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#### ABSTRACT

Contemporary developments in the urban lives of individuals in modern societies are observable. New urban spaces require activities that foster vitality, and this is particularly true in locations with spatial potential for hosting events. Such events can encourage citizen participation and create spatial dynamism. This research initially examines the characteristics of a desirable urban space based on the modern human need for living space outside the confines of the home – a healthy environment for growth, flourishing, and dynamism. This process considers the integration of performing arts into the features of urban space as an influential aspect of art's impact on humans. The research question is: how can street performance adapt to the components of urban space and contribute to the improvement of the quality of the urban environment? The research method is based on content analysis of texts and theoretical saturation of expert opinions. First, concepts were extracted from urban design literature, and then, through an analytical-comparative method, an attempt was made to align the most relevant concepts. Subsequently, a questionnaire was used to prioritize the extracted concepts through coding with MAXQDA software. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of effective components in urban spaces led to the formation of a design framework as a means of answering the research question. The results of this research indicate that the existence of a unique space whose design is compatible with the contextual fabric can simultaneously instill a sense of value and equality in both the audience and the artist. Furthermore, the spirit of participation and communication among individuals is enhanced, which can play a significant role in strengthening the morale of artists to stage street performances, ultimately leading to culture-building in the urban space, through which art flows into the daily lives of citizens.

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## **Introduction**

Considering the city as a living entity composed of a body (buildings, streets, etc.) and a soul (citizens, social and cultural interactions, etc.) draws attention to the issue that creating a healthy and dynamic urban space with a balance between the physical form and the flow of social events requires more intelligent design for the formation of urban spaces [1]. Street performance can be an effective occurrence in connecting citizens with their city and creating pauses within the urban space. Regardless of the impacts that street performance has on the cultural and social dimensions of a society, the interaction that forms among citizens, encouraging them to connect with strangers and spend personal time in a space outside their homes, is very significant and a step towards the vitality of urban space. This is a culture that has taken root less in Iranian society, due to social, political, religious, and other characteristics that cause individuals to have different boundaries for themselves and varying ways of spending leisure time and utilizing urban spaces [2].

In the current situation, most urban spaces in today's Iranian cities lack the facilities for street performance and the formation of public events. The intelligent use of urban space leads to the creation of vitality, security, changes in behavioral patterns in the city, and the elevation of the value of art in society. Designing performance space for street performances requires examining and predicting the function of an environment, considering how citizens use it, which ultimately, with a flexible and appropriate design for attracting performance groups and audiences, will lead to the optimal use of space. Honarmandan (Artists') Park, located in District 6 of Tehran and the Iranshahr neighborhood, has the potential for utilization and staging street performances. This area, due to the lack of proper design for long-term use and inappropriate management, has merely led to the transit of people and stagnant spaces. This research attempts to enhance the quality of the urban space of Honarmandan Park by identifying influential components and creating a proposed framework and appropriate design. This issue has not been deeply investigated so far. Therefore, it can be hoped that efforts of this kind will provide a suitable motivation for deepening the approaches of new approaches in urban space design.

## **Research Method**

The present research is applied in terms of its objective, and the method of data collection is through both library and field studies.

Field data was collected through observation and interviews, while original texts were used for library data collection to conduct content analysis. By establishing a correspondence of concepts in the library studies and identifying suitable components, an open-ended questionnaire was developed. Subsequently, the information obtained in the field research was analyzed using MAXQDA software and open, selective, and axial coding. The extracted components were prioritized based on the coding and the frequency of the codes. Finally, an urban design framework was presented, and a corresponding design was developed within the study area.

## **Theoretical Foundations**

### **Definitions of City and Urban Space**

Socio-economic, ideological, cultural-political transformations throughout our country's history have given rise to a new form of socio-economic and cultural conditions. The city, as the physical-

spatial manifestation of existing socio-economic relations, also presents a new form – a form that indicates evolution, development, and changes. In many instances, this form contrasts with past concepts, bringing forth other urban values and identities in spatial-physical meanings for the city and the citizen, transforming the city into a place of values and valuelessness. Recognizing the concepts of existence and the existing meanings requires a city where “city-place” transforms into “city-time”: a city with identity, as a place filled with yesterday’s memories, intertwined with today’s memories, and prepared to shape the memories of tomorrow’s citizens. In this state, the city becomes the most prominent manifestation of humanity’s inclination and need for civil society, civic life, and urban living – a life born from the totality of people’s interactions with the mental world, with the objective environment around them, with themselves and with others, and the relationships arising from these interactions. Thus, over time, an identity is constructed, composed of the norms and economic-social-cultural behaviors of generations who have built the city and caused urban activities. It is behind these relationships that beliefs and inclinations accumulate and intermingle in various forms, manifesting as the city’s mentality. A living city is one whose experiences and cultural-social accumulations find opportunities for manifestation in its places. It is in these situations and places that urban feeling and perception take shape.

