



**Temporality of Public Art**  
**: its Evocative Function of Space and Time in Everyday Life**

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## *Abstract*

Title and subtitle:

*Temporality of Public Art: its Evocative Function of Space and Time in Everyday Life*

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Abstract:

Starting with an awareness of plain public art which is permanently installed, I begin to pay attention to temporality. As the term “public art” itself carries mutually conflicting concepts, previous researches have mainly focused on issues like “political aestheticization” and “privatization of public space” in terms of development and democracy. From a more socio-aesthetic viewpoint, this thesis will discuss public art noticing the following features; a tendency of contemporary art that appreciates everydayness and a public that actively responds to art and interacts with the space wherein they live. In this context, I will argue that with a limited temporal duration, public art can evoke sense of space and time more efficiently and it renders art more public. This alternative function of temporary public art is examined by discussing examples from Seoul and Malmö.

## *Table of Contents*

<b>General introduction</b>	
Introductory outline of the problem	4
- Point of departure: public art in Seoul now	4
- Research problem and focus: permanently there	5
- Research interests and hypothesis: temporality and evocative moment	6
Case studies and limitations	7
Earlier research and gap in knowledge	7
Outline of the thesis	8
<b>1. Art in public space</b>	
1.1 Public vs. private and third space	11
1.2 Space produced by spatial practice	12
1.3 From place to space in the process	12
1.4 Debate over private art in public space	14
1.4.1 The case of <i>Tilted Arc</i>	14
1.4.2 The case of <i>Flowering Structure</i>	15
1.5 Community-specific new genre public art	16
1.6 Limitations of public rhetoric	17
1.7 Conflicting public and fleeting site-specificity	18
<b>2. Art as everyday experience</b>	
2.1 Everyday life as production	21
2.2 Tactics from within the established	21
2.3 Moments out of everyday repetition	22
2.4 Contemporary art and everyday	24
2.5 Temporality in public art	25
2.5.1 Memory in temporality: from monument to mind	25
2.5.2 Space in temporality: new visions of the familiar	26
<b>3. Art as public spectacle</b>	
3.1 A few reasons art becomes spectacle	27
3.2 Need for critiques and records	29
<b>4. The case of <i>A Secret Garden</i></b>	
4.1 Place: Cheonggye stream in Seoul	32
4.2 Art: <i>A Secret Garden</i>	33
4.3 Public based on differences	34
4.4 Quality of temporality	37
<b>5. The case of <i>by Light</i></b>	
5.1 Park and night	38
5.2 Light the park through art	39
5.3 Light and temporality	42
<b>Conclusion</b>	44
<b>Bibliography and sources</b>	46

## *General Introduction*

### **Introductory outline of the problem**

- *Point of departure: public art in Seoul now*

There is an artwork titled “*Hammering Man*” in a business district in downtown Seoul.<sup>1</sup> This gigantic man who is 22 meters high and weighs 50 ton is actually hammering every one and seventeen seconds throughout the day. Seeing its slow movement lifting the hammer up and down, passers-by often stop walking and look at it. In the middle of going somewhere, of doing something, people might see themselves by seeing this “working” statue. However, this is not a common experience in Seoul to have a moment’s interaction with a piece of public art that comments the site and its architecture.

The majority of public art in South Korea has been installed according to a governmental regulation which stipulates for clients to allocate up to 0.7 percent of the whole construction cost in an artwork.<sup>2</sup> By this policy, over 8,000 pieces of artwork nationwide are viewed in public spaces now and nearly 90 million US dollar market is created in this area every year.<sup>3</sup> However, due to the fact that the responsibility regarding public art is imposed mostly upon the private sector, the aim of the policy which is to aesthetically contribute to a better city environment seems to be difficult. In most cases, artworks are carelessly put in front of buildings and around apartment complexes which rather undermine surrounding scenery.<sup>4</sup> Except very a few, which is the case of *Hammering Man*,<sup>5</sup> generally an artwork is not a primary concern for clients. This is contrary to the policy’s intention, even if it can be an effective way of promoting the image of the company or the architecture.

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<sup>1</sup> *Hammering Man* by Jonathan Borofsky. It was installed in 2002.

<sup>2</sup> *Weekly@Arts Management*, no.38, July 23, 2009

[http://www.gokams.or.kr/webzine/main.asp?sub\\_num=21&state=view&idx=249](http://www.gokams.or.kr/webzine/main.asp?sub_num=21&state=view&idx=249)

It used to be a recommendation but became obligatory in 1984. And it is now applied to buildings over 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> of scale. In the sense that it was enacted shortly before Seoul Asian Games in 1986 and Seoul Olympic Games in 1988, the relation between public art and urban development can be inferred.

<sup>3</sup> *Public Art*, vol.35, August 2009

<sup>4</sup> One of the reasons for this is that considerable amount of money is tended to be paid for an art broker as a rebate not for an artwork. *Public Art*, vol.5, February 2007

<sup>5</sup> It was selected as the most loved public art in the year it was installed. *Hankyoreh*, March 3, 2006  
<http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/BOOK/106120.html>

Grasping this problem, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism is recently making an effort to revise the law in the direction of strengthening publicity.<sup>6</sup> In parallel, this movement becomes visible through establishing a ministry-affiliated organization or a committee under a local government that is specialized in planning urban landscape and commissioning public art and design.<sup>7</sup> In principle, I think this change of public art's installation from the private to the public will set art in public space on the right track. Yet it is undeniable that the somewhat narrow understanding of "the public" or "public" and taking advantage of art for political end are witnessed based on what have been done for a couple of years by these public institutions. I shall discuss this issue more in the following chapters.

- *Research problem and focus: permanently there*

Among the problems on public art what I most concern is its permanence. Under the policy mentioned above, public art will be there regardless of its quality and negative responses to it as long as it fits the mathematics unless the building is torn down. Permanent installation of low level public art is not the only matter I would like to address here. I would also like to bring more emphasis on the time effect on public art.

When we did a fieldtrip to Knutpunkten in Helsingborg,<sup>8</sup> two pieces of artwork attracted me most: one was the blue arc-shaped hanging figure inside and the other was the bronze sculpture like a pyramid placed outside. The point of concern is not their artistic presentation.<sup>9</sup> Nor is it the site: the central space encountered when using the escalator for the former and the space right in front of the entrance to the

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<sup>6</sup> According to this revision, a client has one more choice that is to cost 0.7 percent for public art and endow 0.3 percent for public fund. And the fund managed by public institutions will come to spend for public art in public spaces like a park or a plaza. It means that areas you can see public art will be expanded. *Weekly@Arts Management*, no.38, July 23, 2009

<sup>7</sup> Seoul City Art Gallery Project (2007), Korea Design Foundation (2008) and Anyang Public Art Project (2007) are the representative examples.

<sup>8</sup> The fieldtrip connected to the project *Pass, stay or go – Helsingborg's Knutpunkten as a Space of Interaction, Communication and Urban Visibility*, was conducted from September 21 to 23, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Afterwards I saw the sketches of the two artworks exhibited at Museum of Sketches that focuses on archiving public art. The title was *Splash* and *Bon Voyage* for each. Especially *Bon Voyage* by Carl Magnus was unanimously selected by jury in competition and was installed on May 21, 1992. *City Helsingborg*, <http://www.helsingborg.se/templates/StandardPage.aspx?id=51888&epslanguage=SV>

station for the latter. The problem is their absent presence, formed by the long-time placement. If we did not pay attention to visual impacts at Knutpunkten, they would have been passed unnoticed in spite of their artistic intentions.

On the list of the public arts which are commissioned and viewed by the public institutions stated before, temporary artworks or art projects are included too. This change is a small step forward to broaden the occurrence and variety of public art. However, permanent artworks overwhelmingly outnumber temporary ones. And that many of them are not properly maintained is another problem to point out. It is not hard to see public art turned into a plain or even unpleasant object degenerating its environment.<sup>10</sup> This is where the matter of democratic use of space is raised. In the name of the public, people sometimes have to see an artwork which they are not fond of. To be clear, however, what I will argue is not that the value of an artwork is destined to fade with time, nor that permanent public art is less appropriate, so that it needs to be replaced by temporary one. But temporary public art is a growing phenomenon, gaining interests.

- *Research interests and hypothesis: temporality and evocative moment*

Therefore what I would like to research is the alternative effect or the function of temporality of public art. And as the word public art itself involves public space and people within, its temporality also cannot be detached from the discussion of space and people's everyday life. Let me take the example of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *The Gates*.<sup>11</sup> Aside from its achievement in terms of economics and tourism,<sup>12</sup> to me what is the most impressive is its temporality lasting only for sixteen days. In the grey winter time, it gave people the orange-colored spectacle shining through the bare trees. I think it showed what can be earned by public art; that is site-specific as

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<sup>10</sup> There is an argument that the less communication created with public, the worse maintenance observed. *Public Art*, vol.18, March 2008

<sup>11</sup> It consisted of 7,503 saffron-colored vinyl gates and was sited along the 23 mile-long walkways in Central Park, New York city from February 12 to February 27, 2005. Volz, Wolfgang (photo), *Christo and Jeanne-Claude: The Gates, Central Park, NYC, 1979-2005*, Taschen, 2005

<sup>12</sup> The number of visits to Central Park during the two weeks was estimated nearly four million which is increase of almost 400 percent over a normal two weeks in February. Kornblum, William, *Masses at The Gates*, *Dissent*, vol.52, no.3, 2005, p.95

well as time-specific. Although it received critical reviews from art critics,<sup>13</sup> it seems to be hard to deny that the moment of *The Gates* was imprinted on people's minds.

Like the case of *The Gates*, I will claim that temporary public art evokes efficiently the sense of space and time. This is the hypothesis of this study and that is because it stays for a moment and disappears. In public space wherein people live everyday whether staying or moving, an artwork with a short-lived feature serves an opportunity to create a special moment in daily life and different images of a familiar space. Besides the evocative function of temporary public art in everyday life, I will also examine the critical viewpoint over temporary art or art project which tends to consider them as a mere spectacle or an entertaining event in the next chapter.

