

Understanding of Basic Design Process and Techniques for Effective Museum Exhibition Design

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Abstract:- Museum plays an important role in preserving of cultural heritage to make it relevant to be regularly practiced and learned within communities and between generations. In context of that facts, there are certain types of delivery techniques used to demonstrate and delivery the information that are needed to know by new generation. And museums traditionally have transferred the collections-based through a variety of media presentation in the exhibition. Therefore, a few exhibitions are failed in gaining the visitors attention, engagement, interaction and further experiences. This moreover giving another effect where the richness of collections and all knowledge in the world will not grow and further are not appreciated by new generation. Towards this, in preparing an exhibition design for a museum is highly required the team to know not only the right visual elements in order to engage with the visitors but also understanding space, material and techniques. Thus, by examining the complexity of the design process of museum exhibition particularly on interface design production and techniques of exhibition, the outcomes will be significantly be a best-practiced for future museum exhibition performance in helping the shaping of knowledge for community.

Keywords: museum exhibition, exhibition design, design process, techniques

I. INTRODUCTION

Many previous museum scholars' have agreed that museum as a cultural institution with functions of collecting, documenting, preserving either objects, artefacts or specimens and further performing an activity such as research outcomes through a good display of exhibition and visitor could be interpreted the meaning of it. Another scholar also claimed that a museum functions are not limited as to preserve and store artefacts, but it is also an institution to spread knowledge to the public on the history, culture and natural history (Tambi, 2011). Accordingly, within this it shows that museum been identified a as source of knowledge for a holistic view towards all way of life.

Traditionally, museums have transferred the collections-based through a variety of media. As a core function of the museums, exhibitions regularly come into places to spread the information collection, artefacts or stories to visitors. Here it shows that an exhibition is the medium of public communication that offered a transformative experience for the public who visited museum. As claimed by Lord, Dexter and Mayrand (2001) that the museum exhibition must communicate to the visitors deep to their mind and feeling. Accordingly, it shows here that the key on how the museum

exhibition be prepared is significance to study more. Therefore, the success of any exhibition can be judged in two ways which are from the aspect of visitor's satisfaction (included behavior and familiarity) and a critical appraisal by an expert (subject matter expert and the artist).

Accordingly, more effective presentation methods or techniques are needed for better communication with visitors in museum. Within this situation, through an extensive literature search, this paper seeks to study and understand the interface design process for the museum exhibition. The findings presenting in this paper will be helping for future museum exhibition by shaping of knowledge on a best-practiced on museum exhibition design.

II. THE MUSEUM EXHIBITION DESIGN

Exhibition design in general is seeming like publishing a book or producing a movie in which many parties come together to create a core experience based on themes, story lines or other categories. Therefore, museum exhibition design is the process of developing a content display for museums. It is the set up and arranged to be both attractive and educational for visitors. Moreover, some exhibitions are designed to be permanent fixtures in a museum, while others are only temporary, and some may be designed to allow hands-on interaction (Kamaruddin, 2019).

Regarding the meaning of museum exhibition design, others scholar also defined that museum exhibition design is like physical artefacts, real objects or living displays that be used as focal points for important content (Henning, 2006). Consequently, exhibition design is an event at which displays or show that included a concept and put out in a public space for people to view and interact. Commonly, all types of museum exhibitions may comprise important elements such as text, audio, visual images, objects and experiences. These elements are all combining into one display called as interface design for an exhibition.

III. THE MUSEUM EXHIBITION DEVELOPMENT TEAM AND DESIGN PROCESS

An exhibition development team is made up of several key players with his or her own unique skills, perspectives and responsibilities (Lorenc, Skolnick and Berger, 2007). In particular, the team comprise a museum curator, graphic designers, interior designers and technician. Commonly, the curator is the person that needs in ensuring the exhibition's content is precise. Other experts such as the designers

(graphic and interior) additionally will advocating for the physical design of the space exhibition and ensures every visual used are communicates its messages effectively and is engaging and accessible to all visitors. Consequently, the key role of the both designers (graphic and interior) involved in the museum exhibition design development not only needs to be focusing on the storyline, space displays, exhibition materials, and technology only but also on the design elements.

