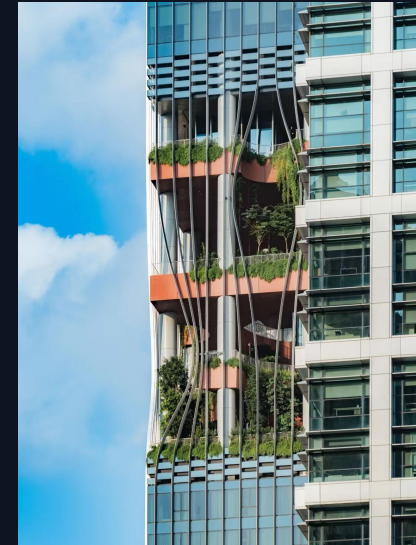
Example:

Times Square Digital Art Displays: The large digital screens in Times Square show dynamic, real-time changing art content. These displays interact with the surrounding urban environment, maintaining their appeal and relevance in the city.



3. Green Roof Art Installation:

Visualize a public park or urban rooftop with art pieces that blend naturally with the surrounding plants and trees. The artwork may incorporate eco-friendly materials, like recycled elements, while integrating sustainable design with living green spaces.



The image features a dark blue background with several abstract elements. On the left, there are three circles: a large light pink one, a smaller light pink one with a darker pink center, and a dark blue one partially obscured by the large pink arc. A large, thick, light pink arc curves across the right side of the image, framing the text.

THANKS!