### **Case studies and limitations: *A Secret Garden* and *by Light***

The hypotheses will be examined by taking specific examples of temporary public art and by applying theories to them. One is "*A Secret Garden*" installed in Seoul and the other is "*by Light*" viewed in Malmö. They are selected since I think that they represented the evocative function in terms of historical sense of place and temporal sense of night respectively. When I was considering examples for a case study, I deliberately delimited a public art which is tangible and occupies a certain space for a certain period of time. As a result, performance type of temporary artwork was excluded. This is in order to accentuate the difference of temporary art with its permanent counterpart.

### **Earlier research and gap in knowledge**

Although there are considerable studies on public art, not many of them specifically

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<sup>13</sup> For example, "*The Gates* is a wildly successful kitsch spectacle." Scott, Peter, *Bread and Circuses*, Art Monthly, no.322, 2008, p.5; "*The Gates* may be a minor Christo work, pooh-poohed by the art Establishment. But as event, as spectacle, as public gesture, whoah! [...] *The Gates* is a form of visual pollution, in that view, an example of the hype and Philistinism perpetrated by the middle-class American mob." Stevens, Mark, *Curtain up*, New York, vol.38, no.7, 2005, pp.64-66

focus on its time factor. Miwon Kwon's research on the change of the concept of site-specificity,<sup>14</sup> James E. Young's thoughts on counter-monument<sup>15</sup> and Patricia C Phillips' short article on temporality of public art<sup>16</sup> are among a few of them. On the topic of public art, the most heavily discussed issues are about the notion of site-specificity and art as a visual strategy in favor of city aestheticization. Researches on individual public artworks in specific cities are another major approach. Given the current state of researches on public art, I would like to put more stress on a temporal dimension incorporating a sociological approach of everyday together with the contemporary art's tendency that appreciates everydayness.

### **Outline of the thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters excluding an introduction and a conclusion. The body text is grouped into two parts; one for theoretical underpinnings containing the first three chapters and the other for case studies containing the rest.

#### *Theoretical framework*

This is a basically theory-based work. Therefore, first and the foremost, the theoretical underpinnings will be built up and inter-developed along the questions that this study will raise; which is that what does "public" mean in public art and space?, how do everyday life and art meet?, with regard to this what does temporality imply?, and how can we understand the phenomenon that temporary artwork tends to be considered as a spectacle rather than an artwork? In the following three chapters, these questions will be presented depending mainly on the thoughts of Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, Miwon Kwon, Rosalyn Deutsche and Arthur C. Danto.

1. *Art in public space*: In this chapter, I will develop the thought on space and its publicity. Through the finding that space is a product which is constantly created by spatial practice, it will be drawn that public or private is not fixed but changing. And

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<sup>14</sup> Kwon, Miwon, *One Place after another: site-specific art and locational identity*, MIT Press, 2004

<sup>15</sup> Young, James E., *The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today*, Critical Inquiry, University of Chicago Press, 1992

<sup>16</sup> Phillips, Patricia C., *Temporality and Public Art*, College Art Association, 1989



by analyzing the *Tilted Arc* case, I will discuss how the efforts to pursue publicity in art have been changed from site-specificity to new genre public art. Furthermore, the limitations of the two notions will be indicated and their reinterpretations will be suggested.

2. *Art as everyday experience*: In order to understand how public art meets people and affects them, this chapter will be devoted to thinking about everyday life as the context where art and the public encounter. The tactical nature of everyday praxis which enables to transform routine and consumption into a moment and reproduction will be described. In this context, the meaning of temporality will be stressed. And the tendency of contemporary art which pays more attention to everyday life and is often represented in a temporary form will be discussed

3. *Art as Public Spectacle*: In relation to the contemporary art's tendency, more often art is considered and consumed as an image or a spectacle. This trend tends to be intensified when an artwork has a temporal feature. In this chapter, I will critically examine this phenomenon and also point out the lack of critical language on public art in general, and stress the importance of reviews and records of temporary public art.

#### *Case studies*

Based on what will have been described in the previous chapters, I will examine my hypotheses in the rest chapters taking specific examples of temporary public art and applying theories to them.

4. *The case of A Secret Garden*: It was created by Jungpyo Kim and installed in Cheonggye stream in central Seoul from April 28 to May 30 in 2009. For one month, people walking by the stream encountered a hundred of Korean women's traditional clothes hanging in the air. I will explain how this artwork evoked the historical memory and present meaning of the place in everyday life associating with its transitory feature.

5. *by Light*: This art project was created by various artists and displayed from

October 31 to November 9, 2008 in the Castle Park, Mariedal Park and the Castle Gardens in Malmö. It was designed to attract more people to the park during the night hours. I will analyze how the time-limited installation contributed to show the other face of the familiar space hidden in the darkness. In addition to this, I will discuss the feature of light that is an ephemeral material often used for temporary art.

## 1. Art in public space

### 1.1 Public vs. private and third space

In comparison to the opponent “private”, the word “public” appears to be easily identified. Private means “for or belonging to one particular person or group only” whereas public means “concerning, or available to the people as a whole.”<sup>17</sup> Like the marked contrast in these definitions, it seems that public stands for openness, accessibility and democracy. Private corresponds with exclusive and restricted ownership.

Yet the division is not clear in reality. For instance, a plaza is generally considered as public space where people gather, take a rest or hold political demonstrations for exchanging opinions. However, in almost all countries, official permission is required to use plazas to take political actions there. In other words, it can be said that the right to use spaces such as plazas lies under government authority.<sup>18</sup> Especially urban planning financed by the state tends to cover this arbitrary standard on public space. As Benjamin points out in the case of Haussmann’s urban renewal of Paris, public space such as public parks and pleasure grounds created by “strategic beautification”<sup>19</sup> even provides the illusion of “social equality.”<sup>20</sup>

Under the state system, there is also a case when public space legally turns into private one. Food vendors on the street or open markets at a plaza are private profit-making businesses in public space. On the other hand, there is privately owned space which is open to public access such as parks, school campuses and even galleries. In more complex cases, what about spaces like a balcony over the street or a caravan park? As Miles claims, “a binary categorization of urban space as public or private ignores transitional spaces which may be influential in the formation of patterns of

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<sup>17</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://www.askoxford.com>

<sup>18</sup> Since the change of the government in 2008, politically progressive groups’ requests for meeting in plazas tend to be rejected by Seoul city in South Korea.

<sup>19</sup> Buck-Morss, Susan, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, MIT Press, 1989, p.90

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p.89 As an example, Kwanghwamoon plaza in Seoul which plays a role as a city attraction rather than as a place for public communication can be discussed in this context. Its design is not appropriate for public gathering and it has mainly functioned as a venue for city promotion and sports events since it was opened in August, 2009.

sociation.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore whether the space is public or not cannot be defined only by the concept of ownership.

### *1.2 Space produced by spatial practice*

Then what creates transitional spaces that blur the clear distinction between public and private? According to Lefebvre, space is a social product. Every society produces a space by its own spatial practice.<sup>22</sup> Spatial practice is the concept embracing the process of production and reproduction. And the subject who conducts spatial practice is people living their lives in a given space and time. Therefore it entails power relations embedded in the process and time when it is happening. As Lefebvre states, “our knowledge of produced space must be expected to reproduce and expound the process of production. The ‘object’ of interest must be expected to shift from *things in space* to the actual *production of space*, but this formulation itself calls for much additional explanation.”<sup>23</sup>

This is the repetitive circular logic of production and reproduction. Therefore spatial practice generates the dialectically interactive process of producing and reproducing a space. Consequently, from Lefebvre’s broader view on space as a human product, the binary pair of public and private divided in terms of property is subsumed under social space where spatial practice is always ongoing. So as Rendell puts “the terms public and private are shifting and mobile boundaries choreographed through looking and moving, determined by personal/ cultural/ social/ historical conditions that is to say by spatial practices.”<sup>24</sup>

### *1.3 From place to space in the process*

In a similar sense, De Certeau makes a distinction between space and place. According to him, “a place (*lieu*) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with

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<sup>21</sup> Miles, Malcolm, *After the Public Realm: Spaces of Representation, Transition and Plurality*, International Journal of Art & Design Education, 2000, pp.255-256

<sup>22</sup> There are purely natural space left at the background but it is disappearing and he predicts that it will be gone soon. Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*, Basil Blackwell, 1991, p. 30

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, pp.36-37

<sup>24</sup> Rendell, Jane, *Public Art: Between Public and Private*, Advances in Art, Urban Futures, 2000, p.22

which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence.”<sup>25</sup> To situate every element in the “proper” location “*beside* one another” without overlapping or a conflict is the law of this ordered place and the way of finding “*stability*.”<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, “a *space* exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements.”<sup>27</sup>

To put it another way, engaging Lefebvre’s conceptions, space is where spatial practice is happening. It is not homogeneous since the number of spatial practices is as many as people who conduct it, nor is it orderly, properly processed since it happens all at once on the thread of ambiguity in a very trivial way. When one is walking or talking with a friend on the street or at a shopping mall, these places commissioned by a state or by capitalists are transformed into a space. That is, “*space is a practiced place*.”<sup>28</sup> Once space is practiced (produced) it becomes a place, then its stability is challenged soon again by spatial practice to which the power of subversion is inherent (reproduction). Like De Certeau succinctly puts, “to walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper.”<sup>29</sup>

As a result, there is no clear cut that divides private territory from public area. Through spatial practice, the public is transformed into the private, place is transformed into space and vice versa. They are not separated clearly, rather, they co-exist making multi-layered characters in the same space at the same time. So the character of space is not pre-defined. What matters is people in the space, their practices in daily life. When the dynamics of space making and the people’s active role in it are understood, the discussion on public art in this study can be developed properly.

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<sup>25</sup> De Certeau, Michel, *Practice of Everyday Life*, Univ. of California Press, 1984, p.117

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p.117

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p.117

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p.117

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p.103

#### 1.4 Debate over private art in public space

Then what should art be in public spaces where heterogeneous elements are colliding and an ever changing producing process is kept going? In fact, unlike the seemingly simple combination of words, the term “public art” connotes the very controversial, unstable relationship between art and public. For, as Rendell clarifies, “art itself is often considered a subjective and personal activity, and so the placing of art in public, represents the placing of a private self in a public space – the social space of public art is at once both public and private – ‘private’ art in a ‘public’ site.”<sup>30</sup> Two examples will examine this elusive aspect of public art.

