

# The Artistic Value of Community-Engaged Art: From the Perspective of Environmental Aesthetics\*

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**Abstract:** This paper discusses the artistic value of "community-engaged art project (CEAP)" from the perspective of environmental aesthetics. CEAP refers to art projects that take place in a specific region for revitalization and other similar purposes. I evaluate the artistic value of it in terms of creating a cycle of discovery of the aesthetic value of a place by various subjects. Section 1 examines Vid Simoniti's "pragmatic view" of the artistic value of socially engaged art (SEA). Section 2 points out two problems that arise when applying the practical view to CEAP. The first is the ambiguity of community revitalization as a social purpose, and the second is that the view overlooks that art is an act of making something. Section 3 interprets previous research on creative placemaking and site-specificity from the perspective of environmental aesthetics and argues that CEAP creates a cycle of discovery of the aesthetic value of a place at the initial phase of revitalization. Section 4 explains what exactly a cycle of discovery of the aesthetic value of a place means, referring to the case of the Oku-noto International Art Festival.

**Keywords:** Community-Engaged Art, Socially-Engaged Art, Oku-noto Triennale, Art Criticism, Environmental Aesthetics

## Introduction

This paper presents a model from the perspective of environmental aesthetics to explain how the artistic value of "community-engaged art project (CEAP)" can be evaluated.<sup>1</sup> The term CEAP is coined by Naoya Fujita and refers to art festivals held in local regions, such as the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale, Yokohama Triennale, and Aichi Triennale, as well as other art projects held throughout Japan (Fujita 2016, 17–18).

Fujita uses this term to question the fact that CEAPs only serve the external purpose of regional revitalization and are not critiqued in the context of art. Hence, the name works as a stigma. Concerns have been expressed about the appropriateness of discussing a large number of projects with different objectives under the title of CEAP (Hoshino 2020, 92). Furthermore, by its very nature, it may be difficult to incorporate negative aspects of the region in CEAP. In this

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<sup>1</sup> CEAP is described in Japanese as "Chiiki-art (地域アート). Chiiki is a general noun referring to any specific place. As Fujita translates Chiiki-art as community-engaged art project, this term is used in this paper.

sense, it may be said that the genre has certain restrictions.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, this paper posits the existence of the genre of CEAP and considers how their artistic value should be described. There are two purposes. First, as Fujita points out, artistic activities related to a region, or in other words, to a specific place, have been rapidly increasing. By presenting an axis for evaluating these activities not only from an economic perspective but also from an aesthetic one, its significance and problems will become clearer. Then, it will be possible to set up a standard for evaluating individual projects. Second, the introduction of environmental aesthetics to the discussion around CEAP is also a central issue of this paper. Some previous research has examined the aesthetic value of Japanese-style art projects from the perspective of the participation and dialogue of diverse actors (Cf. Tanaka 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020). However, in this paper, we focus on environmental aesthetics to shed new light on what participation means for CEAP by referring to environmental aesthetics and introducing the perspective of exploring the aesthetic value of place.

The remainder of the paper is as follows. Section 1 provides an overview of the pragmatic view of the artistic value of socially engaged art (SEA) by Vid Simoniti while relating CEAP to SEA. Section 2 describes the limitations in considering CEAP based on Simoniti's view. Section 3 reinterprets previous research on creative placemaking and site-specificity from an environmental aesthetic perspective and examines what local revitalization is and what art produces in the process. Section 4 uses specific examples to demonstrate that the generation of a cycle of discoveries of the aesthetic value of a place can make CEAP artistically valuable.<sup>3</sup>

## **Chapter 1: Simoniti's Pragmatic View on Socially Engaged Art**

As seen in the introduction, Fujita sees CEAP as a type of art project. According to Junko Kumakura, art projects are “activities that go beyond the exhibition of artworks and enter into the society of their time and develop in relation to individual social events” and “create a new artistic/social context by becoming a trigger for connection/contact that is different from existing circuits” (Kumakura 2013, 0–2). Another characteristic of Japanese-style art projects is that they are held in various regions (Kumakura et al. eds. 2015, 4). CEAP, as art projects, engages with society. As such, they overlap with SEA, that is, art forms that engage with society, although there are some differences in their political nature. Beyond the fact that there are differences

