

A Curatorial Perspective and Operating Procedure for the Viewing Experience Needs of a New Era, and the Enlargement of the Population Base of Calligraphy

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Origin and Abstract

For a long time, the curation of most traditional calligraphy exhibitions has lacked consideration of the viewing experience, often resulting in wonderful works being buried in a large exhibition hall or among a vast array of works, with no way to display the various aspects and multiple layers of calligraphy in a comprehensive manner. In contrast, the thorough curation of art exhibitions today allow visitors to gradually accumulate a basic knowledge of and a way of appreciating art, even though most of them do not have a background in the study of art. As for traditional calligraphy exhibitions, visitors are mostly the students or the calligraphy club friends of the featured calligrapher, and it seems difficult to expand the audience beyond these circles. If one talks to young art lovers—those so-called hipsters—about impressive calligraphy exhibitions from recent years, works of Taiwanese calligrapher — Tong Yang-Tze or Chinese calligrapher — Xu Bing, will be the first thing that is mentioned, or some other contemporary works of ink with strong innovative elements.

However, is that the only way to promote calligraphy? There's nothing wrong with it if it is the result of one's creative temperament, or if one is focused on the effectiveness of the exhibition. But not necessarily! That is because I also see many calligraphers who can still create something new based on the traditional rules of calligraphy. If we look at it from the perspective of promoting calligraphy culture, we cannot remain unaware of the contemporary audience's ardent desire for a fulfilling exhibition experience, otherwise calligraphy will continue to languish on the sidelines with the number of people able to appreciate it becoming less and less, even though professional calligraphers are working diligently as usual.

Based on my personal experience of curating exhibitions in the past few years, I would like to, humbly, propose specific strategies that correspond to specific aspects of the planning of exhibitions, so that calligraphy exhibitions can provide suitable things to appreciate for visitors of different levels of fa-

miliarity with the art form. Optimizing the sophistication of the curation of calligraphy exhibitions and enhancing the effectiveness of promotion will expand the population base of calligraphy enthusiasts, and increase the effectiveness of expenses in government-owned venues.

In this article, I will set aside for the time being contemporary works of calligraphy that possess a high degree of visual tension and exhibition effect, and specifically focus on exhibitions of traditional calligraphy. Although there are still many commentators who question whether a difference ought to be made between traditional and innovative calligraphy, or between contemporary and non-contemporary calligraphy, numerous masters have investigated the profound topic already. Therefore, this article will begin its exploration from the perspective of ordinary viewers. If “textual art” and “pictorial art” were placed on two sides of the scales, the article would lean toward the side of textual art, where calligraphy resides, and discuss as well as make suggestions for curating an exhibition of calligraphic works. To avoid making this article so long that it could be a manual, the detailed specifications of exhibition setups has been abridged for now.

I. Art is Gaining Viewers While Calligraphy is Losing Them

In recent years, Taiwan’s art and culture industry has grown and prospered, in commercial and in academic aspects. Everyone from art professionals to the general public can see a wide range of exhibitions competing for attention; well-known curators and artists occupy media headlines more often than ever; instances of artists granting licensing and expanding their business opportunities also occur more frequently. At the same time, there is almost a complete saturation in the distribution of art and culture venues. Even cities and towns that did not have professional venues will have them constructed and ready for use one by one over the next few years. One example is Taoyuan City, where the Hengshan Calligraphy Art Center and the Taoyuan Museum of Fine Arts will soon be inaugurated.

However, despite this trend of increasing cultural density in our lives, calligraphy patrons have gradually decreased, and the number of people studying calligraphy has been lessening over the years. This is due to several reasons, including technological development and the way modern life is lived, but I find, through participating in the curation of and viewing exhibitions, that the more crucial reason lies in the public having different demands for the exhibition than before¹. Compared to the past when visiting an exhibition was a leisure activity or a way to spend one’s vacation, today’s visitors are no longer satisfied with the superficial visual experience presented by the works in an exhibition. They are more concerned with gaining knowledge and a quality experience in a highly-efficient manner within a limited time frame. For visitors who are more and more demanding of an enriching experience, things such as facts related to the works, the artist’s creative process and techniques, experiences and traits unique to the artist, and even the curator’s perspective and planning all contribute to creating a multi-faceted experience for them.

