

# Thoughts on the "Exhibition Hall Effect" of Contemporary Calligraphy Exhibition

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## ABSTRACT

The Creation of contemporary calligraphy began to transform from the traditional study-style model to the modern exhibition-style model. During the upsurge of calligraphy phenomenon, the "exhibition hall effect" is increasingly manifested, thus stimulating an "exhibition body" which is oriented by aesthetic. By reviewing the history of the Chinese calligraphy, we first try to figure out the reasons for the appearance of "exhibition body" and "exhibition hall effect". Then, we discuss the problems and reflections brought by "exhibition hall effect" and traditional culture. As a result, the calligraphy phenomenon should be dialectically evaluated along with the development of contemporary Chinese calligraphy.

**Keywords:** *Calligraphy exhibition, Calligraphy, Calligraphy creation, Contemporary calligraphy*

## 1. THE EMERGENCE OF "EXHIBITION BODY"

Calligraphy creation began in the 1980s, and after more than 30 years of development, exhibitions based on communications have become an important form of calligraphy activities. Consequently, the display environment of calligraphy works has also begun to change. To be specific, the transformation from a small group of literati to a large socialized exhibition hall has promoted profound changes in the art of calligraphy [1]. The change of contemporary calligraphy from form to the academic philosophy and even the social status of the calligraphers as well as the ecological environment of calligraphy has triggered a lot of thinking about how contemporary calligraphy returns to traditional culture.

In the 1980s, calligraphy activities were jointly carried out in the form of mass competitions and professional calligraphy exhibitions, which inspired the charm of traditional calligraphy art and gave birth of traditional calligraphy in the new era, resulting in greater social impact. At that time, it attracted the participation of millions of people, which sparked the contemporary "calligraphy fever". There are almost dozens of calligraphy exhibitions of different scales throughout the country every year, not to mention the calligraphy exhibitions held by the provinces and institutions [2]. Driven by the competition and subsequent interests, an "exhibition style" which is oriented by the aesthetic of popular cal-

ligraphy exhibition has become popular. The "exhibition style" is different from the traditional classic calligraphy. It is gradually formed along with the development of contemporary calligraphy exhibitions. Most of them are characterized by huge size, collage of colored paper, attention in design, light pen and ink, and many stamps. These "exhibition-style" works are beautiful in shape and have a strong sense of form. So, they are easy to imitate and follow. Also, these works are usually exaggerated, e.g. Exquisite collage, color stimulation, strong induction of design and decoration, imitating historical forms, expanding the space and large production and patchwork. In conclusion, these exhibition-style works pursue greatness and quantity, but neglect property and quality. Obviously, such "creation" runs counter to the core spirit and aesthetic of calligraphy!

## 2. THE "EXHIBITION HALL EFFECT" UNDER THE UPSURGE OF CALLIGRAPHY

The most salient features of contemporary calligraphy are the transformation of traditional study style creation mode and entering the modern exhibition hall style mode. As calligraphy has attracted more and more attention, the "exhibition hall effect" has also become obvious. In modern art, the calligraphy exhibition is like a double-edged sword, which has had a great impact on contemporary calligraphy creation. In fact, the "exhibi-

tion hall effect" indeed promotes the further development of contemporary calligraphy, attracts more and more people to participate in calligraphy learning, passes on the calligraphy tradition [3] that has gone through thousands of years, and changes the original elite mode of calligraphy creation. More importantly, it has produced batches of outstanding calligraphy talents. However, it is undeniable that there are also many negative effects.

### **2.1. Over-design and production**

Firstly, many calligraphers are too eager for quick success and began to pursue the "exhibition hall effect" blindly, which is inconsistent with the law of artistic creation. This kind of "exhibition" is a distortion of the art of calligraphy. In order to win the attention of the judges, these calligraphers did their best to make up, like collage, dyeing, old-fashioning, over-production, and adding some graphic design elements. In a certain sense, the calligraphy art has become calligraphy handicraft, which is obviously unfavorable for the development of calligraphy. Secondly, some calligraphers participated in the exhibition for the purposes of fame and economic benefit, so that losing the most essential thing of calligraphy. Although calligraphy is a kind of modeling art, it is more essentially emotional. It can express the most delicate and rich emotions in the artist's heart. Externalized by the lines of calligraphy [4], the character and temperament of a person can be depicted. Nowadays, calligraphers pay too much attention on the "form" but not the "soul" of calligraphy production. When tending to pursuit the "productization", the literature and poetry of calligraphy are diminishing. Of course, it is reasonable to beautify calligraphy works moderately. There are many forms of calligraphy, such as nave, couplets, albums, etc. From a certain point of view, calligraphy is to beautify a piece of white paper, add aesthetics to the work, and polish the work itself. However, the most essential of calligraphy is the quality, strength and texture of the lines, which gives people an aesthetic feeling and does not need to consider these external decorations too much.

