



Unfolding China's Urban Development: The Implementation of Public Art in Beijing and Shanghai

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ABSTRACT

During China's speeding urbanization, creating a unique city image to achieve economic growth draws the attention of property developers, urban planners, and city administrations. Through activating urban spaces and creating dynamic urban culture, public art plays an effective role in leading modern urban creative capital investment into China's urban development. In order to understand the implementation of public art in Beijing and Shanghai, this research aims to analyze the resonance between public art and urbanization in Chinese megacities through selected case studies. The study reveals public art guided by urbanization policy and strategy in metropolitan China, which further unfolds the discontinuous and fragmented relationship between public art, public sphere, and urbanization policies. Through discovering the imbalances between public art investment, implementation, and post-implementation management frameworks, the study provides several approaches to boost China's urban development for achieving the resonance between public art and urbanization.

Keywords: urban development, developer, urban planner, public art management, urbanization policy

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The term “public art” has a distinctive discursive history and is used to refer to a diverse range of art practices and cultural phenomena^[1]. For the purposes of the present paper, it refers to artworks installed in open urban spaces that are freely accessible by the general public, as opposed to artworks presented in galleries and museums^[1]. This category of cultural production is implicitly receptive to public participation and engagement in the creation and reception of the work^[2]. Furthermore, public art strategies are often aligned with efforts to reveal local cultural characteristics and regional features of the urban context.

As defined by Jürgen Habermas, “the public sphere” means “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed”^[3]. As he mentioned, “a portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conservation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body.”^[4] However, Hein believes that “the public sphere has disintegrated into an arena of competing for private interests.”^[5] According to Bishop (2012), however, work produced under socialism during these decades should be viewed rather more complex^[6]. Given the saturation of everyday life with ideology, artists regard their work as existential and apolitical, committed to ideas of freedom and the individual imagination. At the same time, they sought an expanded horizon of artistic production, in contrast to the highly regulated and hierarchical system^[6].

This interrelationship of public art, public sphere, and urban space allows for the artwork to play different roles within the context of urban development^[1]. According to Zebracki (2011), the roles that public art plays in the definition of urban space can be divided into five broad categories: the aesthetic aspect, the economic aspect, the political aspect, the cultural aspect, and the social aspect^[7]. Public art can play an aesthetic role by enhancing the attractiveness of a site and contributing to the formation of new places^[1]. It has the potential to refine,

sublimate, and display distinctive urban cultural characteristics through aesthetic means, which may contribute to an improved urban image^[1]. Economically, the cultural capital that public art potentially provides may help attract inward investment to a particular urban area and consequently boost local economies^[1]. In its cultural aspect, it can create and carry symbolic value and identity. In its social aspect, it can potentially respond to community demands and provide a vehicle for enhancing community interaction^[8]. Subsequently, through the case studies, this paper will explore the aesthetic, economic, cultural, and social roles of public art and its implementation during China's urban development.

From a different perspective, the architect Lord Richard Rogers insists that creating high-quality urban spaces and lasting vitality with development strategies that incorporate public art programs could achieve what he termed an “urban renaissance” for a city^[9]. Such revivals may offer solutions to the social and economic stresses induced by industrial structural adjustments, promising a comprehensive rejuvenation of social life and the urban environment^[10]. Under such a perspective, which may be observed throughout contemporary China, urban “regeneration” and urbanization more broadly seek to comprehensively improve and develop a region by resolving social and economic problems and contradictions^[11]. As a component of urban development, public art can accordingly be seen as evolving along with the development of urban spaces and the broader urban public sphere, ultimately supporting the accelerated urbanization of Chinese cities in accordance with state-level policies of urbanization.

