7 Connecting with Society and People through 'Art Projects' in an Era of Personalization

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Abstract

This paper examines the current situation of the Art Projects that have been frequently held in Japanese urban communities recently, in order to discuss their significance with respect to these communities. 'Art Projects' refers to cultural movements, art festivals, or exhibitions that do not use museums and art galleries, but rather develop in social spaces such as downtown areas or rural districts, sometimes in old Japanese-style houses or in closed schools and factories. They began to develop around 1990 and have rapidly increased from 2000 onwards. Currently, Art Projects are held all over Japan, numbering more than several hundred annually, with the number of visitors ranging from a few hundred to hundreds of thousands. In recent years, the increasing momentum of Art Projects has replaced the competitive construction of museums, and is the largest movement related to Japan's art spaces in the past quarter century. This paper first considers the increasingly pronounced dilution of relationships among people as one challenge faced by Japanese urban communities, and then considers how Art Projects, which are rooted in the community and developed with the use of cultural resources, have significance as platforms where people can interact. Moreover, this study covers how creative cultural activities contribute to society as a method for facilitating coexistence in an era of personalization, and also indicates its implications and issues.

Keywords: art projects, individualization, community, revitalization, Japan

Figure 7.1   Maps of (a) Japan, (b) 3331 Arts Chiyoda, and (c) Tokyo
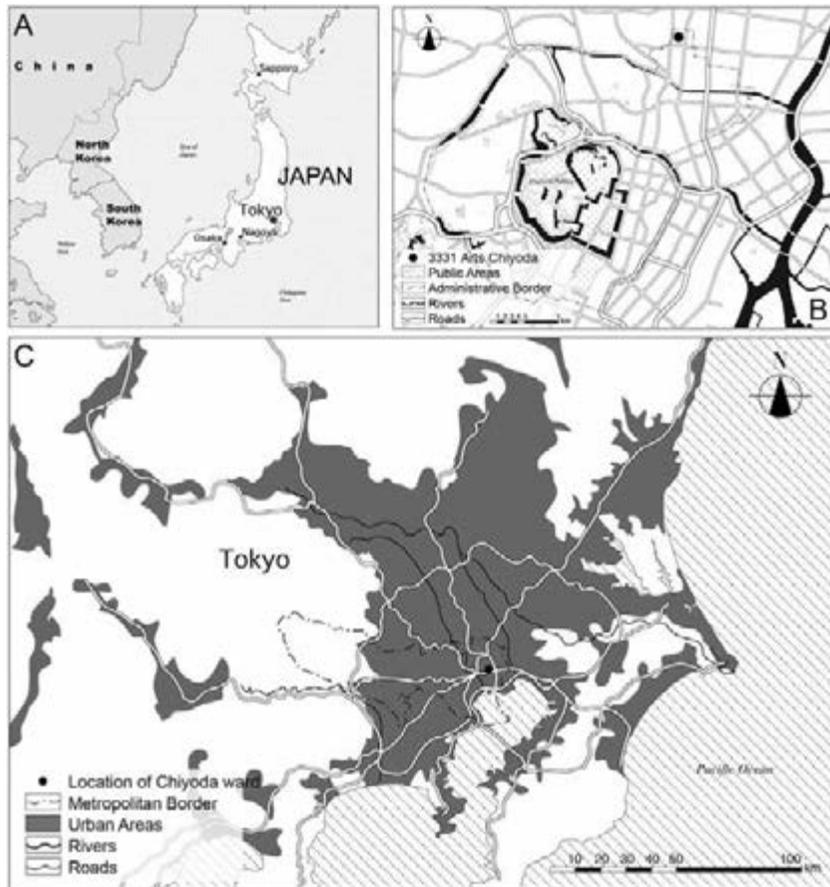
Source: Ariel Shepherd

1   Flourishing of Art Projects in Urban Areas

Akihabara, in Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo, is one of the towns that is considered representative of Japan. It is the world's leading electronics district and is renowned as the center of origin of *otaku* ('nerd') culture, such as manga, anime, and gaming culture. Walking through the town, one comes across girls in their late teens or twenties dressed in 'maid costumes', distributing pamphlets and announcing, 'Please visit our maid cafes!' with welcoming, smiling faces that seem to have been created from a mould. Street corners are lined with anime and game billboards with colorful and kitsch illustrations and characters. Shops are close to each other, with some

Figure 7.2   Akihabara, Tokyo

Source: author

stores loudly playing *anison* ('anime theme songs') or other promotional music (Figure 2).

An art space that focusses on contemporary art—3331 Arts Chiyoda (hereafter, 3331)—is situated in an alley at a short distance from this bustling town (Figure 3). The art center was established by renovating a former middle school. Built in 2010 as part of Chiyoda Ward's cultural policy, 3331 is managed by Command A, an artist-initiative organization. Unlike traditional art spaces in Japan, people from diverse backgrounds frequent this center. The visitors do not necessarily come as spectators to view the exhibitions at 3331; rather, they actively engage in workshops that involve public participation and collaboration. Furthermore, others can enjoy the expansive ambience while, for example, sitting and chatting on benches in the park facing the facilities, pushing a baby carriage, stopping by a café or *izakaya* ('tavern'), utilizing the free spaces established on the ground floor of the arts center, or—depending on personal preferences—smoking in the smoking zones established in outdoor corners. Here, men and women from different walks of life seem to enjoy the slow pace that strongly contrasts with the restlessness of neighboring districts.

