

Sculpture Parks as Cultural Tourism and Landscape Architecture Catalysts

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Abstract

Sculpture parks (SPs) are more than just a blend of landscape and art. They are transformative spaces that showcase sculpture in a natural setting, creating a harmonious backdrop that brings the exhibited artworks to life. They inspire visitors to embark on a journey of discovery, exploring the intersection of art and landscape in new and unexpected ways.

Their vision is to exhibit art and create learning, discovery, and attraction experiences for visitors that celebrate the tapestry of nature, community, and culture. Thus, SPs play an essential role in enhancing cultural tourism.

This study explores how SPs ameliorate visitor experience while contributing to their surroundings' cultural, economic, and ecological fabric. It intends to:

- Through case studies, we will delve into the unique spatial organization of successful SPs. These spaces converge art, nature, and people in urban and rural settings, inviting and attracting cultural tourists with their distinct charm.
- Finally, we will explore how SPs are not just cultural and artistic havens but also significant contributors to local economies. By providing job opportunities and supporting local businesses, they play a crucial role in the economic fabric of their surroundings.

This paper uses a case study methodology to achieve the listed objectives. We use a comparative analysis approach of four successfully designed SPs: the Olympic SP in Seattle, Washington, U.S.; Storm King SP in the United States; Yorkshire SP in the United Kingdom; and Kistefos SP in Norway. The mixed-methods approach includes qualitative assessments of visitors' experiences, economic analysis of tourism impacts, and evaluation of the landscape architecture design strategies used in these selected SPs.

The results show how SPs perform as dynamic green open spaces that enhance community engagement and cultural identity. Key points below:

- The role of placing art in a naturally designed setting in enhancing cultural tourism, bringing tourists and encouraging them to engage with both art and nature.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the existing knowledge of SPs by revealing how they can be designed to boost both cultural tourism and environmental sustainability. Also, by connecting them with greenway planning, the paper demonstrates their potential to enrich the local communities' economic and cultural tourism.

Introduction

The last two decades have seen the increasing development of SPs worldwide. Their expansion mirrors changes in contemporary society, where modest state funding and increased private

sponsorship have contributed to a reconsideration of public art. The installation of modern sculpture today seems implicated in an ongoing dilemma over the value of art practices within Western culture. In this context, the focus of this paper—SPs and cultural tourism catalysts—gains emphasis. The promotion of SPs as an independent discipline can be seen in the growing trend of international exhibitions and projects led by SP organizations in recent years. (Kathleen Dorothy Scherf 2021, 61)

These green outdoors where art, people, and nature converge commonly involve repurposing historical landscapes. For instance, in exhibiting the works of contemporary artists in historic gardens and parklands, they convert spaces once exclusively associated with the cultural interests of landed elites into an opportunity for the mass public appreciation of art and subsequently represent a substantial investment in a particular model of cultural capital. In doing so, they are conspicuous and attract tourists in increasing numbers. In South Korea, the new areas of Deokjeok Island and Paekjang are being designated 'cultural tourism belts' and the site of annual sculpture symposiums, which have seen the creation of several site-specific contemporary sculptures. In the UK, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, which has approximately 150 sculptures on display and attracts around 330,000 visitors yearly, takes a portion of its funding from public arts funding bodies. In the US, there are 200 open-air galleries attached to museums and cultural sites, whilst the 80 sculpture parks and gardens average 300,000 visitors, with an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 works on show.

This paper discusses the role of the SPs as cultural tourism boosters and how these open-air galleries and green spaces simultaneously affect the local economy. This paper tackles the following questions:

- How do SPs participate in inviting and attracting cultural tourists with their unique spatial organization that merges art, nature, and people?
- Also, how do SPs positively impact local communities' economies by providing job opportunities and supporting local businesses?

Methods and Data

To answer the research question, this paper conducts a comparative analysis approach to compare four successfully designed SPs, applying a case study methodology. This allowed studying how these SPs boost community engagement and cultural identity, enhance cultural tourism, and integrate environmental resources through their design activities.