On the contrary, apart from the quasi-contemporary expressions of calligraphy that have appeared in recent years and become media focal points because they draw the eye by presenting the art in peculiar formats, you can only see rows upon rows of ink characters in most traditional calligraphy exhibitions.

However much skill and vitality that those works may have, they are all lost to the viewer because of old-fashioned exhibition planning that fails to consider the viewing experience. After taking a look around an exhibition hall filled with mounted scrolls that exude nothing but an antiquated charm, bewildered viewers can only sign their names in the guestbook as a sign of respect and leave, with what I fear is a perpetual disinterest in calligraphy from that point forward.

The cultivation of a calligrapher stems from Chinese tradition; it is a long and hard process of classic training and self-refinement, while an exhibition is geared towards the masses. There is a profound difference between the quality of the two, which often makes it difficult for a calligrapher to think about an exhibition from the perspective of the viewer and to cultivate curatorial expertise, unlike artists in Western and contemporary art.

For this reason, calligraphy exhibitions have grown increasingly distant from the vividness of current art fairs of all genres over the years. Today, the decline of calligraphy has made the target audience of calligraphy exhibitions even more niche. Many of the elements commonly seen in contemporary curation are missing from domestic calligraphy exhibitions, which only serves to make the public unconsciously distance themselves from appreciating the art of calligraphy and the opportunity to participate and learn.

II. Levels of Appreciation and Experience Design for the Art of Calligraphy

To create an excellent exhibition experience, one cannot ignore the behavior patterns of visitors in an exhibition venue. By observing and analyzing these patterns, one can design a proper display method for artworks. In the past, several scholars have indicated that there are three aspects which affect visitors' behavior.²

- Display Perspective – The Content and Quality of Display
- Visitor Perspective – The Perception and Experience from Visitors
- Environmental Perspective – Environment and Atmosphere in the Exhibition Venue

Curators will focus on one of the aforementioned perspectives based on the different types of venues or exhibition themes. Calligraphy is a visual art exhibited in art museums, and thus its exhibition design focuses on visuals. Cultural morphology is related to history and culture; if visitors become better informed about the history of calligraphy, their appreciation of calligraphy works will be enhanced. Tools used in calligraphy—brush, ink, inkstone and papers—are different from those in painting or sculpture, they are more akin to the presentation of craft museums and are essential for creating an environment and the atmosphere therein. Despite being regarded as old-fashioned, traditional, and boring, presently, Chinese calligraphy transforms into a type of artistic element that allows for great creativity in curating.

The aesthetics of calligraphy can be analyzed in many layers from the above mentioned. In addition to the medium, technique, connotation, and the artist's style and spirit, which are of interest to Western art lovers, works of calligraphy are already rich in elements of appreciation, from the meaning of the text to the meaning of the calligraphic form. To the viewer, the cognitive and experiential levels of a work of calligraphy are divided into the following elements, each being profound than its predecessor.

- Recognition of the text and appreciation of its meaning (Display Perspective)
- Recognition of the script (Display Perspective)
- The strokes, style, and structure of each script (Display & Visitor Perspective)
- Overall placement and distribution of characters (Display & Visitor Perspective)
- Depiction of the inscription (Visitor Perspective)
- The text and the location of the seal (Visitor Perspective)
- The ink and the paper that was selected for use (Visitor Perspective)
- Mounting technique, damask backing and color coordination (Environmental Perspective)

The above elements, the way they correspond to viewer experience, and the relevant planning and design are described below:

1. Recognition of the text and appreciation of its meaning

The greatest difference between calligraphy and art that is simply composed of lines is the readability of the text. In exploring the many discussions on contemporary calligraphy, we often see readability being mentioned as an intangible threshold that makes it difficult for calligraphy to become a part of contemporary art. However, from the perspective of the viewer, the presence of meaning and readability is not only not a limitation, but a driving force in promoting the appreciation of calligraphy.

Calligraphy is text, yet not just text. The appreciation of text that has been “beautified” as well as the relationship between the form of the characters—imbued by the calligrapher—and the original meaning of the characters provides a convenient way to approach calligraphy and a source of accomplishment for those who are new to calligraphy. Even foreign visitors who do not understand Chinese can look past calligraphy's line-art surface and appreciate the meaning and poetry of the text through its translation, opening the door to their appreciation of the aesthetics of calligraphy.

