

# The Application of Earth Art in the Landscape Design of Public Space

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**Abstract:** The modern landscape design trend that emerged in the background of the times is a product of the continuous development of social politics, economy and As one of the more unusual ideas in modern landscape design, Earth Art was born in the wilderness in the early stages of its development and was subject to some limitations in terms of place and concept, but some of the ideas derived from its work for the earth. subject to some limitations in terms of place and concept, but some of the ideas derived from its work for the earthy landscape environment gradually took Earth art attempts to reclaim nature as a space for experience, as a space for reconstructing Earth art attempts to reclaim nature as a space for experience, as a space for reconstructing the relationship between people and the environment, and in some ways it has become an approach that can be drawn upon to develop a new language for the This thesis takes the geodesic landscape as the object of study and establishes an aesthetic paradigm for the landscape based on the study consists of three levels of the aesthetic paradigm for the landscape: the first level of the aesthetic nature of the geodesic art landscape (the first level of the aesthetic nature of the landscape) and the first level of the aesthetic nature of the landscape. the first level of the aesthetic nature of the geodesic art landscape (value theory), the second level of the aesthetic scope of the geodesic art landscape (methodology), and the third level of the third level of the aesthetic form of the geodesic art landscape (design approach). Through the study of the aesthetic thought of geodesic landscapes, a deeper understanding of geodesic landscapes will be enhanced and a reference By clarifying the aesthetic thinking of contemporary landscape development, it will enable a better By clarifying the aesthetic thinking of contemporary landscape development, it will enable a better integration of modern western landscape design thinking with China's local environment and provide a theoretical basis for China's urban landscape The thesis uses both documentary research methods and case studies to analyse and study three aspects of the aesthetic nature, The thesis uses both documentary research methods and case studies to analyse and study three aspects of the aesthetic nature, aesthetic categories and aesthetic forms of earth art landscapes.

**Keywords:** Earth Art; Public Art; Public Space; Landscape Design; Aesthetics.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the study

With the development of industrial technology, the advancement of human science and technology, the accelerated pace of global urbanization, the gradual spread of automated and intelligent production equipment, and the further shortening of spatial distances, have brought convenience to people's lives, but also given rise to many problems. People are looking forward to escape from the hustle and bustle of the industrial cities and return to nature, to escape from the pollution of the industrial cities and join the peaceful and harmonious countryside, to find their lost selves in nature, crushed by industrial civilization. Many of the social and ecological problems caused by human behavior will ultimately have to be addressed by human beings themselves, and there is an urgent need for a design language to draw attention to the changes in the natural environment, to improve the public's understanding of nature and to guide people to regulate their behavior to achieve ecological harmony.

Western design thinking emerged in this context as a product of the ongoing political, economic and cultural development of society. Earth art is one of the branches of this trend, which not only incorporates minimalism, abstract art and pop art hoods, but also develops its own characteristics. Compared to sculpture, it lacks a practical function; compared to installation, it focuses more on the experience of the thinking process; compared to minimalist art, it rejects the

industrial overtones of it. It is from this artistic self-discipline and aesthetic independence that Earth Art has its own calling card. Although percussive art cannot be considered an art school, it has enabled people to re-examine the relationship between man and nature, interpreted new aesthetic concepts, become a bridge for artists to reconstruct landscape space, and provided a new language vocabulary for modern landscape design in line with the characteristics of the times.

### 1.2. Purpose of the study

Earth art is one of the more cutting-edge artistic expressions of modern landscape design thinking. Born in the early days in desolate and uninhabited areas, Earth Art was limited in its development of expression by conceptual ideas, technical operations and the people involved, but the ideas derived from its work for the earthy landscape environment have taken root and are being rapidly promoted in urban landscape design. Earth art attempts to reclaim nature as a space for experience, and as a vehicle for reconstructing the relationship between people and nature, it has become a new form of expression in the development of public space landscape design. Some scholars have attempted to synthesise it with landscaping, but there is a lack of research and generalisation of aesthetic ideas, resulting in a vague definition and connection between the concept of earth art and landscape. This subject sets earth art as an object of study, combining aesthetic principles, through a comparative analysis of the development of earth art, the understanding of earth art in China and the West, and a synthesis of the development of the times in which it is found, to understand

and evolve aesthetic ideas in line with contemporary times.

