



Examining the Semiotics of the Influence of Environmental Art on the Audience from the Urban Perspective

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Abstract

One of the concerns of today's world is the environmental crises that are born from modern thoughts in the industrialist era that affects human life. Environmental Art is one of the branches of the new art, which seeks to examine with a new attitude the relationship between art and nature and offers a new perspective on the coexistence of humans with the environment, and makes involving of the audience and stimulating the mental perception, the inseparable part of the work. This art enriches the landscape and the environment to play an important role in shaping the meaning of the environment. Since the environment and human habitat can have the greatest influence on human mind and the role of reproduction of semantic and mental development of urban space is one of the most important factors in the formation of community mentality, therefore, in this research, the examination of semiotics of the influence of environmental art on the audience from the urban perspective has been dealt with.

In this article, after referring to the fundamental issues, the author examines the semiotics of four works of environmental art from an urban perspective. The method of research is based on the descriptive-analytic nature of the method of data collection is the combination method (library and field) and the method of data analysis is also qualitative. The results indicate that in the works of environmental art, using index signs, it is possible to attract the audience and create meaning by it in his mind, cause the formation of a new look in the urban community on environmental issues.

Keywords:

Environmental Art , *Semantics* , Urban Landscape , Audience

Introduction

In the twentieth century, looking at the city as a purely physical phenomenon changed to a style that, in addition to objective representation, affected the mental needs of the community. Today, the urban landscape is the first factor affecting the representation city, which affects the minds and behavior of the community. Urban perspective is the result of meaning, a meaning derived from the experience and culture of the urban society. Creating emotional links with the object (place) is a prerequisite for psychological balance that can overcome the human identity crisis



of today's human and provide the context for the audience to engage with the subject. Environmental art is a way of representing, improving and promoting the relationship between man and his surrounding environment, as well as the relationships between art and society and the environment. Environmental art involves a number of heterogeneous visual aspects that allow an object to extend to take its space. Environmental art as a new phenomenon in today's world has recognized its place in the society. The urban environment is a suitable context for displaying this art due to the formation of cultural and social factors and events.

Research Question and Hypothesis

This research examines the issue that which is the influence of environmental art on attracting audience by using one of the indexing, figurative and symbolic elements? From an urban perspective, what is the method of reproducing the meaning for attracting the audience in the artistic environmental works from the semiotic perspective?

The research hypothesis research is on this that in environmental art, for attracting the audience and producing the meaning, index elements are used.

Research Aim

Given that environmental art, deals with making interaction and creating connections by using accessibility, creating participation, creating levels of activity, it is with the presence of people and its onlookers that this art makes sense. The aim of this research is to discover the mysteries of this relationship and how to create a new perspective on environmental art in the minds of the audience and its influence on the urban society.

Research Methodology

The research methodology is based on the descriptive-analytic nature. The data collection method is the combination (library and field) and the method of data analysis is also qualitative, that to this end, the resources and articles and visual examples that have been devoted to environmental art, as well as the discovery of secrets of attracting the audience is examined and studied from the perspective of semiotics. The statistical population examines 4 samples of environmental art works that have been used in the urban landscape.

Research Background

Research has been conducted on this subject, some of which are mentioned:

- Environmental Art. 2014. Saeed Azamati. Quarterly Review of Art Book, No. 3 & 4.
- This article reviews the book of environmental art, which is one of the few books that have been published on this subject. This book, called Environmental Art, is a contemplation in meaning giving elements to perspective, a work by Reza Sirus Sabri, published by the Tehran Municipality Beautifying Center has published it in 2013.
- Cultural semiotics in the works of environmental art. Asieh Mohammadian, Dr. Mohammad Reza Sharifzadeh. 2013.

In this research, cultural semiotics has examined the present relationship between the culture of nature and the works of environmental art and also examined the three works from three



prominent artists of environmental art and examining the signs in these works through cultural semiotic approach and the lower semantic levels of the work are examined.

- The role of environmental art on creating a memorable urban space, case study: Vali Asr Street, Tehran, 2016. Mohammad Farshidi.

In this research, it has been attempted to answer the question of whether environmental art as a new element in the city, which carries meaning, can influence the creation of memorable spaces, and in this case which factor is the most influential in realizing this goal?

- Identifying and analyzing the causes of the emergence and function of interactive art with an emphasis on interactive art in Iran. 2014. Qaderi, Erfan. Assistant Professor Ahmad Nadalian and Adviser Professor Mohsen Marathi.

In this thesis, employing descriptive-analytic method and using library resources and the Internet, thirty works from the most prominent samples of foreign and Iranian "interactive art" have been introduced and analyzed. The results of the research show that, despite the many similarities between the types of participation / interaction-based artistic art (including collaborative, cybernetic, proportional art, and etc.), each has its own specific definition and should not be confused with each other and providing a special "interactive art" definition is essential. It was then shown that, based on this definition of "interactive art", examples of Iranian participation / interaction-based, except in a few exceptional cases, are not interactive, but are from other types, including collaborative, cybernetic, and so on.

