

Research on the Role of Contemporary Curators and Exhibition Space Analysis

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Abstract: With the rapid economic development and the continuous improvement of people's living standards, curators and exhibition planning have become an important part of the transformation of the contemporary Chinese art exhibition mechanism. The significance of art curators and effective exhibition planning has been recognized by the public, and a large number of art curators have emerged in this environment. The different ideas of curators are presented in various forms of art exhibition activities.

Keywords: Curator, Exhibition Planning, Culture, Space

1. Introduction

The intertwining of multiculturalism in today's society has influenced the previously unchanging patterns. Many curators have expressed during the curation process that an important job responsibility in the exhibition is how to effectively utilize culture, whether it's contemporary culture or historical culture from the past. At the same time, it's also necessary to think about and explore the most fundamental knowledge and academic positioning established by the planned exhibition. When a curator plans an exhibition in a certain place, it is necessary to start from the local background, comb through and establish a self under this background, and thus present this "self" in the exhibition. Art exhibitions not only examine the capabilities of the curator but also present different perspectives of art to the audience, thereby stimulating more possibilities for art and providing strong support for art education in our country.

2. The Status and Role of Curators

The development of modern society's art museums necessitates the integration of various cultural knowledge, international information, academic research, and contemporary brand exhibitions. Museums serve as repositories of historical and cultural knowledge, from which effective lessons can be drawn through their exhibitions and collections. This knowledge can be combined with the innovative creations of artists to comb through new artistic themes and discover new contexts. In the past, there was a severe shortage of professional curatorial staff in terms of both quantity and quality, leading to the practice of appointing well-known artists or academics as curators. As a result, curatorial activities formed a one-directional, top-down relationship with the public life [1]. However,

a complete exhibition requires curators to plan the content, clarify the theme, and liaise with artists, among other responsibilities.

2.1. Curators and the Exhibition Itself

A successful exhibition requires consultation between the curator and the artist, ensuring the artist's work aligns with the theme of the exhibition for the audience's appreciation. However, this linear artistic experience can sometimes leave the audience feeling disconnected from the artist, leading to a lack of intuitive understanding of the art. Although there is no single way to interpret art, this can result in people ceasing to reflect on the exhibition as soon as they leave, thereby erasing the original intent of the exhibition. The curator serves as the intermediary who connects these elements, ensuring each step blends seamlessly with the next.

Curators are responsible not only for coordinating the internal structure of the venue and its external environment but also for ensuring the exhibition's artistic and cultural level and its final effect. They must ensure the exhibition is well-planned and creative, while also discussing, evaluating, and making adjustments to the exhibition's outcomes to form a complete exhibition. The responsibility and obligations of art curators in an exhibition extend beyond merely planning the exhibition and utilizing space; it also involves publishing relevant art critiques. More importantly, curators must understand the exhibition's content, research artistic values, and even possess knowledge of multiple disciplines, as well as the skilled application of non-specialist knowledge that benefits curation. In some museum curations, curators need to understand ancient history and the exhibition's impact on society, culture, politics, and public thought.

2.2. The Curator's Own Challenges

With the rise of large exhibitions and public events, art colleges and museums have intensified their research on exhibitions and contemporary art. However, there is a lack of systematic, continuous research on art curation [2]. Planning an exhibition has become a systematic project in today's society, encompassing the use of space, academic methodologies, and various skills. The uniqueness of curatorial professionals includes the application of business management and social relations. "Curation" may just be the smallest component of the entire project, where management and social relations play an indispensable part in effectively conducting and promoting curatorial activities. What's more crucial in these projects is the curator's level of knowledge, cultural literacy, and skills in organizing, coordinating, and managing exhibitions. The entire process is complex and requires extensive knowledge, testing the curator's professional level and comprehensive knowledge. The abilities of curators can be summarized as follows: First, professional competence. Curators should have a high understanding and skilled application of their specialized knowledge and be able to discern art; second, business skills. Curators should be adept at social activities, frequently attend related business events, learn economic and management knowledge with a good understanding of it, have rich practical experience, and be familiar with operational processes; third, organizational skills. Curators should have strong management capabilities for the exhibition team and be able to effectively organize and coordinate the development of activities, as well as handle personnel deployment adeptly. They also play a significant role in promoting exhibition activities.

3. Analysis of Culture and Space in Exhibitions

Nowadays, exhibitions are not merely confined to an indoor space; they can take place anywhere. The act of curating can be a means of expressing emotions or spreading culture. Curators create a discursive space in the venue that focuses on engaging viewers in reflection on history and dialogue participation [3]. In the process of actively developing the art market, art curation has become one of

the key elements in constructing and innovating culture, providing good artistic enlightenment and education to the public. It is a spiritual product that highly matches the demands of the times [4].