### 1.3. Study content

This thesis takes geodesic art design as the object of study and establishes an aesthetic paradigm of landscape based on the principles of design aesthetics. The study consists of three main levels: the first level includes an overview of the development of geodesic landscape art, the second level the aesthetic nature of geodesic art landscape design, and the third level the aesthetic form of geodesic art landscape.

### 1.4. Research Methodology

Literature collection method: Collect a wide range of literature and books of an academic nature to enrich your understanding and make your thesis more authoritative and informative by consulting a large number of theoretical materials that match the theoretical content of your research.

The rational analysis method: the images and documents collected are selected and condensed in a rational manner, and the information used by the individual is summarised and analysed to arrive at a theoretical basis that is appropriate and consistent with the theoretical system of the thesis based on rational judgement and continuous refinement. The theoretical basis of the thesis will be made more rigorous by avoiding "patchwork".

Argumentation by example: By giving appropriate examples of deep and poorly understood theoretical content, the reader can better understand the ideas presented in the thesis. At the same time, the examples are also used to reaffirm the representativeness and authority of the theory, so that it is not empty but practical.

The inductive method: making your own judgement on all the above stated attitudes, collected information and elucidated theories, giving a sound analysis and your own conclusions, and making the thesis more referenced through rigorous scholarship to arrive at a basis.

## 2. Overview of the development of the geodesic landscape

### 2.1. Origins of the earth art landscape

Some have traced the origins of earth art back to the huge geometric patterns of the pre-Columbian Nazca wilderness of Peru, which consisted of 'grooves' of varying widths forming triangles, rectangles, parallelograms, rhombuses and spirals. They form the outlines of lizards, spiders, octopuses, long-clawed dogs, parrots, swallows, birds, fish and other flora and fauna. The outlines of black and brown pebbles on yellow sand, which can only be seen from an aircraft, have specific characteristics of earth art. However, to date there is no definitive account of the origins of the Nazca motif or the reasons for its creation, and formal similarities alone do not prove that it was a forerunner of earth art. From a modern art perspective, the artistic characteristics of Nazca motifs do not correspond to those of earlier works of geodesic art and cannot strictly speaking be called geodesic art.

#### 2.1.1. Background of birth

##### (1) Social context

At the end of the 20th century, the United States faced challenges from a turbulent, noisy social environment with a growing population, a wide gap between rich and poor, discrimination, and an arms race. The civil rights movement, the New Left movement, the anti-war movement, were in full swing. Value systems and moral values were constantly under

attack. At this time, the U.S.A. became a battleground for raging political criticism and political resistance. Unlike in other countries, it was young people who took to the forefront of the political struggle, expressing their discontent and rebellion against American society in a peaceful and distinctive way: with their unconventional appearance consisting of bouffant haircuts and fancy clothes. They denied reason, emphasised instincts, focused on the present and expressed their discontent with mainstream culture in a non-violent way - the famous hippie movement (...). The popularity of the hippie movement is a reflection of the discontent and acuteness of social problems in the US. The critique of the "New Left" and the counter-culture camp all led people to rethink and criticise the negative consequences of science and technology. After mankind had gone through the process of worshipping nature and transforming it, the plundering of the earth's resources by industrialisation, the pollution of the natural environment and the accelerated pace of change in the material world made people nostalgic for the traditional way of life and values, the old idyllic life was undoubtedly backward and inconvenient, but it was also free and harmonious. People began to pay attention to the relationship between man and nature and tried to revive the pattern of harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

##### (2) Cultural background

Globalisation has led to an increasing convergence of cultures, with cities, buildings and landscapes being heavily influenced by industrialisation, with the same scenes of mass production everywhere. The natural environment was once thought to have no relevance to culture, but it was not until this point that people realised that the natural environment was also a relevant site for the transmission of human culture from generation to generation. In his essay 'Noyes' Collage', the earth artist Roman Smithson pessimistically describes an urban landscape full of pipes, construction waste, old car parks and endless motorway construction as 'monumental ruins, a memory of the future'. Industrialised production has caused people to mechanically toil away, losing the ability to think for themselves homogenisation of thought and lack of innovation lack of different voices. The questioning of the visual environment has led to a diversification of landscape design, and the demand for housing has increased with material affluence. As social and cultural development became more conscious of the protection of the natural environment rejecting the pollution of the environment by industrial development, artists began to leave the city for nature, escaping society and exploring new creative possibilities. The early earth art, which was more often created in open spaces, also reflects the early awareness of environmental change and feedback from the environmental movement. The vast expanse of Europe and the United States, with its vast amounts of uncultivated open land, also objectively supported the flourishing of the earth art landscape. This has given artists a wider space to develop their creative and imaginative initiative, allowing art to return purely 'to nature, to essence'.