In regard to the museum exhibition development process,

there are two fragments involved which are design process (concept and technique) and output of the design process (fabrication and installation). In term of design process moreover, a broad literature established there are five main phases involved in general. The phases are namely Concept Development, Schematic Design, Design Development, Final Design and Construction Documents. All these phases have their own content deliverables. Moreover, for the output of the design process, there are two phases involved including fabrication and installation. The common steps established in the literature is show in Figure 1 below.

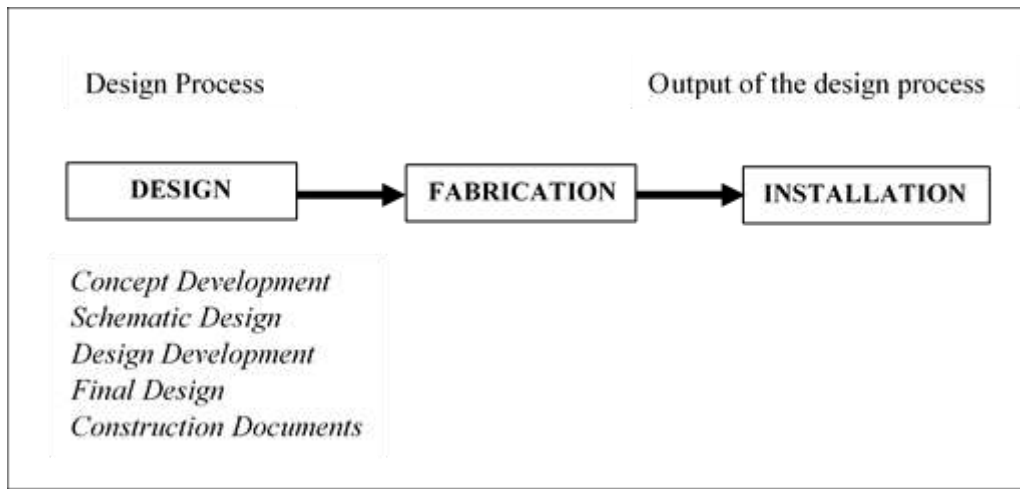


Figure1: General design process for the development of museum exhibition design from broad literature

Commonly, in the design development of museum exhibition, a broad literature established the team of production needs to be ready with a concept development. Accordingly, a concept development normally provides the “road map” for the exhibition. In which, it should content a few components of exhibition concept development including the objectives of the exhibition, look and feel of exhibition (interfaces of the exhibition), main concept, initial budget, and schedule.

After clear with the concept of exhibition and initial budget, the detailing of the concept design and content will take place. This step typically called schematic design. Normally the goal of schematic design is to flesh out the scope and character of the exhibition. This enables all parties involved to confirm themes and to review a spatial appearance, artefact use, materials and additional cost. During this stage moreover, the team will have visuals, narratives, look-and-feel boards and layouts to initially review the allocation of space, traffic flow, audio and visual components, interactive displays, lighting and special effects. Clearly, it shows at this stage of design, overall interface design is the action that come into place. In summary, content deliverables in this stage include the content brief, which provides an overview of the exhibit and its main messages and identifies potential themes, subthemes, and interpretive strategies, such as interactives and media elements. Table 1 explain typical deliverables for schematic

design stage in person meetings and distribution of meeting notes.

Deliverables	Detail descriptions
Content	Description of exhibition aims
	Outline of major components in exhibition
Design	Rough plan view
	Traffic-flow diagrams
	Sketches of key points in exhibition
	Colour perspective sketches
	Look & feel for exhibits
Schedule	Fabrication and Installation schedule

Table 1: Typical deliverables for schematic design stage

The third steps involved is a design development. The design development stage transforms the content from an outline to a final script and articulates the design. In which elevation drawings of exhibition in the real space are created. Content deliverables in this stage include the exhibit script, which content research is compiled into draft text and incorporating with image captions or object labels and the interactives. Towards that, for the interactives part, functions of audio-visuals and computer programs will be chartered, the graphic

elements are compiled, and all the graphics is created. Graphic directional and identification signage for interior and exterior spaces of the exhibition area become main part of this stage.