3.1. Taking the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute's Graduation Exhibition as an Example

Observing the 2022 Sichuan Fine Arts Institute Graduation Exhibition, the external architecture of the exhibition remains a popular spot for social media check-ins. The building's exterior serves as a draw for some visitors, especially those from out of town. Inside, the exhibition is divided by undergraduate, graduate, and teacher sections, and further subdivided by type of work. Sloped areas within the museum are also utilized for exhibitions, with installation art arranged in corners. The use of lighting in installations emphasizes their focal areas, while lighting for paintings is more orderly. The work "Gourmet Feast" explores the relationship between people and objects, using warm and cool tones to express the artist's feelings about food, addressing the contemporary hot topic of young people's dieting and weight loss. This piece is placed in an area frequented by young people. In the graduate section, several small rooms are used for installation art, which is more intricate and space-consuming. Even outdoor installations are present. Although a small room may only have two or three pieces of installation art, they integrate well together. A downside is that the artworks are too closely packed, causing inconvenience for the continuous flow of visitors. Despite a rule limiting the number of visitors per hour, many spend a lot of time inside appreciating, photographing, and resting, meaning sometimes a piece of art may not achieve its intended effect.

3.2. Taking the Chengdu Contemporary Image Museum as an Example

In the era of globalization, museums worldwide use world exhibitions and the multidimensional "Internet + Chinese Civilization" communication system to continuously integrate the imprint and thought values of their own traditional regional culture, while also segmenting audiences around the world for better effect [5]. Taking the Chengdu Contemporary Image Museum as an example, each exhibition is not large, allowing visitors to view several exhibitions at once. For instance, the exhibition at Pavilion A showcases Henri Cartier-Bresson in 1937, housing the largest collection of works by the father of modern photojournalism. The exhibition features an installation that visitors can sit on, which is a major highlight and tribute to his classic work "The Coronation of King George VI". The exhibition hall is brightly lit with white walls, and the photographic works are arranged in size, neat and orderly. In Pavilion B, "Me and You: Eric Sos" displays most of his works shot with large format cameras, featuring delicate images with a sense of space and intriguing focus choices. The exhibition's wall background is a soft nude pink, with most works being color portraits of gentle Western women. The exhibition layout softens the scenery and increases the distance between works, with one wall dedicated to a single piece, drawing the audience's attention. Barriers were reconfigured inside the museum to reduce the original scope, but it does not feel cramped. The artwork frames are thin and black, blending more appropriately with the images. Pavilion C's "Brazil: A Convergence of Images" showcases video shorts created by 14 Brazilian artists and their teams, reflecting the diversity of Brazilian and contemporary culture. The overall ambiance is dark, with only the artworks illuminated, projected quietly yet powerfully, and the enclosed space allows viewers to immerse themselves. The visual effects are not harsh, with one whole wall displaying a single work, drawing more attention than other exhibits. The downside is that the dim lighting can lead to visitors accidentally bumping into each other.

4. Conclusion

Exhibitions are not only aimed at the youth; with the continuous improvement of art education today, children's art education has also attracted everyone's attention. Through museum exhibition education,

children experience the awakening of self-awareness and the growth of independent individuals, forming positive and healthy interactions between children, families, and society. At the same time, this also places higher demands on the current stage of museum children's audience education capability building and research in our country [6]. Of course, this is also an area that needs to be developed with emphasis after the gradual improvement of curators and exhibition planning.

Art museums today are places that preserve various works of art and are temples of art. Curators subtly play a guiding role within them, using art museums or other exhibition venues to cultivate the public's aesthetics. People will naturally accept things they would not have accepted before and will form certain self-views about art. Giving a concept and letting the audience interpret the work based on the concept is actually a form of misdirection. It should be open and allow them to feel for themselves [7]. While planning exhibitions, curators can also promote the in-depth development of artists' artistic creations. Through continuous exploration and understanding of the surroundings, artists can better engage in divergent thinking and better integrate themselves into the current creation, thereby creating works that are in line with the theme and have deep connotations.

As people's demand for the spiritual world significantly increases, the general public has higher expectations for spiritual fulfillment. Actively keeping pace with the times, updating the range and content of services, can attract more attention from the audience, showcasing the value and role of art museums [8]. While organizing exhibitions, curators and museum directors need to consider the actual conditions of the venue, local culture, and local policies. Starting from the museum's characteristics, cultural heritage, and the themes of the exhibitions, it is essential to expand research and exploration of the museum's exhibition functions and areas. This approach meets the needs of audiences with different levels and interests.

In terms of curation, modifications to the exhibition hall should focus on the audience's experience. For example, attention should be paid to wall color coordination, the warm and cold colors of lighting should be adjusted based on the works, and whether the design of stairs is convenient or a hindrance. The appropriate use of dark or light colors within the space also tests the curator's sense of aesthetics and sensitivity to color. The convenience and visibility of QR code introductions to the works should also be properly considered. For certain installation art pieces, curators need to consider whether to use separate spaces to avoid the sound and color of one piece affecting the viewing experience of others. This includes the decoration of carpets and curtains, all of which require careful consideration by the curator.

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