

AICA JAPAN CONGRESS 1998

Symposium "TRANSITION : Changing Society and Art "

■ Colloquium II *Monuments and Icons : New Dimensions of Public Art*

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Recent Trajectories in Public Art

The mid-1990s saw various developments in public art in Japan. One was the SHINJUKU I-LAND PUBLIC ART PROJECT, completed in 1995; another was the Fare Tachikawa project, completed in 1994. The Yumeooka Art Project in the Kamiooka Station Building in Yokohama, completed in 1997, also displayed a new approach.

I was directly involved in directing the art project in the Shinjuku I-land and Yume Ooka projects. The following is a list of the unique characteristics of these two projects.

IN 1997, I commissioned 5 creators to make art works for the WWW and also organized international jury exhibition. As the result, WWW is proved to be the enormous virtual public space for art.

Shinjuku I-Land

- all thirteen art works were commissioned.
- All of the works were closely integrated with the space and architecture.
- Artists representing 1960s art movements -- pop art, minimal art and conceptual art -- were shown from art historical point of view.
- Most of the artists were already established.
- The total project respect the beauty of dignity since the location is quite official.

Yumeooka Art Project

- All nineteen works were commissioned.
- Young artists from Japan and other parts of Asia were the participants.
- The works carefully integrated with the surrounding space and architecture.
- Movements such as minimal, conceptual, and pop art by young artists were represented.
- Some works were huge in scale, and dynamic and almost like part of architecture.

Public Art on the inter net

- It is proved that art on the inter net can also be curated.
- The project of Yoko Ono based on the communication was successful because it uses the nature of the inter net.
- It is proved that the conceptual art suits to inter net art works.
- The virtual space on the inter net will be limitless public domain for art

This kind of public art enables people to experience contemporary art in their daily lives; in the process, it liberates art from the confines of museums. Although museums still play an important role, I believe that public art projects have radically changed the conventional view of art as something that intrudes upon a white cubic space. The projects also demonstrate that even public art can be curated.

As a result, art has the capacity to become more democratic and popular, and gain a broader audience. It can also actively perform new social functions for amenity and communication.

In Japan, there are few museums where one can see permanent exhibitions of contemporary art. And so, the fact that these works are on permanent display serves an important, educational function.

The following predictions can be made in light of the above remarks: In future, art will not be confined just to museums and galleries but will expand into a wider range of venues and spaces, and be appreciated by a broader audience. The vocabulary of contemporary art and its potential as a means of communication will acquire greater meaning in the practice of the realm of public art. In addition, public art will offer new insights into whom art is for and what its purpose is supposed to be.