It is in these places and situations that meetings occur, events and incidents take place, and the citizen becomes both actor and spectator at the same time. The relationship between urban space design and the forms of social life within it is clear evidence of the connection between built structures and the spaces through which people move. Streets and squares are the physical-spatial expressions of such a relationship, where the spectacle and the spectator intertwine. If it were otherwise, which it is, the reference points in the city would disappear, the roots of familiarity with the urban space would be eliminated, and future generations would never perceive the city in accordance with its material appearance, nor would they ever understand a familiar space [3]. Public urban space is a place with free access where very different individuals can freely enter and achieve maximum human exchange and dynamic cycles in positive social interaction. In this sense, public space, except in exceptional cases, is necessarily a modern phenomenon and could not have been so hierarchical, with castes present, and even within each caste, specific hierarchies determining the position of all individuals down to each family. Yet, individuals could interact with each other in a public space? The systems of exchange between people in ancient society followed rules different from those of today’s society: cities encompassed only a small minority, around ten percent of the population (rulers and their servants), and the common habitat was the village, where relationships between individuals were strongly governed and limited by communal, tribal, and family rules and regulations [4].

### **Art and Urban Space**

The history of studying urban art and the various perspectives on this phenomenon are inseparable from the conceptual evolution and artistic function in urban space. Among the limited writings before the 20<sup>th</sup> century on the use of art in urban space, one can point to “City Building According to Artistic Principles” by Camillo Sitte. The important point of this book is that Sitte noted the emptying of cities from artistic principles due to modern urban planning, where in spaces devoid of social interactions, there is no place for artistic principles [5]. In fact, the beginning of research and critique on urban art can be considered from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (with the fading dominance of modernism). At this time, art, more than ever before, with a freer expression in public spaces, began to re-examine the space the display of art alongside urban developments after modernism. This topic inspired research in the field of the perception of artworks, such as

examining the social and economic role of art in public spheres [6]. The book “Art in the City” by John Willett is considered one of the first books and a turning point in the field of urban art research during this period. It approached the question of urban art, how people perceive it, and provided guidelines for the development of urban art from a cultural perspective. Writings of this period (1960s and 1970s) addressed the need to revive the role of the arts in avant-garde art with a trans-modern approach and called for the presence of art in urban space. These writings, along with the financial support of institutions and organizations, led to an increasingly prominent presence of art in urban space in the 1960s and 1970s with the introduction of giant sculptures, abstract art unrelated to context, into urban spaces. The concept of “public art” also originated in this era. Among the new trends was the necessity of collaboration between the artist and the designer [7]. With the entry of art into urban spaces, a connection is established between two phenomena. This connection can be between two spectra: attachment to the environment and becoming a part of the environment. However, it should be noted that the function of a work of art in urban space is definitely not like an object hanging on a wall; rather, the processes of meaning-making must interact with the surrounding space [8].

### **Street Theatre**

Street theatre is a live performance that raises important societal realities as well as the latest current issues, and its subject matter is very different from stage plays. Furthermore, street theatre is an uncontrollable current, and if it is to be controlled – meaning if a subject is imposed on it – it deviates from its own form. Among the important characteristics of street theatre is the active presence and participation of the people [9]. Street theatre can well meet the needs of twentieth-century humans who are more confronted with the issue of politics than ever before. In fact, street theatre is the most political form of performing art [10]. Street theatre has a simple form. This simplicity in form makes the execution of this type of performance easy. Many semi-professional, amateur, and experimental groups that have limited resources for their productions can, under the guise of the “easy construction” of street theatre, stage their desired works [11]

#### **Performance in the Hall and Performance in the Street**

From the very first movement to convey concepts, the theatre artist, in the executive delivery of their work, obligates themselves by choosing the most accurate possible location and the most precise method of using space to employ the language of their art; that is, movement. In fact, finding the appropriate performance venue can be an initial discovery for testing the environmental realities governing their life and that of their audience. Therefore, the artist tries to avoid stereotypical criteria and pre-determined conventions by discovering different spaces for performance and to reach new experiences of space and place. To understand the roots of how theatre moved from a conventional and closed space to a non-conventional and open space, it is necessary to review the role of the artists of this art in inventing various stage approaches and to shed light on the factors that were the traditional limitations of the performance venue, so that the acting group and the audience are placed together, free from the usual barriers, forming a unified whole [12].

### **Discussion and Analysis**

Based on the studies conducted on public urban space and street performance, the significant dimensions and components in the present research were extracted, and ultimately, the influential components in the design of urban space for staging street performances were identified. The

extracted dimensions, as required by the research, include: social, physical, and functional, environmental, and content-related and semantic.