### 2.2. Earth art landscape composition

#### 2.2.1. The formation of plural forms

Earth art was originally formed as a form of artistic expression, using materials, forms and shapes in the open wilderness to convey the ideas that the artist wanted to express. Unlike ordinary landscape art design, where a three-dimensional form stands in a public space as an iconic

sculpture or decorative sculpture, or where urban renewal or landscape design in a public area is practical and ornamental, earth art is more of a performance art, except that it is based on the earth and incorporates the natural landscape into its creation, achieving a high level of integration between man and nature. There is no clear 'centre' or 'sense of boundary'. This concept of space is an innovation on the traditional Western world where the human perspective is the centre, a breakthrough from the traditional European medieval concept of 'focal point perspective'. The centres and boundaries that humans have artificially added to nature are removed in earth art, removing the 'centres' and 'boundaries' and restoring the naturalness of nature. Zhuangzi speaks of 'the unity of all things': 'All things are of one kind, but in different shapes and forms. The beginning and the end are like rings, and no one can get their own way, which is called Tianjun. The various attributes of all things in the world (including Ran) exist in the same small form, but are interconnected and influence each other, interlocking with each other from beginning to end, a state of cyclical change. In this way, everything in nature is a link in a 'chain of nature', all of them equal in relation to each other, and none of them central. This 'decentrality' is best exemplified in the earth art of Richard Trench. His first earth art work, entitled Line Out, is a straight line formed by him walking back and forth in a field, stepping over grass. Since then, Richard Drum has travelled the world, creating fleeting works in the earth, reorganising raw materials on site to form simple contours and shapes.

### **2.2.2. Use of multiple materials**

In terms of materials, the artists include everything that is available to them in the creative realm, including wind, earth, water, fire, lightning, grass, rocks, trees and the sea as elements in their work. The use of rocks, land and desert landscapes, for example, forms the core aesthetic of Heather's work. Artificial and natural materials work together: even expressions made of artificial materials become elements of expression in the landscape of earth art. For example, in their 1973 work *The Mountain Curtain*, the material used is a 3-ton orange nylon curtain. Their 1979 work, *Flying Fence*, is made of white nylon fabric 5.5 metres high. The rocks were laid by hand for Sofitel's Buffalo Rock Monument. Outstanding earth art works such as Walter de Maria's *Lightning Field*, made from 400 stainless steel rods, emerge to embody a supermaterial aesthetic.

## **2.3. The development of geodesic art landscapes**

### **2.3.1. The art of ecological landscapes**

The design of the Earth Art landscape also focuses on ecological diversity in its creation, not only in combination with nature, but also in consideration of ecological diversity. The famous Chinese-American designer Lin Yue's work 'Storm King Wave Land' is representative of this. Located in a sculpture park on the outskirts of New York, Storm King Wave Land houses the works of famous sculptors such as Moore, Bronco Two and Isamu Noguchi. On a site of approximately one acre, Lin Leap presents eleven rows of undulating waves made of earth and grass that, as visitors walk through them, are drawn into the design and engage in a dialogue with the textures of their forms in their own way. Formerly a gravel quarry, the site is now an environmental renovation project under the direction of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, where 260 species of native trees have been planted in addition to the

native grass species. The artistic design adds to the soil of the original site with a naturally occurring drainage system beneath the soil. The grasses planted on this site do not require much watering and their planting emphasises the ecological view of this artwork. This large scale outdoor sculpture is also the culmination of an exploration of the shape of water waves as a design approach.

### **2.3.2. Abstract art in the landscape**

So-called earth art is a series of methods and conceptions of extreme art that are recreated in nature on a large scale, so that from the very beginning earth art has concentrated on large-scale civil engineering designs, which are created on the surface of the earth according to several principles of extreme art and are therefore also abstract in nature. For example, Christo Vladimirov Javacheff and Jeanne-Claude Denat de Guillebo, a couple of artists who emerged during the Cold War, unlike other earth artists who worked with materials taken from nature, wrapped monuments in fabric, created land platforms on water, or connected valleys with fabric, opening up new possibilities in They have broken new ground in earth art.