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<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it is thought that there are examples of CEAP leading to gentrification in some cases. In the area where the Koganecho Bazaar (Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture, 2008–) was held, which used to be lined with illegal sex shops, art was used to improve the situation by preventing illegal shops from moving in by using the property as an art-in-residence, with the aim of “purifying the town's environment” (Suganuma 2019, p. 70). While the residents' intention to eliminate shops of that kind and make the town a safe place to live, including for children, should be respected, it should be noted that initiatives to rapidly construct a new image through this kind of disconnection from the past could easily turn into a gentrification of the place.

<sup>3</sup> While the focus of this paper is on art practices in Japan, we refer to Western debates where appropriate during the argument. For example, when Nicolas Bourriaud's “relational aesthetics” is applied to the discourse on the community-engaged art project in Japan, it is sometimes pointed out that it is freely used out of context (Hoshino & Fujita 2016, p. 55). Caution is needed when introducing different discourses. Nevertheless, in view of the current situation where theoretical research on community-engaged art projects has not been fully developed in Japan, this paper introduces Western arguments with caution, as far as necessary.

between the two, it should be noted that both CEAP and SEA are concepts that blur their extensions. However, because both of their social effects are often the subject of debate, it is useful to consider Simoniti's pragmatic view on the artistic value of SEA.<sup>4</sup>

In his discussion, Simoniti cites specific examples of SEA, such as Theaster Gates' *The Dorchester Project* (2009–), Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001), and Olafur Eliasson's *Little Sun* (2012). Gates's project is about bringing social change to a community by renovating a rundown bungalow on Chicago's South Side and turning it into a multi-functional space for local residents. Deller's project is a "re-enactment" of a clash between miners and police in Orgreave in 1984. Eliasson sells yellow flower-shaped solar-powered lights, developed in collaboration with engineers, to bring lighting fixtures to areas where the electricity supply is poor. Simoniti characterizes these SEAs in that (1) the intended value of the art project is coextensive with its *social and political impact*, and (2) the *methods* utilized to produce that impact bear a close resemblance to non-artistic forms of political and social activism (Simoniti 2018, 72).

Simoniti first examines aestheticism and pluralism concerning artistic value and argues that neither of these can successfully capture the artistic value of SEA. Aestheticism is a position that equates artistic value with aesthetic value (Simoniti 2018, 74), while pluralism, in contrast, is a position that sees artistic value as encompassing various types of value, including cognitive, ethical, and political value, in addition to aesthetic value (Simoniti 2018, 74). Perhaps it is easier to understand that the artistic value of SEA cannot be captured under aestheticism. Nevertheless, as pluralism sees artistic value as encompassing different kinds of value, at first glance, it seems to be a position that can also identify the value of works with social and political consequences, such as SEA. However, Simoniti judges that aestheticism and pluralism have something in common and, therefore, both are ineligible for assessing the artistic value of SEA. Their commonality is the premise that what is considered artistic value is realized through artistic features such as medium, genre, theme, technique, mode of display, and art kind. Through artistic features, we can make a distinction between the artistic and practical value of an artwork (e.g., if a painting has practical value in the sense that it is just the right size to cover a hole in the wall, it cannot be count as its artistic value because it is not derived from its artistic features).

However, Simoniti argues that SEA can be artistically valuable precisely because of the practical value not directly related to artistic features. While there are artistic features in SEA, they are used as an interchangeable means to the end of social transformation, and the artistic features of SEA are not essential to realizing SEA's artistic value. He, therefore, formulates his own "the pragmatic view" as follows<sup>5</sup>:

Value V, possessed by artwork X, is an artistic value  $\longleftrightarrow$  V is the positive political, cognitive, or ethical impact of X (Simoniti 2018, 76.)

