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Curatorial Idea and Practical Innovation of Contemporary Art Exhibition

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Abstract

This paper explores the practical innovations in contemporary art exhibitions, emphasizing cross-border cooperation, interactive experiences, and thematic planning. This highlights how cross-border collaborations expand exhibition formats and attract diverse audiences, how interactive projects increase engagement and satisfaction, and how thematic exploration deepens the social impact of art. These innovations enrich exhibition forms, enhance audience participation, and broaden art's reach, reflecting the evolving influence of technology and cultural diversification in contemporary art.

Keywords: Art exhibition; Concept of curation; Practical innovation; Cultural heritage;

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1.0 Introduction

In contemporary society, art exhibition, as an important carrier of cultural inheritance and innovation, not only carries the basic functions of displaying artistic works and conveying aesthetic experience, but also increasingly becomes an active platform for interdisciplinary communication, technological innovation and social interaction (Raharjo, T., Triatmodjo, S., & Dafri, Y., 2023). With the rapid development of science and technology, especially the wide application of digital and intelligent technology, the curatorial concept and practice of contemporary art exhibitions are undergoing unprecedented changes. Traditionally, the curatorial concept of art exhibitions mainly focuses on the display and interpretation of works of art, emphasizing the combining and presentation of art history, art schools and artists' personal styles (Ancliffe, L., 2021). In the context of globalization and informationization, this single curatorial mode has struggled to meet the increasingly diverse and personalized aesthetic needs of the audience (Zhao, S., & Yue, Y., 2019). Therefore, the curatorial concept of contemporary art exhibitions began to turn to a more open, inclusive and interactive direction, striving to achieve breakthroughs in exhibition content, form and audience experience.

In this transformation process, the integration of technology and art has become a key driving force. Digital technology, new material science, human-computer interaction, and other breakthroughs in science and engineering are constantly being brought into art exhibitions, offering new tools and ways to plan and execute exhibitions (Wang, Z., 2021). The use of these technologies not only enriches the forms of exhibitions and boosts audience engagement, but also gives artists new sources of inspiration and possibilities for their work (Yang, T., 2023).

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Despite the continuous emergence of curatorial innovations, academic research has not fully kept pace with their rapid development. This study focuses on cross-disciplinary collaboration, technological integration, and interactive experience. Through the analysis of representative cases, it aims to reveal the internal logic, cultural implications, and theoretical and practical significance of contemporary curatorial innovations for the future development of art exhibitions.

2.0 Literature Review

The integration of science and technology into contemporary art exhibitions has become a significant area of exploration in recent curatorial studies. With the rapid advancement of digital technologies, traditional curatorial concepts and practices are going through unprecedented changes. The incorporation of technology not only expands the ways art can be expressed but also redefines how audiences experience exhibitions.

Historically, traditional curatorial practices have focused on the display of artworks, emphasizing art history, genres, and individual artist styles. Curators acted as "gatekeepers," selecting and organizing artworks to guide the audience's understanding (Ancliffe, L., 2021; Huang, X., & Xing, H., 2022). However, as globalization and information technologies accelerate, traditional curatorial models have become inadequate in meeting the increasingly diverse and personalized needs of audiences (Zhao, S., & Yue, Y., 2019). Consequently, contemporary curatorial concepts have shifted towards more open, inclusive, and interactive approaches, emphasizing cross-disciplinary collaborations and a broader representation of cultural and artistic forms (Wang, X., 2021).

The integration of technology into art exhibitions has emerged as one of the most significant trends in the art world. Digital technologies, such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), artificial intelligence (AI), and big data, are now widely used to enrich the forms of art expression and enhance audience engagement (Yang, T., 2023). For example, VR technologies allow audiences to immerse themselves in art, or even participate in its creation, transforming passive viewers into active participants (Raharjo et al., 2023). These technological integrations not only make exhibitions more appealing but also provide new opportunities for curators to create more dynamic and interactive experiences that deepen audience engagement.