**Physical and Functional Components:** Limiting car traffic, free access, legibility (node, path, edge, landmark), presence of environmental symbols and signs, mobility and flexibility, distance to administrative centers and the main street, context-oriented design, and appropriate urban furniture.

**Social Components:** Creating a sense of belonging, spatial dynamism, memorability of the designed environment for individuals, role-taking and agency of citizens and their engagement with the space and events, creating a sense of curiosity to pause in the space, active public participation, direct communication between performer and audience, attracting social trust, and striving for social avoidance and inclusivity of the space were introduced.

**Influential Components of Environmental Dimensions** also include: considering noise pollution, snow and rainfall in the study site's climate, and considering sunlight.

**Components of Focus in Content-Related and Semantic Dimensions:** Low cost and ease of construction of space and events, immediacy of the event and the people, deconstructive nature of content and form that are spontaneous flows.

Furthermore, considering the potentials, the history of the neighborhood, and the type of desired plan, a questionnaire was developed, and responses were received with the collaboration of 30 experts in urban design, architecture, and performing arts. After collecting data and achieving theoretical saturation of experts, the responses were entered into qualitative analysis software and coded. The resulting output is a table with the frequency of codes and the presentation of three codes: open, axial, and selective.



**Photo 1.** Street performance

**Table 1:** Suitable examples of open-source, pivotal, and selected codes for an urban space in staging a street performance

<b>Selective code</b>	<b>Axial code</b>	<b>Open code</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Ease of Access to Space</li> <li>* Lighting of the Space</li> <li>* Uniqueness of Environmental Symbols and Landmarks</li> <li>* Provision of Movable Seating</li> <li>* Borderless Physical Connection Between Audience and Artists               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Intimate Atmosphere</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Design Appropriate to Various Climatic Conditions</li> <li>* Comfort and Convenience of Audience and Performers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Feedback from Relevant Personnel               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Presence of Signage</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Presence of Environmental Symbols and Landmarks</li> <li>* Provision of Restrooms</li> <li>* Audience Structuring               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Suitable Flooring</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Appropriate Vegetation and Green Space</li> <li>* Appropriate Sanitary Facilities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Good Visibility of the Performance Space</li> <li>* Mobility and Flexibility of Space</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Comprehensive Space Design               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Context-Oriented Design</li> <li>* Provision of Restrooms</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Provision of Cafe and Buffet Space               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Audience Structuring</li> <li>* Flexible Seating Design</li> <li>* Suitable Flooring</li> <li>* Makeup Room</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Creative Environmental Advertising</li> <li>* Comfort and Convenience of Audience and Performers</li> <li>* Appropriate Sanitary Facilities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Good Visibility of the Performance Space</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Appropriate Sound Distribution</li> <li>* Standard Heating and Cooling System               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Organized Scheduling of Performances</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Based on the research findings, it was determined that the Iranshahr neighborhood, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Tehran in terms of history, physical structure, and culture, is mostly used by art enthusiasts and individuals who frequent this urban space daily for leisure. These individuals tend to use public urban spaces such as cafes and parks, as well as follow domestic and international performances, visit exhibitions, and attend art events in this area. Due to the presence of this area within Tehran's traffic plan and its central location in the city, people prefer to use public transportation, especially on weekdays. Furthermore, considering the prevailing atmosphere in this space, they are inclined towards voluntary activities, and most of these activities include free performances, performance art, street music, social events, etc., for leisure. The majority of people feel a sense of belonging due to the existing spatial quality of this place and believe that creating a safe and suitable space for the formation of performance events will increase attendance, and consequently, collective memory will be formed over time. The space of Iranshahr Park, which is surrounded by streets with old and seemingly aged buildings, has a specific architecture. Therefore, according to field observations and expert opinions, it should be compatible with the dominant architecture and materials while being unique and attractive to users. Based on the analyses conducted.

the issue of security, ease of use of the space for the general public including children, women, people with disabilities, etc., and the dynamism of the space while maintaining intimacy and beauty are vital factors for creating a high-quality and lasting space for citizens' use and should be considered in the principles and criteria of design.

**Table 1:** Presenting a proposed design framework in IranShahr Park's urban space for staging street performances (Source: Authors)

