

Practical Analysis on Interface Design Arrangement for a Special Exhibition at the Selected Museums in Malaysia

Norfadilah Kamaruddin

Creative Visual Exchange Group (CREaTE),
Faculty of Art & Design, University Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
dilagiant@gmail.com

Abstract: *When working on an exhibition design for a museum, a graphic designer commonly has to select the right visual elements and using the space, technology, displays, materials that effectively would be in contact with the visitors. This is due to the environment in any museum exhibition must communicate with the audience and transmit the information technologically. Within this understanding, this paper presenting the outcomes of the interface design presentation analysis on special exhibition at the selected museum in Malaysia based on practical review. In the case of it, each of the exhibition components was observed as an integrated approach for the museum exhibition process. This review will helping the team of museum exhibitions in preparing an effective appearance of future exhibition.*

Keywords: interface design, museum exhibition, design process

1. Introduction

According to Lorenc, Skolnick and Berger (2007), exhibition design is a medium of graphic design that communicates an environment. Moreover, Demir (2009) has added that exhibition design as a new branch to its design categories. The categories types can be varied from public centers, institutional centers, parks and heritage centers, trade shows, art galleries, showrooms, and traveling exhibitions to museums. But there is a main difference between any kind of exhibition: commercial or not commercial exhibition.

Working on an exhibition design for a museum, a graphic designer commonly has to select the right visual elements that effectively would be in contact with the visitors. This is due to the environment in any museum exhibition must communicate with the audience and transmit the information technologically. As mentioned by Neal (1987), museum exhibition must be organizing and displaying the selected items into a meaningful story. So the vital role of the designer involved in any museum exhibition design is to focus on the storyline of the exhibition. The secondary focus will be on using the space, technology, displays, materials and the harmony of the design elements (Erkmen, 2004).

In the case of special exhibition design from selected museums in Malaysia, a practical review and analysis of the interface design of the special exhibition is an example for comprehending the complexity of effectiveness museum exhibition design. The objectives is to determine how the interface design elements were used in the exhibition towards the understanding of interface design roles.

2. Interface Design for Museum Exhibition

At a museum, the exhibition works can be demonstrated as a medium of presentation with an element of interface design for the collections and research works (Kamaruddin, 2019). In this sense, the interface design between the visitor and the museum collections was called as an exhibition where museum exhibition must communicate to the visitors deep to their mind and feeling (Lord, G. Dexter and Mayrand, 2001).

Through a broad literature, it be defined that there are 3 categories of interface design for museum namely Standard, Virtual and Augmented. In certainly, a standard interface is referred to the use of standard interfaces like keyboards, mice, and computer monitors. While Virtual interface is when the interfaces block out the real world to create a reality. Finally, an Augmented interface category is when the interfaces does not block out the real world and creates reality (Kamaruddin, 2019). In which, interface design at the museum as a means of communication tool that changed from the object based presentation (the display of art works in the museums) to the information based presentation (images or texts in museums halls, information kiosks, etc).

3. The Production of Special Exhibition at the selected Museums in Malaysia

The main function for all museums in Malaysia is to preserving the national uniqueness and heritage. Furthermore, there are also over 50 museums in Malaysia that are managed by the federal and state governments. The focus of these museums has exceeded beyond the museum walls and this brings about the implementation of a different kind of museum experience (Taha 2008). Museums in Malaysia moreover still face many challenges such as being a non-profit institution and a high maintenance body. Therefore, Malaysia government still considers museum as a semi academic and educational institution. Thus, the strength of a museum depends on its role in education progress.

Volume 8 Issue 8, August 2019

www.ijsr.net

Licensed Under Creative Commons Attribution CC BY

In regards to the museum exhibition in Malaysia, there are a few types of exhibition including permanent exhibition, temporary exhibition, special exhibition and mobile exhibition. For this paper, a special exhibition that being exhibited by selected museums across Malaysia was involved in the analysis. The museums are including the

Royal Museum of Malaysia, The Lukut Museum, The Textile Museum, and the National Museum. All those four museums are under the Department of Museums Malaysia and be analysed in regards of interface design arrangements on the special exhibition involved as per shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: The banner for selected special exhibition

3.1 The Project Team for Museum Exhibition

In this study, a core team members are referred to those who play a primary role in designing and developing the interfaces of exhibition. These team members are included:

1. The Curator who performed as an idea generator that creates the concept for the exhibition based on the content and writes the storyline. Commonly a detailed description of the exhibition and the preliminary draft for the labels that appear in the exhibit are prepared by the Curator.
2. The exhibit designer, who prepares the physical design of the exhibition, including its floor plan and graphic identity. She or He also who chooses the wall and floor coverings, designs display cases and prepares the looks of the exhibition.
3. A general contractor who acts as an idea implementer for the exhibition, securing objects for the exhibition that are not in the museum collection, overseeing the work of the peripheral team (specialists who implement the plans), ensuring conservation of items to be displayed, and making sure that the design is implemented according to plans

Typically, for all those exhibition involved in the study established that these team members provide specialized skills needed to develop a part of the exhibition. In example, a museum curator whose job is to develop programs geared toward visitors that are related to the exhibition content and editor whose job is to edit the copy for all labels and gallery guides associated with an exhibition.

