

Liveness and Media: The Social Turn of Art Exhibition

Shengyu Zhang¹

¹ School of Advertising, Communication University of China, Beijing, China

¹ Corresponding author. Email: 2020101305L1170@cuc.edu.cn

ABSTRACT

Since the 20th century, the practice of art exhibition in the region has not only provided people with the meaning in the art world, but also reappeared as a "social intermediary" in addition to its semantic value in the art world, showing the constructive role of art exhibition in society. This article advocates the research path of taking "liveness" and "media" as the fundamental consciousness problem, which is linked with the relationship between art exhibition and society, and strengthens the social construction of art exhibition. This paper makes a preliminary comment on the research status of the academic circles in China and foreign countries, hoping to answer the question of the social turn of art exhibitions.

Keywords: Exhibition intervention, Liveness, Media, Social turn.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, art exhibitions held in various urban and rural areas in China have brought special benefits (such as regional transformation and renewal, cultural heritage display, regional cultural image establishment, etc.) into play by organizing and formulating art events, taking the public as visitors and attracting their attention, and the organizers use such practices to inject value objectives into specific areas. This kind of exhibition practice, which focuses on public art and regions, "reappears" at a certain place temporarily or according to a fixed frequency, introduces regional construction projects into the exhibition, feeds back the exhibition results to the regional construction, and presents them in the social public space. If people discuss the practice of such art exhibitions as a construction process of the transformation of art society, it contains two key concepts, namely, the on-site nature and media nature of art exhibitions.

The reason why the researchers take the liveness and media as the research path of the fundamental problem consciousness is mainly based on the consideration of the following questions: What kind of transformation has taken place in the art exhibition at present with the changes in the political and economic structure?

How can art exhibitions participate in the construction of the public sphere? What can art exhibitions bring to the region when they are involved in the region? How do these regional art exhibitions connect with the local context? In what roles do curators, designers and artists intervene and create what works to have a dialogue with the scene? How to activate the context while identifying, exploring or selecting it, rather than just understanding local history or special exotic things? This paper makes a preliminary comment on the research status of the academic circles in China and foreign countries, hoping to answer the question of the social turn of art exhibitions.

2. THE SOCIAL TURN OF ART EXHIBITION

In the field of art, exhibition is the main exchange place of art, where the meaning of works of art can be constructed, maintained and even deconstructed. Art exhibition is not only a spectacle and social event, but also a strategy of constructing the art world, which establishes and dominates the cultural significance of art.[1] It contains "the 'world' provided to us by artists and the symbolic value reflected by the world". [2] With the increasingly diversified venues and forms of exhibitions held and experienced outside the museum, such art exhibitions and festivals outside

the "white cube" invite people to explore the social scene carefully constructed by the planners, making it a place to be seen. This is different from the 19th century German Artists Association and the French Salon Exhibition, as well as the later exhibitions in art institutions, art associations and museums. The purpose of such outdoor exhibitions is not only to display art, but also to reappear as a "social intermediary" in addition to its semantic value, [3] which includes the organizers' political, economic and cultural purposes, as well as the social turn of art itself. People must see the new role of art exhibition, which has expanded its activities beyond the organized art field. When it is mixed with urban development and tourism, it becomes more and more vague. It once defined the advantages of the form of artistic scene over the function, but now it has become a feature of the political and economic fields, showing a trend of transformation from artistic self-discipline to instrumental rationality.

The exhibition of combining art and place abroad began with the first Venice Biennale in 1885. As a unique art exhibition mode, the first Venice Biennale closely combines art and politics, expresses the emerging discourse of Venetian regionalism and Italian nationalism, and the desire to establish Venice as a modern world culture and tourism center. In the speech at the opening ceremony of the exhibition, the task of the first Venice Biennale was set as "believing that art, as one of the most valuable elements of civilization, can not only justly develop intelligence, but also promote friendly exchanges between people of all countries". [4] The Biennale was initially established as a demonstration to the world of a country's unique and original cultural production capacity, aiming to overcome national, cultural and political isolation and show political openness and tolerance through the establishment of international networks.