##### 1.4.1 The case of *Tilted Arc*

Richard Serra’s “*Tilted Arc*” is frequently mentioned as the artwork that ignited a strong debate over public art in early 1990’s. It was a curving wall of raw steel, 120 feet long and 12 feet high that carves the space Federal Plaza in half.<sup>31</sup> It was commissioned by United States General Services Administration (GSA) and installed in 1981. From 1985 several hearings were held over the relocation of *Tilted Arc* and against it Serra’s several legal actions were taken until it was finally removed in 1989.<sup>32</sup> This long-time debate started from an issue on “public use of the plaza.” Apparently this gigantic steel arc



Figure1. *Tilted Arc* by Richard Serra, 1981-1989, New York

literally blocked the view over the other side. Aside from its interrupting physicality, the artist’s claims made against the relocation appears to be elitist and even arrogant. He declares that “I am interested in sculpture which is non-utilitarian, non-functional. [...] any use is a misuse,”<sup>33</sup> “to remove the work is to destroy the work”<sup>34</sup> and “art

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<sup>30</sup> Rendell, p.23

<sup>31</sup> It was installed in Federal Plaza in New York city. *PBS website*, [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/cultureshock/flashpoints/visualarts/tiltedarc\\_a.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/cultureshock/flashpoints/visualarts/tiltedarc_a.html)

<sup>32</sup> Deutsche, Rosalyn, *Evictions: art and spatial politics*, MIT Press, 1996, pp.257-258

<sup>33</sup> Kwon, Miwon *One Place after another: site-specific art and locational identity*, MIT Press, 2004, p.72

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* p.73, Serra insists that “*Tilted Arc* was conceived from the start as a site-specific sculpture and

is not democratic. It is not for the people.”<sup>35</sup> In addition, the seed of the debate was laid on the commissioning process in the first place. The six panels who approved its installation were the selected artists and the three from GSA.<sup>36</sup> No one was there on behalf of the people in the neighborhood.

#### 1.4.2 *The case of Flowering Structure*

There is a quite similar case as *Tilted Arc* in Korea. Created by Frank Stella who is as renowned as Serra in minimalism art, “*Flowering Structure*” has been displayed in 1997 at the entrance to a steel company building located in downtown Seoul. It was made of hundreds of pieces of cast stainless steel which is 9 meter high.<sup>37</sup> Since it was exhibited, however, it has been controversial because of its resemblance to scrap-metal. Although its relocation to a museum has been discussed, it is still there overshadowed by trees. Despite its private ownership, since it is viewed in open space accessible to pedestrians, it is not free of public criticism. And now it is hidden from view.

In these two examples, public seems to be defined as that more people can enjoy a good art. But it turned out that they were criticized rather than be loved. According to Miles, “the role of art is to transform spaces into places,<sup>38</sup> the public into people. This entails a merging of individual with common interests, without contradiction.”<sup>39</sup> Following this criteria, both artworks seemed to fail to play the right role as a public art. Even if they are highly evaluated in terms of art, they lacked a certain link connecting with common people in public space. Therefore the verdict upon *Tilted Arc* seems to be fair. The rather ridiculous action taken on *Flowering Structure* after controversy could be understood as well, because the decisions seem to consider “public use of the plaza” and “public aesthetics.” However, as written, art is a

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was not meant to be “site-adjusted” or [...] “relocated.” It will be discussed further regarding the notion of site-specificity later on.

<sup>35</sup> PBS website

<sup>36</sup> Kwon, p.81

<sup>37</sup> Magazine Hankook, August 7, 2008,

[http://weekly.hankooki.com/lpage/08\\_life/200808/wk20080807144303100510.htm](http://weekly.hankooki.com/lpage/08_life/200808/wk20080807144303100510.htm)

<sup>38</sup> Irrelevant to De Certeau’s definition of space and place, in this context space refers to neutral, geographical location while place refers to somewhere engaged with emotion or memory. Jeff Kelly states “a social site (space) filled with human content is a place.” Lacy, Suzanne, *Mapping the terrain: new genre public art*, Bay Press, 1995, pp.141-142

<sup>39</sup> Miles, Malcolm, *Art for public places: critical essays*, Winchester School of Art Press, 1989, p.4

personal expression, so it is impossible that random public apprehend it identically. Therefore it is problematic to interpret the function of public art just as placing a high art in open space or as binding individuals into people without contradiction.

### 1.5 *Community-specific new genre public art*

In the 1990's, a new movement has been started over public art scene. As Judith F. Baca states, it reflects the critical awareness on the existing public art which is "tied to the non-functional state, relegated by an "art for art's sake" tyranny."<sup>40</sup> Lacy called this phenomenon "new genre public art." Lacy defines that,

It is not specifically painting, sculpture, or film, new genre art might include combinations of different media like installations, performances, conceptual art, and mixed-media art. [...] Attacking boundaries, new genre *public* artists draw on ideas from vanguard forms, but they add a developed sensibility about audience, social strategy, and effectiveness.<sup>41</sup>

In a nutshell, the most distinctive features that new genre public art differs from the traditional sense are its media diversity and engagement with audience group. So "public" in terms of new approach does not mean to broaden accessibility to fine art, but to concern social issues that people including artists as citizens are facing today. In doing so what art ultimately aims for is to be a catalyst to provoke movement for change.<sup>42</sup>

As a result, new genre public art has come into being based on community-specificity. It is not for random public but for specified people who share the same situation. Therefore to learn the place as well as people in question is prerequisite for intimate communication through art. And in this regard, what is notable in most cases is the fact that artwork is made by the collaboration between artists and ordinary people. For example, there is the artwork titled "*Touching words, beautiful*

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<sup>40</sup> Lacy, Suzanne, *Mapping the terrain: new genre public art*, Bay Press, 1995, p.135

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p.20

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, p.177



*memories*” that is installed on the wall in front of the school for blind children in Seoul. Younghwan Bae, the artist designed the work from the start bearing children’s participation in mind. So this tile art which consists of children’s handprints on cannot be created without their help.<sup>43</sup>

While discussing community-based public art, Kwon points out the importance of labor from audience. As she puts,

Investment of labor would seem to secure the participants’ sense of identification with “the work,” or at least a sense of ownership of it, so that the community sees itself in “the work” not through an iconic or mimetic identification but through the recognition of its own *labor* in the creation of, or becoming of, “the work.”<sup>44</sup>

The meaning of public, from the perspective of new genre public art, is achieved through this two-way communication between artist and audience engaging (labor) collaboration. So “public art is not built on a typology of materials, spaces, or artistic media, but rather on concepts of audience, relationship, communication, and political intention.”<sup>45</sup>

### 1.6 *Limitations of public rhetoric*

As seen, the heated debate started from *Tilted Arc* expanded to the discourse of public art in general for a decade. And as a rebound, the movement of new genre public art has come to rise and the meaning of public has been re-examined in terms of community based site-specificity from sharing art with more viewers. However, it is hard to say that the public art debate came to an end. On the contrary, the series of discussions exposed the complicated nature of public art once again.

Let me go back to *Tilted Arc*. Its removal was for the public use of plaza. Its

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<sup>43</sup> It was created as a part of “Seoul City Gallery Project” in 2008. *Seoul City Gallery Project* website, <http://www.citygalleryproject.org/work/work.php>

<sup>44</sup> Kwon, p.96

<sup>45</sup> Lacy, p.28

installation in the first place was for the public as well. Are they referring to different public? What made them decide the installation and the removal in the same name of public? Is there public in the discussion anyway? Deautsche in here reads a rhetoric of public, usefulness and democracy. She puts that,

Government officials disparaged critical art under the banner of “antielitism,” a stance consistent with a general tendency in neoconservative discourse to accuse art of arrogance or inaccessibility in order to champion privatization and justify state censorship in the name of the rights of “the people.”<sup>46</sup>

What about public art engaging people’s active participation then? It also has left problems unsolved concerning public. More often than not, this new genre public art seems to put attention mostly on involving people into the art-making process. Of course it could be understandable that “public engagement is an important part of its aesthetic language.”<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, in reality, there are artworks which provoke a question like what is the difference between artwork and social work if the aesthetic aspect does not really matter? In this sense, Mary Jane Jacob directly indicates that “the latest “art outside the mainstream”, being praised as “the new” and damned as “not art,” is the new, community-based public art.”<sup>48</sup> Aside from its aesthetic quality, however, a more necessary question to ask is whether or not public, sharing, integration and all can be accomplished through art-making collaboration.

### *1.7 Conflicting public and fleeting site-specificity*

Therefore to find the *raison d’etre* of public art is difficult when restricted to the narrow interpretation of public and site-specificity which is pursuing unitary harmony through art. Contrarily, regarding public, first we need to think about the possibility of reaching the perfect state of public where has any conflict or division. In here, to remind how space is made would be helpful. Lefebvre explains that,

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<sup>46</sup> Deautsche, p.265

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p.19

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, p.55

Space is simultaneously the birthplace of contradictions, the milieu in which they are worked out and which they tear up, and finally, the instrument which allows their suppression and the substitution of an apparent coherence.<sup>49</sup>

Likewise, as an artwork placed in public space, it is more likely to cause different responses, confrontations and discordance in terms of aesthetics, its meanings and locations. By accepting these traits of art and space, public could be understood differently not as something collective or common but as a process itself to draw productive discourses out of conflicting elements and perspectives. As far as I am concerned, this is the public value indeed.<sup>50</sup> In this regard, *Tilted Arc* seems to be a true “public” public art. But we need to reconsider the term site-specificity.

Opposed to Serra’s claim “to remove the work is to destroy the work”, however, initially “site-specificity presents a challenge to notions of ‘original’ or ‘fixed’ location, problematizing the relationship between work and site.”<sup>51</sup> So it is not the word referring to definitive relationship between art and site, rather referring to the function of art as a media that “occurs in a displacement of the viewer’s attention toward the room which both she and the object occupy.”<sup>52</sup> Therefore it cannot be public simply by insisting the strong tie between the art and the public site.

