



Anchoring Creativity: The Birth of the World's First Floating Sculpture Park

Om Khattri¹

sculptorom@hotmail.com

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Abstract

The Hulan Floating Sculpture Park, unveiled in July 2023 in China, marked a groundbreaking fusion of art, culture, and environment. This historic project, a result of collaborative efforts by the Hulan District Committee, the District Government, and the International Sculpture Symposium Alliance (ISSA), brought together artists from sixteen countries across four continents. It inaugurated the world's First Symposium-Cum Floating Sculpture Park, a testament to the power of global collaboration in the arts. This study delves into the profound implications of this ambitious initiative, exploring its significance, the monumental creations of participating artists, and its broader impact on art, culture, and the aesthetic environment. Through an in-depth analysis of each sculpture's thematic elements, materials, and artistic influences, this research illuminates the harmonization of diverse global creative perspectives within a natural milieu. Drawing from the author's direct participation in the project, employing a qualitative and reflective methodology, this study assesses the implications for local communities and the broader art sphere, highlighting the pivotal role of art in fostering international dialogue and promoting art and aesthetics within the environment.

Keywords: Floating Sculpture Park, Sculpture Symposium, Environmental Art, Monumental, Global Art Fusion.

1. Assistant Professor in Sculpture, Tribhuvan University.



Introduction

In July 2023, a seismic shift occurred in art and culture, reshaping the conventional boundaries between artistic expression and the natural world. This transformative event, the genesis of the “China-Hulan Floating Sculpture Park,” is a monumental achievement that is a testament to the boundless realms of human creativity and expression. Monumental sculptures, crafted on a large scale, commemorate significant events, individuals, or ideas. Their immense size is a defining characteristic, aiming to command attention in public spaces and urban landscapes, evoking grandeur and reverence. Constructed from diverse materials like corten steel or metal alloys, these sculptures, spanning ancient to contemporary times, profoundly influence their surroundings’ visual and cultural material.

Settled within the picturesque Hulan Estuary Wetland Park, this unprecedented spectacle unfolded against a serene backdrop, drawing together global artists, cultural luminaries, and passionate art enthusiasts. Environmental art emerged in the mid-1960s and persists today (Carlson, 2005, as cited in Khattri, 2021). Environmental art, or ecological art, creates pieces that engage with the natural world, often using natural materials or environmental elements. Through sculptures, installations, or land art, it promotes sustainability and raises awareness of environmental issues, fostering a deeper connection between humans and nature. This monumental sculpture symposium took place along the Hulan River's banks, and it navigated the flowing river, serving as a junction where nature harmoniously merged with human artistic expressions. Collaborative efforts of the Hulan District Committee, the District Government, and the International Sculpture Symposium Alliance (ISSA) culminated in the birth of an extraordinary endeavor.

In the beginning phase, twenty sculptors from sixteen countries across four continents united under a shared objective to infuse the Hulan River landscape with a rich tapestry of diverse sculptural creations. The artist sculpted stainless steel into sculptures, using it as their primary medium. During the symposium, artists employed various techniques, incorporating bronze as a material for some sculptures. They crafted textures, contrasting them with the reflective mirrors finished stainless steel, and applied patination on bronze and the curtain steel, resulting in animated, polychromatic vibrations within the sculptures. What is truly intriguing is that some sculptors utilized hi-tech CAD/CAM in the initial sculpting stages, a testament to the ever-evolving landscape of art and technology. The new CAD/CAM technology in creating 3D forms represents Computer-Aided Design/Computer-Aided Manufacturing. Khan et al. (2017) emphasized a significant advancement in sculpture during this era: the emergence of 3D visualization techniques, rapid prototyping, and CAD/CAM technologies in 1988. They discussed that these technological innovations notably decreased the time required for tool development. In

contrast, others adhered to conventional methods for the final foundry outcome, particularly in creating bronze figurative works. At the forefront of this ambitious initiative was the visionary leadership of Liu Yang, the general secretary of ISSA, whose curatorship played a pivotal role in translating this bold global vision into reality.

The world's first floating sculpture park concept emerged as artists crafted monumental sculptures, each a poignant symbol of their cultural heritage. These sculptures, anchored on robust iron bases engineered to withstand the elements, embarked on an extraordinary journey downstream along the Songhua and Heilongjiang Rivers, potentially reaching the vast expanse of the ocean (Y. Liu, 2023a). The sculptures become immovable during winter as they stand steadfast on the frozen, snowy river. During this time, spectators have the unique opportunity to freely walk around the sculptures and physically interact with them without the need for boats. In this fluid convergence of art and nature, these sculptures signal a new era and embody the intrinsic fluidity of artistic expression.