Public art initiatives in Chinese urban space can also be used to demonstrate engagement with social and economic purposes by policymakers^[12]. Substantial evidence suggests that policymakers should be more engaged with the social conditions of the locality and explore more ways to activate sponsorship^[13]. The study seeks to identify the circumstances that accompany the

implementation of public art in the urban contexts of Chinese megacities of Beijing and Shanghai in order to better understand the relationship between public art and urban development. In the discussion of case studies relating to the Chinese metropolis, the integrated and contextual development of public art and urbanization will also be explored.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research for this paper was conducted through reviewing relevant scholarly literature, undertaking field investigations and subsequent analysis. The reviews of literature in the field give a scope of the research background in order to have a better understanding of the research from the current publications. By conducting field investigations, it aims to gather the case-study information through observation and documentation. As part of the research method, the interview seeks an in-depth understanding of public art in China and the relationships between public art, urban space, and urban development in the Chinese metropolis. For this paper, the interviews and personal communications were conducted with four participants, including an urban planner, a researcher, a developer, and an artist in China. The interviews offer an insight into the practice in the field from different disciplines. The ethics approval for the field interviews was obtained in advance from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Adelaide in 2019. After receiving the participants' consents to undertake the interview for the study, the information and data required from the participants are collected.

In this study, we focused on the on-site investigation of two selected urban public projects in Shanghai (Lujiazui, the Bund), and Beijing (Grand Wangjing). Since China's reform and opening-up policies, Pudong New Area, Shanghai's Special Economic Zone, has been approved for the national comprehensive supporting reform for innovation in the areas of administrative management and piloting for leading the

development of the urban sculpture industry in 1990. With cultural heritage on-site, the Bund reflects the spirit of harmony between tradition and modernity, which carries Pudong and even Shanghai's characteristics in the urban development process^[14]. The urban sculptures in the area could reflect the unique urban spatial form and environmental characteristics, shaping the regional urban pattern. Meanwhile, Grand Wangjing is becoming the "Second Central Business District (CBD)" of Beijing, which is policy-led by the Beijing Municipal Commission of Development and Reform. The integrated design of urban space allows the public to interact with the urban environment and facilities, realizing public participation in public space. The integration of the landscape and public art in the space injects a cultural atmosphere into the community and creates a rich spatial experience, which provides new exploration and experimentation of urban space.

Data from the observation and documentation of the cases studies in Beijing and Shanghai are presented. After gathering and collecting the data for the cases from the sites, site plans [Figures 1 to 4] were developed, mapping the urban contexts and sites of the cases. By contrasting two urban projects from Beijing and Shanghai respectively, the development characteristics and issues of public art in distinct spatial, social, and regulatory contexts are illuminated. The findings are presented along with accompanying discussion, offering preliminary interpretations of this dimension of urban development under the urbanisation policies of contemporary China.

3. THE EVOLUTION AND INTERPRETATION OF PUBLIC ART IN CHINA (1949-2020)

The People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, and the country's development and construction began with the National Political Consultative Conference^[15]. Public art also began to develop with commemorative themes with the support of state funds^[16]. The main feature of large outdoor sculptures of

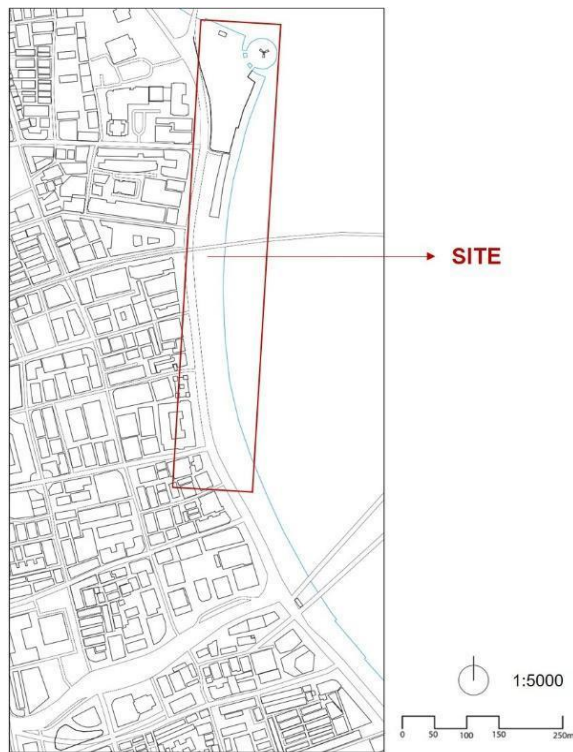


Figure 1. The urban context of the Bund in Shanghai. Source: Drawing by Han Cheng

