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# Reflections on the Public Art: Comparative Case Study of the Elgolu Park in Tabriz (Iran) and Lampini Park in Bangkok (Thailand)

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### Abstract

By the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, rapid technological changes, increasing urbanization, and the login art to Urban Space, everyday lives of the people bounded to the 'public spaces'. Hereby, new 'institutions' were in need, and 'city' turned into one of the fundamental problematic sites of inquiry for artists, urban planners, designers, architects, politicians, and every individual citizen around the globe. In 1920s, as one among many solutions to the problematic of the 'cities' and 'citizenship', 'public art' increasingly caught the attentions and preformed an undeniable role in the everyday lives of the people. As an analytical-comparative analysis, this inquiry analyzes urban spaces in two main public spaces in Thailand and Iran comparatively: Lampini Park in Bangkok and Elli Park in Tabriz. From structural perspective, the two are significantly similar; which makes the research justified methodologically. Despite the similarities such as the area of Parks, having lakes and being constructed in the same time, the comparative analysis, based on the analytical components, illustrates that the spaces had been used differently.

Contrary to what the analysis the Lampini Park in Bangkok shows, there is no distinction between the interior and exterior structures in case of Elgolu Park in Tabriz; which means the designers faced two different spaces with one single logic and mind set. Not only cannot meet the requirements, but also is caused special confusion and disorder as well.

### Keywords

Urban Park, Public Space, Public Art, Lampini Park, Elgolu Park.

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### Introduction

Cities and public space recently, have turned into the spaces with highly distinctive significations; culturally and socially. The changes that we have never faced since the emergence of the modern cities after the industrial revolution. In the course of the changes and transformations, the relationship between men and the urban environment has undergone a huge gap. Massive urban spaces require public works which can be a linking agent to the urban environment and enhance human visual perception. The relationship between these two components would not be achieved unless with interfaces' loop such as public art that is an arena to create meaning and collective norms of human beings. "According to the United Nations, the beginning of the twentyfirst century is coinciding with the development of the new urban revolution in the world and for the first time in history, more than half of the world's population live in cities and up to the next thirty years, the number of urban dwellers will be double of villagers " (Madanipour, 2000).

Contemporary collective life with issues such as public space, urban furniture and environmental graphic which, despite the ignorance of many citizens toward these elements, the impact of such components is undeniable the individual's psyche and mental life. Public art plays a crucial central role in the expression of history and character of a city and therefore must be considered as an exhibition of talent, creativity and capabilities of artists. This is a crucial component in the design of innovative urban space the fundamental goal is to attract people to public art and enjoyment of works of art in the city and spend more time to be realized. Meantime, the park is a unique place with a focus and giving priority to audiences and citizens that provides urban life with creative spaces to consume, live with, interpret, and rebuilt individual and collective identities.

In this background, this article investigates the role of public art in the formation and reformation of individual and collective lives in two Asian cities; one located in the Middle East another in south-east.

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# **Research questions**

Which elements of the Lampini and Elgolu parks can be evaluated and analyzed as a contribution to the public art?

# **Research hypothesis**

Assessment and comparison of the level of urban development in public art in two parks indicates that despite of presences of the works, only some part of the two abovementioned parks have the potentialities to be considered as the sites of the public art. In such cases, there is a significant difference in terms of applying public art in public spaces.

### **Research method**

This study is done in two levels of the descriptive and analytical analysis, using library collections and documentations, as well as observation to achieve coherent data and assessments

### **Research Background**

Although considerable researches hasn't been done on the significance of the public art in the public life, but still few studies have been published as comparative investigations between societies and countries. The most important examples, here, are as followings:

1. Salman Moradi investigated and defined public art in a comprehensive way in his article entitled "public art and integrate it with urban space" (2007).

2. Ali Madanipour tries to pay attention to towns and the two-way communication between audience and the city as an active element in "Urban Space design: a vision on social-locational processes" (2000). In this book, paying attention to urban elements and its active participation in everyday' human life will find a shared aspect of public art which is in line with the article.

3. Maryam Asgari and Mohsen Kalantari are authors of "Tabriz tourism in opportunities, challenges and develop strategies" (2012). In this book the authors seek to provide an analysis of Tabriz economic, geographic and tourism characteristics, and then they have assessed the strengths and weaknesses of Tabriz tourism.