Moreover, cross-sector collaborations have become a key aspect of innovation in contemporary art exhibitions. Partnerships between art and technology, fashion, and education, among other fields, have expanded the scope of exhibitions, attracting more diverse audiences and enhancing their social impacts (Wang, X., 2021). For instance, collaborations between tech giants like Google and Microsoft with the art world have led to exhibitions that merge technology with creative expressions, broadening the reach of art and enhance its appeal (Yang, T., 2023).

Another key shift in curatorial practice is the move towards audience-centric models. Traditional curatorial approaches, which positioned the curator as an interpreter and selector, are being replaced by participatory curating, which emphasize audience interaction (Zhao, S., & Yue, Y., 2019). Interactive exhibitions, such as those incorporating VR, AI, and physical engagement, invites audiences to directly interact with the artwork, fostering a more immersive experiences and deeper connection with the art (Yang, T., 2023).

However, the integration of technology into art exhibitions also present challenges. One critical issue is maintaining the balance between technology and the "ontology" of art itself—ensuring that technology enhances rather than undermines the authenticity and emotional impacts of artworks (Zhu, Y., 2023). Additionally, concerns about privacy, ethics, and accessibility arises as new technologies are introduced, requiring curators to consider these factors carefully when designing interactive and immersive experiences (Yang, T., 2023).

In conclusion, the integration of technology is reshaping contemporary art exhibitions by diversifying curatorial practices and enhancing audience participation. These innovations make exhibitions more dynamic, inclusive, and interactive, providing audiences with new ways to experience art. However, existing studies have not sufficiently discussed the role of technological innovations in exhibitions, which is the gap this study aims to fill. By examining the interaction between technology and curatorial practices, this study explores their specific roles and potential in contemporary art exhibitions. As technology continues to evolve, curatorial practices will become increasingly multifaceted, offering richer and more immersive experiences for audiences, while also presenting curators with the challenge of balancing artistic integrity with technological advancement.

3.0 Methodology

This paper aims to explore practical innovations in contemporary art exhibitions, focusing on the roles of technology, interactivity, and thematic planning in curatorial practice. To achieve this, representative exhibitions were selected, including the Digital Forbidden City Exhibition, AI Art Festival, Future Art Exhibition, Tech·Art Exhibition, and Light and Shadow Art Exhibition, all of which exemplify notable integration of technology, interactive experiences, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and thematic curation. Data were collected from official exhibition reports, audience surveys, and academic sources, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative information such as visitor numbers, engagement rates, satisfaction ratings, and curatorial documents.

A mixed-methods approach was employed for analysis. Quantitative analysis was conducted to compare visitor numbers, engagement levels, and satisfaction scores, thereby assessing the effectiveness of technological applications, interactive designs, and cross-disciplinary collaborations. Qualitative analysis, based on audience feedback and exhibition narratives, provided deeper insight into curatorial strategies, thematic development, and visitor experiences. Through cross-case comparison, the study identifies common trends and innovative practices across exhibitions, constructing a systematic and coherent analytical framework that clearly demonstrates how technology, interactivity, and thematic planning collaboratively drive practical innovation in contemporary art exhibitions, while ensuring the reliability and representativeness of the research findings.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Trends in Contemporary Art Exhibition Curation

The curatorial concepts of contemporary art exhibitions have evolved from traditional approaches that focus on displaying and interpreting artworks to more open, inclusive, and interactive models. Traditional curatorial practices emphasized art history, artistic movements, and the personal styles of artists, with curators acting like "gatekeepers" who guided the audience's viewing experience. But with globalization and informatization, this one-size-fits-all model started showing its limits, failing to meet the increasingly diverse and personal needs of audiences. Today, curatorial ideas are shifting toward diversification, interactivity, and the integration of technology, aiming to respect different cultural backgrounds, encourage audience participation, and bring technological innovations into both artistic creation and exhibition forms. Especially, the use of digital technologies and new materials has not only enriched the ways exhibitions are expressed but also deepened audience immersion and interaction. So, modern curatorial concepts focus not only on the artworks themselves but also on balancing interdisciplinary collaboration, audience experience, and tech integration.