By the conclusion of the design phase, the final design stage finalizes the design details and graphic layouts into a production-ready package. It a complete package that illustrates the full exhibition design such as where every component is located, details for audio visual components, and how each sound and lighting systems works within the larger space. Content deliverables in this phase include the final copyedited and proofread design files (graphic layouts) that ready for production. By right, once this phase is completed and has been approved by the team, the team can transition into fabrication phase and further for final installation.

The Museum Exhibition Design Process of the Department of Museums Malaysia.

A review on the document of exhibition design process provided by the Department of Museums Malaysia, it defined that process of planning and exhibition execution is four phases namely early planning, concept, production and installation. If compared to the common process established in broad literature, there is a similarity within the phases

involved which are design process phase and output of design process phase. The diagram of common process implemented by the Department of Museums Malaysia is shows in Figure 2 below. In term of team production involved, it was determined that the Department of Museums Malaysia has exhibition division which responsibility on the production of exhibition design. The team is including the curator, the designers and technical staff.

In the very beginning, the proposed title or subject for the exhibition will be suggested in the form of a proposal paper. In the proposal paper, commonly explained the benefits of exhibition, objectives, locations, materials, target visitors and financial. This proposal paper will then go through the evaluation process where discussions of the necessary actions based on the proposal will be made. In the assessment process, the assessor team will identify which staff will be involved to ensure that each planned will not be interrupted. Improvements over ideas and concept, exhibit objects, and storylines are also be emphasized at this point. In comparing to the common broad practice, clearly established that the Department of Museums Malaysia be practising the same procedure with others museum exhibition design team. In which concept and storyline has be discussed at the early stage of development process of museum exhibition design.

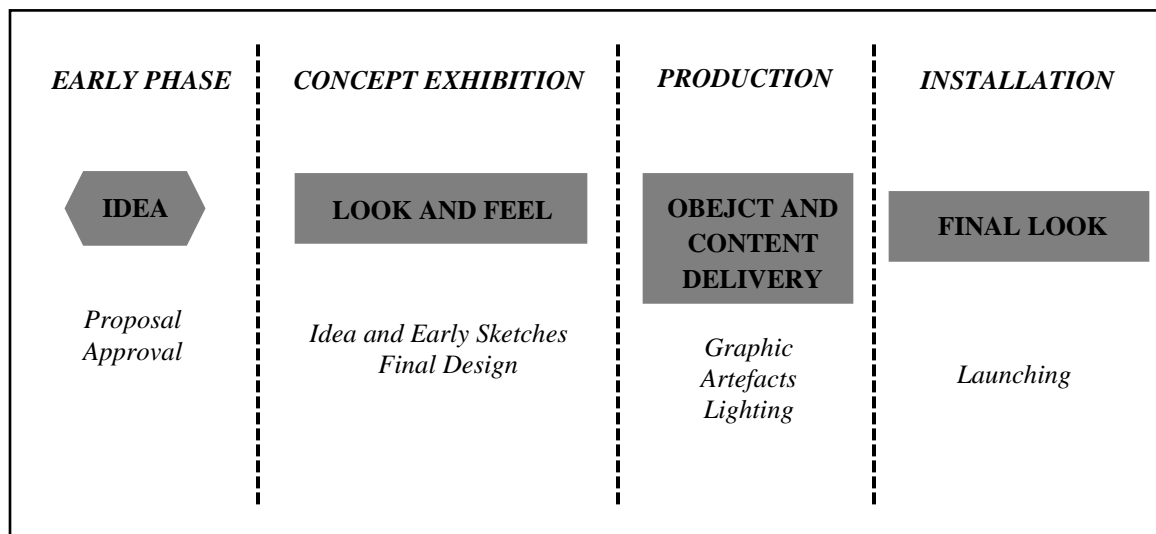


Figure2: General design process for the development of museum exhibition design by the Department of Museums Malaysia.

