

Public Art Dialogue Special Issue: On the Nature of Sculpture Parks

Public Art Dialogue

Deadline: Aug 1, 2023

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Submit a Manuscript to the Journal Public Art Dialogue for a Special Issue on the Nature of Sculpture Parks.

On the Nature of Sculpture Parks

Sculpture parks, or art parks as they are now sometimes called, are a late twentieth-century invention. While the display of sculpture in outdoor, often bucolic settings is as old as the medium itself, the idea of a large garden or park dedicated to its display became reality during the post-WWII period, with the founding of institutions in the 1960s and 1970s like the Laumeier Sculpture Park, Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, and Storm King Art Center in the United States and Kröller-Müller Museum Sculpture Garden and Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Europe. Sculpture parks now exist as a specific type of arts institution on six continents, and predominantly show examples of modern and contemporary sculpture. Their origin coincides with notable temporary presentations of artwork in outdoor environments, artists' increasing interests in moving beyond the space and scale of the gallery, and a changing environmental awareness spurred by the emerging consequences of late-stage capitalism.

Given their unique purposes and development within the broader history of contemporary art, sculpture parks are critically underexamined. What did or do the sites of sculpture parks offer viewers and/or practitioners? Are they modern follies, interactive amusement parks for art, or sites for unique interventions? Are they best understood as incubators or cemeteries for some of the most significant sculpture of the past half century? Do they or can they help us consider the histories of the land upon which they rest or reveal decades, centuries of layered, complex connections to broader, troubled histories of capitalism, colonialism, industrialization, and migration? What is the relationship of sculpture parks to broader concepts of nature, ecology, recreation, art tourism, community, site, or public art?

Public Art Dialogue invites submissions, including essays, focused case studies, interviews, and artist projects, for a special issue focusing on both the historical and contemporary role of sculpture parks, understood broadly. Submissions may consider the institutional histories of sculpture parks, the ways in which they function (or do not) today, and what future possibilities they might offer.

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Please feel free to contact Marin Sullivan at marinsullivan@gmail.com with any questions or talk through potential contributions and sources or concepts that may be of use.

For further information on the journal and instructions for authors see <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/rpad20>

Reference:

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(accessed Dec 26, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/38353>>.