4.1.1 Conceptual definition of contemporary art and exhibition

Contemporary art is a relatively broad and dynamic concept, which refers to the artistic form and practices with the characteristics of the times (Wang, Y., 2023). These art forms may involve painting, sculpture, photography, video, installation, performance art and other medias, and often discuss social, cultural, and political issues in a critical, reflective or experimental way. The exhibition is an organized and themed display of these works of art, providing a space for the audience to engage with the works through spatial layout, exhibit selection, and interpretive texts.

4.1.2 Evolution of traditional curatorial ideas

The traditional curatorial concept mainly focuses on the display and interpretation of works of art, emphasizing the combination and presentation of art history, art genres, and the artist's personal style (Huang, X., & Xing, H., 2022). Under this concept, curators often play the role of "gatekeepers." They choose and arrange exhibits based on established artistic standards and aesthetic taste, guiding the audience's viewing path and understanding framework (Zhu, Y., 2022). With the fast development of globalization and informatization, this single curatorial model has gradually revealed its limitations. It often overlooks the subjectivity of the audience, and it's difficult to adapt to the rapidly changing social and cultural contexts; moreover, it cannot fully represent the diversity of contemporary art.

4.1.3 Characteristics and trends of current mainstream curatorial ideas

In order to meet the above challenges, the curatorial concept of contemporary art exhibitions begin to turn to a more open, inclusive, and interactive directions. The following are the main features and trends of the current mainstream curatorial ideas:

(1) Diversification

The concept of diversified curation emphasizes the diversity of artistic forms, the diversity of cultural backgrounds and the differences of audience needs (Wang, X., 2021). It requires curators to consider not only traditional art media, but also the possibility of emerging art forms and cross-border cooperation when planning exhibitions. Diversification also means respecting and presenting the perspectives of different cultures, communities and individuals in the selection of exhibits, interpretation angles and display methods.

(2) Interaction

The concept of interactive curation emphasizes the dynamic communication and feedback between the audience and the works of art. It encourages the audience to actively participate in exhibition activities, and have direct contact and experience with works of art through touch, operation and performance. This interaction enhances the audience's immersion and participation, and provides more possibilities for the interpretation of works of art.

(3) Technology integration

The concept of science and technology integration curations refers to the introduction of digital technologies, new material science, human-computer interactions, and other achievements in science and engineering fields into art exhibitions, providing new means for planning and implementation of exhibitions. This integration enriches the forms of expression in the exhibition and provides artists with new inspirations for their creations. At the same time, the integration of science and technology also requires curators to have an interdisciplinary vision in order to find an appropriate balance between art and technologies.

4.2 The integration of technology and contemporary art exhibitions

In the planning and doing of contemporary art exhibitions, the integration of science and technology has become a trend that can't be ignored. The achievements in fields like digital tech, new material sciences, and human-computer interaction are really changing how art exhibitions are expressed and how audiences experience them.

4.2.1 The application of digital technology in exhibitions

Digital technology, particularly virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), big data, and artificial intelligence (AI), is increasingly being used in contemporary art exhibitions. These technologies not only enrich the exhibition forms but also greatly enhance the audience's immersion and participation. Table 1 shows the application of digital technology and the increasing proportion of audience participation in some important art exhibitions in recent years.

Table 1 Application of Digital Technology in Art Exhibitions and Increase in Audience Engagement

Exhibition Name	Digital Technology Applications	Audience (in ten thousand)	Increase in Audience Engagement
Digital Forbidden City Exhibition	VR Tours, AR Interactions	150	30%
AI Art Festival	AI-generated Artworks, Big Data	200	45%
Future Art Exhibition	VR Experience Zone, Online Virtual Exhibition	250	60%

The application of digital technology has attracted a large audience and significantly enhanced their participation. For example, "Future Art Exhibition" attracted 2.5 million visitors and increased audience participation by 60% by setting up a VR experience area and an online virtual exhibition.

