

Public art and controversies assignment

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Taking a Stance on Public Art Considering the work “ Tilted Arc”, by Richard Serra brings many questions to mind. Especially now, one questions the role of public art and whether or not it is beneficial to taxpayer interest. The ideas of public art really had me considering the value of public opinion when it comes to art. I suppose really art is about making an impression, and that impression doesn't have to necessarily be a positive one. There were many ideas to ruminate over with this assignment, and it is my hope that I can give clear and concise opinions on the various questions presented.

First thing that I believe should be addressed is whether or not it's “ art”. When you look on the Internet and search “ Tilted Arc” you certainly see a plethora of sites that found it to be a work of art. There are even posters for sale such as the “ Tilted Arc defense fund” poster. Richard Serra, when speaking of the sculpture, had the following to say: “ As he moves, the sculpture changes. Contraction and expansion of the sculpture result from the viewer's movement. “(pbs. org) And this movement specifically seemed to be the catalyst for its removal. People did not want to have to move around it.

They may have used the question of whether or not it is “ art” purely to facilitate the removal of a structure they deemed a hindrance. I personally think the people had a right to have this structure moved. Mr. Serra maintains in the book “ Living with Art” that a “ new location would destroy its artistic integrity. ” It almost makes you wonder if he specifically meant it to be an impediment. I do not know whether or not this was his specific idea but I have a good feeling that it was. I base this on his following statement: “ I don't think it is the function of art to be pleasing...Art is not democratic.

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It is not for the people. “(pbs. org) I agree with Mr. Serra on many levels with regard to this statement, but as happens often, this is not a black or white agreement. Art can be a catharsis and outlet for countless emotions and statements, and it can be presented in a way which is not for public approval and love, however when presented in a forum where thousands of people have no choice but to see it, and in this case walk around it, it is up for dismissal. The New York Times article in our course-book put it best. “ The public has to live with ‘ Tilted Arc’; therefore the public has a right to say no, not here’”. Getlein 283) They make an excellent point using the idea of art in a museum, which has the ability to choose to view it. Of course, please do not think that I believe all art should be kept in a museum! Definitely not my opinion at all. In this case however, there was an overwhelming outcry concerning the art and its purpose and intent. Mark Getlein, in our course-book, talks about how this particular “ battle” as being a “ struggle between the art establishment (pro) and the general public (con). It is my hope that neither side feels in any way superior to the other, but my jaded outlook would say otherwise.

Maybe then this piece of art, though it only remained on-site for 8 years or so, achieved its purpose. I don’t think art necessarily has to encapsulate its original intention, if it branches off and creates new “ daughter” ideas, maybe that is something to be proud about for Mr. Serra. It was definitely a provocative piece. Mr. Serra’s views on his art not being for the public seemingly betrays an arrogant and callous demeanor which might very well be a hindrance in and of itself. I find myself torn between an admiration for his character, standing behind his creation.

But I also find myself displeased by his apparent disdain for the public whom his work was on display for. Personality does not dictate what can be considered Art, of course. But it can do wonders to translating the message of said Art and help people to garner their own personal appreciation for it.

WORKS CITED Getlein , Mark. Living With Art. Eighth. New York: McGraw Hill, 2007. PBS Online, “ Culture Shock Flashpoints: Richard Serra’s Titled Arc. ”

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