URBAN PUBLIC ART PLANNING AND ITS RELEVANCE TO URBAN CENTERS

EUGENIA YAA ASABEA DANSO
Master's in Design Planning and Management- School of Fine Arts.
Huzhou University, Huzhou-Zhejiang, China.
Email – eugeniadanso5@gmail.com

Abstract: In recent years, public art in cities has received a lot of traction. The high rate of urbanization and the growth of world cities have aided in the promotion of public art in cities. Many governments are working to construct and design millennium cities that will attract visitors, investors, and expatriates while also putting their countries on the map as beautiful places in the world. Urban public art of today is increasingly linked with urban planning initiatives. These urban planning initiatives have the aim to organize and develop cities, as well as communicate with members of the community. An aspect of this can be done through urban public art. Most urban public art makes an aesthetic expression through art communicating cultural, heritage, historic and social symbols to the community.Qualitative data analyses were used in this study. After, data sampled through surveys will be analyzed to establish findings. The significance of this research is to examine how the collaboration between urban public art and urban planning works to achieve sustainable communities.

Key Words: Urban, Public Art, Planning, Aesthetics, Initiatives.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Urban public art is basically art that is made for public spaces for the general masses to enjoy or relate to. They offer relaxation and beautify the urban landscape. Today, public art has taken a wide range of forms, sizes, and scales. It can be temporary or permanent. It usually conveys a message of the history of the place, its people, and perhaps addresses a social or environmental issue. Public art can include murals, sculpture, integrated architectural or landscape architectural work, community art, digital new media, arts and crafts, even performances and festivals.
Most urban planners have included public art as an initiative to help make the urban planning process enhanced. It helps the planners connect with the community and helps improve the aesthetic overview of the city or urban space. According to, **The Intersection of Public Art and City Planning blog, posted by Meredith Frazier Britt, Sep 04, 2014** "Public art collaboration: She stated that in her conversations with urban planners to understand the relevance of public urban art, the response was it increases the quality of life for the people. An instance given was in a neighborhood facing high rates of obesity and diabetes, a collection of interactive and inspiring public art pieces on eating healthy, drinking more water and simple exercise like walking was used to encourage physical activity. This public art intervention was used as visual cognitive strategy for better health, this provided an awareness that could help a community reach measurable public health goals." There is an intersection between urban planning and public art. Most urban planning initiatives have made use of public art as a strategy to connect with the community and its people as well as offer beauty to the landscape and something for tourist to enjoy and appreciate. This has resulted to a workable relationship between artist and planners. Urban planners can ensure they create spaces and plan with the artists how and where best to suitable for all types of public art work. It can be temporary art, performance art or permanent art.

In the past, planners did not consider creating these kinds of spaces, so later creating space for them into the landscape posed challenges. However, planners today create policies that encourage walk able communities that provide public spaces and, thankfully, better accommodate public art. Now, with the rise of beautification and modernization of urban cities to put a country on the map as having millennium cities and arouse interest of tourist and investors, most town and country planning units around the world include public art spaces.

2. OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this study is to
- Discuss the significance of public art planning in metropolitan areas.
- To gain a better understanding of how partnership between urban public art and urban planning can help cities become more sustainable.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Literature review is the aspect of the study where literary research is done on the topic at hand. This helps provide a broader perspective for discussions.

"Public art instills meaning—a better sense of identification and understandings of where we live, work, and visit—creating unforgettable experiences for everybody," according to the **Americans for Art Blog's 2015** post on the subject of Public Art. It refines the built environment by offering a social dimension through identifying the past, present, and future vision and can help communities thrive."

Public art has been found to have an impact on communities by creating a conducive and enabling environment that supports economic growth and sustainability, attachment and cultural identity, artists as contributors, social cohesion and cultural understanding, belonging, and cultural understanding. Public art is defined as art that responds to the community and conveys a message as well as offer artistic expression appreciation.