Therefore, we can see that the first level of appreciation of the aesthetics of calligraphy begins with having viewers understand what the text means. On the object labels of the works of calligraphy, there would be a *shiwén*, or explanation of the text. Texts in scripts such as clerical script or regular script are easily recognizable, but if it is written in ancient literary Chinese, then the modern viewer will need punctuation and breaks as reading aids. Moreover, works written in seal

script or cursive script will be difficult to read for those who have not learned about calligraphy to a certain extent. Even though the cursive script still has its rules, it offers greater room for the expression of the calligrapher's emotions and spirit, or the use of a unique composition that the calligrapher wishes to create, thus making the text even more difficult to read. Therefore, to curators, a complete and easily accessible presentation of the texts' explanation will determine the ultimate number of visitors at the exhibition. Please refer to Table 1: Visitors and Their Effect on Increase in Attendance

Table 1: Visitors and Their Effect on Increase in Attendance					
	First-tier Viewer	Second-tier Viewer	Third-tier Viewer	Fourth-tier Viewer	
Source of Viewer	Invited VIPs, veteran calligraphers, calligraphy students and disciples	Calligraphy enthusiasts, long-time learners of calligraphy, galleries, researchers	Teachers of calligraphy classes, students studying Chinese in universities, beginners in calligraphy	People who like traditional Chinese culture and ancient literature, friends and family of calligraphers	
Visitor Influence	First wave of viewers at the opening	The first 80 each get 5 people to visit	Every person in the second-tier gets 3 people to visit	Every person in the third-tier gets 2 people to visit	
Number	80 people	$80 \times 5 = 400$ people	$400 \times 3 = 1200$ people	$1200 \times 2 = 2400$ people	Total number of visitors 4080 people
Perspective of Appreciation / Focus	1. The uniqueness of the calligrapher 2. Placement and distribution of characters 3. Inscriptions and seals 4. Selection of paper and ink 5. Craftsmanship of mounting	1. Technique and structure of characters 2. Placement and distribution of characters 3. Inscriptions and seals 4. Process of creation	1. Appreciation of the text and its meaning 2. Technique and structure of characters 3. Inscriptions and seals	1. Recognition of the script 2. Appreciation of the text and its meaning	

To this date, the object labels in most art exhibition venues are to the point so as to not affect the viewing of the artwork itself; sometimes, they are even shrunk to the greatest possible extent or removed. Yet it is impossible for such succinct object labels to present a clear explanation of the text if they are used for calligraphy. However, in order to include a complete explanation of the text in the label, then the label must be enlarged to a certain extent, and the distance between the label and the artwork must be large enough to avoid affecting the viewing of the work itself,

which in turn may reduce the number of works that can be displayed in an exhibition space.

For adequate format and size in labels, I have some suggestions. According to my experience from actual practice, if the amount of text is within 30 characters, then using 18pt font (about 6mm wide) can provide good readability at a distance of 1.5–2 meters, and the size of the label can be kept within the size of an A5 sheet of paper (148mm × 210mm), which will not drastically affect the viewing of the works or the capacity of the venue.(fig.1)

If the explanations are more extensive, then don't paste the labels on the wall; instead, use small easels to present the explanations of the texts. Place the easel 2–2.5 meters in front of the work. It allows the viewers to read the explanation easily and carefully without affecting the complete presentation of the work or the visitor flow. To avoid collisions tipping the easel over, the bottom of the easel can be fixed to the ground with transparent silicone adhesives or double-sided masking tape, both of which can be easily removed.

2. Recognition of the script

Although it is easy to see which script is used in a work of calligraphy, for a viewer new to the world of calligraphy, becoming acquainted with scripts is the start of understanding and appreciating the art form's development. Therefore, curators need to indicate clearly on the label what script type was used. In exhibitions that show the work of students of calligraphy, the titles of the original inscriptions that they made a copy of can be put onto the label, so that those who are learning calligraphy can have specific benchmarks and learning objectives.

3. The strokes, style, and structure of each script

At this level, one comes to the range between the external and the internal of the artwork, which is the part that most visitors to a calligraphy exhibition will primarily appreciate. Those who have studied calligraphy for some time, or those who visit because they are interested in writing calligraphy, will especially pay attention to the technique and the strength of the strokes in the artworks.