Contrary to the image generated by the mass media, the Akihabara neighborhood is not merely a popular culture center and electronics town

Figure 7.3   The 3331 Arts Chiyoda

Source: courtesy of 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Tokyo

supported by peoples' hobbies. Rather, it is the residence of various types of people, including those whose families have been residents since the latter half of the nineteenth century or the early twentieth century—from the Meiji or Taisho eras—and the descendants of townspeople and samurais ('warriors') from the seventeenth-century establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate.[1] In addition to such old and familiar groups, young families and students have recently relocated to this area. Although the number has decreased in recent times because of the trend of exclusion under the name of 'protection', people with no fixed abode also reside in this area. Furthermore, the town is the destination for various businessmen who commute to the neighborhood. Myriad employees pass through every day, including civil servants, restaurant employees, and freelance designers. The district is home to people of various ages and to various social organizations and affiliations. In other words, it is a 'community' within the city in which people of diverse backgrounds live and make a living. At 3331, this heterogeneous mixture of people gathers voluntarily and in a way that pleases them.

1   Tokugawa shogunate (1603-1867), also known as the Edo Bakufu, is the last feudal military government in Japan. At that time, Tokyo was called Edo, and became one of the largest cities in the world.

3331 is an example of the 'art projects' that have recently been actively developed throughout Japan. While 3331 is an art center for exhibitions, it is also quite consciously a community project rooted in the neighborhood community (Favell 2011). 'Art projects' refers to cultural movements, art festivals, or art exhibitions that are not held in museums and art galleries but developed in social spaces such as downtown areas, old Traditional-style houses, closed schools, and abandoned factories. These projects began to develop around 1990 and rapidly increased in number, popping up at various locations from 2000 onwards in Japan. Since the initiation of Museum City Tenjin (Fukuoka City) in 1990, art projects have been actively held in urban areas at various sites from the 1990s through the 2000s. Examples include the Toride Art Project, which was launched in 1999 with a tripartite collaboration among the citizens, the city government, and universities; the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial, started in 2000 in a vast, semi-mountainous area; the Beppu Project, which commenced in 2009 in the hot spring tourist city; and the Water and Land Niigata Art Festivals, which began on the Shinano River Basin and along its banks. Currently, several hundred art projects are held annually throughout Japan and are visited by countless people. In recent years, the increasing momentum of art projects has replaced the competitive construction of museums and has become the largest movement concerning Japan's art spaces in the past quarter-century.

A primary characteristic of art projects is that they are frequently connected with the invigoration and development of communities. For this reason, art projects are frequently held in downtown areas. With the rapid ageing of Japanese society and changes to a post-Fordist style of manufacturing, many former community centers, such as schools, factories, and commercial shops, are being closed. Art projects have been initiated in these closed public spaces to re-invigorate communities. Certainly, the relationship between the arts and communities differs for each art project. However, many projects in Japan are expected to invigorate the community using various social spaces and to promote tourism (Kumakura, Kikuchi, and Nagatsu 2014).

Another characteristic of art projects is that their activities frequently include art that involves significant civic involvement.[2] Citizens from both

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2   Many curators and sociologists of art have indicated that in the 1990s a considerable amount of art focussed on the theme of people building relationships. For example, Bourriaud (2002, 14) presented the concept of 'relational art' and argued that there had been a recent increase of creative activities with a focus on relations among people. According to Bourriaud, the rapid progress of urbanization in recent years, represented by the spread of a global urban culture and the extension of the urban model, is hampering and restricting the creation of relationships among people. The recent emergence of art trying to find significance in the relationships among people is trying

within and outside the community might participate in the process of creating works of art in collaboration with the artists. For example, Yoshio Shirakawa created fictional stories based on the popular Yakuza boss, Chuji Kunisada (the local government has kept distance from him because he was an outlaw), and a well-known poet, Sakutaro Hagiwara (who abandoned his own town, thus it is sometimes difficult to use him as a local hero for the local municipalities). Shirakawa further created a festival based on these stories with citizens at the Umaya-no-Mokuba-Matsuri ('The Wooden Horse of Umaya Festival') in cooperation with Arts Maebashi in Maebashi City. At the Breaker Project in Osaka and at the Guruguru ya→mi→project in Tokyo, Kimura Toshiro Jin-jin operated a mobile café called 'Nodate', where he dressed like a drag queen and fired teacups that the participants painted on the spot so that they would enjoy Japanese tea in their own teacups. Takayuki Yamamoto held workshops that predicted people's futures through various fortune-telling scenarios that were invented by children, and he further created artistic footage based on the workshops at the Artist-in-Jidokan ('Artist-in-Children's House') Project in Tokyo and at the Hospital Project in Tottori City. Japanese art projects feature a diverse group of aesthetic trends mainly centered on contemporary art. Examples include art installations, architectural art, music, and dance. However, considering the expectation of community invigoration, a significant characteristic of art projects is the development of various art forms that incorporate creating a relationship with the citizens, in addition to using social spaces in the local community. Considering these characteristics, Japanese art projects could be called 'community-based art projects' (Koizumi 2012).