The blog discusses the important of public art to the people as they identify and creates memorable experiences. It helps boost economic growth and sustainability of the community because it attracts tourists and investors which offer increase in foreign exchange and patronage of domestic facilities such as hotels, restaurant, and tourist sites among others. It also portrays a good image of the urban space.

Meredith Frazier Britt's article titled The Intersection of Public Art and City Planning, 2014, discusses the inter-relationship between urban planners and public art artist. The planners organize data for analyses and evaluate to come up a community that is safe, accessibility to social amenities and relaxing landscape. The public artist uses this data or studies the environment which informs him to make decisions about the most effective locations to work, and communities can be used as a key stakeholder to offer their input to the artists which will foster a sense of identity on the changes they would like to see in their communities through art.

In addition the article suggested that when public art artist are included in community interactions, it includes more fun and production of art which the members' of the community are more receptive to. It allows them share community history, values and interest which can help in the planning aspect. "Artists are gifted at manifesting concepts and spurring people to think in new ways. It was concluded that, in town council and city hall meetings during citizen engagement processes involving visually creative presentation, more people were likely to make a contribute to the processes that include the amusing and entertaining production of art, alongside a written plan. This type of collaborative public art can embody community values and aspirations, serving as a hallmark of a social contract between community members and local government to ensure that visions become reality.**"(Britt, 2014)**

The subject of the public realm and publicity is addressed in the research evaluation of urban public art. The concept of the public realm and public art's visibility promotes public art's accessibility to all. The public sphere is described as a space in social life where people express their values and identify with them. In his book **The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, published in 1991, Jürgen Habermas** introduced and discussed this notion. He claims that the problems with the public sphere and the decrease of visibility can be addressed by requesting publicity and transparency from government and opinion-forming institutions (parties, interest groups, press). He believes that this is how citizens claim, articulate, and invoke the public sphere. This demonstrates that in order for the urban public art to achieve its aim, structural changes in the public sphere, publicity must be motivated by a desire to reinvigorate citizens as part of an empowered public.

In his article Some **Reflections on Metropolitan Public Art Today, published in 2014, Ken Lum** examines how public art is defining visual features in many urban landscapes. It gives people a sense of belonging by expressing something that is usually a community's tradition, value, or belief, or even just an artistic appreciation of beauty. He stated that public art should always include a social reality component. Audience art should serve the community or provide entertainment to the general public. He also claimed that public art has become more relevant in society in recent years. It not only beautifies the current urban landscape, but it also aligns with community values and heritage.

Furthermore, an article written **by Félix Duque in 2014 on the topic of Public Art and the Making of Urban Space** helps us understand current trends in modern urban spaces, including how urban spaces are planned and the identity they want the community to portray, as well as the importance of public art in social integration. "The contribution to our current understanding of contemporary cultures, more specifically the creation of urban identities and the role of contemporary art in illuminating the modern and pervasive mechanisms of cultural hegemony at the terrain of the visual arts," he wrote. The resulting context is based on an examination of ideas such as the work's site-specificity component, which he explains in the paper.

He stated that in the post-modernist era, urban space patterns have shifted from tradition to a more contemporary modern style that objectifies the general public's heritage, values, and social trends. It promotes social integration since the artwork integrates community sentiments. Concepts such as site-specific component of works are introduced as a result of this. This notion is concerned with how the community, its people, and values are considered while selecting a venue for public art. For example, in a town where there has been gun violence, art depicting violence will be improper, whereas art depicting support, hope, and bravery will be appropriate.

In a 2010 blog post titled **Public Art; An Introduction, the Project for Public Spaces** defines public work as "art that differs from all other art in two major ways." The first is that it was commissioned through a democratic procedure. The community is involved in the selection of the artist, artwork, and venue. Second, the initiative is

financed with public cash. Because the art is intended for the general public, there is a sense of responsibility on the part of the artist and the select committee to ensure that it serves the community. This emphasis the role of public art planning in metropolitan areas.

