

Research on the Influence of Art Gallery Display Modes on the Meaning Generation of Artworks

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Abstract. Art galleries are important venues for the exhibition and dissemination of artworks, and the way they are displayed directly affects people's perception of the artworks and their understanding of their significance. Starting with the role of art gallery display methods in the formation of the meaning of artworks, this paper studies the process of generating the meaning of artworks in different types of art galleries by consulting a large amount of relevant materials and using the methods of actual visits and comparative analysis. The study suggests that display factors such as the spatial layout of the art gallery, the combination of exhibits, the signage system, the lighting design, and the visiting route all affect the expression of the meaning of the artworks. The traditional chronological arrangement, which emphasizes the development of art history, helps people understand the historical and cultural value of artworks. A thematic display can highlight the significance of a particular theme. Contextualized display is the use of a certain context to enhance the appeal of the work. At the same time, with the development of technology, the application of new technologies has also brought new opportunities for display methods, such as multimedia display, virtual reality and other technical means that make the meaning of artworks conveyed richer and more diverse. In addition, the cultural literacy, aesthetic experience and purpose of the visitors themselves will interact with the display methods, thereby influencing the meaning of the artworks. Therefore, in order to enable art galleries to better play their educational and cultural communication roles, this article puts forward the following suggestions: Fully consider the characteristics and connotations of the artworks themselves, flexibly adopt various display methods, pay attention to the needs of the audience, and establish more effective ways of communicating the meaning of the artworks.

Keywords: Art gallery display; Meaning generation; Display design; Audience experience; Cultural communication.

1. Introduction

Art galleries are important venues for cultural inheritance and art education, and play an irreplaceable role in communicating the beauty of artworks and the cultural value contained in them to the public. In recent years, with the development and expansion of the cultural industry, museums and art galleries in China have also entered a good period of development. As of the end of 2023, there were 6,833 museums across the country, up 23.5% from 5,535 in 2019, according to the National Cultural Heritage Administration. Among them, art museums and galleries account for 15 percent of the total, with more than 1.2 billion visitors each year. This indicates an increasing demand for art and culture, as well as higher requirements [1] for the display quality and publicity efforts of art galleries.

In the operation of art galleries, how to use appropriate display methods to maximize the value and significance of artworks is one of the current research hotspots in museology and art management. The meaning of an artwork is not set in stone, but is generated by the interaction between the audience and the artwork in a certain exhibition environment. The display method serves as an important bridge between the artwork and the audience, and its design concept, spatial layout, technical means, etc. all have an undeniable influence on the meaning of the artwork. Therefore, exploring the mechanism by which the display methods of art galleries generate the meaning of artworks is of great theoretical and practical significance for enhancing the cultural communication capacity of art galleries, improving the viewing experience of the audience, and promoting the development of art education.

2. The Theoretical Basis of the Creation of the Meaning of Artworks

2.1. Elements of the Meaning of an Artwork

The meaning of an artwork is multi-faceted and multi-layered, mainly determined [2] by the material content of the work itself, the creator's intention, and the audience's understanding. In terms of the work itself, it has its own unique visual symbols, form language, material properties, technical features, etc., all of which are the basis for the creation of the meaning of the work. The creator's cultural background, ideas, emotional attitude, aesthetic ideals, etc. are all reflected in his work, which becomes the starting point of the meaning of the art work. In addition, the context of The Times, social environment and cultural traditions in which the artwork is situated also have an impact on the meaning of the artwork. And when viewers look at artworks, they interpret them differently based on their own knowledge, experience, values and other factors, and due to the different ways of display, there will also be different interpretation results, so the meaning of artworks has a certain degree of openness and fluidity.

2.2. The Interaction Mechanism Between The Viewer and The Artwork

The interaction between the viewer and the artwork is the key to the creation of meaning, and it is a cognitive activity [3] in which multiple senses work together. Visually, the viewer makes the first impression and feeling by observing and recognizing the formal elements of the artwork. From a cognitive perspective, it is the process by which the viewer uses their existing knowledge and experience to understand and interpret the artwork, the understanding of the subject matter of the work, the recognition of the artistic techniques, and the understanding of the cultural significance contained in the work. From an emotional perspective, it is the emotional experience and psychological resonance that the viewer generates during the viewing process, and this emotional response is often highly subjective and individualistic. The extent and effect of the interaction depend largely on the viewer's cultural level, aesthetic ability and enthusiasm for participation, and are also influenced by the information and atmosphere provided by the exhibition environment.

