

Mapping the impact of public art in the creation of convivial culture: A case study of a public art exhibition at Sher Shah Colony, Lahore, Pakistan

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1. Introduction

“The indifferent A (4)rt” was a participatory public art exhibition that was held for 02 days in 2018. The exhibition was held in two different parks of a low-income housing society i.e., Sher Shah Colony, in Lahore. Sher Shah Colony is a designed housing facility located in the southwest of Lahore. It is compressed between the highly commercialized locality of Raiwind and a chunk of agrarian land. (Figure 1) Although the investigation of the development pattern of Sher Shah Colony is not the focus of this research however it is important to note that the colony has recently examined

a dramatic shift in terms of population growth and has observed an astonishing pace of urbanization in its vicinities. The recent introduction of educational institutions, industrial faculty, and housing societies for the urban elite and middle class, connected through a network of fine roads, has contributed to shaping and altering the socio-built environment of the colony. Planned on a perfect iron grid pattern, with an approximate area of 4600000 sqft, the colony is divided into 4 blocks namely A, B, C, and D. A park has been designed at the center of each block and two big parks have been allocated at the center of the colony.



Figure 1. Context of Sher Shah Colony located on near Raiwind Road , Lahore. Source: Indifferent A(4)rt 2018

Interestingly the exhibition itself was a product of informal discussions carried out among a group of friends over meals in Sher Shah Colony, Lahore. The growing contextual and psychological strain affecting their cities, neighborhoods, families, and personal lives was often deliberated during their discussions. Being indifferent to the situation stopped working for their personal satisfaction since the current environment was not about people and places around them but about people and places where they anchor their existence. Therefore the endeavor holds not only objective but also subjective significance in its occurrence. Also, the brutal hegemony embedded in the structure of art and architecture practice and inaccessibility of urban public spaces was personally experienced by initiators rather than speculatively perceived in this case. Therefore efforts to create a public platform where discourse on these subjective and objective, personal and communal, concerns can be generated and encouraged seems to be the only possible solution for the group. The exhibition was conceived to be an experimental and collaborative endeavor challenging the spatial and artistic paradigm of creative culture. It was also aimed at fetching the art exhibition, creation, and appreciation out of the

confined gallery spaces and privileged social groups and engaging it to evoke convivial culture in public space. The group believed that the collaboration of art and public forums can create democratic spaces where underprivileged voices can also be expressed, heard, and valued. The name of the project “The indifferent Art” doesn’t also define the objective of the project but highlights the existing dominant artistic and spatial attitude towards public spirit. And in an attempt to do so, it does also voice that art and public space should be indifferent to serve segregation, censorship, and anti-convivial and anti-democratic conditions.

The design of the exhibition space was perceived as a collection of memories. Memories of culture in distress, of culture in celebration. Each piece of art displayed was projected as a story and every story highlighted multiple social behaviors observed by the artist in Sher Shah Colony. This was further emphasized by weaving the design around an existing element which can retain the memory of social life i.e. one exhibition was designed around a big mango tree (Figure 2) and in another park around an abounded football net (Figure 3). It is interesting to note here that the deliverables of the proj-



Figure 2. The exhibition is arranged around the mango tree located in the park. Source: Indifferent A(4)rt, 2018.



Figure 3. The exhibition was designed around the empty football net located in the park. Source: Indifferent A(4)rt, 2018

ect were also not preconceived but they evolved organically during the course of the research. However, what was decided from the start was to invest in public art as a catalyst to revive convivial culture in public space and to establish the autonomy of this unconventional practice of art exhibition by its mere occurrence. Several design proposals were presented in community meetings, informally discussed with the people of the colony, and rejected. These include the public follies, landscape design elements, and provision of kiosks or other facilities as a tool to create or revive the social convivial culture in the public park/s of Sher Shah Colony.

With the help of a multi-disciplinary and collaborative approach, the question on the nature and spatial typology of exhibition space appropriate to advocate the objective of the project was initiated and finalized. The extended public partnership and understanding achieved through research also informed the materialization of the exhibition. The research also provides decisive guidelines for the implementation of the exhibition where the design and implementation process focus on an inclusive approach fostering participation, en-

agement, and collaboration of people.

