

The Impact of Multi-Stakeholder Dynamics and Identity Differences on Artistic Rural Revitalisation: A Comparative Case Study

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The revitalisation of rural areas involves complex power dynamics and interests. This study focuses on multi-stakeholder collaboration within the creative transformation of villages, examining how stakeholder dynamics and identity affect project outcomes. Comparing cases from mainland China and Taiwan, it combines spatial production theory with relational art perspectives to analyse the interplay of power structures, development models, and identity conflicts in artistic community building. Findings indicate: (1) Artistic rural revitalisation must prioritise the interweaving of economic, cultural, and social objectives alongside the cultivation of local creative resources; (2) place-making initiatives strengthen local social bonds and emotional attachment through public spaces and community art; (3) non-governmental organisations, acting as intermediaries for policy implementation, enhance the social innovation efficacy of rural governance.

Keywords: artistic rural revitalisation, multi-stakeholder collaboration, place-making, rural governance

Introduction

Amidst the advance of globalisation and heightened modernity, Giddens (1991) observed a marked imbalance: the global integration of Western institutions contrasted with the fragmentation of other local cultures. Against this backdrop, the countryside—as the spiritual homeland and cultural bedrock of traditional societies—has been drawn into urban-centred modernisation, reduced to functional units of economic production. Its cultural value and local identity now face severe challenges. In response to the impacts of globalisation and urbanisation, a rural revitalisation pathway centred on community art interventions and cultural conservation has emerged. Post-World War II, numerous nations began exploring “place-making” initiatives. Examples include Japan’s “Town-Making Movement” and the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale, alongside efforts in the UK and US that utilise art to drive local regeneration (Goldbard, 2006). These demonstrate art’s emergence as a vital medium for rural cultural revitalisation and community identity reconstruction

In China, Taiwan has promoted “Comprehensive Place-Making Development” since 1994. Through integrated policies combining spatial transformation, industrial revitalisation, and cultural arts, it has established a collaborative community renewal model involving government, professionals, and residents (Wang, 2014). Mainland Chinese villages similarly grapple with imbalances stemming from modernisation and globalisation. Following the 2004 national proposal of “cultural heritage and rural revitalisation” (Tu, 2019), village

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development has increasingly been dominated by capital and power, which has fostered two dominant approaches: a technocratic “state governance + expert model” and a tourism development model driven by consumerist logic. Both are prone to over-exploitation of cultural and natural resources (Deng et al., 2016). Against this backdrop, artistic rural revitalisation has emerged as a third pathway. Emphasising respect for local culture and traditional values while maintaining distance from mainstream models, it offers new possibilities for rural cultural conservation and community identity reconstruction (Qu & Wang, 2015).

In practice, “who constitutes the primary agent of rural development” remains the most central and contentious issue in artistic rural revitalisation. Unlike government-led or capital-led models, this approach involves multiple actors—artists, villagers, local governments, designers—each operating from distinct identities, interests, and values, forming complex collaborative networks and power dynamics. While this multi-stakeholder participation brings resources and vitality, it also raises ethical and governance challenges: When artists take the lead, how do villagers accept external perspectives? If villagers become the primary actors, does external intervention imply unequal power dynamics? These structural contradictions represent critical issues that contemporary artistic rural revitalisation urgently needs to address.

Against this backdrop, this study examines the mechanisms of multi-stakeholder collaboration within artistic rural revitalisation and their impact on sustainable rural development. It seeks to explore: Within the complex, power-diverse, and interest-intertwined context of rural development, how can art function as a cultural mediator to foster local identity, community engagement, and sustainable development? To achieve this objective, the study employs comparative case research, selecting representative examples from Taiwan and mainland China. Through comparative analysis, it reveals both differences and commonalities in artistic intervention strategies. The structure of this paper is as follows: First, it examines the controversies surrounding artistic rural revitalisation and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Second, it introduces the case backgrounds and the methodological framework employed. Third, by integrating spatial production theory with relational art perspectives, this analysis examines how local identity reconstruction influences artistic intervention strategies, revealing the interactive mechanisms between power structures, development models, and identity conflicts. Finally, it summarises research findings, distils optimisation strategies, and emphasises rural development pathways that integrate economic, cultural, and social objectives, providing theoretical and practical references for artistic engagement in rural revitalisation.