If the biennale was originally for the purpose of political diplomacy and cultural self-confidence, it began with the outdoor sculpture exhibition in the late 1940s, and the outdoor space was regarded as an extension of the space of the indoor exhibition hall. The art originally placed in museums and art galleries was moved to the street, presenting the art to a large number of people who are not used to visiting galleries (these people will think that many contemporary art is incompatible with them). [5] In 1948, the London County Council launched the first outdoor exhibition (The LCC's Open-air Sculpture Exhibitions) in Battersea Park, which

later evolved into a triennial event. The first outdoor exhibition attracted 150000 paid visitors. This exhibition provides a model for the explosion of open-air sculpture exhibitions in Europe and other regions in the decade after the war, and also provides a novel and effective way for curators, such as the Sosbeck Triennial in Arnhem, the Netherlands, since 1949; Middleham Sculpture Park in Antwerp has also held sculpture biennale since 1950. [6] This is related to the urban reconstruction and new public space production after World War II. The large-scale renewal of the city has brought about the discussion of urban image and other issues. At this stage, works of art enjoy great privileges in urban development, making the outdoor space become a container for art exhibitions or works, and as an early mode of exhibition intervention, gradually improving the artistic atmosphere of urban space. And through this way of using movable works of art for exhibition in public places, it becomes a way to solve the public's resistance to monument sculpture after the war and provides a dimension for the development of art.

Since the end of the 1980s, the discussion on the topic of "local" and "global" has made the art exhibition practice mode of the biennale and the triennial based on each local cultural background and connected with the art and cultural networks of other countries. The biennale has become a "temporary mediation space", which is the interface between art and the more public. These audiences are both local and global, living, nomadic, non-professional, or artistic. These exhibitions have formed new artistic, social and political relations in a more globalized world, and have achieved cultural tourism and urban transformation through a cyclical (two-year, three-year) model. They legalize some forms of art exhibition practice in the global cultural industry. Ivo Meskita believes that in the era of "culture is a wonder", art exhibition is the catalyst of global culture, attracting financial investment and audience. More and more cities are holding biennial exhibitions and art expositions. These cities and countries take cultural tourism as a means to gain a place on the international economic and cultural stage. For example, Liverpool won the title of "Capital of Culture" in Europe in 2008 through the strategy of art and culture.

Through the practice of biennials and outdoor exhibitions, it is necessary to explore various public space quality improvement models, gradually promote regional transformation and renewal, and use art exhibitions as a practical means of cultural

tourism and regional transformation and renewal, to stimulate the desire of the whole society to actively promote various public space renewal activities. Western scholars believe that this is related to the transformation of the post-modern regional economy from a production-oriented economy to a consumption-oriented economy. In this process, the resources and strategies on which regional operation depends have undergone major changes. Scott described this transformation as the transformation from Fordism to post-Fordism. In his view, the traditional regional economy believes in the doctrine of Fordism, that is, to obtain economies of scale through large-scale production and market. In the post-Ford era, the difference in supply and the uncertainty in demand completely invalidated the doctrine of Fordism, and changed from the large-scale production of Fordism to the differentiated marketing of post-Fordism. [7] The first thing brought to the region by activities such as art exhibitions and festivals is the preservation of "things". Through the preparation of such practices, "things" set up on the roadside, nodes, signs and other "things" that constitute the image of the city. A large number of original and new cultural facilities in the region have become important nodes of the regional landscape. On this basis, a number of distinctive cultural landscapes have been formed, and then the spatial image of the region has been reshaped. [7] It not only contains the image of physical space, but also expands the meaning space of regional cultural image, so as to change the image of traditional backward industrial cities, such as Glasgow, Liverpool, Frankfurt and other European cities, to reshape the new image of "European cultural and economic capital".

If the practice of modernist art exhibition is a discussion of the internal meaning of the art field, the main motivation of the practice of today's site-oriented art exhibition is to pursue closer contact with the external world and daily life, and focus on integrating art more directly into the social field. When people rethink the situation of art, as well as the same unsolved situation of heritage, handicrafts, media, urban organization and tourism, the practice of finding answers in historical, anthropological and aesthetic studies is being reformulated. As a part of global culture and geopolitics, the social turn of art exhibitions is being reshaped with these social processes.