2. Method and research questions:

Urban exploration and a community-based participatory approach were employed as the on-ground research methodology to experience, record, and analyze the public culture, public spaces, and aesthetics of the Sher Shah Colony in order to organize a participatory public art event. The above-mentioned research methods were also used as ingress to interact with, engage and extend collaborations with the community of Sher Shah Colony.

Each research methodology was chosen to serve a specific objective and yield a pre-determined outcome. For example, Urban exploration was employed as one of the research methodologies to explore and map the public culture and spatial complexities of Sher Shah Colony and to identify potential public spaces in Colony for social experiments and interventions. Photographs, videos, sketches, personal notes, maps, and architectural drawings exploring zoning, building typologies, spatial hierarchy, activities, and infrastructure

details were developed in this regard.

Also, in order to develop an inclusive design proposal assisted by research data, a community-based participatory approach was adopted. The process of research and exploration was further strengthened by regular workshops, seminars, and meetings in which the curators of the exhibitions present, analyze, and deliberate on the research conducted under the supervision of community members. Design proposals for social experiments and interventions, strategies for the acquisition of required material, and funding for the exhibition were extensively discussed during community meetings with peers and with the people of the Sher Shah Colony. The community-based participatory approach has contributed a lot in honing community participation, interaction, engagement, and a sense of community ownership with the public art exhibition.

Public spaces are the manifestations of civic urban complexities. These spaces are projections of communal expressions and are shared, accessed, and preserved distinctly and differently in the personal and collective memory of the people. The *translucency** of the public spaces allows the exposition of such personal and collective experiences, associations, and interactions to dwell under a single shade fostering conviviality. Public spaces are also capable of absorbing and generating manifold abstractions of a single reality. The nature of extensions and the reactions communicated by and to the public user imparts fluidity to a public space making it a cocktail of various and varied human expressions of individual and communal concern. Public spaces being the cul-

mination points in the public arena also reflects on people's thoughts, activities, traditions, beliefs, and culture. These spaces have been feeding multiple human needs i.e., from physical, emotional, and cultural to psychological. UNESCO defines a public space as one which is "open and accessible" to all. One of the primary forms of public space is a public park which has the innate quality to bring the people of the city together through its spatial accessibility and viability in terms of design supporting communal activities, interactions, and initiatives. The formal and informal interactions generated in and around public parks allow people to discuss what is already acquainted and to hear stories and ideas that are unknown. The curiosity to listen and the urge to respond, in almost a symphonic manner, can form the basis of convivial culture in the public domain. The unfamiliar faces and ideas introduced during these interactions facilitated by a public space either result in awe or generate a heated or soft debate. In either case, the interactions are facilitated by public space encouraging everyone to voice and shape their opinions. Clearly many communal public actions typically happen in existing public spaces thus reasserting the role and sustenance of the public realm (Tridib Banerjee, 2001).

But what if the phenomenon of debate and dialogue attributes intrinsic to tolerant and democratic values are not allowed to unfold in the public sphere? What if the basic human right i.e. right to freedom of expression, is crumbled through sophisticated propaganda? What if the innate spatial quality of public parks i.e., the convivial culture is reduced to mere visual pleasure that is too reserved for a few? What if the dynamics of socializing and interactions are altered in



Figure 4. An architect's impression of the socio-built environment of Sher Shah Colony. Source: Indifferent A(4)rt, 2018.

a way that produced nothing but discomfort, mistrust, and hesitation in the public arena? What if public spaces staging human drama (Syed Faisal, 2014) the story of our society being performed is of apathy and desolation?