This is so for the community-based site-specificity. Even if delimiting the group of audience to those who share a social issue, there is no good enough reason to see them as “one.” Community is not “some happy, consensual unit.” There are people who want to get out and there must be room for strangers as well. Therefore, as artist Wodiczko<sup>53</sup> indicates, public art needs to “offer ways for people to step out of their community to reenter the community.”<sup>54</sup> Consequently, what is clearly drawn from the reinterpretation of public and site-specificity is that these concepts are not tied to

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<sup>49</sup> Lefebvre, p.402

<sup>50</sup> In this regard, Deutsche rightly indicates that it is necessary “to recast public art as work that helps create a public space in the sense of a public sphere, an arena of political discourse.” Deutsche, p.267

<sup>51</sup> Kaye, Nick, *Site-specific art: performance, place and documentation*, Routledge, 2000, p.2

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p.2

<sup>53</sup> Krzysztof Wodiczko is Polish-American artist well known for his outdoor projection artworks.

<sup>54</sup> Phillips, Patricia C., *Creating Democracy: A Dialogue with Krzysztof Wodiczko*, Art Journal, 2003, vol.62, no.4, p.42

a physical location of space and community. Rather, they ask possibilities to create differences and potentials to re-perceive the familiar. In this context, temporality of art is worthwhile to notice.

So far, I have attempted to understand the nature of space and its publicity. In addition, I have examined the conflicting feature of public art in which contain both private and public. However, by knowing that space is produced by people's spatial practice, public can be identified as a concept which encompasses different elements. And with the comprehensive understanding of public, art's public aspect can be found not only in the relation between art and site or in the collaboration with audience. It can be found in a conflict and in a movement. Based on the new definition of public and site-specificity, I will discuss public art in everyday life more in the following chapter.

## **2. Art as everyday experience**

The big difference between public art and museum art is the way people get to see them rather than the space wherein they are placed nor than the implication which is something public they attempt to represent. We see public art in daily life. I have seen *Hammering Man* mentioned in the introduction, usually when I go to the movie theater in the building on weekends. Seeing the statue, the sentiment that I felt was relaxing and compensating one for myself after five working days. That sentiment would be different from that of those who encounter it during the hectic commuting time. What is important here is that the statue enables to draw certain feelings out of individual beholders situated in each different context. It gives them thereby a chance to have a special moment. Neither an attempt to transform individuals into unified public, nor to link an artwork to a physical site, as for public art, what is more to be expected is providing a variety of room for interpretation to and communication with people. Therefore, first and the foremost, to know the meaning of everyday life as well as its relationship with space is crucial.

## 2.1 *Everyday life as production*

Everyday life was deemed as routine, not as something to speculate. But Lefebvre stresses the necessity of the critique of everyday life criticizing the abyss between philosophy and everyday practices. Cooking, walking and playing seem to be trivial “residue”<sup>55</sup> irrelevant to superior activities such as thinking. Yet these “human raw materials” hide “the wealth of the content” and it is true that knowledge is actually drawn from everyday ordinary practices.”<sup>56</sup> As described earlier, as how walking on the street (spatial practice) produces space out of place, simple activities in daily life is social practice, that is, praxis which is producing life itself. So everyday life is a product and “the producing activity (production) produces man.”<sup>57</sup>

Meanwhile, in parallel with capitalism, everyday life has been consumed and manipulated by producers who have financial and authoritative power. Like Federal Plaza was appropriated in the name of public by administrators and developers, everyday life is vulnerable to strong producers. However, social praxis does not reduce only to controlled consumption. Since triviality and weakness of everyday life can be converted to flexibility and timeliness which is able to insinuate it in the ordered system and reproduce something new and other.

## 2.2 *Tactics from within the established*

In this regard, according to De Certeau, consumption which is usually considered as a passive activity under capitalist consumerism, however, has the other side hidden. Products are produced by capitalists and the proper way to use them is imposed on each item. Nonetheless, the way they are used and operated is not always followed by the guideline. In many cases, we use them and re-appropriate them in various ways of our own. Simply, walking not on the lined path is one of the deviated consuming practices. Take another example. In general, mass-media is censored and filtered in favor of interests for the privileged. Despite manipulation, especially

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<sup>55</sup> “‘what is left over after’ all distinct, superior, specialized, structured activities have been singled out by analysis.” Lefebvre, Henri, *Critique of everyday life*, vol.1, Verso, 1991, p.97

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p.86

<sup>57</sup> Lefebvre, Henri, *Critique of everyday life: Foundation for a sociology of the everyday*, vol.2, 2002, p.237

nowadays the truth is disclosed on the Internet by ordinary people. They willingly offer what they know about the issue and each source is combined little by little so that finally goes beyond individual knowing. This is how collective knowledge is completed. And more often than not this reproduced knowledge influences backwards to the established system.

De Certeau calls the way that enables different consumption “tactic” differentiating with “strategy.”<sup>58</sup> While strategy is a means for the strong, tactic is that for the weak. While strategy is to produce things, tactic is to use products. Yet in the procedure of using products, even without knowing it, they create differences, contradictions which are laid outside of the system and conversely “they subvert them from within.”<sup>59</sup> This is everyday social praxis through consumption. And tactics are operated on the basis of temporal pertinence whereas strategies are imposed on the physical place to establish “proper” rules getting rid of time’s intervention. Quoting from Lefebvre, “strategies pin their hopes on the resistance that the *establishment of a place* offers to the erosion of time; tactics on a clever *utilization of time*, of the opportunities it presents and also of the play that it introduces into the foundations of power.”<sup>60</sup> Therefore what creates newness and differences from established everyday does not depend on permanent stability but on the temporal attack.

### 2.3 *Moment out of everyday repetition*

Social time within which we live everyday consist of two scales; linear time and cyclic time.<sup>61</sup> Linear time passes like an arrow flying in a certain direction. It is usually connected to knowledge, reason and techniques.<sup>62</sup> So, some call the direction a progress. It never occupies the same point in time sequence but just goes straight. Our life goes along with this time line. Although it will stop at a certain point, time keeps running as it is. Whereas realizing linear time and ourselves as a finite being in it, we perceive time as repetition in daily life. Having three meals a day, working five

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<sup>58</sup> De Certeau, p.34

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p.32

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, pp.38-39

<sup>61</sup> Lefebvre, vol.2, p.231

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, pp.231-232

days a week, everyday goes around and around like seasons in nature. Therefore it is no wonder that we feel everyday life like a monotonous repetition. However, spring this year differs from last year's and will so from coming year's as we all know. Since that even if the signals of time are repetitive, "the newness springs from the repetition."<sup>63</sup>

The newness out of the repetitive is created through transforming a mechanical "instance" in a flying time sequence into a precious "moment." According to Lefebvre, a moment is chosen and singled out of everyday's triviality.<sup>64</sup> "From then on they are no longer experienced in 'lived' banality, but are taken in charge at the heart of 'living.'"<sup>65</sup> This chosen moment continues only for a certain time.<sup>66</sup> If it is continued it turns into the lived again, into plain everydayness. A moment exists only in temporality as human being earns its meaning in finitude. And when choosing a moment, there is a motive behind.<sup>67</sup> Without it, everyday will remain routine. By means of motive, people get to select a moment from everyday dullness and give it a meaning. So far as it stays in limited time, a moment is valid.

I have attempted to examine a few properties of everyday life supported mainly by Lefebvre's and De Certeau's theories. Unlike its passive and trivial aspects, it is the realm where social relations created and connected, where the weak slip into the ordered system and make little changes by tactics. And out of flows of dull and repetitive day by day, a moment which is bracketed from it comes into being. And in these features what is commonly found is temporality. In a place, against strategies, out of everyday, social praxis reproduces space through tactics making special moments. Only when this chaotic, productive dimension of everyday life and its temporal importance are taken into consideration, public art could become a motive to light up everydayness.

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, p.340

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, pp.348-349

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p.352

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, p.349

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, p.356

#### 2.4 Contemporary art and everyday

Attention on everyday life is not new at all in contemporary art scene. Either by using everyday goods as a material or by taking ordinary narratives as a theme, art has come down to earth and strived to have connections with people. Minimalism which seems to be detached from everyday is actually one of attempts to approach viewers. When seeing a minimalist artwork, its overtly simple figure rather renders audience bewildered and change the direction of contemplation not to the artwork but to themselves seeing it. In here, a subject or an object does not exist as a fixed definition, nor does artwork as an absolute. Instead, what exists is the relation between an art and a beholder and the space where they are both in. So the true art here is not an art object. It is the communication created in between the relationship. Attention on everyday life can be understood in this context. Rather than exclusively expressing one's own creativity or creating immortal piece of work, artists try to engage us with art. As Wodiczko says, they want to be an artist that is "*not an artistic artist, but a life artist.*"<sup>68</sup>

Intervening into everyday life, the realm of art has been enlarged also. In fact, the attempts have been made to expand and blur the border of art hybridizing with different disciplines like architecture or science. When artist Eliasson<sup>69</sup> was asked about the cross-over nature of his works, he answered that "it doesn't matter for the quality of the project<sup>70</sup> whether it's art or not. It's an absurd discussion because saying it's art doesn't add anything."<sup>71</sup> And he emphasized that his concern is "having people interact with the work,"<sup>72</sup> art's openness towards every new visitor and its changeability for the next day. Therefore contemporary art is more like a medium generating communications than a self-inclusive existence. Therefore, as for a medium fabricating everyday, uncertainty, instability, ambiguity and impermanence are more desired attributes than that of permanence, continuity, certainty,

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<sup>68</sup> C. Phillips, Patricia, *Creating Democracy: A Dialogue with Krzysztof Wodiczko*, Art Journal, vol.62, 2003, p.47 (my italics)

<sup>69</sup> Olafur Eliasson is Danish-Icelandic artist whose works "grapple with a provocative set of challenges to the status quo of museum practice." Eliasson, Olafur, *Take your time: Olafur Eliasson*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Thames & Hudson, 2007, p.4

<sup>70</sup> I have noticed that more contemporary the art is more often called as "project" than as artwork or art piece. I would like to study further on art as a project.

<sup>71</sup> Grynsztejn, Madeleine, *Olafur Eliasson*, London: Phaidon, 2002, p.31

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, p.31



groundedness.<sup>73</sup> And contemporary artists do not seem to mind the fact that artworks are consumed as a media, motive or a catalyst. On the contrary, they are willing to offer ways of experiencing things differently since it is true art for them.