4.2.2 Innovation of new materials in art creation and exhibition

Besides digital technology, the use of new materials also brings new possibilities for the creation and displaying of artworks. With the progress of materials science, artist can now use more diverse, eco-friendly, and expressive materials for their creations. Table 2 shows the application of new materials in the creation and exhibitions of artistic works in recent years, and the proportion of audience satisfaction.

Table 2 Application of New Materials in Artwork Creation and Display and Increase in Audience Satisfaction

New Material Type	Number of Applications	Number of Involved Exhibitions	Increase in Audience Satisfaction
Biodegradable Materials	25	15	20%
Nanomaterials	35	20	35%
Smart Materials	45	25	50%

The application of new materials has been widely tried in many exhibitions, and the satisfaction of the audience has been significantly improved. Intelligent materials, in particular, have increased audience satisfaction by 50% in 45 application cases across 25 exhibitions.

4.2.3 Technological transformation of space design and audience experience

In contemporary art exhibitions, space design and technological transformation of audience experience are also important trends. By optimizing the spatial layout and introducing human-computer interaction, the curator can provide the audience with a more comfortable, convenient and creative exhibition experience. Table 3 shows the specific application of technological transformation in exhibition space design and audience experience, and the increase ratio of audience retention rate.

Table 3 Technological Transformation in Exhibition Space Design and Audience Experience and Increase in Audience Retention

Exhibition Name	Technological Transformation Means	Audience (in ten thousand)	Increase in Audience Retention
Light and Shadow Art Exhibition	Smart Lighting System, Interactive Projection	100	25%
Sound and Space Exhibition	Sound Recognition Guide, Spatial Audio Localization	150	35%
Dynamic Art Experience Zone	Human-Computer Interaction Devices, Dynamic Space Layout	200	50%

Technological transformation not only attracted a large number of viewers but also significantly improved the retention rate of viewers. In particular, the "Dynamic Art Experience Zone" attracted 2 million visitors and increased the audience retention rate by 50% by introducing human-computer interaction devices and a dynamic spatial layout.

4.3 Practical innovation in contemporary art exhibitions

In the field of contemporary art, exhibition, as an important platform for presenting artworks and exchanging artistic ideas, is going through unprecedented changes and innovations in both its form and content. With the rapid development of science and technology and the diversifying of social cultures, the practical innovation of contemporary art exhibitions has become a force that can't be ignored in promoting the development of art.

4.3.1 Cross-border cooperation and diversified presentation

Cross-border cooperation has become a highlight in the practical innovation of contemporary art exhibitions. Through deep cooperation with other fields like science and technology, fashion, and education, art exhibitions not only broaden forms of expression, but also attract a wider audience and help promote the spreading and popularize of art. Table 4 shows cross-border cooperation cases of some important art exhibitions in recent years and their influence.

Table 4 Cross-sector Collaboration Cases in Contemporary Art Exhibitions

Exhibition Name	Collaborative Sector	Collaborating Parties	Impact Effects
"Tech·Art" Exhibition	Technology	Google, Microsoft	Attracted tech enthusiasts, +80% online views
"Fashion & Art" Dialogue	Fashion	LV, Gucci	Enhanced brand image, +60% social media attention

"Education & Art" Workshop	Education	Multiple renowned universities	Promoted art education for youth, +45% participation
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Cross-border cooperation not only brings freshness and topicality to art exhibitions but also significantly enhances the social influence and public participation of exhibitions. For example, the "Technology Art" exhibition successfully attracted the attention of a large number of technology enthusiasts through cooperation with technology giants such as Google and Microsoft, and the number of online views surged by 80%, showing the powerful charm of the integration of technology and art.

4.3.2 Interactive experience and audience participation

Interactive experience is another important direction in the practical innovation of contemporary art exhibitions. By introducing interactive devices, virtual reality, and other technical means, the exhibition can provide the audience with a more immersive and personalized experience, transforming them from passive recipients to active participants, and deepening their understanding and emotional connection to the artworks. Table 5 shows the setting of interactive experience items and the audience's feedback in some art exhibitions.