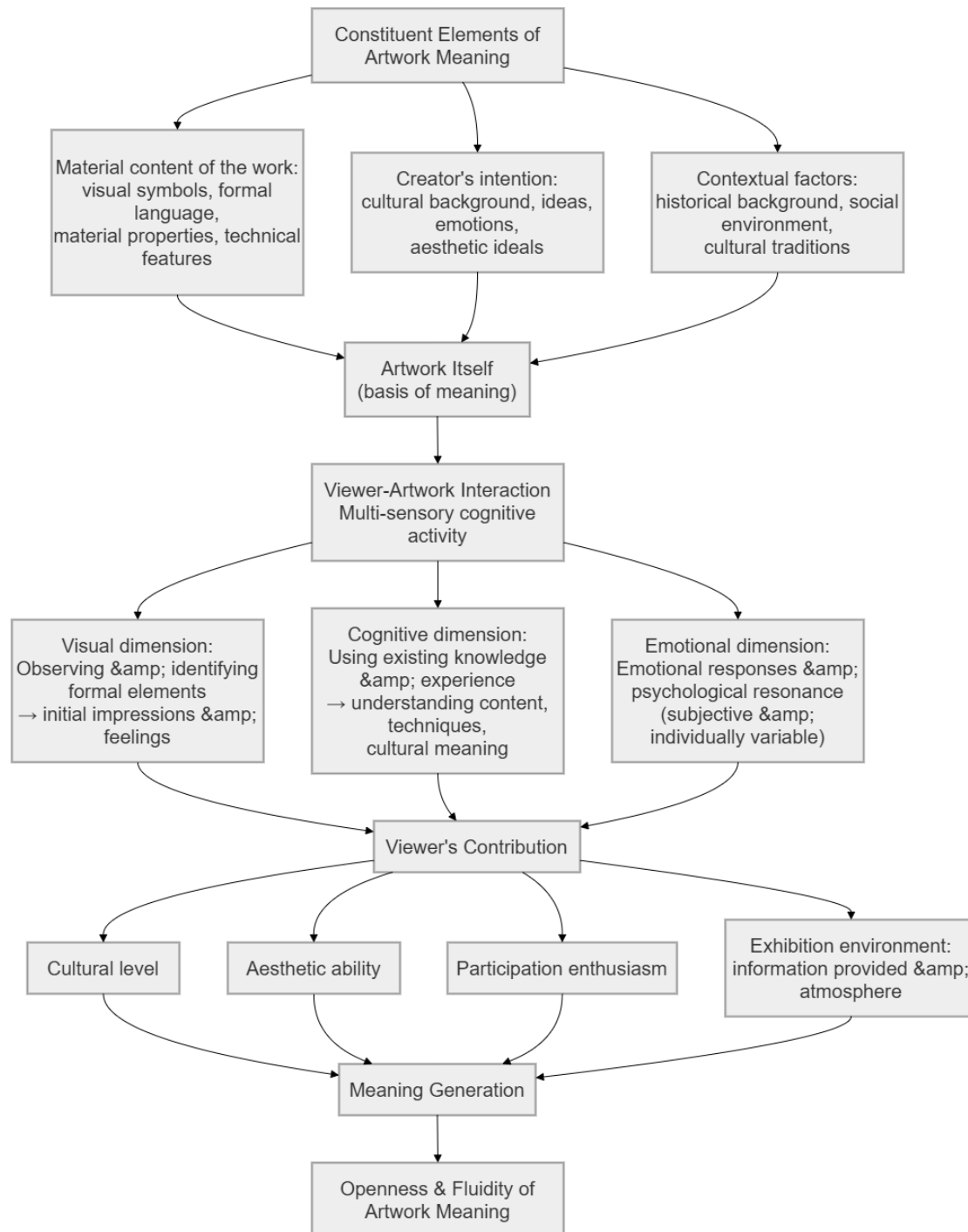


Figure 1. Interaction mechanism between the viewer and the Artwork

2.3. The Role of Spatial Environment in Meaning Interpretation

The exhibition space is the material basis for the dissemination of the meaning of artworks, and it will bring different feelings [4] to the audience in terms of spatial form, environmental atmosphere and functional layout. The size of the space, the intensity of the light, the color combinations and the use of materials all create a specific viewing atmosphere, evoking corresponding emotions and feelings in the audience. The arrangement of the display space and the route of walking will also affect the speed and process of viewing, thereby affecting the degree of understanding and coherence of the works. At the same time, the space environment can also provide background knowledge, set up reference objects, and create dialogue scenarios, which play a positive role in interpreting the meaning of the artwork. Good spatial arrangement can enhance the expressiveness of the artwork and enable the audience to better understand and accept it; otherwise, it will have the opposite effect.

