

Theory Research on Visual Communication Design of Urban Public Space under the Concept of Social Design

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ABSTRACT

Through observation and analysis of modern urban public spaces, we can find that design is not only a combination of appearance and functionality, but also a profound understanding and response to society, culture, and the environment. The social design concept emphasizes the principle of people-oriented design, pursuing the inclusiveness, interactivity, and sustainability of public spaces, and shaping the identity and shared experience of urban spaces through visual language and symbol systems. This article will explore how to implement the concept of social design in visual communication design, and explore its impact on the quality of life, social cohesion, and urban image of urban residents. The ultimate goal is to provide practical guidance and inspiration for urban planners, designers, and decision-makers, promoting sustainable development of public spaces and social harmony.

KEYWORDS

Social Design; Public Space; Public Art; Visual Communication Design; Design Expression.

1. TRACING THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL DESIGN

In today's world where human material level and spiritual civilization are increasingly improving, people have higher aesthetic standards and needs for everything in daily life. Gradually, design has become a solution to daily life problems that people increasingly rely on, and has become more influential and influential. At the same time, a series of issues related to people's living and survival, such as pollution, resource scarcity, and wealth inequality, are intensifying. Just as the basic needs of human life must be redesigned and properly addressed, social problems also urgently require a "design approach" based on the new era to address.

In Western countries, social design has gradually developed into a fusion of diverse roles and cross disciplinary approaches through the initial designer's social responsibility. Therefore, having a comprehensive thinking and perspective is the direction driven by design in today's society. Influenced by Western social design, Asian countries and regions have gradually introduced the development concept of social design. In Taiwan, China, Chen Dongsheng, a sociologist at Taiwan University, believes that the difference between social design and pure design is that social design does not serve a single product or object, but needs to solve problems systematically. The core of sociology is equality and justice. When sociology intervenes in design, it is necessary to consider how to solve fundamental structural problems. Therefore, design is "creatively solving problems", while social design is "creatively solving social problems".

Overall, the concept of "social design" originated from different social scales and scales. The main topics of its design can cover topics ranging from paying attention to the relationship between people and the environment, cities and ecology, as well as social welfare, to details such as design aesthetics

that are difficult to notice in daily life. Social design is designed for society and people, and social design and sustainable development complement each other.

2. VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN EXPRESSION OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

With the development of society, people are increasingly valuing their living and survival environment, and businesses are also paying more attention to improving the overall visual image system of their own brands. Designers also tend to combine the overall visual image system with the relationship between public spaces to coordinate overall design. Visual communication design is no longer a purely flat research, but a combination of public spaces and visual communication design. They focus on visual communication design as an extension of public spaces, and the two are inseparable, designed for communication.

In recent years, guided by the "people-oriented" architectural design concept, public space design has placed greater emphasis on human subjective feelings, and the integration of visual communication design can better meet this requirement. The application of colors, visual symbols, and other elements fully mobilize people's visual, auditory, and tactile senses. The use of modern art design language has brought different visual impact effects, making public space design more scientific and creating different spatial visual experiences for people.

As a fusion of visual communication art and public art, the public space art of the subway is also worth mentioning, and many public arts in subway spaces are expressions of visual communication art. Taking the Beijing subway in China as an example, its early design and construction process was limited to varying degrees by the historical, economic, and technological background. Starting from the 1970s, large-scale mural style public art expressions with obvious thematic orientation were the first, and more and more public art expressions appeared in people's field of vision. During the 29th Beijing International Olympic Games in 2008, in order to present colorful and distinctive artistic forms to the people of the world, designers designed various public facilities systems in Beijing around the theme of "Green Olympics, Humanistic Olympics, and Technological Olympics". Among them, the design scheme of urban subway transportation cannot help but be eye-catching. It integrates the dissemination and expression of culture and art into the design works while meeting the basic functions of urban transportation. By grasping and clarifying the cultural relationship between specific routes and specific areas, and using creative expression techniques, the creative concept of "one line, one scene" is expressed in concrete visual art images. At the same time, the designer also divides the key and non key categories between each station based on practical information such as pedestrian flow statistics, commercial area division, and administrative area division, so that the public art design of the Beijing subway meets the requirements of economic development and public order.

