

The Role of Public Arts: Case Studies of Public Arts in Urban Park of Central Surabaya

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Abstract. As a city with high mobility, Surabaya needs an interaction space with objects that benefit their people aesthetically, recreationally, psychologically, and economically. Public art, as one of contributors to the city's culture and identity, needs to be developed and taken care of, especially regarding its existence in public spaces, such as urban park. This study attempts to determine typology of public arts in urban park of Central Surabaya and publics' perceptions of each artwork. This study was done qualitatively, by doing direct observation and unstructured interviews to people who currently live in Surabaya city. We found several types of public arts that are exhibited in Surabaya urban parks. The publics perceptions were mainly positive about the public art, however they favour monumental type of artwork more than functional ones. The finding of this study can contribute to cities' developments, especially in establishing public art in Surabaya area.

Keywords: *public art; urban park; perceptions; typology*

1 Introduction

A city is a form of multiple elements, such as economy, humanity, environment, and landscape. As a city grows from time to time, the people inside it hope for better life quality, and it is reflected in their social activities. Surabaya, as a metropolitan city in Indonesia along with Jakarta and Makassar, has quite high mobility. Being one of the biggest cities in Indonesia, the government activities, trades, industry, and social, are centered there, especially in the heart of the city, which is Central Surabaya. In order to reach the balance between mobility and quality of life, the people of Surabaya need interaction space and objects that can be used not only to interact with each other but also benefits them aesthetically, recreationally, psychologically, and economically.

City arts, or public art - which ranges from large permanent sculpture to a temporary project or even street furniture, is a perfect form that can reflect cultural, landscape, nature, and social interaction of the people in a city. It is a perfect instrument to facilitate interaction between communities and their cultural and social activities. As a form of artistic expression, public art is accessible for

the public and communities, and it contributes to shaping a conducive environment for a city to be lived in. It can be placed in public open spaces, such as parks, formal gardens, recreation ground, play space, or even market square. Previous research have studied that public art enliven public open spaces including urban parks [1], [2] attract tourists to visit the parks, and also increase urban life's quality, such as reflecting and expressing identity of an area, telling history, contributing in the sense of pride and ownership of a community, etc. [3]

Being one of very important contributors to cities' culture and identity, public art in urban parks seems to be a developing feature and strength for the city and communities inside. However, in developing countries like Indonesia, the awareness of public arts existence and role are somehow not perceptible yet compared to Western countries. There are still debates and arguments on public art contribution in the public open spaces, especially in its meaning and appreciation [3] - which hinders the growth of public arts in cities. This study will focus on public arts that are located in urban parks in Central Surabaya, since these public arts and urban parks are important contributors to the city's development and continuity of the city culture.



The aim of this paper is to analyze the public arts that are located in urban parks in Central Surabaya and the communities around the neighborhood's perception towards it. We believe that communities and people's perception about public arts will give a better understanding of public arts and the role of public arts in the urban area. The findings of the research will be useful for local communities as recommendations, and also contribute to cities' development in improving the quality of urban life and environment.

1.1 Public Arts in Public Open Space

Public art is a term used to define a temporary or permanent artwork that is accessible and available for the public, and displayed openly in public locations, outside museums and galleries [4]. Art in public space has been a part of societies around the world since classical antiquity, which is around 8th century BC to 6th century AD [5]. It has been evolving since and nowadays it has been purposely used to strengthen urban lives and public spaces' quality [6]. In addition, public art contributes to settlements of many urban problems, including economic, environmental, social, and cultural problems. Policy Studies Institute [7] stated there are some contributions made by the existence of public art, such as: contributing in the development and preservation of local culture, attracting investment from companies, being a part of tourism, increasing the values and use of open spaces, and lowering vandalism. As now it has been widely recognized, art in public spaces can be a tool to reach people, to communicate with the public, and to present and represent cultural and social identities.

In this study, we used Tyler [8] and Portland Public Art Committee [9] 's theory in classifying public art typology based on its used and characteristics, as shown in Table 1 :

Table 1 Classification of Public Art

No	Type of Public Art	Description	Image Reference
1	Memorial / Remembrance Artwork	Used to celebrate and memorialize famous/ historical figure	 <p>Figure 1 Jalesveva Jayamahe Monument</p>
2	Community Artwork	Dialogical, community-engaged art that involves community in the process of making	 <p>Figure 2 Repainting Crosswalks with Mass MoCA</p>

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|---|--------------------|---|
| 3 | Expressive Artwork | Displaying artwork with the goal of introducing beauty and artistic sense to people |
|---|--------------------|---|



Figure 3 Nyoman Nuarta - Rush Hour II (1992)

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|---|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 4 | Functional Artwork | Art which is created for use |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|



Figure 4 Michael Beitz - Public Sculptures

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|---|-----------------------|--|
| 5 | Environmental Artwork | Uses natural materials, like branches, stone, etc. |
|---|-----------------------|--|



Figure 5 Eighteen Thousand Tides

Each piece of public art has its own role depending on the surrounding. According to Ozoy and Bayram (2007), there are 3 fundamental values that originated in public art : historical value, aesthetic value, and functional value. Historical values embolden the connection between societies and history, and usually the art works are related to famous historical figures / monuments of historical events.

