

# On the Relationship Between Art Curator and Audience

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**Abstract:** In the current art market system, curators are no longer just an accessory to an exhibition, they have become an indispensable part of the contemporary art market. As the soul of the exhibition, whether from the choice of the artist, the positioning of the work, the way of presentation and the audience they need to face, are the problems they must consider. Among a series of issues that curators should consider, the most important thing is how to deal with the relationship between them and the audience, Curators not only need to shoulder the responsibility of bringing the audience to the arts, but also to decompose the arts for the audience. As a curator, he should have a good academic background, not pay too much attention to the commercial nature of the exhibition, but need to extract the core soul of the artist's works in a variety of interesting forms. On the basis of deeply digging the connotation of the work, when the curator really considers himself as an audience to plan and appreciate the exhibition, an exhibition is more likely to resonate and think about the audience. How to make the audience better appreciate and understand an exhibition is one of the important factors in evaluating the success of the exhibition.

## 1. Introduction

Who is the curator? The director? The producer? Or an exhibition babysitter? When this foreign word is rampant in China, perhaps many people do not understand its true 'identity'. The word "curator" originated from the English "curator" and first appeared in Europe in the 17th century. The early curators were responsible for organizing special exhibitions or art exhibitions according to different times and themes subdivided by museums. After the 18th century, the curators gradually developed into professionals in the custody and display of works of art."In the mid-1990s, the curatorial industry also appeared in China. However, at that time, people did not know the concept of curator, but just knew that it evolved from the identity of the exhibition planner, and the specific concept of it was not very clear".<sup>[1]</sup>In the current era, the role of curators has gradually become no longer unfamiliar. For curators, they not only need to communicate well between artists, exhibitors and collectors, but more importantly, they should consider the audience's perception of others as much as possible, so that the social value of artists' works can be extended.

## 2. Bringing Audiences to Art

### 2.1. Role Orientation of Curators

The curator should be both the planner and implementer of an exhibition, and he shoulders the task of overall coordination and in-depth details. Japanese scholar Toshio Sasaki mentioned in his book *The Curatorial Age*, "The so-called curator, in Japan, refers to the administrators of museums and art galleries. It collects information on various works of art from around the world. Collecting works of art together, such as temporary borrowing, gives a sense of connection, and curates exhibitions to the world. This is the job of the curator."<sup>[2]</sup>The work of curators is more like a behind-the-scenes promoter, and they usually have to carefully consider the whole preparation process of the exhibition. From the conception of the plan to the collection of exhibits and then to the organization of the exhibition, they are linked together, in which they act as the core figures to promote the whole process of the exhibition. But they should not be too high-profile because they want to show the story

of the artist and share the beauty and emotion of the work for the audience. In an exhibition, they must act as a bridge to keep in touch with the artist, the work and the audience, so as to put the audience in the overall image of the exhibition.

## 2.2. How to Attract Audiences

On the one hand, if you want to organize an exhibition well, you should have a good academic background as a curator. They should have an in-depth understanding of the artist and his work before curating, and be able to determine a clear exhibition theme and clear positioning of the exhibition. A good exhibition positioning can fully stimulate the interest of the audience, let the audience really understand the entire exhibition, and understand the core connotation of the exhibition. La Biennale di Venezia is an art festival with a history of hundreds of years. The previous themes have paid more attention to the relationship between art and nature, society and human beings. Art and culture of different countries collided and exchanged in the exhibition.

For example, the 54th La Biennale di Venezia held in 2011, The theme of the China Pavilion exhibition curated by Peng Feng's team is "Diffuse", making the most contemporary artistic expression of traditional Chinese culture. The five participating artists, Pan Gongkai, Yang Maoyuan, Cai Zhisong, Yuan Gong, and Liang Yuanwei, respectively created works based on the five odors of lotus, medicine, tea, fragrance, and wine, forming a metaphorical relationship with "the five flavors" and "five miscellaneous". The artistic work created will, in general, create a wonderful world of sensations. Let Venice permeate the Chinese flavor, which not only shows the independent identity of Chinese culture, but also seeks extensive ties with other countries and cultures. The presentation of the five smells is based on the theme and attracts the audience's attention from different senses to the greatest extent. "The works of the China Pavilion are challenging the limits of visual art. Due to constant experimentation and challenges, the works not only include sight and hearing, but also contain smell, taste and touch. The works are designed to evoke the audience's multiple feelings."<sup>[3]</sup> From the words of the curators, it is not difficult to see that this exhibition has its clear positioning, and the team before the curator has made it clear that this exhibition is a transnational cultural exchange exhibition. With the clear positioning of the curators, the exhibition will be more organized, and the audience will be able to understand some interesting traditional Chinese culture through these works of art. The theme is that the "living water" of the exhibition will lose its source if there is no theme, and a large number of visitors will be lost. therefore, in order to attract the audience, the curator must clearly grasp the orientation and theme of the exhibition.