Analysis criteria selection and data collection

Three main analysis criteria were grouped into three main categories based on a mixed-method approach; each category has various criteria:

Visitor Experience: this category includes the following criteria: Visitor Numbers, Accessibility, Learning Programs, On-Site Amenities (based on the SP master plan), Interactive programs (based on their official webpage), and Mission.

Economic Contributions: The following criteria are included in this category: Governance, Cultural Role, Funding Sources, Num. employees impact

Design Strategies: including Size (Area), Key Features, Sculpture collection, Historical Significance, Sustainability Efforts

By studying these three dimensions, the research can capture the holistic impacts of SPs on their local tourism, culture, and community engagement.

Case Studies

This paper uses a comparative analysis approach to compare four prominent SPs: Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP), Kistefos Sculpture Park (KSP), Laumeier Sculpture Park (LSP), Storm King Art Center (SKAC). Below is a brief introduction to each sculpture park, including its location, size, key features, and unique aspects. The parks were chosen based on their being well-known for design innovation or having sufficient local or international acclaim that the park could be easily visited. Also, a selection was made of parks that engage in public art and have done so with innovation. In addition, we pursued a selection of parks that are primarily historic and predate the mid-1900s for comparison with contemporary parks. It is advised that most parks consider a combination of fixed structures, world-renowned artworks, and temporary installations with lesser-known artists.

Data collection

This comparative analysis is built on data from the published annual and financial reports declared by the SPs organizations and found on the analyzed articles and websites. Due to found materials sources, the years chosen for the yearly report differ for Kristofos SP (KSP)- the last report found was for 2020.

Case Studies Introduction

Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP)

Established in 1977, YSP is the site of Bretton Hall, a former 18th-century estate that has since been switched into an open-air gallery. YSP is approximately 500 acres, with 250 acres of managed landscape for sculptures. The 500 acres are typically separated into sections. First is the 'Historic Estate and Garden,' which is 100 acres. The 'Country Park' portion is the other 400 acres. In 2014, 2017, and 2018, the park had 1 million visitors. Various exhibitions and installations are displayed there. (SKAC 2000)

Kistefos Sculpture Park (KSP)

KSP is an example of the accommodation and the integration between contemporary SP and the surrounding landscape. It is located on a former industrial mill along the trans-European waterway called the Telemark Canal in Jevnaker, Norway. Founded in 1996, it is currently led by the Head of Kistefos, an advisory board that selects, commissions, and facilitates new works and installations throughout the sprawling property on an ongoing basis. This SP is well known by its site specificity as the utmost priority when adding new artwork to the park due to the landscape architects who have outlined guiding lines for siting the park's new commissionable works for the next 50 years. KSP landscape surrounds three sides of the Kistefos property on a sloping bedrock site covered in spruce, pine, and aspen trees. This staging allows for a synergy between the natural and industrial, recalling this region's landscape and history. (Kistefos SP 2025)

Laumeier Sculpture Park (LSP)

One of the first prominent open-air museums in the U.S. Founded in 1968 to reclaim a landfill by the Meramec River, the park initially featured a floral photography museum alongside over 50 permanent public art sculptures. Over time, the site has new designs and educational purposes under nonprofit management. Now, LSP gets over 300,000 visitors annually, strengthening its status as a leading attraction. The park is on 105 acres and includes a “living laboratory” combining architecture, landscape architecture, museology, art history, and ecology. It is located 15 miles west of the Mississippi River in suburban St. Louis, with an evolving semi-wild setting. Defined walkways to guide visitors through static sculptures, blending art with nature. (LAUMEIER SP 2025)

Storm King Art Center Sculpture Park (SKSP).