2   Problem Awareness

Traditionally, research on the relationship between art and society has considered art to be a special area within society; thus, this relationship has not been given significant attention from the social science perspective. Especially, an adequate examination of the roles of art in building a society had yet to be conducted. Of course, there has been some classic research regarding the

to bridge the gap (sometimes in a symbolic manner) and rebuilding ties between people in the modern, computerized, and mechanized society (Bourriaud, 2002). Kester (2004) and Foster (2008) have proposed similar arguments. On the other hand, Rancière (2004; 2008) questioned the recent 'relational art' —attempts to 're-politicize' art, since they lessen this discontinuity and gap between the work and viewer. Bishop (2006) has also expressed discontent with 'socially engaged art' that has an interest in the relationships between people, and suspects that art critics judge a work as good or bad depending on whether the work conformed to ethical standards.

relationship between art and society. For example, Walter Benjamin (1936) explained that the unique 'aura' of artworks had been lost due to printing technologies, but that this had given birth to an 'exhibition value'. Through this theory, he suggestively commented on the significance of the masses' primary participation in the production of art. This is an indicative observation on the relationship between art and people, but his theory did not mention the role of art in building a society. In addition, other researchers who were also members of the Frankfurt school; Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1944) expressed concern about the risk of standardization of people's perceptions due to the culture industry, noticing the flourishing of jazz in America. Obviously, they considered art to be a specialized field within society. Even after World War II, Baumol and Bowen indicated—taking the example of performing arts—that professions like arts are not 'productive' compared to other industries such as manufacturing (Baumol and Bowen 1966). This theory is called as Baoumol's cost disease. Later, Pierre Bourdieu (1984) stated that people's tastes are defined by 'cultural capital', which is formed through 'cultural reproduction'. Likewise, some other researchers also mentioned the relationship between art and society, but many of them considered art to be independent from society and did not discuss its societal impact.

However, recently, art has been the object of intense social focus, mainly stemming from a strong interest in 'creativity' as a way to differentiate one's nation, city, or products from those of others. This interest has risen both from within the economies of advanced consumer societies in an effort to evoke differences in people's tastes and from the escalating competition between nations and cities due to the 'time–space compression' (Harvey 1990, 240) of advancing globalization. For example, Tessa Morris-Suzuki (2004) has indicated that cultural and various social spheres (themselves made of political and economic spheres) are becoming more closely tied together and overlapping. She states that there is an intense emphasis on the differentiation of cultures in the political and economic spheres during this time of globalization. The truth of this assertion is demonstrated by the increased focus on and awareness of the importance of 'soft power', which can be observed in nations' recent cultural policies, such as the Korean Wave Promotion Policy[3] and the Cool Japan strategy.[4] Moreover, a strong interest

3   After the Asian currency crisis in 1997, the Korean Government has been embarking on a nationwide effort to strengthen and globally expand cultural industries such as drama and popular music.
4   Since around 2010, the Japanese government has been focusing on expanding creative industries such as anime and fashion overseas and is planning to strengthen overseas public relations and further develop human resources.

in 'creativity' is reflected in the focus of social actors on creative industries directly, as well as on their influence on other industries (Hartley 2005; Iwabuchi 2007; Nye 2004). Furthermore, as the social focus on creativity continues to increase, creative people (referred to as the 'creative class') are considered the key to invigorating the industry. This 'creative class' includes prominent artists, who form part of the 'super-creative core' (Florida 2002, 4; Florida 2012). Creative talents, then, are considered the definitive source for the stimulation of the economic and political areas of society.

Despite the optimism regarding creativity's role in forming an appealing nation or city and its importance as a source of industry's competitive power, the influence of creative work on the development of human communities has been inadequately discussed. Except for the focus on industrial development, few investigations have been conducted on the actions of the creative class in society and how these actions could cause changes in the community. Moreover, little research has been undertaken on the importance of citizens' creativity for community development. With awareness of this problem, this chapter examines the influence of creativity on the development of communities using the example of Japanese art projects, which frequently include art demonstrating significant civic involvement. This study covers how creative cultural activities contribute to society as a method for facilitating coexistence in an era of personalization, and also indicates its implications and issues.[5]

3   An Era of Personalization

As has been noted by Zygmunt Bauman with the term 'liquid modernity', today, our society is characterized by individualization (Bauman 2000). The same is true of Japanese society within the framework of neoliberal competition in a social structure that is based on the post-Fordist mode of production. For example, this tendency can be seen in Japan in the trend of consuming towards personalization, such as the 'solitary meal', called '*Koshoku*' – 'to eat meal alone', and 'personalized electric appliances', called '*Koden*', geared towards the individual rather than the family. This tendency can bring us the possibility of choice and 'freedom', and more importantly, different viewpoints, diversity.

