Actual Art. Ideas and Technologies in an Urban Context

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Abstract. Russia’s public interest is focused on modernization problems. To make Russia’s towns and cities look up-to-date must be the main task of this process. Actual art can become an effective way to aestheticism the urban area. The objective of the given article is to define and specify mechanisms of new cultural actions aimed at a creation of a new experimental phenomenon – an urban area as an integral exhibit space. At present, there are a great many methods for changing the situation in the cultural context of modern towns and cities. Nowadays, actual forms of art can become a most efficient tool of social co-operation. Informational, didactic, aesthetic, and ideological functions of art implemented in large-scale town art projects and art objects can significantly influence town residents’ way of thinking, help to unite the local community, form new kinds of leisure activities, and encourage creative activities of people of all ages. Involving young designer teams, student architectural studios, and decorative artist alliances can be regarded as a method for solving the above mentioned problems. In this case, the major idea is to make joint team efforts in order to create innovation residential areas. The results can be expressed in design concepts directed towards integrating contemporary art into the context of the urban environment. This article is meant to be a basis of the content that will allow to get quickly acquainted with actual concepts and methods for solving problems of forming cultural “landscape” and contemporary urban area ambience. Provided, active involving creative youth in co-operation process for both, creation of art objects and discussion of them, is to be a necessary condition. Cognitive methods for mastering actual art techniques, new visualization forms, and gaming and carnivalesque scripts of art projects presentations are intended to become an efficient mechanism for creating a basically new appearance of towns and cities.

1. Introduction

A comfortable urban environment is formed by different factors. They are architecture, transport network, green zones, information availability, and many others. However, a general aesthetic outlook should be taken into account as well. It is a most important factor of emotional impression that gives a feeling of joy, easiness, and comfort. To determine which of the above mentioned factors can positively influence relations between the urban environment and a human, is difficult. The feeling of joy or happiness arises spontaneously. Still, the influence is possible. One of strong factors to radically change the atmosphere of the contemporary town is art. The decorative monumental art is a genre that has almost disappeared; nevertheless, this art and its tendencies, such as street art, public art, kinetic art, performance, and installation are capable not only of entertaining and captivating residents, but also of imparting unique and unforgettable features to the town thus altering its outlook. Techniques
and aids of modern art are really unrestricted. In significant projects intended for a wide public, an idea possesses a defining meaning. Ways of its implementation can be both simple and available.

2. Actuality

Today, the problem of integration of actual art into the urban environment is in the focus of everybody, who is engaged in forming this environment. However, no general efficient mechanisms have been worked out, yet. Everybody knows how the urban environment is formed. Though the architect is a fundamental figure, but it is not he, who is principal. Developers are fighting for best grounds that can be used further on at a highest profit. To make the developers and owners take care of attractiveness of the new environment, is almost impossible. Nevertheless, as soon as everybody sees how expressive, remember able, and artistic any usual new construction can be; how the demand for residential areas where there are prearranged zones for art actions, realization of actual art by professionals and amateurs, increases, the problem of investments in new territory design will perhaps begin to move forward. When we speak of the urban environment formation, everybody’s eyes turn towards architects. But the outlook of Russia’s towns is not specified only by architecture. Our climatic conditions are severe and often unpredictable when customary décor (plants, flower beds, verdant hedges, fountains, and ponds) becomes unrealizable or too expensive. Most towns in Russia live in an achromatic scale for seven months a year. The white-grey-black scale dominates everywhere and influences the emotional state of people. They lack color, light, warmth, variety, and impressions. The architecture of most towns in Russia is not marked for variety; though, lately, some positive changes can be traced. Many architectural offices offer modern solutions, new materials and technologies, actual lighting scenarios, and expressive color compositions. But all that is not sufficient, and it is impossible to solve the problem only by means of architectural projects. This is an amplitudinous problem: how to make Russia’s towns become original and peculiar, and have an individual recognizable style?