Known as one of the prominent examples of SPs. Founded in 1960. SKSP has developed into a place known for its bold and large-scale art installations, embraced by the Hudson River landscape. With its role as an open-air museum, the combinations and interaction between the natural surrounding environment and the works SKSP is enhanced in the form of a harmonic absorber: the 500-acre sculpture park. The congruence of organic and inorganic is accented with design elements like pedestrian pathways, viewing points, and tram buds that make visitors collaborators in the museum park’s design. The grassy knolls at Wellington Grand Allée enhance views of Maya Lin’s Storm King Wavefield. The fifteen sculptures create a dialogue between art and nature, connecting nearly 60,000 annual visitors through seasonal experiences and education. (Storm King Art Center 2000)

Results

Figures 1, 2, and 3 demonstrate the comparative analysis between the four selected SPs according to the criteria and categories listed in the methods and data section.

Category	Criterion	Yorkshire SP (YSP)	Kristofos SP (KSP)	Storm King SP (SKSP)	LAUMEIER SP (LSP)
A. Visitor Experience	Data Year	2023	2020	2023	2023
	Location	WF4 4LG (Sat Nav WF4 4JX), West Bretton, United Kingdom	Kistefossveien 24, Jevnaker, Norway	New York's Hudson Valley, United States	2580 Rott Road, Saint Louis, Missouri 63127, United States
	Visitor Numbers	391025	168950	240000	350000
	Accessibility	Ticketed entry model.	Ticketed entry model	Ticketed entry model.	Ticketed entry model.
	Learning Programs	44,000 persons are enrolled in educational programs. In addition to a formal strand that involves instructors, adult learners, and school and college groups, the learning program also includes a family and community strand that fosters creativity among people of all ages, improving wellness and family and community dynamics.	Variety of kid-friendly activities. While adults take advantage of the various cultural activities offered, children can have fun in the activity park, foam pit, and hamster wheel, get wet in the water fountain, or work out puzzles using the children's map or activity guide.	Education and Public Initiatives: Public initiatives such as Winter driving excursions, guided walking tours of the Storm King collection's highlights, and interactive art-making activities for kids and families. Artist Residency, Education Partnerships, Digital & Teacher Resources, and Bloomberg Connects Digital Guide.	Laumeier provides a variety of educational programs to introduce art and environment to people of all ages. In residence: The purpose of Laumeier's In Residence programs is to invite intellectuals, artists, and philosophers to visit the Park, interact with the local population, and create links between nature, art, and other disciplines.
	On-Site Amenities (based on the SP master plan)	Information Desk, Toilets, Disabled toilets, All gender toilet, Changing Places toilet, Baby change, The Quiet Room, Picnic areas, Restaurants, The Kitchen Café, The Coffee Shop, The Café at YSP Learning, YSP Learning, Little Wild Wood, Activity sheets and trails, National Arts Education Archive, Parking, Coaches and minibuses, Cycle parking, shops, Transportation.	Parking, Visitor Center (Opening in 2026), Café and Restaurant, Restrooms, Playground, Information Center, Museum Shop, Transportation.	Restrooms, accessible restrooms, outdoor cafe, picnic area, water station, information, tickets, bike rental, museum store, vending machine, elevator, bus pickup, ride for hire pickup, parking, free and wheelchair-accessible Tram Loop is available to help visitors move around the Art Center, Transportation	Parking Lot, Roadway, Restroom + Water Fountain, Creek, Aronson Fine Arts Center, Kranzberg Education Lab, Siteman Carriage House, Amphitheater, Education Shelters Moss Shelter, Leaf Pavilion by, Frank Schwaiger (2009), Transportation.
	Interactive programs (based on their official webpage)	Exhibitions sculpture and modern and contemporary art, offering public education programs, events, and attraction activities.	Exhibitions sculpture and modern and contemporary art, offering public education programs, events, and attraction activities.	Exhibitions, Learning & Engagement: Public programs, family & school visits, teacher workshops, artist residencies, Events, Archives: Oral history, special collections.	Exhibitions: Sculpture, modern & contemporary art, Education: In Residence, Art Camps, Teen Art, Clay Classes, Family Workshops, Nature & Wellness, Events, Attractions.
	Mission	-World-class collections, exhibitions, and landscape. -Dynamic programs with national and international significance. -Engaging activities for all ages in art and nature. -Preservation of historic and Grade II landscape elements. -A venue for diverse publics to enjoy nature and art. -Promoting learning, mental health, and community well-being.	-Preserving buildings and industrial heritage while celebrating contemporary art.	-Exhibit, acquire, and conserve modern and contemporary art, focusing on large-scale sculpture in a natural landscape. -Offer engaging exhibitions, educational programs, and special events. -Contribute to art history through research, publications, and archives on sculpture. -Foster relationships with artists and support their creative development. -Steward and conserve the Art Center's natural setting with sustainable landscape practices. -Contribute to the region's cultural life and prosperity as an international destination.	-Fostering community engagement through art and nature.