<sup>4</sup> Pablo Helguera, for example, notes that, besides SEA, relational aesthetics, community art, collaborative art, participatory art, dialogic art, public art, and social practice are used as designations for the arts based on social interaction (Helguera 2015, 30–31).

<sup>5</sup> Simoniti's pragmatic view has nothing to do with pragmatism in philosophy. The word "pragmatic" is used simply to refer to a work serving some social and political purposes (Simoniti 2018, 82, Note 4).

According to Simoniti, the fact that SEA is a work of art can be adequately explained by adopting a historical or institutional definition of art: it draws on post-minimalist art in terms of its participation in place (this point is discussed in more detail in Section 3), and it also has a political aspect. French realism and Russian constructivism, in terms of their political aspect, collaboration, and participation, have precedents in the Situationists of the 1950s, the Happenings of the 1960s, and the feminist practices of the 1970s. Therefore, according to Simoniti, it is clear that SEA is art in terms of historical definitions. It is also accepted as art by institutional definitions, as SEA artists such as Gates and Eliasson have been recognized by international exhibitions such as Documenta and museums such as the Tate Modern SEA.

Furthermore, some, if not all, SEA works are good works; that is, SEA as a genre is not worthless, and this can be explained by the fact that there are already works that are valued in the art world. As SEA's search for political validity is not curious in our contemporary art world, this does not prevent it from being called art.

If SEA is art, it must have some artistic value, but aestheticism and pluralism cannot explain it. In the case of participatory art, which overlaps with but is distinct from SEA, there may be things that encourage participants to have aesthetic experiences through their interactions with each other and can therefore be explained by aestheticism and pluralism. However, SEA, which has a perspective from social activism, does not directly try to enhance participants' aesthetic experience. For example, Claire Bishop evaluates Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave* by seeing it as a hybrid of performance art and historical painting. However, according to Simoniti, in light of its aim to bring about change for the mining community, the participants are indifferent to the project's place in the art world. Its artistic characteristics are not the most important factor in measuring Deller's achievement with SEA. Hence, the pragmatic view supplies a better account of the artistic value of SEA than aestheticism and pluralism (Simoniti 2018, 77–80).

As mentioned above, the pragmatic view makes radical claims, but Simoniti intends to create a stir in the current state of SEA criticism, which is dominated by ambiguous axes of evaluation in the first place. According to him, on the one hand, SEA criticism tends to overestimate its power of social change. On the other hand, if its social influence is low, there is a tendency to change the criteria and evaluate it in terms of aesthetic value. He offers a pragmatic view to rectify this confusion of axes of evaluation, arguing that the artistic value of SEA should be assessed exclusively in terms of their social impact: as long as SEAs are intended to bring about social and political change, they should not be compared with other works of art, but be assessed in the context of wider social and political action. Eliasson's *Little Sun*, for example, should be compared to the work of the NGO Litter of Light, which supplies countries worldwide with lighting systems made from plastic bottles. This policy would certainly be demanding for SEA, he argues, but before becoming over-enthusiastic about the "transformative power" of art, it is necessary to carefully consider the actual political and ethical implications of each work that seeks to engage with society (Simoniti 2018, 81).

## Chapter 2: Problems Applying the Pragmatic View to Community-engaged art project

As stated by Simoniti, his pragmatic view does not apply to all art forms. Furthermore, it should be noted that Simoniti does not share the concept of CEAP, which is the subject of this paper's consideration. Therefore, the fact that this view does not apply to CEAP may not immediately undermine his argument's validity. However, attempting here to apply the pragmatic view to CEAP and pointing out its limitations may help to take the consideration of the artistic value of CEAP. If we apply his pragmatic view to individual CEAP, we can say that some CEAP are superior in terms of artistic value if it has a social impact comparable to other pragmatic means. However, does this solve the problem? Two problems with applying the pragmatic view to CEAP are identified below.