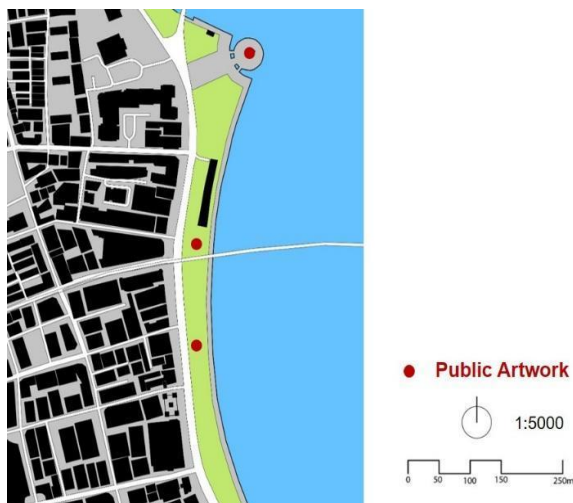


Figure 2. The site of public artworks on the Bund. Source: Drawing by Han Cheng

this period is a collective creation, reflecting the national spirit^[17]. Therefore, the creation of commemorative themes by recording history and enhancing national cohesion, such as the Monument to the People's Heroes, laid the foundation for the development of Chinese public art. The buds of Chinese public art have already emerged, although there was no definition of public art at that



Figure 3. The urban context of Beijing Grand Wangjing Central Park. Source: Drawing by Han Cheng

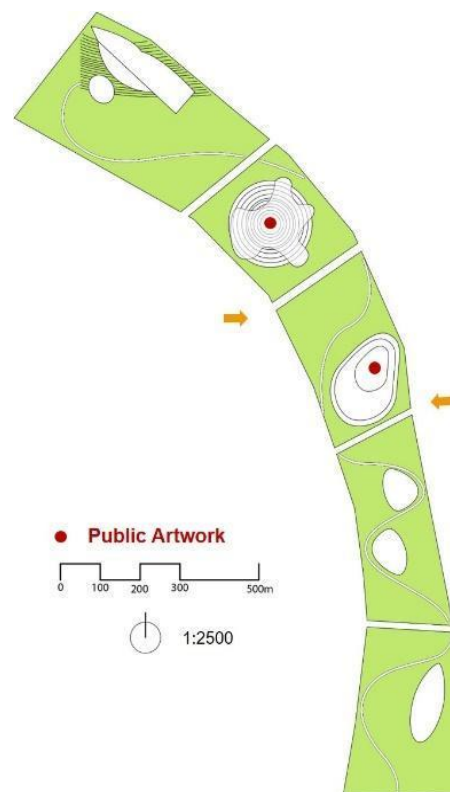


Figure 4. Public artworks on the site of Beijing Grand Wangjing Central Park. Source: Drawing by Han Cheng

time. The characteristics it embodies have shown the expression of public art: artists lead the public to participate, representing the history of the people, the image of the country, and the characteristics of a nation^[18]. With the policies and guidelines of the reform and opening up in 1978, a series of policies were formulated to prosper cultural and artistic creation, develop mass cultural activities and

strengthen cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries, which opened up new directions for the exploration of Chinese public art ^[17].