Literature Review

The Politics of Difference and Rural Power Dynamics

Traditionally, globalization and locality have been viewed as a binary opposition, with the former representing fluidity and homogenization, and the latter symbolizing stability and insularity (Dirlik, 2006). However, Massey’s (1994) theory of the “global sense of place” transcends this framework, redefining locality as an open, dynamic network system inherently characterised by difference. From this perspective, the countryside ceases to be a closed, stable cultural unit; instead, it emerges as a fluid landscape shaped by capital flows and diverse practices (Halfacree, 2012). Within the dynamic interplay of power and space, rural practices exhibit pronounced characteristics of the politics of difference, manifesting as complex interactions between policy interventions, cultural power, and local resistance. National and transnational institutions frequently employ policy instruments to reconfigure the countryside as “governable units”, yet often overlook the resilience of local knowledge and social networks (Li, 2007; Scott, 1998). This projection of “governmentality” not only

simplifies rural differences as “backwardness” (Shanin, 2020) but also transforms local identities into consumable capital through the appropriation of cultural symbols (Belfiore, 2022).

However, the penetration of policy and capital is not unidirectional domination. As Mosse (2005) demonstrates, the legitimacy of policy discourse relies on the translation by local actors: Villagers may strategically utilise official narratives to secure resources, or deconstruct external agendas through passive resistance. In artistic rural revitalization projects, villagers’ participation often stems not from an affinity for artistic values but from kinship-based emotional obligations or pragmatic survival rationality. They treat artistic practices as tools for securing resources, maintaining relationships, or advocating for policies (Wang, 2020). Such “strategic participation” not only fails to foster genuine cultural collaboration but may reinforce existing power structures and social stratification, transforming the countryside into a “contested arena” (Gupta, 1998) where multiple forces vie for dominance. Within this arena, the profit-driven logic of global capital and the modernisation goals of state developmentalism continually clash and negotiate with local systems of meaning rooted in lived experience and practical life. For instance, art projects may be rapidly implemented through policy initiatives yet encounter cultural misinterpretation or collective indifference at the local level, highlighting the profound disconnect between “macro-narratives” and “local practices”. Future research must therefore transcend the binary framework of “domination-resistance”, shifting focus to how heterogeneous actors (such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), artists, digital platforms, and returning youth) form temporary alliances within multi-scalar networks. Through flexible collaboration or competition, they reconfigure local power relations (Li, 2007; Wang, 2020). Tracking the practical trajectories of these “non-traditional governance actors” can help reveal the evolving power logics and cultural negotiation mechanisms within contemporary rural transformations.

Spatial Production and Relational Art

Spatial sociology posits that space is not merely the backdrop for social practices but a significant shaper of them. Lefebvre (1991) proposed the theory of spatial production, emphasising how individual agency, capital, and power interact during the use, development, and transformation of space, thereby generating new relations of production. Place-making exemplifies this process, focusing on the dynamic interaction and co-construction between people and space. The related concept of a sense of place originates from Tuan’s (1974) theory of “Topophilia”, which denotes emotional attachment and memory connections between individuals and their physical environment. Williams (1992) further proposed that place attachment encompasses both functional dependence (related to the functional entities of a place) and spiritual identification (a sense of belonging expressed as “I am part of this place”). Successful place-making often fosters both functional and emotional attachments through landscape regeneration, thereby reshaping residents’ sense of agency and ownership.