However, this personalization trend sometimes also triggers social problems. Yoshinori Hiroi (2009) asserted that, along with the outflow of human resources from rural areas to cities after World War II, the closed

5   This paper used the results of interviews and participant observation conducted in Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo, from April 2010 to January 2015.

nature of the traditionally strong rural communities was transferred to Japan's cities. This led to the formation of villages within the cities, in the form of companies and the nuclear family. Since the 1970s–1980s, there has been a complete collapse of these villages within the city caused by changes in the structure of industry and the movement of people from place to place during the transition to post-Fordist production styles. Consequently, people have lost their sense of belonging, which in turn has led to individualization. Further, even rural areas that previously featured strong community connections have transformed into urban suburbs due to the blurring of the boundaries between urban and rural areas by transportation networks and technological advancements. Regional towns and cities are gradually facing challenges similar to those faced by larger urban areas. Furthermore, the current social structure of Japan is heading towards the increasing isolation of individuals, spurred in part by the world's most quickly aging and declining population, and the aggressive erosion of urban communities. As society ages, birth rates decline, and the trend towards individualization continues, existing social foundations are in the process of being lost. Although, as Osawa (2008) indicates, people—the base element of communities—want to form relationships with others; they find forming such relationships extremely challenging (Osawa 2008).

Under these circumstances, it is reasonable to predict that communities based on interests and hobbies rooted in shared tastes and cultural values could develop into relatively stable communities. Recently, the advancement of Internet technology has encouraged the formation of communities based on interests and hobbies that extend beyond nations and regions. Examples of such communities are those created on the web by people interested in manga, anime, or game culture. As stated by Bourdieu (1984, 173), 'Taste, the propensity and capacity to appropriate (materially or symbolically) a given class of classified, classifying objects or practices, is the generative formula of life-style', therefore, communities based on shared tastes may develop comparatively close relationships.

Although isolating communities can create stability, excessive exclusion of diversity that extends across nationalities, occupations, religions, and sexualities, can be harmful. As Richard Florida indicates, diversity creates energy and attracts people who possess creativity in abundance (Florida 2002; Florida 2012), thereby stimulating renewed creativity within the community.

Yet, how can individualized and diverse people interact and be interdependent—or, in other words, how can society with diversity be realized? In Japan, interest in community development—known as *Machizukuri*— has also

increased since the collapse of the bubble economy in the early 1990s. Such community development has spurred interest in the re-formation of relationships among people and has assumed forms such as neighborhood building (Sorensen, Koizumi, and Miyamoto 2008). However, the potential for reforming communities with multicultural relationships has been inadequately examined (Iwabuchi 2007). This argument asserts the importance of the role of art in this realization. This is because art, which evaluates people's 'alternative ideas,' or respects the imaginative power derived from 'different points of view,' is a form of cultural expression based on diversity, and therefore can play a significant role in creating relationships with 'others' in this individualized society.

4   Art Projects in 'Communities' Within Urban Areas

Art projects in Japan have been flourishing since the 1990s, and particularly since the early 2000s. Initially, they took the shape of biennial or triennial festivals that lasted for limited periods of time. However, many of these events became deeply connected with the communities as their activities developed; gradually, these events and activities began to be organized throughout the year. From approximately 2010, there has been a remarkable trend of year-round events (for example, the activities of the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale and the Setouchi Triennale).

Since 2010, '3331 Arts Chiyoda' has also established itself as a permanent art project through various activities involving diverse groups of people. The incentive for establishing 3331 emerged when the Rensei Middle School was closed in 2005. The Chiyoda district government—which had established and managed the middle school—formulated a policy for its reutilization and decided that the closed school, which contained many memories connected to the community, would be utilized for important projects in the Chiyoda Culture and Arts plan. Thereafter, it was decided that the operations would be managed by the Non-Profit Organization (NPO) named 'Command A'. After renovation, the former school was re-opened in 2010 and given the name '3331 Arts Chiyoda'. The name '3331' stems from the clapping pattern of the traditional *Edo Ippon Tejime* handclap, used when people want to share their happiness and encourage each other. The former school building houses the central facility, which has a basement, three floors, and a rooftop. In addition to spaces for exhibitions and artist activities, it also contains offices of design companies, shared offices for NPOs and small-scale businesses, commercial art galleries, and small- to medium-size spaces used by businesses to develop activities emphasizing the creation of relationships within the community.

The initial renovation cost of slightly less than two hundred million Japanese Yen was taken on by the district. While independent financial resources shoulder the burden of slightly less than 50 million Yen, over 90 per cent of the current annual operating expenses of 1.3 hundred million Yen are paid primarily by business revenue, such as income from rent.

