



## **Art Commission Movement in American, British and Japanese Planning History: Institutional Development of Civic Art (1890-1945)**

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Civic art was a concept and methodology of urban design, which was born and developed from the late 19th century to the early 20th century in the U.S. and had an impact on other countries. Recently, planners and designers, mainly advocates of "New Urbanism", insist on the recognition of the importance of civic art as central to the culture of good place making. In this paper, I am going to describe the international development of civic art in the institutional perspective, especially focusing on the relation of the development of modern city planning.

At first, I will explain the genealogy of civic art from the late 19th century to the early 20th century in the inter-continent framework between Europe and the U.S. In the process of the spread of civic art as a basic concept of the City Beautiful movement, art commissions were established in some cities of the U.S. An art commission was a jury on the design and location of works of art, which was restricted to paintings, statues or monuments at the beginning but extended to public buildings later in some cities. In 1890, the first art commission was established in Boston. By 1945, about 30 cities and 9 states had or once had their art commission.

Next, I will describe the relation between the art commission movement and city planning movement in the U.S. by analyzing the discussions at the national level and looking at the examples of two or three cities. After the first conference on art commissions in 1913, discussions of the function and power of art commissions occurred. The difference between art commissions and newly established city planning commissions was discussed in the 9th National Conference on City Planning in 1917. After that, the main topics of discussions shifted to the enlargement of the power of art commission into the realm of the control of private properties through the development of zoning. Finally, these discussions converged with the concept and practice of architectural controls at the end of 1920's. The legacy of civic art and the activities of art commissions were inherited by the design dimension of city planning.

Finally, I will make clear the impact of the art commission movement in other countries. In the U.K, the Royal Fine Art Commission of England was established in 1924. In addition, leading civic societies introduced civic art in their work. In particular, the Birmingham Civic Society set up an advisory art committee in 1922 referring to the activities of art commissions in the U.S. In Japan, the gaps between some emerging issues of the modern city and the new field of city planning gave rise to the civic art movement and the Society of Civic Art, which was established in 1926. The establishment of the Tokyo Municipal Art Commission was one of the specific goal of the civic art movement. In 1939, the jury for the aesthetic district around the Imperial palace in Tokyo was set up.

**KEY WORDS:** Civic art, art commission, art jury, architectural control, U.S, U.K, Japan.