



# The New Healing Role of Public Art in the Post-epidemic Era

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**How to cite this paper:** Ruyun Xu. (2023) The New Healing Role of Public Art in the Post-epidemic Era. *Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Science*, 7(9), 1800-1804. DOI: 10.26855/jhass.2023.09.018

**Received:** August 30, 2023

**Accepted:** September 28, 2023

**Published:** October 25, 2023

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## Abstract

In recent years, public art healing has been increasingly valued by patients. It has become essential to understanding and recognizing illnesses, analyzing their causes, and treating them. Public art has certain political and social functions. It meets the specific spiritual needs of people, and the government provides material goods or services activities. In the current epidemic, art healing can help people relieve emotions such as anxiety, depression, and anger and help them recover their mental health. For many people, the experience of suffering or witnessing the suffering of others can have a severe psychological impact. President Xi has repeatedly emphasized the importance of psychological treatment and counseling, and the State Council and National Health Commission have issued policies and measures to help improve mental health and promote mental health and social work. In the face of the many people affected, art can be an effective treatment method to alleviate their psychological trauma.

## Keywords

Healing, public art, post-epidemic era, new features, creative industries, post-pop, surviving

## 1. Current Situation and Problems of Public Art in the Post-Epidemic Era

Since the end of December 2019, the rapid spread of novel coronavirus pneumonia has spread to all corners of the world. People in many countries and regions are facing a grave health threat. Given the outbreak of the new coronavirus, public spaces have become an extremely challenging area, and traditional public artworks face many limitations in their creation and dissemination. Nevertheless, public art continues progressing, and artists worldwide use their social responsibility as a medium, expressing a concern for society through their art. Regardless of the subject matter or the context in which it is created, it contributes to the challenge of combating the New Coronavirus (Wang Hongjiang, 2019). As time goes on, we gradually walk out of the haze brought by the novel coronavirus, but this global crisis brings to us will not stop thinking.

### 1.1 The Current State of Development of Public Art During the Epidemic

The current status of public art during the epidemic is reflected in the following aspects. First is the research on public art. Since the 1990s, there has been relevant theoretical and practical exploration of public art in China. The second is the application and promotion of public art. With the continuous improvement of social and economic levels and the improvement of people's quality of life, more and more people have begun to pay attention to their environment, and they hope to change the environment around them through their own efforts. The last is for the creation of public art. Due to the impact of the New Crown Pneumonia epidemic, many artists have turned their

perspectives to things in the natural world, expressing their innermost thoughts as paintings or sculptures (Lin Ruixue, 2020).

At this particular time, public spaces may become more sensitive because they were once the ideal place for public art to be created. Creating public spaces or the social activities that arise from them may pose challenges to preventing and controlling the epidemic, so promoting public art becomes more difficult. During the epidemic, public artworks included traditional murals and installations and artists' ongoing exploration of creative spaces. For example, some artists use waste materials to make "temporary" public artworks, which are simple but very practical and can make people briefly forget the troubles of reality. In addition, the rapid development of digital technology has also enabled public art to be displayed in more ways, such as virtual exhibitions, online museums, and so on.

## 1.2 Public Art During an Epidemic

For a city, it is not only composed of a wide variety of buildings but also many other factors. For example, some natural or cultural landscapes in the city will affect people's moods and emotions. Therefore, if you want to play the healing function of public art better, it is necessary to understand its environment and surrounding conditions. Only in this way can these public works of art be genuinely integrated into it and be accepted by the users. In addition, the quality of the public artwork itself is also essential. No matter how good it is, if a work does not touch the audience's hearts, it can not achieve the desired effect. In addition, the creation process of public art also has specific difficulties. How can we ensure the safety of public artworks during the epidemic? How to make it easier for the public to understand the meaning of public artworks? These are all the urgent problems to be solved before us. At the same time, whether the number and types of public artworks are rich enough is also critical in determining their healing ability. In short, despite the achievements of public art during the epidemic, its environment remains uncertain. However, most parts of China often ignore this point when carrying out relevant research and have not done any investigation work, which leads to the final results presented to the public not being ideal. In addition, although there are many public art books, most are written for the more famous buildings, and few people pay attention to the things around them. Therefore, even if people read these books, they cannot apply the contents to their lives. Moreover, there is a lack of institutions for people, making it difficult for people to find someone to talk to.