Whether an exhibition is showing the work of one calligrapher or the work of different artists together, the difference in technique and strength of strokes is something to be considered and used when arranging the placement of individual works. For example, if works using the same script but different brush work are placed next to each other, visitors can compare the two when they visit the exhibition. The guided tour can also use the introduction of individual works to link different works or different calligraphers in the exhibition venue together through an analysis on technique and strength of strokes so as to offer a viewing experience rich with knowledge and context.

4. Overall placement and distribution of characters

Placement and distribution display the calligrapher's skill and creative spirit. The combination of technique and stroke strength with placement and distribution can also help to portray the connotation and mood of the text. For instance, calligraphers use different font styles and characters to write various types of poetries from Li Bai. In the exhibition venue, the element most relevant to viewing an artwork is the viewing distance, which also affects the arrangement of visitor flow.

Curators should discuss with calligraphers the placement, distribution, and characteristics of their works to determine the appropriate viewing distance for each and every work. In general, though, large-sized works will naturally cause the viewer to step back and look at it from afar, while small-sized works will make people want to take a closer look. However, the viewing distance of an artwork does not necessarily depend on its size, so it is necessary to consider the density of the work's "message". For example, if a calligrapher wrote a Buddhist sutra with a great amount of characters, the font would be relatively small and neatly arranged, but the size of the finished work would be very large. If you look at it from too far away, you will only see dense dabs of ink; you will not be able to tell what has actually been written, nor can you see the work's technique or the structure of the characters.

For a work of calligraphy, the density of the message is not only related to the number of characters but also decided by the density of the placement and distribution of characters; furthermore, the density of the message determines the most appropriate viewing distance for a certain work. Therefore, if there is too big of a difference in the density of characters between works placed next to each other along the visitor viewing route, the viewers will have to keep adjusting their focus and viewing distance from near to far as they move from one work to the next, not realizing that it is increasing their fatigue. If there is a large number of viewers, it will also cause conflicts in the visitor flow. Therefore, properly arranging works with similar placement and distribution next to each other will allow the viewer to keep the same distance from each work within a certain section, and it will effectively enhance the viewing experience and comfort.

5. Depiction of the inscription

Inscriptions include information about the source of the text, how the calligrapher felt when creating the work, the art name that the calligrapher chose, and the words that they picked to put in the record of the date, time, and the solar term. Thus, inscriptions are very important for the study of a calligrapher and the evolution of his or her works. However, since most inscriptions use the semi-cursive or cursive script, viewers who are not proficient in calligraphy often find it difficult to discern what they are saying, and in turn lose a valuable entry point to the appreciation of

the work. Therefore, the curator must indicate clearly what is written in the *kuanshi*, or inscription, on the work's label, so that the audience can include it in their appreciation of the work; only then can a work of calligraphy and its creator be appreciated in their entirety.

6. The text and the location of the seal

Calligraphers usually study seal carving as well, so they would never omit that detail, small as it may be. Many calligraphers carve their own seals, and teachers of calligraphy would often receive seals made for them since they teach countless students and build connections far and wide. An exhibition of calligraphy is a great opportunity to see all the seals of the calligrapher in one place. The seal includes the calligraphers' art name, their state of mind when they created the work, and their aspirations for themselves. It is a part of the artwork, and also an important source of verification when someone wants to see if an artwork is the original.

However, it is rare to see a curator take the trouble to handle such an important element. There are some calligraphers who wish to keep quiet about the seals in their collection because they were made by famous artists. Even though the seal can be seen on the works of calligraphy, they still want to avoid unwanted attention. Other than that, the curator should verify the seals used for each work with the calligrapher and design an appropriate presentation method. An enlarged version of the seal could be put on the labels, or a special space could be set up in the exhibition venue to display the calligrapher's seals and the text that is on them.

7. The ink and the paper that was selected for use

For calligraphers or veteran calligraphy enthusiasts visiting calligraphy exhibitions, the aforementioned techniques, placement of characters, inscriptions, and seals are the basic elements of a good work. This group of professional appreciators of calligraphy make more detailed and in-depth observations of the artworks, including whether the right type of ink was used, and whether the right type of paper was chosen for the format of the work. Through the ink color, we can observe the calligrapher's technique in selecting and using ink, and even his or her experience in searching for and collecting types of ink. Looking at the paper used, one can observe the calligrapher's experience and attention, and better imagine the calligrapher's pursuit for a better atmosphere in which to write calligraphy.