4. METHODOLOGY:

4.1 Research Method:
The research method is qualitative, that aims to get accurate information using a descriptive approach design **(Hubermans &Saldana, 2014)**. Qualitative research methodologies tend to focus on the how and why questions, allowing for more in-depth understanding and explanation of complex social issues. **(Bhosale, A. 2013)**

4.2. Research Design:
Online surveys were used as the research design. A questionnaire was developed entailing questions covering the main question and objectives of the study. It will include multiple choice, degree rating and open-ended questions. This will give room for respondents to express their opinion.

4.3. Sources of Data:
For the purpose of the study both primary and secondary sources of data will be used. Primary sources will be data collected from respondents through the survey. Secondary sources retrieved from existing literature such as books, journals, articles and newspapers among others.

4.4 Target population:
The target respondents were residents in urban areas in Accra, Ghana with focus on Spintex, communities 17-20. These areas have a wide range of residents from both formal and informal workforce, educational and social facilities. Some institutions such as culture and creative arts institutions, town and country planning representatives were engaged in interactions to offer an overview.

4.5. Sampling Technique and Size:
The sampling technique will be the non-probability sampling method with specific reference to the use of the convenience or accidental sampling technique. This technique will make use of people who are present and available as at the time the study will be conducted.
Sample size was about 55 respondents.

4.6 Data collection tool:
The questionnaire designed by the researcher was used to collect the data.

4.7. Method of Data Collection:
Online surveys were distributed on social media and educational platforms for respondents to complete after which the researcher can view responses.

4.8. Data Management and Analysis:
Data retrieved from online site was sorted out, edited and analyzed using simple arithmetic calculations which included averages and percentages for statistical analysis.

4.9. Ethical Considerations:
The purpose of the study will be stated to the respondents in the surveys. Information gathered will be used for research purposes only. Finally, existing materials used in the research were referenced to avoid plagiarism.

5. DATA ANALYSIS:

Introduction:
The overall sample size was 55. The convenience sampling method was used. All respondents complete the survey properly. The analyses were performed in satisfying the objectives of the study.

Demographics

i. **Gender**

Gender distribution analysis shows a high ratio of women to men in that society. Data collected recorded shows a total number of males being 22, representing 40% and that of females being 33, representing 60%.

ii. **Age Distribution**

Table 1 Age distribution of respondents

Age Band	Numbers	percentages
17-25	23	41.8%
26-35	20	36.4%
36-45	10	18.2%
Above 46	2	3.6%

Mean Age of respondents- 25 years
Employed- 35 (63.6%)
Dependent/ unemployed- 20 (36.4%)
Age distribution figures shows a very youthful population with a mean age of 25 years which includes an active workforce ranging from employees to self-employed with a greater majority.

iii.   Highest Level of Education

All respondents had attained some level of education. A total of 12 (21.8%) out of the sample size had attained secondary education. Vocational/technical education had figures of 10(18.2%) respondents. Tertiary education had a total of 22 representing 40% with 11 (20%) respondents attaining post-graduate studies.
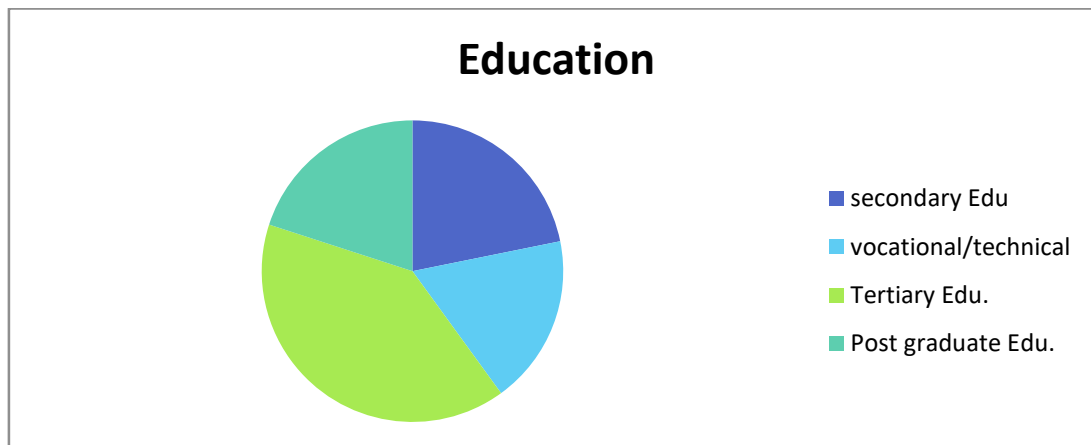

