

## The Role of Installation Art in Dance

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**Abstract:** Installation art is a modern form of cultural expression that uses specially processed works of art to interact with the audience at a particular time and place, not only in the form of exhibitions and interactions but also in a variety of artistic fields such as painting, sculpture and dance (Bishop, 2005). With the development of the current art market, this aesthetic and subversive art form has stimulated the creative desire of many artists and broadened the creative development of art. Dance is no exception, and many dancers combine installation art with dance to create new works that express social or personal emotions in the form of mediums, settings, and props. This emerging form of dance work combines installation with dancers' physical movements, breaking away from the perception of conventional dance and re-examining dance as an art. Through the art form of installation art as an entry point, this article discusses the embodiment and role of installation art in dancers' bodies and dance works. It analyzes the characteristics, background and development of installation art, its development of dancers' movement and thinking, its role as a medium and background in dance works and its development as an art form. This paper explores installation art and dance work not only as a way to enhance the theory of self-art but also as a research direction for modern dance creation.

### Introduction

Since the 1960s, installation art has been the darling of postmodern art and has a place in Western galleries, combining a variety of means of artistic expression. This kind of artistic progress is a driving force for the development of society and is well known in many universities, art museums, experimental theatres, etc. in China. I was fortunate enough to come across installation dance during my bi-weekly workshop in Beijing, and during my studies with teachers both at home and abroad, I discovered that installation dance is not yet popular in China. By analyzing the role of installation art in dance, we can understand the value of appreciating installation art in dance works, the means of expression and the trends of contemporary dance (Fraser et., 2004).

At present, installation dance is getting more and more attention from the younger generation of dancers, and there are more and more dance works created by using installation art. The significance of this paper is also to lead an understanding of the relationship between installation art and dance and to explore the development of contemporary dance.

**The background of installation art.** Installation art originated in the 1960s and the term installation art only appeared around 1970, when it was also referred to as "environmental art". Western critics are divided about the origins of installation art. In the United Kingdom, installation art originated with a French postman, while in the United States, critics believe that installation art originated with primitive cave paintings and that the world's major religious temples and churches can be described as the predecessor of installation art (Bishop, 2005).

However, it was in the early twentieth century that installation art emerged in the public eye, represented by Marcel Duchamp, who used the male urinal as a work of art in 1917, signed the nickname "The Fountain", and sent it anonymously to an independent exhibition of American artists to exhibit as art. This anti-aesthetic, satirical artwork caused a huge stir, which completely upended the traditional way of making art. Since then, many artists have taken apart or transformed common everyday objects and given them unique emotional colours to produce new works of art, which have been placed outdoors or indoors in art museums, becoming a new form of artistic

expression - installation art (Fraser et., 2004).

Installation art first became known in China in the late twentieth century, after an exhibition by the artist Lauschenberg, which attracted the attention of some artists in the country, followed by several exhibitions of installation art in domestic museums (Fraser et., 2004). At that time, however, the concept of installation art was still vague, as it was less popular in the country and only studied by a small number of people.

**The development of installation art.** As the times have progressed, installation art has become better known and has been featured in galleries and exhibitions around the world as a means of cultural exchange, and installation artists have created works that incorporate local materials and cultures. For example, in the Chengdu Pompeii: International Biennial Festival of Art "Global City", there are many interactive installations, such as the large scale installation by Filipino artists Alfred and Elizabeth Aguirre, "Residence: The Other Place Project (here, there, elsewhere)", in which small houses made of recycled cardboard fill the urban landscape of the installation in striking detail (Dixon, 2007). In this installation, visitors can interact with each other, for example, they are able to sketch in the bamboo forest, reflecting the interactive nature of installation art and the wide range of materials.

Installation art can also be found everywhere in major cities like Beijing and Shanghai. For example Beijing Red Brick Art Museum, Mumu Art Museum, Shanghai Art Museum, etc. The popularity of installation art is growing in China, and more young people are now becoming installation artists. Installation art is growing rapidly on the international stage, with major universities offering specialization in installation art and, in the UK, installation art museums. The United States also had relevant professional courses available at the time. Installation art also has a place in major art museums abroad.

**Installation art in dance.** Dance, as an expression of installation art, is inextricably linked to installation art. For the dancer, the performance of a choreographed work is a refinement of one's skills, creating movements that express the choreographer's abstract concepts through the reflexive features that the dancer's body produces on those words. Installation art plays an important role in dance modelling, helping dancers to have a better understanding of the work, and because installation art is inherently interactive, dancers interact with the installation by improvising, creating, assembling, etc.