Figure 1. Comparative analysis of the first category of visitor experience on the selected SPs. Source: Authors

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Category	Criterion	Yorkshire SP (YSP)	Kristofos SP (KSP)	Storm King SP (SKSP)	LAUMEIER SP (LSP)
B. Economic Contributions	Governance	YSP is an independent charity supported by Arts Council England, Wakefield MDC, West Yorkshire Grants, the Henry Moore Foundation and funds raised from grants, awards and sponsorship.	KSP is managed by a non-profit organization and governed by a Board of Trustees. The leadership team includes Director Kari Roll-Matthiesen, Curator Kate Smith, Head of Development Kristin Gamme Helgaker, and Communications and Marketing Manager Maria Sandvik. The organization is committed to diversity, equity, and accessibility, integrating these principles into its governance, operations, and programming.	Managed by a non-profit, SKSP is governed by a Board of Trustees, chaired by Roberta Denning. The leadership includes President John P. Stern and Artistic Director Nora R. Lawrence. The organization prioritizes diversity, equity, and accessibility in its governance and programming.	Executive Director Lauren Ross and Curator Dana Turkovic are among the executives of Laumeier Sculpture Park, a nonprofit organization overseen by a Board of Directors. It prioritizes diversity, equity, and accessibility in its operations and is recognized by the American Alliance of Museums. It collaborates with St. Louis County Parks.
	Cultural Role	Working with other cultural organisations and partners, regionally, nationally and internationally, to facilitate cross-art collaborations.	Working with other cultural organisations and partners, regionally, nationally and internationally, to facilitate cross-art collaborations.	Storm King Art Center nurtures a vibrant bond between art, nature, and people, creating a place where discovery is limitless. Committed to supporting artists and stewarding its landscape, Storm King connects with visitors through dynamic exhibitions and programs.	LSP is both a park and an art museum. Parks and arts/cultural organizations provide tremendous value and benefit to their communities in a myriad of ways. It encourages healthy lifestyles, increase community wellbeing, and promote communal experiences between citizens. Experiencing the arts fuels inspiration, creativity, empathy and cultural understanding for people of all ages. Arts education also brings many benefits to K-12 school kids, helping kids engage with school and reduce stress; develop social-emotional and interpersonal skills; enrich their experiences; handle constructive criticism; bolster academic achievement; and improve focus.
	Funding Sources	Public, private sponsorships, visitor revenue.	Generous donations from Christen Sveaas and his company Kistefos AS.	State Funding, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Empire State Development, Private Donations	LSP's revenue and support are derived primarily from state and federal sources, corporate and foundation support and individual contributions.
	Num. employees	230 staff (149 FTE), including seasonal staff, across a wide range of specialisms: retail, catering, fundraising, technical, facilities and housekeeping, administration, learning, management, visitor experience, curatorial, finance, marketing, estate management, and gardening.	A total of 30 seasonal employees have visited during 2020 in positions including both permanent and seasonal positions, all contributing to the park's operations and cultural offerings.	In 2023 SKSP employed 117 members, including full-time, part-time and seasonal employees across various departments, supporting the park's operations, exhibitions, education programs, and visitor services.	+21 permanent staff and a variable number of seasonal faculty and staff.