First, the pragmatic view asserts that each SEA aims to create some kind of social change and that its achievement is of superior artistic value. However, what this social change looks like will vary from one work/project to another. Although Simoniti does not make much distinction, there are different types of social change, and what and how close to achieving it may vary depending on the type of social change desired. In the case of CEAP, it is generally assumed that regional revitalization is one of its major goals. This is particularly the case for CEAP in rural areas, which are usually set out in a straightforward manner, while urban art festivals also often have objectives related to regional revitalization in a broader sense, such as linking with creative city planning and the reuse of hollowed-out areas within the city. If the social change expected of CEAP is regional revitalization, then its contribution to the resolution of the economic recession due to reasons such as population decline or urban devastation would, in a pragmatic view, enhance the artistic value of CEAP. However, many CEAP are very unlikely to smoothly achieve such an effect compared with other means, such as attracting businesses and so on. In the first place, it is doubtful that there are quick-acting methods to fulfill regional revitalization. From the pragmatic point of view, most CEAP would probably cease to be artistically valuable, and therefore an axis of evaluation that compares the artistic value of various CEAP forms with each other would not be possible.

Of course, there is no proof that dismissing the significance of CEAP, in general, is wrong. This paper strongly acknowledges that, in a situation where CEAP is in a state of flux, the enthusiasm for its social effects should, to some extent, be tempered. However, we can point out another problem from the pragmatic view: Simoniti fails to consider what art is supposed to do in the first place.<sup>6</sup> As we will see in more detail in the next section, Simoniti demonstrates that art with social utility, like SEA, also emerged because of the development of art history. If SEA is a kind of art, the basic point that art is the production of *something* should not be lost sight of. Of course, *something* here does not necessarily refer to a work of art as an object but may be a situation, for example. Also, the subject of *producing it* may not be the artist alone but may refer

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<sup>6</sup> While acknowledging the significance of Simoniti's pragmatic view, Futoshi Hoshino is concerned that "the consideration of the formative or, more broadly, formal aspects of the work of art can somehow slip away completely" (Hoshino 2018, 143). He argues that, if we consider SEA (which Hoshino calls social practice) in relation to the concept of art, it is necessary to "secure a unit of analysis that corresponds to the 'form' of the work" (Hoshino 2018, 144).

to various actors, such as viewers and performers (Cf. Berleant 1991, 49). Even if the concept of artwork and author in the modern sense has been transformed, the choice of artistic means is not just a linear progression towards the goal of social change but also a step in the process of producing something on the way to that goal. As I will argue in the next section, when considering CEAP, the perspective of what is being produced is the key to understanding its artistic value in terms of environmental aesthetics.

### **Chapter 3: Revitalization and the Aesthetic Value of Place**

In the previous section, we pointed out that it is inappropriate to apply the pragmatic view to CEAP due to the ambiguity of revitalization and the lack of a perspective that art produces something in the process of achieving social change. On the other hand, the difficulty in applying the pragmatic view also raises ways in which it is considered important to describe the artistic value of CEAP. First, we need to articulate the role that art can have in the process of social achievement of regional revitalization, and then we need to identify what it is that art is producing for this role. This method enables us to question the nature of the artistic value of CEAP in relation to society while distancing ourselves from a pragmatic view.

The key to advancing this approach is a focus on place. In demonstrating the link between SEA and art history, Simoniti refers to Miwon Kwon's work on site-specificity. Kwon argues that following Minimalism and Land Art, which engage with a place from a phenomenological perspective, and Institutional Critical Art, which questions place in relation to art, a stream of art emerged in the early 1990s that engaged with a place outside of the artistic context, either as a local community or political discourse. Simoniti sets this third phase, which Kwon encompasses under the label site-specificity, as the beginning of SEA (Simoniti 2018, 73).<sup>7</sup> Simoniti does not further consider the issue of place in SEA, but this is an important perspective for this paper.