For over 48 years, the pair worked tirelessly together to re-imagine the natural landscape in a labyrinth of coloured fabric from Australian ports and the Florida Keys to the Reichstag in Berlin and the Rocky Mountain valley, and in 1961 they began their initial collaboration, filling barrels and packaging in the port of Cologne. Over the next 30 years the pair went on to build larger installations in the USA, France, Germany, Switzerland, Australia and Japan, and the duo grew to worldwide fame.

## **3. The aesthetic nature of the earth art landscape**

### **3.1. Poetic expression of the traditional oriental landscape**

Heidegger, the philosopher of the Sangha, admired the poem of the German poet Hölderlin: "Man dwells poetically on the earth". He was deeply convinced of the danger that the development of modern technology poses to the world of human existence, and he wanted to pursue how to poetise and how to enter the habitat. The most fundamental of these is the 'space of human existence'. Since the Wooden Age, many disciplines have brought to the fore the study of the human space, presenting the point of the human experience of the environment as a problem. The Norwegian architectural theorist Norberg Schulze analysed space in terms of Heideggerian theory, introducing the concept of existential space in *The Architecture of Spaces of Being*. He argues that perceptual space is constantly changing in its own right, and that its changing forms are assimilated by the subject's schema, which in turn is modified by new experiences, so that even the changing forms of perceptual intercourse are integrally linked to the work that forms meaning. Modern science and technology have brought about a new era of urbanism, creating a modern material space for human beings, but what they need is a humanistic design space. Therefore, the concept of urban design has changed fundamentally. In addition to functional design, traffic planning, underground infrastructure and urban economic benefits, urban design also strengthens the human living space. The earth art landscape in urban park design, square design, abandoned land transformation, monumental site design, urban landscape

sequence design, etc., focus on the quality of the urban environment and the quality of life of human survival. This idea is an organic combination of materiality and humanity, making art come to life and making life become art.

### **3.2. Non-scenic expression of Western earth art**

Scenery means 'wind' and 'scenery' in the sense of 'moving air' and 'daylight'. "The term 'wind' and 'scenery' means 'moving air' and 'daylight'. Wind is essentially a landscape in certain conditions, with landscape scenery, as well as certain natural and human phenomena constituted enough to arouse people's aesthetic: appreciation of the landscape. Landscape, plants, animals, air, light, architecture and other effective scenery such as sculptures and inscriptions, and the remains of places of interest serve as the basic material and objective factors of the landscape.

Landscape is the complex of land and the space and materials on it. It is the grid imprint of complex natural processes and human activities on the earth. However, landscape is understood differently in different domains, which explains the complex and multifaceted nature of landscape as a complex complex. Geographers define it as 'the surface of the earth', artists as 'objects of creative expression', architects as 'built landscapes', ecologists as 'ecosystems', tourists as 'tourist resources', historians as 'historical sites', etc. Landscapes have evolved beyond visual and conceptual expressions to become human phenomena of interest to the general public.

### **3.3. Differences between Chinese and Western earth art**

China is a vast country with many rivers and mountains. The beautiful land, mountains and rivers, as well as its deep-rooted history and culture, have given rise to long and profound systems of gardens, such as the Chinese classical gardens. Unique in the world for its colour and high artistry, classical gardens have influenced not only Korea and Japan in the Asian-Chinese cultural sphere, but also Europe for thousands of years and are recognised by the scientific community as the origin of the art of horticulture.

If we compare our earth art landscapes with our classical gardens, we find several similarities. Firstly, they share a similar understanding of the word 'nature'. Chinese gardens have always recognised the idea of "the unity of heaven and man", and as Ji Cheng says in *Garden Ye*, the essence of the traditional Chinese garden can be summarised as follows: "It emphasises the expression of natural beauty, the essence of which can be summarised as "Although made by man, it is like a measure of nature. Humans are always at the centre of the world, but must follow the rules of nature, emphasising the idea of harmony between man and nature. The expression of the ecological landscape is in line with the traditional Chinese concept of "the unity of heaven and man". In addition, Earth Art Landscape's focus on the human landscape has something in common with the public space of classical Chinese garden design. Placing equal importance on functionality and artistry, Earth Art Landscape aims to enhance the quality of the living environment by making the most of the earth's available resources and designing the landscape in a minimalist manner. Classical Chinese gardening, on the other hand, aims to 'borrow skillfully from the earth and refine it to suit the situation', also emphasising how to use, transform and process the land conditions of the garden and design it to suit the situation. The most appropriate

