



Defining site specificity.

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draft

Jamie Sides

question

What is site specific art? And how is it made? I will use 3 examples of site specific art to find the meaning of what it is and what purpose it gains from being in the specific location for the artwork to really work.

Goals

1. To find out what site specific art is
2. What makes it site specific
3. How can i make a site specific project

1. kikito



<https://www.jr-art.net/projects/giants-border-mexico#:~:text=In%202017%2C%20JR%20visited%20the,in%20Tecate%20overlooks%20the%20fence.>

Kikito is an artwork by photographer artist JR. As you can see it is a giant print out of a child looking over a fence. However it has no meaning if you don't know the location.

This is the Mexico/USA border, a border with huge turmoil over the years especially now. Kikito is a Mexican child and the image of him peering over the wall makes him a political statement in a way. Kikito symbolises an entire national issue that is being oppressed by America. The image only works because it's the US/Mexico border. This artwork couldn't be moved to anywhere else in the world because then Kikito as a message loses meaning. Therefore the site specificity is clear, making it exclusive to work in the location the art is placed.

One way that the artwork is made is the research of finding a place and also Kikito. Kikito being found is a pivotal piece to the artwork. According to Tate Modern the quote **"As a site-specific work of art is designed for a specific location, if removed from that location it loses all or a substantial part of its meaning."** This directly relates to what I said about how it only works on the border of Mexico and the US, Kikito as a child is equally as

essential. Although any mexican person could have worked it did need to be a mexican person, Kikito as a mexican is not changeable and to change it to another nations person would again lose the meaning, same as the location. Site specificity needs to only work in the location placed as well as the people who will be in the art or see it. For instance in a time when the mexico/american tension is so high, with pop culture taking it into account even now with Paul Thomas Anderson making 'one battle after another' a film about this topic and it being raved about shows how people see this kind of impact and see the importance behind it. I believe if this statement was made 30 years ago less people would see the importance and message behind it even with the 'sensitivity of the topic' it works in this place of the mexico border but no where else does this message work for this time and era we live in

2. Muddy dance



<https://www.erikkessels.com/play-public> for Toronto work

<https://www.erikkessels.com/muddy-dance>

Muddy dance is an artwork by Eric Kessels is a series of cloth prints of footballers playing but without the football (removed in editing) the prints are then placed on a local football pitch in full scale print.

According to sources, the children still played on the pitch and would kick the ball at the cloth for fun. This is interesting because it changes how the local people interact with the environment differently because of the art. This is an interesting way that site specific art can change its environment to make interaction a part of the site and artwork together. Bringing community elements to it as well. Kessels did a different art project in Toronto made for people to interact with, his own quote reads **"Visitors can interact with these constructions by jumping, climbing or sitting on them and photographing themselves together with the funny past. By actively participating in the playground your body and your eyes can burn some calories."** This is interesting because it means that Kessels take into account the impact on the community when he is making his art, and by using this information it is clear to see that the site specific idea of the artwork combined with the social aspect, creates a truly complex and interesting artwork.

Different to Kikito however this can be moved, but only to other football pitches. It's interesting how there's different levels to how an artwork can be moved in some circumstances yet not in another. And sometimes when it is moved it could bring a new interesting light on the way people interact with it. For instance with muddy dance i imagine if it was moved to somewhere like a pitch in London it would probably be vandalised or removed due to the amount of defacing art that happens in public spaces in the uk.

3. Christo & Claude



<https://christojeanneclaude.net/>

Christo and Claude have a series of works including the one above, where famous landmarks are covered in a giant tarp concealing the location yet remaining recognisable in silhouette. The site specificity comes in the form of the landmark, the artwork can move but the site must be a very clear and recognisable place. Site specification therefore can mean various things, because Kikito, Muddy Dance and this all have shown how site specificity can change depending on the context of the artwork, the way the artwork is made and how the artwork changes or reacts to the location that the artwork is in.

For instance this artwork by Claude and Christo has been moved around into France with the arch and as shown above the Reichstag in Germany.

If this artwork however was draped over greggs in swansea, the art loses meaning, it's the importance of the places as well as the distinctive shape and architecture that makes the work of art actually make sense and can be moved logically and make sense.

Bibliography

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