3. Types and Characteristics of Art Gallery Displays

3.1. Historical Displays in Chronological Order

Historical displays are chronological in chronological order, showing the development of artworks [5]. This approach focuses on the continuity and phases of art development, using the chronological order of the works to help the audience understand art history. In practice, historical displays are often accompanied by detailed information about the background of The Times, artistic styles, and related historical events, allowing the cultural and historical value of the artworks to be fully displayed. The advantage of this approach is that it provides the audience with a more systematic knowledge system, which helps them better understand the background of The Times in which the artworks are placed and the role they play. By comparing works from different eras, viewers can also intuitively see the changes and developments in the language of art. However, an excessive emphasis on chronological order may lead to a lack of attention to the individual artworks themselves, and it can easily result in a linear way of understanding, which to some extent hinders the audience's exploration of the multiple meanings of the artworks [6].

3.2. Conceptual Displays Categorized By Theme

A conceptual display is a recombination and reinterpretation of works of art from different eras and of different types based on a certain theme or concept. This breaks the previous limitations of time and space by concentrating on a theme to highlight a certain level of meaning. Generally speaking, themes include social life, human care, nature, religious beliefs, etc. Under these broad concepts, there are more possibilities for communication and space for generating new meanings among artworks. The most valuable thing about conceptual displays is that they can discover the connections among artworks, the cultural commonalities that transcend time and space, and the spiritual aspects. Visitors usually get more thinking and feeling in such exhibitions, and have a deeper understanding [7] of the theme. It is also a good way of modern art education that can enhance people's contrastive ability and critical thinking. Conceptual displays, however, pose a challenge for curators, who need a certain level of academic proficiency and creative ability to find the right point between thematic unity and the individuality of the works.