The product rubs and touches, creating unexpected shapes and combinations of movements. Besides, installation art, as a part of the dance, has the same characteristics as Wado, which greatly enhances the dancers' body language movements and emotional expressions, and the dancers break through the limitations of body movement in their performances while strengthening the visual effects and means of expression of visual art. Installation art comes in a variety of forms, with dancers expressing their emotions through immersive performances and using installation art as a medium to find the most appropriate "language" in the combination of body language and installation work. In some installation dance works, the installation extends the unique features of the dancer's muscular lines. Even in some installation art dance works, because of the uniqueness of the installation art, it brings a special feeling to the dancer's body. For example, at the Lyon Dance Festival in France, in addition to bringing the wonderful experience of weightlessness (using devices such as trampolines, turntables, and inversions) to the dancers, the devices developed by using weightlessness in water to "levitate", defying gravity and the laws of gravity, allow the dancers to redefine their bodies and experience the changes that gravity, balance, and stillness bring to body language.

The root of dance creation is life, the subject of the creation from real life, shaped into an artistic image (Helmuth et., 2010). The appeal of installation dance as an emerging dance form is that the choreographer has to create the installation itself as well as the dance. The interdisciplinary nature of installation art allows for an infinite range of imaginative spaces and artistic combinations in the process of creation. For example, when choreographing an installation, the choreographer will give priority to how the installation can be used to express the content of the dance, and how it can fit in with the theme of the work. All the means of expression are meant to make the dance piece perfect.

It can be said that installation art serves the content of dance expression, adds colour to the work, makes up for other deficiencies, and plays up the artistic effects in the work (Deng, 2019).

Today, installation art is constantly influencing the dance world at home and abroad, which will spread in a new concept, in a new way (Alaoui et., 2013). Dance is a comprehensive art and should enhance the presentation of artistic and cultural understanding. Installation art has complemented art forms such as fine art and sculpture, and the same is true for the art of dance (Deng, 2019). This combination enriches the dancers' thinking about dance, and to a certain extent, breaks the space, time and intensity of conventional dance works, breaking the patterns and frameworks in their creation, and at the same time deconstructing the old theatre system, allowing dance to be presented in a new way to the audience, allowing the dancers to talk to the new media and to talk to the experimental theatre. Therefore, installation art has a strong impact on the dancers' way of thinking, emphasizing different new attempts and new developments in the installation dance (Alaoui et., 2013). This is also in line with the demands of the times and the modern concept of pursuing individuality and innovation.

**The role of installation art in dance.** Installation art serves as a medium for the expression of emotion and movement of dancers in dance, as it is highly interactive and allows the audience to participate in the dance and feel its appeal (Leo, 2007). At the University of California, Irvine, and Case Western Reserve University in the United States, dance instructors have long introduced video dance installations into the classroom as a teaching tool, a medium for students to create art. During the Beijing Dance Fortnight, teacher Yidi Lin from Jacksonville University told me that in dance classes in the United States, students use media devices as a medium to vent their emotional expressions in dance works. While installation art can be used as a teaching tool, it also enhances the relationship between the dancer and the environment, providing good emotional resonance for the dancer as well as the audience, and becomes a medium for evoking emotions. Installation art also plays an important role in many dance works, and the good use of installation can add a lot of charm to the dance (Leo, 2007). For example, in the work "The Falling Man" mentioned in this article, installation art as a medium helps the audience to understand the connotation of the work, and while affecting the balance of the dancers, it also gives a good narration of the deep value of the work and the name of the dance. This installation is the core of the dance work, the installation bridges the subjective imagination and the solid installation, abstracting it in solid material form. If the dance leaves the installation itself, the work loses its meaning and the installation loses its soul.

The incorporation of installation art in the stage is also an embellishment of the stage, an art form that often gives visual information in dance, using combinations of objects in space to stimulate psychological and behavioural reactions in the audience, where each movement and flow of space by the dancer chemically reacts with the installation itself, and where installation art emphasizes features that stimulate the imagination and interaction of the audience and help them to feel the stage and the work (Farley, 2007). The ingenious use of installation art reflects the fluid and fluid forms of expression of dance itself, as well as the flexibility and interactivity of installation art itself. The elaborate design and control of the movement through the expression of the dance can, to a certain extent, help the dancers to create unexpected movements that have a wonderful chemical reaction with the installation itself, helping the actors to express their movements and emotions.

In installation dance works, the installation is part of the stage and theatre, and part of the dance, where it serves as a backdrop to deepen the expressive meaning of the work, and dancers can interact and create with the installation. Installation art, as a new way of creating a space, promotes the development of stage art and is in harmony with each other (Farley, 2007). For example, installation art, as part of the background of the dance work, incorporates modern elements to complement the stage art and make the dance work more complete, which has a special meaning in Light.

Nowadays, the combination of multimedia installation and dance receives more and more favour from choreographers, and installation art tells us that dance is not just presented on stage, performed, or separated from other art forms. In the new media installation "Dance-IT", artists fuse different kinds of dance from around the world, such as Indian, Japanese, street, ballet, etc., and

appear in major museums around the world (Hachimura et., 2004). This innovative art form plays an important role in the development of dance, and at the same time allows us to look forward to the changing patterns and trends of dance theatre in the future.

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