- Examining the role and position of the audience in interactive arts. Abbasi. Foroud. Professor Mehrnaz Kowkabi and Mostafa Asadollahi.

In this study, the effects of innovative technologies on the process of digital age art, the development of modern arts, especially interactive art, the change in the nature of art and artist, has led to a change in the audience's position from the viewer and the audience to the participant and action viewer and it was followed by the transformation of ways of conveying the messages to the audience. Studying the arts of motion in business commercials between 2000 and 2016. July 2006, Shiva. Supervisor Dr. Seyyed Nizamdin Emami Far.

In this research, it has been tried to promote the role of motion arts in modern advertising.

- The role of the audience in the interactive art (case study: interactive layout). 2015. Seyyedin, Bahareh. Assistant Professor Reza Afhami and Mehdi Keshavarz Afshar.

This fundamental review focuses on the concepts of interactive art, with a case study on interactive layout for assessing the experience and the role of audience by using the many existing human-computer interaction (HCI) methods of such interactive works, examines the aesthetic criteria governing the experiences of interactive art.

Environmental Art



The environmental art was born in the 1960s, following the artistic movements of the twentieth century, in the post-war political and social atmosphere. During this period, the conditions governing the community had destructive effects on culture and nature, artists began to publish messages to the international community with the advent of the movement of environmental art and with the presentation of works of natural elements and materials as well as the natural context for the presentation of the work. Their first works were to demonstrate protest against the laws of the museums and to return and communicate between man and nature, as well as to create a new and conscious view of art in relation to the cultural, economic and biological environment, and with the traditional view before it was different.

Environmental Art is one of the branches of the new art, which seeks to address humanity and nature with a new perspective. An environmental art is composed of two terms, the Art and the Environment, is a mix in which the artist creates a pre-planned three-dimensional space in such a way as to include the viewer and puts him/her in the collection of the sensory stimuli. Creation of the work in natural environments and using natural and special materials is of the characteristic of this art which of course, these works may also have the characteristics of instability and attenuation. Environmental art is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as: "An artistic form in which artists create three-dimensional space. In the Dictionary of Art, Jane Turner, provides the definition of environmental art as: "An art form based on the premise that a work of art must overcome the integrity of its environmental architecture, and should be considered as a form of a complete space, not reduced to an object hanging on a wall or something inside a space" (Turner, 1996). The term environmental art is defined in the encyclopedia Encyclopedia of Ribbon Pakbaz as "a term used to describe the three-dimensional works that the audience can enter into their environment and sense themselves in the environment made" (Pakbaz, 1999). In Reza Cyrus Sabri's Environmental Art Book, environmental art is defined as follows: "a kind of presentation in nature, in order to communicate directly and broadly with the general audience and the more attention to the environment, which is rooted in Developments and industrial currents of the contemporary era" (Cyrus Sabri, 2013). Generally, environmental art is a way of representing, improving and promoting the relationship between man and nature surrounding him, whose distinguishing aspect from other arts is the place of presentation that is not in conventional places such as museums and galleries.

The goal of environmental art is not merely formalistic, because there is interaction between culture and nature, thus the goal is a cultural approach with an environmental and humanitarian consequence.

Urban Landscape

Urban landscape is a collection of natural and artificial factors that are formed under the influenced of the specific cultural, social, economic and historical characteristics of the city. The city's urban landscape is a representation of city that influences the minds and memories of its citizens and its significance in the aesthetics and identity-making aspect is very important to the community. Many believe that urban space is evaluated from both physical and social aspects by thinkers. That is, physical studies have been more from the viewpoint of architects and social studies have been from the point of view of urban sociologists, planners and urban geographers. Until the twentieth century, that art, philosophy and science and social institutions



were not separated from each other, urban space represented the community, and there was no difference between the form of urban space and its function. With the beginning of the twentieth century, and the spread of modern thinking more than ever, modernism considered urban space as the imposed result of the social functions that takes place in the city. The urban landscape can be defined in two aspects: first, the urban landscape is in the form of an objective reality, and the other urban landscape is from the point of view of the mind and the citizen's perspective. And in some cases also, the objective and subjective are parts and parcels of each other.

Introduction to Semiotics (Semionlogi)

Semiotics is a science that examines the types of signs and factors involved in the process of production and exchange, and the embedding of them, as well as the rules governing the signs, and examines the nature and the way of connection and meaning in various phenomena and systems (Mohajer, 2001). According to Umberto Eco, "semiotics includes the study of anything that refers to something else" (Emamifar, 2009). A sign is something that sits on the sidelines from the point of view of someone, in a direction or capacity. The sign refers to someone, that is in the mind of that person, he creates an equal sign, or perhaps an extended sign, that the sign thus created is called the interpretation of the first sign (Sojoudi, 2008.). The sign is the basis of one of the methods of text analysis. If we want to simply clarify the meaning of semiotics in plain language, it can be called systematic study of all the set of effective factors in the emergence and interpretation of signs (Nouri, 2006).

