

PUBLIC ART 2020



Taiteen edistämiskeskus
Centret för konstfrämjande
Arts Promotion Centre Finland



THE YEAR IN PUBLIC ART



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In front of you is the first *Annual Review of Public Art*. It has long been our desire to capture freeze-frame images of how public art and the structures behind it are changing.

Public art has a special relationship with time: some works are around us from one generation to the next, and we also carry our history with us through the art displayed in public spaces. In works of public art, special attention must be paid to their life cycle, their permanent or transient natures. Sometimes the authors specifically want to break the bonds of eternity and make their art temporary, momentary and transient.

We also have a strong impression that public art has been in a state of flux, that its structures have changed, that there is more of it than before or it is somehow different. It is striking that these views are largely based on our imaginations: there has been very little documentation of any change. This publication serves as a kind of starting point for documenting change.

The *Annual Review of Public Art* does not describe in detail what kind of art has been produced in Finland during the year. Rather, this publication is an attempt to address the themes, debates, hopes and sorrows that have revolved around public art in 2020. Nor is it intended to be scientifically objective, but rather consciously subjective.

The article *Public Art 2020* is based on three roundtable discussions to which we invited six artists specialising in public art who currently also work on various committees of the Arts Promotion Centre Finland. The discussions revolved around certain themes and concepts. At the centre of these were, for example, the role and competence of the artist in public art projects, the diversity and advantages of competitions and procurement models, and new types of platforms and forms of public art. The article is an answer to the question of what public art creators were talking about specifically at the beginning of 2021.

A more direct analysis of individual works is provided by art critic Sini Mononen in her annual critique of public art. We commissioned this separately due to the fact that public art hardly appears in art criticism. What would be said about the subject if one were to write an art critique about it? Something came up in both the annual critique and our roundtable discussions that we have referred to as the metamaterial of public art. There are many opinions about public art, also among those who have never seen the works. They are surrounded by various texts, images and social media opinions. This is also one of the key findings of the summary: works of art exist as objects or creations, but also as notions, writings, memories and narratives.

This publication has been compiled by the Arts Promotion Centre Finland's expert services team for public art. It was published at the spring conference for public art on 18 May 2021.



EVERYDAY ART IN AN EXCEPTIONAL TIME

ANNUAL CRITIQUE OF PUBLIC ART 2020
SINI MONONEN

In December 2020, I was walking along an underpass tunnel under the rails of Helsinki Central Station when my Bluetooth earplugs suddenly ran out of battery.

The music stuttered for a moment and then turned off. For a few seconds it was mixed with a strange and bizarre buzz. It was as if the sound of a fluorescent light was playing inside the music: Did this song really go like this, *that's not how I remember it!*, I wondered.

As I took out my earplugs, I realised I had heard Josué Moreno's sound installation *Tunnel Piece* (2020). Its unusual buzz momentarily created the illusion of a strangely electrically tuned tube or music that would have been something quite other than I remembered.

Moreno's sound installation did what public art does best. It pops up in the middle of everyday life unexpectedly and tunes the mundane into a new mood. Walking through the tunnel became an art experience.

Public art can work in many different ways. It can find countless forms, from expanded sculpture to media art and public space performances to sound and light art. It can be a public space that is painted in way that catches your attention or less conspicuous art that surprises the viewer. Sometimes it can be downright hidden from its audience, while sometimes it invites the public to participate and shape the everyday environment.

My own favourites among the art I have experienced in my neighbourhood have included a public painting in 2018 by the Polish artist Sainer at Toinen linja 10 in Helsinki, in which a girl painted on the end wall of the "Hekan talo" property appears to be peeking from behind the tower of an adjacent building. From a suitable distance, it looks as if the stripes on the girl's shirt continue in the seams of the roof. The painting also plays with the movement of light characteristic of the place: the artist has used bright paint on the parts shaded by the walls of other buildings.

MUSTA GRANIITTEISTOS, Chiaki Kobinata, 2004, Helsinki. Photo: Aura Saarikoski

Also memorable was the performance *Running Man* by Nestori Syrjälä in 2016 and 2017, in which a man in a black suit ran around the city with a briefcase under his arm. What made this work exceptional was that I feel I remember the work well, even though I never actually saw it. The mere thought of a man running around stayed in my mind.

Whereas paintings are the mainstream of public art, performances made as public art are less often seen. In the new millennium, however, public art has diversified and approached the idea of *New Genre Public Art (NGPA)* coined by Suzanne Lacy in the 1990s. The term refers to art that not only occupies public spaces, like a traditional statue, but is also public in that it recognises the shared nature of public spaces and invites participation. Such public art breaks hierarchies between institutions and authorities on the one hand and audiences on the other. It seeks to take into account the history of the space as a natural site, a built environment and a socio-cultural network.

In Finland, such participatory public art has been seen at the IHME Contemporary Art Festival. Now known as IHME Helsinki, the festival has allowed the public to shape clay in Antony Gormley's *Clay and the Collective Body* (2009), share their heartbeats with Christian Boltanski's *The Heart Archive* (2012) and use flags to signal messages to other locals far away in Mirosław Balkan's *Signals* (2013), which would have been especially great to experience in the safe distancing corona year of 2020.

LIGHTS OFF

The year 2020 was one of withdrawal and cancellations. The dangerous infectious disease was combated by restrictions on gatherings that also impacted art in public spaces.