3331 conducts cultural activities, such as exhibitions, workshops, and lectures, throughout the year, in addition to art activities that focus on community relationships—both foreign and domestic. An example of these activities is the development of exhibitions via an exchange project with areas not only in Japan but also in other countries (for example, the Artist-in-residence program 'AIR3331' and the 'open residence' program, in which visiting artists—while living in the community—conduct creative activities with the help of the community that utilize community resources). In addition, they provide various opportunities to exhibit arts by citizens. Examples of this are, creating spaces for exhibitions of the creative works of a diverse group of citizens, such as one that gathers artwork by both able-bodied citizens and those with disabilities (e.g., the POCORART public exhibition), and the 'independent' exhibition, which is often participated in by people from within and without the community (e.g., Chiyoda Art Festival – an open submission art event). It had as many as 565,000 visitors in 2012 and this number has a tendency to increase annually. The common age group of the visitors is people in their 30s to 40s (45% of the all visitors), but there is also a significant number of visitors in their 10s to 20s (31%), and 50s to 60s (20%) as well. The female percentage is 60 per cent, and male is 40 per cent. Also, visitors come from various professions, such as company employees (33%), students (16%), community planners and others (15%), artists and others (11%), designers and others (9%), and public servants (7%). These visitors are not only from Tokyo (56%), but also from other parts of the Kanto area (33%) and the Kinki area (such as Osaka and Kyoto, 4%), and the Chubu area (such as Nagoya, 3%). Some people are from overseas such as China (3331 Arts Chiyoda 2014).

Another important aspect of 3331 is that activities are conducted, in cooperation with the community residents (Figure 4). Many local events and groups are conducted by 3331 including: the community neighborhood association; cooperative activities with the Kanda Matsuri Festival;[6] a screening of footage from Kanda Matsuri Festival edited by creators from 3331; and *mochitsuki* ('rice cake pounding') events for the local residents. In addition, an organic

6   The Kanda Matsuri Festival is the festival of the Kanda Myojin Shrine, and has a history of more than 400 years. It is known as one of three major festivals in Japan along with Tenjin Matsuri Festival held in Osaka, and Gion Matsuri Festival held in Kyoto.

Figure 7.4   The 3331 Arts Chiyoda, 'Kirigami workshop'

Source: courtesy of 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Tokyo

vegetable garden has been opened on the facility's roof, and it is also the site of reunions by the elderly. All of these cultural and social activities involve the participation and cooperation of diverse groups of neighbouring people of all ages. A cafe and an *izakaya* ('tavern') are also situated in 3331 which further raise the potential for social interaction. A space has also been established in the complex that can be used by anyone without charge to encourage social activities. 3331 is more than a place where citizens are involved in the exhibition and appreciation of art; it is also a place for the development of diverse activities involving the participation of local citizens (Favell 2011).

5   Effects of Art Projects in Urban Communities

What do community-based art projects accomplish? Firstly, art projects are significant because they provide cultural experiences for the citizens. Experiencing art in familiar places, such as closed schools and factories that previously formed communities' centers, has a greater mass appeal than the top-down approach followed in Japanese public museums. As

Hideharu Matsumiya (2003, 267) has indicated, public museums in Japan have tended to superficially imitate the Western system. As a result, the scope of the term 'public' institution is limited; it does not mean that the institution is serving the public, but rather that it has been provided by the government. Matsumiya argues that these museums are filled with works of art that inspire feelings of 'awe' similar to religious sentiments, instead of providing more general public engagement. In contrast, art projects are significant because they are related to a community's cultural resources and provide a novel perspective on the community to people both inside and outside the community. Furthermore, art projects are also meaningful because they provide opportunities for many young artists to associate with one another, and they nurture the next generation's creativity (Koizumi 2012).

Moreover, art projects are now places that many local citizens casually visit frequently. As a result of their activities, 3331 has become a place where various people spend their time, either visiting or participating. The interviews conducted as part of this study and the quantitative survey conducted by an external think tank both show this tendency. For instance, one of the 3331 visitors who is in her 30's said: 'I live nearby, so I can just drop in. I look forward to my holidays now'. Her comment indicates that 3331 has become a community hub where people can come and go in a casual manner. Also of importance is that this project is linking with local community memories. A man in his 40's said: 'I am a graduate of the [closed] junior high school. I was really happy to see that it is being re-used—not just as a museum but also in such different ways. Thank you so much for using it and not destroying it'. 3331 is intentionally retaining and using the old facilities of the school. This project provides the place where cultural resources are connected to community memories and are starting to function as new places for people to visit in addition to their workplace or home.

Ray Oldenburg (1989, 16) once stated that Americans are losing their informal public lives; therefore, having a 'third place' that is neither home (the first place) nor the workplace (the second place) and that serves as 'the great good place' is essential for community development and invigoration. The Japanese translation version of his book cover used the picture of the *Izakaya* ('tavern') as the 'third place'. The picture described the scene where people comingle in the street in front of the *Izakaya* shop. Certainly, they were a good example of a Japanese third place at that time. However, since the 1980s, an increasing number of *Izakaya* chains characterized by separated or individual seats, and also sometimes situated in shopping malls, have begun to appear in the country, and the former third place-type *Izakaya* has been

in decline. Also, people gathering in the shopping arcade like during the 1980s has been restricted recently. Machimura (2017) used the example of Japanese shopping streets to point out the recent development of managed pseudo-public spaces from a social engineering viewpoint. He compared the degree of comfort of clean, safe mall-style spaces that are more privatized and controlled to that of conventional public shopping street-style spaces. He argued that in the recent mall-style spaces, the somewhat neglected spaces that generate a variety of 'noise' (present in the shopping street-style spaces) were excluded. Thus, the loss of informal public lives is a noticeable trend in Japan as well, where communities are becoming more isolated. It is therefore important for residents to have a place that they can aimlessly frequent.