With the acceleration of the development of urbanization and marketization, the main form of public art, urban sculpture, presents a prosperous and upward scene based on economic construction. In the context of the new era, Chinese public art has begun to turn to take the demands of the people as the core and serve the people as the orientation ^[19]. In the 1990s, with the fast urban construction in China, urban public spaces have been further expanded, with economic construction as the core guide, guiding the continuous development of public art in new forms in the social system ^[20]. The dominance of urban public space by commerce was a major feature of urban development in the 1990s ^[21]. The socialization and commercialization of art have enabled Chinese public art to get out of the ivory tower and get closer to daily life, becoming a new trend of the times. Communities, pedestrian streets, public squares, and other places have become the main venues for public art exhibition and creation, which contribute to the development and understanding of public art in China ^[22]. The relationship between people, the environment, and artworks has changed with the passage of time, and public art has gradually become an art medium with contemporary spirit in public space ^[20].

China's rapid economic growth in the last few decades has led to the emergence of new cities and a phase of accelerated urbanization across mainland China ^[1]. A previous study shows that the urban population has risen from less than 20 percent some five decades ago to over 60 percent ^[23]. To manage this influx, the state is continuously implementing new policies for urbanization ^[23]. The expansion of consumption in contemporary Chinese life has gradually led to the diversification and specialization of public art in market spaces, which have increasingly played an important role in cultural, artistic, and commercial arenas ^[22]. In Beijing and Shanghai, public art

in the commercial contexts is often regarded as a communication device linking the commercial environment and its occupants ^[24]. Historically, streets have been the main form of urban space in Chinese cities ^[24]. As an essential public space, the design and programming of streets affect the performance of public life. The management and design of the shopping district and consumption spaces is an increasingly important area of research. This suggests that there are great opportunities for the development of public art in the pedestrian streets and commercial spaces of Beijing and Shanghai. Therefore, designers and planners should consider how to effectively integrate the design of commercial spaces with the characteristics of their historical and cultural background, and create distinctive urban market spaces for the citizenry.

The emergence of new public spaces in Chinese cities has resulted in a wide range of public activities, such as diverse commercial activities and leisure activities ^[22]. The economic and social purposes of public art in Beijing and Shanghai, both associated with local history and culture, are becoming a booming topic in China ^[25]. Processes of urbanization generate more space and opportunities for the implementation of public art, and could contribute to the vibrancy of urban cultures by drawing attention to artistic expression at the levels of both the government and general public ^[26]. Urban planners and policymakers see public art as contributing to urban development through its capacity to shape the image of a city, which is in alignment with the overarching goal of the central government of achieving economic growth ^[27]. This connection is noted by Yu Hu-Yun, Director of Urban Construction Management Office of Beijing Municipal Planning Commission, as follows: "Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the central government has vigorously promoted urbanization with the booming economy, and a large number of public artworks have been landed in urban space to decorate the urban environment" (H-

Y. Yu, personal communication, November 4, 2019).

4. THE RESONANCE BETWEEN PUBLIC ART AND URBANIZATION IN CHINA

Public art is related to the urban environment and local culture, which has an impact on the public through different urban spaces ^[25]. Such characteristics demonstrate its art form interacting with the viewers in the public spaces, in which multiple parties, departments, institutions, and so on, intervene and work together. Accordingly, it is the intervention of various parties instead of the artist's self-expression, which reflects the cultural and artistic creation. As introduced by Zhang Yi-Ming, the founder of Pinchen Art and Needart, compared with the artist's self-creations, public art projects are relatively restrictive with social project attributes (Y-M. Zhang, personal communication, November 17, 2019). In fact, because of the intervention of various parties, the artistic expression of public artwork would become featureless after the construction (Y-M. Zhang, personal communication, November 17, 2019).