Before the pandemic began to spread, however, the year had gotten off to an active start. The Lux Helsinki light art festival attracted record audiences in January: it was estimated that more than 600,000 people attended the event over five days. Lux Helsinki is an excellent example of a public art event for the general public. The event is held at the darkest time of the year in different locations in and around the heart of Helsinki. It showcases major international names in light art along with professional artists and students in the field. The light art encourages viewers to see the built environment with new eyes and discover visual experiences during the darkest time of the year.

With the arrival of this year, however, Lux Helsinki had to be cancelled. It is clear that, having gathered a record audience last year, the mass event that could not have been organised in the same way amid the corona pandemic.

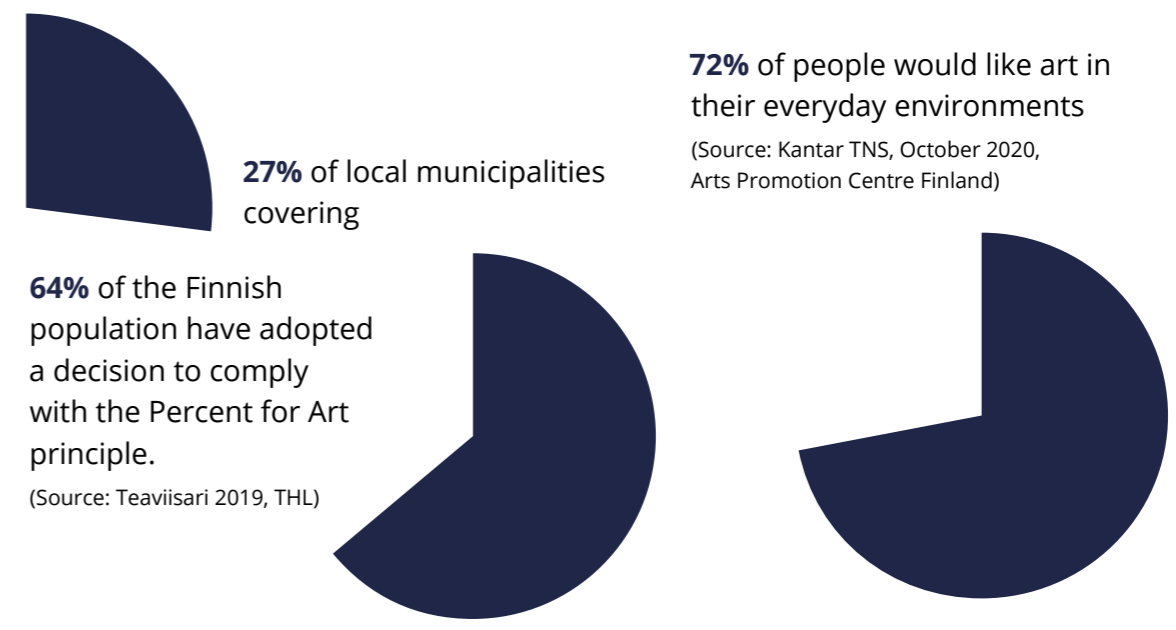
COZY LIKE A COLD FOREST, Telmo Miel, 2017, Joensuu. Photo: Kati Leinonen





STATISTICS

LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES AND PUBLIC ART



MUSEUMS AND PUBLIC ART

The collections of Finnish art museums contain **26,947 works of public art**.

In 2020, **205 new works of public art were procured for these collections**.

Museum collections also include **3,202 digital objects**.

(Source: Museum Statistics 2019)

Public art is highlighted as its own task within the new distribution of tasks among regional museums that entered into force in 2020. **Regional art museum tasks are handled by a total of 17 museums.**

Only a few of the regional museums have a separate budget for public art, and the procedures for maintaining public art vary.

TAIKE AND PUBLIC ART

Special subsidies for "Percent of the construction costs to art" projects have been awarded by the Arts Promotion Centre Finland (Taike) since 2014.

During the period 2014–2020, these subsidies have been awarded to **87 projects**. The total value of these subsidies is almost **2.5 million euros**.



The festival has traditionally seen spectacular dramaturgical works along the walking route that have drawn large masses to admire them. For example, Teresa Mar's *SunWind* (2020) in Senate Square at the 2020 festival was a collage-style installation realised using traditional projection technology, the visual narrative of which attracted viewers in large numbers to observe. Large and impressive works like *SunWind* are indeed difficult to implement, even outdoors, at a time when audiences cannot mingle with each other.

How did it feel to plan a massive public art event during the year of corona? According to Susa Nokelainen, event producer of Lux Helsinki, the fate of the festival was considered as early as March 2020, when the pandemic began to have a real impact on Finnish society. Alongside the traditional route concept of the festival, a model was considered in which the installations would be scattered widely throughout the city. This would have been somewhat similar to the *Sculpture Expanded* event organised by the Association of Finnish Sculptors in 2019, when contemporary sculptures were displayed not only in the city centre but more widely across different districts. However, since Lux Helsinki is a festival for the masses, even the decentralisation of the installations could not ensure the safety of the event, so it was decided to cancel it altogether for 2021.

ART ON SCREENS

In October 2020, the Arts Promotion Centre Finland commissioned a survey, according to which as many as 72% of Finns would like more art in their everyday environments. However, the survey did not identify what public art should look like. Would it be graffiti, sculptures or something else – perhaps new residential buildings should be designed listening to future residents and their wishes regarding public art?