In artistic place-making practices, collaborations between artists and grassroots forces reveal complex social interactions, embodying Bourdieu’s (1993) sociological theory of “field”, which posits networks of relationships formed by actors based on their position and resources. Bourriaud (2002) further proposed the concept of “relational art”, emphasising that artistic creation is not merely aesthetic expression but a medium embedded within social contexts that facilitates interpersonal interaction and the reconfiguration of intersubjective relationships. This art form transcends closed, reified relationships, becoming a catalyst for social connection and identity reshaping. However, collaborations in artistic rural revitalization often encounter deep-seated tensions: Artists typically hail from the “great tradition”, possessing professional backgrounds and cultural prestige, and

tending to create in the name of freedom and ideals; villagers belong to the “little tradition”, as grassroots groups more concerned with tangible benefits and practical needs (Freedman, 2004). This divergence stemming from differing social positions and value orientations constitutes a key challenge in artistic rural revitalisation.

Methodological Framework

Methodology

This research employs a comparative case study, selecting representative and comparable cases from Taiwan (where community development began early and is well-established) and mainland China. Through case comparisons, field investigations, and in-depth interviews, it analyzes how local identity reconstruction influences artistic intervention strategies, reveals the interactive mechanisms between power structures, development models, and identity conflicts, and constructs a relational dynamics framework for analyzing artistic rural revitalization. The research focuses on how multi-stakeholder collaborative art-based place-making serves rural sustainable development, conducting a comparative analysis from three core perspectives:

1. Initiation approaches: How do the identities of different project initiators (e.g., artists, government, local people) affect the smooth progress of projects and the achievement of objectives?
2. Power dynamics: Which stakeholders (e.g., local people, government, capital providers, artists) are involved in project development? What conflicts based on interests and perspectives exist between them? How does the degree of local people’s agency influence the emergence and resolution of conflicts?
3. Objectives and development models: What orientation (economic, cultural, social, or composite) do projects pursue? What characteristics define their development models?

Research data were primarily gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant observation. Interviewees included village representatives, participating artists, local government officials, and capital investors. The focus centred on each stakeholder’s specific involvement across different phases of artistic rural revitalization—such as decision-making, artistic creation, and public space maintenance—to examine power distribution, manifestations of influence, and interaction patterns. Discussions centered on core issues such as conflict resolution and the development of collaborative mechanisms. Questions were predominantly semi-structured, preserving space for open-ended inquiry to uncover emerging themes and latent tensions. To deepen understanding of power dynamics and micro-interactions among diverse actors, we supplemented interviews with long-term participant observation. By embedding ourselves within case sites, we documented key events, daily interactions, negotiation processes, and spatial practices during project implementation. This methodology facilitates the capture of non-verbal power practices (such as symbolic systems and habitual routines) and micro-level bargaining processes that prove difficult to convey through textual materials, thereby offering a more comprehensive revelation of the dynamic evolution of power relations within artistic rural revitalization.

Case Overview

This study examines two case studies: the Xucun Project in Shanxi, northern mainland China, and the Tugou Village Community Development Project in Tainan, Taiwan.

Xu Village Project. Xucun boasts picturesque scenery and has preserved relatively intact Ming and Qing Dynasties residential architecture alongside enduring folk customs and local culture. However, due to Shanxi’s abundance of traditional villages, Xucun failed to meet the government’s heritage protection criteria, leaving demolition as the villagers’ sole option for livelihood. Moreover, situated at an altitude of 1,500 metres, the

village experiences a short frost-free period and poor crop yields, compelling most residents to seek employment in cities to supplement their household income. In 2005, artist Qu Yan visited Xucun to conduct field research, initiating restoration work on the ancient village and oral history surveys. He mobilised artists, architects, and relevant experts to participate in preserving Xucun's cultural heritage. The project later gained governmental support, evolving into artistic place-making initiatives that included international artist residencies, the restoration of village ancestral halls, and rural educational assistance. Today, it has become an internationally renowned art village.