3. "LIVENESS" OF EXHIBITION INTERVENTION

Even though contemporary art is getting closer to the public, it still has the gene of "high-end art". From art self-discipline to popular art consumption, how can the communicative attribute be constructed in the intervention of art exhibitions? In the era of "culture is a wonder", art exhibition is so obvious as the "tool attribute" of regional planning and regional renewal. Although the commercialization of art (consumerism) has led to outdoor exhibition and public art exhibition, they are not just economic exchange. The way of art exhibition intervention really uses art as a "resource" that can be consumed, that is, people are treated as visitors and attract their attention, in order to bring special benefits into play by formulating and organizing art practice activities, thereby injecting specific values to achieve the set goals. The disadvantage is that it usually leads to its focus on the art field instead of the scene, which is easy to become the self-entertainment of curators or artists in the public space. The controversy caused by it lies in the identity presented in the art exhibitions under the banner of art in various regions. The exhibition does not represent a specific place but just another "other place". The question remains, what is the basis of these art exhibitions and what provides them with resources and symbolic significance? Although the commercialization of art has spawned public art exhibitions, they are not just economic exchanges. The significance of an art exhibition is not only what it "represents", but also where it "is" and how it plays its role through its own structure. This involves the discussion of the "liveness" of art, and at the same time, related questions also arise: What is the difference between the liveness of art exhibitions and the liveness of art? What problems can be solved by liveness?

The discussion about "liveness" originated from the rise of earth art and minimalism in the 1960s. Due to the holding of outdoor sculpture exhibitions and the establishment of outdoor public art, the topic of public sculpture discussion changed from the initial discussion of public power to the discussion of "specific field" and "theater" of sculpture works. After the outdoor works of art are separated from the meaning space of art galleries and museums, the outdoor space should make it relate to the space, light and audience's vision, showing the tendency that the works of art need to be combined with a specific place. The most

influential case is the discussion triggered by Richard Serra's "Inclined Arc". When the works are separated from the specific site space, whether the works can still be established, Quan Meiyuan discusses the form of contemporary art with "site-specific" and points out that this form is the expansion of art in social space. When art goes out of the museum, to the street, to the community, to the wilderness, it determines that the main expression of contemporary art is not the surface of the form, but the social attribute of the form itself. [8] Quan Meiyuan pointed out that the increase in the number of public art design exhibitions based on specific fields around the world, and how the field-oriented approach of art works can adapt to or perplex the construction and commercialization of regional characteristics, these problems are related to the nomadic environment in which artists pursue field-oriented practice. The definition of liveness is being reconfigured to imply that it is not the permanence and stillness of the work, but its transience and impermanence. In the 1980s and 1990s, the connotation of "liveness" began to shift to public space. In artistic creation, artists need to cooperate with community residents and listen to the opinions of community residents with an open mind. In addition, these artistic projects are still rooted in the local social and cultural context.[9]

"Liveness" in works of art usually refers to the relationship between the works of art and the place where it is carried. The phenomenon of turning from objects to the scene in art provides a basis for the liveness involvement of the exhibition. Through the liveness nature of art works, there is a necessity to drive the liveness nature of the exhibition, pay attention to how to reveal the social and cultural significance of the specific scene through the practice of art exhibition intervention, and build a new cultural space on the scene through the dialogue with the theme of the exhibition and the meaning of the art works. With its strong social participation and art practice, the liveness nature of art exhibitions has gradually become a critical concept, promoting the multiple integration of art and media in the process of urban planning and public space creation. The art exhibition involved in the society, through the expansion of the exhibition container to the art event, the social and cultural attributes of the outdoor space are also included in the consideration of the curators and art practitioners, from the scene of "things" to the scene of "events", and also included in the consideration of space walking. In the 2021 Shanghai urban space art season "15-minute

community life circle - people's city", the organizer will "build a 15-minute community life circle" in Shanghai's urban planning, and integrate art works and community space with the community as the carrier. The curators invited art practitioners and designers to participate in the scene to show the method, process and results of creating a "15-minute community life circle - people's city". Through the setting of the work site, the mode of art exhibition observation will be transformed into the experience of walking in it. The audience will wander in the community and reshape the community life in the way of art exhibition. The liveness nature of exhibition intervention is developed through the site specificity of art works, requiring the audience to move, and broadening the definition of audience and exhibition site through tourism. The audience includes residents of the community, tourists of the art world and tourists of tourism, while the exhibition site includes the community site itself. The map of the exhibition is combined with the local environment, and the map of the art exhibition is also the map of the community or urban space. The scene of art exhibition has changed from a metaphysical perception space to a space with social and cultural connotations.

