25 The changing role of the public in curation

written by Aobing Wang

The topic of this week's lecture is public projects in exhibitions. My undergraduate major is related to this, and I have certain experience in the design and implementation of public exhibition projects. However, in my previous experience, "public projects" are very rigid forms, such as lectures and workshops, which are very common forms. Therefore, I am looking forward to receiving some explanations on public exhibition activities from different cultural contexts. Gabi's lecture met my expectations. What she narrated told me that the Public Programme is not only an activity to support exhibition, but also a part of the exhibition itself. The Public is not only the audience to come to the exhibition, they can become the curators of the exhibition project and the co-producers of knowledge.

In my previous understanding, the public project of an exhibition is a one-way output of art education activities to participants. However, Gabi mentioned in the class that one of the responsibilities of curators is to create a truly meaningful public space, which made me realize that public projects should not be merely art education exported to the outside world, but rather the construction of educational relations negotiated with participants. This updated my consistent understanding of exhibition Public projects, and also changed my planning of the Public Programme in my personal curatorial projects. Originally, I planned to hold two simple art creation workshops as the public project of the exhibition, but now I am considering reducing the activity to one, recruiting participants in advance, collecting what they want to discuss or learn through the activity, and then further designing the activity (of course, I will prepare the basic framework of the activity in advance). In this process,

participants will no longer passively accept the content of the listener, but actively express their understanding of the exhibition, become the co-creator of the exhibition content.

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24 Sleepwalker Archives Vol.3: Sound as a Distorter of Reality

written by Aobing Wang
https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/s2658490_curating-2024-2025sem2/wp-content/uploads/sites/11170/2025/03/4.m4a

The third activity is a 5-day continuous activity, we will be divided into two groups of activities, through the form of "recording – playback – recording – playback" to build a multi-level sound superposition formed by the "real sound field". The central question Sleepwalkers hopes to discuss through this event is "when technology is no longer a limitation, how do we face the reality of being mixed?" .

Each day, one participant in the group would use a recording device to continuously record the sounds around him (including the sounds he made) for one minute, and four participants in addition to the first participant would play the previous participant's recording at the same time, and repeat the operation for five days to get the final audio.

In this activity, I no longer simply listen to the sound, but participate in the generation and distortion of the sound. The five of us would talk to each other and guess the source of the sound in the audio, and after several days of mixing and recording, the sound in the audio became indistinguishable.

The first person's clear recording of the wind around him as he walked along the road, the sounds of leaves rubbing against each other, and the sounds of cars moving on the road were gradually blurred, mixed with the sounds from the kitchen, the park, and other environments. Even though I was involved in the generation of this audio, I can no longer identify the sounds coming from me. I came to understand the central issue of the event. Can a sound be defined as real when it is superimposed? If so, where does its sense of reality come from? Take the audio we generated for example. If I think it's real, then maybe it gets its authenticity from the sound of a car horn, or some birds. But I don't think the audio can still be called "real," even though the clips it contains are all real.

We often say that "hearing is false", and the real sound can be sampled, played back, edited and synthesized indefinitely. Is the so-called "auditory memory" sometimes just an individual's highly selective acceptance of the sound of the external environment, and then reconstruction of the heard sound according to the facts that he believes?

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23 The role of publishing in curating

written by Aobing Wang

The topic of this week's lecture is "Publishing as curatorial practice". Before that, my understanding of publications in curating exhibitions has always been a kind of auxiliary and extension of exhibitions, such as guide manuals, artist interview records, exhibition record books, etc., whose main function is to archive, disseminate or summarize exhibition

experience. But this week's lecture gave me a new understanding of the role of "publishing" in curating, and the publication itself can be an independent and complete curatorial exhibition.

The lecture began with an introduction to Transmission Gallery's The Phone is the Keyhole; The Penpot, The Heart, published in collaboration with Ruine Munchen. I thought it was just a documentation of an exhibition, only to find it was not a record, but a complete curatorial project. The publication constructs a non-linear, decentralized publishing logic through artist interviews, in-committee conversations, and other textual content. This is different from what I used to understand as a publication, which does not seek to explain or summarize a certain concept, but always maintains an open, inclusive, unfinished state. Another case, Give Birth to Me Tomorrow, gave me a new understanding of the form of publication. Like the previous case, it is not a publication in the traditional sense, but a multi-frequency curatorial form composed of sound, image, moment capture and connotation of emotions. The audience can enter and leave repeatedly as they read. The publication is constantly creating openness and malleability, making its content a device that can "breathe."