More importantly, art projects constitute a setting that encourages people to create new cultural and social activities. As previously mentioned, various points of entry to art projects have been provided for different types of lifestyles. This feature makes art projects places where people from different locations and occupations can come to appreciate art, participate in workshops and events, in addition to simply visiting without any specific purpose (Figure 5).

Let us consider the example of the functions of 3331's 'Commissioned Artists' in activities performed in cooperation with local residents. These artists have become incorporated into the local community and are working on art exchanges with community members, workers, and visitors. One such project is the Asatte Asagao Project, in which artists and community citizens collaborate to cultivate Japanese morning glory plants. The principal aims of this project are as follows: (a) to 'foster communication among people, communication between people and the community and communication among different communities, and strengthen the relationship between people and the community in modern society;' and (b) to 'evaluate the diversity and functionality of art in society by taking the forms derived from the relationships between people as the roots of art'.[7] In 2003, Katsuhiko Hibino launched this project during the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale; as of 2013, 25 communities, including 3331, were participating in it. Notably, beyond solely the activity of the artist, this project has resulted in cooperation among people who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to meet each other and collaborate; such as community citizens, the 3331 staff, and elementary school students. These people from different communities are able to exchange their feelings using visual and performing arts through

7   'Asatte Asagao Project,' Day After Tomorrow Newspaper Cultural Department, http://www.asatte.jp/asatteasagaoproject/about.html. 2015, translation by author.

Figure 7.5   The 3331 Arts Chiyoda, 'Free Space'

Source: courtesy of 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Tokyo

the project, in addition to directly exchanging their opinions through conversations concerning Japanese morning glory seeds and seedlings at the exchange meetings.

In addition, inspired by these activities, participation in projects at 3331 provide a new opportunity for local community council meetings, which have become somewhat routine and uninspired. For example, at the neighborhood association's New Year's party (itself significant in the formation of Japanese communities), the art projects with the local community from the preceding year are reviewed with newcomers to 3331's activities. It becomes part of the enjoyment, as people excitedly discuss the upcoming New Year while looking back over the preceding year. In the case of 3331's citizen projects, this result occurred from the simple task of working with others using day to day knowledge, such as the cultivation of Japanese morning glory plants. It is simple and relatively familiar situations for citizens like these that allow for the continuous maintenance (primarily by local citizens) of a place where people can interact with each other as well as form new connections. Besides 3331, examples of civic activities conducted through the collaboration between people's day to day knowledge and art activities can be observed in other art projects, such as the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale (Koizumi 2010; Koizumi 2012).

From the community development perspective, art projects are in the process of becoming co-created civic spaces. Mike Douglass, K.C. Ho, and Giok Ling Ooi defined civic spaces as 'those spaces in which people of different origins and walks of life can mingle without overt control by government, commercial or other private interests or *de facto* dominance by one group over another' (2008, 5). They defined the term 'civic spaces' from terms with similar meaning such as 'public space' as managed and administered primarily by the government (or the private sector in cases of coffee shops and pubs), and 'civic society space' that which entails a broader definition. That is, 'civic space' especially refers to a social and spacious place wherein people can interact while maintaining a definite distance from specific power relationships. Today, art projects function as a new type of civic space and provide opportunities for cooperative activities. They stimulate important social connections between diverse groups of people and occasionally provide opportunities to undertake other activities. In other words, they can be seen as 'civic spaces that accompany co-creation'.

There is an insufficient number of civic spaces for democratic cultural practices in Modern Japan (Mōri 2009). For example, as Douglass, Ho, and Ooi (2008) indicated, during the bubble economy in the latter half of the 1980s, bathhouses—which were previously important civic spaces in Japan—became the targets of land developers and were subsequently commercialized. Also, between the 2000s and the 2010s, spaces for people's expression has also been limited; encompassing such areas as Miyashita Park in Shibuya City, which has essentially become the fee-accessed 'Nike Park' surrounded by fencing, Ikebukuro Nishiguchi Park, where art was used to drive off unlicensed performers, and Yoyogi Park, where there has been a severe crackdown on raves and other free parties. For these reasons, new civic spaces such as 3331—in which people can visit and escape from strong authority and interference without needing to be a member—are important for forming relationships and offering opportunities and activities that can trigger cultural and social interaction.

In civic spaces that are open to all, what can be done to connect people without using forced rules? The important thing is, art serves as a platform where people may 'inadvertently' collaborate. At art projects, the interactions among people through art and activities are not a form of pre-planned harmony. Rather, dramatic changes gradually occur as activities progress or members encounter each other (or share their thoughts or art). Cooperation frequently becomes necessary during a project; new members are added to the project by simply asking people to help out. This mechanism can result in

chance encounters. This type of accidental co-creation (which is unexpected even by the artists) is accomplished through different artistic activities.

Certainly, there are limits to this line of reasoning: not all people involved with or mediating at art projects are *active* participants. However, the act of going to 3331's garden to meet others, or to the free space or smoking area to relax, helps create relationships among people and provides opportunities to create more relationships. These acts facilitate the exchange of opinions among people with the art project as a catalyst, and these encounters may prompt further interactions. Irrespective of whether participation is active or passive, permitting diverse viewpoints on activities is important for art projects to be able to function as a co-created civic space.