Although the roots of semiotics in history go back to Plato and Augustine, semiotics as an independent theory at the beginning of the twentieth century was raised in the writings of Charles Sandoz Pierce and Ferdinand de Saussure. From Saussure's point of view, the sign does not link an object to a name, but connects a concept to the audio imagination. The audio concept is not a material voice that has a physical aspect, but it is the mental work of this vocal, and the sense of our representation, is a sign of a tangible language, and if we call it material, it is only in that sense and in opposition to the concept (Emamifar, 2009). From Saussure's point of view, the sign is a form of cause and effect and the relation between the cause and effect is called indication. From Pearce's point of view, the sign has a three-dimensional pattern: Representamen: A sound that takes its sign and is not necessarily material. Interpretant: The meaning of the sign. Object: The sign refers to it.

Pierce calls the interaction between the representation, the subject matter and the interpretation as the process of sign. According to Pierce's classification, semiotics is divided into three categories: iconic and symbol and sign (the same source) a symbolic sign, "the sign (appearance) is not similar to the signifier (interpretation) (Mousavi Lar, 2014)", "signs that are related to the subject through an agreement or firm solidarity with general ideas (which are chosen based on a contract, not merely a similarity). Classical symbols such as flags, peace pigeons, driving signs, musical notes and Morse alphabet, such as a system of arbitrary signs are considered in this classification. Symbolic signs are more have more social functions than other signs (Sojoudi, 2008).

An iconic sign is a sign that depicts its subject based on similarity, and hence implies something. The design of a statue, a picture, a simplified image that represents a tree or a house, is considered an icon in case it resembles a tree or a house" (Chandler, 2007, p. 95); "the



relationship between sign and signifier(subjective image) is based on similarity" (Mousavi Lar, 2014).

An iconic sign is a sign that refers to the subject and is known by the link it may establish with it. According to Pierce's definition, the symbol is a sign that has been influenced by the subject itself. That is, the index of what remains of the subject matter is called a symbol. Such as: the scintillation of the face as a sign of fatigue, smoke as a sign of fire or cloud as a sign of rain (Sojoudi, 2008; Imamifar, 2010). The amount of arbitrariness of the relationship between the sign and symbol in these three types of signs decreases accordingly. Symbolic signs such as the language, are very conventional, and have a slightly symbolic sign, the iconic signs are somewhat conventional and symbolic signs attract the attention according to compulsive blindfolds to their objects. It can be said that figurines and figurative signs are more bound to their signifiers, while in symbolic signs that are more conventional, these are signifiers denoted by the signs (Imamifar, 2009).

Explicit meaning, implicit meaning

Each word may have implicit meanings in addition to its "literal" meaning (its explicit meaning). In semiotics, the explicit meaning and implicit meaning of truth are concepts that deal with the relation between sign and signifier, and the type of signifier is distinguished: explicit effect and implicit effect. (Sojoudi, 2008) the term explicit is described in terms such as "definition", "literal sense", "tangible meaning" or "meaning based on general reception". (Chandler, 2007), the term "implicit meaning" refers to sociocultural and "personal" associations (ideological, emotional, etc.) (Sojoudi, 2008).

The Audience in Environmental Art

At the beginning of the twentieth century, changes were gradually made in terms of audience and artist, with the advent of technology and the birth of the virtual world, other forms of the past did not meet the needs of the artist and the audience, but the need for mutual interaction in the new world was felt and caused the creation of the new art. Environmental art is one of the branches of the new art, which can be used by the artist to deepen the relationship between human and nature, and draw attention to the dangers that threaten the environment, as well as new symbiosis with the surroundings facing the artist and audience. An environmental art invites the audience by engaging and stimulating the audience and influences his/her subjective perception to interaction and participation. Environmental art seeks to create conditions that has examined the improvement of relationship between human with nature and has attracted his/her attention to the dangers that threaten today's environment and to help the society to address these problems. In this regard, artists have created new works and presentations of the environment and nature, and they try to present a developed and new and deep view on this issue. In the twentieth century, this idea that the audience be able to be a part of the work even the painting or the bulk and be regarded as a part of the work was capable of acting as an efficient and uniting factor. Creating emotional ties with an object is of the prerequisites for mental balance that can overcome the human identity crisis today and provide the context for the audience to engage with the subject. Environmental art involves a number of heterogeneous visual aspects that allow an object to extend its space to encompass its own space.

