

Research on Factors Influencing Online Art Exhibitions and the Role that Social Media can Play during Online Exhibitions

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Abstract: During the epidemic, many art exhibitions and museums started online exhibitions actively or passively. How to make online art exhibitions accepted by more people and how to promote online art exhibitions more smoothly have become the main problems facing the society. This paper aims to explore the factors that affect people to watch online art exhibitions, and how to make the promotion of online art exhibitions successful.

Keyword: Online exhibition, art exhibitions, Social media platform

1. Introduction

According to the development of the offline museums, the visitation and aesthetics of people has been developed. However, when modern museums were beginning to develop the online art galleries and exhibitions, the concern exists: if the collection or experience were published online, the in-person visitation and feeling would invariably decline since the base of the exhibition has been changed [1]. But during the world has entered the global pandemic, more and more museums started to find new opportunities and begin to publish the online version in order to attract more customers and make livings [2].

To be more specific, according to the world's current situation with the COVID-19 virus, there are many art exhibitions canceled or changed the form of exhibitions. This change is not only based on the local needs of epidemic prevention, switched the form of exhibition from offline to online exhibitions, but this change is also based on the development of society that the single model of museum exhibitions has undergone a qualitative change. According to the research of The Research On Culture And Art, it shows that until now there are more than 4,500 museums in China have done the exhibition with online platforms, such as WeChat or live streaming platforms. For instance, since January 28, 2020, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage "Museum Online Exhibition Platform" has seen rapid growth, with an average of more than 40,000 views per day, the total number of platform views has exceeded 600,000. After entering 2021, the online browsing volume has increased significantly, and has exceeded one million in the first half of the year. As a result, it is easy to find out that online exhibition has become one of the trends for art exhibitions in our modern society.

Due to the development of the online exhibitions, how to make online exhibitions accepted by more people and how to make the vitality of online exhibitions more lasting have become a matter of

close concern to modern people and art museums and exhibitions. Rather than all the online exhibitions made big progresses, there are only several types of online art exhibitions and galleries succeeded indeed. This paper will then mainly focus on the factors that affect the success of online exhibitions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Status of Online and Offline Exhibitions

The reason why offline exhibitions can attract many people to watch the exhibition is that the interactive form of offline exhibitions can bring the ultimate experience to the audience. According to the experience mode of the audience, offline exhibitions can be divided into two aspects: active experience and passive experience [3]. The main characteristics of active experience are the emphasis on interaction, the interaction between people and machines, and the interaction between people. The main feature of passive experience is to make people immersive and emphasize immersion. However, online exhibitions rely on mobile phones and other electronic platforms for exhibition, which is difficult to achieve the effect of offline exhibitions [4].

However, there already have some ways for people nowadays to overcome the drawbacks that online exhibitions have. There are several new forms of online exhibitions have been developed and applied nowadays.

2.2 The Reason Why Online Exhibitions have been Developed

Before the global pandemic arrived at 2019, almost every visitor treat online exhibition as a brave try and future goal. However, after the COVID-19 ensured quarantines, people have to treat online exhibitions as the practical way to make livings [5].

2.3 New Ways to Preform

The major way of online exhibition is the art museum publishes pictures and videos on their own website, but it can only attract 42.5% visitors rather than before [6]. With the development of the social media platform, more ways exist and that can be used to show online art [7].

Indeed, there are several social media platforms can be used for art museums and exhibitions to use for attracting people to visit their online exhibitions. For instance, a popular social media platform, the Little Red Book, can be a suitable platform to promote online exhibitions. According to the research from Nelson, it shows that more than 36% of the Little Red Book users choose this application is for following popular trends, and 30% of the users choose this application is for looking other people's popular sharing. This directly shows the availability of using social media platforms to promote online exhibitions since the purpose of users to use these types of application is for following trends and improving their aesthetics.

2.4 The Impact of Digital Process as a Foundation on Online Exhibitions

The digital process can make online exhibition overcome the problem that people cannot immerse themselves in the exhibition. With the rapid development of digital camera technology, VR, AR and other technologies, panoramic virtual exhibitions and 3D virtual exhibitions have become increasingly popular [8]. 3D virtual exhibition has broad application prospects. It can not only rely on physical works of art or exhibitions, but also create many exhibitions that do not exist in reality. It has become a new exhibition form independent of physical exhibitions. According to the results of the questionnaire, more than 80% of people are willing to watch online art exhibitions containing 3D virtual technologies, of which more than 60% are willing to watch online art exhibitions containing

digital achievements repeatedly

3. Methodology

The research uses setting questionnaire to deeply research the reason why people choose to visit online exhibitions and the factors influencing people's attitude toward online exhibitions.

3.1 Questions Setting

The questions in the questionnaire is set in three different parts.