3.2 The Phases of the Exhibition Design Production

There were numerous phases of the exhibition design production for the museum in Malaysia that are involving Project Phase (budgeting), Conceptual Phase (the tasks of the Project members: Idea developing process, deciding on the museum’s mission, information gathering, story telling, documentation, lay-outs, sketches, text writing etc.), Design Phase (the tasks of the exhibition designer,

industrial designer and the graphic designer is designing the general concept of the exhibition, actual concept of exhibition design and designing exhibition units which is graphic design details, designing the tables, platforms, and the sitting units and movie projected on the screen), Production Phase (the task to choosing the manufacturers for manufacturing work including print-outs, construction, illumination, audio visual design etc.), and finally is Terminating and Exhibiting phase (the task is for the final look of the exhibition). Table 1 below explains in brief all the phases of the exhibition design production.

Table 1: The Phases of the Exhibition Design Production

Phases	Description
Project Phase	Beginning the work of production with theme and content. The task of the director is on proposed budgeting.
Conceptual Phase	The tasks of the Project members: Idea developing process, deciding on the museum’s mission, information gathering, story telling, documentation, lay-outs, sketches, text writing etc
Design Phase	The tasks of the exhibition designer and the graphic designer: Designing the general concept of the exhibition, exhibition design and it’s graphic design details, designing exhibition units. The task of the industrial designer: designing the tables, platforms, and the sitting units. The task of the 2nd graphic designer: movie projected on the screen
Production Phase	Choosing the manufacturers. The tasks of the project team and the manufacturing firms: Print-outs, construction, illumination, audio visual design etc
Exhibiting phase	The final looks and launching

3.3 Exhibition Design Concept

Primarily a design language and a concept had to be found for the museum’s exhibition design. As Erkmén (2004) states in an analysis of a design he made; the museum design has to have it’s own language which identifies the difference between museum and exhibition, has to give

hints indicating whether it is temporary or permanent, and has to have a relationship with the materials, lighting and the design concept. Towards this understanding, the general concept should be planning by the curator to reflecting the atmosphere of the content. The graphic designer therefore, who is commonly play the role as the concept designer, should decided to the backgrounds of the general design. Moreover, details (photographs, letters, handwritings etc.)

in the exhibition design, guide the audience to feel and sense the aura of the concept. According to Neal (1987) the colours of a gallery wall imply an architectural period or an environment. Another main design point was the strength of the contrasts. Dark ceiling and light walls all around, sidewalls of the entrance and the outer surface are the examples for this design understanding (Figure 2).



Figure 2: The dark ceiling and light walls all around exhibition space

3.2.1 The design of the Walls

The graphic design of the entrance each exhibition is the first point that reflects the design language of the museum. Contrasts are used on the surface to strengthen the

perception. For that the outer surface has bright coloured backgrounds with darker typography and side walls of the entrance have darker background with brighter typography (Figure 3).



Figure 3: The bright coloured backgrounds with darker typography

3.2.2 Typography and the Labels

Good design and graphics can strengthen the text but cannot take the place of it. The placement of elements and texts are accepted as the most common mistake in any exhibition design and as school children, disabled and elderly persons are included in the target audience of the

four different museum involved in the study, audio visuals projection and giant graphics are added to the museum's design system. The texts and type size are arranged and tested to an average body and eye-level height. With comfortable head movements the visitors would be able to read the texts (Figure 4).



Figure 4: The texts and type size for label are arranged to an average body and eye-level height

3.2.3 The design elements

In any design work, the design elements is a must. For museum exhibition, therefore the design elements involved are text, colour, space, and light. Moreover the museums have two main purposes: to conserve precious objects and to provide a perfect visual perception of displayed objects. Thus the perfect visual perception is requiring an accurate illumination to imply the form, the atmosphere and the space. Similarly, according to Daragh and Snyder (1993) that stated a good museum lighting is a partnership of art as it integrates the aesthetic and preservation needs of the collection, the form and character of the building and the technical systems of the building. Within this, analysis on four different exhibition at different museum involved discover that most of all the exhibitions were had a good lighting which bring the focuses of the audience to the collection being exhibit.

4. Conclusion

The target audience of each museum is the visitors with the aim of every museum exhibition is to communicate and reach the audience satisfaction. Towards this, the interface design elements and the exhibition design are the initial tools for an effective communication. Accordingly, exhibition design is all about building a bridge between the viewer and the exhibition presentation on any content of collections.

Beside the museum visitor satisfaction as the most important references, there are a big experience for team production in designing an exhibition. Different roles within a member of exhibition team were also be contributing to the effectiveness of exhibition performance among visitors. When the museum's prestige and public trust increases, other special collections can be donated as well.

Acknowledgement

This research is a collaboration study between University Teknologi MARA (UiTM) and The Department of Museums Malaysia in determining the roles of interface design in museum exhibition.

Reference

- [1] Neal, A. (1987). Help For the Small Museum. USA: Pruett Publishing Company
- [2] Darragn, J and Snyder, J. S. (1993). Museum Design: Planning and Building for Art. New York:Oxford University Press.
- [3] Demir, C (2009). Exhibition Design in National Promotion, Graphical Images on Stands Germany: VDM Verlag
- [4] Erkmén, B (2004). Recent Works. İstanbul: Ofset Yap Ömevive Matbaac ÖİÖk San. Ve Tic. A.Ş
- [5] Lorenc, J. , Skolnick L. and Berger C. (2007). What is Exhibition Design? Switzerland: A Roto Vision Book SA.
- [6] Lord, B & Lord, G. Dexter, Mayrand, Y. , (2001). The Manual of Museum Exhibitions: The Roles of Exhibition Designer, Altamira Press, Pg: 405-406.
- [7] Kamaruddin, N. (2019). Interface Design Assessment of Museum Permanent Exhibition at the National Museum of Malaysia. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS), 3(5), pp. 295-300 (ISSN 2454-6186)