The questions posed in the above-mentioned paragraph are not mere hypothetical assumptions but an everyday reality of our time and context. Pakistan and especially Lahore is witnessing the corrosion of public spaces as a direct outcome of capitalism and terrorism. Systematic dysfunctional conditions are improvised to socially impair public parks as vibrant convivial arenas. Recent development in Lahore city observes the social function of public parks consciously debilitated and their utilitarian purpose being reduced to mere visual gardens. The new ones being developed in gated vicinities are reserved for the exclusive urban class. And low-income neighborhoods are gifted with an underdeveloped piece of land under the name of public parks which are either illegally occupied or abandoned due to their poor physical environment and lack of ownership. The research, therefore, aims to investigate if public art can regenerate an inactive public space in underprivileged communities like Sher Shah. Evolving urban morphology of Lahore is treating land as a commodity. Too valuable to be wasted on public parks dedicated to the public well-being and democratic spirit. A new form of public space recorded as "Privatized public spaces or publicized private spaces" (Tridib Banerjee, 2001) is merging to satisfy commercial and capital hunger. This new face of public space dedicated to feeding capitalism is strictly controlled and monitored allowing little or no room for democratic convivial culture to develop. Thus Decline of the public realm is paralleled by a corresponding decline in public spirit (Tridib Banerjee, 2001).

Interestingly paradoxical conditions in reference to the "publicness" of art exist in our context where public art has been displayed for the public in private space i.e. *Surkh gulaban dey mausam wich phulaan dey rang kaaley* (Black Spring) by Awami art collective, or where public art has been exhibited for privilege class in a public space i.e. galleries. The term art has always been a contested terrain (Robert S. Nelson, Richard Shiff, 2003). And the question of what qualifies a piece of art as public art furthers the complexities of the subject. A lot

has been discussed, written, argued over, and criticized by academic and nonacademic circles on the subject of Public Art. But the issue, fortunately, or unfortunately has been further convoluted. Public art can be described as an interrelationship between content and audience (Cher Krause Knight, 2008) having an ability to generate emotional or consequential effects (Robert S. Nelson, Richard Shiff, 2003). The three key elements i.e. art, public, and space, have been formulating the base or structure of all concepts designed to address the notion of public art. The convivial conditions created and encouraged in public space due to the ownership, engagement, and participation of people with art, labeled as public art, can also serve as a tool to measure the "publicness" of an art piece and public space. Also, the level of public engagement and participation should be questioned rather than answered while defining the *publicness* of public art.

Conviviality is more than a "feasting, drinking good company" (Merriam Webster) or "sociable and good time" (Word web Dictionary). It is the autonomous and creative intercourse among people and their intercourse of persons and their environment (I Illinch, 1973). Peattie (, 1988) describes these interactive interactions of social pleasure as purposeful activities which are not limited to singing, dancing, and socializing but also may include small or big community/group initiatives aimed at addressing the grave community concerns or demanding reclamation of their rights. Convivial environments demand liberty and freedom of expression and public spaces by definition act as breathing spaces of a city, both environmentally and socially. Therefore the research also aims to investigate if experiments like Indifferent A(4) rt i.e. a public art exhibition being held in a public space can act as a bridge between people and revive convivial culture in a society that is in the process of strangling its communal spirit. Subjectivity, being an intrinsic attribute of public art, demands acknowledging the fact that multiple opinions (irrespective of being ultimately wrong or right but debatable) are expected to be generated by a single expression of art. And the expression and its reactions, in the shape of acknowledgment, adaptation, and confrontation, is, in fact, an astonishing display of human creative diversity. And recognizing this environment of pluralistic values is the soul of a convivial culture.

During the course of field research, 6 public parks located in Sher Shah Colony were critically observed and considered potential sites (Figure 5). Where urban exploration allowed the navigation of inaccessible parks, the community-based participatory approach laid down the paradigm using which the parks were selected. Two out of the 6 parks were attached to the government school and were already being used exclusively by the school authorities. Another 3rd park, interestingly decided for women, was slowly being engulfed by a mosque located at its periphery to an extent that the site boundary located between the mosque and the park was indistinguishable. 4th park, interestingly another park dedicated to women, was organically evolving its convivial spirit due to its neighborhood. This park relatively the smallest among all parks was surrounded by a residential area and therefore was used by children, women, and men alike in the evening. Feedback received from the people also indicated that an intervention might destabilize and reorient the evolving convivial culture of that park. On the one hand, religious partiality, the hegemony of government institutes, and surveillance exploitation can be reflected and on the other hand spark of a convivial environment was observed in the parks of Sher

Shah Colony.