First, to demarcate the role of art in achieving the social objective of revitalization in relation to place, we refer to the debate on creative placemaking. According to urban philosopher Sharon M. Meagher, creative placemaking refers to attempts to use art to revive cities and towns or to build communities (Meagher 2020, 169). It has many overlaps with CEAP.<sup>8</sup> In a booklet published by the National Endowment for the Arts, creative placemaking encompasses the goal of creating "livability" and economic development (Meagher 2020, 170). This livability is further defined in terms of the safety and aesthetic, expressive, and environmental concerns of people living in and visiting a place, which Meagher summarizes as "the quality of life" (Meagher 2020, 170). Although the purpose of creative placemaking overlaps with regional revitalization, it is not limited to creating economic benefits but also involves reimagining place from a variety of

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<sup>7</sup> Simoniti partly agrees with Jason Gaiger's critique of Kwon. Gaiger argues that the transition from Minimalism to SEA should be seen as a history of art's emancipation from autonomy. Simoniti tries to locate SEA in the history of art in a way that integrates Kwon's and Geiger's theories (Simoniti 2018, 73–74).

<sup>8</sup> The term creative placemaking was first used by the United States National Endowment for the Arts in 2009 and has since been used by various organizations with different definitions and extensions. According to Meagher, creative placemaking is positioned as a grassroots effort to counter globalism and ensure a sense of place and creativity (Meagher 2020, 171).

interests, including aesthetic ones, to improve people's quality of life. Meagher further states that "creative placemaking projects foster justice—by creating spaces for civic dialogue and engagement and bringing neighbors and outsiders together to (re)imagine their communities and cities" (Meagher 2020, 172). In other words, there is the phase in local revitalization, the "phase of (re)imagining place," which makes the next phase of social transformation possible.

What role, then, could art play in the (re)imagining phase of place? This means addressing the second issue of this section, which is to consider what CEAP produce. In the context of creative placemaking, place can also refer to social contexts such as communities and their associated discourses. When Kwon refers to art in the 1960s as being site-specific, it was exclusively in reference to concrete, physical places. However, as symbolized by the New Genre Public Art movement of the 1990s, the focus of artworld has moved from being site-specific to being issue-specific; that is, a complex discourse. The notion of site=place, she says, is being extended to what might be the question of community as constructed by a complex set of discourses (Kwon 2004, 112). This shift may also indicate a shift of interest in art from the aesthetic to the social. However, when considering the various practices of CEAP that are the subject of this paper, can we reconsider the significance of their production in terms of (re)imagining the aesthetic in place as the basis of community? Kwon is critical of how community identities are linked to places as physical spaces. She also has a concern about nostalgic impulses driving the identities (Kwon 2004, 164–165). I agree with Kwon's concern, and, moreover, argue that place and community may not be separated. However, just as Kwon argues that communities and their identities can be variably constructed through the intervention of art (Kwon 2004, 165), the aesthetic value of a place can also be social in the sense that it is not univocal but constantly explored through the participation of diverse people.

Environmental aesthetician Emily Brady believes that the search for the aesthetic value of the environment takes place through our communication. We belong to different sensitivity groups, depending on our backgrounds (Brady 2003, 209–210). Even on the same mountain, a farmer and a traveler will engage their sensitivities in different ways and discover different aesthetic features. However, Brady does not assume that any view is acceptable and calls her position critical pluralism. Under this position, the validity of an interpretation is relativized according to the interpreter's background beliefs and the cultural and historical context to which they belong, while prejudices and personal whims are excluded (Brady 2003, 80). We communicate their aesthetic judgments of their respective environments to others, and through this communication, the aesthetic value of the environment becomes pluralistic (Brady 2003, 212). In this process, our imagination works well. According to Brady, imagination creates new connections between us and our environment and allows us to extend our experience in ways that go beyond perceived content.