4. Low, DanaTaplin and Suzanne Scheld Setha in their book, "Rethinking urban park public space and Cultural diversity" (2005) seek to redefine and review five New York City's parks and considers an advantage of parks on their design for different racial diversity in global scale.

5. In "Public art and Space" (2010), Stefan Gaie applies an interdisciplinary approach between public art, urban sociology and anthropology to examine challenges which public art is faced with.

6. Sturley, in his book "Community plan for public art" (2008) have addressed how the council planning in Canada tried to build the city as cultural capital.

7. "Urban regeneration a challenge for public art" (1997) is collected and modified by Antoni Remesar and has been written by different authors in three chapters and different sections that deal with a range of ideas related to the role of art in the public domain, public life, citizens' attitudes toward both art and city and alike.

#### Public art and its forms

It is clear that by "coming down" to the public space, contemporary art has become part of life and public life (Gaie, 2010: 170). Here, public art and architecture participate actively in building the bridges and facilitating dialogues with (in) communities. The main objective here is to bring art to the ground and make it available to everyone; especially to the urban populace in the form(s) of urban life.

According to some of references, including the Oxford dictionary, the concept and application of public art is: "In general, in connection with people and the general public that have been opened for public viewing and its existence is for all people" (Lambton, 1994:4). Art works transformed our invisible spaces of cities. They were changed from being present in our everyday life and therefore experienced by us in daily bases. While many of artworks can be found in galleries and museums,

public art catches minds of the audience under a challenging urban site and thus invites people to participate in consuming and producing of urban sites in different ways. It invite people to participate and comment and even cause various forms of identity and meaning to places forgotten as well. In this case, public art either belongs to everyone or to nobody.

Such an outstandingly new and changing conception of the public life and public art brings at least three main elements into the modern city's face:

• It increases social interactions of citizens in the city dramatically;

• It creates the image of the city as a cultural center;

• It creates an image of the city as the center of dynamic variable (Remesar, 2005:121).

Some argue that art has a higher value which is beyond the perceptions and experiences of the ordinary people. Here, accordingly, this approach considers galleries and museums as the only significant defendable place for art works. But others are looking to expand a public identity and spiritual growth of the community through public art and the art of impact on social behavior change undeniable know. This approach considers art as a communal activity; produced and consumed publicly. However, in a more general perspective, public art is placed in front of the art museum, commonly.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, John Dewey called museum as the invention of capitalism and rejected the curators' claim on providing a specific and detached place for art. From the perspective of this American philosopher, museums are some tools to create separation between art and life of humans. Similarly, Marcel Duchamp in his article "Creative Act" (1957), considers art as a pact between the artist and the audience; not a single individual performance of an artist. Promoting public art and the artists that made artwork from exile - the museum .What relieved, not merely decorative applications, and the ability to "citizen" was provided in urban areas will experience art. As a result of public access to art in public spaces, art was a part of daily life.

Public art went through some historical trends as well

as other disciplines. For example, since the beginning of the 1960s up to the mid of 1970s, public art was performed in the form of abstract and modernist sculptures in large size and copy of the works of art trapped in the museums and galleries. These works are pieces of works by featured artists (including Isamue Noguche, Henry Moore). The work of these groups of artists had no distinctive quality to be coined 'public works' except for the size and scale. The only thing that legitimizes this works is being located outdoors in the public places. In the early 1970s, Henry Moore spoke about the places of apathy which is the place to offer many works of (not all) artists who were working with public art title and stated that:

"I am not interested to do custom work, so that's going to place (of install) and study it and then think what I should do. Whenever asked me to consider a special place which probably one of my sculptures will be installed there, I will try to select a right thing from the work which I've already done or finished the works that I have. In this way, I will never wait and do not attempt to do something special for that special place to create a thing" (Kwon, 2002: 6).

Henry Moore's process of dealing with the work and the environment had become a reflecting factor to artists in this way and created a different context from the typical art exhibits everywhere. This new trend provided new meanings to the urban spaces with newly significant capabilities. Rather than asking for their interpretation by reference into space it added a sense to the space and the human environment; a meaning that would have a two-way communicative component of the audience.