Tugou Village Community Development Project. Tugou Community, situated on the periphery of Houbi District in Tainan City, was a severely depopulated village with a deteriorating natural environment. Faced with bottlenecks in traditional agriculture and challenges in industrial transformation, locals spontaneously formed the “Tugou Rural Cultural Development Association” under government guidance. They initiated community development efforts, including park renovations, road repairs, and greening initiatives. Subsequently, through collaboration with Tainan National University of the Arts, artists were attracted to participate in projects centred on the local cultural ethos—the water buffalo spirit—to intervene in public spaces through art. A local rural art museum was established to revitalise local culture, achieving the integration of art and daily life. In Tugou's community building, diverse stakeholders, including villagers, artists, the development association, and the government, worked together to enhance community cohesion and identity.

Comparability

Development models. Operational models for artistic rural revitalization can be categorised based on the dominance of participating entities: the external model, the internal model, and the collaborative internal-external model (Yin, 2017). The external model represents a top-down approach led by government or external social enterprises. In contrast, the internal model operates bottom-up, typically involving local villagers and grassroots artists driving endogenous rural development through their artistic creativity. The collaborative model, a hybrid of the former two, emphasises the integration of external forces (represented by artists and enterprises) with endogenous forces (represented by villagers), manifesting as locally rooted artistic practices involving community participation (Jiang, 2021). Both cases examined in this study fall under the collaborative model.

Scope of issues. Kiyoshi Miyazaki (2008) categorised place-making themes into five domains: “People”, “Culture”, “Place”, “Industry”, and “Landscape”. “People” refers to fulfilling community residents' needs, nurturing interpersonal relationships, and creating well-being; “Culture” denotes sustaining shared historical heritage, organising arts and cultural activities, and promoting lifelong learning; “Place” denotes the conservation and promotion of geographical features, alongside the preservation of local identity; “Industry” encompasses the management of local industries and economic activities, property development, and marketing; “Landscape” involves the creation of community public spaces, sustainable management of living environments, the establishment of distinctive scenery, and resident-led development. Both projects broadly encompassed these themes.

Output outcomes. In terms of outcomes, both projects can be categorized under the rural art museum model within the framework of artistic place-making. A rural art museum does not denote a single museum building, but rather the entire village itself as an art museum: Farmhouses become exhibition spaces, rice paddies serve as canvases, farmers become artists, and agricultural products are transformed into artworks. The concept of the

“rural art museum” integrates artistic interventions across all aspects of community development, achieving improvements in the rural environment, fostering a positive economic start, and shaping a sense of belonging within rural society. It represents a model of rural revitalisation through artistic and community collaboration (Cheng & Gao, 2016). Art plays a vital role in intervening in public spaces, which are closely linked to private spaces, people’s livelihoods, and social issues. From different dimensions, dialogue-based art can prompt interaction between artists and residents, gradually evoking a sense of collectivity and cohesion among residents; art creation, art activities, and other art forms can serve as a medium to realize the collision and fusion of farming civilization and modern civilization; art concepts, art installations, and other forms, when combined with local landscapes, can form large-scale landscape art and enrich local aesthetics; arts-centered creative industries can drive the overall development of local industries in the community; art can also transform and artistically reuse spaces, opening up new possibilities for vernacular art and local art. These artistic interventions in public spaces eventually converge in the “Rural Art Museum” and, through integration, achieve the rural renaissance in terms of landscape and economy as well as social reconfiguration.

Case Analysis

This chapter conducts a comparative analysis of two artistic rural revitalization cases—Tugou Village Community Development Project and China’s Xucun Project—across four dimensions: initiation methods, power dynamics, development models, and goal orientations. It focuses on how local identity reconstruction influences artistic intervention strategies within multi-stakeholder collaborations, revealing the interactive mechanisms between power structures, development models, and identity conflicts. The analysis summarises practical experiences and governance insights worthy of reference.