### 2.5 *Temporality in public art*

Public art today is not separated from the tendency of contemporary art described above. However, a temporary feature of public art is not found as often as a permanent one. I think that it is because of the narrow understanding of “public”, “site-specificity” and lack of attention to “everyday life” as examined; which means unifying without heterogeneity, fixing against moving, profound than approachable. Yet, as Phillips accentuates,

Public art is public because it is a manifestation of art activities and strategies that take the idea of public as the genesis and subject for analysis. It is public because of the kinds of *questions* it chooses to ask or address.<sup>74</sup>

That is to say, an artwork is not finished per se. It is a question (product) which needs to be answered (reproduced). Through the process of interaction with people, it can be meaningful at last. In this context, temporality of art proves its tactical aspect; that is, the evocative function of space and time. I will briefly explain the function of temporality with examples.

#### 2.5.1 *Memory in temporality: from monument to mind*

The monument is the archaic type of and takes a major part in public art we encounter. They are usually made of durable materials such as marble, granite, bronze etc. The site where they are installed is mostly where the event which the monument commemorates has happened. And once erected it will be there for long. The intention is clear that the event should never be forgotten and its memory should be shared by public permanently. Therefore a monument resists time by means of

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<sup>73</sup> Kwon, p.160

<sup>74</sup> C. Phillips, Patricia, *Temporality and Public Art*, Art Journal, vol.48, no.4, 1989, p.332 (my italics)

lasting substances and a strong tie to the very site. But in most cases, the will and efforts employed on monuments have turned out to be in vain. Not only the event, but also the monument which was supposed to keep the memory comes to become unrecognized.

Coinciding with the tendency of art today, artists have made an effort to overcome “the death of the monument”<sup>75</sup> and suggested new types. James E. Young calls them “counter-monument” and introduces a few cases memorializing Holocaust. The problem which the artists found is that existing monuments are isolated from everyday life “doing our memory-work for us”<sup>76</sup> while we forget about it. In response to the awareness, they have tried to bring monuments within people. And by taking the form of self-abnegating or self-consuming, they expose a changing process. It invites viewers and stimulates them so that the memory moves into their mind from the monument. As Young rightly points out, “by formalizing its impermanence and even celebrating its changing form over time and in space, [...] the counter-monument re-marks also the inevitable -even essential- evolution of memory itself over time.”<sup>77</sup> Not only by being against time but also by being flexible to it memories can be reborn.

### 2.5.2 *Space in temporality: new visions of the familiar*

Apart from the memorial function, temporality efficiently provides chances to perceive a familiar space differently by disordering the ordered space. Wodiczko’s works would be a good example. His works are conducted by projecting media-images on architecture or monuments. For instance, in his “*Homeless Projection: A Proposal for the City of New York*,”<sup>78</sup> he casted the light images on the statue of Abraham Lincoln, George Washington and so on in the Union Park in New York City.<sup>79</sup> These images represented a kind of symbols of homeless people such as a shopping cart or a crutch. In 1986 when the gentrification and urbanization was under progress by city developers, this work reminded the public of those who were

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<sup>75</sup> Young, James E., *The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today*, Critical Inquiry, vol.18, no.2, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992, p.272

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p.273

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, p.295

<sup>78</sup> Created by Krzysztof Wodiczko, it was viewed in the Union Park in New York City, 1986

<sup>79</sup> Deutsche, p.3

forced to be ousted from their residence. By transforming the solemn statues into the weak, he provoked the real-estate issue and revealed another look of the space. This light and temporal touch upon the monuments not only raised a social problem. It also brought back the dead monuments in presence.

There is even the work merged into natural tempo. The “*Green River*” which is literally to dye rivers with green color has occurred in some cities.<sup>80</sup> What the artist intends through the project is to dismantle ordinary everyday in a familiar space to help people re-perceive where they are and the relation they have with the space.<sup>81</sup> The green will soon disappear swayed by flows but the moment witnessing it will be left as a memory in each individual. With a temporary stay, public art motivates us to be spatially conscious and to have a moment to rethink.

In the latter part of this chapter, I have tried to figure out the tendency of contemporary art which focuses on everyday as well as the temporal attribute. And I have had a brief look at the public artworks where these qualities are both employed. They were intervening into our daily life and bringing up what has been ignored and hidden depending on temporal attack. Thereby the memory was recalled from oblivion, the space was sensed with the other view. I think this is the meaning of public art which enables people to refashion everyday by evoking a moment. Yet sometimes these qualities are deemed as a factor which obscures the identity of art. I will deal with this issue more in the following chapter.

### **3. Art as public spectacle**

#### *3.1 A few reasons art becomes spectacle*

While researching, one thing I have noticed is that there are some words frequently used to describe temporary public art; such as spectacle, festival, event, performance, project etc. Sometimes they signify a form or a modality that the artwork took. But

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<sup>80</sup> Olafur Eliasson displayed the work in Tokyo, Japan (2001), Stockholm, Sweden (2000), Los Angeles, USA (1999), Moss, Norway (1998), Bremen, Germany (1998). Olafur Eliasson’s website, [http://www.olafureliasson.net/works/green\\_river.html](http://www.olafureliasson.net/works/green_river.html)

<sup>81</sup> When it took place in Stockholm, people mistook it as environmental pollution whereas only a very few people cared it in Los Angeles. Grynstejn, p.18

sometimes they are used to insinuate in a way that the work of art is aesthetically low standard but spectacular in an entertaining way. In fact, this reaction goes for contemporary art in general and it is not surprising.

Regarding the term “spectacle,” as Guy Debord poignantly indicates, we cannot deny the fact that spectacles, appearances, mere surfaces are separating us from our concrete life. Under the capitalist mode of production, alienated from the products that we produce, we are standing in a passive position yearning for the images of products. As Debord states, “the domination of the economy over social life brought into the definition of all human realization the obvious degradation of *being* into *having*.”<sup>82</sup> From this viewpoint, contemporary artworks which often do not seem to be elaborately styled or seriously narrativized, could be seen as vulgar art that is intended to fill the public’s visual hunger covering realities.

Moreover, the fact that they tend to be used as a visual strategy for city aestheticization by political force might be one of the reasons that they let fall their identity as art in doubt. *The Gates* and Eliasson’s *Waterfalls* project,<sup>83</sup> for instance, also received negative comments related to this. About the latter, a critic points out that “in securing an artist who enjoys critical acceptance from the cultural establishment, [...] Mayor Bloomberg has curated the ideal candidate to join in his campaign to pacify New York.”<sup>84</sup> Likewise in Korea, the large part of public artworks today is created by supports from the governmental institutions. Whether artists are aware of it or not, to some extent, it is undeniable that their works become a strategic spectacle to promote the sense of unitary identity hiding political aim behind it.

The quality of everydayness in contemporary art seems to make it devalued too. Taking an ordinary object as an art material or having a trivial theme renders it unserious and easy. We know the famous examples like Duchamp’s *Fountain* and Warhol’s *Campbell Soup Can* or *Brillo Box*. They are not even copies, but exactly the same goods that we can buy at a store. One step further from here since post-

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<sup>82</sup> Debord, Guy, *Society of the Spectacle*, Black and Red, 2005, p.17

<sup>83</sup> *The New York City Waterfalls* by Olafur Eliasson, 2008.

<sup>84</sup> Scott, Peter, *Bread and Circuses*, Art Monthly, p.322

minimalism, as Foster claims, art's *faux*-phenomenological tendency has been heightened. After minimalism which dismantled the concept of art and space, post-minimalism art has provided the techno-mediated pseudo-experience involving illusion and distraction.<sup>85</sup> For instance, when Eliasson conducted *Waterfalls* project in New York by means of scientific technologies, it produced a kind of "techno-sublime"<sup>86</sup> so that the viewing experience was not purely phenomenological.<sup>87</sup>

Coinciding with this art's tendency today, the reception as well seems to consume art rather than appreciate it. It is more obvious when art involves movement in public space and temporality. We are seeing public art mostly while we are moving. On the move, public art is more likely to be fallen into city spectacles. Discussing the definition of non-places, as Augé describes the tourists' experience of city as "snapshots memory,"<sup>88</sup> we hurriedly take out a digital camera to catch the moment of something extraordinary appearing in our view. This is a kind of an automatic reaction without thinking. Here what is important is not the art or performance but themselves seeing that scene through camera lens. Augé points out that "the spectator in the position of a spectator were his own spectacle"<sup>89</sup>

I have looked up some reasons why contemporary public art are degraded as a spectacle. The negative responses of a spectacle are essentially rooted in the capitalist consumerism. Coupling with the contemporary art's tendency which involves everyday experience, techno-mediation and even political dimension, the doubt concerning its identity has been enhanced. In this regard, it is necessary to have a critical thought on public art as spectacle. But at the same time, we need to understand the changes in contemporary art scene so that we could find another perspective towards it.

### 3.2 Need for critiques and records

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<sup>85</sup> Foster, Hal (in conversation with Marquard Smith), *Polemics, Postmodernism, Immersion, Militarized Space*, Journal of visual culture, vol.3, no.3, 2004, pp.326-327

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, p.327

<sup>87</sup> *The Weather Project* by Olafur Eliasson at the Tate Modern, 2003

<sup>88</sup> Augé, Marc, *Non-places: introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*, Verso, 1995, p.86

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, p.86

Despite the agreement on the critical attitude towards contemporary public art as a spectacle and a consumed visual, on the other hand, it is hardly deniable that it is more approachable and inviting with its features above mentioned. In other words, people like it although some works overwhelm them with the *faux*-phenomenology. That is because, like Foster says, “it’s an effect, beyond distraction, of disorientation, of being lost in space, and one has to wonder about its ideological effects.”<sup>90</sup> Even if it gets their attention based on its media intensity, it is true that through this trait, it could have more potentials for communication with viewers. And speaking of the fakeness of the experience, as Foster declares, “our sensorium is now so mediated that the state of perceptual purity would be impossible to recover even if it ever existed in the first place.”<sup>91</sup>

The effects of disorientation make people wonder, that is, to ask them a question about the experience with the art work. It can be connected to Danto’s definition of art. In his book *After the end of art*, he literally declares the end of art. However, the end, in this context, refers to a disconnection between the previous era with the contemporary. Art after modernism is not post-modern art, but “post-historical” art.<sup>92</sup> According to him, contemporary, that is, post-historical art has come into existence in the attempts of viewers that “turn from sense experience to thought.”<sup>93</sup> Since anything could be a work of art, what defines art is an interpretation. “Even when the interpretation gives the object back to itself, as it were, by saying the work *is* the object”<sup>94</sup> is what transforms an object in an artwork. It might be arguable statement concerning the identity of art. But I think that this implies the importance of viewing and interpreting activities of people which is the crucial element especially to public art. If critics give more attention to public art, it helps appreciate it more in an aesthetic way.