way to create a garden is by borrowing from the situation. Of course, many of the differences between classical Chinese gardens and earth art landscape design come from the different views of gardens and landscape design in the East and West, both temporal and cultural. Firstly, Chinese gardens are 'poetic', not only reflecting certain parts or scenes from the poetry of their predecessors in the garden, but also using the artistic techniques of literature, and the structure of gardens and literary art is quite close. As Qian Yong says: "Gardening, like poetry, must create intricate laws and echo them on all sides; the most jealous of heaps of sheds, the most jealous of miscegenation, just to be called a good structure". The artistic landscape of the earth is also known as the poetic landscape, which emphasises the concept of the "poetic habitat of man" and is an important element of the human landscape. Poetic", a term that must be understood in the context of Western culture, is hardly comparable to the heritage of classical Chinese gardens from a cultural and artistic point of view.

The field of earth art has only been present in the developed countries of modern Western Europe for 40 years. Influenced by modern Western philosophy, aesthetics and other ideological concepts and Western design thinking, it has gradually developed into an autonomous design school with its own characteristics, but is not yet a mature system due to its relatively short development process and diverse forms of expression. Its aesthetic essence is a poetic expression of the landscape, neither in its original form nor in its future direction of development, but as a comprehensive expression of current external expression and inner core ideas. Compared to the maturity and stability of classical Chinese gardens, there is still room for development in the art of gardening in China.

## **4. The aesthetic form of the earth art landscape**

### **4.1. Plain expressions of the natural world**

Earth art, also called geomorphic art, is expressed as an inseparable link between the earth's landscape and the artwork itself, as well as being an art form created in nature. Earth art can be simple or profound in its expression. It can be ardent or immersive. Appreciating the beauty produced by nature in the summary of the work and experiencing the unknown life force that opens up. Making up for missed landscapes through art.

The most direct contact between Earth Art landscape design and nature is through the use of natural materials such as soil, water and plants in its artworks and landscape design. By cleverly using natural materials, Daichi Art creates rich and intimate spaces that blend in with the natural environment and allow people to experience nature. Once again, Earth Art has become a hot spot thanks to this mountainous region of Japan, Echigo Tsumago. "Echigo Tsumago" means "snow-covered village", and "Tsumago" also means far away and the end. Echigo-Tsumari is a 760 square kilometre area that includes Toka-machi and Tsunan-machi in the southern part of Niigata prefecture, more extensive than Tokyo's 23 wards and about two hours' drive from Tokyo, making it one of the few snowy areas in Japan. It was only in 1996 that Japanese curator Tomiro Kitagawa came to Echigo-Tsumago and was so moved that he was determined to do something with his art. After repeated attempts at communication, the first Echigo Tsumago Earth Art Festival was finally held in this decaying area as it entered its millennium. The impact of the event was

obvious to all. In Echigo-Tsumari, a sparsely populated village and forest, the most fascinating form of art has been brought to the world. For over ten years, the Echigo Tsumago Earth Art Festival has been attracting artists from all over the world in droves. The whole of Echigo-Tsumari is a purely natural art gallery. Some of the works created by artists for nature and the earth during the festival have been preserved intact, making art a true 'part of the earth'. Yayoi Kusama, James Turrell, Marina Abramović, Christian Boltanski ..... All of these artists, as we know them, have "made things" in the fields and forests of Echigo Tsumago.

#### 4.2. Harmonious expression of the human habitat

Earth Art was originally created in the hope that the relationship between man and nature would be better understood by the public through a series of works that transform the natural landscape. From large-scale transformations of the natural landscape, such as creating a dam and enclosing an island, to the use of a few leaves and footprints, Earth Art takes many different forms. Although the exact meaning of individual works varies, the goal is common: to create works of art using clay, rock, soil and other natural materials in order to increase human sensitivity to the environment. So the process of creating art should follow the laws of nature, use subjective initiative to organically combine theory and practice, and use limited materials to create more and better works that rely on the resources of the earth to convey artistic ideas.

### 5. Conclusion

The art form has changed dramatically since the concept of earth art emerged. However, much of the practice of today's artists can still be seen in earth art. As the space available to artists has diminished, new creators of earth art works have found alternative ways of creating works without having to travel to remote spaces. This has also made earth art more accessible to the public than before, who now have more opportunities to see these works in person. Although earth art

is more popular in the United States, the art form is also present throughout Europe and is becoming increasingly popular in Africa. Earth art has not always disappeared, and some works are still evolving over time.

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