Or perhaps more media art should be introduced to residential areas. Media art would seem to fit naturally into the everyday life of modern people: media screens are everywhere, from public transport to shopping malls and grocery stores. They are visible along roadsides and are carried by people in the form of smart devices.

The Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma and the Centre for Finnish Media Art AV-arkki launched the joint public media art project *Visual Overture* in 2018. It was designed to display media art as a visual introduction to the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra's concerts. Audiences would see the media art when they arrived at the concert, and at the same time it would be displayed on the largest media screen in the Nordic countries outside the Helsinki Music Centre, thereby enlivening the cityscape.

New media art has also been commissioned within the project: Jenni Toikka's *Prelude Op. 28 No. 2 in A minor* was scheduled to be displayed on the media screen in late 2020. Unfortunately, the production of Toikka's



SUSI KOSIOMATKALLA, Eija Hänninen & Henna Onnela, 2007, Joensuu.
Photo: Kati Leinonen

work was disrupted by the corona pandemic, and when the concerts of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra were cancelled, the entire *Visual Overture* project experienced the same fate. According to Aleksi Malmberg, general manager of the orchestra, the decision was taken to stop presenting the media art as the context in which they are displayed changed once the concerts were cancelled and there was no will to organise events like *Visual Overture*, even outdoors.

However, is a work of media art displayed on a media screen in a public space an event? And could the corona pandemic have created a new context in which media art could have provided new memories for residents amid so many cancellations?

During the corona pandemic, it is the responsibility of the organiser to assess the risks of the event. According to the Regional State Administrative Agency AVI, an event is not considered an occasional happening that does not take place at a specific time and that is presented over long periods of time (for example, around the clock for days, weeks or months). Especially if audiences are not especially invited to the venue and the happening is not particularly promoted, it can hardly be considered an event. An example of such a non-event could be a work of media art that is displayed on a media screen day and night over an extended period.

Jenni Toikka sent me a preview of her work. It has two characters sitting alternately at the piano. They appear to be playing. The camera moves

smoothly and fluidly between the characters. There is no sound. The work is captivating, but would masses crowd up to wait for it to appear on the media screen in the Kansalaistori square?

Toikka's art is reminiscent of Sini Pelkki's and Jani Ruscica's *Screen Test for A Living Sculpture* (2012), which has been displayed on the media screen outside the Turku City Theatre and is now on permanent display at Helsinki City Hall. It is also fluid in rhythm and atmosphere. Occasionally appearing in the cityscape and serenely calm, its character is quite different from that of the New Year's Eve fireworks, for example, which are limited to a specific time and which people are used to watching together.

Many cities indeed cancelled their annual fireworks at the turn of the year, before which there had been many other cancellations too. IHME Helsinki postponed a sound installation by Jana Winderen that had been planned for the Helsinki Rowing Stadium until 2021. A form of cancellation also affected Ville Vallgren's *Havis Amanda* statue (1906) in Helsinki's Market Square, where the annual May Day celebrations were discouraged by surrounding the statue with a tall fence.

On the other hand, during the Poetry Moon festival organised by the Nuori Voima association, "Poems on Tracks" (*Runoja raiteilla*) displayed poems on the digital screens of the Helsinki Regional Transport Authority (HSL) in the usual way. Festival Director Anna Borgman describes "Poems on Tracks" as a project that attracts the eyes of passengers when they are on public transportation anyway. In this way, it is not a separate event but part of the everyday experience of travelling around the city. The poetry can be enjoyed simply glancing at a screen whenever a poem appears.

NOTEWORTHY LOCALS

IÄI (2020) by IC-98, i.e. Patrik Söderlund and Visa Suonpää, together with poets Henriikka Tavi, Mikael Brygger and Olli-Pekka Tennilä is a "work of art immersed in the forest" in Viikki, Helsinki. I have not seen *IÄI*, but the description on the Helsinki Art Museum HAM website is intriguing. What is art immersed in the forest with contemporary poetry like?

The HAM website describes the installation as follows: "The work is composed of 38 words or syllables written on stones, rocks and trees in the forest."

This description evokes powerful images. It may be that it stays in my mind like Nestori Syrjälä's *Running Man* until one day I get to experience the work in person.

Public art can also be this: transient moments and suggestions – even mere ideas – that become enduring memories. Its material can be intangible thoughts, disappearing materials, flashes and echoes.

A similar porosity and delicacy that mixes with everyday life can also be represented by a modern statue, even if it is carved from granite.

Emma Jääskeläinen's *Put put* (2020) was unveiled in the Adriananpuistikko park in Herttoniemenranta, Helsinki, last autumn. When I first saw the statue, it had just snowed in Helsinki. At first, it was difficult to distinguish the work amid the surrounding snow. The size of a small person, *Put put* is a pale shell-like mound that sits directly on the ground, without a pedestal that would distinguish the work from its own environment.

Put put looks chubby. There are a couple of children in the park. One leans against the work, the other hugs the rough surface of the granite.

Thanks to Anna Borgman, Aleksi Malmberg, Susa Nokelainen, Sini Pelkki and Jenni Toikka, who related their trials and tribulations of 2020 to the author.