In this context, *The Gates* and Eliasson’s works that received many reviews from critics can be discussed. Although many of them are harsh comments, they still

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<sup>90</sup> Foster, p.329

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, p.330

<sup>92</sup> Danto, C., Arthur, *After the end of art: contemporary art and the pale of history*, Princeton Univ. Press, 1997, p.21

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, p.13

<sup>94</sup> Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A philosophy of Art*, p.125

suggest the way to interpret them differently. But these are exceptional cases. That might be largely due to that they are already internationally acclaimed. However, in most cases not much attention has given on public artworks, temporary ones in particular which many are created by young artists. Discussing new genre public art, Lacy indicates “the less critical language on process art.”<sup>95</sup> In the light of that temporary public art contains the “process” of change through time and of making relations between public and space, it could be called as process art. And as Jeff Kelley states, we need “people [critics] who can evaluate the qualities of a process.”<sup>96</sup> Yet, in reality, they do not seem to be enough. The lack of critical language might be the partial reason that let temporary public works stay as a consumed visual.<sup>97</sup>

Furthermore, the lack is not only found in critical attention on public art but also in attempts to record them. In this context, Wodiczko states that “in order to understand a public projection it must be recorded and announced as any significant urban event is.”<sup>98</sup> This is for remembering once experienced in the city and building the continuity between the time in the past and to the present. In this regard, taking pictures of the art also can be understood as an individual record in a positive way. Memory is cherished not only in the mind, but also in the laptop, blogs on the Internet as well as in the museum. And this is also the chain of production and tactical reproduction in everyday life.

I have considered the reasons that contemporary public art are often devaluated as a spectacle. Whereas there are understandable aspects, there is also the need for rethinking. When these two perspectives are balanced we could appreciate better the contemporary public art. Bearing this in mind, I will explore the evocative function of temporality in detail in the following chapter.

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<sup>95</sup> Lacy, p.45

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, p.45

<sup>97</sup> I do not mean that they need to be over interpreted to be an artwork. But critiques are important since they add artistic meanings on the work and it gives viewers a chance to consider it with different perspective.

<sup>98</sup> Kaye, p.37

#### **4. The case of *A Secret Garden***

##### *4.1 The place: Cheonggye stream in Seoul*

Seoul is an old and large city. Therein, the area where Cheonggye stream runs through is the most historical and politically, culturally important site. There are old palaces nearby and offices of governmental organizations are concentrated around. It is also the site for public communication where plazas and newspaper companies are located. And when you walk along the stream you will see the small, tiny hardware, lighting, printing stores which are closely spaced. At the heart of the capital there used to be, still are, little stores run by common people.

As one of the branches of Han River, Cheonggye stream had functioned as sewage where domestic waste water enters and had kept the city clean. Through the period of Japanese occupation and Korean War, it became a city slum where the poor and refugees gathered. After the war, it was decided to cover the stream for hygiene and for the cityscape. During 1970's with the construction of an overpass and a shopping district, it was changed from the symbol of poverty into the symbol of industrialization.<sup>99</sup> And forty years after, in 2003, it was decided to open the stream removing the overpass.

The decision was made by the former mayor of Seoul city who is currently the president of Korea. Apparently many citizens supported it so that he won the election for the mayor. He promoted the plan as an eco-friendly city renewal and promised to secure the neighboring businesses during and after the restoration. Since 2005 when the work was finished, the Cheonggye area, the grey downtown covered with concretes was improved on the surface. It is true that it provided a green space for citizens to relax which they hardly find in the center of Seoul. But it is also true that it is not so much eco-friendly as he declared.

First of all, many eco-activists have pointed out that it is more like an artificial waterway than a stream. Because the water is not naturally flowing but is pumping

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<sup>99</sup> *Seoul Metropolitan Facilities Management Corporation*, <http://www.cheonggyecheon.or.kr/>  
During this period the poor were pressed to move to the outskirts of Seoul.



out of the intake dam and it costs a big amount of money.<sup>100</sup> Besides, unlike his promise, many neighboring merchants left the area due to the lack of proper policy measures for emigration and compensation.<sup>101</sup> Consequently, even though it seems to have succeeded in improving the urban landscape, in fact, it is the typical case of gentrification. And the mayor achieved the political goal taking advantage of this “visible” outcome.

#### 4.2 *The art: A Secret Garden*

*A Secret Garden* is the temporary public art that was viewed in Cheonggye stream from April 28 to May 30 in 2009. Jungpyo Kim, the artist connected the bridge rails by lines and displayed one hundred pieces of Korean women’s traditional clothes which are called Hanbok. Upper garments with a long string separately hanging with skirts apart look like a laundry on a clothesline fluttering in the wind. Despite its traditional shape, the artist’s Hanbok does not follow the traditional and typical fabric and pattern. Kim states that he chose the fabric and the patterns which remind us of those of “몸빼(mompei)’s.”

Mompei are a kind of working clothes for women which are loose fitting elastic waist pants. It is originally from Japan<sup>102</sup> and during 1930’s it was forcibly supplied by Japanese imperialism to efficiently produce military supplies.<sup>103</sup> Since then it has been widely used until 1970’s when the industrialization was accelerated. Hence, in principle, it is clothes designed only for practicality without any consideration of femininity or aesthetic features. Interestingly, however, as far as I know in Korea at least, it is made of very colorful and tacky fabric as seen in the image. And it is still in use in rural area for old ladies.

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<sup>100</sup> *Pressian*, October 1, 2005,

[http://www.pressian.com/article/article.asp?article\\_num=30051001095727&Section=](http://www.pressian.com/article/article.asp?article_num=30051001095727&Section=)

<sup>101</sup> *Hankyoreh*, February 14, 2007, [http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society\\_general/190664.html](http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/190664.html)

<sup>102</sup> It is called  $\text{も\text{へ} \text{ぱ}}$  (mompei) in Japanese.

<sup>103</sup> Ahn, Taeyoon, *Wartime Control on Women’s Fashion during the Late Colonial Period: Mompei Enforcement and Women’s Strategy of Femininity*, Society and History, Korean Social History Association, pp.5-33



Figure2. *A Secret Garden* by Jungpyo Kim, Seoul, April 28 to May 30, 2009

Kim explains the idea of combining Hanbok's style with the working clothes' fabric that it intends to bring back the time which we today have lost in memory.<sup>104</sup> It was just a few decades ago, Korean women devoted their whole life to support a family working in a mompei. Now it became funny to wear but it used to be everyday clothes for women. Moreover, the fact that Cheonggye stream had been the wash place until it was covered makes us remember old photos of women in Hanbok doing the laundry crouching down there. As a result, the mixture of Hanbok and mompei calls out a series of memory of Korean women's hard life throughout the tough history in the space.

#### *4.3 Public based on differences*

However, there is no guarantee that everyone appreciates it the same way and understands the artist's intention. Even though Kim was a member of artists' group which is sponsored by the governmental institution and created the artwork in

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<sup>104</sup> He might be more sensitive about it since he saw his mother has gone through the time selling vegetables in the market. Jungpyo Kim's blog, <http://blog.naver.com/se358349?Redirect=Log&logNo=120068668952>

intimate relation to the site,<sup>105</sup> as examined in the previous chapter, it is not possible for an artwork to draw a unitary feeling from random public. Therefore it is not surprising that for some, it can be a just another annoying public art. And actually a critical article on *A Secret Garden* was published in a newspaper during its exhibition.<sup>106</sup>

The journalist who wrote the article saw it while walking on the pathway alongside the stream having a conversation with his friend. His friend was complaining about the unavoidable viewing experience of art faced in public spaces. While walking, the journalist comes to think about the difficulty in appreciation of contemporary art and it continuously leads him to think about the issue of space where it is viewed. In his opinion, Cheonggye stream is the resting place for the public, therefore, calm and relaxing artworks are more suitable than “uncomfortable” one. In addition to this, he mentions another public sculpture, *Spring* which is also situated in the same area. With the hope to be a landmark of the renewed Cheonggye stream, it was installed in 2006 and 3,400,000 US dollars was spent on it.<sup>107</sup> Nonetheless, it is considered in general to fail to comprehend the site context so that has not received the positive response.<sup>108</sup> Comparing *A Secret Garden* with *Spring*, as a result, he concludes that both artworks do not coincide with the common sentiment of the public and the sense of place which are expected to be implied in public art, according to his article.



Figure3. *Spring*, Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, Seoul

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<sup>105</sup> He belonged to Cheonggye Art Studio at that time which is funded by Seoul metropolitan Facilities Management Corporation. According to the website, it aims to transform Cheonggye stream area into a cultural hub by supporting visual artists and displaying their work which is in resonance with the place. *Cheonggye Art Studio*, <http://artstudio.sisul.or.kr/>

<sup>106</sup> Written by Jongmyeon Kim, *Seoul Daily*, May 9, 2009

<http://www.seoul.co.kr/news/newsView.php?code=seoul&id=20090509027006&keyword=김종면>

<sup>107</sup> *Hankyoreh 21*, February 28, 2006, [http://h21.hani.co.kr/arti/culture/culture\\_general/16178.html](http://h21.hani.co.kr/arti/culture/culture_general/16178.html)

<sup>108</sup> It is the work of Swedish artist Claes Oldenburg and his wife Coosje van Bruggen. It has been criticized mainly due to the lack of openness in the commissioning process and of suitability to be a “landmark” of the site.