Figure1: Level of Education

Employment Status & Income Level

Data sampled shows the total employed as against unemployed respondents were 35 (63.6%) and 20 (36.4%) respectively. The employment ratio shows about 72% out of the 35 total employed respondents are in the informal sector. This reflects the national ratio of employment. With income level, the statistics gathered shows the predominant monthly income earned was from GH500 to GH1, 500 cedis representing 65%. Respondents in income ranges for GH1, 600 to GH3, 000 were about 20% while the remaining 15% earned above GH 3,000 per month.

Table 2 Income Level of Respondents.

Income range in Ghana cedis per month	Number of respondents
GH 500-1,500	23
GH 1,501-3,000	7
Above 3,000	5
	Total 35

Table 3 Employment Status.

Employment Status		
Employed		Unemployed
35 respondents showing (63.6%)		20 respondents which is (36.4%)
Formal sector	Informal sector	
11(32%)	24(68%)	

6. FINDINGS WITH DISCUSSIONS:
Respondents Views of Urban Public Art

The respondents were introduced to the definition of urban public art on the survey. It was stated that public urban art is defining visual elements found in urban spaces for the general public to appreciate. They can be temporal or permanent. The temporal ones can include art performances, installations, decorative/ornamental elements among others whereas the permanent ones are sculptures, mosaics, monuments among others. In this study, respondents were polled about their opinions on urban public art. Respondents were asked to affirm whether or not they value and prefer public art in their communities. All of the respondents agreed that having public art in their neighborhoods is something they value and prefer. Public art should be in residential neighborhoods, professional environments,

educational campuses, and recreational facilities, according to nearly 95% of respondents (52). The respondents' top reasons for preferring public art were that it enlivens and relaxes their surroundings. It provides life to our environment and beautifies and enhances our civilization. It is utilized to communicate social messages that aid in the development of social identity and cohesion. It's a tool for raising public awareness about social issues.

Table 4. Respondents views on public art.

Questions	response		Number of respondents	Total number
Do you appreciate and prefer urban public art in your society	Yes		55	55
	No		0	
Areas that has urban public art or would like there to be an art	i.	Residential areas	12	55
	ii.	school campuses	15	
	iii.	office environments	10	
	iv.	Recreational facilities(malls, parks)	15	
	v.	None	3	
Reasons stated for why urban art is needed	i.	It enlivens and brings relaxation to their environment.	16	55
	ii.	It beautifies and enriches our society and brings life to our environment.	23	
	iii.	It is used to convey social messages which help foster social identity and cohesion.	9	
	iv.	It is used to create public awareness on social issues.	7	

Respondents Views on Collaboration between Urban Planners, and Artists:

