

THE ROLE OF CULTURALLY – SPECIAL ARTIFACTS IN
SRI LANKA LANDSCAPE DESIGN.



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A dissertation submitted to the Department of Architecture University of Moratuwa in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science in Landscape Design 2011.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation represents own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously include in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university or to another institute for a degree, diploma or other qualification.



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A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Shiranee', written over a dotted line.

Prof. Shiranee Balasuriya
Supervisor MSc Disserataions

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Introduction

Landscape Architecture is the imaginative blend of art and science in the design of environments for people. As the world population is increasing and new problems are created that involves human living space, Architects, Landscape Architects have the task of transforming their needs into built form. In this regard, landscape Architecture provides a sense of place and support of all types of human activity. Landscape Architecture in particular, helps the man-made fit in harmony with the environment while promoting health and well-being, enriching lives aesthetically and spiritually, providing economic opportunities, and creating a legacy that reflects and symbolizes culture and traditions.

One of the most powerful elements in making a built landscape a meaningful space was the artifact. By definition, an artifact is “any object made by human beings, especially with a view to subsequent use” The particular use of artifacts had changed over the years, but the significance of an artifact has not lost ground. Landscape architecture has a long history and its gradual evolution might have influenced artifacts in a greater scale. In a similar way the trends in art were influential too. The first and foremost step in studying this use of artifacts should be to identify the changers and its causes.

Throughout history the landscape architecture of Sri Lanka changed and developed through many stages, with different socio-economic influence. The landscapes enhanced by such artifacts can be seen in historical sanctuaries, monasteries, parks and many other places round the country. In addition, artifacts, used in the historic periods of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Yapahuwa, Kurunegalla and Kotte, can be recognized with its usages, the ways of using these artifacts in landscapes can be also recognized according to those specific periods.

Presently, there can be seen a reduction of using artifacts in a meaningful way and many meaningless spaces appeared due to lack of knowledge in identifying meaning and the proper placement of them. Therefore there is a severe effect to experience the landscape and space which induces no meaning or positive experience in the human psyche. In terms of the study during a limited time frame it is necessary to follow the theories of space making and experiencing spaces. This study is an attempt to understand the significance of the landscape artifact and its manifestation in a meaningful landscape design. A literature study will be carried out for this as a base to analyze the case study which will be developed.



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