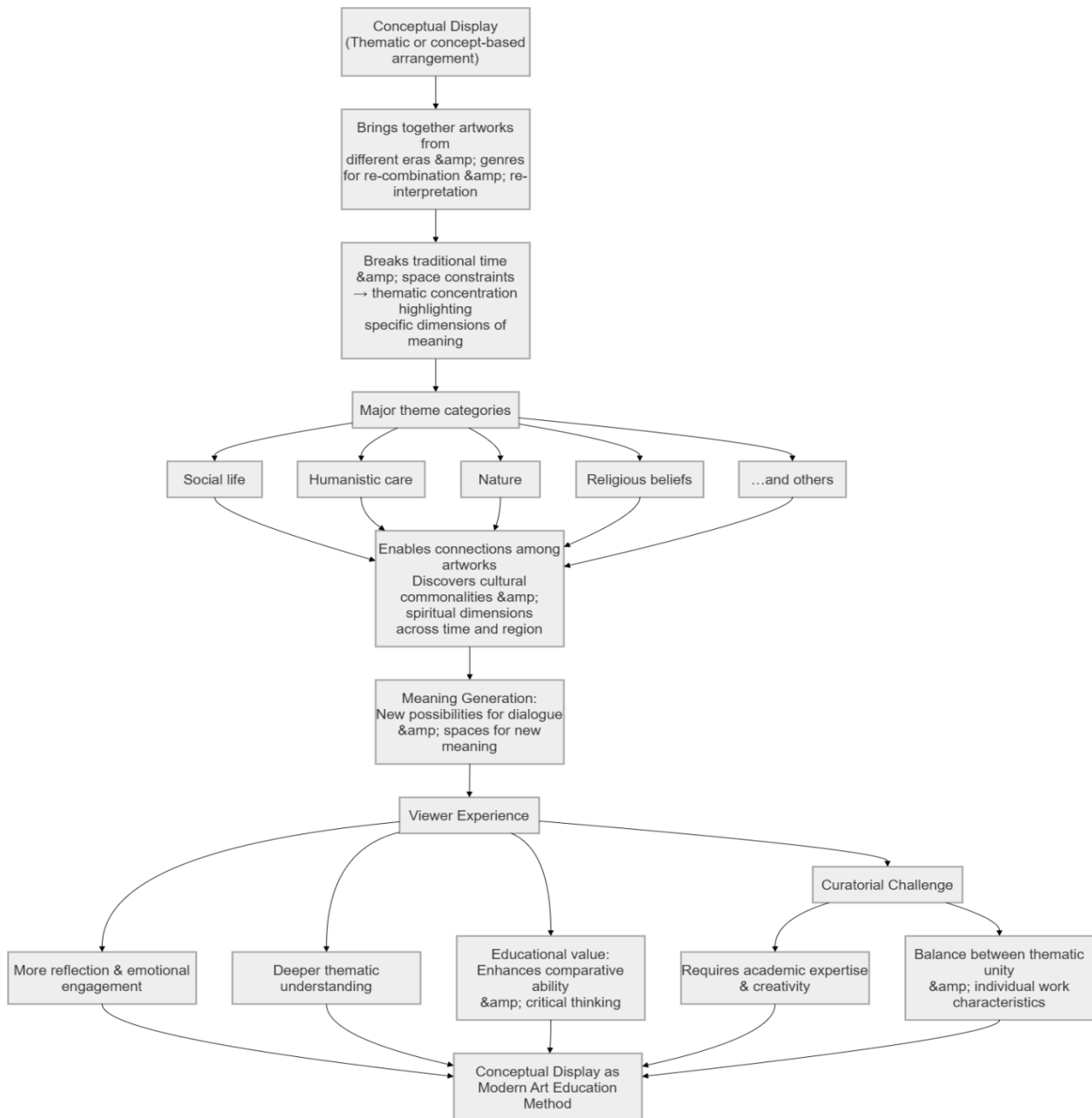


Figure 2. Structural and Characteristic Framework of the Conceptual display method

3.3. Aesthetic Display By Artistic Style

Aesthetic display is the classification of artworks with similar or related aesthetic traits based on artistic style and aesthetic features. This approach focuses on the formal language and aesthetic value of the artworks, allowing the audience to feel and experience the aesthetic qualities of the artworks. In practice, aesthetic displays are usually placed in different areas according to different art schools such as realism, impressionism, and abstract expressionism, and can also be classified [8] according to different aspects such as color usage, composition methods, and material selection. This way of display helps the audience better understand the characteristics and significance of various art styles and improve their own aesthetic ability and appreciation level. Because works of the same style are placed together, the audience can see more intuitively how an aesthetic idea is expressed and how it develops and changes. At the same time, aesthetic displays also create a great opportunity for comparative learning in art education, allowing viewers to further understand the language of art through comparison. However, this approach is also prone to overemphasizing formal elements while neglecting the social and cultural elements contained in the artwork, and there is a risk of using the artwork as a tool.

3.4. Interactive and Immersive Displays

With the advancement of technology, interactive and immersive exhibitions are a new trend [9] in the way art galleries display today. This approach uses new technologies such as multimedia, virtual reality and augmented reality to give visitors a full range of experiences and participation. Interactive exhibitions use devices such as touch screens, sensors, and digital guides to enable visitors to actively learn about the exhibits and make their own choices and further research. Immersive exhibitions, on the other hand, create an atmosphere and context that makes visitors feel as if they are in the era when the artwork was created or in an imaginary space. The most distinctive feature of this form of exhibition is that it can motivate the audience and give them a unique viewing experience, especially for young people, which is more in line with their interests and hobbies. At the same time, the application of technology adds more possibilities to the meaning of the artworks, allowing the audience to understand the artworks [10] from different perspectives. However, excessive use of technology can also cause the audience to overlook the charm of the artwork itself, so it is necessary to handle the relationship between technology and art well.

4. The Specific Impact of Different Display Methods on the Creation of the Meaning of Artworks

4.1. The Impact of Display Space Layout on Viewer Perception

Display space layout is one of the fundamental elements of exhibition design in art galleries and is an important factor influencing the viewing experience of the exhibition and the perception of the artworks. The size, height and shape of the space, as well as the relationship between the exhibition halls, all affect the message that the artworks are intended to convey. In large, spacious exhibition halls, artworks can be displayed to a greater extent, and viewers can view the works from different directions. This is very beneficial for large sculptures or installation art works, which can better reflect their magnificent and grand effects and bring visual impact and appeal to people. The relatively enclosed small exhibition rooms are suitable for works that need to be observed closely, such as ancient calligraphy and paintings, jewelry, etc. Such Spaces can give the audience a sense of tranquility, allowing them to concentrate on appreciating the beauty [11] of the details of the works. The movement of the space is also very important. Under reasonable guidance, visitors can follow the route set by the curator to appreciate the exhibition content. The free-form movement gives visitors more options. Different viewing routes will lead to different interpretations of the meaning, thereby affecting the audience's perception and understanding of the overall meaning of the artworks.