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PUBLIC ART 2020

MARI KEMPPINEN

Public art has appeared to be somewhat of a trend in recent decades, and there is no end in sight to the interest in it. In February-March 2021, the Arts Promotion Centre Finland (Taike) convened three roundtable discussions aimed at pondering important current topics and trends in public art. Public art here refers to all the visual art found outside the walls of museums and galleries in a public space. This article is based on these roundtable discussions and brings together the main themes that have emerged from the discussions. What inspires and preoccupies the field of public art today?

Participating in the roundtable discussions were visual artist Marjo Heino, lighting designer and light artist Elisa Hillgen, sculptor and architect Maija Kovari, visual artist Jaakko Niemelä, visual artist Pasi Rauhala and visual artist Denise Ziegler, and from the Arts Promotion Centre Finland, special advisor Henri Terho and art experts Maija Kasvinen and Mari Kemppinen. In addition, one of the discussions was attended by art critic Sini Mononen, who authored the annual critique of public art for this publication.

ART AS OPPORTUNITY AND RELEVANCE

Art offers the opportunity to experience relevance. The purpose of art is to create a connection between the experiencer, the work of art and the artist. Art has the ability to tackle meanings more boldly than many other professions in which relevance resonates. For example, architecture has a passion for the quality of the spaces it creates, but the means available are more limited than in art, where practically anything is possible. Creating and bringing meanings also to public spaces is both necessary and important. Each of us remembers some touching art experience, how art can confuse, comfort, stop, question and delight us! These experiences are valuable and remind us of our own humanity and the universality of things.

Public art provides an opportunity to build a better and more pluralistic society. Art in public spaces leaves a mark on the environment about us and what we consider important at this time. Art can also help to reflect on our own relationship to public spaces and how we function in them. The importance of public spaces to us has changed. One hundred years ago, displaying emotions in a public place was considered inappropriate. Social monuments have provided an opportunity for collectively processing the past. They represent things that were once considered worth remembering,

FIBONACCI SEQUENCE 1-55, Mario Merz, 1994, Turku. Photo: Vesa Aaltonen

such as great men, soldiers, and important military events. As the world changes, so does the need for what we want to address and who to remember. Having this discussion is useful and should go hand in hand with the creation of new works. We should not think of public art merely as an affirmation of things, as hegemony. Equally important is the opportunity public art provides as a counterweight. This should not be forgotten in issues related to hegemony and power. A lot of art aims to address these power structures.

There are still a lot of actors who see public art as some kind of obligation. When art is included in plans due to regulations, for example in construction, it may also be seen as a necessity and not something to be enthusiastic about or care about. How can these actors be made to see as public art as an opportunity? Establishing the role of the artist in construction projects helps to dispel the idea that art is something separate and awkward. The normalisation of and familiarity with the role of artists in construction also helps open up ways of thinking about what can be achieved with art.

It is increasingly important to talk about the value obtained by investing in art so that it is not perceived as unnecessary or superfluous. Broadening the public debate will also help in accepting art. Through discussion and openness, the public can become more familiar with public art. Highlighting different art experiences opens the way for people to reflect on their own feelings, alongside art and life.

THE DIVERSITY OF ART

Public art is constantly searching for new forms, and the field of public art has diversified. The roundtable discussions highlighted the various possibilities of media art and the use of light as a material for art. Many are also already familiar with event-based and temporary art. Light art has entered urban spaces not only through festivals but increasingly also as permanent installations. Light art has its place in the dark north and can be considered a positive trend. The Finnish Light Art Society FLASH has done a lot towards this, and starting in 2021, the City of Jyväskylä will serve as president of the international network of cities on urban lighting LUCI (Lighting Urban Community International) for the next two-year period.

The proliferation of light art has also stimulated the debate over what is light art and what is lighting design. There has also been a critical debate over multi-coloured lighting, the over-lighting of urban spaces, bright neon signs and introducing carnivalistic light into the environment. As light art increases, it would be appropriate to reflect more deeply on the content of the works and encourage a curatorial discussion. As the issue is still foreign to much of the general public, pattern lighting with standard solutions, for example, is now easily accepted as light art.

In addition to more curating, expertise in maintaining light installations, as well as other public art, is called for. The life cycle of public art works is often not thought out in advance, and many are unfortunately often left to deteriorate. For light art, a reasonable life cycle could be, for example, 5 to 7 years, after which the equipment should be updated. Of course, the work must also be serviced if necessary during that time, but with the development of technology, it is now possible to install light installations that are relatively maintenance-free during the above-mentioned estimated service life of 5 to 7 years.

The spread of the virtual world into urban spaces

In recent years, media displays have also proliferated in public spaces. Technological advances offer enormous possibilities for artists. Receivers and terminals already exist. The challenge in using media screens as an art platform is often that the screens are managed by several different providers, making it difficult to design larger integrated entities for them.

In addition, media displays almost invariably contain commercial advertising content, resulting in a potential conflict between the advertising and art content. How is the art interpreted in relation to the surrounding advertisements, over which the artist has no control? On the other hand, public art always exists in relation to its environment and comments on it accordingly. In addition, the reception of public art involves “distraction” and the separation of art “as art”, sometimes with only weak signals. However, public art on media screens differs from its environment in the same way that other public art differs from the “non-artistic” content surrounding it.