3.1.1 Basic Information Collection

- 1) Your gender
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other
 - Prefer not to say
- 2) Your age
 - Under 20
 - 20 - 40
 - 40 - 60
 - Greater than 60
 - Prefer not to say
- 3) Your level of education
 - High school or less
 - Undergraduate
 - Graduate
 - Doctoral
 - Prefer not to say
- 4) The size of the city you live in
 - Relatively big, such as Beijing or Shanghai
 - Relatively small, which means you have little opportunity to meet important galleries
- 5) profession or just interest in arts and science
 - Profession in Art and Science
 - Having big interest in Art and Science
 - Have a few interest in Art and Science
 - Have no interest in Art and Science
- 6) Have you ever visited a museum or exhibition person pre-Covid
 - No, never
 - Yes, but only a few times
 - Yes, and I often visit museums and exhibitions in person

3.1.2 Information about Their Experience and Preference about Online Exhibitions

- 1) What type of exhibitions have you ever seen offline?
 - Museum exhibitions, which include traditional art such as artifacts or famous paintings
 - Modern art exhibitions
 - Modern contemporary art exhibitions
 - Photography exhibitions

Sculpture exhibitions

Light and shadow exhibitions

Performance art exhibitions

Other please specify here: _____

- 2) Have you ever gone to an online exhibition

No, skip to question 4

Yes

- 3) What type of exhibitions have you ever seen online?

Classical art restored online and re-shown in HD

Photos of modern art/photos of contemporary art

Electronic artworks

Live streaming of performance art

Watching from social media platforms, such as TikTok

Depending on what my social software pushes to me, such as the Little Red Book

Other please specify here: _____

- 4) What is your knowledge and interest in online exhibitions?

Very well informed, often visit

Very well informed, but not often because of practical problems

Very well informed, but not if there is no favorite subject matter

Not very well informed, but often visit

Not very well informed, occasionally visit

Not very well informed, not at all

Not informed, not interested

3.1.3 The Understanding of the Online Exhibitions

- 1) Do you think there is a difference between online art and offline physical art?

Yes

No

[Skip to the fourth or fifth question according to your answer]

- 2) Why do you think there is a difference between online and offline art?

Different forms of presentation lead to different perceptions

Different expenses

Different environmental influences such as foot traffic

Different styles or genres of artists

Different status of artists

Personal habits lead to accepting only one of the art forms

Other please specify here: _____

- 3) Why do you think there is no difference between online and offline art?

Differences in the presentation do not cause differences in art

Artist's style does not change with presentation

Both art forms are well understood and accepted

Other please specify here: _____

- 4) If you were not affected by the epidemic, would you choose to view the exhibition online?

Yes

No

I don't know

- 5) If not affected by the epidemic, will you go to the exhibition online? If so, what type of exhibition would you have chosen to see?

Museum exhibitions, which include traditional art such as artifacts or famous paintings
Modern art exhibitions
Contemporary art exhibitions
Photography exhibitions
Sculpture exhibitions
Light and shadow exhibitions
Performance art exhibitions
Other please specify here: _____

- 6) What benefits do you think online art has brought to you?
Cultivating an aesthetic that is more in line with contemporary trends
Reducing unnecessary socializing and communication, and being able to view exhibitions without being disturbed
Privacy is better protected
Being able to take screenshots or download works you like and then save them
More convenient, saving time and energy
Other please specify from here: _____

3.2 Data Analysis

3.2.1 Factors that Influence Online Art

According to the questionnaire, the basic information has influenced the traffic to the online exhibition. The questionnaire set to more than seventy people, and seventy-two of them are available for the paper. Moreover, this research questionnaire reflected some basic data support. There are 34 male, 36 female, and 2 people prefer not to say their gender, and 98.6% of them are educated. 88.9% of people are coming from big city, which provides them a good condition to visit offline exhibitions. 80% of the people who answered the questionnaire are under the age of 40, and 66.7% of them are willing or like to see art exhibitions in person (whether online or offline.) Also, more than 82.5% of people used to have the experience of visiting some offline exhibitions, which means that in today's society, people are having more interest in going to some exhibitions in person.

Moreover, except the basic information of the questionnaire collected, it also shows some deeper data according to the answer of the questionnaire. Firstly, there are 62.5% of people will go to the exhibitions if they are not affected by the epidemic. This shows the importance of developing a suitable and popular online art. Moreover, more than a half of people believes that there is a very big difference between online and offline exhibitions, and the option "Different forms of presentation lead to different perceptions" plays a vital role in the reason why people did think there is a big difference between online and offline exhibitions, which is 81.9%. This shows the result that if the online museum galleries and exhibitions want to be successful, they have to overcome the problem of different perceptions. As a result, it is clear that online exhibitions can be published to more people in the society since there are a lot of people are willing to go to exhibitions, but the technological devices of online exhibitions must improve.