6   Implications of Art Projects

What are the implications of art projects for developing communities? Further, what are the important factors that enable artists and people in the community to co-create a space? This section presents two reasons why the art developed at these community-based art projects facilitates the formation of relationships among people in urban communities.

First, art projects serve as a place connecting the artists with people within and outside the community. Florida (2002; 2012) noted that everyone has the potential for creativity but argued that people of the creative class are especially situated at the center of development. Moreover, he posited that the key to creating an energetic, attractive town lies not in attracting businesses but in providing an environment that attracts diverse human resources, particularly the creative class. However, he argued this in relation to the importance of creative talents particularly for economic growth. Conversely, from the viewpoint of social formation, art projects suggest the importance of places where artists can meet and connect with diverse citizens, to encourage community revitalization. Such places are essential for allowing artists to manifest their strengths in the community. Even if there are artists adept in community focused art, there is nowhere for them to connect with the people (e.g., a place that appropriately provides contact with society), their creativity cannot be fully manifested in society and they are unable to encourage people's creative potential for community development.

As noted by Sarah Thornton (2008), art has generally been composed and produced by the social systems associated with art, including auction houses, art markets, art schools, and media such as art magazines. Accordingly, the places concerned with art were developed within the small incubator

of art-related social systems. The community-based art projects that are currently flourishing have departed from this incubator and garnered significance as places concerned with art that are making their way to everyday civil society. The supervising director of 3331 and artist Masato Nakamura has stated the following: 'When one goes to a modern art museum, there is a feeling that there is only one acceptable standard [...] but art projects have the feeling of having diverse possibilities [...]. "3331 Arts Chiyoda" itself can have the awareness of being a project because it has taken on varied senses of values' (Kumakura, Kikutchi, and Nagatsu 2014, 212, my translation). Thus, art projects are different from the existing places related to art, such as modern art museums: they are starting to function as places that attract diverse groups of people with different standards of value and where artists can work through a type of trial-and-error method. Here, the artists' role is like a 'social designer' or 'community curator' not only creating works of art, but also 'inadvertently' creating the relationship between people and community.

In addition, related to this, from the point of view of cultural policy, the example of 3331 shows the importance of having a vision for future culture creation. Initially, 3331's initiatives—which are centered on experimental areas of contemporary art—did not appear to significantly contribute direct (particularly economic) benefits to the community when considering the expenditures for subsidizing the project. However, this initiative has been designated one of two high priority projects in the Chiyoda district to predict the positive influence of this type of project. This is because the Chiyoda local government considered the importance of the artists and the local citizens' creativities for the coming generations in addition to focusing on traditional cultures. This attitude towards future culture creation is significant for cultural policies in any period, including Japan's current rapidly ageing society. When confronted with the decline of local cultures, governments tend to prioritize cultural preservation and protection. A typical example is the preservation of precious local cultures such as local 'chosen' cultures in museums. However, when confronted with vanishing local cultures, simply preserving and protecting them is not adequate, because these activities can turn into a requiem for a living culture.

Also, from an art management perspective, it shows the importance of public-private partnerships including those involving artists or curators, in the form of sharing opinions regarding the management and organization of the project in its early stages. The administrative manager of 3331 and artist Koichi Sasaki has stated: 'Being able to collaborate in this way before the local government decides on a single plan is very beneficial for us. The architects and people from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport

and Tourism said that it would receive a failing grade architecturally, but this place could also be called an example of success as a place for artists and the people who use it' (Koichi Sasaki, interview by author, 12 January 2015). In the case of 3331, it is significant that 'Command N' (an organization primarily led by artists) was involved in the construction from the start: the administrators who would be responsible for 3331's activities were able to help design the space from a user perspective. Demands for a similar partnership are frequently heard on the sites of other art projects as well. To help artists perform to the best of their potential as 'social designers' or 'community curators', we have to create an environment able to accommodate the active initiatives of the artists.

7   Issues Related to Art Projects

On the other hand, it is important to give sufficient attention to the inherent challenges of building a place for co-creation. This is because, although in the case of 3331, not a great amount of open political and economic intervention occurs in the civic space of co-creation, art projects are connected to various social authorities.

   The historian and cultural anthropologist James Clifford (1997, 192) has indicated that museums are 'contact zones' constructed from historic, political, and ethical relationships and using the organizational structure of the collections as their intermediaries. The concept of contact zones was originally proposed by Mary Louise Pratt (1992, 7), who defined it as 'an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect'. Pratt used this term in her arguments on how the asymmetrical relationships between non-colonial areas and colonies were intertwined during the mid-eighteenth century, when the European imperial order was established. Clifford (1997) adopted Pratt's awareness of these issues and applied them to museums. He indicated that many museums are situated in metropolitan cities, and they often diligently rescue, store, and interpret objects that originate from peripheral areas. In this way, they exist on the overlapping historical, political, and moral relationships exchanged. Museums are located in the relationship between colonization and decolonization, between nation formation and minority assertions, capitalist market expansion and consumer strategies.