If we consider Meagher and Brady's arguments together, we can think about what CEAP produces in the following way. In places where local revitalization is needed, people's interest in the places is considered to have waned or become polarized for some reason. The search for the aesthetic value of the place is one of the things that currently stagnates. Artistic interventions can engage people's imaginations to re-initiate this exploration of the aesthetic value of the places. Just as the development of landscape painting in Europe turned people's attention to the real

landscape, or the genealogy of nature writing in North America opened people's eyes to the beauty of wilderness, it is not impossible to say that the aesthetic values of art have been strongly linked to the aesthetic values of the place. CEAP also has this effect that art can have. It reinvigorates the search for the aesthetic value of place in different ways for people inside and outside the community, and this cycle of aesthetic value discovery is *something* that CEAP produces.

If, to begin with, place is something that changes spatially and temporally according to natural and cultural conditions, then we will never be able to grasp its aesthetic value fully and correctly from a single perspective. The search for the aesthetic value of the environment is, therefore, a collaborative process of people (Aota 2020, 280–285).<sup>9</sup> In other words, what emerges from overlaying the perspective of environmental aesthetics on discussions of creative placemaking and site-specificity is that issues of participation and collaboration can be incorporated into a focus on place itself. Participation and collaboration in CEAP do not simply mean the involvement of non-artists in the process of an art project but can also mean that diverse actors become engaged in the collaborative process of exploring the aesthetic values of a place.

#### **Chapter 4: The Cycle of Exploring the Aesthetic Value of Place**

The previous section, via Meagher's discussion of creative placemaking, provided an answer to a problem that Simoniti's pragmatic view cannot solve. In other words, it became clear that local revitalization as a social impact of CEAP can be divided into at least two phases and that what CEAP produces can be viewed from the perspective of creating the cycle of exploration for aesthetic values of place in the first phase of this process.

In the following section, we aim to describe the relationship between CEAP and the aesthetic value of place in concrete terms, using the framework of environmental aesthetics. Through this, it becomes clear what is meant by exploring the aesthetic value of place as a collaborative process. I will mention the Okunoto International Art Festival as an example (Suzu City, Ishikawa, 2017).<sup>10</sup> It is obvious that the concept of CEAP, which can include a wide range of examples, cannot be represented by the Okunoto International Art Festival alone and that other types of CEAP should also be analyzed for more comprehensive research.

However, this paper uses this art festival as a specific example for the following two reasons. First, the Okunoto International Art Festival is a later example of a large-scale CEAP. The style of CEAP had been developed well already before this festival was organized. It is therefore a suitable example for considering the artistic value of CEAP. Second, while the Okunoto

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<sup>9</sup> Drawing on Dominic McIver Lopes' discussion of aesthetic adepts in addition to Brady, I have offered a perspective that sees the exploration of the aesthetic value of the environment as a collaborative process (Aota 2020). By examining Lopes' aesthetic network theory, Hitoshi Tanaka presents the possibility that it can function as a theoretical model for the aesthetic evaluation of "art projects" in Japan (Tanaka 2020, 95). Although our perspectives on these issues differ, we share a common attempt to view collaborative work concerning the aesthetic in relation to Lopes.

<sup>10</sup> Okunoto International Art Festival is held in Suzu, Ishikawa Prefecture, at the tip of the Noto Peninsula, with Fram Kitagawa as general director. The city used to be a candidate site for a nuclear power plant, but a policy change eliminated that option.



International Art Festival is a “regional-type” CEAP in the countryside (Yoshida 2019, 10), as an international exhibition, it also invites artists from abroad, so the differences in the positions of the participants—artists, residents, and tourists—are outstanding. By selecting an example where diverse people participate in the exploration of the aesthetic value of place, a model can be presented that can also serve as a reference point when considering cases where the differences between these positions are blurred.