The community-based participatory approach adopted during the course of research in which community members were engaged as team members and advisors indicated that artistic intervention in 2 parks located at the center of Sher Shah Colony, relatively big in size and surrounded by commercial area will be suitable for the public art exhibition. The parks were selected because despite being large and located in approachable vicinity, they were inactive in their use and accessibility. Also, the parks were situated between the commercial and residential areas, enabling them to share a much more diverse neighborhood than other parks located in the Colony. The location, size, and diverse neighborhood of the parks can also ensure the participation of males as well as females since one was dedicated to males and the other was dedicated to females shared by kids and elders.

3. Regeneration of An Inactive Public Space with the Help of Public Art

It is interesting to note that despite the well-defined space designated for the public parks, only one park out of all the present in Sher Shah Colony, was recorded as active in terms



Figure 5. Usage of Parks located in Sher Shah Colony. Source: Indifferent A(4)rt.

of activity, accessibility, and quality of space. Lack of public ownership, maintenance, infrastructure, and activity was mostly absent from all the parks located in the colony. Cricket was the main activity predominately observed in the parks during reserve hours but for only male members. The participation of females, the elderly, and kids were rarely observed. These block parks were rarely either used by elder members of Sher Shah Colony for evening sittings or rare political or religious processions.

A glimpse of periodic activity was however observed in the two selected parks of the colony in terms of their usage since the Sunday market was attached to one park and the second park was used as a cricket ground. The culture of conviviality, public spirit, and communal participation was absent from all six parks of the colony.

The Comparative activity map (Figure 6 & 7) demonstrate how the introduction of a participatory public art exhibition not only increased the participation of all genders and age group in the park but also added a significant number of activities created within and around the exhibition. The activities contributed to the creation of convivial culture and allowed the people of the colony to talk around and about the exhibition as well as about their daily lives. Children who

were rarely observed in the parks were the main agents of change. The children contributed to making the space and exhibition active by participating in the event as well as promoting the event in the vicinity.

The comparative activity map (Figure 6) shows that limited space within the park was used for playing cricket by the male members of the colony i.e. students of the school located in the vicinity of the park. The Cricket matches were also played at fixed hours. However, the participatory exhibition attracted not only young male members but kids as well as elderly members. The exhibition also ran from morning till evening. One of the major activities added to the park was the exhibition itself, however, due to the exhibition, the elderly members started engaging with the exhibition as well as with each other under the shade of a nearby tree. Together with crickets, the male members were busy painting and discussing the art piece exhibited in the exhibition with artists as well as with their fellow peers.

The comparative activity map (Figure 7) shows that the park was generally active in the area where a play area was dedicated for the children. The park was not actively used by the females despite it being named “Ladies Park”. Although the park was well maintained but underused due to the lack of