Installed in public spaces and open to the public, there is a tendency for public art in China to be considered reflecting the transformation process from a planned economy to a market economy ^[28]. China's transition from "planned economy" to "market economy" has been accompanied by open-door policy of the central government. This leads to the significant shifts in the understanding of urbanisation policy and practice in Mainland China. In the continuous development of China's urbanization, many cities are actively expanding urban public space with increasing investment funds, which consequently leads to an increasing number of urban public artworks ^[29]. The process of the creation of urban public art is often influenced by government financial appropriations and urban policy ^[30]. Which groups and views are implied in this concept of publicness, and how this is incorporated into the definition and reception of public artworks, are open questions that are rarely

sufficiently explored in the implementation of urban public art installations and programs. Indeed, as mentioned by Chinese artist and researcher Dr. Zhang Zhong-Tao, "socially engaged art and social events are not mainstream" (Z-T. Zhang, personal communication, November 11, 2019). Zhang claims that public artworks in China are mainly sponsored by local government or developers, aiming for building city images and boosting economic purposes (Z-T. Zhang, personal communication, November 11, 2019).

4.1 Public art restricted by urbanization policy and strategy

Since its development and opening up in 1990, Pudong New Area has been approved for the national comprehensive supporting reform for innovation in the areas of administrative management and piloting for leading the development of urban sculpture industry. In the administrative area of Pudong New Area, there are many urban spatial forms, such as the old city, development zones, and suburban new towns since 2009. Within the Pudong New Area, the Bund facing Lujiazui is a historical area with multiple urban sculptures surrounded by traditional and modern buildings [Figures 1 and 2]. West of the river, the Bund incorporates the historical district, and together the overall waterfront area offers a complex urban spatial framework, including parts of the old city, the redevelopment zones, as well as the suburban new towns ^[1]. Public artworks like the Shanghai People's Heroes Monument [Figure 5] and The Bund Bull [Figure 6] are designed to commemorate historical heroes and to present a memorable state image to promote China's urbanization and economic policies ^[31]. The Bund Bull was specially made for the Bund Financial Square, symbolising the vigor of the flourishing Chinese economy. The sculptor is Arturo Ugo Di Modica, who is also the creator of the Wall Street Charging Bull in Manhattan, New York. This example shows how national priorities may be embodied and promoted in the sculptures and public artworks. Such artworks express the

expectations for booming economic development of national priority that are often expressed through public artworks. Hence, the public engagement with public artworks can become an integral part of urban development^[32].



Figure 5. Shanghai People's Heroes Monument. Source: Photo by Han Cheng, November 20, 2019



Figure 6. The Bund Bull. Source: Photo by Han Cheng, November 20, 2019

The developed countries of the West have embarked on a comprehensive approach to the management of urban environment, public art and urban development^[33]. Before the concept of public art took root in China, it

was mainly represented by sculptures decorating urban spaces. Since the beginning of the 1980s, China's public art has been in a new developing stage with the development of urban sculpture, public murals, environmental art and landscape art^[17]. While several outstanding programs or works of public art have appeared in megacities like Beijing and Shanghai, the development and sophistication of public art in contemporary China can still be said to be at a preliminary stage, if progressively gaining momentum^[17]. Consequently, development strategies which could expand the horizon of artistic production are needed that can be advanced in coordination with national policies of urbanization.

With the continuous expansion of the scale of sculptures' construction, various problems and contradictions are increasing. According to Cai Hai, the director of Jingan Planning and Land Administration deputy of Shanghai, "some developers have very high art enthusiasm, but their understanding and knowledge in the area is limited."^[34] With rapid urban development and continuous infrastructure improvements, the value of public art in urban planning is increasingly recognized and applied by governmental departments and urban entrepreneurs alike. Collaboration between artists, urban planners, architects, and policy makers plays an important role in the creation of state-sponsored urban public art projects. However, due to constraints embedded in the Chinese state's regulatory mechanism and the corresponding urban planning system, urbanization policies and the implementation of urban public art projects are not well coordinated.