The arguments in the following discussion can be put forward as follows. CEAP involves at least three types of people: artists, residents, and tourists. When the works are organized so that all these people become both creators and appreciators of the aesthetic value of the place, CEAP realizes a cycle of exploration of the aesthetic value of a place and enhances its artistic value. When we aesthetically appreciate an object that does not have clear boundaries, such as a place, we create frames by ourselves to select the object of appreciation (Hepburn 1966, 291; Moore 2008, 108-109), which is analogous to the act of production in that we choose aesthetically valuable things from within a place to constitute an aesthetic object. In this respect, it can be described analogously to the act of production (Aota 2020, 192–197). In other words, the active appreciation of a place is, at the same time, an act of producing a new way of looking at the aesthetic value of a place.

Based on this idea, artists are creators in two ways. That is, as well as being creators of the work that serves as a device to initiate the collaborative act of exploring the aesthetic values of a place, artists first create a new way of looking at the aesthetic values of a place. In CEAP, works that reflect the specificity of the place are usually welcomed, and many artists produce works that are in some way specific to the region by visiting the site and going through a process of research.<sup>11</sup> In the process, artists are expected to be sensitive to and scoop up the aesthetic values of a place.

Brady presents “aesthetic integrity” as an aesthetic norm that functions in practices such as environmental conservation. Aesthetic integrity is the principle that requires that, when modifying parts of the environment, we preserve the integrity of the story of the environment as a whole, that is, the diachronic unfolding of the forces of nature and human culture (Brady 2003, 243–244).

Although her discussion is not about the production of art, it can help think about CEAP. In the case of CEAP, the place that is the material for the art is never untouched. When using a place already imbued with history as a material, artists see the aesthetic value of the place as appreciators. However, even if a place has a story to tell, there is no single interpretation. Rather,

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<sup>11</sup> Kwon draws attention to a point made by Hal Foster; in community-based art, artists objectify the community (Kwon 2004, 138). In terms of the aesthetic value of place, which is the issue of this paper, it is possible that Foster’s criticism could be valid. In other words, artists can present the aesthetic value of place as a kind of authority. Therefore, this paper emphasizes that searching for the aesthetic value of place is a collaborative act. In environmental aesthetics, too, the position known as the cognitive model, represented by Allen Carlson, authorizes certain views by arguing that common sense/scientific knowledge of the environment is necessary for an appropriate aesthetic appreciation of the environment (Cf. Carlson 1979, 273). In contrast, Brady and I see the aesthetic value as something to be discovered by communicating with a more diverse range of actors. It is artists who initiate the search for the aesthetic value of place in CEAP. However, if their work acts to lead people only to a fixed view, it will not be a successful piece.

artists, through their active appreciation of the place, initiate a cycle of exploration by drawing sympathetic attention to the place while also perceiving the aesthetic value of the place in their unique way and showing this through the production of the work. For example, *Theatre Sumer* by Yoshitaka Nanjo, one of the works exhibited at the Okunoto International Art Festival, is an installation set in a former movie theater. It is unique in its use of diatomaceous earth, which forms the Noto Peninsula. The work, which combines the nature and history of Okunoto, is formed by overlaying and giving form to the aesthetic values of the place he has discovered.

Nanjo's work reminds local residents, especially older people, of the time when the site was a real theater (Yamashita 2017, 54). The cycle of exploration of the aesthetic value of place in CEAP is thus further linked from artists to residents. *Theatre Sumer* evokes the past, while Aleksander Konstantinov's *53 Bus Station of Suzu*, for example, covers four bus stops with aluminum, drawing attention to the components of place that are integrated into everyday life. Arto Haapala argues that the environment in which we spend our daily lives is the basis of everydayness by becoming part of the residents' existence and evokes feelings of familiarity in us, a kind of aesthetic pleasure that can be found in the everyday (Haapala 2005, 50). Often, however, we are not conscious of this feeling of familiarity. CEAP evokes this feeling by bringing change to the everyday, making residents aware of the aesthetic quality of familiarity of the place. In other words, it transforms residents into active appreciators of the place and engages them in exploring its aesthetic value.<sup>12</sup>

Another example of a different approach that initiates the exploration of residents is Maki Kijima's *Sea Life and Mountain Life*. Kijima organized a workshop where local residents were asked to create flags using cloth as the main material, based on their memories of the sea and mountains, and exhibited the result in Hioki House (formerly Hioki Elementary and Junior High School). Although they directly the flags, they also become creators of aesthetic value in that they select aesthetically valuable places to make the flags.