Last but not least, the questionnaire also shows the influence to people in the modern society. More than 76.4% people agreed with the point of view that if there are some online exhibition topics are interesting, they will attend the exhibition online, and more than 90 percent of them agree with the reason that online exhibitions can help them to save time, save energy, and avoid unnecessary communication with foreigners. Also, more than a half people agreed with the point of view that online exhibitions provide them a convenient way to take screenshots or download the art for further look. These evidence and data show the benefits people can gain from online exhibitions, and they also reflect the importance of publishing online exhibition since it can convenient people's life.

3.2.2 Conclusion

To conclude, under the life that is affected by the epidemic, the museums and exhibitions must develop some new methods in order to make livings. Online exhibitions have been developed and became one of the trends in art exhibitions. Modern people can accept the form of online exhibitions, and they are willing to attend in some ways. There are some factors that will influence people to choose whether they will attend the online exhibitions or not, and some of the factors can be overcome with the attention from the museums or the exhibitions themselves. Social media is an efficient platform to promote people to attend online exhibitions due to its own function and unique users.

4. Findings

To begin with, the theme selection of online exhibitions has a great impact on the passenger flow. The theme and the title of the exhibition often determines the success of the whole process of the exhibition.

Firstly, the theme can include the quality, level and artistic status of the exhibition, which can largely determine whether normal visitors are willing to spend time watching online exhibitions. According to the result from the questionnaire, it reflected some basic data support: seventy-two of them are available for the paper, and there are 34 male, 36 female, and 2 people prefer not to say their gender, and 98.6% of them are normal visitors, which means they are not professional, and the reason why they usually go to see the exhibition is just because they are interested with the exhibition itself. According to the questionnaire, it shows the result that more than 76.4% people agreed with the point of view that if there are some online exhibition topics are interesting, they will attend the online exhibition without thinking about other determinants such as time and price.

Secondly, the different fields involved in the exhibition theme will have different impacts on the online exhibitions. According to the result from the questionnaire, it shows the result that among all genders that willing to maintain the habit of visiting some online museums, 64.58% of the visitors are female, and 32.42% of the visitors are male. It clearly shows that choosing the theme of the online exhibition based on women's aesthetic preferences will play a vital role in the success of the exhibition, since more than half of the people who are willing to continue to visit online exhibitions are women. Also, according to the research of Thelwall, M. in 2018, it clearly shows the ratio of different gender people as YouTube commenters varies almost a hundredfold between museums, and although some differences may cause by the gender interests in museum themes, the major difference is caused by the topics chosen for online contents. These results all proved that if an online exhibition wants to be successful, it has to pay attention on gender preferences. For instance, through the experiment exposed participants to masculine and gender-neutral interfaces, gender-biased topics can significantly negatively impact women users of those web interfaces, and they will have a sense of resistance, whereas gender-neutral topics was perceived positively by all gender individuals [9].

Moreover, the form of online exhibitions has a great impact on the passenger flow. Compared with offline exhibitions, it is true that online exhibitions has a big number of drawbacks. How to overcome these drawbacks of online exhibitions became a serious question that art museums and exhibitions need to overcome.

First of all, according to the survey questionnaire, there are 78.1% of people have seen online exhibition through one unique social media platform: tiktok. This social media application can easily build a platform for artists who are willing to do performance art, and around 85% of people are willing to visit online performance art exhibition because it can provide a great visual impact both online and offline, and online performance art exhibitions can cover a wider range of topics and last longer. For instance, performance artists can broadcast live for 24 hours per day.

Secondly, the result of the questionnaire's data analysis shows the future of online exhibitions is bright, but it still needs some platforms or technology to further develop, such as using social media

to promote. For instance, a popular social media platform, the Little Red Book, can be a suitable platform to promote online exhibitions. According to the research from Nelson, it shows that more than 36% of the Little Red Book users choose this application is for following popular trends, and 30% of the users choose this application is for looking other people's popular sharing.

According to the research questionnaire, it shows that more than 70% of women are willing to use the Little Red Book for gain new information for exhibitions and museums, and more than 90% of them are willing to visit online exhibitions and museums. As a result, due to the reason why people decide to use the Little Red Book and the fact that a big number of people nowadays are using this social media platform, this application truly can be used for the online exhibitions to become successful. This directly shows the availability of using social media platforms to promote online exhibitions since the purpose of users to use these types of application is for following trends and improving their aesthetics.

In the comrades of the times, the famous art critic Boris gross used to say: "at the beginning of the 21st century, art has entered a new era, that is, an era of not only mass consumption but also mass production. Today, contemporary art has become a kind of mass practice." The current exhibitions online have developed a variety of forms of expression, due to the fact that the society has been affected by the COVID-19 and the promotion of scientific and technological products.

5. Conclusion

As a result, under the life that is affected by the epidemic, the museums and exhibitions must develop some new methods in order to make livings. Online exhibitions have been developed and became one of the trends in art exhibitions. Modern people can accept the form of online exhibitions, and they are willing to attend in some ways. There are some factors that will influence people to choose whether they will attend the online exhibitions or not, and some of the factors can be overcome with the attention from the museums or the exhibitions themselves.

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