The second phase of museum exhibition design production is on visual appearance or looks and feel design. According to the Department of Museums Malaysia, after getting an approval from the appraisal team, finding the right place is a first job that includes the safety of the place and convenience of visitors to attending the exhibition. At this stage, the design team is a main group that doing the job related to the visual appearance of the exhibition. During this stage moreover, the team will have visuals, look-and-feel boards panel, lighting and floor-plan layouts, Additionally, the design team started their sketching work, preparing drawings for information

panel and so on. The completed sketches further will be presenting to the responsible party and needs an approval. What has been practicing by the Department of Museums Malaysia compared to the literature is highly similar. Thus, it can be explained that this stage is significantly important which the content from an outline needs to be articulating into final design through effective visual elements.

Therefore, the most important thing to keep in mind when developing a museum exhibition is the audience. This is because visitors come to museums with their own interests, needs, and desires (McKenna-Cress, Polly and Janet A.

Kamien, 2013). They are also learning in different ways and are drawn to different types of content. With this, the team of development should consider all available options when deciding how best to present an idea through museum exhibition. Moreover, content of museum exhibition can be expressed in many ways so whatever tools be use, the team should ensure the visitor to not overwhelming with too much content (Elizabeth Bogle, 2013).

The third phase of museum exhibition design production is called final production. At this stage, the leader of team needs to ensuring artefacts that going to exhibit is ready with the write up. If the exhibition involved with interactive display, a detail specification also needs to be ready as it going to be as a guideline during the installation. At this phase also included the final design files was edited, a proofread completed and ready for production. A few deliverables item for this production stage as per listed in Table 2. Those deliverables seem slightly different to international literature which divided into three namely content, design and schedule. However, for the Department of Museum Malaysia, there are four deliverables which are object, content, technical and finance.

Deliverables	Details Description
Object	Artefacts catalogue should ready
Content Write up	Editing dan Proofreading approval
Technical Testing	Detail specification as a guideline to be using during installation should ready before installation. If prototype required, a detail testing needs to be conducting before installation.
Finance	No additional cost between proposal and final

Table 2: Typical deliverables for production stage

Final phase mentioned in the document by the Department of Museum Malaysia is about installation of the exhibition. The team needs to ensure all technical, artefacts, exhibition panel and space is ready for installation and exhibition. The document established that during the installation phase, the team of promotion will do a promotion and preparing for the opening. The technical team also play an import role at this stage due to technical work and final looks and operation of the exhibition material and space.

Beyond the theoretical structure of presentation, interface design of museum exhibition has a prominent role particularly in the exhibition's development process (Alexander & Alexander, 2008). The role of design involves in materializing the narrative concept, showcasing objects on display, orientating and planning visitor's experience, and adapting the exhibition to meet the success of visitors' experience. Consequently, a successful museum exhibition incorporates four aspects that including Ideas (whish refereed to concept and content of exhibition), Visitors (who is the audiences that potentially come to visit the exhibition), Objects Display (a visual language and aesthetics value as a communication tool) and Physical Interaction (visitors experience). Moreover, lack

of visitors' experience is commonly due to unsuccessful of exhibition. Thus, the team of development needs to understands the role of interface design for effective museum exhibition.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The target audience of a museum exhibition is the visitors. The aim of a museum exhibition is to communicate and reach the audience expectation and needs. The interface design and the museum exhibition design are the initial tools of communicating between museum exhibition content and the visitors. Towards this understanding, museum exhibition design is all about building a bridge between the viewer and the exhibited material. Thus, the satisfied visitors are the most important references for a museum exhibition. When the museum's prestige and public trust increases, other special collections can be donated as well.

Therefore, to design a good museum exhibition is a big challenge and experience due to nature of development process of museum exhibition design which required the curators to collaborate with other disciplines. Besides that, an understanding of the designers on the role of look and feel of exhibition also important in ensuring every visit to museum exhibition is worst. It can be understood that designing museum exhibition is a multidisciplinary fact, however in making sure every museum exhibition is unique, the challenge of holding every visitor's attention while also trying to get them to learn towards their visit also required further action.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

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