In this line of argumentation, therefore, that public art is a work which is created by artists and members of society, and has three features in general form:

• The effect can be lasting, permanent or temporary.

• The work of professional artists or ordinary citizens can be created; and,

• It costs upon on government or the private sector or community or a combination of these things (Sturley, 2010: 2).

Different articulations and relations between public art and urban areas are ways to understand the traditional values and modern urban histories. This segmentation can be divided more generally into the public works as "sustainable" and "temporary". The "temporary" works include fireworks, works with fabric, playing with light, music, pantomime and in general they are the works that are similar to the short-term durability which from these works remains purely only photos and videos. Public art "sustainable" covers a wide range including:

• Historic monuments; Each building, painting or object that is able to reconstruct the history of the city;

• Specific buildings in scales such as different sizes (such as skyscrapers) or the aesthetic value that is different from one site into another one;

• Memorial works: sculptures, buildings and fountains which representing the event image, symbol for the city;

• Sculptures and other decorative works: sculptures, tablets and fountains that are used to improve the city;

• Urban furniture elements: The basic role of urban furniture to improve transport in cities, including: identifying authorized and unauthorized spaces (Fences and signs, etc.), for ease of transport (paving, signaling system and ...), light of paths (street lamps), in order to comfort the citizens (hours, toilets, chairs and tables, garbage bins, kiosk), elements to create natural landscapes, including plants, trees, grass (Remesar, 2005:132).

So the realm of public art includes the most banal of objects in the city to the best work of art. This handy objects only in conjunction with space and enjoy the beauty of art can provide for citizens. Increase the levels of the public art realm in the city is a civil undeniable pride on citizens. There are many cities which relatively pay to welfare citizens by offering facilities, but richness of urban life is emerged when the art, spirituality will be sustainable in the city and the urban environment and harmony between them. There is an important principle that is public art should be for the people and with the people and should play a role in reducing social inequalities. According to this thinking that we should say that public space is not a museum or gallery to exhibit the works. Because in this case, this local space will be the showcase of achievements and the ability of a person, not a space to showcase the achievements and memories and cultural dimensions of a community" (Moradi, 2007: 86).

Access to green spaces, in the Iranian traditional system was supplied through natural environments and gardens and today, with the expansion of Urban Space there is need to independent places to spend time and creating of Urban Parks. Urban Park is said to the park which is placed in a residential area and considers an area at least twice the size of maximum in regional scale (8 hectares). Also, in accordance with the standard, referred person can reach the mentioned park from the farthest regions with the vehicle at the time of an hour or more (Majnoonyan, 1995: 72). Urban parks created in relation to their surroundings, Such as Lampini and Elgolu Parks. It should be noted that both mentioned spaces where only the green space (gardens) in time of construction, which have been outside the city. But today, by expansion of the city of Tabriz and Bangkok, these two parks is part of the urban and are considered as urban park according to the changes that have been made over time. Historical trends of two parks and the remaining elements of national and historical identity indicates that the national parks and urban elements can be found in these two spaces. In analyzing the principles of using public art with real and effective definition and functions, it is necessary to review two types of coordination in natural and urban spaces, but differ in the method of use of public art. For this purpose, we will review Elgolu' park in Tabriz, Iran and Lampini' park in Bangkok, Thailand in historical mode.

#### **Elgolu Park in Tabriz**

Elgolu Park has a pool and a park with an area of 5.5 hectares with an area of 60 hectares is located in the southeastern city of Tabriz. In the center of the

pool there is a street like peninsula, and an octagonal mansion is built there which has a banquet hall for guests (Asghari, 2012: 97). Earlier, this monument catering for Elgolu restaurant has been made as one-floor of mud brick and its old buildings was demolished by the municipality due to burning out in 1967 and in its place was built a two-story building with multiple Porchs is 1,200 square meters. Its pool water is a branch of Lighvam and Sahand River in the form of streams from the southeast corner. Construction of the original building ponds is ascribed to the reign of Sultan Yaghoob Aghkoyunlular and consider its development from the Safavid period. Completion of especial esplanade and mansion for courtiers and its prosperity is ascribed to the time of Champion Mirza, the son of Abbas Mirza regent who was the ruler of Azerbaijan. The Safavid dynasty in the pool Elgolu was the largest water reservoir in the garden. Aghkoyunlular and Safavid and Qajar periods all within the catchment area of sand was empty and it was drawn on the walls of stone and lime. After the Qajar era this area was transferred to Tabriz municipality be a public walkway. With the construction of five-star hotel Elgolu Pars, this area has the international aspect and the space agencies of Tabriz city has become one of the most beautiful public parks (Khamachy, 2007: 146); (Fig 1).