The up-to-date lighting scenario is extremely important for new visual impressions. The winter comes; this is a long-lasting season on the largest part of our country. All the summer decorations disappear, and looking at the trees, it is hard to imagine that they were green a very short time ago. The decorative monumental art is an exclusively Russian genre, Soviet, to be more exact. It was present all over the country, it was considered a most important ideological factor, and therefore it was developed due to the state order. Since then, there are preserved numerous objects of this genre: sculptures, mosaic panels, steles, frescos, abstract forms, and memorial plaques. Their aesthetic merits are debated by art critics and theoreticians. Their sacral meaning is lost long time ago, however, most people like them; these objects serve as landmarks for people’s routes about the town, places to make a date or to take a photograph to capture the moment. These objects are outdated, they have lost their former pomposity; but many generations of residents have grown up and celebrated important events of their life beside these objects. Perhaps, the presence, attraction, and preservation of such historical zones everywhere confirm the necessity of art in the urban space design.

3. Discussions

Evidently, there are some tokens of artists’ striving for artistic actions and interaction with the public in any zone of the urban environment. As an example, we can take a touching and somewhat naïve attempt to integrate classic Russian painting in the center of our city. Deformed format reproductions of famous Russian painters’ canvases in enclosures resembling fillet are placed on facades of buildings. But the public’s attention is not always ready to meet a piece of art in the hustle and bustle of a big city; the reproductions attract the public’s attention, many people stop to read the legend and the date of creation. The public art was invented as a trend of art placed in a free public space, the trend being intended for less educated people. Active development of new trends: street art, graffito, and trends that are now well known: kinetic sculpture, engineering arts, optical art, installation, and others let us hope that in the nearest future, young masters of new genres will change the outlook of
the Russia’s towns with their own independent searches for means of artistic expression, harmony, and aesthetic ideal of the XXI century.

Being public, any art initiative requires complicated co-ordination, financial support, skilled executors, and indifferent public. Nowadays, there is no state order; the monumental art in its initial format exists no longer. There is no denying that young authors’ statements are mainly of a protest character. It was always so and there is no need to be afraid of. The youth counterculture created a large number of new trends; many of them lost their meaning and disappeared and are forgotten. The street art is short-term, it is not intended for a long life. One creative action goes after another; but an idea to be thought over, remains. There is nothing wrong with it. An aggressive rejection of new art forms will possibly give way to attempts to take a good look at them, to think over and discuss them; thus, dialogues between the artist and the public, the artist and the town authorities will become an unavoidable element of the town life and of active and meaningful leisure. Maybe, the town administration’s zeal will come down; and bans will be replaced with permits. In an ideal case, all that should turn into a dialogue or discussion. Young counterculture can be awkward and aggressive but this will become an informal topic for a conversation.

4. Results
The results of project investigations of methods for integration of modern art in the urban environment have been realized in the imagery searches of students at the Chair of Design and Art History of the Ufa State Petroleum Technological University. These are their projects of mini-ground for dancing with a possibility of transformation into an exhibit zone and a project of court territory arrangement “Children’s Megalopolis”, a kind of a town within a town for children where there are prearranged zones not only for children’s creative work but also for the exposition of their works. All children’s dream is implemented in the wall for drawing; a stage is provided for performances and a mini-workshop for acquiring primary skills of handicraft. The most significant event will become the opening of the “Art-square” in our city. It is a complex space occupying a whole block. The author of the project is Pavel Ponomarev, a graduate of the Chair. His energy and creative fantasy, his passion for contemporary art and design are implemented in this remarkable complex, dedicated to actual art and live interaction with it. The complex provides space for art actions, media projects, and creative experiments of young authors, working in different genres of actual art. There are historical fragments delicately combined with new hi-tech architecture, skillfully made labyrinths and passages from one zone to another make visitors be in a permanent movement, intercommunicate, and interact. Projects of such a level can be considered a real breakthrough in a habitual context of the city life. Fascination of the place, unusual and artistic, full of up-to-date ideas will make all feel the time motion in some different way. All those who have come to observe how the unique “residence for art” creation is going on, they imperceptibly for themselves become participants of the process, and they come again and again, looking for impressions and inspiration.

This particular complex has explicitly demonstrated that strong aspects of contemporary art with its democracy, striving for public expression, and metaphoric thinking will contribute to formation of the town environment of a new type, creation of a kind of a cultural quest where an interaction of all participants of the process will become an important condition. It is possible that in the long run, there will appear a stylish aesthetic outlook of the environment of towns in Russia as a unique large-scale exhibit ground.

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