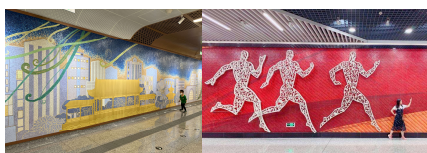


Figure 1. The murals at Beijing Subway Station

Therefore, applying the graphic design form in visual communication design to public art forms is a new form of public art that has the function of visual communication and beautification of public spaces. This fusion breaks the singularity and limitations of previous art, not only diversifying public art, but also expanding the scope of visual communication design, making the application of visual

communication design more extensive. It is a new idea and direction for the development of public space art.

3. THE INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL DESIGN AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN

Visual Communication is a comprehensive course that emphasizes the perceptual foundation of experience, conveys information through visual expression, and leans towards a comprehensive, human oriented, and human based approach. The visual communication profession reflects the design concept of "people-oriented" in the design process through the "see" communication method. For example, in the design of the Jinan International Innovation Design Industrial Park, the theme is "evoking memories through design". A Jinan dialect memory card is designed for elderly people over 80 years old to prevent Alzheimer's disease and prevent memory decline in advance. The design starts with daily necessities such as clothing, food, housing, and transportation, with the theme of daily old objects, well-known Jinan cuisine, and the Jinan dialect spoken every day. Using vivid hand drawn illustrations and enlarged fonts, the cards can be split and reassembled to help the elderly achieve the goal of training their brain memory during games. From this, it can be seen that in the process of design teaching, it is necessary to more fully enable students to find the relationship between design and society or humanity, with "society" as the main design content, so that students can be closer to social life and observe and experience society from a design perspective. The Department of Visual Communication Design at China Academy of Fine Arts has been attempting to integrate design skills and knowledge into studio semester project-based teaching materials with the theme of "society" since 2015. Through teaching experiments, students' attention and work paths have undergone significant changes. Information on environmental protection, energy, health, urbanization, social-economic, political, and social welfare has gradually become important materials for understanding and analyzing design. When dealing with such complex, systematic, and uncertain problems, we have also begun to pay more attention to the actual effects reflected in the design process. Through reflective experiments, we continuously adjust the design scheme, closely adhere to the content requirements, and express methods that meet the needs of moderation. As a result, we have gradually formed a complete set of effective design methods and design management processes.

The integration of social design and visual communication design involves combining the concepts and methods of social sciences with the technologies and principles of visual communication design, making social issues visible and improving public understanding and attention to them. Provide design support for social movements and advocacy organizations, helping them better communicate ideas and attract volunteers and fundraising. When designing products or services, combining the principles of social design can enhance user experience and social participation. For example, incorporating community participation in urban planning and collecting feedback and suggestions through visual means. In enterprises, visual communication design can help convey their commitment to sustainable development and social responsibility. Through brand design, advertising promotion, and packaging design, we aim to enhance consumer awareness and trust in the social influence of enterprises. By visualizing social data, policy makers, social science researchers, and the public can better understand social trends and issues, thereby supporting decision-making and action.

Overall, the integration of social design and visual communication design can not only enhance the effectiveness and attractiveness of information transmission, but also promote social change and public participation, making it a powerful tool to address today's complex social challenges.

4. INNOVATIVE DESIGN IDEAS FOR VISUAL COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC SPACES UNDER THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL DESIGN

(1) Social Participation in Narrative Design

The narrative design in public spaces achieves the dissemination of thematic meaning through the time transformation and diverse expression of narrative language. In the early stage, it is necessary to fully analyze the design theme and specific design requirements, with the aim of transforming the temporal narrative language of thematic texts into spatial artistic expression language. The narrative subject transforms from a conceptual form of thinking to a thematic visual form of expression.