Due to the increasing popularity of "exhibition effects", the China Calligraphy Association did not accept excessively formal calligraphy in the solicitation and review of the "Fifth Lanting Award" and the "Eleventh National Exhibition of Calligraphy and Seal Cutting Works". The reviewers jointly advocated the comprehensive and cultural literacy assessment of calligraphy. In recent years, our country has successively organized many courses on calligraphy, such as "Chinese Culture and Calligraphy Class", the main purpose of which is to cultivate the comprehensive qualities of young calligraphers. These classes have enabled the development of calligraphy in a healthy direction, which is in line with Xi Jinping's goal that "artists should consciously stick

to their artistic ideals and continuously improve their learning ability, cultivation, and accomplishment". The development of calligraphy art must consciously pursue the guidance of the Chinese spirit, which is the literary soul.

### **2.2. Calligraphy consciousness and lack of cultural responsibility**

Through the analysis of many calligraphic works in Chinese history, we find that their works are both beautiful in calligraphy and prose, such as Wang Xizhi's preface to Lanting, Su Shi's Huangzhou cold food poetry, etc. In addition, they also have a good integration of poetic and calligraphy. Through the analysis of calligraphy theory, we can find that the ancients also emphasized the cultivation of calligraphy. For example, Zhao Yi of Han Dynasty put forward the importance of artistic cultivation in the non cursive script, and Liu Xizai of Qing Dynasty also expressed an opinion, the persons who write words write their own aspirations, in shugai. Calligraphy can reflect a person's knowledge, ambition and talent, and can reflect a person's personality strength. This is why calligraphy has accumulated a profound humanistic tradition in the development of history.

There is no doubt that the basic cultural literacy is what calligraphers need to have. It is not only the requirement of the times, but also the requirement of calligraphy consciousness. First of all, in the process of copying poetry, the basic cultural literacy of calligraphy makes a calligrapher not to have typos. Accurate writing can convey the culture or connotation of ancient poetry. Although on the surface, there is no typo, in fact, it is through technology to deal with the language carrier, but in fact, it is also the spiritual labor of the writer, that is to say, it has the accuracy of the transcription. If the calligrapher is required to be a scholar, it is almost an ideal state, but often the ideal is not consistent with the reality, or even a state that cannot be achieved at all. In real life, calligraphy life has completely lost that atmosphere. For calligraphy creation, "literati" and "Scholar" have become a highly conscious and cultural responsibility. Its core content is that before becoming a calligrapher, a calligrapher is first a literati, who not only has calligraphy technology, but also has the quality of scholars, as well as profound academic self-cultivation and spirit. That is to say, calligraphers should embody all kinds of conditions that literati should have, such as literary talent, literary heart, literary talent and literary thinking; But in fact, more than half of the calligraphers or lovers are not up to the standard, and lack of yearning and consciousness.

### **3. MATH THOUGHTS ON CONTEMPORARY CALLIGRAPHY EXHIBITION**

#### ***3.1. Attach importance to both literature and art***

After years of development, calligraphy exhibition occupies an important position in the selected channel of calligraphy talents. On the one hand, calligraphy exhibition can stimulate the enthusiasm of calligraphy creation, on the other hand, it can test modern calligraphy and become an important way to select calligraphy talents [4] as far as calligraphers are concerned, the purpose of participating in the exhibition should be a way to test their own calligraphy level. Excellent works are moved by superb brush and ink skills and rich emotions, not just collage making. Calligraphy works should stand close scrutiny, and calligraphy art is "reasonable, unexpected". When appreciating it, it gives people a feeling of beauty, such as feeling and reason, but it is unexpected. This is really the form of beauty of calligraphy. Calligraphy exhibition works are not only an art form, but also a cultural carrier. The value of exhibition is not only a way to show the artistic beauty of calligraphy, but also a way to spread calligraphy culture, a way to realize the spiritual pursuit of the masses, and ensure the realization of the spiritual civilization of the masses, make more audience getting aesthetic edification and cultural nourishment when watching calligraphy works exhibition.