As we navigate through the following pages, we embark on an exploratory journey into the heart of the China-Hulan Floating Sculpture Park. This article, enriched with a qualitative analysis methodology and reflective insights derived from the author's firsthand experiences as a participating sculptor in the Hulan International Sculpture Symposium 2023, aims to illuminate the multifaceted dimensions of this transformative event.

We address crucial questions about the origin and significance of this exceptional artistic endeavor, paying homage to the participating sculptors and their awe-inspiring creations. Each sculpture encapsulates a unique narrative, encouraging viewers to reflect on profound aspects of the human experience. Beyond the realm of artistry, the birth of the China-Hulan Floating Sculpture Park transcends conventional boundaries. It is a living testimony to the inexhaustible potential of creative expression, international collaboration, and the seamless integration of art with nature.

Despite the existence of the underwater sculpture park since its unveiling in 2006 and Robert Smithson's environmental work, Spiral Jetty, completed in 1970 (Janson & Janson, 2001, p.854), (Causey, 1998) Earth as Art as a whole, the first phase of the inaugural international sculpture symposium in Harbin, China, established the historical significance of a floating sculpture park on a flowing river. They will showcase hundreds of sculptures within five years. This event, associated with the Hulan Floating Sculpture Park, marked a pioneering moment in art history, as it was the first of its kind to integrate the concept of "floating" with the dynamic nature of the river, emphasizing the sculptures' connection to the river's flow. This article serves as a gateway into the profound impact of this artistic phenomenon. Furthermore, it provides valuable perspectives on the transformative potential of human ingenuity, international cooperation, and the harmonious merger of sculptural creativity with the flowing waters of the Hulan River.

The Hulan Floating Sculpture Park represents a confluence of art and nature, celebrating diverse cultures' rich tapestry and interconnectedness. Embark on a thrilling adventure through the creation of the world's first symposium-cum floating sculpture park as we explore the global stories told by these monumental sculptures in creative landscapes. It contributes to the broader discourse on the intersection of art, culture, and the natural environment, showcasing the enduring spirit of creativity and cultural exchange on a global scale.

Methodology: Crafting Insights from Artistic Participation

This study aims to explore the transformative nature of artistic participation within the context of the Hulan International Sculpture Symposium 2023. As a sculptor and researcher, I immersed myself in the symposium to understand the intricacies of sculptural creation, collaborative dynamics, and audience engagement. This investigation aims to contribute significantly to the sculpture discipline by offering insights into the diverse dimensions of artistic involvement and its wider influence on cultural interchange and imaginative representation.

Ethical considerations are pivotal in this study, particularly concerning informed consent and data confidentiality. All participants were informed about the research objectives before engaging in conversations, whether in person or through electronic media, and their explicit permission was obtained to ensure their deliberate participation.

The methodology adopted in this study offers a distinctive perspective on understanding artistic participation and sculpture symposiums. The research captures a holistic view of the symposium's dynamics by combining firsthand experiences with supplementary data sources, such as official documentation, photographs, and recorded discussions. This immersive approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the sculpting process and delves into artistic engagement's cultural, social, and emotional dimensions. The qualitative analysis, grounded in reflective practice, allows for a nuanced exploration of the deeper meanings embedded in the creative process and the resonance of sculptures within their broader context. Through this innovative methodology, the study aims to contribute novel insights to the field, enriching our understanding of artistic participation and its transformative potential.

The Hulan International Sculpture Symposium 2023 and Creativity

Art has always been a means of connecting cultures, bridging gaps, and transcending borders. The China-Hulan Floating Sculpture Park embodies this ethos in a pioneering fusion of artistic vision, craftsmanship, and engineering. With the serene backdrop of the Hulan River, this unique endeavor brings together twenty artists from across the globe to showcase their distinctive cultural identities through monumental sculptures. The sculptures, placed atop hollow iron bases that double as floating boats, navigate the Songhua River, facilitating an unparalleled fusion of art, nature, and innovation.

A Reflection of Complexity: “Collapse” by Ali Al Jabri - Oman

Ali Al Jabri’s “Collapse” presents a visually arresting exploration of structure and chaos, light and shadow (Al Jabri, 2023). The stainless steel cubes, varying in size and finish, form a tree-like shape that balances precariously on a rectangular floating base. The sculpture’s mirror-like surface and rich maroon hues create a captivating interplay of reflections and depth, inviting viewers to ponder the delicate equilibrium between order and entropy.