In addition to artists and residents, tourists are also participants in CEAP. CEAPs, especially those that take the form of large-scale art festivals, often follows the format of art tourism. Even if the artworks representing regional characteristics have their specific meaning for residents, they may be consumed by tourists with mere curiosities. The Okunoto International Art Festival also follows a style of typical tourism that is not limited to art, for example, by overlapping the festival period with the time of the local festival and organizing tours to experience the region's unique customs. While these initiatives may effectively attract people to the region, they may also have the danger of fixing how outsiders view the region. Also, it sometimes risks remaining tourists as passive viewers by reinforcing the stereotypes.

However, it would not be impossible to make tourists also active appreciators; that is, who produce new ways of looking at the aesthetic value of place. Tomoko Konoike's *Go Ashore* is a three-dimensional work in which an animal horn and a child's foot are fused together on the cliffs of Shakuzaki, located at the northernmost tip of the Noto Peninsula. The work can only be viewed

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<sup>12</sup> I have elsewhere presented "past-oriented framing" and "future-oriented framing" as mechanisms by which residents become aware of the aesthetic property of familiarity (Aota 2020, 230–248). The effect of CEAP here does not fit into either of these categories. It is a potential third framing for familiarity.

by walking along the cliff for about ten minutes. Konoike says this is because “art has no meaning unless it is blurred from the inside” in a situation where art festivals are often turned into mere objects of sightseeing. She dares to invite the audience to “walk in inconvenience” and to “reorganize their whole body senses” (Konoike 2018, 33). This place is difficult to discover in everyday life, not only for tourists but also for residents. By being involved in the process of walking, tourists can discover the aesthetic value of the place rooted in their physical senses in their own ways, such as by noticing the sensation of stepping on the path, the things that happen to come into view, or the sound of the waves that can be heard.

In this way, CEAP can enable such collaborative activities where artists, residents, and tourists explore the aesthetic value of a place from their own perspectives through the linkage of various artworks. The artistic value of CEAP lies not only in the fact that individual artworks can have aesthetic value but also in the fact that the artworks can be used as a catalyst to explore the aesthetic value of place.

## Conclusion

This paper begins by pointing out the problems with applying Simoniti’s pragmatic view to CEAP and argues it plays a role in creating a cycle of discoveries of the aesthetic value of place in the initial phase of regional revitalization. As a result, the artistic value of CEAP is based not only on the aesthetic value of the artworks themselves but also on the discovery of the aesthetic value of place through the artworks.

This paper concludes that assessing the artistic value of CEAP in terms of the extent to which they contribute to the exploration of the aesthetic value of a place may not be in direct conflict with Simoniti’s pragmatic view. Nor can it be said that CEAP has brought about social change in the sense of the rise in electricity supply that Simoniti expected from Eliasson’s *Little Sun*. However, if we use the ideas of creative placemaking seen in Section 3, local revitalization was not only about making an economic impact but also about (re)imagining places, including aesthetically. In other words, at least about CEAP, the step of discovering the aesthetic value of place is included as part of social change. The participation aspect can be reconsidered from the perspective that this is an activity that requires people to work together. Even if the aesthetic value itself is divorced from usefulness, it is possible for the understanding of aesthetic value to have social significance.

However, this paper does not conclude how much CEAP can be assessed as excellent in terms of artistic value. Perhaps, just as Simoniti set a high bar for SEA, the criteria in this paper will not be easy for CEAP to achieve. This paper presents an axis for criticism of CEAP from a philosophical-aesthetic point of view. The validity of this standard will be measured through repeated applications with specific cases.

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