In the future, the maintenance, renewal and removal of public art will be big issues. New media are one way in which augmented reality can be used to make virtual works layer by layer on top of existing works, for example combined with murals or sculptures. This was done, for example, in the *Sculpture Expanded* exhibition project in 2019 and is still done annually in connection with the murals in Arabianranta, Helsinki.

The importance of virtual urban space will increase with the development of artificial intelligence, which will further enable virtual public art to be brought into public spaces. Individual experiences can be created, and everyone can create their own virtual reality. Technically, this will become possible within a few years as technologies such as XR (Extended Reality) headsets evolve. This will help democratise public art, especially among young people, for whom using apps, mobile devices and social media is natural.

THE STORYTELLING OF ART AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF METAMATERIAL

The importance of event-based, immaterial and temporary art is growing all the time. Today, event-based art can even succeed in art competitions.

Works can emerge not so much as physical objects but rather as stories. The storytelling and indirect experience of art inspired much reflection in the roundtable discussions.

Momentary and temporary works of public art must be experienced at a particular moment or they will be missed. The same goes for performances. The premise of public art is that it is art made for and accessible to all. However, works of public art become exclusive when they are in places that people cannot go or access. A paradox then arises as to what “public” means. The *House of Khronos* by the artist duo IC-98 is an exciting example of this. In this conceptual environmental artwork, a house and its fenced yard are left untouched far into the future, and we cannot see what the house will look like over time. The concept of a house and the passage of time is more fascinating than the house itself.

In her annual critique of public art for this publication, Sini Mononen wrote about works that she had not seen herself but that were familiar through what others have said about them. In the age of social media and the internet, experiencing things indirectly is typical. There are far more images and other “metamaterial” in works of public art than before. Metamaterial in this context refers to all written, image and video material that is included in and shared by the art but that are not in and of themselves part of the work itself. Metamaterial creates new dimensions in works. The coronavirus pandemic with all its restrictions has already increased the remote experiencing of things through devices. For many, however, the most common way of experiencing art even before the pandemic has been through storytelling. Many of us read more about exhibitions than actually attend them.

The challenge of the storytelling nature of art is the question of through whose story the work is experienced? Is there a right or wrong story about the work, and is the story becoming too important? Is the story of the work told by someone else faithful to the artist’s original purpose, or does it even matter? The destruction by fire of Villu Jaaniso’s gorilla-shaped tyre sculpture *Everything is Possible* set in motion its own reality. An online portal unaffiliated with the artist was created on which people shared pictures and told their stories about the late work. Although the sculpture no longer exists, it survived through what people told about it. There is no need to see the work anymore, as the story about it is sufficient. This underscores the importance of story and documentation in public art.

The importance of social media and documentation is particularly noticeable in the case of light festivals, the contents of which are as if made for recording on viewers’ cameras and social media channels. There is something mystical and magical in darkness and light. Audiences visit light festivals to capture moments that can then be shared in the form of images. The material of public art is always its context. Accordingly, will social media also become a material for public art? This is not altogether a good thing if,

by doing so, the side effects of social media also become part of the context of experiencing the work. On the other hand, it must be remembered that for the new generation, social media is not just a channel on which things are shared, but a place where life and also art takes place.

Nevertheless, metamaterial is no substitute for one’s own experience of art. It is interesting to consider how the experience of art changes when you get to see it for yourself. Creating stories about art and sharing them does not replace the art experience, which can also be much less than some great narrative yet as such just as valuable. An experience may just be something that happened one day. If the city were full of ongoing wow experiences, one could not function in such a place. Works of art cannot attack us with their stories. It is in fact good that the aesthetics and experience of public art are everyday occurrences.

PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS AND THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC ART

The late art critic Otso Kantokorpi travelled diligently to view public art. At one seminar, he expressed the view that most public art is bad. Creating public art is a demanding art form and differs a lot from art created for galleries, for example. Public art must endure more than one view. Permanent works remain in our environment for a long time, no matter how successful they are. Since new works seldom appear, changes are manifested slowly. However, more and more artists are earning merit through their public art, and the quality of art is being created more in the context of public art than before.

In the field of design, it is still widely held that art is something that an architect or other designer can do in a design studio. These works are still made by non-professional artists and often focus not on content but on technical implementation. Even if we want art to have content and quality, can a sub-genre of art emerge in which content is not at the core? What is a work of art if it does not exceed the threshold for a work of art? It should be remembered that the training for art and, for example, architecture and graphic design are different. Professionals in these fields have quite different skills to offer. When creating works of art, the artist’s competence cannot be replaced by that of an architect, nor can an architect’s work be commissioned from an artist. Also, the cost of a work of art will hardly be more affordable if it is created by someone other than an artist.

Sometimes the entire project may lack a person who defends the quality of the art. If the client lacks art expertise and the artist has no one to challenge and support him or her during the process, it will be more demanding for the artist to achieve a high-quality end result. For these reasons, it is important to commission art from professionals and to instil artistic expertise also among those commissioning the art.

Regionalism and the quality of art

The roundtable also discussed how, as the number of projects increases, more should be said about the quality of art. By discussing the issue of quality, one can set out to evoke people's thoughts on everything that art could be. "Bad works of art" can also be good openings for discussion. Public art always take place on the interface of citizens. The audience cannot be defined very precisely, but the making of art can be approached in different ways and it is good to consider those who encounter the art. The fact that it is perceived by different audiences also recognises the value of audiences. At the centre should always be the question of for whom public art is made.