Fig.1,2. Al Jabri , A. (2023). *A Literary Homage*, Hulan, China
Photograph 1. courtesy of Liu Yang-China

A literary Homage: “Tales of Hulan River” by Andrey Balashov- Russia

Andrey Balashov’s “Tales of Hulan River” pays a heartfelt tribute to the literary legacy of Hulan City, particularly the works of Xiao Hong. Through meticulous clay modeling and lifelike bronze casting, Balashov captures the essence of this literary heritage, embodying the realistic nature of the region’s literary treasures. This sculpture bridges art and literature, fostering an appreciation for the rich cultural history of Hulan City (Balashov, 2023).



Fig.3. Balashov,A.(2023). *Tales of Hulan River* – Hulan, China

A Tribute to Harmony: “Earth and Sky (Himalaya)” by Om Khattri - Nepal

Om Khattri’s “Earth and Sky (Himalaya)” seamlessly marries organic and geometric structures, symbolizing the harmony between humans and the Nepalese Himalayan landscape. The stainless and weathering steel elements playfully intertwine, echoing the peaceful coexistence of humans and nature. The suspension bridge-like segments within the sculpture invite viewers to contemplate spirituality and creativity, evoking a sense of interconnectedness and peace.



Fig.4,5. Khattri, O. (2023). *Earth and Sky (Himalaya)* Hulan, China
Photograph 4. courtesy of Liu Yang- China

A Dance of Transparency: “Whisper” by Matl Peter - Ukraine

Matl Peter’s “Whisper” is a testament to innovative sculpture techniques, inviting viewers to contemplate solidity and transparency, silence and conversation. The sliced corten steel figures seated face to face on a boat create a mesmerizing rhythm and harmony, transitioning from solid to ethereal as one’s perspective changes. “Whisper” challenges conventional notions of sculpture, pushing the boundaries of form and dimensionality (Peter, 2023).



Fig.6,7. Peter, M. (2023). *Whisper*. Hulan, China
Photograph 6. courtesy of Liu Yang-China

Vibrant Fusion: “Oriental Market” by Ibragrim Valikhodjaev - Uzbekistan

Ibragrim Valikhodjaev’s “Oriental Market” vividly showcases the artist’s ability to blend vibrant colors with corten steel contours, creating a monumental vivacity and energy. The stenciled figures on the standing flat plates reach the viewer, bridging the gap between art and the surrounding space. “Oriental Market” is a testament to Valikhodjaev’s poetic skill in pushing the boundaries of form and color while imparting viewers a sense of monumentality(Valikhodjaev, 2023).



Fig. 8,9. Valikhodjaev,I.(2023). *Oriental Market*.Hulan, China
Photograph 8 courtesy of Liu Yang- China

A Cultural Kaleidoscope: “Wave Rider” by Liu Yang - China

Liu Yang’s “Wave Rider” marks a historic moment in the art world as one of the enormous sculptures in the symposium and the central piece of the floating sculpture park. This monumental sculpture embodies the seasonal transition with its intricate stainless steel design, symbolizing cultural fusion creativity. Its square shapes deliver transparency with the void and the enduring spirit of the Hulan International Sculpture Symposium(Y. Liu, 2023b). “Wave Rider” is a graphic masterpiece and a profound symbol of unity and cultural synthesis.

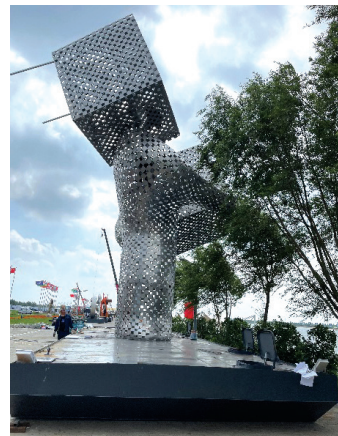


Fig.10,11. Liu, Y.(2023)*Wave Rider*. Hulan, Hulan, China

An Exploration of Dualities: “Moon Shadow on the River” by Chiu Chen Yeuh - Chinese Taiwan

Chiu Chen Yeuh’s “Moon Shadow on the River” delves into the interplay between day and night, happiness and sorrow. The polished and patinated surfaces of the coexisting figures mirror the ever-changing states of the human psyche(Chou, 2023). The representation of the moon and water wave invites viewers to contemplate the complex dance between the tangible and ephemeral, offering a serene space for introspection amid life’s constant flux.