Data correlated and interactions with institutions in the creative arts industry and town and country planning agency shows that a total of 88% tallying about 48 out of 55 respondents stated yes for interaction between planners, artist and people. The majority of respondents felt that proper contacts between urban planners and artists are necessary for holistically planning communities. The chart below (figures 2) indicates that when residents are included in town council meetings, including talks about urban public art, they feel a sense of belonging, which supports social cohesion and community growth.
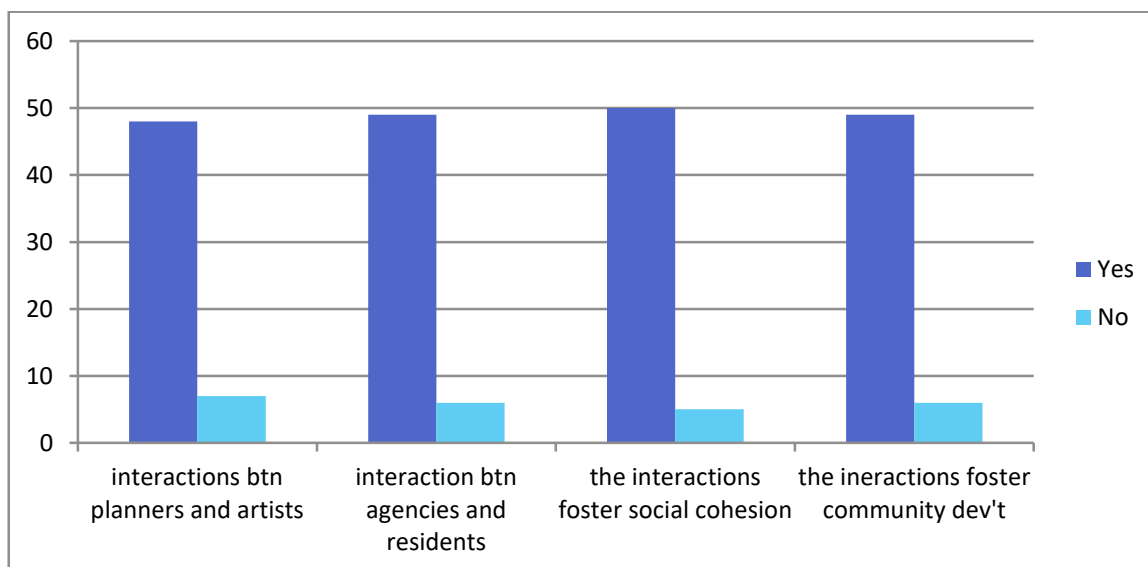

Figure 2 interactions between residents and agencies.
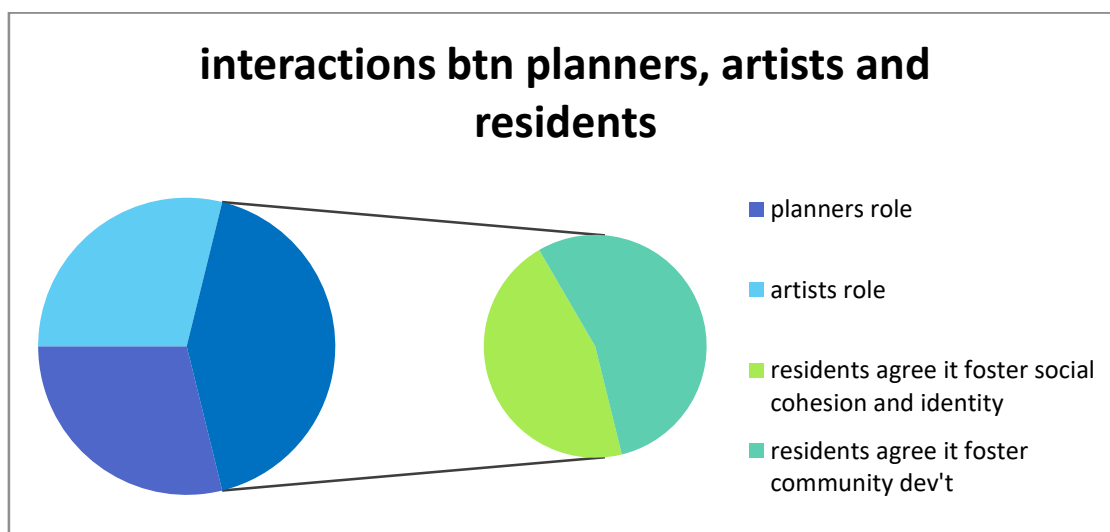
Btn-between   dev't- development.

Figure 3: Interactions between planners, artists and residents

Socio-Economic Relevance:

The study began this section by confirming an assumption that public art contributes to urban growth. All respondents agreed in one way or another that public art supports growth socially, economically and psychologically.