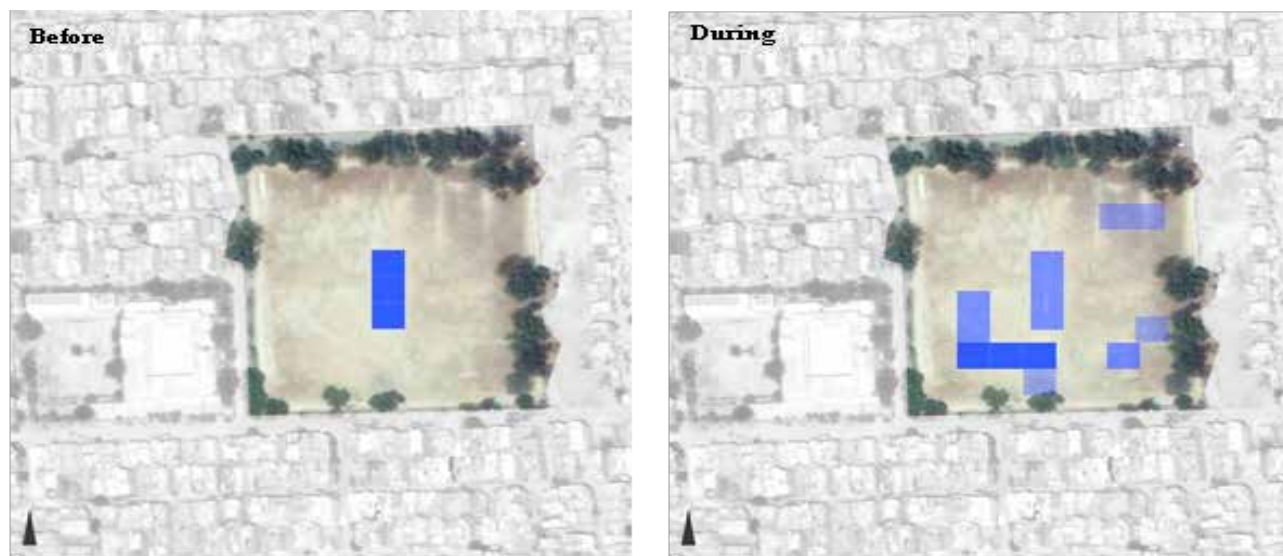


Figure 6. Activity Map of Park reserved for young boys, Before and During the exhibition. Source: Mustafa, Mehreen (2019).

activity. The participatory art exhibition first attracted the kids who were playing in the designed section of the park. The kids not only participated fully in the exhibition but also invited their family members, especially the female ones. Soon the park was raided with mothers holding their children. The art exhibition soon witnessed kids filling the canvas with colors. Mothers and young females engage with an artist concerning their aspirations and how the exhibition has provided them an opportunity to use the park and paint their hearts out.

The comparative analysis of the activity map (6 and 7) clearly outlines the increase in the number of activities conducted in the park. The park was transformed from only a cricket and playing area to a space where painting, discussion, casual chatter, and debates are being held. The maps also highlight that the participatory art exhibition has encouraged females and children to access the parks and participate in the participatory art exhibition, resulting in the creation of gender-inclusive public space i.e., from a male-only space to a space where children and females can sit, relax, paint, play, and discuss their daily business. The maps highlight that the participatory art exhibition has regenerated an inactive public space and contributed to the creation of convivial public life and space in the parks where people. of all ages from young

members to kids and the elderly can participate freely.

4. Reviving Convivial Culture with the Help of Public Art and Public Space

The design Layout and concept of the exhibition were focused on “Inclusiveness, participation, and democratization” as the key features. The layout of the exhibition provided multiple options, perceived as “perspective”, to the public through its subtle opening. Providing multiple options to access an exhibition also provided multiple routes and order of seeing things displayed. This flexibility of accessibility and navigation was intentionally designed to open the door of “multiple perspectives” of a single reality i.e. exhibition. The “memories i.e. art pieces” informing the “perspectives” were conceived to be either suspended in time i.e. air or deposited in the subconscious i.e. earth. The use of the minimalistic style of display composed of only fish wire, bamboo, stone/bricks collected from the site, and a piece of cloth was employed to propagate the message of “memories suspended in air or deposited in the subconscious”. The materials were also chosen due to their everyday use in the living culture of the Sher Shah Colony. The nature, behavior, and texture of these materials were not new, unknown, or uncomfortable for the people who have been using them creatively in their everyday life (Figure 08).



Figure 7. Activity Map of Park reserved for Ladies , Before and During the exhibition. Source: Mustafa, Mehreen (2019).



Figure 8. Daily use material such as fish wire and bamboos were used for the exhibition to generate sense of similarity and comfort. Source: Indifferent A(4)rt, 2018.



Figure 9. A glimpse of series “Rah Chaltay Jumlay”. Source: Indifferent A(4)rt, 2018.