Fig.12.Chou, C. Y.(2023) *Moon Shadow on the River*. Hulan, China
Photograph courtesy of Liu Yang-China

The Elegance of Transparency: “Drifting” by Han David - America

Han David’s “Drifting” elegantly captures the essence of a fish skeleton, symbolizing the river’s grace and flow(David, 2023). The transparency and fluidity of the sculpture evoke the delicate dance of life in the river, drawing viewers into a world where the familiar becomes extraordinary. “Drifting” is a testament to Han David’s skill in seamlessly melding transparency, fluidity, and nature’s grace.



Fig. 13. David, H. (2023). *Drifting*. Hulan, Hulan, China
Photograph courtesy of Liu Yang-China

A Rhythmic Symphony: “Dancing Leaves of Life” by Olga Cuxart Oriol - Spain

Olga Cuxart Oriol’s “Dancing Leaves of Life” is a vibrant and visually stimulating sculpture that invites viewers to partake in the dance of life (Oriol, 2023). The monochromatic stainless steel forms create a rhythmic composition that exudes energy and vitality. Each dynamic pose tells a unique story, offering a profound exploration of movement and life’s vibrancy.



Fig.14. Oriol, O.C. (2023). *Dancing Leaves of Life*. Hulan, China
Photograph courtesy of Liu Yang-China

Mysteries of Aquatic Life: “Bogota River Crab” by Carlos Rodriguez - Colombia

Carlos Rodriguez’s “Bogota River Crab” brings the subtleties and mysteries of aquatic life to the forefront (Rodriguez, 2023). The lifelike depiction of the crab emerging from the water invites viewers to ponder the beauty of the natural world. This sculpture serves as a reminder of the intricate and often overlooked wonders along the Hulan River.



Fig. 15. Rodriguez, C. (2023). *Bogota River Crab*. Hulan, China
Photograph courtesy of Liu Yang-China

A Meditation on Opposites: “Tai Chi” by Liu Qin - China

Liu Qin’s “Tai Chi” is a profound meditation on the interplay of opposites and the ceaseless change cycle (Q. Liu, 2023). Through geometric and abstract shapes, this sculpture symbolizes the eternal struggle for survival within the dominant void space. “Tai Chi” visualizes the dynamic harmony inherent in the universe, inviting viewers to contemplate the intricate interplay of opposing forces.



Fig.16. Liu, Q. (2023). *Tai Chi*. Hulan, China. Hulan China
Photograph courtesy of Liu Yang-China

A Melodic Innovation: “Lyrical Movement” by Ilker Yardimci - Turkey

Ilker Yardimci’s “Lyrical Movement” is an innovative fusion of art and technology. Its semi-transparent structure produces a textured melody as the wind interacts with the metal plates, offering viewers a unique sensory experience. This sculpture challenges conventional notions of sculpture by incorporating sound, making it a standout piece at the symposium(Yardimci, 2023).

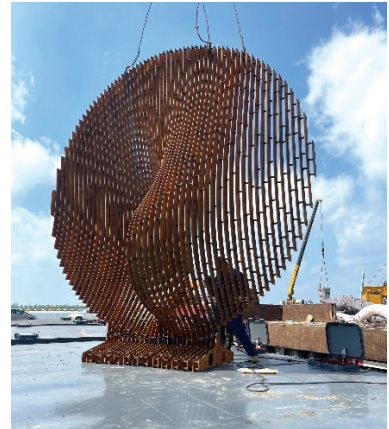


Fig. 17,18. Yardimci, I. (2023). *Lyrical Movement*. Hulan China.

A Symbolic Journey: “Road with a Heart” by Ali Jabbar - Denmark

Ali Jabbar’s “Road with a Heart” symbolizes unity and resilience, bridging the gap between ancient cultures(Ali, 2023). The sculpture’s evolution from narrowness to expansiveness mirrors the ancestral journey of reuniting with loved ones. This artwork embodies the enduring human spirit and the profound connections that unite us across time and space.



Fig. 19,20. Ali, J.(2023). Road with a Heart.Hulan, China.

Photograph 19 courtesy of Liu Yang- China

CJ-23 Multipurpose User-Friendly Agriculture Robot - Nedim Hadzi Ahmetovic-Serbia

Nedim Hadzi Ahmetovic's sculpture amalgamates human and animal forms, symbolizing the duality of human existence(Ahmetovic, 2023). It represents the intricate relationship between humans and nature, inviting viewers to explore this connection.