<b>solution</b>	<b>strategy</b>	<b>policy</b>	<b>goal</b>	<b>Urban design framework</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Designing and Arranging Seating that is Different and Flexible</li> <li>* Creating an Intimate Space</li> <li>* Using Appropriate Elements and Components to Convey a Sense of Familiarity and the Formation of a Feeling of Belonging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considering Aesthetic Criteria Related to the Theme of the Performance</li> <li>* And Creating an Intimate and Comfortable Space for the Public to Connect and Encourage People's Participation in the Space</li> <li>* The Space Being Different from Indoor Performance Spaces with the Classical Frameworks and Characteristics of a Rigid Performance Space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Creating a Beautiful and Attractive Performance Space for the Use of Artists and Audiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Promoting Public Culture</li> <li>* Promoting the Pursuit of Street Arts or Encouraging Engagement with Street Arts</li> <li>* Supporting Street Artists</li> <li>* Elevating the Status of Art and Artists</li> </ul>	Cultural dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Using Elements Related to Performance and Art</li> <li>* Paying Attention to the Predominant Materials Used in the Iranshahr Neighborhood and Iranshahr Park</li> <li>* Suitable Flooring and Lighting to Create Beauty and Security</li> <li>* Using Different Materials in Seating and Stage Flooring Compared to Urban Spaces and Instilling a Sense of Semi-Private Space</li> <li>* Using Flexible, Unique, and Modern Furniture for the Audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Utilizing the Prevailing Taste of the Expert Community in Design and the Visual Characteristics Around the Intended Site in Various Dimensions of Design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designing a Unique Conceptual Design with Attractive Features Related to Performing Arts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Enhancing the Visual Quality of the Environment</li> <li>* Instilling a Sense of Aesthetics and Value in Citizens</li> <li>* Transforming Iranshahr Park into a Unique and Prominent Space in the Center of Tehra</li> </ul>	Physical dimension

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Considering a Flexible Space and Walls with the Possibility of Movement in the Backstage Area and Passage to and from the Stage for Performers</li> <li>* Providing a Suitable Sound and Lighting System on the Stage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Having Freedom of Movement and Performance</li> <li>* Having an Intimate Space for Establishing Effective Communication</li> <li>* Having Basic and Necessary Facilities for the Performance Stage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Attracting Artistic Groups with Different Ideas and Structures</li> <li>* Not Creating Environmental Limitations for Performers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Injecting Deconstructive Events and Spaces into the Iranshahr Neighborhood or Infusing the Iranshahr Neighborhood with Disruptive Events and Spaces</li> <li>* Giving Freedom of Action to Artists in Performance</li> <li>* Creating Diverse and Thought-Provoking Cultural Currents in the City</li> </ul>	Content dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Standard Design of Walls with Suitable Materials and Form to Prevent Noise and Wind</li> <li>* Providing a Suitable Roof for Use During Snow and Rainfall</li> <li>* Providing Trash Cans Near the Space for Cleanliness and Maintaining Hygiene</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Considering Standard Physical Characteristics for Resilience Against Wind, Rain, and Intense Sunlight in Different Seasons</li> <li>* Controlling the Intrusion of Disturbing Sounds from Outside to Inside the Space and Vice Versa for Environmental Comfort</li> <li>* Using Environmental Necessities and Planning for the Cleanliness of the Performance Space and Surroundings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Giving Importance to the Needs of Artists for Performance</li> <li>* And Audiences for Using the Space in Various Weather Conditions</li> <li>* And Ease of Using the Space in the Specific Climate of the Site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Controlling Noise Pollution at the Performance Venue</li> <li>* Sustainable Design of Space for Various Weather Conditions</li> <li>* Maintaining the Cleanliness of the Environment</li> </ul>	Environmental dimension

## Conclusion

This research initially aimed to find the connection between humans, art, and urban space. It is evident that what binds a person to a space, after initial visual perceptions in the objective environment, leaves an invisible yet gradually vital impact on the individual's mind. Furthermore, employing effective characteristics in the design of a unique urban space in terms of culture and physical form, and reflecting this in the form of urban art, encourages individuals to choose the space for pausing, resting, and spending hours of the day. With the entry of art into the realm of urban space, a connection is established between these two phenomena. The presence of art in the city is not necessarily limited to the existence of sculptures and paintings on various buildings; rather, the intermingling of human connection with art and the perception of messages through human interaction provides greater opportunities for interaction and impact on people. Therefore, the formation of a space for the presentation and execution of environmental art and art events that are created by citizens will be a suitable platform for this. In this research, by examining and quantitatively and qualitatively analyzing the effective characteristics in the quality of urban space, an urban design framework was achieved, which determined the design guidelines, priorities, and necessities of the site in question. Designing a legible and unique place while being compatible

with the site's context; designing the performance stage and entrance at the same level for access for all individuals of different ages, genders, and social strata; placing movable seating and flexible space for sitting; placing vegetation in the outdoor performance area to reduce noise pollution; considering light and shade on the stage; staging performances at different times of the day; and ensuring the comfort and safety of space users are the main aspects of the proposed plan. These are factors that allow space users to create new events, foster a sense of value, and facilitate mutual transfer and understanding, leading to the flourishing of individuals within the urban space. The passage of concepts from the physical form to the minds of people and the impact of memories on individuals' minds through art, and the creation of a sense of solidarity and empathy among people, is an objective that initially manifests in the form of recreation but simultaneously leads to the enrichment of social life and the vitality and dynamism of the urban space.

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