The sculpture series titled “ *The Rah Chaltay jumlay* (Figure 09) “ was subjected to heated discussion. Although the female participants appreciated the content, the men folk were receptive but uncomfortable with the message it was projecting. Rah Chaltay jumlay made its space in the exhibition with the help of the following statement:

*“We, especially the women folk here, have always experienced our personal space violated in private and public spaces. The violation though is not always physical. It can be as subtle as a voice having no literal but symbolic meaning or a word which cans your mind can register and signify. The interplay of signifier and signified (Ferdinand de Saussure 1857 – 1913) provides critical insight into our collective behaviors. What we are being called? Why are we being called? What does the word being called signified” are the complex questions we are always forced to think about once the ferocity of the moment has passed. These also include those sentences which have stuck in the memory of artists due to their conditional significance and how they have been expressed. The following “ *Rah chaltay jumaly*” is something we encounter and we think this does say a lot about cultural perception and interpretation.”*

The painting series titled *Collection of memories* (Figure 10) was subjected to introspection in both parks. Male, female, and elderly people discussed the content and perspective of the artist on Sher Shah Colony and gave their input. Since *Collection of memories* was the fusion of what culture at Sher Shah and what the artist has registered. The memories are reflecting the perspective of an artist and their nostalgic baggage expressed in the context of Sher Shah Colony. They evoke memories of homes, emotions, physical needs, behaviors, paradoxes, humanness, etc. And the people of Sher Shah Colony received, discussed, and welcome these impressions with warm hearts. Where adults and the elderly were attracted to the content and story behind the painting, the kids were more interested in the imagery used. But most importantly the collection of memories rather than being a nostalgic identity was crafting something unique – a culture in making. The exhibition by taking the help of existing culture, art, and public space was in process of reviving conviviality. The existing culture with all its undesirable and intolerant aspects was juxtaposed by a layer of convivial culture, both

existing and making each other, a single plane of time.

A regular space was created using the display of art pieces at their periphery. Art pieces were facing the interior of the periphery and the space created was small in size. It was intentionally designed so to designed to increase the proximity of people navigating it. The comfortable congestion compelled people to notice and acknowledge each other and interact. Also, the inclusion of white blank canvas of various sizes assisted by colors and brushes in an environment where each canvas was full of colors and memories challenges the definition of “artist” (Figure 11). The blank white canvas was the main feature and attraction of the exhibition where young and elders, with or without hesitation but little encouragement, considered themselves artists and had painted their observations and aspirations on canvas. The creative use of colors, symbols, portraits, and abstraction painted by the people of Sher Shah Colony on the canvas were confidently projecting that an “untrained eye and mind” can critically observe and sensitively translate their impression on canvas. That such eyes and minds can not only create, appreciate and confidently exhibit their art but also initiate and welcome discussion around their ideas. That art doesn’t require any privileged space or hands to unfold it or to be appreciated. The event had successfully established the autonomy of this unconventional practice of art exhibition by its mere occurrence. The symbols and lines drawn were demonstrating the desires and hopes of the people. Art as a medium of expression was at its work. It is especially interesting to note that where the male members drew portraits and names (Figure 12) The female members drew their opinions, aspirations, and challenges with the help of symbols and abstraction. (Figure 13) The female members discussed the work of the artist and their opinion on the art displayed at great length followed by drawing their reflections on the white canvas. The canvas imprinted the challenges of mothers, the aspirations of young girls, and the obstacles of a common female member of the colony. Apart from leaving their impression on canvas the female members started forming small groups and started reclaiming their space in the park. There were a group of females who were keen to show their creative skills on canvas and there were groups who were talking about education and its accessibility for the girls of the colony.



Figure 10. A glimpse of series “Rah Chaltay Jumlay”. Source: Indifferent A(4)rt, 2018.



Figure 11. White canvas allowed the people to reflect, engage and participate in the exhibition. Source: Indifferent A(4)rt, 2018.



Figure 12. Male members has mostly drawn the portraits. Source: Indifferent A(4)rt, 2018.



Figure 13. Female members have used abstract symbolism to express their aspirations. Source: Indifferent A(4)rt, 2018.



Figure 14. Engagement of children with event. Source: Indifferent A(4)rt, 2018.

The “kids-only park” space soon transformed into a feminist arena, where stories were shared and critical concerns regarding the accessibility of public space and navigating the streets were raised and discussed. Ladies shared that they were rarely welcome or allowed to use the park and how activities like this exhibition can provide them with an opportunity to access the park, meet each other, and discuss their collective and personal concerns.