### Lampini Park of Thailand

Bangkok was chosen as the capital in 1782 AD, and Thais call it "Kroonk TaB 'or the City of Angels (Spooner, 2013, 54). Lampini Park in the 1920s on land that belonged to King Vajyravud (Rama V) was created, which at that time was on the outskirts of Bangkok; however, regarding the progress of this city, the park is located within the city of Bangkok. The park is considered as the largest park in Bangkok, which is located in the Van Pasyom range and includes the range of 576000 square meters (Liedtke, 2012, 107). Lampini Park is located on Randamry Street which is at the entrance of Saturn Street.

In this place, Symphony Orchestra concerts are performed publicly during the cold months



Fig.1. Facade of building and pool, Elgolu Park. Source: www.tabriz.ir.

(November to February); (Spooner, 2013: 54). Its' artificial lake is a habitat for several types of animals including the giant lizards which reach up to two meters. At the entrance and North West of Park, there is a statue of Rama. The first Public library of Bangkok city was built on this site. Before seven o'clock in the morning practice tai chi (a Chinese exercise)

for Chinese citizens, and before the sun runs aerobics for residents in the park (Liedtke, 2012: 107). More visitors to the park, families, and tourists are most active they are walking, skating, sailing (Fig 2). Matching two Elgolu and Lampini Park from the perspective of public art

By introduction of two discussed parks, with



Fig.2. Facade and lake, Lampini Park. Source: www.bkk thailand. com.

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reference to the segmentation that is presented in the form of public art, we have addressed public art of Lampini and Elgolu parks comprehensively. The works presentation and introduce their survival and space in the minds of a significant role to play and is evocative of a place, citizen interaction with living space, sense of reasoning of the city and honor and social dynamics them to place their lives in has been followed.

### • Historical monuments

Two statues of Rama V (Fig. 3) in the Lampini Park are the demonstrations of the history of this ancient park. Two park entrance is symbolic with these statues. The structure of sculptures follows a classical style (Greek) and are trying to show their power by altitude location. Each of these components is considered as identifying factor of attachment to place (Table 1).

#### Special buildings

Among the elements that attract the audience in this space are two monuments. There are only two significant monuments in Elgolu park; the most prominent building, is a pergola (picture 1) and Pars Hotel (Fig. 4) In the traditional to modern, many charms is needed in the space between them in all the cohesion lead. Ecology-based aesthetics in the works presented is one of the issues that have been ignored.

Hotel (Fig. 5) and the Public Library of Lampini Park follows Greek architecture in terms of form factor. Overarching architecture with traditional Chinese art of positioning Sami and the clock tower by the park in different places, in different ways are responding coherently. Furthermore, despite the diversity of works that represent different cultures, a visual harmony in this space can be seen (Table 1).

#### • Commemorative elements

In these two parks, there are statues and fountains which can't be considered as parts of the public art components with historical and symbolic memorial. Sointhissection, the statues of Arimathea (Fig. 3 and 6) in Lampini Park is raised (Table 1).



Fig.3. Statue of Rama, the Park entrance Lampini. Source: www.thailandtraveltours.com.



Fig.4. Prospect of Elgolu Hotel, Source: authors, 2015.



Fig.5. Prospect of Lampini Hotel. Source: www. Wikimedia .Com

# Visual works and decorative elements • Sculptures

Elgolu park has several sculptures, which recently have been in this location. Statue of mother's body (Fig 7), Children's statue, the statue of the modern horse, the Statuette old woman. All the statues of classical form rather than the influence of Islamic and indigenous content, the sculpture evokes the West. Even the statue of the horsee - which is made with metal and has a modern form – is classical. Therefore, in spite of Islamic content of these statues, its form does not follow this category. Used material in mother's statue was damaged due to climatic conditions in the shortest time and this question could be raised that how long Elgolu can conserve the work?