On the other hand, after the curators have determined the theme of the exhibition, they must consider how to better present the exhibition to the audience. At this time, in addition to simply showing the appearance of the painting, it is more important to extract the core soul of the work through the exhibition. An excellent curator can dig its deep connotation from the content of the work and make the exhibition more meaningful. Still take La Biennale di Venezia as an example, The theme of the 58th Biennale curated by Art Director Ralph Rugoff in 2019 is "May you live in interesting times". "Amidst interesting instability, it points to an era in which economic, technological, geopolitical, and ethnic contradictions are constantly being watched. Various factors of instability constitute a so-called post-cold war order" and indirectly constitute an important tradition Challenges of the world structure, institutions, and the world. "<sup>[4]</sup> For Rugoff, it means that art will play a role of participant and witness in a world with unstable regional political situation. Way to understand the world and feel the interesting soul.

Swiss-Icelandic artist Christoph Büchel brings a work called (Barca Nostra) to the dock alongside a striking dock. The whole body is covered with dazzling rust, and it is full of sores and bumps, which makes the audience watching it farther silent. To mourn more than 800 people who died in the most tragic shipwreck in the Mediterranean on April 18, 2015. The six-handed "bridge" built by Italian artist Lorenzo Quinn with sculptures represents the core values in people's hearts: friendship, wisdom, help, faith, hope and love! Chinese artist Sun Yuan and Peng Yu's "Involuntary Self-Prohibition" uses a huge machine to move thick and bloody liquids back and forth in a sealed

glass wall. The strong visual shock makes the audience think about politics, control, technology and artificial Fear and doubt brought about by intelligence. The exhibition uses unstable works of art, suggesting times of restlessness and chaos. Althusser stated in his article *Ideology and the State Machine of Ideology* that "We can and must start with reproduction to think about the essential characteristics of the existence and nature of superstructures. Once the view of reproduction is taken, the spatial metaphor of the building Many of the questions that are pointed out but cannot be answered with concepts are suddenly bright. "[5] As the curator said, art may not stop the rise of nationalist movements and authoritarian governments in different parts of the world, or mitigate the tragic fate of globally displaced people, but the artists used their unique insights to demonstrate artistic joy and critical thinking And other social functions. It is precisely because the curator can cleverly explore the connotation of the artist's work and connect it into a value. An exhibition can become noble and emotional, and the audience is more willing to stop and appreciate these works and taste the works brought to people. mental strength.

### **3. Breaking Down Art for the Audience**

#### **3.1. The Dual Identity of the Curator**

From the preparatory stage of an exhibition to the official installation, the identity of the curator has actually undergone multiple transformations. For example, he was an organizer and a curator before curating, and he would also be a commentator after curating. It is worth emphasizing another identity of the curator--the audience. The curator not only has to be the promoter of the entire exhibition, but more importantly he has to be present as an audience. Only when the curator sees himself as an audience, can they appreciate the feelings of a viewer in more detail and understand how the exhibition is most comfortable for the audience. The curator should not separate himself from the audience. Instead, he is still a senior audience. In his eyes, he can see in what form the work will be presented to restore its truest appearance.

An excellent curator should learn to transform his identity, treat himself as an audience, and think more about the issues and appreciate the paintings from the perspective of the viewer. Only in this way, the curatorial talents will know more about the audience's thoughts and gain more audiences.

#### **3.2. Ways to Break Down Art for Your Audience**

As a curator, the first thing to understand is that you are planning an exhibition for the audience, not just selling an artist. The curator should not place too much emphasis on the commerciality of the exhibition, but should put more thoughts on how to make the audience understand the exhibition. It counts as a successful exhibition. "The generation of the meaning of a work must be completed by the artist, the curator, the work and its exhibition environment, appreciator and other elements. The above elements also have aesthetic subjectivity as a result of this generation process, that is, the work is no longer a purely material and indifferent existence waiting for the audience to come and see, and the appreciator is not the receiver who lingers passively in front of the work. "[6] In other words, if the curators want to seize the hearts of the audience, they must first think of others and think about how to plan the exhibition from the point of view of the audience, so that the enforceability of the exhibition will be higher, and the benefits of the exhibition will be higher.

After a curator has learned how to cleverly curate himself as an audience, the next thing he must consider is how to make the exhibition more attractive. Although an exhibition has only one theme, the curator can divide it into several small parts to guide the audience to the exhibition. The curator can divide the theme to achieve the purpose of breaking up the art for the audience. An exhibition can subdivide the theme of the exhibition according to various classification methods such as the artist's creation year, creative thoughts and feelings, and creative methods. Regardless of how it is distinguished, the curator should grasp the core emotion of the entire exhibition and try to resonate with the audience through this emotion.