The narrative design of public spaces is primarily aimed at narrating the thematic significance, characterized by diverse forms, open spaces, and interactive events. The theme covers geographical features, social culture, historical events, etc. The corresponding forms of expression vary according to the narrative elements and functions of public art. The ancient Roman scholar Cicero believed that it was necessary to create images that could last in memory for a long time. This image has strong similarity and distinctiveness, and can be used to evoke distant memories. Similarity is mainly reflected in two aspects, one is the similarity of events, and the other is the similarity of language. Therefore, in the narrative of public space art, attention should be paid to extracting typical elements related to the theme, strengthening the recognition of the theme, using art forms that are suitable for the theme's image and meaning, and deepening the value of the theme's meaning.

At the same time, the narrative design of public spaces can also view the city as a comprehensive carrier of collective memory. By highlighting the multiple relationships between urban spatial areas and transforming the narrative elements in different temporal and spatial dimensions, the natural environment and artificial environment can be integrated. In this process, designers can use techniques such as coding, sequence, reverse narration, and interlude to overlap, weave, deconstruct, recombine, and integrate the narrative plot with the place space, allowing spatial participants to participate in the process of thematic narrative. The La Villette Park has protected the "original architecture" and "industrial relics" of the site, and renovated them on the basis of protection. The site structure of industrial relics symbolically expresses historical functions while also narrating the way of life of indigenous peoples. This is a narrative of history. He also built an abstract system of points, lines, and surfaces on top of it. The "point, line, and surface" system also serves as a narrative form, connecting original buildings, industrial relics, and new buildings based on this form. The superposition of the "point, line, and surface" system has deconstructed and reorganized the original site. The native system and the newly built system express the narrative language through architectural form, allowing visitors to experience different thematic narrative content and achieving the connection between the site and urban space. In this, the form of thematic significance corresponds to the maximum extent possible to transform the designer's spatial creation into an art form that the public can enjoy.



Figure 2. The La Villette Park

(2) The formal transformation of visual fusion

"Vision" refers to the framework or perspective that a person understands or comprehends. Everyone, as a historical entity, is situated within a certain tradition and culture, and therefore resides within a certain perspective. People will live and understand within their own perspective. Gadamer believed that in order to understand history, the interpreter must attempt to explain it from a historical perspective, from the perspective of the existence of history itself and past traditions, rather than simply relying on contemporary scales and someone's understanding. At the same time, it is also impossible to completely eliminate the norms and biases of the comprehender themselves. We need

to be aware of the uniqueness of these two perspectives and overcome them by establishing a combination of their perspectives. This process is called "field of view fusion". Public spaces need to possess cultural value, inherit urban context, and create a good urban image. Therefore, public space art in cities should achieve a fusion of perspectives in the expression of themes, paying attention to the historical context of the place and the cultural context of the era. While reflecting a good urban image and inheriting excellent urban culture, it is also necessary to balance the integration with the surrounding environment and cultural context.

With the development of new media art and network technology, the forms of expression of public space art are not only material entities in urban spaces such as sculptures and murals, but also activities, performances, planning, temporary works, and even virtual games, artificial intelligence, immersive exhibitions, metaverse, etc. implemented using new technologies, presenting a richer visual effect. These will guide new design ideas, enrich the city's artistic image and cultural connotations.

The "Interactive World" device utilizes VR and full range projection technology, making visitors feel like they are in a real forest ecosystem. Children can play and learn about animals and plants in this realistic scene, deepening their memory and learning effects through this immersive sensory stimulation experience. The "Fun World" device allows players to use the app to build their own interesting worlds and showcase these interesting worlds using holographic projection technology. These virtual interactive platforms created using digital media technology allow more people to express their understanding of a certain topic. Artists transmit their works to the public through invitation letters, creating a tool and platform to engage the public in a game like manner, and then building a virtual world that they consider interesting. Similarly, playing with mobile phones, artists use mobile applications to create an artistic world and interact with the audience, achieving deep emotional communication.