Large cities have different critical masses and often better opportunities to experience diverse art and different ways of experiencing it than smaller municipalities. In small towns, public art easily divides opinions when local residents embrace art and criticism. On the other hand, a strong local identity can also be a resource and a good starting point for making unique and personal art. ITE Artists who work outside the art world are mainly found outside the big cities, as is a large part of the land art and environmental art.

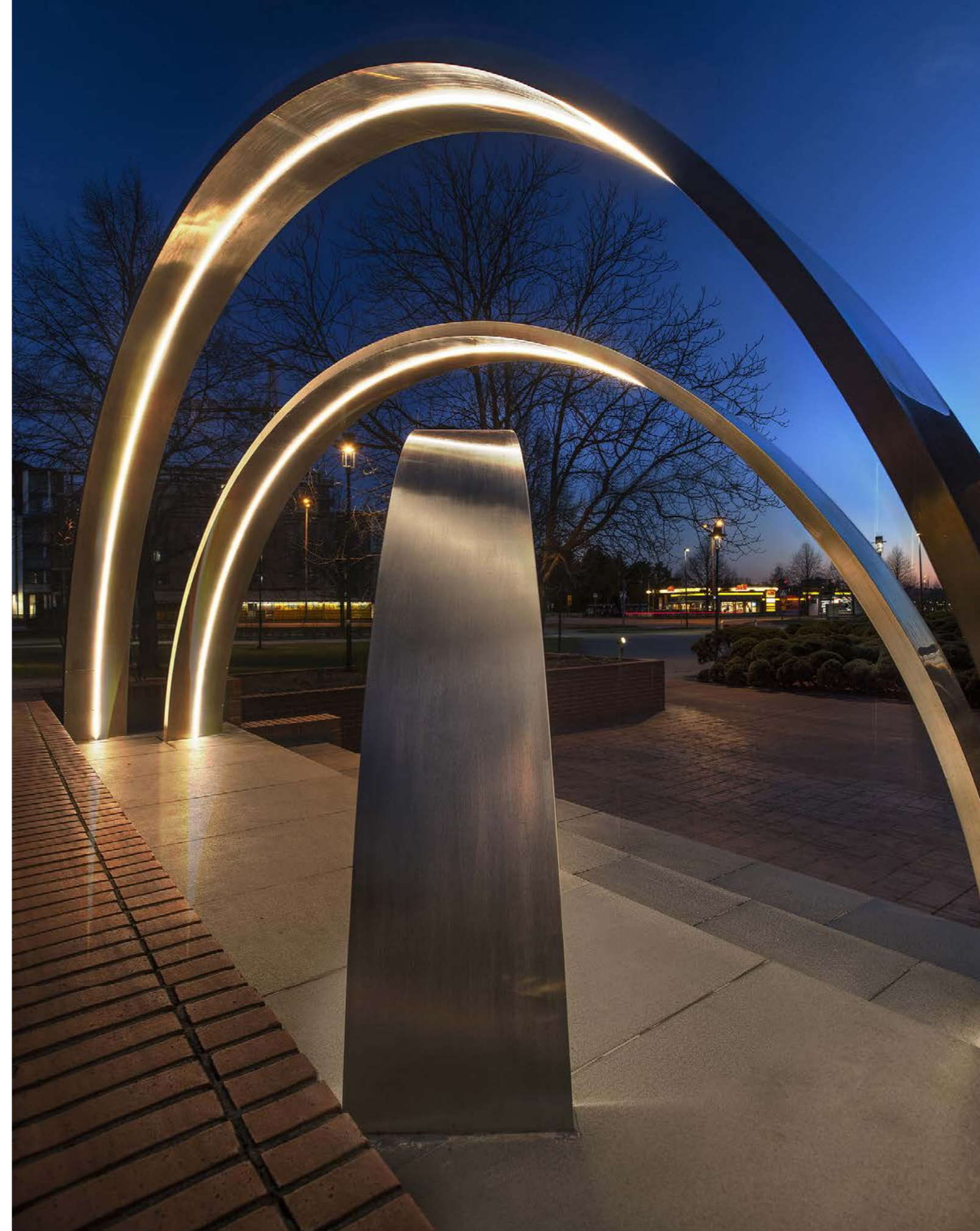
How can it be safeguarded, nurtured and encouraged that new types and artistically ambitious works of art are found outside the big growth centres? In every local municipality, the idea has to mature and public art has to grow at its own pace. It is good to start from what is beautiful and enjoyable. The various art institutions also have a role to play here to broaden the perception of public art and the significance of the concept. Of course, literacy in art develops also outside the field of public art, and locals do not always need to know whether something is art. The Aha! experience may come later.

Art at a discount

It would be good to have a more open discussion in the field about money, prices, artist fees, and what it costs to commission and create art. When discussing art budgets in public, misunderstandings, misconceptions and pure factual errors can put entire projects in a bad light. Projects that receive a negative stigma in public may even be cancelled. The diversifying roles of artists, as well as the different scopes and levels of difficulty of projects, also mean a wide variation in the amount of fees. For this reason, it does not make sense to make universally valid price lists. However, a more open discussion about money would certainly help the whole field, both for artists and those commissioning art.