Aesthetic value in public art is the value of beauty and aesthetics to improve a place's visual quality. Meanwhile, functional value is found in public arts with functional use (also referred as applied art), and the public art is very useful to people in the area, such as: signage, street furniture, etc.

1.2 Public Perception towards Public Art

As stated above, public art is supposed to facilitate communication and interpret issues and concerns of the public as it can be accessed publicly [11]. We used Zebracki's 4 of 5 attributes to measure the perceptions of people towards public art in this study. Other than the educational background of the visitors, awareness of the existence of public art and familiarity are important. Next, it is the perceived attractiveness. A successful public art should be attractive to contribute more to tourism, or to be more inviting and catch the eye of the visitors. The third one is meaningfulness. Meaningfulness is also related to attractiveness of the artwork. Do the visitors feel or see a deeper meaning in the public artwork? Do they see more than 'beauty' in the artwork? If they do, the public has given appreciation to public artwork [12]

2 Methods

This research was an exploratory study in nature, and we performed a case-study research on several public arts in 4 urban parks of Central Surabaya, listed as follows :

- Taman Bungkul
- Taman Persahabatan
- Taman Apsari
- Taman Ekspresi

The selection of public parks for case studies were based on the presence of public arts in the parks. Meanwhile, the sampling technique used was purposive sampling, and we picked 16 people who live in Surabaya to be interviewed. We purposely picked participants that currently live in Surabaya since it is more plausible to notice the artwork when they live in the city. Primary data was acquired through interviews with 16 people and direct observation, while secondary data was collected through academic literature and documents review (such as news and media). The observation was conducted within Central Surabaya as shown in Figure 1.

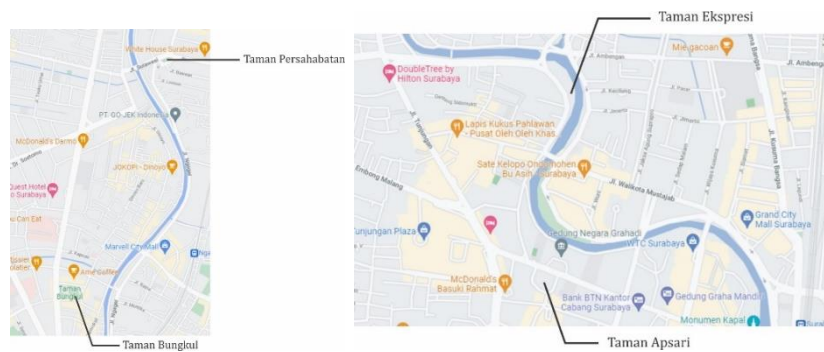


Figure 6 Research Area Map (Central Surabaya / Surabaya Pusat)

We picked all of 4 urban parks located in Central Surabaya and reviewed each public art that was exhibited there. We reviewed the public arts in several dimensions:

- a) The typology identification of the public art from the literature shown in Table 1
- b) The important values to state the objectives of the public art (whether it has functional value, esthetic value, or historical value)
- c) The perception of the public toward the public art, including degree of awareness, meaningfulness (interpretations and memories), and attractiveness.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Identification of Public Art in Urban Park of Central Surabaya

Observation took place in 4 urban parks: Taman Bungkul, Taman Apsari, Taman Persahabatan, and Taman Ekspresi, and 4 of them are located in Central Surabaya. From all of the public arts we investigated, the majority of the public arts exhibited in public parks of Central Surabaya is 3D expressive artworks, such as sculpture, followed by 3D functional artworks, which includes street furniture and signage.

Table 2 sums up the findings of public art we observed in 4 urban parks located in Central Surabaya. All of the public arts can be accessed freely by the public who visit the urban parks. Referring to the typology dimension, we found a total of 9 expressive artworks, 8 functional artworks, 3 memorial artworks. Referring to the purpose, the dimension of values is hard to define. We tried to classify them

based on the value that is most noticeable. For example, ‘Monument of Governor Suryo’ in Figure 12 represents historical value, as it is a memorial artwork to remember the first East Java governor who was killed in the PKI rebellion. Even though all public arts surely have aesthetic values, there are some public arts which also contain other values such as functional and historical values. Out of 18 artworks, there are 8 artworks with aesthetic value, 8 artworks with functional value, and 3 artworks with historical value significance.