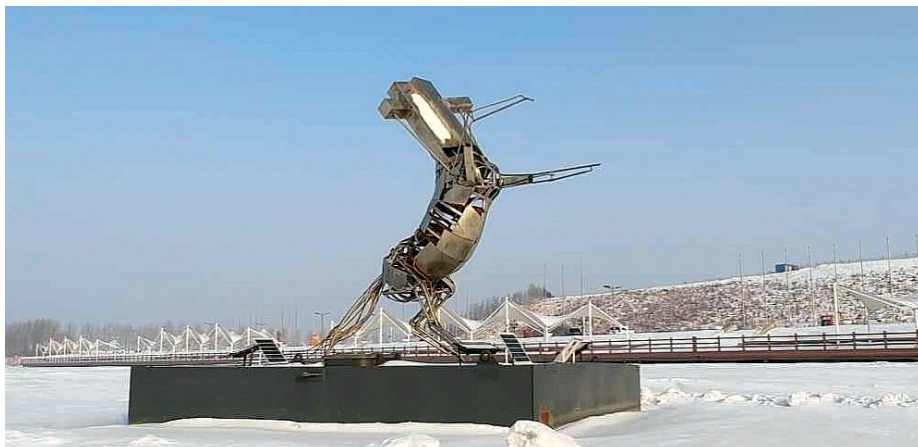


Fig. 21. Ahmetovic, N.H.(2023). *CJ-23 Multipurpose User-Friendly Agriculture Robot*. Hulan, China.
Photograph courtesy of Liu Yang-China

Cultural Amalgamations-Defender - Roberto Ventura, Honduras:

Roberto Ventura's "Defender" bridges Mayan and Chinese cultures, symbolically representing their shared ancient heritage(Ventura, 2023). Its use of bronze and the portrayal of Mayan architecture adds depth and historical significance to the sculpture.



Fig.22,23.Ventura, R.(2023). *Defender*. Hulan China.
Photograph 22 courtesy of Liu Yang-China

Horizontal Ascent - Thierry Ferreira, France:

Thierry Ferreira's "Horizontal Ascent" challenges conventional artistic and structural norms (Ferreira, 2023). It invites viewers to reconsider their understanding of form, balance, and progression, encouraging thought and contemplation.



Fig.24.a,b Ferreira, T.(2023). *Horizontal Ascent*. Hulan, China.
Photograph 24 courtesy of Liu Yang- China

A Universal Wish: "Gate of Hope" by Tutu Pattnaik - India

Tutu Pattnaik's "Gate of Hope" conveys a universal message of hope and positivity that transcends cultural boundaries (Pattnaik, 2023). The sculpture, composed of stainless and weathering steel, symbolizes the deep roots required for branches to reach high. The inscribed Sanskrit mantra beautifully conveys the universal wish for peace, well-being, and harmony.



Fig.25. Pattnaik, T.(2023). *Gate of Hope*. Hulan China.
Photograph courtesy of Liu Yang-China

An Exploration of Duality: “Needle” by Antonio Jurado - Spain

Antonio Jurado’s “Needle” invites viewers to contemplate duality and unity, challenging conventional notions of scale and perspective. The golden and silver needles, juxtaposed parallel to the present moment, spark reflections on balance and equilibrium (Jurado, 2023). This sculpture transforms everyday objects into profound expressions of art and meaning.



Fig. 26. Jurado, A. (2023). *Needle*. Hulan China.
Photograph courtesy of Liu Yang-China

A Visual Meditation: “Water Cycle” by Hakan Sengonul - Turkey

Hakan Sengonul’s “Water Cycle” invites viewers to contemplate the intricate patterns and processes that govern water, a vital element of our lives (Sengonul, 2023). The polished arch and mirrored finish evoke a sense of reflection and depth. This sculpture serves as a visual exploration of the beauty and significance of the natural phenomenon of the water cycle.



Fig. 27. a, b Sengonul, H. (2023). *Water Cycle*. Hulan, China.
Photograph 27a courtesy of Liu Yang-China

Floating Women - Arne Mæland (Norway)

Though awaiting completion, Arne Mæland's "Floating Women" sculpture presents a captivating study of movement and grace (Mæland, 2023). The sculpture captures the essence of a figure seemingly in mid-fall, inviting viewers to contemplate the transparent delicate balance between gravity and grace. This ambitious project exemplifies Mæland's ability to convey gravity and fluidity within figurative expressions.