Paying attention to the content of calligraphy creation cannot be ignored. The content of writing should be as superb as the skill. Although it can't achieve the goal of freely creating poems and prose [9] like the ancient calligraphers, we should also choose a beautiful, healthy and wonderful content. We should not just copy the ancients, but also insist on what we want to express and don't drift with the tide. The most important thing of art is to stick to the pure art of Chinese calligraphy, adhere to the essence of calligraphy, in a white paper on the brush and ink can also be the most incisive display, with exquisite techniques to express the spirit of art is the soul of calligraphy. Just as Zheng Banqiao said: "if you insist on the Castle Peak, you will be rooted in the broken rock. Thousands of grinding and thousands of blows, but also strong, let the East, West, North and south wind.

#### ***3.2. Attach Exhibition enriches the development of calligraphy***

There is no lack of exhibition in the contemporary book world, which can activate the atmosphere of the book world and stimulate the vitality of the book world; And with the help of the exhibition [11], many calligraphers can enhance their reputation. With the help of the exhibition, people show their understanding of calligra-

phy and their own calligraphy skills, and their creativity can be concentrated in the exhibition [12]. Generally speaking, the writers embody all their spiritual sustenance in their calligraphy works. They hope to realize their artistic ideas with the help of the exhibition. So many participants will be obsessed with the exhibition [5] in many cases, people use calligraphy exhibitions to understand the calligraphy world, calligraphers and aesthetic judgment.

It is impossible to hold a national exhibition in ancient times, but it is a very important way to promote calligraphy in modern times. Although the calligraphy creation in the exhibition era highlights the form, it lacks the cultural atmosphere and humanistic spirit. The calligraphy in the exhibition era is rich and diverse. Whether it is the composition of the author group, aesthetic orientation [6] or the value orientation of creation, the rich and diverse characteristics of calligraphy are well displayed. At present, China's society is in the stage of rapid development, calligraphy creation is also in constant development, and gradually formed a situation of coexistence and common prosperity, pluralistic integration and complementary calligraphy development. Even though calligraphers have different interests, come from different groups and have different ideas, they can still gather together and create different calligraphy. This kind of situation was guided by the development trend at that time, not advocated artificially [6].

#### ***3.3. Improve the exhibition evaluation mechanism***

At the same time, calligraphy exhibition and the research after the exhibition also need attention. Almost every time a national or provincial level exhibition is held, more attention is paid to the form and scene, giving people a sense of passing. Basically, the end of the exhibition [7] is the real end, and there is not much extension of the content. Therefore, it is very necessary to establish a research team of exhibition review, to observe and study the aesthetic trend and value of the exhibition from a professional and even a professional point of view. There must be differences in aesthetics between them and the exhibition organizers, so they can objectively express their own views [8], and put forward their own views in micro and macro aspects. In fact, the aesthetic direction of the exhibition is not completely in accordance with the requirements of the organizers, it will have its own development direction. The exhibition can be regarded as everyone's experimental field, whether it is selected or not is the result of the test; Everyone can freely choose whether to participate or not, no matter what kind of personality can improve their calligraphy creation ability in life. To grasp the core value of the art and culture of calligraphy, to examine the influence of the exhibition on today's calligraphy creation from a historical perspective, to define the positioning

of the exhibition mechanism in the whole calligraphy creation environment [10], to gradually improve the evaluation mechanism, to enable the calligraphy creators to correctly handle the relationship between their own creation and exhibition, the development of calligraphy is bound to enter a broad road.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Contemporary calligraphy should be affirmed in terms of continuous innovation and exploration in the development process, but it should also recall the loss of the cultural spirit and Chinese aesthetic spirit in the inheritance of calligraphy. This is a very important test for calligraphers. The requirements not only include the improvement of formal creation and skill, but also the enhancement on aesthetic. Moreover, while achieving achievements, the spirit of traditional culture should be expressed through calligraphy, which is the inner core of calligraphy. Although the requirements of ancient and contemporary calligraphy are different, we can find a point of convergence in the conflict between ancient and modern, constantly updating creative forms and techniques, and inheriting the cultural spirit of thousands of years. This will require calligraphers to think carefully and practice calligraphy in the future.

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