The fragmentation of the field and the arrival of new actors can also be seen in the pricing. In many cases, art budgets are small, and clients are willing to pay only a little for the artist's work. Especially those who commission art simply because, for example, the local zoning plan requires it,

KAARET, Mika Natri, 2020, Raisio. Photo: Vesa Aaltonen



easily go over where the fence is lowest. Artists' own assessments of the value of their work also vary a lot, for example in connection with competitions. With the arrival of more artists, someone is always willing to work at a discount. Sometimes projects want to avoid paying decent artist fees, so works are commissioned from students. Young novice artists especially are often willing to work in return for visibility. For this reason, the Academy of Fine Arts, for example, currently has a board that evaluates on a case-by-case basis whether the art projects offered to them are fair before they are directed to students.

The harmonisation of public art & the blurring line between art and non-art

Art is already very much present in a wide variety of environments. It is found as an integral part of urban space, architecture, structures and surfaces. As art integrates into its environment, the line between art and non-art blurs. Integrated art can further replace structural parts in the future. Is there a danger of the "bulking up" of art, the fact that low-cost ready-made solutions are sold as "art"? Commissioners of art and artists should ensure that the ease of technical implementation or production does not take precedence over artistic content. It feels great to get excited and inspired by successful works of art. When something successful is done somewhere, others want to do the same elsewhere. However, works of public art should, in principle, be thought of as unique entities designed specifically for that place. Distinctiveness and uniqueness should be at the centre of art.

THE CHANGING ROLES OF THE ARTIST AND THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION

Diverse skills are needed in the field of public art. Diversity and collaboration are especially needed when creating integrated works. For example, in light art, in addition to the artist, an electrical design professional is needed. When it comes to building foundations for installations, thinking about lighting, or calculating strength calculations, it is good to have other professionals working alongside the artist. The key is to ensure that all projects involve the necessary expertise to achieve the best possible implementation. If an artist is part of a working group, this also requires a new way of thinking to understand that the end result is part of a larger whole.

Depending on the nature of the work, the artist can play a variety of roles in projects, for example as a sculptor, designer, colour designer or even facilitator. In addition to creating art, artists can act as experts in design teams, bringing an art perspective to the discussion. Education should be able to offer and open up new different roles alongside that of

the artist. The spirit of working together should come already through education. In the future, artists will be seen more and more in an expert role as part of working groups.

Public art is not suitable for all artists. Construction projects often face challenges that are solved, adapted and changed. The artist must go through this and accept to some extent the compromises that are sometimes required. In projects, all parties make compromises and are flexible when necessary. The most important thing is that the character and heart of the work is preserved and that the artist can stand behind his or her work despite the compromises. It is not necessary to agree to everything. The ability to collaborate is an essential skill when processes are collective. Even if there are processes and established practices, public art projects always include organicism and tolerance for uncertainty.

In group work, personal chemistry plays a big role, but good communication is the key to everything. Artists have to express and articulate their own work even more. When issues are discussed and verbalised, they also come to the fore. The artist must also have the ability to communicate with locals and city residents. There must be interest in telling why such a work has been made.

The significance of competition practices for changes in the field

The participation of working groups and participants from other fields, such as architecture, has also become more common in art competitions. As multidisciplinary teamwork is increasing in the field, it is only natural that the same development can be seen in art competitions. How can the position of artists in art competitions be ensured? Is there a threat that design offices will take over the field in art competitions, making it difficult for an individual artist to compete against the resources of these offices? On the other hand, through working groups, artists who may not relate to public art personally can also participate in public art competitions.

These aspects could be defined in competition programmes. Organisers can target competitions directly to professional artists or, if they wish, make other restrictions on the participants. For working groups, for example, the competition programme may require that a professional artist or artists be found among the members of the working group. However, such restrictions must be clearly stated in the competition programme.

The development of presentation techniques has also altered the tone of art competitions. The 3D design and modelling techniques commonly used in the field of architecture and design have also found their way into the art proposals of art competitions. Are competitions now being won by "presentation technology"? Does this put architects or design firms participating in competitions at an advantage? On the other hand, if an artist uses 3D design and modelling to make a competition proposal, will the competition

proposal be seen as too “architectural” and can the chosen technique receive negative points in the review?

When organising art competitions, it would be good to always stop to consider what kind of material is requested in the competition. Are presentations always needed or possibly something else? At the same time, one can consider whether the requested material enables the participation of different artistic disciplines in the competition, or whether certain restrictions are made unintentionally or intentionally.

However, it is important to trust that the jury will make their decision based on the best work and content. The jury’s professional artists are able to see from a pencil drawing whether the work is good. Jury work should also allow artist members are able to properly explain to other jury members why a certain proposal is the best one. In many cases, however, it is the other members of the jury who take the project forward after the competition, so it is in everyone’s interest that the entire jury stands behind the decision and understands the winning proposal.

Competition advice is currently provided by the Artists’ Association of Finland, which constantly updates and works to develop the service and information.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RENEWING THE FIELD

In addition to art competitions, open calls for portfolios have increased in recent years in public art. These bring together a number of artist candidates interested in the project, from which the final artist selection is made. The roundtable discussions raised concerns about how to get young artists involved in open calls for portfolios if they lack the necessary references. Open calls for portfolios are challenging for artists at the start of their careers. Since public art is a significant earnings opportunity for artists, it should be ensured that new artists also have the opportunity to get involved in projects.