Fig. 28. Mæland, A.(2023). Floating Women. Hulan, China.

Photograph courtesy of Liu Yang-China

During the initial phase, twenty sculptures were positioned along the streaming river during the summer and securely fixed in place for the winter season. The China-Hulan Floating Sculpture Park is a testament to the power of art to transcend boundaries, foster cultural exchange, and create innovative connections between nature and creativity. The sculptures featured in this article represent a mere glimpse into the depth and diversity of artistic expression showcased in this ambitious project. As these monumental artworks navigate the Songhua River, they encourage spectators to begin a voyage of reflection, connection, and admiration for the deep aesthetic allure of dynamic art.

Thematic Discussion

The concept of the Sculpture Symposium is monumental in its ambition to create the inaugural Hulan Floating Sculpture Park, envisioned to feature a hundred sculptures that may eventually reach the sea. This symposium transcends traditional boundaries, poised to make a record-shifting impact on art history discourse. It represents a pioneering endeavor that merges artistic expression with environmental consciousness, creating a platform for global dialogue and innovation. By harnessing the transformative power of monumental themes and creative collaboration, the symposium sets the stage for a new era in the intersection of art, culture, and the natural world.

Unveiling the Transformative Power of the China-Hulan Floating Sculpture Park

The China-Hulan Floating Sculpture Park is a testament to the extraordinary possibilities that unfold when artistic vision, international collaboration, and nature converge. As we delve into the discussions surrounding this groundbreaking event, several key themes emerge, each shedding light on the profound impact and significance of the world's first floating sculpture park.

Environmental or Earth Art

Environmental art, emerging in the late 1960s and early 1970s, involves the creation of artworks within natural landscapes, often outdoors, utilizing materials such as rocks, soil, and vegetation. Diverging from traditional art forms, it shuns galleries, favoring open spaces for direct interaction with the environment. Artists delve into themes of ecology and humanity's intertwining with nature, prompting contemplation on the Earth's resources. Notable examples include Robert Smithson's "Spiral Jetty" and Andy Goldsworthy's ephemeral sculptures. Art is integral to shaping the built environment beyond surface aesthetics. Successful environmental design requires harmonizing art, law, sociology, politics, and engineering, grounded in a comprehensive human behavior and aesthetics philosophy (Feldman, 1992, p.73). The statement underscores the vital role of art in influencing the appearance and guiding the functionality of the built environment, emphasizing the necessity of integrating various disciplines within a broader understanding of human behavior and aesthetics.

In Spiral Jetty (1969-70), Smithson employs a stark, minimalist design juxtaposed against the barren backdrop of the Great Salt Lake. This deliberate placement within the natural landscape imbues the artwork with a heightened significance as it engages in a dialogue with the area's unique environment and historical context (Causey, 1998). The discourse exemplifies the ethos of environmental art, which challenges conventional boundaries between art and nature, encouraging deep contemplation of our relationship with the environment. Subsequent generations of artists have continued this exploration, as seen in projects like the Hulan Floating Sculpture Park in Harbin. Here, sculptures integrated with the Hulan River freeze into a wintery tableau, inviting viewers to interact with the artwork physically and fostering a deeper connection to ecological themes.

The Hulan River Sculpture Park concept is intriguing. It presents a dynamic environment where sculptures interact with the changing seasons, transitioning from a lively river setting in summer to a static, frozen landscape in winter. This innovative approach highlights the interplay between art and the environment, exploring binary oppositions such as movement and stillness, sound and silence, distance and proximity, reflection and opacity, and solidity and transparency.

Cultural Dialogues and Global Narratives

The amalgamation of diverse cultures within the Floating Sculpture Park is a powerful cultural exchange agent. The sculptures, each rooted in the cultural heritage of their creators, become vessels for global narratives. For instance, the “Earth and Sky (Himalaya)” sculpture by Om Khattri from Nepal pays homage to the Nepalese landscape. Beyond the geographical limitations of the Himalayas between Nepal and China, it engages in cross-cultural dialogue and amalgamation, inviting viewers to reflect on the interconnectedness of humanity and nature.

Artistry Beyond Boundaries

The international collaboration in creating the sculpture park transcends geographical and artistic boundaries. Sculptors worldwide brought unique perspectives, techniques, and cultural influences to the project. Ali Al Jabri’s “Collapse” from Oman, Liu Yang’s “Wave Rider” from China, and Andrey Balashov’s “Tales of Hulan River” from Russia, for example, showcase the diversity of styles and thematic inspirations converging in a singular artistic endeavor.