## 1.3 Trends in Public Art During the Epidemic

For art, it is a comprehensive concept. All things that can affect the human spiritual and material world can be called "art"; narrowly speaking, it refers to those works that have aesthetic value and are expressed through a particular medium for their appreciation. Therefore, we mentioned "public art" to integrate these elements with certain beauty into the city and make it a part of the urban cultural construction. Of course, this fusion does not mean a simple superposition or stacking but should exist more reasonably and play its due functions and functions (Guo Buer, 2022).

At the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, due to the uncertainty of the virus and the unclear transmission route, people will inevitably have tension, anxiety, and other negative emotions. At this time, some public artworks full of humanistic care are significant. For example, the "Dove of Peace" sculpture in front of the United Nations headquarters in New York City uses the image of a white dove, expressing the desire of people worldwide to fight the epidemic together. For another example, the MORE AND CHINA series created by Chinese artist Zeng Fanzhi at the Kaohsiung Art Museum in Taiwan conveys confidence and courage to people with lines full of strength and speed. These works make people feel the influence of beauty and give them the courage and faith to move forward in the face of difficulties.

Local governments have gradually resumed production and life with the epidemic under effective control. At this time, public art also needs to adapt to the new environment and demand and play a more significant social benefit. For example, the large-scale installation of "Life Flower" launched by the National Modern Art Museum in Tokyo, Japan, presents the tension of life and indomitable perseverance with bright flowers, giving people the strength to grow upward. At the same time, this work also reminds people to cherish the time and seriously enjoy each stage of their life course.

To sum up, public art is vital during the pandemic and daily life. We can genuinely realize its healing effect and promote public mental health by constantly innovating forms and enriching content.

With the continuous improvement of the social and economic level and the people's growing need for a better life, more and more people begin to pay attention to whether their living space is comfortable and pleasant and hope that their living environment can be improved. As a result, many artists look to the field of public art, believing that only

in this way can we genuinely play the role of public art and then achieve the purpose of healing people's hearts. The idea turns out to be very accurate. After years of exploration and practice, China has formed a relatively perfect theoretical system to guide the development of related work. For example, Wang Shu, a famous scholar of public art, once put forward the view of "place construction", that is, in order to maximize the effect of public art, we must first dig deep into the local historical and cultural resources, and then carry out corresponding creative activities according to the actual situation. In addition, some experts and scholars have researched environmental psychology and other aspects and achieved fruitful results. In short, no matter what form is used, as long as it can give people the enjoyment of beauty, and let people have emotional resonance, then this work is called a success.

## **2. Strategies for the Healing Role of Public Art in the Post-epidemic Era**

### **2.1 Strengthen public art education and enhance the public's aesthetic quality**

As a comprehensive subject, public art involves many fields of knowledge, including architecture, design, aesthetics, literature, philosophy, etc. Therefore, to give full play to the healing role of public art, we must pay attention to cultivating a group of high-quality professional talents. Specifically, on the one hand, government departments can increase investment to encourage universities to offer public art courses or related majors, so as to provide more excellent talents for the public art industry. On the other hand, the general public should also take an active part in it, through various channels to receive systematic training and learning, to improve their own aesthetic quality and appreciation ability. In addition to making great efforts on visual effects, public art should also have specific interactivity and experience. In other words, it should not only be a work of art placed in public places but also a reflection of a city's cultural connotation and quality. Therefore, the future public art creation should be developed in the direction of diversification, and make full use of modern scientific and technological means to create a unique landscape integrating ornamental value, entertainment, and fun. For example, a street in Edinburgh, England, has several projectors and sound equipment, attracting many pedestrians to watch. This interactive display mode is not only novel and exciting but also can convey specific information so that people inadvertently accept a vivid art popularization (Cao Xiaomin, 2022).

### **2.2 Strengthen the sense of social responsibility of public art, and promote the development of public welfare undertakings**

Public art is not only a simple artistic act, but also a public welfare cause related to social harmony and stability. Therefore, in the future, public art creation should always adhere to the concept of people-oriented, consider the needs and interests of different groups as far as possible, and avoid excessive commercialization and kitsch tendencies. In addition, emerging media such as Internet platforms can also be used to expand the scope of influence of public art and promote the development of public welfare undertakings. For example, the municipal government of San Francisco cooperated with non-profit organizations to transform the abandoned factory into a creative industrial park, which attracted a large number of young artists to start businesses and create and also promoted the prosperity and development of the surrounding communities (Zhuang Shu, 2021).