If the name of the ink and the paper used for the work could be included on the label or in the guidebook, it would lead the visitor on an exploration to dig for more profound knowledge of calligraphy and enhance their ability to appreciate it, even if the average viewer has yet to reach that level of understanding about the art form. It would also make an exhibition more valuable for research and attract calligraphy scholars from all over the world. If it is an exhibition held at the commercial art avenue, these labels also can promote calligraphy tools indirectly.

8. Mounting technique, damask backing and color coordination

Works of calligraphy must be mounted before they can be officially exhibited. Even though paintings also need to be framed, one can see many exhibitions in which unframed paintings are simply shown as such in recent years, whereas traditional works of calligraphy are almost never exhibited without mounting. For works of calligraphy, they must go through a backing process before they can be sent into a studio to be photographed. Afterwards, all the mounting must be completed before the works can be moved into the exhibition venue for display.

The mounting of calligraphy should be considered as a part of the work and an element to be used during curation. In a recent exhibition of a calligrapher's works that I handled in Taoyuan, the colors of the damask were synchronized with the script style. Although the works in the exhibition venue were arranged according to a different logical sequence, the viewers could search for works in a specific script simply by looking at the color of the mounting in the large exhibition hall, which was very helpful to the viewers in navigating the exhibition and to the learners of calligraphy who visited for self-study. During the set-up of the exhibition as well as when the exhibition was over and the works were returned to the calligrapher, the coloring system made it easier for the calligrapher to organize the works.

Some calligraphers care about the compatibility of the mounting material with the artwork, while some leave the decision entirely to the mounting master. Since traditional mounting takes several weeks to a few months, the use of high-quality mounting materials such as damask takes up a large part of the exhibition cost. As the number of traditional mounting workshops is decreasing and those that are left vary in skill level, one can often find cases of poor mounting in works of calligraphy on display in exhibitions, such as works with curling, wrinkly, or unevenly pasted damask; or poor color coordination with the work itself. Therefore, curators must think of the big picture when planning the exhibition budget. Do not be careless with the mounting, otherwise a wonderful work will be greatly reduced. It would not only harm the image of the calligrapher but also impact the value of the work in the art market in the future.

In addition, if the curator does not discuss the mounting format with the mounting master beforehand, it may not match the artwork. For example, if you are working with an artwork that has multiple panels, space for a border should be left on the first and last panels but not on the middle panels to ensure that the assembled work flows continuously. In some cases, a series of works may have each panel separately inscribed and stamped with a seal; those should be mounted separately. As for the color of the mounting, it depends on the content of the artworks. If different colors are used, they should be able to match, ensuring that they relate to and do not interfere with one another. If no attention is paid to the mounting format, and standalone works are mounted as though they were part of a series of panels and vice versa, it will be troublesome for the viewers when they are trying to appreciate and interpret the works, and that will affect people's assessment of their quality.

III. Other curatorial elements related to the overall quality of the exhibition: Number of works, placement planning, lighting arrangement, design of the exhibition area, opening ceremony discourse

1. Number of works

In the past, most visitors stay in calligraphy exhibitions for only a short time due to the exhibitions' lack of the aforementioned planning, more or less. So to keep visitors there longer, calligraphy exhibitions often increase the number of works on display as much as possible. However, as I mentioned before, viewers did not leave quickly because there were not enough works to see, but because they did not get a good experience out of their visit.

Earlier than 1916, Benjamin Ives Gilman spoke about the "Museum Fatigue" phenomenon in the *Scientific Monthly*, stating that an undesirable display will induce fatigue in visitors³. After conducting several studies at museums in the United States, in 1933, Melton pointed out that when the museum visitors begin feeling slight to mild mental and physical exhaustion during their visit, they will have a hard time concentrating on displays, and will head towards the exit in a shorter time.⁴

If the aforementioned elements of viewing were properly taken care of, the number of works on display could in fact be reduced by a lot. For one, it would reduce the cost of mounting and photography; second, it allows the viewers to see more profound layers to the works.

In planning the number of calligraphic works to be displayed, we must not forget that the general public base their appreciation upon the recognition of text and meaning, so the number of words that the viewers can read in a certain amount of time must be considered, along with the time needed to appreciate the placement and distribution of the characters as well as other details of each work. The optimum number of works to be displayed can be calculated by setting the number of hours for a complete viewing to one to two hours.