Nature as a Canvas

One of the remarkable aspects of the Floating Sculpture Park is the harmonious integration of art with the natural environment. The sculptures, anchored on the Hulan River, become dynamic elements within the landscape. Matl Peter’s “Whisper,” with its sliced figures seated on a boat, seems to engage in a silent conversation with the river’s flow. This symbiotic relationship between art and nature transforms the river into a living canvas, where sculptures coexist and actively participate in the ebb and flow of the surroundings.



Fig.29.Floating Sculpture Park(2023). Hulan, China.

Photograph courtesy of Liu Yang-China

Symbolism and Narrative Resonance

Each sculpture within the park tells a distinct story, contributing to a rich tapestry of symbolism and narrative resonance. The “Moon Shadow on the River” by Chiu Chen Yeuh, with its contrasting figures in polished and patinated steel, becomes a visual metaphor for the dualities of human experience. Similarly, Han David’s “Drifting,” with its fish skeleton form, invites contemplation on the delicate balance of life in the river. The sculptures go beyond aesthetics; they become storytelling vessels, prompting viewers to explore the human condition more deeply.

The Human Experience in Sculptural Form

Beyond the technical prowess and artistic innovation, the sculptures in the Floating Sculpture Park encapsulate the essence of the human experience. Whether it is Liu Qin’s exploration of Yin-Yang philosophy in “Tai Chi” or Olga Cuxart Oriol’s celebration of dance in “Dancing Leaves of Life,” the sculptures resonate with universal themes. They invite viewers to connect with the shared aspects of human existence, transcending cultural and geographical boundaries.

In conclusion, the discussions surrounding the China-Hulan Floating Sculpture Park underscore its significance as a transformative artistic phenomenon. It represents more than a collection of sculptures; it is a living testament to the potential of art to bridge cultures, harmonize with nature, and articulate the intricacies of the human experience on a global stage. As the sculptures float downstream, their symbolic journey becomes an enduring narrative of creativity, collaboration, and cultural richness.

Conceptual innovation of the Floating Sculpture Park

The inaugural Sculpture Symposium-cum-Floating Sculpture Park presents a groundbreaking departure from traditional sculpture events, emerging as a beacon of innovation in the post-pandemic era. This pioneering initiative nurtures diverse artistic directions and aesthetic expressions and offers a holistic perspective on the evolving landscape of sculpture in the aftermath of global challenges. Over five years, the Hulan Floating River will be a dynamic canvas for a hundred monumental sculptures, enriching the summer landscape with artistic vibrancy. Furthermore, using steel boats ensures that these artworks remain accessible even during the snowy winter months, inviting visitors to engage with them physically and immerse themselves in a year-round celebration of creativity and artistic endeavor.

In addition, spiritual connections of interest, as in Hindu mythology, the boat symbolizes the soul’s journey through life’s ocean towards liberation (Moksha) from the cycle of existence (Samsara). From texts like the Matsya Purana, King Manu’s boat embodies

resilience and protection during adversity. It also signifies the guru's guidance in navigating life's challenges toward spiritual enlightenment and freedom from rebirth. Similarly, In Buddhism, the boat and river symbolize the journey of life and the path to enlightenment. This metaphor emphasizes harmony with nature and recognizes our interconnectedness with all beings and phenomena.

These innovative floating sculptures, the comparative analysis between Sandro Botticelli's 'The Birth of Venus' (Carol Strickland, 1992; Woller, 2002) and the sculptures adorning the Hulan River in China, unveils a profound interplay between classical and modern contemporary ideas and artistic expressions. The enduring symbol of the Greek-mythological love goddess Venus is at the heart of both narratives. Botticelli's masterpiece immortalizes her on a floating seashell, a motif echoing throughout art history as evidence of the continuing attraction of conventional themes and artistic representation. Similarly, the Hulan River Park's sculptures draw inspiration from the river's fluidity, mirroring the base of Botticelli's seashell. The parallel between the sculptures placed on individual boats and Botticelli's portrayal of Venus on a scallop shell introduces a nuanced dialogue on artistic connectivity. This shared imagination transcends temporal and cultural boundaries, representing a universal human inclination toward creative expression.