Initiation Methods: Path Differences Between Spontaneous and Induced Approaches

Initiation approaches in artistic rural revitalization can be categorised into two main types: spontaneous (proactive engagement by locals or outsiders) and induced (invited by government or third-party institutions) (Yin, 2017). Tugou Village exemplifies a locally spontaneous case. In 2002, spurred by Taiwan’s “Community-Based Development” policy, young villagers formed the Tugou Rural Cultural Development Association to address community challenges. Through self-directed community building, they fostered consensus, laying the social foundation for subsequent artistic interventions. Subsequently, the association collaborated with Tainan National University of the Arts teams and artists to initiate over a decade of artistic transformation practices. The Xucun Project, however, exemplifies a third-party induced model. Artist Qu Yan initially entered Xucun by chance during a field research project, undertaking a photographic documentation of the village. He gained support from a local grassroots official with a background in art and gradually accessed governmental resources through introductions by local elites. However, it took Qu Yan half a year to establish basic trust with villagers, illustrating the initial barriers faced by external interventions.

Comparatively, in rural areas characterised by familiar social networks, locally initiated community development models tend to gain greater community understanding and cooperation, thereby laying the social groundwork for subsequent external involvement. However, these models often face early challenges such as funding instability and resource scarcity (as exemplified by Tugou Project, which nearly stalled due to fundraising difficulties before achieving sustainable development through later government intervention). In contrast, third-party-induced models typically provide stronger external support for projects. However, the

critical challenge lies in stimulating villagers' agency, sense of participation, and autonomy to ensure sustainable progress.

Objectives and Development Models: A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Goals

The primary practical approaches of artistic rural revitalization include: (1) rural cultural preservation and transmission; (2) architectural and public space renovation; (3) community cultural revitalisation and public life reimagining; (4) community education; (5) cultural innovation and rural tourism product design (Yin, 2017). These approaches correspond to distinct objectives: economic (industrial revitalisation), social (community cohesion), environmental (liveable spaces and public services), and cultural (traditional preservation and identity construction).

Comparing the initiatives in Xucun and Tugou villages reveals differing emphases in project objectives, based on the entities initiating them. As previously outlined, Tugou's community development was primarily self-organized by villagers, representing an internal, self-sustaining model; consequently, economic objectives served as the primary driving force. Local artistic activities initially focused on enhancing economic income and improving living conditions, with the subsequent establishment of a rural art gallery aimed at uncovering and revitalising localised cultural arts to advance cultural and social objectives. The Xu Village Project, initiated by artists, initially pursued cultural objectives through the restoration of traditional buildings. However, conflicts arose between the values of artists and villagers, prompting artists to explore ways to mobilize villagers' participation and agency. By leveraging cultural industries to benefit villagers, they sought to foster greater enthusiasm for cultural preservation. This process utilised economic means to achieve social and cultural objectives.

Moreover, both projects emphasised the significance of landscape regeneration and the reshaping of agency in achieving their social and cultural objectives. In the Tugou Project, residents collectively implemented spatial transformation plans, starting with the village's six parks, and progressively created public spaces, including parks, tunnels, and paddy fields. They invited artists to create public art installations symbolizing the village's totem—the water buffalo spirit—with artists and residents jointly completing a water buffalo sculpture that embodied collective memory. During this process, residents developed an appreciation for environmental aesthetics and strengthened community consciousness, shaping collective identity through the reinterpretation of shared memories. The subsequent establishment of a rural art museum fostered deeper interaction and mutual support between art and the village by annually selecting themes related to sustainable rural development and inviting residents and youth to participate. In the Xucun case, although the project was initially met with misunderstanding by villagers, Qu Yan gradually mobilised their agency through the following approaches: Upon arriving in Xucun, Qu Yan observed that local heritage buildings were not protected under cultural preservation laws, leading residents to demolish them for new construction. He repurposed these traditional structures to establish the Xucun International Commune, salvaging old furniture and encouraging villagers to refurbish and arrange discarded pieces. This process prompted residents to reassess the value of their heritage architecture.