Table 2 Public Art in Urban Parks of Central Surabaya




No	Urban Park	Type of Public Art	Form	Purpose value	Photo
1.	Taman Bungkul	Functional Artwork (3)	3D	Functional & Aesthetic	 
2.	Taman Bungkul		3D	Functional	

Figure 7 Taman Bungkul Park Public Facilities

Figure 8 Taman Bungkul Signage




3.	Taman Persahabatan	Memorial Artwork (2))	3D	Aesthetic	
4.	Taman Persahabatan	Functional Artwork (1)	3D	Functional	
5.	Taman Apsari	Memorial Artwork (1)	3D	Aesthetic	

Figure 9 Sistercity Monument (Surabaya and Guangzhou) and Lions International Monument sign

Figure 10 Taman Persahabatan Signage

Figure 11 Gubernur Suryo Monument

6.	Taman Apsari	Expressive Artwork (1)	3D	Aesthetic	
					Figure 12 Bike Installation
7.	Taman Apsari	Functional Artwork (1)	3D	Functional & Aesthetic	
					Figure 13 Bike Parking
8.	Taman Ekspresi	Functional Artwork (3)	3D	Functional & Aesthetic	
					Figure 14 Pot and Bollard

9.	Taman Ekspresi	Expressive	3D	Aesthetic
		Artwork (8)		

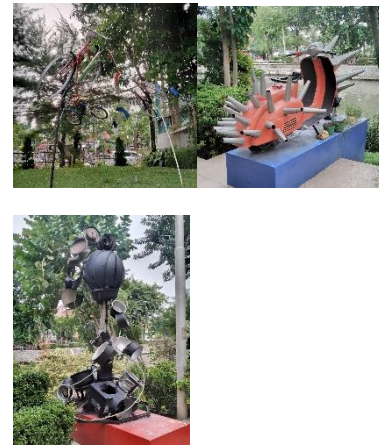


Figure 15 Untitled Installation in Taman Ekspresi

From the table, we can see that all public arts inside urban parks in Central Surabaya are in 3-dimensional form, such as sculptures, installations, and public facilities. From the 4 urban parks we investigated, Taman Ekspresi which is located near the Education Museum has the most numbers of expressive public artwork displayed in the area. Most expressive artworks in Taman Ekspresi comprises installations from recycled materials as shown in Fig. 16. Interesting part about artworks in Taman Ekspresi, it also has public art which has both functional and aesthetic value like the plant pots that are made of an old pair of jeans filled with soil, plant pots with O-alphabet shape, and stick-man shaped bollard (Fig.15). Other public parks have approximately 3 public arts each. Taman Bungkul has 2 functional - aesthetic artwork : public seat (sponsored by Telkom) and urban park light, and 1 functional artwork : Taman Bungkul signage, meanwhile Taman Apsari has 1 memorial artwork (Governor Suryo monument as shown in Fig. 12), 1 expressive artwork (flying bicycle with a writing to persuade the visitors to keep the park clean), and 1 functional artwork which has also the aesthetic value - the public bicycle rack which shaped like a cyclist (Fig. 14). Taman Persahabatan, just like its name (Friendship Park) has 1 functional artwork which is the name-sign of the park, and 2 remembrance artwork that is related to a foundation (Lions International foundation who sponsored the park and the Sister City Monument (the friendship monument between Surabaya and Guangzhou, China), as shown in Fig. 10 and Fig. 11.

3.2 Public Perceptions toward Public Art in Urban Park of Central Surabaya

From the participants we interviewed, 75% of them are originally from Surabaya, and the rest are from other cities. However, not many of them visit the urban park regularly, even those who have lived in Surabaya for years, hence, there are still not familiar with the public artwork displayed. Generally, the participants notice the artwork when they visit the public art, however they do not feel attached or attracted to the artwork. We formulate three inclusive findings from the interview data. Firstly, in general the publics' perceptions were more positive with regard to the memorial public art type than to the functional public art type. Publics tend to like public art that is easy to decode, so they can connect to the artwork. Meanwhile, according to the participant, functional public art like public seats (Telkom) and signage has no deeper meaning for them, and they only answer the interview questions based on their empirical experience. However, some functional public art with great aesthetic values and easy to decipher also gained positive response, for example is the pots and bollards in Taman Ekspresi, as it has unique shape, and according to the participants, they have deep meaning, and also functional. Secondly, expressive public arts displayed in the urban park are hard to understand by the public. For example, ones in Taman Ekspresi. During the interviews, many participants could not express the meaning of the artwork to them; therefore it is hard to create a connection between the art and the viewer. The lack of description and information related to the artwork makes every individual have a different interpretation when seeing it. Thirdly, participants were hoping for a more attractive, interactive, and educational public art which is properly and strategically placed to get more engagements from the audience and visitors of public parks.

4 Conclusion

The type of public art located in public parks in Central Surabaya varies, however expressive public art is the most displayed in public parks. Even though this type of public art is most displayed, publics' perception was more positive about memorial public art type, because they seem to have lost in interpreting and understanding expressive public art as there is no description nor information about the work. Artwork description is needed to guide public art viewers to understand the meaning of the work. In essence, art in public space is important, especially as an identity signifier of a place/ community, and also to enliven community activities. Therefore, it needs to be protected and developed by creating more of attractive, interactive, educational, and well-placed public arts to invigorate public places in Surabaya.

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