4.2 The discontinuous and fragmented relationship between public art, public sphere and urbanization policies

In 2018, a new urban public art project in Beijing's Grand Wangjing Central Park is completed. The project is located in the Dawangjing business innovation area of the Chaoyang district of Beijing, whose master planning is designed by AECOM. This

project was the result of an official policy of urbanization. The Dawangjing area was once an urban village in Beijing, which was included in the urban-rural integration urban development and construction project by the Beijing Municipal Government. The urban space is to provide the public with a relaxing and livable environment by creating a landscape and artistic atmosphere. In 2009, the Beijing Municipal Commission of Development and Reform released the environmental remediation and land-level development projects in the area of Dawangjing Village, Chaoyang District, Beijing, which leads to Dawangjing Village being designated as a “business innovation zone,” or the “Second CBD” of Beijing^[1]. In 2011, the second CBD of Dawangjing was officially written into the 12th Five-Year Plan of Beijing Municipal Planning Commission, which stimulated its development vitality. As planned, Beijing CBD and Zhongguancun will form the economic area of Beijing's international trade, research and development, and design. The developed regional planning and policy orientation prompted Dawangjing's rise to Beijing's new economic center. Accordingly, the planning and construction of this area are conducive to optimizing the layout of urban functions, improving the investment environment, promoting Beijing's international image as a metropolis, and becoming a new economic growth point for urban development. The rapid growth of the area has attracted firms and industries enjoying rapid growth, such as Alibaba, aviation industry and many other well-known enterprises and companies. Nowadays, the Grand Wangjing has become the principal science and technology business innovation zone in the Chaoyang district, under the priorities attending during China's official urbanization policies.

Observing the urban context of the project site [Figures 3 and 4], multiple public artworks [Figure 7 and 8] are installed within a built environment predominantly consisting of skyscrapers associated with business services and urban corporate offices. The dominant public artwork designed by Beijing

Shunjing Garden Co., Ltd. [Figure 8] on the site appears to be little more than a replica of the 2009 Serpentine Pavilion in Hyde Park, London, designed by the award-winning Japanese architecture firm SANAA. This suggests a fragmented relationship between public art and urban development, which illustrates the limitations and challenge of urbanization policy and management under the innovation-driven and transformational development policy, which leads to the issue of the planning and implementation of public art projects. Accordingly, it reveals that the limitation discontinues and fragments the dialogues self-reflectively between public art, public sphere and urbanization policies. This urban project indicates the imbalance between the public art planning mechanism and the implementation of public art projects in Chinese cities.



Figure 7. Public art in Beijing Grand Wangjing Central Park. Source: Photo by Han Cheng, October 25, 2019



Figure 8. Case study project by Beijing Shunjing Garden Co. Source: Photo by Han Cheng, October 25, 2019

On the other hand, from the viewer's perspective, the public is relatively passive. The management system of public art projects is normally dominated by the elites in the field from top down. After the completed artwork being approved by the proponent, it will be placed in the urban space following the planning guidance. During urban development, the public can spontaneously participate in the practice of some public art projects in different approaches, such as urban public art events, urban art festivals, and so on. Through these activities, the public could communicate and engage with the artists or creators. Such public participation could potentially influence and inspire the artists or give feedback to their artworks. In such circumstances, the development of public art is closely connected with society's inclusiveness and is impacted by the diversification of the national culture. Simultaneously, there should be diverse resource channels and public interventions, which should not only from government sectors but also from private third parties or individuals. Subsequently, it could play its role and autonomy in building a connection with the local community and activating the city's public spaces.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Imbalances between public art investment, implementation, and post-implementation management frameworks

It may be instructive to contrast the situation in contemporary China with the evolution of public art policy in other countries. In the United States, the initial basis for funding public art was the "National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965."^[35] In 1967, San Francisco enacted public art legislation, and in 1969, the Public Art Ordinance was implemented^[14]. In 1978, Chicago also passed the Percentage Art Ordinance and promulgated and implemented the Public Art Percentage Act^[36]. By the mid-1980s, the public art percentage policy has been implemented in most parts of the United States^[37]. About twenty-eight state

governments in the United States have promoted the construction of public art under a legislative framework known as "Percent for Art," in which a small percentage of the construction cost for major urban development projects is reserved for public art projects^[37]. Many cities in Canada and Europe have also gradually adopted the Public Art Percentage Act^[38]. Since the 1980s, the mode of governance through cultural policy approach for urban regeneration is used in Barcelona, Spain^[39]. Meanwhile, in 1994, the public art policy started to be implemented in Sydney, Australia^[40].