Furthermore, the Xucun International Art Festival facilitated dialogue between international artists and villagers, thereby bridging art and daily life, as well as China and the world. International artists created public-benefit works in Xucun, exhibited at the Old Granary Art Gallery, drawing art professionals from China and abroad to the village. Young local art students, along with some foreign artists, stayed with villagers. The

communication needs between villagers and artists indirectly spurred the development of local English education. The festival's co-presentation of local traditions and foreign cultures promotes mutual understanding and appreciation between villagers and artists. Crucially, mirroring the Tugou case, Quyan has rediscovered its indigenous folk beliefs. By reconstructing the village's ancestral hall, it restores local faith traditions and rekindles residents' attachment to their homeland.

Power Dynamics: Tension and Reconciliation Between the Higher and Lower Traditions

In artistic rural revitalization practices, disparities in villagers' agency often trigger power antagonisms and value conflicts between the "great tradition" (artists/elites/government) and the "little tradition" (villagers/grassroots). Firstly, in the Xucun case, as the initiator was an outsider artist, navigating the relationship between the artist's subjective intentions, villagers' agency, and governmental decision-making consistently influenced the project's trajectory. At the project's inception, despite Qu Yan securing backing from local gentry elites, numerous conflicts arose between villagers and the artist. For instance, Qu Yan's artistic aesthetic and romantic notions about preserving ancient dwellings failed to resonate with villagers, who prioritised modern housing and functional living spaces. Quyan's artist residency programme was intended to foster artistic exchange between artists and villagers. However, villagers permitted artists to reside locally primarily because it afforded children opportunities to learn English and develop their artistic skills. Later in the project, when Quyan and villagers formed a relatively close-knit community and proposed restoring the local ancestral hall to revive rural faith traditions, the local government deemed this a potentially feudal superstition and withheld financial and regulatory support. Secondly, externally initiated and led artistic rural revitalization projects face sustainability challenges. In the Xucun initiative, an international arts festival is held only every two years for fifteen days. Can such sporadic, short-term exchanges genuinely achieve the goal of community transformation? Although the organisers hoped the festival would introduce modern knowledge and art to the village, residents expressed a desire for more frequent or longer-running events, which was not driven by an interest in learning art, but rather by the hope of sustaining visitor numbers to generate greater income. This situation reflects how the identity divide between artists and villagers prevented the Xucun Project from achieving genuine internal self-sustainability.

By contrast, the Tugou case offers potentially instructive lessons. Firstly, the Tugou Rural Cultural Development Association served as the driving force behind the Tugou Rural Art Museum's decade-long journey from conceptualisation to formal establishment. Formed spontaneously by local elites, the association adopted a self-organised, collective decision-making model. This approach mitigated the cognitive dissonance often encountered when external elites engaged with local communities. During its formative years, the association faced limited funding opportunities because it did not meet the criteria for government-backed community development schemes—members, therefore, self-funded initiatives, accumulating experience before applying for external support. When community aspirations diverged from governmental policy directions, the association rejected token funding that imposed systemic constraints. Instead, it collaborated with corporations and foundations to secure resources, achieving greater flexibility and efficiency. Secondly, although Tugou Village's community development programme similarly pursued cultural industries, such as arts festivals, its leadership by the Tugou Rural Cultural Development Association (rather than artists) steered the festival towards industrialization and economic viability. For instance, the association collaborated with villagers to organise events blending art and religion—such as rock music festivals and ritual celebrations—attracting numerous external visitors while encouraging villagers to develop distinctive homestays. To address the decline of traditional

agriculture, the association and villagers, supported by professional community advisors, established agricultural production and marketing organisations. They developed leisure farms and farmers' markets, driving an organic transformation of Tugou's industries. It is worth noting that Tugou's industrialisation emphasises local distinctiveness. The decision-making team, composed of villagers and local elites, prioritises integrating the countryside with creative industries within a manageable scale. This approach explores compact, aesthetically pleasing creative clusters and communities, thereby avoiding the homogenisation issues associated with mass production.