4. MEDIA NATURE OF EXHIBITION INTERVENTION

Through the creation of "liveness", the exhibition integrates the experience of audience walking on the site, combines with the social environment outside the art, integrates the display of art works, regional space and regional communication, and generates the cultural and social significance of new public space, thus strengthening the significance of "media" of art exhibition in the process of regional cultural communication. Art exhibitions also create a future public space paradigm by strengthening the "media" of social space. [10] As a traditional media, exhibition intervention not only produces artistic discourse, but also produces public space. On the one hand, the on-site nature of art works, that is, the content of the exhibition indicates that it is the art creation in response to the scene. These works become the new landscape signs and nodes in the space. On this basis, they form the regional landscape image, and then reshape the regional cultural significance. These works have artistic metaphysical value and identity, and are also media of interaction and communication.

On the other hand, the planning of the art exhibition itself becomes extremely important in the process of its involvement. How can the curator balance the relationship between politics, capital, art and culture, and the audience? The development of the Echigo-Tsumari Art Field has provided people with some paths. Before the exhibition was organized, the area of Echigo-Tsumari was just an ordinary rural area. The curator, Fram Kitagawa, asked with art, "Is it possible to use art for regional construction? Can public art created in public spaces such as squares and roads outside the art museum be used as an element of regional construction?[11]" In the initial stage of publicity, Fram Kitagawa used the activity to collect the public's "impression of beauty" of the region, that is, to attract public attention by using the way of photography competition, and divided it into six exhibition stages by using the local area, and used the six stages as the communication strongholds to spread the charm of the region from all aspects. Finally, through the integrity of the region and the richer regional image of the Triennial Exhibition of Vietnam's Later Wife's Art at the Dadi Art Festival, the art and regional renewal and construction have been effectively combined. In this process, art exhibitions have become diverse, more common and more "concrete and perceptible". The art exhibition promotes values, such as artistic innovation, multiculturalism, green ecology, etc. In order to become a platform for information dissemination, the space where the exhibition is located also reflects its significance.

Thirdly, the involvement of art exhibition also expands the media attribute of art exhibition, placing temporary works, installations and landscapes in the city, forming temporary landscapes different from daily ones, providing visitors with the experience of space roaming, and promoting the creation of urban culture. In the current urban network model, new display technologies and methods have become a trend, but integrating regional space experience and disseminating local information will continue to be an important means to achieve the creation and dissemination of public space. The intervention of art exhibition is to create a lifestyle of public space by strengthening the roaming of space. Experience is one of the principles of event creativity. [12] The premise of experience is participation. In order to create more novel experiences for the audience, the curators and art practitioners must create more opportunities for the audience to participate, and through participation, leave a profound experience

for the audience, so that the theme and purpose of the art exhibition can be accepted by the audience without leaving any trace. In order to let participants have different and novel experiences, it is necessary to also pay attention to creating more dynamic content in the exhibition, so that the audience can gain new experience and lifestyle in the roaming. As the perspective of media ontology, art exhibition intervention emphasizes the interactive relationship between art exhibition and society and daily life, believes that exhibition is an interdisciplinary and diverse form of behavior in social participation in art, and creates a new interactive communication interface as a specific field. [10]

The social benefits of art exhibition involvement in practice, especially the satisfaction of public cultural needs, are often the important objectives of such practice. In the face of the cultural resources of different cities, how can such practices activate them while identifying, exploring or selecting the context, rather than just understanding the local history or special exotic things? Therefore, the "media" involved in the art exhibition is defined, that is, the curators and artists pour the design thinking and social intention of the life world into the exhibition, so that the real space can be materialized accordingly, and the audience can perceive its design intention and the cultural, artistic and social meaning of the implied life world through the art works.

5. CONCLUSION

The form of public art practice that activates regional culture, image and resources by means of art exhibition intervention has increasingly become a new trend in China's public art practice. The comprehensive art activity that displays the city image and enhances the added value of the city through exhibition intervention is its mainstream. It claims to respect the local character, and at the same time turns the exhibition intervention into a public product under the creative cultural economy. This article focuses on the two key words of public art exhibition practice, and carries out vertical positioning and comparison for the liveness and media nature of art exhibition intervention. On the basis of such thinking, the involvement of art exhibition can provide people not only with the discussion of art language in the art world, but also with the description of specific art objects or events. The issues of liveness and media are associated with the important content of art exhibition, social

construction and cultural construction. Finally, as the opposite of intervention, this does not mean that the discourse of art self-discipline has disappeared. The main body of art exhibition is still supported by the discourse of art, which makes the intervention of art exhibition in social space not fall into the trend of homogenization.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Project: Supported by "the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities", Project No.: CUC220A005, JG22194.

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