Does public art support urban development	Responses		Totals / total number of respondents 55				
			Strongly disagree	disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Economical.	i.	It offers employment and careers in the creative arts and crafts industry.	0	3	5	17	30
	ii.	It serves as an attraction which boosts local businesses for shops, restaurants, cafes	0	1	6	15	33
2. Social	i.	It boosts social cohesion and identity.	2	1	10	19	23
	ii.	It used as a medium to convey society's values and aspirations	0	3	8	18	26
	iii.	It is used to raise public awareness about important community issues, such as environmental stewardship and respect for diversity.	0	3	6	16	30
3. Psychological	It creates a serene environment which results to relaxation.		0.	0	7	20	28
	It brings life to places especially offices/schools, which can improve morale and productivity.		0	0	6	18	31

Respondents filled out a degree scale model to help us talk about the influence and role of urban public art on people and society. According to the data collected, more than 80% of respondents felt that economic scaling provides

employment, particularly in the creative arts and crafts business. It was agreed that it would be a tourist destination for locals and visitors, boosting recreational and hospitality industries.

In terms of social values and goals, the concept of urban public art as a means of expressing them was unmistakable. This underpinning assertion is shared by both artists and consumers, according to the research. Because art must interact with people in order to be respected and play a role. This can be traditional, modern, or historical themes. This improves social cohesion, which is a critical long-term driver of societal prosperity and overall well-being. This has an impact on society's psychological well-being. It provides a refreshing perspective, according to respondents, and can also act as a reminder of ideals and objectives. Office space psychology has recently gained popularity. An info graphic from the USC Online Masters in Applied Psychology program examines how the office space has evolved over the previous few decades, with notable implications on workplace productivity, morale, and culture among the results of this more dynamic and creative workspace and atmosphere. This corresponds to the respondents' belief that urban art provides vitality (a refreshing and soothing effect) to the workplace, boosting morale and productivity.

7. RECOMMENDATION:

Public art should be included in urban planning initiatives to ensure sustainable cities and communities. The citizens should be encouraged to participate in town council meetings and inculcate their views in policies.

8. CONCLUSION:

Penny Balkin Bach assertion in her book New Land Marks; Public Art, Community and the Meaning of Place, 2001, encapsulates the importance of artists collaborating with their communities to include public art into continuous community development, urban greening, civic history, streetscape enhancement, and other rehabilitation efforts. The case study was the Fairmount Park Art Association, a long-standing Philadelphia cultural group that started a program to develop and create innovative public art projects with communities that volunteered to participate. With the findings of this study, it can be concluded that public art and urban planning initiatives have to intersect in order for community development to be sustainable. Also, it was established that public art contributes to the socio-economic development of the urban space and country as a whole.

8. ACKNOWLEGMENTS:

REFERENCES:
1. Britt, F.M., (2014). The Intersection of Public Art and City Planning. Arts Blog; Americans for Arts. https://blog.americansforthearts.org//.
2. Americans for Arts. (2015). Public Art; Public Art 101. https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-topic/public-art.
3. Habermas, J. (1991). The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. The MIT Press.
4. Lum, K. (2014). Some Reflections on Urban Public Art Today. Penn Institute of Urban Research.
5. Duque, F. (2014). Public art and the making of urban space. City Territ. Archit. 1, 4. https://doi.org/10.1186/2195-2701-1-4.
6. Public Art; An Introduction. (2010). Project for Public Spaces. https://www.pps.org/article/pubart-intro.
7. Miles, M.B, Huberman, A.M, Dan Saldana, J. (2014). Qualitative Data Analysis, A Methods Sourcebook, Edition 3. USA: Sage Publications. Translated by Tjetjep RohindiRohidi, UI-Press.
8. Bhosale, A. (2013). Feasibility report -basic concepts with example. Slide share. https://www.slideshare.net/abhijeetbhosale102/feasibility-report-basic-concepts.
9. Bach, B.P. (2001). New Land Marks: Public Art, Community, and the Meaning of Place. Grayson Publishing.