The United Kingdom shows a similar focus on institutional support for funding public art, where special institutions like the "Public Art Development Trust," the "Art Angel Trust," and the "Public Art Agency" have emerged since the 1980s to manage public art implementations^[1]. There is a global emergence of a body of contemporary art practice concerned with collaborative, and potentially emancipatory, forms of dialogue and conversation^[41]. Such an evaluative framework for the project is no longer centered on the physical object, but engaged by the public and participants. Public art, as community-based art designed with social and urban contexts, often shows the differences in the artists' and communities' socio-economic, cultural, and educational levels. Consequently, it advocates the significant roles of public art in enhancing the economic, cultural, and social development in public space^[7]. As Miwon Kwon (2004) observes, when artists are both creators and community members, they often find themselves not belonging to any party^[42]. Residents, planners, and executives also have unclear identities. Besides, art critic Rosalyn Deutsche believes that contemporary public art is frequently evaluated by utility and people's consensus, and even public trials, so that attitudes will easily lead to business operations^[42]. In other words, whether public art has a practical effect and whether it wins people's hearts is not the only criterion for

evaluation, art forms a symbolic expression by business.

5.2 The approaches for achieving the resonance between public art and urbanization in China

The interviews provided readers with an in-depth understanding of the implementation of public art projects and practice, which unfolds the relationship between public art and urban development in Beijing and Shanghai. Moreover, the study offers an insight into how governance and policies influence the development of public art in Mainland China. However, compared with the public art policies in the West, the management of public art in China lacks diversified and multiple investment channels ^[1]. As mentioned by Yang Bing, a project manager who has been working in this field for a decade, public art projects are mainly sponsored by local governments (through funding vehicles like fixed government financial appropriations and the national special appropriation for specific public art projects) (B. Yang, personal communication, November 3, 2019). There is also a limited amount of funds from third-party private investors, such as urban entrepreneurs and others from the real estate industry, explained by Zhang Yi-Ming (personal communication, November 17, 2019). Since there is a lack of a comprehensive public art planning and regulation system, capital investment in public art is irregular and uncertain, with unstable investment channels, which contribute to the uneven quality of urban public art ^[1]. Furthermore, public art in China is generally produced for economic gain ^[43]. With the development of social economy, urban investors and developers have gradually joined the public discourse during the urbanization process driven by the market economy. Urban real estate development investors and urban entrepreneurs have slowly entered the field of urban sculpture construction, which has brought market driving forces to the development of public art. However, the planning and development of its real estate or regional development

projects often use sculpture or public art as a commercial promotion in the market, resulting in some artworks lacking site-specificity or public engagement. The emergence of this phenomenon reflects that some artworks in the urban spaces are capital-driven with limited publicity, which focuses on commercial operation and urban marketing. The value of the property around Lujiazui of Bund in Shanghai, and the new construction projects on the site of the Grand Wangjing Central Park in Beijing indicate that public art is planned as an instrument for urban development and urban marketing ^[1]. Accordingly, public art's economic characteristic is playing a dominant role in China's urban development.