Figure 3. The "Interactive World"



Figure 4. The "Fun World"

Vivian Flor said, "On the one hand, public art represents a desire to enhance the audience's experience of art, the environment, and the world in a utopian form and place. On the other hand, it also has to undertake the task of modernism, attempting to subvert and challenge various fixed values and biases." Therefore, public art needs to comprehensively consider the context of the times and assume more meaning and value.

"The Wall of Amity" is a public art form that emerged in Iran for public welfare purposes. Due to the severe cold wave and severe weather in Iran in 2015, coupled with the economic crisis, most vulnerable groups such as women and children were left homeless. So some kind-hearted people began to hang warm clothes and daily necessities on the public walls of the community, providing them to those in need. This kind of act was widely imitated by the local people and formed a trend. Many public walls in the community are used to place their own love and can also be taken away as needed. This type of wall gradually developed, with more items on the walls. Some people started placing refrigerators next to the walls to provide free food, while others erected canopies to prevent donated clothes from getting wet. Nowadays, many urban spaces in China also have "friendly walls". This public welfare model is easy to manage and can be stably maintained. The social value significance it conveys is also enormous, and more and more people are paying attention to vulnerable groups in cities and thinking about more ways to help them. In addition, due to the contemporary

industrialization process, urban construction pursues efficiency and speed. "Speed" permeates every corner of urban space, severing the original urban landscape. The accelerated development of industry has brought about environmental crises, uneven development, lack of human care, and compression of residential space to cities. The emergence of these problems has begun to provoke reflection, as the form of urban construction needs to be transformed and the creation of urban space needs to be optimized. At the same time, we need to shift from simply creating space to pursuing and enhancing the cultural significance of the city, and enhance the overall image of the city. To create high-quality living spaces for people living in cities. In addition, from the perspective of the development of urban public space art and its impact on urban space, introducing design practices and methods into urban construction will expand the boundaries of public art and enable it to gain more meaning and value recognition.



Figure 5. "The Wall of Amity"

(3) Social intervention, intervention, and selection

The era of rapid progress in informatization and knowledge economy has invisibly increased the distance between people and society. In this trend, people's focus is no longer just on material satisfaction, but on further spiritual comfort. Therefore, seeking ways to balance the interaction between art and people, and using artistic means of intervention, intervention, and choice to bring spiritual care and healing to people, are key issues that contemporary public art expression language should consider.

Public spaces are the main places where people engage in daily activities, where they communicate, interact, and convey emotions. Today's public art creation should focus on meeting people's spiritual and cultural needs and activating public spaces; Reflecting real social issues in public spaces and attracting people's attention and communication; Or, in the form of artistic expression, propose some suggestions or ways to solve problems for everyone to experience and share, achieving positive output of meaning and value. Raise people's awareness of issues and form emotional resonance.

The "Crown Fountain" located in Millennium Park, Chicago, has given the work a certain degree of fun and activated the field through communication and interaction with the public. The Crown Fountain is a public artwork created by Chicago artists who collected facial expressions from 1000 Chicago citizens, combined with lighting and water. When the image of the fountain is a smiling expression, water will spray out from the mouth, which attracts people to run to the fountain mouth in advance to wait for this moment. The facial features displayed on the fountain screen are from ordinary people, which makes the fountain works different from the cold and rigid typical square fountains. Instead, they are full of warmth and evoke the public's love for the city. The fun interactive communication experience stimulates people's senses such as vision, hearing, smell, and touch, which makes the Chicago Crown Fountain reflect a humanistic sentiment.

By combining static material forms and dynamic expressive techniques, we can add fun to urban public spaces and alleviate the psychological states of restlessness, discomfort, and anxiety that the public may experience in public places due to various reasons. Create rich and diverse artistic experience spaces, guide the public's correct aesthetic awareness, and provide the public with a beautiful life experience.

5. CONCLUSION

Design originates from life, and social design emerges in society. As a social behavior, social design breaks through the current framework of commercialization in the design industry and moves towards a focus on "social level design". Social design can generate positive social value, as Victor Barbaneck pointed out: "The greatest role of design is not to create commercial value, nor to compete in packaging and style, but to be an appropriate element in the process of social change."

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