Yet the important thing here is that *A Secret Garden* caught his attention and questioned him what public space is and public art is. He is not a trained art critic. He was walking along the stream and talking with his friend. It was just a little break on an ordinary day. And the artwork broke into his routine and made him respond to it. This is a moment when the lived turns into the living, when a space is produced from within a place. Even though the feedback was not positive, certainly, the artwork provided him something other and extra than the ordinary. He speculated on the character of Cheonggye stream and defined it facing differences with others' ideas of it.

There could be another response also. Although I missed the chance to see it in person, the pathway is very familiar to me. The office workers in the neighborhood enjoy lunch time strolling around the area and I used to be one of them. Personally when I saw the images of *A Secret Garden*, besides what artist intends, I could not help but recall the political implication of Cheonggye stream's restoration mentioned earlier. Light, wind-blown female clothes made a strong contrast with the concepts of construction, development and man-made nature. Like Korean women added the feminine touch on forced working clothes with bold, unfashionable floral patterns, fragile fabrics created fissures in the ordered place. For me it is no other than a tactical practice of the weak that De Certeau describes. They always make something else "not by rejecting or transforming what are imposed on them by force, but by many different ways of using them."<sup>109</sup>

There must be other interpretations about it. There must be some who do not catch the fact that the clothes are mixture of Hanbok and mompei. However, some walked in the space thoughtfully and others took a picture of it. As indicated before, to photograph the artwork can be regarded as "snapshot memory." Yet it is a personal record of the space where they have been as well as a part of a spatial practice. In fact, Kim put the photos taken from different viewers on his blog and wrote "it is happy to see the diverse perspectives of it which are all different person to person."<sup>110</sup> A difference or the private is not opposed to the public. In the discussion

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<sup>109</sup> De Certeau, p.32

<sup>110</sup> Jungpyo Kim' blog, <http://blog.naver.com/se358349?Redirect=Log&logNo=120068668952>

of public art, the public is not the matter of universality or ownership. It is a matter of openness of how many differences are created, and a matter of a motive of how influential to change everyday into a moment.

#### *4.4 Quality of temporality*

*A Secret Garden* was displayed for a month or so. Whether the citizens liked it or not, now it has been left as a memory in each of their minds. As for the journalist and his friend, it must have been good not to encounter the unpleasant artwork any longer while taking a walk for a rest. However, it is not the case of *Spring*. No matter how foreign the sculpture is towards the citizens and the space, it is unlikely to be removed or relocated. The issue here is not the fact that it has got mostly negative responses. As *A Secret Garden* received different responses, *Spring* is open to controversies too. Over time, it might be loved as the symbol of Cheonggye stream or Seoul like its initial purpose.

But we need to think about the other side. Just imagine the situation you have to see something you are not happy to see everyday. An unavoidable viewing experience in public space like the journalist's friend complained. But the worse case is that it could become plain, unrecognizable sculpture which does not have any link to cut into people's daily life. Not even annoying or uncomfortable, in spite of its eye-catching shape and colors, it could occupy the physical site permanently without addressing anything to people. In that case, it would be hard to find the meaning of "site-specificity" and "public" in the art any more. In this context, time-limit could be an alternative way to save the sense of existence of an artwork. Since, as stressed before, the meaning of public art can be found in the interaction with viewers not in the permanent site-fixation.

There is another virtue of temporality. Among the reviews of *The Gates*, one mentioned the after-effect of it. The critic had a negative view on it and wrote that "people will see the park more clearly for a time, becoming more conscious of the serpentine design of the paths and more aware, perhaps, of the genius of the park's

designer, Frederick Law Olmsted.”<sup>111</sup> He suggests that after seeing *The Gates* which is just a vulgar cross-over art according to him, people can better appreciate the original design of the park. To remove an artwork is not the end of it. Disappearance leaves reappearance. It can contribute to awake the consciousness of the familiar space even if the art is not enjoyable for some.

*A Secret Garden* does not demand persistent attentions from people as a “noun/object” based on the permanent physical relation to the site. Rather, as a “verb/process,” it evokes the sense of place of Cheonggye stream to the public “based on the recognition of its unfixed impermanence, to be experienced as an unrepeatable and fleeing situation.”<sup>112</sup> The process of its appearance and disappearance itself is a part of the aesthetic. And an after image of it is reproduced as a memory with every each different perspective on the space. In this context, it can be said that it is public with its temporal tactics fabricating a moment out of everyday.

## **5. The case of *by Light***

### *5.1 Park and night*

A park is a space where people carry out their daily activities; such as jogging, cycling, walking a dog, having lunch sitting on a bench etc. As a public infrastructure its importance is getting bigger especially in an urban city.<sup>113</sup> It gives a little flavor of nature that enriches the quality of civic life. Therefore this responsibility is taken by a local government which manages the public park or the garden where citizens do leisurely activities. However, at night time, a green space filled with big trees could provoke an insecure feeling. Instead of walking through a park people make a detour avoiding the darkness.

The Castle Park (Slottsparken) is one of the classic parks in Malmö city in

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<sup>111</sup> Stevens, Mark, “Curtain up”, New York, vol.38, no.7, 2005, pp.64-66

<sup>112</sup> Kwon, p.24

<sup>113</sup> Rosenberg, Elissa, *Public Works and Public Space: Rethinking the Urban Park*, MIT Press, vol.50, no.2, 1996, p.89

Sweden.<sup>114</sup> Located in the center of the city, it serves as a green space where people enjoy daily activities and picnics. The Castle Gardens (Slottsträdgården) is adjoined with the park and adds greenery to the city.<sup>115</sup> In addition to this, the Malmö City Library is also situated in the park arena and it is well known because of the new part of the building.<sup>116</sup> Thus at the heart of the city, this green space plays a significant role and it enhances the citizen's environmental and intellectual life. But still we cannot avoid the fact that at night it becomes an insecure area. In fact, a shooting happened in the early morning of October, 2009 in Heleneholm's park that is close to the city downtown.<sup>117</sup> Consequently, it can be said that although a park attracts people with the peaceful and regenerative greenery during the day, it tends to lose that function and gains a negative aspect during the night time.

### 5.2 *Light the park through art*

As a temporary art project, *by Light* was exhibited in the Castle Park and the Castle Gardens mentioned above for ten autumn days in 2008.<sup>118</sup> The aim of this project was quite clear. According to Gunnar Ericson, the head of the city garden, the project intended to change the night landscape of the parks to increase the parkland's attractiveness during dark hours.<sup>119</sup> In order to illuminate parks, from light designers to suppliers and students were involved in the project<sup>120</sup> which consisted of four parts: the light of the park, the light of art, the tentative light and the light of way. For this chapter, some of the artworks belonging to the first two parts are discussed.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Danish landscape architect Edward Glæsel proposed the idea for transforming the Castle Park. He got inspired by Frederick Law Olmsted who designed New York City's Central Park ideas on a weekday park for all ages and social classes. The park was opened in 1900. *Malmö city*, <http://www.malmo.se/Medborgare/Idrott--fritid/Natur--friluftsliv/Parker/Parker-A-O/Slottsparken.html>

<sup>115</sup> As an organic garden, it opened in 1998 for bio-farming techniques, recycling thinking and use of environmentally friendly products. *Malmö city*, <http://www.malmo.se/Medborgare/Idrott--fritid/Natur--friluftsliv/Parker/Parker-A-O/Slottstradgarden.html>

<sup>116</sup> The new part called *Calendar of Light* was designed by Danish architect Henning Larsen in 1997.

<sup>116</sup> *Malomotown.com*, <http://www.malomotown.com/en/list/culture/attractions/the-city-library>

<sup>117</sup> The Local, October 3, 2009, <http://www.thelocal.se/22444/20091003/>

<sup>118</sup> The art project was viewed in Castle Park, Mariedal Park and Castle Garden from October 31 to November 9 in 2008.

<sup>119</sup> From the brochure of the *by Light* exhibition. Malmö city published.

<sup>120</sup> For each light installation, three or four companies mostly related to light and energy sponsored.

<sup>121</sup> I made the decision since I would like to analyze what I personally experienced. In total, twenty two works of art were grouped in the two parts.



Figure 4. *All the light on me* by SWECO Architects (left), *Water lily* by Lage Pergon (right up), *Mother Earth* by Tindra design (right down), Malmö, October 31 to November 9, 2008

Following the goal of the exhibition, the individual light installations were spread over the parks area to be shown on the move.<sup>122</sup> The way the artworks were displayed stimulated the evening walk along the parks' pathway and encouraged people to rediscover its charm at night. In relation to this, what is most noticeable were the artworks exhibited on the surface of the water. When the Castle Park was designed, water was the leitmotif.<sup>123</sup> The two large ponds in the park became the perfect background for the light art during the exhibition. For example, the small island in the big pond changed into the starry green planet and made the reflection image on the water.<sup>124</sup> The oriental carpet was floating<sup>125</sup> and the white lilies were

<sup>122</sup> In the exhibition brochure the map is attached that indicates over forty spots where the artworks displayed.

<sup>123</sup> *Malmö city*, <http://www.malmo.se/Medborgare/Idrott--fritid/Natur--friluftsliv/Parker/Parker-A-O/Slottsparken.html>

<sup>124</sup> *Mother Earth* (Moder Jord) by Tindra design

<sup>125</sup> *Liquid Carpet* by Åsa Maria Begtsson



glowing resting on the water making sharp contrast with the deep darkness.<sup>126</sup> These artworks gave life to the desolate ponds.

The light art viewed on the ground also altered the face of the parks. Entering the Castle Park from the city library, park goers walked on the red carpet.<sup>127</sup> Coupling with the chandelier made of knives and forks, the red light carpet not only showed the new dimension of the familiar space but also added some delightful festive air, inviting citizens. As a result, the ordinary route where they jog and walk a dog was not ordinary any more. The light allowed people to see the park, that same park that they avoided going into at night.