	Economy impact	YSP positively impacts the Yorkshire economy, contributing more than £11.5m annually. With motorway and rail links to major cities such as London, Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield, YSP plays a key role in attracting cultural tourism to the region. YSP achieves substantial national and international coverage across TV, radio, and print, with high profile developments and exhibitions by internationally renowned artists making a strong impact on the cultural appetite of the nation.	The foundation's accounts were settled with an annual profit of NOK 17,725,274. The reason for the large profit is due to the choice of accounting principle for the cost of construction for acquisition costs related to sculptures and investments.	SKSP, in 2023, generated \$8.44 million in income (revenue) from its activities, such as ticket sales, donations, and other sources of funding. However, the cost to run the center, including maintaining the park, paying employees, and covering other operational expenses, was about \$9.76 millions. In simpler terms, SKSP spent more money than it earned in 2023, resulting in a net loss for the year. Despite this, the center still plays an important role in supporting the regional economy by attracting visitors and generating revenue for local businesses, which is valuable even when the center itself does not operate at a profit.	LSP has an annual budget of \$2.6 million, with 20% from St. Louis County. In 2023, LSP reported revenues of \$2.23 million and expenses of \$2.73 million, resulting in a net loss of \$504,750. Although specific economic impact data for LSP in 2023 is unavailable, the broader arts and culture sector in Missouri generated \$1.725 billion in economic activity, with \$868.7 million in the Greater St. Louis area, highlighting the LSP's contribution to the local economy through cultural programming and visitor spending.
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Figure 2. Comparative analysis of the second category, economic contributions to the selected SPs.
Source: Authors

Category	Criterion	Yorkshire SP (YSP)	Kristofos SP (KSP)	Storm King SP (SKSP)	LAUMEIER SP (LSP)
C. Design Strategies	Size (Area)	500 acres	66,76 acres.	500 acres	105 acre
	Key Features	18th century parkland, features 17th-century trees, historic architectural structures, serene lakes, and open-air galleries, offering a harmonious blend of nature, art, and cultural heritage.	Kistefos Sculpture Park showcases 54 sculptures by leading contemporary artists, features The Twist—a combined bridge, sculpture, and gallery—and preserves industrial heritage from a former wood mill. Its natural setting, highlighted by the Kistefossen waterfall, enhances the artistic and historical experience.	Storm King Art Center's dramatic landscape includes farmed fields, natural woodlands, lawns, native grasses, wetlands, and water. As Storm King has grown, its landscape has been gradually altered to accommodate and enhance the collection, frame vistas, and encourage movement through the site.	Including 105 acres of varied topography, such as open fields, woodlands, and landscaped areas. Visitors can explore the park's sculptures and natural splendor along a 1.4-mile route. Adding historical appeal to the park's setting is the 1917 Tudor stone mansion, which was once the home of Henry and Matilda Laumeier and is currently used as the Kranzberg Education Lab.
	Sculptures collection	A dynamic collection of approximately 90 sculptures, with around 70 permanent installations and 20 temporary exhibitions.	A dynamic collection of approximately 55 sculptures by internationally renowned contemporary artists. KSP continually expands its collection, adding one or more sculptures each year.	A dynamic collection of over 100 sculptures, with approximately 115 permanent installations across its 500-acre landscape.	A dynamic collection of over 70 large-scale outdoor sculptures interwoven among woodlands and trails, enticing visitors with an immersive blend of art and nature.
	Historical Significance	Established in 1977. As custodians of the historic Bretton estate, YSP is responsible for an extensive range of listed and historic buildings and follies including the Learning Centre, Chapel and Bothy Gallery. It is also responsible for buildings including YSP Centre, the Underground Gallery, and Longside Gallery. YSP continues to maintain and develop the estate in line with a 10-year Historic Landscape Management Plan, following the restoration of the lakes and woodland area in 2011. The next iteration of the 10-year historic management plan was adopted in 2021.	Established in 1996. Kistefos' vision is to preserve the buildings and industrial heritage, while celebrating the best of Norwegian and international contemporary art.	Established in 1960.	Established in 1976
	Sustainability Efforts	YSP is committed to urgent action in response to the Climate and Biodiversity emergency. Environmental Policy 2022–2030. We have always sought out artists that create work in an environmentally conscious way, from David Nash, who reduces any harmful impact on our surroundings by utilising nature itself to create his work, to Leo Fitzmaurice, who draws our attention through clever use of language and form.	The UN's Sustainable Development Goals are global and overarching, so KSP is working to reduce them to local and national goals. Kistefos delivers well on points 3: good health and quality of life, 4: good education, 9: industry, innovation and infrastructure, 11: sustainable cities and communities and 12: responsible consumption and production.	SKSP's founders, H. Peter Stern and Ralph E. Ogden, commissioned the late landscape architect William A. Rutherford to develop Storm King's grounds. Underscoring the inherent natural beauty of the region, the design is a subtle pastoral landscape, including vistas, hills, meadows, ponds, woodlands, allées, and walking paths, scaled to embrace both small- and large-scale works of art in a variety of mediums.	Emphasis on landscape conservation. They also help the environment: their trees remove thousands of tons of toxins from the air, filter rain and absorb storm water runoff, and help cool surrounding temperature.