In September 2019, the "Magnificent Picture of Great History-Art Exhibition Celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China" opened at the National Art Museum

of China. This exhibition is divided into 4 categories: "Blood Struggle: The Road to People's Liberation", "Hard Struggle: The Road to National Construction", "Struggle for Unity: The Road to Reform and Opening Up", "Great Dream: The Road to National Rejuvenation", etc. In this chapter, the variety of works is rich, and the sacred duties of art reflecting the style of the times, leading the times, and bacon casting souls are concentrated."As Bourdieu suggests, artistic acceptance is a plural phenomenon in itself, and each reinterpretation constantly constitutes a re-creation of the work."<sup>[7]</sup> From the core purpose of this exhibition, the curator has successfully captured the hearts of the audience. The motherland, the figures, the history of the performance, and the reality depicted by the artists capture the 70th anniversary of the founding of New China The spirit and style of the struggle of generations and generations, and through the artist's public education, the distance between the audience and the artists is even closer. Therefore, when the curator grasps the core theme of the exhibition and uses it to dig out its inner human meaning, he will capture the audience's heart and resonate with the content of the exhibition. This is also one of the best ways for curators to try to break down the art for the audience and lead them to taste the content of the exhibition.

#### **4. Audience Development and Exhibition Promotion**

##### **4.1. Streamline the Relationship Between the Curator and the Audience**

"with the diversity and openness of Chinese art exhibitions, independent curators have multiple responsibilities in Chinese society, and they are also hunters for promoting and exploring artists. The curator is not a "lone ranger". He is not only a practitioner who takes the lead, but also a thinker who promotes "brainstorming" in a new way of design and display. Curators and artists work together to create new social civilization and ideas of the times, as well as the core values condensed by public society. "<sup>[8]</sup>It is particularly important to straighten out the relationship between curators and audiences. When curators put themselves from the perspective of the audience and resonate with the audience through the deep connotation of the exhibition, an exhibition can attract more audiences and have more influence.

The curator is actually the guide, he must stand in the audience to curate and consider how to better guide the audience to understand an exhibition and taste the connotation of the exhibition. When planning an exhibition, we must first look for the audience through the inherent humanistic meaning of the exhibition and bring audiences to the art; then we must think about how to decompose the art for the audience, guide them to watch the exhibition, and let the audience gain something. And this is exactly the core role of a curator.

##### **4.2. Thoughts on Popularizing Exhibitions**

The curator plays a neutral role in the exhibition. although he cannot ignore the feelings of the audience, he cannot unduly interfere with the emotions brought about by the audience to appreciate art and taste works. He needs to guide the audience to think about the exhibition and savor the meaning of the exhibition consciously. Of course, the prerequisite is that the exhibition must have enough attraction to the audience and the existence of content that can resonate with the audience in order to really capture the hearts of the audience and make the exhibition more valuable. To guide the audience to think about the exhibition, the curator needs to be able to do the following: First, arrange the artist's works as systematically as possible, and fully create a strong visual impact. Allow the audience to think in the order of the works during the exhibition, and then give the audience enough time to taste the specific connotations of the works. Second, reduce unnecessary text in the exhibition appropriately, so that the audience can take the initiative to read the pictures, instead of looking at the "work introduction" next to the work. Third, appropriately reduce the number of commentators and change to experience methods such as video or virtual reality, so that the audience can take the initiative to watch the exhibition, taste, and think about the value behind the exhibition.

To successfully host an exhibition, the curator must do enough publicity for the exhibition, so that the audience has a general understanding of the exhibition before it is launched, and this will greatly help the audience to better taste the exhibition. The publicity of the exhibition is not just a

notification of the website, but the need for appropriate public education activities to expand the audience and make the exhibition more socially influential. After the exhibition, the curator must communicate with the audience in a timely manner and actively ask the audience for their views on the exhibition. If they have the opportunity, they can also participate in the curatorial process and make some suggestions for the preparation of the exhibition, which promotes the curator. People understand the audience's psychology more clearly and get closer to life, and the artist's work can more easily enter the audience's mind.

## **5. Conclusion**

This paper makes a simple exploration on the relationship between the exhibitors and the audience. In the face of the complicated situation of the market, only by letting the curators define their own position and strengthen the cultivation of professional ethics will it be the continuous prosperity and development of the whole art market. And dealing with the relationship between curators and the audience is also an indispensable link in the whole exhibition process. When the curator really regards himself as an audience to plan and appreciate the exhibition, an exhibition will be closer to the reality of life and make the work have more resonance with the audience. At the same time, as a curator, he should also strengthen the communication with the audience. When the curator really plans and appreciates the exhibition as an audience, an exhibition is more likely to arouse the audience's resonance and thinking. How to make the audience better appreciate and understand an exhibition is one of the important factors to evaluate the success of the exhibition.

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