Study of an art project which induces co-creation of art and public policy with education, community development, welfare

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The Art Projects are forms of social activities born in the 1990s in Japan. The projects’ goal of promoting art in local communities has become widespread in Japan since 2000. The value of the projects is hard to evaluate, as they cross different spheres and are conducted in collaboration with public policies, including education, town planning, and welfare. Therefore, the mechanism and methods of the Art Projects are not clearly defined. To promote and develop the projects further, it is necessary to establish the theory behind the projects and clarify their challenges. This study aims to establish the theory of the Art Projects inducing the co-creation of art and public policies. The paper examines some main Art Projects’ activities and presents their mechanisms, methods, and challenges. The paper also discusses the value and possibilities of the Art Projects from a panoramic point of view.

The paper consists of the introduction, a body of seven chapters, and the conclusion. Chapter 1 examines what led to the creation of the Art Projects and how these projects have evolved. The examination finds that the projects began in 1990. Their development can be separated into three periods: the dawn period (1990–1993), the experimental period (1994–1999), and the expansion period (2000–2011).

Chapter 2 investigates the Art Projects conducted locally and discusses representative cases. Following the concept of the “importance of the provinces,” this investigation focuses on Hyogo Prefecture because it was the epicenter of the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake of 1995. Although modern art is mainly seen in urban areas, art projects are also actively conducted in the provinces. Therefore, investigating the provinces is an effective way of exploring the theories of the Art Projects. Focusing on the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake is also effective because it served as an important factor in the development of the fields of modern art, cultural policies, and civil society, which in turn had a major impact on the development of the Art Projects.

This study selects seven representative cases, which include “Firefly & Mushrooms,” “Machiju Art Museum,” “The Art Project of Kakogawa Municipal Yamate Junior High School,” “Joy-Farm Shop with Many Orders,” and “Maitamon Nature Art.”

Chapter 3 investigates the Art Projects’ collaboration with education sectors and reveals their mechanisms, methods, and challenges. The cases investigated are “Firefly & Mushrooms,” “Machiju Art Museum,” and “The Art Project of Kakogawa Municipal Yamate Junior High School.”

Chapter 4 examines the Art Projects’ collaboration with local communities and reveals their mechanisms, methods, and challenges. The cases investigated are “Joy-Farm Shop with Many Orders,” and “Maitamon Nature Art.”
Chapter 5 investigates the Art Projects’ collaboration with welfare sectors and reveals their mechanisms, methods, and challenges. The cases investigated are “Mixsider” and “Ebisu Art Project.”

Chapter 6 consolidates the research results of the third, fourth, and fifth chapters, and reviews the mechanisms, methods, and challenges of the Art Projects. The investigation finds that their mechanisms consist of three conditions, which are found in “Sphere Crossing,” “Participation of People,” “Joint Production,” and the “Circulation of Expression and Interaction.” The study also reveals that there are ten kinds of methods of planning and ten methods of management in the Art Projects. Six challenges were identified by the examination and termed as: Side-effects, Creating Local Culture, Balance of Co-creation, Copyrights, Development of Leaders, and Record and Disclosure.

Based on the research results of the preceding chapters, Chapter 7 examines the value and possibilities of the Art Projects from a panoramic point of view. The examination finds that the effect of the Art Projects on the creation of art can be termed the “birth of the art of co-creation” and the “relativization of art.” This study regards the Art Projects, an activity deviating from the concept of modern art, as the embodiment of the birth of a new artistic sphere called Co-Creation Art. Co-Creation Art is equipped with the attributes of “empathy,” “subsumption,” and “linkage.” Co-Creation Art connects arts that were separated by modernization and creates traffic between them. As a result, arts are relativized and the relativization of the creation of art is promoted. This study also finds that the effects of the Art Projects on public policies are the reorganization of the resources of local communities, the agitation of public policies, and the creation of the cooperation of local communities. These effects in turn promote the realization of sustainable and symbiotic society. The overall view of these examinations reveals that each of these effects is closely linked to the issues caused by modernization. This study finds that the Art Projects contain the values and possibilities for creating art and complementing public policies.