Examining the Samples of Environmental Art from the Semiotic Point of View



Since issues related to the environment are one of the most important issues influencing the mental and physical health of the community, thus the revival of the lost human relationship with nature, which is rooted in the industrial developments of the contemporary period, has always been a matter of concern. In the following, by showing 4 samples of the environmental art of the urban landscape has analyzed and interpreted and has examined how they are influencing the audience and has illustrated the process of producing meaning and comprehension of the content from this perspective.

Sample Number 1



The environmental work titled The Plastic We Live With in France, thousands of plastic bags have been collected for months from the city's stores and warehouses, and have been arranged in front of the building's facade, lit up from the back at night, and are displayed like colored glasses, and have been collected after 4 days and transported for recycling. The explicit implication of the work is on the facade of the building, whose windows are covered with plastic bags and behind it is lit with a lamp. The implicit implication of the work is on attracting the attention of the public to the fact that the consistent use of these harmful substances leads to involve all aspects of our lives, which leads to environmental degradation, and warns the audience about the risk endangers our ecosystem. In this work, because the sign implies the signifier, the indexes used to attract audiences have been used, given the fact that it indicates the signifier, and the observation of the relationship between the facade covered with plastics and the warning of the dangers of these plastic materials in the ecosystem, symbolic signs have been used to attract the audience.

Sample Number 2





Madrid's 2017 Plastic Waste Labyrinth - This labyrinth is made up of bottles that have been used for one month and are non-biodegradable. The length of the corridors is 170 meters (558 feet) and the walls are 3 meters (10 feet high) and the area of 300 square meters (3230 square feet), which is located around the statue of King Philip. In this work, the explicit implication of the work is on labyrinth or rectangular maze, consisting of four rectangles interconnected in each other, and it is made up of narrow corridors with walls made of plastic bottles, and these walls are illuminated with the blue color light and the corridors create a warm and stinking environment. The symbolic signs draw the attention to their objects, and the sign is bound in the signifier. In the above work, it is a collection of bottles that is directly related to the subject, the rectangular interconnected form also conveys the concept and, given the fact that in the discussion of the interaction, the audience, participating in the work, the concept and the content (the signifier) is completely dependent on the form of the work (sign). In the interpretation of the work, the implicit implications of the work is dealt with of what kind of content the work conveys. In this work as mentioned above, is to convey the malicious effect and the complications of these plastic wastes and the work wants to convey the bad feeling that is created due to the accumulation of his waste to the viewer, that is why he has considered a space to convey a feeling of is that the effect of the accumulation of these wastes For this reason, he/she has considered a space to convey to the viewer a feeling of apprehension and dissatisfaction.

Sample Number 3



The 30m square sandy carpet of the island of Hormuz, Iranian artists in the week of tourism, designed the "Happy World Tourism Day" and "Tourism for All" in two languages of English and Persian as the main role of sandy carpet with 7 kinds of earth color. The logo of the Qeshm Free Zone Organization and the 6th of October date, as a World Tourism Day, is also featured in colored soils on a part of the sandy color carpet. The explicit implication of the work on the definition has been mentioned. Implicit implication of the work is showing the natural attractions of the island of Hormuz to attract tourists as well as the goal of showing natural amenities in this area, such as colorful soils and environmental preservation. In this work, the sign is dependent on the signifier, so the indexed signs are used to attract the audience.

Sample Number 4



The work titled The Dream of Peace in the Persian Gulf is by Ahmad Nadalian, a well-known Iranian artist. Implicit implication of this work is that, when riding a bicycle and moving by the person on the beach, the line script “Dream of Peace in the Persian Gulf and Clean Environment” will be printed. The wheels of this bike were designed and prepared by recycling old tires. Implicit implication of this work is that the bike is of the clean vehicles and using it helps to protect the environment and the ecosystem and to have clean air, encourages the audience to use these vehicles. In this work, the sign is physically and causally dependent on the signifier, so indexed sign is used to attract the audience.

Conclusion

In this research, the importance of the existence of environmental art from the urban perspective and the process of understanding the meaning and content and attracting the audience from a semiotic point of view such as “explicit implications and implicit implications” and “sign and signifier” have been discussed and according to these descriptions, the importance of the contact of the audience with environmental work is observed. Accordingly, recognizing the signs plays an important role in attracting the audience and understanding the meaning and content by him/her, as well as having a significant influence on reading the environmental work of art in the mind of the audience. Since the urban landscape is the first representation of the city that influences the minds of the people, thus, it has a significant influence on the behavior and spirit of the community, accordingly, influencing on the behavior of the community individuals in terms of environmental issues and warning in this case and using symbolic signs are represented in the mind of the viewer and a new perspective is created in the mind of the viewer. By reviewing four samples of environmental art samples, in most environmental works, indexed signs are used for the process of producing meaning and attracting the audience.



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