Furthermore, the China-Hulan Floating Sculpture Park becomes a contemporary embodiment of art's historical role as a bridge between cultures. Artists from diverse backgrounds combine their works with distinct cultural and individual identities. The placement of the sculptures on hollow iron bases, doubling as floating boats, echoes the innovative engineering seen in Botticelli's time. The Hulan River sculpture park, navigating the Songhua River, symbolizes a harmonious fusion of art, nature, and cutting-edge engineering, echoing the transcendental beauty Botticelli sought to capture. This living testament to the universal language of art mirrors the aesthetics of 'The Birth of Venus.' similarly, art in nature enhances aesthetic value through human creativity, as in the art of Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty. Spiral Jetty goes beyond its physical form, reflecting humanity by encouraging echo on the connections between history, myth, and the natural world. As spectators involved in the artwork, they are encouraged to contemplate the cyclical nature of human endeavors and the transient quality of existence(Causey, 1998). In this way, Spiral Jetty is a powerful example of environmental art's ability to stimulate thought, mix emotions, and quickly reflect one aspect of human life. It is a dynamic representation of how art continues to transcend borders, fostering connections and dialogue across diverse cultural landscapes. The parallel artistic motifs and engineering ingenuity in both instances underscore the enduring power of creativity to unite humanity across time and space.

Showcasing and Ceremonies

The integration of solar panels and spotlights into the sculptures' bases at the Hulan Sculpture Park has yielded remarkable results, transforming the viewing experience for spectators both day and night. During the unveiling and closing ceremonies of the First International Sculpture Symposium on 30 July 2023, spectators were treated to a captivating display as each sculpture was illuminated and moved along with the river's current. This innovative approach to showcasing sculptures alongside engineering marvels has sparked new interest in the intersection of art and technology.

However, the unpredictability of weather conditions, particularly sudden wind and storms, posed challenges to the installation and ceremony. Despite being anchored with sandbags, some sculptures were displaced against the river's current. Nevertheless, this unexpected movement added an element of dynamism to the experience, with sculptures shifting from near to far, captivating spectators in fleeting moments of wonder.

The decision by local authorities to select the Hulan River site for the sculpture park was not arbitrary but strategic, aiming to establish a new canon of art history and discourse within academia. By harmonizing human creativity with the natural environment, this event exemplified the potential for coexistence between art and nature, offering a profound juxtaposition of aesthetic activities against the backdrop of nature's splendor.

Furthermore, the symposium served as a platform for cultural exchange, bringing together diverse perspectives and working processes. The archetypes of various cultural influences provided fertile ground for exchanging ideas and exploring new artistic horizons.

The organizers have set ambitious goals for the park's expansion, aiming to showcase a hundred sculptures along the Hulan River over the next four years. This ambitious endeavor promises to enrich the curatorial canon of art and redefine the trajectory of art history, setting a new pace for innovation and creativity in the field.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the First China-Hulan Symposium-Cum Floating Sculpture Park underscores the transformative impact and significance of this pioneering artistic project. The author thoroughly analyzes the project's influence on art, culture, and the environment, drawing insights from an in-depth exploration of the sculptures, thematic discussions, and conceptual innovations.

The Floating Sculpture Park emerges as a beacon of innovation and creativity, transcending traditional boundaries in sculpture events. By integrating art with the natural environment

and harnessing international collaboration, the park becomes a dynamic canvas for cultural exchange and dialogue. The sculptures, each telling a unique story, resonate with universal themes, engaging spectators to connect with the shared human experience.

Furthermore, the article highlights the sculptures' symbolic and narrative resonance and their integration with cutting-edge engineering and technology. Despite challenges such as unpredictable weather conditions, the park's inaugural event captivates spectators and sparks new interest in the intersection of art and technology.

The decision to establish the sculpture park along the Hulan River proves strategic, aiming to redefine art history and discourse while harmonizing human creativity with nature's splendor. Additionally, the symposium catalyzes cultural exchange, fostering collaboration and exploration of new artistic horizons.

Looking ahead, the organizers set ambitious goals for the park's expansion, envisioning a hundred sculptures along the Hulan River over the next four years. This ambitious endeavor promises to enrich art's curatorial canon, redefine art history's trajectory, and set a new pace for innovation and creativity.

In conclusion, the China-Hulan Floating Sculpture Park represents more than just a collection of sculptures; it embodies the transformative potential of art to bridge cultures, harmonize with nature, and articulate the intricacies of the human experience on a global stage. As the sculptures float downstream, their symbolic journey becomes an enduring narrative of creativity, collaboration, and cultural richness.

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