For the renewal of the field, it is important to keep artist selection processes open to new artists, as well as to provide training in the field. Training allows access to the field before the artist has accumulated practical experience in making public art.

The importance of education

The issue of education has been discussed for a long time. With regard to public art, there is a lack of structures to ensure basic education in the field. For this reason, there is also a lack of continuity in education. Only specialisation or further training is available. For example, the University of the Arts Helsinki, Aalto University and the University of Lapland together offered for the first time in 2019–2020 a two-year special training course for public art experts. This year, the course will continue with new students. At Turku



TASAPAINOLAJEJA, Laura Pehkonen, 2018, Helsinki. Photo: Aura Saarikoski

University of Applied Sciences, public art is part of the curriculum as part of the Kampus ART programme.

It becomes even more problematic if the training keeps starting over from the beginning. Stronger basic structures would be needed. The issue of education is becoming more acute all the time, and it should be possible to organise it more permanently. In addition, the needs of the field are diverse. A more detailed study should be made of the educational needs of the various parties involved in public art. Training should be available to artists, intermediaries, experts and commissioners of art.

Those commissioning art should have knowledge of the technical implementation, but also some understanding of the artistic process.

Strengthening process expertise from commissioning art to maintaining the works is important for all parties involved in the projects. Consolidating best processes on a broad basis takes patience and time. The more knowledge and expertise there is among organisations commissioning art, the less it will be up to individuals to embark on art projects. Instead, it becomes part of the way the organisation operates.

Public art education for artists

Public art education should be available to art students and artists not only through occasional courses and competitions. Many art schools teach basic techniques, tools and so on in the first year. The first year of study is the moment when one is looking for a direction for one's own artistic work. Could one option be that public art is included already at this early stage? Later, competence in this field could be deepened also through entrepreneurship studies. In addition, it would be a good idea to offer further education opportunities for artists who have already graduated.

There is also a call for creative entrepreneurship training. Graduating artists may not perceive all the different options there are for entrepreneurship in the field. For working in the field, however, this is important in order to be able to hold one's own side and to understand how different ways of working affect an artist's earnings and opportunities. Budgeting and pricing one's own work are also part of the professional skills of an artist.

It would also be useful for public artists to learn about construction processes and phasing. When it comes to multidisciplinary collaboration, it is helpful to outline the context in which one is working and understand it in relation to other parties in the field. This makes communication easier. For example, the Building Information Foundation RTS (*Rakennustietosäätiö*) has published a useful information card entitled "Art in Construction Projects" (*Taide rakennushankkeessa*) that is worth referring to.

However, it cannot be demanded that all artists should have an in-depth understanding of construction processes simply because many artists may make only one or a few public art works during their careers. There are public art coordinators and curators in the field who have the expertise to bring together art and construction. Their professionalism should be utilised. Many artists also work in the role of both artist and coordinator, changing roles according to the project. The need for the special expertise of art intermediaries has increased in recent years as the number of public art projects has increased.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF PUBLIC ART TO SOCIETY

The recent Architectural Policy Programme Apoli2020 discusses the role that architecture will play in solving future problems. Public art is linked to and runs in parallel with architecture and design. The position of public art

is strengthened by the fact that art will be more closely connected to architecture and related goals in the future. We may be allergic to art having some externally set purpose, but public art must keep up with the developments that are taking place in its context and in the world around it. In the future, the world of problem solving will be what is important. Artists should be involved in this discussion. Artists can choose the means for themselves. Change can open up new opportunities to build society also through art.

The role of art in building the identity of regions is a current topic around the world and in Finland too. Appeal and attraction are talked about in urban planning. Regions are branded and form their own brand through art. This topic also involves the social inequality of regions and both participatory and communal arts, where professional artists are working with certain groups to make their regions distinctive.

Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen's "Discussion Park" (*Keskustelupuisto*) in Rauma is a great example of a successful community and urban art project involving local residents. Municipalities are interested in community and participatory arts, but in many cases these projects have little funding, so the impact can be modest.

However, art should not be harnessed to solve social ills that simply cannot be solved by art. For example, an artist may be asked to create community art in a situation where a social worker would be needed more. In such projects, it must always be ensured that the artist also has all the necessary support or skills, and it must be remembered that art cannot replace social support structures that are lacking.

In the roundtable discussions, the multidimensionality of the field of public art was well recognised. Public art is constantly taking new forms, and our understanding of the field and its practices are evolving alongside it. Ways of working should be in place that enable the field to renew, that is to allow the entry of new actors, ideas and art forms into the field. Public art is a demanding art form in which professionalism plays an important role. People encounter public art in the middle of their own daily lives, and in this way it has the power and opportunity to reach and touch those who do not experience art in museums. Public art is not born in a vacuum but is strongly connected to its environment and the surrounding society.

s. 1 **RUUSUKATU OULU**, Kaisa Salmi, 2013, Oulu. Photo: Kati Leinonen

s. 2+3 **740 H**, Terhi Heino, 2012, Oulu. Photo: Kati Leinonen

s. 4 Henri Terho, photo: Vilja Pursiainen

s. 30+31 **TUOHI**, Antti Immonen, 2018, Joensuu. Photo: Kati Leinonen

s. 32 **METSÄKAURIS / BAMBI**, Matti Haupt, 1957, Helsinki. Photo: Aura Saarikoski



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