   Of course, this social structure of powers can be seen not only in museums but in all social organizations. However, Clifford's assertion can be

considered to be critical since he questioned the strong power structure of museums as they confront 'others' and exclude the 'inauthentic'. He proposed that this would not be 'a democratic politics that would challenge the hierarchical valuing of different places of crossing' (Clifford 1997, 214).

In light of these theories, it is appropriate to call art projects 'true contact zones' (Koizumi 2012). The artistic activities in these projects are calm on the surface, but even if they seem to be at ease, there is a mixture of historical, political, and moral influences that underlie them. The social art project must be planned and developed among the mixing and polarities of various external power relationships. These relationships involve economic and political participation by different social actors, such as the administration, supporting businesses, and support groups. The art project also includes the power relationships of participants that the art projects are involved in, brought about by the differences between occupations, residential areas, residential history, and family structures.

Considering this perspective, we should be cautious of the overemphasis on art projects being used for specific social goals, such as revitalization of local industries, cultural tourism, or the enhancement of national interest. In the recent post-fordist society, perspectives on how to use cultural areas for creating differences from other social actors have gained strength (Iwabuchi 2007; Morris-Suzuki 2004; Mōri 2014). According to George Yúdice (2003), nations, businesses, and even Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have tended to inconsiderately utilize various cultures for their expediency. As globalization progresses, culture is used more as a socio-political or economic resource by social actors as well as the state, who place its usefulness to their causes at the center of attention. Yúdice (2003, 9) termed this 'the expediency of culture'. Because of the closer relationship between these cultural and social areas in the current age, there is a risk that art projects will become excessively geared towards a specific purpose. This causes 'unsuitable' people and things (for example, art and people that at first glance are considered unnecessary for the reinvigoration of communities) to be eliminated from art projects. This causes the diversity included within art projects—and consequently its use as a civil space—to decrease. Koichi Sasaki of 3331 stated the following: 'There are times when opinions of the government district surface [regarding the activities at 3331]. Opinions like "this is too much stimulus for children." With regards to the first period [of the five-year operating contract for the building], it was tentative, so we do not know if there will be a second term. If we have confrontations with the district, we must tread carefully' (interview by author, 12 January 2015). This quotation partially illustrates the difficulty in forming a balanced relationship with

other social groups in the operation of community-based art projects, which focus on activities rooted in the diversity of the citizens. In other words, art projects are facing a situation in which they must consider the views of, and avoid things that will be rejected by the local government and community. This has occurred at 3331 and is a latent possibility in any art project.

Crucially, art projects have meaning because community development is occurring alongside the diverse and disjointed subjectivity that exists within art projects. A group of strangers can participate actively or casually and transcend the differences in their viewpoints. Art focused on creativity in community-based art projects exists to set up a place that encourages this type of diversity. However, what would happen if the artistic activities of art projects were restricted and some activities and people were excluded? This would make them merely communities supported by similar tastes. Art projects have meaning because they can encompass various walks of life (including those who do not have a direct interest in cultivating Japanese morning glory plants, for example) and enable them to participate in or casually observe activities. This diversity is connected to the forming of new communities from individualized societies. Therefore, it is important to be conscious of the expediency of culture, and also of the asymmetrical powers from the outside (such as nations, businesses, NGOs, and even artists and participants) in art projects that encourage community relations.

8   Moving Towards Community-based Art Projects of Co-creation

This paper has discussed observations on art projects that have proliferated in recent years and their effects on the surrounding urban communities. First, using the example of '3331 Arts Chiyoda' in Tokyo, some features of art projects have been identified. Art projects can use art for co-creating civic spaces that make connections between people amidst the personalization observed in today's society. Art projects have become a place visited by diverse people, and they help these people connect incidentally through artistic activities. Occasionally, art projects have also 'inadvertently' facilitated the creation of new cultural activities and the development of social activities. Thus, they are new places where artists and citizens can form new creations together. The emphasis on future culture creation and systems to help artists perform to the best of their potential for revitalizing community is significant, even with the rapid ageing of society and its tendency towards the preservation of old traditions.

Nonetheless, art projects face certain challenges. They are always surrounded by social actors; and if art projects cater too much to the demands of any particular social actor, the democratic nature of their activities might be hindered. This study's primary purpose is not to form judgments or condemn the control exercised by the government and various social authorities. Social actors, such as the government and commercial enterprises, are not monolithic organizations, and the people who visit art projects are not subservient slaves who will blindly follow all instructions. This study also does not advocate for the excessive separation of art from society. However, it should still be emphasized that art projects constitute places where the diverse and disjointed subjectivities of the participants are connected through artistic activities. It is significant to avoid losing this diversity by being vigilant against any alterations to the function of art projects because of the agenda of any social actor (nations, businesses, NGOs, artists, and participants). Such an alteration would result in the loss of the inherent meaning conveyed by art projects, and people would lose one important opportunity to reform important social foundations in their communities where an isolated lifestyle is becoming more common.

Community-based art projects are places of co-creation, where the subjective opinions of a diverse group of people 'intersect'. The activities conducted by artists can bridge the gap of an individualized society. In order to realise 'cities by and for the people', the focus must be shifted to the creativity that contributes to community development, and the significance of the interaction of diverse groups of people.

Acknowledgments

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