In most countries, the most crowded and most

deserted places are considered as installation place of art works. The busiest places, agent to communicate with the public in the wake of artwork and sculptures deserted places with more dynamism to the present, and on the other hand are factors attracting people to these spaces. Something that Elgolu had ignored is the Statue of children behind the trees and missing coffee shops. Elgolu with its large scale, has plenty of space for placement of the works, for example, the entrance ramp, where the audience and the identity of the location with high potential..

In Lampini Park, there are Rama V statue (Fig 6), modern sculptures, statues of women and children. Lampini Park with several sculptures will have a variety of style in classic and modern performance. Despite the diversity of works in groups of Lampini's sculptures, there is no lack of statues with regional and local approach, it is the problem that we see in



Fig.6. the Statue of Rama, Lampini Park. Source: www. Thailandtraveltours.com.

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Fig.7. Mother Statue, park. Elgolu.Source: authors, 2015.

some other parts of Elgolu (Table 1).

### • Wall murals

Elgolu Park can create litter, graffiti and wall murals due to its tiered structure with walls. In case of opposites, Lampini Park is located on the natural open platform. Paintings in Elgolu Park have the lowest quality at the park entrance. Copies of the cartoons and Western works (fig 8, 9) or low resolution images of design, color choices and overall poor performance have been exposed. For a city that has a credible position in Iran's paintings, these are just some nightmares; these paintings are the factor of visual pollution rather than public art. Although these works have been used merely to fill the wall space, but the consequences and its impact on children's minds would be quite contrary to the



Fig.8. Mural Painting, Park entrance. Source: authors, 2015.

perception enforcement.

### Fountain and air jets

Using water and pools in Iranian architecture has a long tradition and religious roots "... and we raised up, every living thing from water." (Surah of Anbiya verse 30). The shape of used pools in two analyzed parks holds a clear distinction. In Lampini Park, the pool has the shape of Natural River, but water in Elgolu Park takes a different form by the pagination on steep ground (Influenced by the traditional gardens and an allegory of Paradise Creek). Water as ponds or lakes; target central part in both parks are responsible. The use of water jets and fountains during the day and combining colored lights at night, from public art elements, can be achieved in these locations with the lowest cost and features. The absence of elements in categories is considered as appropriate to review the principles of design in both parks. Elgolu Park is limited to using simple colored lights and fountains. The use of water jets and fountain combinations of colored lights during the day and at night, the public art elements, can be achieved at these locations with the lowest cost facilities. Despite the lack of a fountain in the park Lampyny with proper form, even the colors, a native of ships that are the most efficient solutions and shaping the spatial structure is changed. (Fig. 11).



Fig.8. Mural Painting, Park entrance. Source: authors, 2015.



Fig.10. Lake and Boats, Elgolu Park. Source: authors, 2015.



Fig.11. Lake and Boat, Lampini Park. Source: www.bangkoksite.com.

### • Urban furniture

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The largest part of the park like most parks, trees, grass and plants is formed. Ecological aesthetic is involved in the basic foundation of Green Park. The local area is to link man and nature in which art enters and affects recovery space. Lampini Park (such as segmentation bench square or spaces with stones in geometric shapes) is manifested in line with the views and beliefs of Christians. On the other hand, unfortunately in Elgolu Park there wasn't a considerable effect and purely aesthetic green space to pare down the trees and seedlings despite having a vast expanse of green space (Table 1).

The interesting element in Elgolu Park is non-

normative use of banners and graffiti. Many park facilities have been hidden from the public due to lack of correct information. Due to the availability of facilities in skateboarding, riding a skateboard in public places is taking place and this is not limited to Elgolu Park – which is located at the edge of town – and Park Lampini clutter space in public places such as coffee shops, camp guests and can be seen at the entrance. Accordingly Lampini in the park, which is located in downtown Bangkok crowded This clutter is more. Only a few digital billboard that features audio, video and text are all data transmitted to People Park properly.

In recent centuries, urban planning and targeted attention from authorities that the procedures are executed as native. In this regard, the religion, culture and nationality care, and other nations are trying to introduce them to new generations. Activities which are performed in Lampini' park with this purpose is performing live music, Sunday concerts, aerobic exercise, education, and Zen practice. In Elgolu' park, festivals and activities occur solely on the cross-sectional shape, for example, hang gliding program that was run only once or sports and recreation solo run that way. Emphasis on cultural traits as a communication tool is achievable at the park in order to promote public art, including factors of prospective plan.