Even if we wish for visitors to make another visit, we can not rely on numbers alone. Rather, we should work on creating a good experience and depth to presentation of the works so as to attract experienced visitors to come back again and again.

2. Placement Planning

In the aforementioned part about placement and distribution, it was noted that each work has its own appropriate viewing distance, and that arranging for works with the same viewing distance to be placed in consecutive order can produce a route that is comfortable for the viewer. Here, considering the fact that works of calligraphy are often based on poems and songs written by the literati of ancient times, I propose another strategy in the arrangement of artworks.

For example, I participated in the planning of a solo exhibition of a calligrapher in Taoyuan a while ago. Since Tang and Song Dynasty poetry was a favorite subject of the calligrapher, during the curation process, we discussed having the works arranged according to how Tang and Song Dy-

nasty literati were connected. For example, the calligrapher has several works based on the poems of Li Bai, who often mentioned Xie Tiao in his poetry and was a great admirer of his Jian'an style, so we decided to place the works based on Xie Tiao's poetry and the ones based on Li Bai's together. Although a generation apart, Xie Tiao and Xie Lingyun were from the same family and both were known for their talent; therefore, the works based on Xie Lingyun's poetry were placed next to the ones based on Xie Tiao's. In addition, as Wang Wei and Pei Di once retreated into seclusion together and were each other's mentor and friend, the artworks based on their work were placed next to each other as well. Such an arrangement also manages to stagger works of different scripts so as to avoid boring the viewer.

Although the arrangement is based on literary connections, it does not detract from the calligraphers' creative spirit and the meaning of their works, since calligraphy is the reiteration and re-presentation of culture; rather, it allows viewers to have a clearer idea of the calligraphers' source materials and speculate on the context in which they created their works. In addition, when elementary and junior high school teachers take their students to visit a calligraphy exhibition, they can give a guided tour to help the children appreciate the ancient literati and gain an understanding of the history of literature in addition to visiting a calligraphy exhibition. This would entice children who do not yet have the ability to appreciate calligraphy to enter its world.

3. Lighting Arrangement

Most works of calligraphy are vertical and narrow, but sometimes calligraphers also create works that are horizontal, square, and fan-shaped. Even ink paintings of *qingong* (tabletop decorations) and of flowers and birds have horizontal ones. However, the lighting in exhibition venues generally give a circular projection of light, except for those rare few that have special lights. This means only about one-third to one-half of vertical and horizontal works will be illuminated. If the track lighting is farther away from the artwork, then the wall will be illuminated more evenly, but if the lighting is not bright enough, the exhibition space will appear dull and blurry.

Ideally (except for square-shaped and fan-shaped works, which would be better suited to a single light), two lights are required to evenly illuminate vertical or horizontal artworks. As for lumens and wattage, the parameters are more complicated due to the differences between traditional halogen lamps and LEDs, but curators should refer to the information on lumens and throw distance that all lighting manufacturers provide, and the overall pre-planned brightness of the exhibition space to plan the overall lighting design.

Usually, painting exhibitions pay considerable attention to the color of the lights. However, most calligraphy exhibitions do not pay attention to this aspect of holding an exhibition. Sometimes, I see light bulbs of different color temperatures in the exhibition venue at the same time. Because of this, curators must investigate beforehand the specifications of the lighting fixtures avail-

able in the venue, and even if they have to make do with lighting in different color temperatures, they must arrange for the lighting to be placed in appropriate places so as to avoid having different-colored lighting scattered throughout the venue. Since ink paintings typically have a more subdued color scheme than Western acrylic or watercolor paintings, the use of lighting with high color rendering index allows for the strokes and colors of ink paintings to look richer and fuller. Even in the case of calligraphy, color rendering is still helpful in the presentation of the different shades of ink. Therefore, if one were to curate a calligraphy exhibition that could be considered as exquisite, the use of lighting is the key to demonstrating the importance of the curator's role.