## **3. The development trend of public art during the epidemic period**

Public art has shown a solid healing effect during the epidemic, which has attracted wide attention and recognition. However, at the same time, some problems and shortcomings are also exposed, which are worth further discussion and improvement. Technological means will also become one of the critical factors to promote the development of public art. At present, many artists have used virtual reality technology to create art, and audiences can experience the shocking effects brought by art through VR glasses or mobile phone screens. I believe that in the near future, this immersive feeling will indeed become mainstream and attract more people to participate in it.

### **3.1 Integrate art healing into primary and college education**

Our efforts will eventually focus on education, whether in schools or through all sectors of society, to make our world a better place. This is our overall goal, and art has the same significance. Today's education should not only emphasize examinations but also cultivate students' emotional and thinking abilities. In this context, art education can play a role, letting the students feel happy in the learning process. I understand that all the usual schools now

have educational psychology courses. However, how to apply this knowledge to children's learning to relieve their pressure, I think, is a problem worth thinking about. Art as an effective way of emotional expression, especially for children, has not yet fully developed, because they may not be able to accurately grasp their emotions, and painting, photography, and collage, not only can help them express ideas but also can make consultants more in-depth understanding and evaluate their psychological state. As they grow older, college students have more vital rational thinking abilities and a better knowledge system, while art can provide them with a unique way to solve challenges.

Psychological therapy has shown interdisciplinary collaboration in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. On May 13, 2020, the National Health Commission, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the National Medical Insurance Administration, and the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine jointly issued the Rehabilitation Treatment Plan for COVID-19 discharged Patients. In order to better help patients recover, it specifically put forward the policy of including eligible psychological treatment in the scope of medical insurance payment. Many professional institutions, including the Chinese Psychological Society, the Institute of Psychology of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Tsinghua University and Psychology and Beijing Normal University, quickly organized experts, consultants, and volunteers, opened hundreds of psychological counseling hotlines, and planned the public mental health public lecture, provide psychological assistance for medical staff and patients. This shows that there is an internal connection between art and medicine, which complement each other and jointly serve people's physical and mental health. Therefore, we should make full use of the existing resources, strengthen the publicity and popularization of the public, and encourage more people to participate in the arts and healthcare cooperation.

### 3.2 The combination of art healing with contemporary pavilions and technology

In the past, China's exhibition industry was not called the exhibition economy, but it has developed into an industry in the past few years. Although we not only focus on economic interests but also the "litmus test" can reflect people's demand for art exhibitions, which is also an effective way to establish a social communication mechanism and evaluation standards, thus highlighting the importance and value of exhibitions. In the healing aspect of online resources, the current exhibition has not fully explored this issue. Most exhibitions are still based on traditional offline art galleries, so we should strive to build a communication system that can fully use the advantages of online art galleries. To improve efficiency, we need to combine the uniqueness of online transmission, the healing function, and the original purpose of curation. In the future, we will continue to try this way. Through the use of the latest scientific and technological achievements, we can develop AP and wearable devices, and with online psychological self-help assessment and intervention platform, at the same time with the positive elements of art to help the public guided by art, adjust the life state, from individual to group mental health real-time guardian.

In addition, digital technology is expected to enhance the artistic healing effects further. For example, using virtual reality to create an immersive experience environment that allows visitors to feel the emotional impact of the artwork or using AI algorithms to analyze the audience's behavior patterns and emotional responses to provide personalized advice and support. These new technologies will undoubtedly make art healing more efficient and accurate.

## 4. Conclusion

Public art may not be able to solve social problems directly and quickly, but successful works can arouse public discussion and thinking, thus promoting the solution of problems. The public artworks for social collective trauma expose the wound gently and convey the collective and shared information to us. This is not a trauma of one person but the trauma of the whole society. We face it together, and we will get more comfort. It comforts our wounded hearts, instills sympathy, and removes shame, which often brings pain, and makes suffering watched and respected as part of the collective. Under the epidemic situation, the social role of contemporary art should be viewed again on the table, and what contemporary art can create and what it can bring has become a topic that we urgently need to reflect on and examine.

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