4.2. The Impact of the Combination of Works on the Interpretation of Meaning

Art combinations are the focus of curators' work, and different combination methods will bring about different interpretations. Contemporary art galleries are increasingly focusing on the dialogue between works to create new meanings. The contrastive combination of eras brings together works from different periods, allowing a clear view of the development process and changes of art, and enabling the audience to understand the background of the era in which the works are located. Thematic response combinations involve putting together works with the same or similar themes to enhance the expressiveness of a particular theme, allowing viewers to experience the rich content [12] of that theme from different perspectives. Contrastive combinations bring together works with different styles or viewpoints, which can prompt the audience to think and communicate, and generate new meanings. The combination of materials and craftsmanship can also influence people's perception of the technique and aesthetics of the artwork. In recent years, cross-cultural and cross-media combination displays have become a new trend, where traditional classification boundaries are broken, the meaning of artworks is given contemporaneity, and classic works are given new vitality and value in the context of new combinations.

4.3. The Impact of Lighting and Display Techniques on the Representation of Artworks

Lighting design plays a very important role in the display of artworks. It affects both the visual perception of the artworks and people's understanding of their emotional atmosphere and spiritual connotation. Professional museum lighting should take into account the balance [13] between protecting cultural relics and good display. Warm lighting creates a sense of warmth and is suitable for displaying artworks with a sense of history. Cold light is more suitable for showing the intellectual nature of modern artworks. Directional spotlights can highlight the details of key works, draw the viewer's attention, and make it easier for the viewer to notice the message the work intends to convey. Modern digital display technology offers new ways to convey the meaning of artworks, and multimedia interactive devices can give visitors an immersive experience, allowing them to better understand the story behind the work and the cultural significance it contains. Virtual reality technology can even bring visitors "back" to the time when the work was created, allowing them to experience more real and concrete content, thus greatly expanding the possibilities [14] of the meaning of artworks.

4.4. The Impact of Guides and Expository Texts on Meaning Conveyance

The tour guide system and work descriptions are important components of the educational function of art galleries and play a bridging role in conveying the meaning of artworks. Detailed and professional descriptions can provide the audience with some necessary background information, such as the artist's life, creation background, technique, meaning, etc., to give the audience a correct perspective of appreciation. However, the level of detail and the way it is presented can have a significant impact on the viewer's experience. Too detailed information may leave the viewer with no room for imagination and personal understanding, while too brief information may make it difficult for the viewer to truly understand the meaning of the work. The multilingual tour also reflects the international vision and inclusiveness of the art gallery. Different language versions may have some subtle differences in meaning due to different cultural backgrounds. The development of digital Tours also provides technical support for personalized meaning communication, allowing visitors to choose different levels of information content [15] based on their own interests and knowledge levels. Interactive Tours can also boost the audience's enthusiasm, prompting them to have a deeper understanding of the artwork through questions, discussions, and other forms, thereby obtaining richer and more personalized meanings.

5. Conclusions

This paper, starting from the relationship between the display methods in art galleries and the generation of the meaning of artworks, elaborates on the importance of display design in the dissemination of art. The display method of art galleries is not only a means of display, but also an important factor involved in the construction of the meaning of artworks. Whether the spatial layout is reasonable, whether the combination of works is scientific, whether the technical means are appropriate, and whether the navigation system is sound will all affect the audience's artistic perception and understanding of the artworks. With the development of China's cultural undertakings in recent years, the number of art galleries has been increasing year by year. From 2019 to 2023, the number of art galleries of all kinds across the country rose from 518 to 672, and the number of visitors exceeded 50 million per year, which also put forward higher requirements for the quality of exhibitions. Nowadays, the cultural demands of the audience are increasingly diverse and individualized. The traditional single display method can no longer meet the needs of various levels of the audience. Therefore, art galleries should place more emphasis on the dominant position and interactivity of the audience in the display design.

The future development of art gallery displays should be people-oriented, making full use of advanced technological means for innovative display and dissemination methods. Digital transformation brings new opportunities to art galleries. The application of technologies such as virtual exhibitions,

augmented reality, and AI-guided Tours has changed the way people visit art galleries. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the different needs of people in different cultural backgrounds for artworks and establish a variety of ways to convey meaning, while preserving the cultural connotations of the artworks themselves and giving them new vitality in the context of today's times. Cross-border collaboration and integration are the future trends of art galleries. Cooperation with schools, enterprises, groups, etc. can better play the role of cultural dissemination and social education of art galleries and make greater efforts to build a high-level public cultural service system.

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