In addition, the completion of an urban sculpture is divided into three stages: project planning approval, design and construction, and opening for the public after completion. The first two stages are the decision-making and implementation phases dominated by local government management departments or urban developers engaging with the artists, which is the stage of sculpture creation. The latter stage is a passive appreciation approach by the public, which lacks public participation. Therefore, the emergence of sculptures in urban spaces during China's urbanization is based on the urban planning of the government sectors and the artists' intervention under the investment of the urban developers. Government decision-making serves as a platform for multiple management mechanisms such as planning, consulting, and implementation supervision. Accordingly, the macro-control of the government and market mechanisms in the field have produced public intervention and guidance for the implementation of public art projects. Such a management mechanism is provided to the public as a planning and management agency of public art in cooperation with artists. From the root of its mechanism, it has limited space to explore the public characteristics of public art projects. However, publicity is the characteristic of public art, giving it the attributes of openness and sociality. Consequently, public dialogue

and participation in the decision-making process could include the public as a part of the decision-making mechanism to reshape the roles of public art in urban space. Expanding the social realms and providing more practical platforms for government decision-making requires the cooperation and participation of all the parties.

The deficiencies in the urban public art management system are unfavorable to the long-term development of urban public art, and there exists a clear need for the regulatory and institutional infrastructure supporting public art to be reviewed and updated ^[41]. In the urban construction frenzy, some hurrying decisions and plans reveal the builders' impetuosity during China's urbanization. In this context, the urban sculptures and landscaping constructions are following the trend of rapid urbanization. Although today's art ecology in China is vigorous, it is increasingly subject to commercial capital. In Mainland China, the government has proven to be a promising promoter, offering much-needed platforms and opportunities ^[44]. In global context, art is based on the museum systems, gallery auctions, and art fair systems in Europe and the United States, and has arguably been reduced in many cases to a national brand marketing or trade and financial investment ^[45].

6. Conclusion

This paper examines the planning of public art and urban sculpture in the major metropolitan cities in China and considers a number of issues with the current systems, aiming to encourage further work in this field. The study argues that public art and sculptures are conceived as both an economy boosting driver and urbanization catalyzer in the Chinese central government's urbanization policies. Urban public art is a significant actor in creating a vibrant urban scene in public sphere of the Chinese metropolis by promoting urbanization within the urbanization policy framework implemented and administered by urban developers and municipal administrators.

The implication of urban public art projects shed light on the frameworks of cultural policy and implementation from the perspective of their distinct roles in aesthetic, economic, and social aspects. The findings enrich the knowledge of the circumstances of public art implementation within the urban spaces of Chinese cities. With the understanding in the frameworks and contexts of the implementation of public art projects in China, public art and sculptures in public spaces can build positive resonances with China's urbanization in the contemporary era.

As an important component of the cultural layer of urban public space, it might be argued that urban public art should ideally combine aspects of the historical culture of the specific city or site under development, with the national culture in its process of historical unfolding. The recent evolution of public art in China indicates that public art is adapted to urban development, as can be seen specifically with the process of updating the official guidelines of *The Eighth Five-Year Plan for Shanghai Urban Sculpture* ^[46], which sees public art as beneficial for shaping the city image. The artworks in the public realms represented by sculptures are increasingly becoming an important strategy for the construction and development of contemporary cities in Mainland China. It is also an approach to vigorously promote local culture and enhance the place making for urban spaces.

Under the urbanization policy of "innovation-driven and transformation-oriented development," the innovative public art management is of positive significance for promoting urban transformation and development in China. Mobilizing resources from the real estate and cultural industries to enhance the cities and urban public art management is conducive to promoting urban transformation led by public art and sculptures. Accordingly, local culture and history would be preserved as heritage in the memory of the city, which would be transferred into the city image presented by public art. This would lead to the

transformation of Chinese urbanization and dynamic Chinese urban context.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

ETHICS

The ethics for the research interviews was approved in advance by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Adelaide in 2019. Upon obtaining participants' consent to undertake the interview, the information and data required from participants were used for the study and research with the agreement of the participants.

FURTHER DISCLOSURE

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

H.C. conceived this paper, and took the responsibility of the format and content, including data collection, creating analytical diagrams, and writing of the manuscript. J.W., who guided H.C. throughout the research, reviewed and edited this paper. H.C. is a Ph.D. Candidate of School of Architecture and Built Environment, The University of Adelaide. J.W. is professor of Architecture, School of Architecture and Design, University of Tasmania.

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