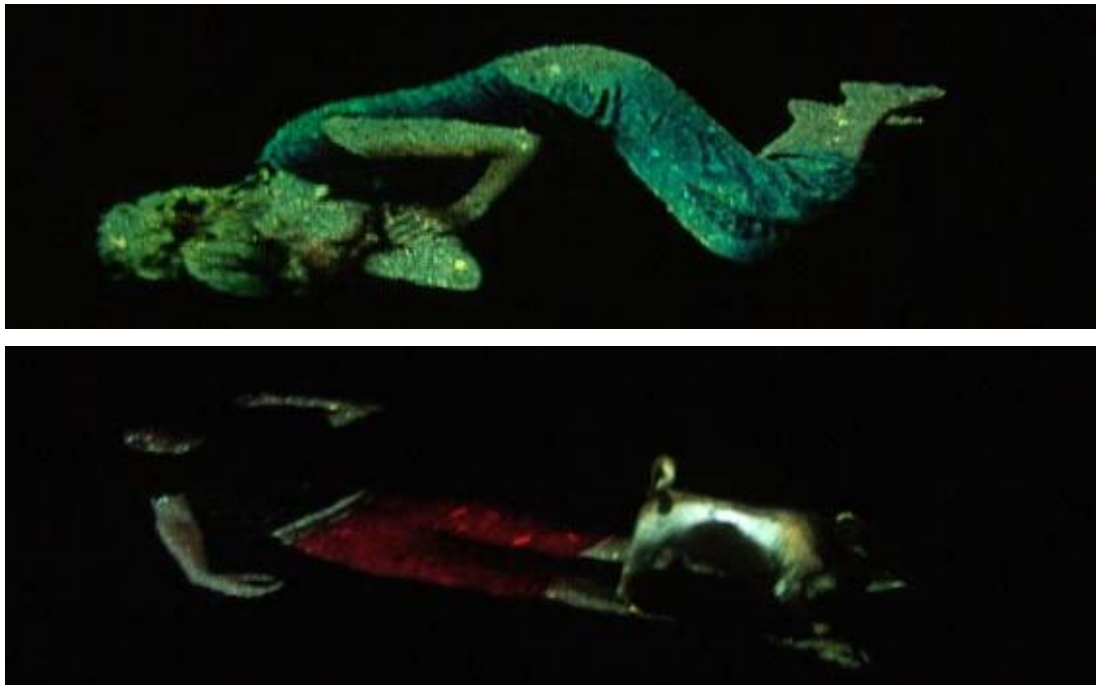


Figure5. *At rest* by Janne Björman, Malmö, October 31 to November 9, 2008

Meanwhile, in the case of the work *At rest*,<sup>128</sup> some people might have been startled by witnessing someone lying on the ground. What they had been seeing were the images of sleeping men and women. One by one, they lied down on the ground to sleep and after a while suddenly got up and disappeared. We could not be sure if they were alive until they made little movements. This projected moving images provided

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<sup>126</sup> *Water lily* (Näckros) by Lage Pergon

<sup>127</sup> *All the light on me* (Allt ljus på mig) by SWECO Architects

<sup>128</sup> By Janne Björman

the unusual experience to the viewers. The scenes feeling somehow scary in the first glance slowly changed for the viewers by seeing people's peaceful faces and the relaxing postures in the images. Literally they were at rest in the nature. While seeing sleeping people, viewers would have felt like seeing themselves freed from the daytime burden. As the night resonated with the rest, the rest resonated with the nature. So the fearful night park became the tranquil resting place with nocturnal air. Consequently, the interaction with the projected images made people re-perceive the familiar park and appreciate the value of it with its darkness.<sup>129</sup>

### *5.3 Light and temporality*

As the title of the project stipulates, all the artworks were created by light. Reflected on the water, saturating the ground, the light showed another dimension of the familiar space by moulding itself. This ephemeral and intangible quality of light as an art material coordinates well with the temporality of public art. Firstly both share the short lived feature. As light shines most in the dark, temporality renders public art vividly alive. Besides, as light is disseminated to the air rather than being framed, public art with limited time duration tends not to be bound to the physical site. Lastly, it is common that they leave the traces after they disappear.

Merging temporality with flexibility of the material, light public art, enhances the evocative function of space and time. In the article demonstrating the role of light art for urban landscape, Alves states that "in holding events based on light in urban spaces, light acts as a pretext and a leit-motif in rediscovering urban space, its virtualities and its potentialities."<sup>130</sup> The *by Light* project proved that simply by shining light in the midst of the trees, the forest got a very different expression.<sup>131</sup> By virtue of the light, the artworks revealed the unseen side of the parks covered by darkness which depended on the same darkness.

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<sup>129</sup> The artwork interacted with a dog. A dog walked by someone responded to the image's movement and barked at it.

<sup>130</sup> Alves, Teresa, *Art, Light and Landscape New Agendas for Urban Development*, European Planning Studies, vol.15, no.9, 2007, p.7

<sup>131</sup> In some cases the effect was enhanced coinciding with the designed sound.

As *by Light* rediscovered the value of the night in the park, light has the ability to call forth the sense of time as well as sense of space. In relation to this, light art as memorial can be discussed. For instance, the work of “*Tribute in Light*”<sup>132</sup> was first installed in various sites near the former World Trade Center in New York City in 2002.<sup>133</sup> It commemorated September 11 attacks with twin vertical columns of light beaming into the night sky. Notwithstanding the traits of light which is clearly visible only during clear night and temporality of the work, it struck a deep chord with the public.<sup>134</sup> On the contrary and coinciding with the short lived feature, light’s vulnerability to time, space and even the climate yields the power of a moment. Thus, in regard to public art, temporality and ephemerality is no less appropriate than permanence and physicality to evoke memories in people’s mind and create new ones.

Unlike the case of *A Secret Garden*, I am not familiar of the space where *by Light* was exhibited. Despite this, it still became a motive for me to keep the memory of the space where I have been. Discussing the relationship between stories and the memorable, De Certeau describes that,

The places people live in are like the presences of diverse absences. [...] Demonstratives indicate the invisible identifies of the visible: it is the very definition of a place, in fact, that it is composed by these series of displacements and effects among the fragmented strata that form it and that it plays on these moving layers.<sup>135</sup>

To the neighborhood, the effects created by light artworks would have been different to that of a stranger. But what is in common between the two is that the project provided another layer of the space by lighting the night. And it gave them a special moment to enrich everyday life.

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<sup>132</sup> Concept: John Bennett, Gustavo Bonevardi, Richard Nash Gould, Julian Laverdiere, and Paul Myoda with Paul Marantz. Detail design and execution: Fisher Marantz Stone, Inc.

<sup>133</sup> It was displayed from March 11 to April 14, 2002.

<sup>134</sup> Owing to the strong response it has been repeated for about a week each year since 2002 and would be continued in 2011. Phifer, Jean Parker; Photography by Francis Dzikowski, *Public art New York*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2009, p.35

<sup>135</sup> De Certeau, p.108

## *Conclusion*

I started this thesis with a question why many public artworks around us seem to be dead. They fail to appeal to people either positively or negatively. Presuming a permanent placement might be one of the reasons, I focused on temporality of public art and its evocative qualities.

Prior to concern with the time factor, the preliminary study on public art, public space, and everyday life was required. While researching on these topics I could learn how the debates on public art have been developed. The notion of site-specificity has been placed in the center of the debates. From the *Tilted Arc* controversy to the movement of new genre public art, it has evolved with a care for the sense of public. It used to be understood that sharing high art with more viewers is public. Since the new genre public art's movement, however, the role and the importance of people has recognized and has been growing.

This change which engages beholders coincides with the tendency of contemporary art. Even though the concept of site-specificity was wrongly interpreted in public art, it initially came from the minimalism's idea that art mediates audience with the space where they occupy. In addition to this, the new genre public art claimed to include more diverse art forms into public art such as performance, conceptual art and process art other than a permanently installed sculpture. Above all, the most distinctive features in contemporary art's trend are the openness to interpretation as well as the attributes of impermanence and everydayness.

While reading Lefebvre and De Certeau, I have realized the dialectical reasoning of their theories of space and everyday life. Also I have realized that the way of making space out of place, the way of selecting a moment out of the repetitive are related to temporality. Whereas the permanent goes in tandem with universality and stability, temporality includes the potential of conflicts and changeability. Even though they counterwork they cannot exist without the counterpart. With this point of view, to separate public space from private space and to regard everyday life as the passive consuming activity lacks the understanding of the dynamics of social practices.

Based on what I have experienced and learned from reading, contemporary art seems to grasp this aspect of everyday life and have strived to be connected with people.

Since the new genre public art, the idea of temporality and everydayness, to some extent, has been reflected in the concept of site-specificity. Yet its interpretation was still somehow restricted. Even if it adapted many different types of art and involved people in art work, it was bound to the physical site where a community resides. From this perspective, public which can be achieved through art does not prepare a room for the other. In other words, it maintained the view that public is one without differences.

Knowing this limitation of the notion of site-specificity and public, I have come to be able to redefine public art. It is not for to offer a chance to see a famous artwork by placing it in open space nor to produce a sentiment that all could share with. If it can invite people so that give them a motive to sense the space differently and cherish a moment, it becomes public. In order to play this role, public art dose not necessarily need to be displayed permanently. The temporary and the transitive aspects of it also can get the public quality. To achieve it, more critical reviews and records on public art are necessary.

I have examined the function of temporality which is the hypothesis of my work analyzing the case studies. These two artworks efficiently evoked the sense of space and time; the space of the walkway along the stream and the park in which everyday spatial practices take place; and the time of the past which has continued to today and the time of the night. These artworks, with a limited temporal feature, highlighted the character of the space and the time so that created new understandings of it. And it was reinforced by the disappearance with the ephemeral materials that they took.

What I have kept in mind while writing the thesis is that we meet public art in our daily life. If they are not recognized by us, it is hard to find the reason why they are there occupying a space. In this context, temporality might be an alternative way for public art to be noticeable and to be public evoking sense of space and time.

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### **Images**

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- Figure2. *A Secret Garden* by Jungpyo Kim, Seoul, April 28 to May 30, 2009  
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- Figure3. *Spring*, Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, Seoul  
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- Figure4. *All the light on me* by SWECO Architects, *Water lily* by Lage Pergon,  
*Mother Earth* by Tindra design, Malmö, October 31 to November 9, 2008,  
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- Figure5. *At rest* by Janne Björman, Malmö, October 31 to November 9, 2008, photo  
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