Figure 3. Comparative analysis of the third category, Design Strategies on the selected SPs. Source: Authors.

Discussion

Sculpture Parks as Cultural Hubs that promote cultural tourism

Our examination of the visitors' experiences of the four chosen SPs reveals that SP parks have a deeper purpose and more profound significance than simply being open areas for displaying artwork in a natural setting. They are well-positioned to contribute significantly to cultural tourism because they offer an immersive experience that combines art, nature, and cultural engagement. Here is how they are connected: First, creating a unique cultural experience that cannot be replicated in enclosed typical gallery spaces by harmoniously fusing art and nature.

This improves the visitors' experience by allowing them to appreciate the large scale of the contemporary sculpture and the picturesque setting. Second, by exhibiting artist collections and expressions with various artistic origins and perspectives, SPs aid in promoting both local and global culture. Third, these places draw many people looking for cultural and recreational activities because of their fantastic scene benefits and what they offer. Because SPs appeal to tourists and culture vultures, they are well-liked by both groups.

Additionally, the analysis shows that the SPs' distinguishing features—like planned private events, seasonal events, and artist residences—help draw in a diverse range of visitors with various goals and improve their experiences. Fourth, SPs provide a range of educational initiatives. The learning program comprises a family and community strand that encourages creativity among individuals of all ages, enhancing wellness and family and community dynamics and a formal strand that engages instructors, adult learners, and school and college groups.

The facilities found in SPs are essential in improving cultural tourism and the experience of park visitors by making the park more comfortable, enjoyable, accessible, and engaging, particularly in large-scale SPs. These amenities encourage visitors and enable them to stay longer, and they are more likely to return. For example, the case studies show that state parks have amenities like restrooms, accessible restrooms, an outdoor cafe, a picnic area, a water station, information, tickets, a museum store, a vending machine, an elevator, and ride-for-hire pickup.

Transporting this will guarantee that SPs are family-friendly and inclusive of many audiences. When creating SPs, transportation factors like bike rentals, bus pickup, parking, and free, as well as wheelchair accessibility, are also carefully considered. Visitors can navigate the park with the assistance of the Tram Loop. Additionally, some facilities support tourist interaction, such as information desks and visitor centers with park maps, activity guides, and educational materials that promote exploration and teach visitors more about the park's history and artist sculptures.

Additionally, the park has interactive displays that add to the experience, such as digital guides, hands-on activities, and art-making stations. Additionally, it is evident from the analysis and the sculpture parks' official website that SPs support family-friendly tourism. SPs bridge the gap between cultural tourism and tourist happiness by including these amenities. On-site amenities contribute to bridging the gap between cultural tourism and tourist satisfaction by providing comfort, boosting interaction, and promoting knowledge.

By accommodating the needs of many groups, such as families, single travelers, art enthusiasts, and casual tourists, they build sculpture parks that are accessible, engaging, and unforgettable. These amenities improve the parks' social, cultural, and economic impact and elevate their status as cultural hubs.