4. Design of the Exhibition Area

During the long period of time it took to cultivate one's talent in calligraphy, calligraphers must have accumulated a variety of experiences, and grown old with them. Curators ought to use the entire exhibition space to plan multiple exhibition areas and create a visitor flow that has chapters, rhythm, and breaks, as if one were reading a book. Using a calligrapher's exhibition in Taoyuan that I participated in recently as an example (please refer to Figure 2: Plan of the Visitor Flow within the Exhibition Space), the exhibition was divided into sections, starting with the influences that the calligrapher received while training with renowned masters, followed by the calligrapher's process of learning by emulating the works of famous calligraphers for many years; then the period of great creative energy doing semi-cursive and cursive calligraphy; and finally to the calligrapher's later years painting landscapes, flowers, and birds, all of which forming a unique look into the calligrapher. The works are placed in different areas in accordance with the above-mentioned context, so that when viewers see the exhibits along the arranged route, they will not only see scrolls of calligraphy but also participate in the growth of the calligrapher over the years. Because of the multiple layers we have planned for this exhibition, even if visitors return to the exhibition repeatedly, they will still be able to see something new in the landscape of calligraphy.

5. Opening Ceremony Discourse

The planning and scheduling of the opening ceremony will be the crucial to the overall number of visitors, the effects of which can be seen in Table 1. The effects of holding any exhibition or event are formed gradually and cumulatively by the influence of each tier of viewers. Through the initial dozens of VIP guests, the benefits will eventually culminate into thousands of visitors, the source of which lies in the planning of the opening ceremony.

Of all the opening ceremonies I have seen, regardless of whether they are public sector exhibitions or private ones, they always include a performance, speeches, a live calligraphy performance, or even a quiz with prizes. Lastly, refreshments are offered to the guests and the visitors, and that's the end of a lively opening ceremony. While it is important to create a joyful atmosphere for the opening

to delight all visitors, it is unlikely that a “program” that has nothing to do with the content of the exhibition will be of any real benefit to the overall effectiveness of the exhibition. Although the program and speeches still need to be included, I suggest that the main focus of the opening ceremony should be discourse. Most of the invited guests are veterans and renowned masters in the field of calligraphy, who are influential in the promotion and teaching of the art form. It is vital for the promotion of the exhibition to show these guests what to recommend or what is special about this exhibition while they are all gathered together for the opening.

The presentation of the discourse can be designed, and do not always have to be serious and lengthy. Through a clear and lively speech about the concept of the exhibition, we can convey the characteristics of the artworks in a concise and powerful manner; or, through a dialog between the curator, artists, and calligraphers on current issues in calligraphy, we can gather the important highlights of the exhibition. Only through the recommendation of the first tier of guests can the number of visitors increase after the opening ceremony.

IV. Creating more appreciation for calligraphy through collaboration with curators

With the rapid development of the art market came multiple demands being made on curators, as well as multiple parties being reliant on them. Thus, curators and artists are beginning to compete with each other for fame and prestige. The curator’s role sometimes overshadow that of the artist and the artworks, even impacting artistic freedom by taking charge of marketing. As a result, there have been many voices advocating a review of the role of the curator ⁵.

On the other hand, however, the role and the function of the curator in domestic calligraphy exhibitions is still limited and has yet to be fully realized. It is clear from the above that a professional curator can help a calligrapher resolve many issues in an exhibition, and it is only through collaboration with a curator that the essence of the calligrapher’s creativity can be fully expressed. Therefore, now is precisely the time when it is necessary for calligraphers and curators to work closely together and have discussions. Through mutual understanding and collaboration, complemented by professional and good-quality venues and equipment, they will be able to keep pace with others in passing down the great tradition of East Asian calligraphy, remaining unperturbed by the impact of contemporary exhibitions. There would be no need to follow in the steps of others and create strong visual effects simply for show, or to make oneself anxious through manipulations of new mediums. Through refined curation, we can help calligraphers pass down our cultural heritage and help it make sense in today’s world. In the process of engaging the viewer in sincere dialog, we can gradually cultivate opportunities for innovation for the art of calligraphy, and usher in a new era of exhibition experience for calligraphy in Taiwan.

Notes

- 1 Li, Yi-Wen. "Cultural Consumption Behavior from the Expertial Marketing View: Blockbuster in Taiwan." Diss. National Taiwan University, 2005.
- 2 John H. Falk, John J., Koran Jr., Lynn D. Dierking, and Lewis Dreblow. "Predicting Visitor Behavior." Trans. Liu Ho-Yih. *Museology Quarterly*, Vol.2(4) (1988), pp.11-15.
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