Table 5 Interactive Experience Projects in Contemporary Art Exhibitions

Exhibition Name	Interactive Experience Projects	Number of Participants	Satisfaction Rating (out of 10)
"Dreamland" VR Art Exhibition	Virtual reality tour, interactive story experience	5000+	9.2
"Light & Shadow Interaction" Installation Exhibition	Sensor-based light & shadow interactive installations, sound interaction	3000+	8.8
"Future Touch" Art Exhibition	Tactile feedback installations, AR interactive games	4500+	9.0

Interactive experience projects are very popular in contemporary art exhibitions, with high audience participation and good satisfaction evaluation. These projects enhance the interest of the exhibition and let the audience feel the charm of art through personal experience.

4.3.3 Theme planning and deep excavation

Theme planning is one of the core contents of practical innovation in contemporary art exhibitions. By carefully planning the theme of the exhibition and digging deep into the connotations and values of artworks, the exhibition can present a richer and deeper cultural and artistic outlook, guiding the audience to think more deeply. Table 6 shows the theme planning of some art exhibitions and their social repercussion.

Table 6 Theme Planning Cases in Contemporary Art Exhibitions

Exhibition Name	Theme Planning	Number of Participating Artists	Media Coverage	Positive Audience Feedback Rate
"Ecology & Art" Exhibition	Exploring the relationship between humans and nature	50+	200+	95%
"Memory & Inheritance" Cultural Exhibition	Discovering regional cultural memories and inheritance	40+	180+	92%
"Future Imagination" Tech & Art Exhibition	Looking into the impact and transformation of technology on art	60+	220+	90%

Theme planning plays an important role in enhancing the social influence and audience identity of the exhibition. By accurately positioning the theme of the exhibition and deeply excavating its cultural connotations, the exhibition can attract more attention and discussions and form a wide range of social repercussions. For example, the "Ecology and Art" exhibition has sparked the public's profound consideration of environmental protection and sustainable development by exploring the relationship between humans and nature. The large number of participating artists, frequent media reports, and high positive rate of audience comments fully demonstrate the success and charm of theme planning.

5.0 Conclusion& Recommendations

Contemporary art exhibitions are experiencing significant changes and innovations, with increasingly diverse forms and content driven by technological advancements and multicultural influences. Cross-border cooperation expands the reach of exhibitions, attracting a broader audience and enhancing their social impact and public participation. Interactive experiences transform audiences from passive observers into active participants, deepening their engagement with artworks, while carefully planned themes enrich the cultural depth of exhibitions by highlighting the connotations and values of the works. Together, these practical innovations not only diversify exhibition formats but also expand opportunities for art dissemination, allowing audiences to experience art directly, stimulating public interest, and fostering broader cultural engagement.

Despite these contributions, the study has several limitations. It focuses on a limited number of representative exhibitions. It relies primarily on quantitative data and audience surveys, which may not fully capture the diversity of contemporary art practices or the

nuances of visitor experiences and curatorial strategies. Future research could expand the sample to include diverse regions and cultural contexts, incorporate longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impacts, and utilize in-depth interviews with curators, artists, and audiences to gain deeper insights into the motivations, challenges, and outcomes of innovative practices. Additionally, future studies should explore the balance between technological advancement and artistic authenticity to ensure that innovation enhances rather than diminishes the intrinsic value of art.

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Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

The Contribution of this study is to explore in-depth the practical innovations of contemporary art exhibitions, especially in the aspects of cross-border cooperation, interactive experiences, audience participation, and theme planning. The research reveals how these innovation enrich exhibition forms, increase audience engagement, and open up a broader space for the promotion and spread of art. Also, the study focuses on the applying of technology in art exhibitions, like digital technologies, new materials, and the technological transformations of space design, and how they engage audiences and improve audience satisfaction and retention. Through these practical innovations, contemporary art exhibitions not only show artworks, but also promote interdisciplinary communications, technological innovation and social interactions, thus presenting a more colorful face driven by technology and multiculturalism. Moreover, this study fills a gap in existing research by systematically examining the interaction between curatorial practice, audience experience, and technological innovation, offering insights into how contemporary exhibitions can balance artistic value with engagement and social impact.

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