The role of children remained vital in regenerating the convivial culture of the public space and the success of public art events. Their participation, curiosity, and confidence built an environment of trust in the exhibition space. The children facilitated the setup of the exhibition by identifying the potential human resources which were required to gain the confidence and approval of the neighborhood for the exhibition. Also, they played a vital role in convincing their mother and female members of the colony to visit the exhibition and participate in it (Figure 14).

4. Concluding Remarks

The question of power and agency affiliated with the creation and appreciation of art and its exhibition in the public domain, in an urban context especially, adheres to the core principles of democratic civic behaviors. Understanding the extension of these behaviors in public spaces is very crucial in our context and time, when lack of trust, security threats, and state-backed undemocratic attitudes have further segregated our already fragmented urban class. The segregation enforced, other than being intrinsically unjust, directly foster autocratic conditions in the public and private realms. The complex phenomena noted above through personal experiences are what has motivated the group comprised of artists and architects to investigate and breach the preconceived peripheries of approved institutionalized art, artist, and public space. But the breach was not attempted only by aesthetic purists or merely for the sake of it. It was attempted with a very clear objective i.e. to scrutinize whether conviviality can provoke progressive and tolerant dispositions in public space through art. The effort was also a creative critique of

the conventional practice and exhibition of art and design in which the authority, legitimizing one's opinion as valuable and others as invalid, rests on the premises of one's formal education and privileged background. The phenomenon is supported by arguments like "one needs a trained eye and a cultural mind to enjoy and appreciate art (Syed Faisal Sajjad, 2017) Such narratives automatically exclude the so-called "untrained" eye and "uncultured" mind from participating and enjoying art and other creative cultures. Nevertheless, several artists believe that appreciation of art is not a social construct but an innate human trait (Denis Dutton, 2010) and have therefore dedicated their lives to challenging the idea of art as not merely a privileged asset but an integral part of public life. Regular efforts have been made to accelerate interfaith and intercultural tensions. Art and artists, therefore in our part of the world, have rarely felt comfortable being a part of general public discourse and public space.

Public art is still a not acceptable form of expression in our region although it has acquired the status of art in urban sub-cultures as an alternative medium for the new Avant-garde (Syed Faisal Sajjad, 2015). Nevertheless, creative endeavors in the domain of public space and public art should be encouraged since public spaces and artists with the power of art can foster convivial culture. Interactive and participatory art and public space can motivate people to come out of their biased prejudices and face each other's social polarities. It can create social spaces encouraging intellectual conflict and public discourse. Inclusiveness, participation, and democratization are the key features of convivial public culture. The indifferent Art demonstrated that art in public space can help foster this culture.

A convivial culture evoked by public art can provoke social capabilities of the public space in which a or multiple creative expressions perceived by people in their capacity can create a shared experience that reflects on the collective enterprise of a complex society. (Garrett Dash Nelson, 2015) As believed by Frederick Law Olmsted public spaces especially Parks could hasten the emergence of a broad-minded public spirit that could transcend factional politics (Garrett Dash Nelson, 2015.) Public space in Pakistan is a contested site on which state, extremists, and society are laying claims thus

public art in Pakistan is geared towards empowering people (Sadia Pasha Kamran, 2017). Where art has widely been used as a propaganda tool by states and extremists through various mediums and platforms, public art in Pakistan has so far made its alliance with civil society. Different forms of public art in Lahore such as urban graffiti, street art, street theater, public installations, etc. are highlighting and representing serious communal concerns, resistance, and interest of underprivileged, underrepresented, and marginalized groups. Formal and informal censorship on the freedom of expression imposed by autocratic forces in the region is creatively challenged using art and public platform. And this is one of the prime reasons of as to why, in our region, public art is strongly discouraged and preferred to be acknowledged as a frivolous art form sabotaging public space.

The event was an attempt to connect the convivial culture with a by definition convivial space. Undoubtedly the participatory public art exhibition A was designed to commemorate a shift in our attitude towards how art should be created, where it should be displayed, and how it should be celebrated concerning its impact on communal wellbeing and convivial spirit.

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