Conclusions and Discussion

This study compares two artistic rural revitalization cases—Xucun Project in mainland China and Tugou Village Community Development in Taiwan—which share similarities in operational models and outcomes. It focuses on examining how the composition of project initiators influences the setting of overall objectives, the dynamics of power relations, the difficulty of project implementation, and the selection of development models. Findings reveal that within rural networks characterised by familiar-society relationships, structural tensions often arise between artists and villagers due to divergent identities, values, and interests. These tensions can undermine project sustainability and the depth of community engagement.

Based on these findings, this paper proposes that within the Chinese context, a more viable and referenceable model for artistic rural revitalization may comprise the following elements: local gentry elites or community-based leaders serving as initiators to forge villagers' consensus on community development goals, thereby forming an "internal community" grounded in shared values; building upon this foundation, external experts such as artists and consultancy teams are introduced as advisory support, while actively seeking non-institutional funding sources from corporations and foundations to enhance project flexibility and sustainability. Although this model faces multiple challenges in practice, comparative analysis of two case studies yields the following actionable insights:

1. Goal synergy: The interweaving and transformation of economic, cultural, and social objectives:

Artistic rural revitalization initiatives need not inevitably descend into identity conflicts or cognitive misalignment. The key lies not in mechanically prioritising economic, cultural, or social objectives, but in recognising that these are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they function as both means and ends, capable of achieving synergy and transformation through dynamic practice. For instance, in the Xucun Project, artists indirectly enhanced villagers' participation and cultural identity by promoting cultural industries and art festivals, demonstrating how economic means can empower social and cultural objectives.

2. Industrialisation pathways: Creative aggregation and mitigating homogenisation risks:

Industrialisation practices within artistic rural revitalization need not replicate homogenised tourism models. The crux lies in how leaders comprehend and foster the diverse symbiosis and localised evolution of creative industries. The Tugou Village case demonstrates that community-led art festivals and agricultural transformation, by integrating local distinctiveness, small-scale creative clusters, and community building, effectively circumvent large-scale replication and cultural dilution, achieving a dual victory of industrial upgrading and cultural preservation.

3. The essence of place-making: Reinventing space, relationships, and community:

Place-making transcends mere public space and landscape transformation; it fundamentally reshapes intersubjective relations and social bonds. The process of landscape reimagining is intrinsically tied to the

formation of community consciousness. Whether through the collective participation of Tugou villagers in public art installations or Xucun's utilization of art festivals and international exchanges to foster interactions between villagers and external entities, spatial practices emerge as pivotal arenas for reproducing social relations.

This research further resonates with and expands upon the theoretical insights of Touraine's sociology of action. Touraine (1988) emphasised that intellectuals must reaffirm their independence and autonomy to reshape their roles; this process inherently requires actively responding to and supporting the public's desire to be taken seriously. Within the Chinese context, this theoretical perspective equally applies to artistic rural revitalization practices. Artistic rural revitalization can be seen as a contemporary continuation of China's traditional "scholar-official" ethos—that is, engaging in public affairs and promoting social reform through cultural practices. Although non-governmental organisations (NGOs) hold no formal authority within the existing system, their practices enable the exploration of relatively constructive collaborative mechanisms through interactions with diverse actors, including government bodies, communities, and artists. This, in turn, influences the formulation and implementation of public policy. Interventional art plays a pivotal role in this process, offering creative pathways to dismantle entrenched dichotomous frameworks such as "art-life", "intellectual-public", and "urban-rural". The future of artistic rural revitalization lies precisely in transcending these oppositions to forge a new model of rural advancement characterised by cross-boundary collaboration, inclusive subject-hood, and cultural symbiosis.

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