Economic Impact of Sculpture Parks

From the conducted comparative analysis based on the annual report published by the officially studied SPs organizations, we can see that Even though sculpture parks' (SPs') financial performance varies from park to park, their economic impact shows how important they are to regional and cultural economies. The YSP, which benefits from excellent rail and motorway connections to major towns including Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, and London, contributes more than £11.5 million annually to the Yorkshire economy. Thanks to its connectivity and

national and international media coverage, this made him a key force behind cultural tourism in the region. Similarly, in 2023, the SKSP earned \$8.44 million from ticket sales and donations. Yet, there was a net loss of \$9.76 million from operating costs, which included maintenance and payroll (ProPublica, n.d.) Despite this financial shortfall, SKSP brings in money for nearby businesses and attracts tourists, significantly boosting the local economy.

On the other hand, Laumeier Sculpture Park (LSP) has an annual budget of \$2.6 million, 20% of which comes from St. Louis County. In 2023, LSP declared \$2.23 million in revenue and \$2.73 million in costs, meaning a \$504,750 net loss (ProPublica, 2023). Despite the absence of specific economic effect data for LSP, the Louis region accounted for \$868.7 million of the \$1.725 billion in economic activity generated by Missouri's arts and cultural sector. (Laumeier Sculpture Park 2023)

With its financial challenges, this demonstrates how LSP promotes the local economy through cultural events and visitor spending. This brings us to the idea that the impact of SPs extends beyond their direct incomes and operational costs. SPs can bring a host of benefits to local and regional communities. This extends to the economic effects as they become important tourist attractions. Many sculpture parks attract many visitors, and increases in revenue from those visitors can positively impact the park and the local area as a whole. It's not just the entrance fees, but things like people buying meals, drinks, souvenirs, accommodation, especially in rural areas, and so on. Various SPs also host events and festivals, which can increase their role as revenue-generating agents. A key economic development strategy is to improve an area's tourism through cultural activities such as SPs, and the subsequent economic impacts can contribute significant income to a region.

Providing Job Opportunities and Business Support

SPs have a significant role in boosting culture and tourism, so they often moderate as urban or regional institutions and contribute significantly to the local area's economy (Hougherth n.d.). From our analysis, we can see that SPs offer many job opportunities as they are active spaces with various activities, meaning that they continuously hire people for various vacancies to manage the different park departments such as coordination, curation of the sculptures and their professional maintenance, events management, and organization. Park maintenance, curatorial workshops, learning, and educational programs, etc. for example, we can see that in 2020, KSP had 30 seasonal employees in various positions, including both permanent and seasonal, contributing to the park's operations and cultural offerings (Kistefos SP 2025). On the other hand, from the annual report of YSP, in 2023, it has a total of 230 staff (149 FTE), including seasonal staff, across a wide range of specialisms (Yorkshire Sculpture Park 2023).

Statistically, employment in sculpture parks is presented and depicted across different dimensions. Large SPs employ up to 200 staff members year-round, while associations barely employ one person on a local, part-time basis. However, smaller SPs reliant on energetic volunteers hire a few people full-time during high season. Those aiming for a sculpture-specific career might obtain more permanent employment in larger SPs, where the entire range of occupations is available. Nonetheless, most employees work seasonally, during spring and summer.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper highlights SPs' significant role in inviting visitors to embark on a journey of discovery, particularly at the intersection of art and landscape, in innovative and

unexpected ways. Key takeaways include:

- SPs are integral to the local green infrastructure, offering thoughtfully designed landscapes contributing to environmental and ecological well-being.
- SPs wield considerable influence by uniting the community and offering various academic and recreational programs that bring people together and serve as important cultural and learning green open spaces.
- SPs are a powerful catalyst for cultural tourism, significantly enhancing the overall value and boosting the economy of the regions in which they are located.

According to O'Dwyer (2025), these green open spaces provide numerous benefits across various sectors. Their effective management and multifunctional role make them essential components of both cultural and natural landscapes.

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