Comparative	Lampini Park		Elgolu Park		Public art elements	
Analysis	Image	Description	Image	Description		
This monument is a symbol of the park and the city of Bangkok. There is a lack of monuments in Elgolu.	1	Statue of Rama	-	-	Historic monuments	
Both parks have hotels and buildings in the traditional form and with modern appearance.		Lampini Hotel Lampini Library		Pars Hotel Elgolu Mansion	Special buildings	

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Elgolu and Lampini Park in terms of public art. Source: authors, 2015.

Studies in Elgolu shows a lack of monument. While in Lampini park statue of Rama has filled this vacuum.	Ŷ	Statue of Rama	2	Statue of Mother	Statue	Memorial elements
Memorial fountain is the features, in which is in two parks.		Fountain in the center of pools	and the second sec	Fountain in the center of pools	Fountain	
Elgolu Park has the mansion in the middle of pools. While the park Lampini, without mansion		Lampini Library	<b>I</b>	Elgolu Mansion	Mansion	
Park Elgolu, fences and iron are simple to figure out. Lampini Park logo is a simple scalar.	Frite d	Input fences		Railing	Separatin g elements of space	Urban furniture elements
Signs both in terms of information and advertising, in both the bustle of the park, could not have been organized space.		Adapters and stalls		Signs and banners		
These elements exist in both parks, but Lampini park with different designs has been more successful in this category than Elgolu Park.		Park bench		Chairs, kiosks, hours and	Elements of comfort	
In Elgolu Park aesthetic green space in the park is limited to Haras tree.		Trees in the form of an elephant		Plants, trees and grass.	Landsca pes	

# Conclusion

The result of this comparative study shows two Elgolu Park in Tabriz and Lampini Park in Bangkok that are at the same level in terms of basic features (date of construction and scale), but there provide us with significant differences in terms of public art domains.

Works, monuments and parks dating back two Lampyny and Elgoli the positive aspects and are superior to both parks and a lack of understanding of public art, the use of inappropriate materials in the construction works, inappropriate location of works on design weaknesses in this field.

Among five indicators of public art, the index of specific buildings and building of Elgolu Park have presented outstanding performances. Also in comparison with the Lampini Park in its historic monuments, special

buildings, sculptures and landscapes, the premier features of the Elgolu Park are the indicators of a relatively significant awareness and knowledge on the area of the public art and space designers.

The space separating elements, fountains, elements related to comfort people in both parks functional form of public art and public art not follow the indicators. Prospective planning in the design and promotion of public art works in both parks is an essential element.

In order to emphasize the cultural and artistic features of the statue to the aesthetics of the park is a priority. In terms of the application of the statue, there is a significant difference between the two parks. The lack of a statue in the park Elgolu at odds with the implementation of the diversity sculpture park is Lampini. Overall sculptures in the park compared to figures Elgolu Park has a long history and material are lasting.

One of the few elements that is applied throughout aesthetics is religious-philosophical element; that, is being applied natively in the two parks, pools and atmospheric form water. As the Elgolu Park has pools composed out of the Iranian traditional orchards and campus presented in the Quran (four straight sides) and the natural form Lampini Park, Buddhist view shows closer to the form nature.

On the other hand the causes of the weakness of the two parks, bustle and turmoil park signage, banners, accommodation for tourists and the entrance to Central Park Lampyny and around the shops and stalls deli Elgoli Park are involved. However, unlike the Lampini Park, in the Elgolu' park there are platforms for camping travelers and tourists, which are considered as a positive side to provide an order in the performance of the space.

Finally, it must be admitted that the restoration and improvement of quality public art in both parks, rebuild and strengthen the positive effects and mitigate the negative impact factor elements will be provided. Because due to their unique features increase the quality of life and environment, expansion of relations between citizens and also cause social and educational opportunities, rising visual literacy of the public and the most important factor is social health. Public art, is the art for people. What people desire, therefore, must be privileged and considered in the upcoming possible changes of spaces in these two urban sites; as well as any other urban spaces that might be designed in the future.

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