22 Sleepwalker Archives Vol.2: The Theater of Reality in Contemporary Art

written by Aobing Wang

The theme of Sleepwalkers' second event is The Theater of Reality in Contemporary Art, and we chose the classic film The Truman Show as the main medium of the event. We will think about the question of who is controlling the reality of this film. This makes me not just watch the film, but with a kind of examination and disassembly eyes, to observe how some of the design and details in the film affect people's perception of "reality". After watching, we divided into two groups for discussion. The task of my group b is to analyze why "we" think the world is real from the perspective of the audience, and to extract a keyword as the theme of observation. After the group discussion, we gathered for a deeper discussion: Is Truman free? Have we ever been in the Truman show? What's the difference between us and Truman now? On the first question, most people think that Truman was not free before, but he may have been free after he escaped the set world. But an objection was raised: Even if he left the studio, he might still enter the next "reality" where everything was set. For the second question, someone shared social media big data that they had trained themselves by repeatedly searching for keywords to prove that their status on social media was actually a "Truman's world." For example, after watching a video about pets, social media algorithms will continue to push similar content, forming a user's preferences as the theme of the information cocoon, so that users mistakenly believe that the world's mainstream wind is what they see. On the third question, we had a heated discussion. Some argue

that our current situation has more options than Truman's, but others argue that Truman at least has the option to escape, and that we can only passively accept it, even if we are aware of the existence of the information cocoon.

The key word I wrote for the movie is "scripted life." When life has a script, is the truth in people's eyes just an unexposed lie? The Truman Show made me think about the reality of certain actions and things in everyday life. Truman's life in the behind-the-scenes "world" is similar to that of modern humans: we already live in a "real" world made up of algorithms, consumer symbols, and media narrative lights. We are used to creating a "human set" on social media to construct a nearly perfect self that is different from reality. This self-symbolic behavior is undoubtedly stepping into the curtain and becoming the initiative of Tulu Men. But the film also conveys a message that reality is not something that exists objectively, but human resistance to false consciousness. When Truman chose to come out of the "blue sky" of falsehood, he proved by his actions that "truth" exists in the questioning of falsehood. In today's deluge of AI-generated content, maintaining the ability to question fake content could be the real thing.

21 Venue for individual exhibition projects

written by Aobing Wang
Based on the initial idea of a personal curatorial project and the results of field investigation, I finally decided to choose the exhibition venue between Tramway in Glasgow and Another Art Museum in Guangzhou. The two venues each have

their own advantages that fit the theme of the exhibition, but also have their own limitations. Here are some of my specific comparative analysis of various aspects of the two venues.

Space characteristics and hardware facilities

The two galleries were converted from abandoned Spaces: Tramway was converted from an abandoned tram factory, while Another Art Museum was formerly a pharmaceutical factory. As part of Glasgow's industrial heritage, the Tramway main gallery has an extremely high height and a large number of exposed metal structures, which are ideal for large-scale installations or immersive environments.

The main exhibition hall of Another Art Museum also has spacious interior space. Different from the main exhibition hall of Tramway, the exhibition hall of Another Art Museum has three floors, among which the middle of the first and second floors is set up an empty space to accommodate large-scale installations, and the rest is a classic white cube space. This unadorned interior space provides ample leeway for the curators to play freely around the theme of the exhibition.

Tramway's main exhibition hall
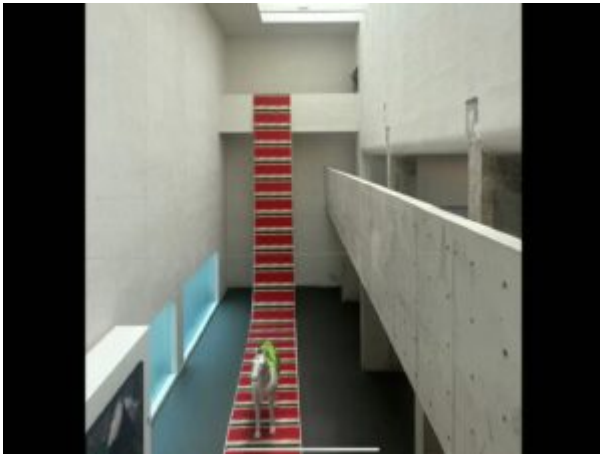
Another Art Museum's main exhibition hall

Geographical environment, audience base, resource support and theme freedom

The inevitable part of holding an exhibition is to comprehensively consider the local urban cultural background, the audience base and a series of other objective factors. Glasgow, where Tramway is located, and Guangzhou, where Another gallery is located, each have their own strengths in hosting contemporary art exhibitions. Glasgow, where Tramway is located, has a long artistic tradition and is known for its rich art education resources (such as the Glasgow School of Art) and strong contemporary art atmosphere. The audience here is mainly art students, scholars and art industry practitioners, and the audience is highly receptive to conceptual art, experimental video and social critical works. In addition, Glasgow's exhibition funding comes from the Public Art Fund, which is suitable for collaboration with academic institutions and the European Art Network. If my exhibition wants to explore the subconscious, psychology, social dreams in depth, Glasgow's art ecology and academic environment will provide ideal support. Guangzhou, where Another Art Museum is located, is one of China's economic and cultural centers. With a large audience of young people in Guangzhou who are receptive to interactive, immersive experiences and digital art, social media (e.g., Xiaohongshu, Douyin, Weibo) can quickly amplify the impact of an

exhibition. If my exhibition can highlight the sense of technology, new media art and immersive experience, Guangzhou is undoubtedly the ideal choice. However, curatorial freedom in Guangzhou can be limited by Chinese cultural censorship, and some works involving social and conscious exploration may need to be adjusted. In addition, Guangzhou's art market is highly commercialized, and exhibitions need to find a balance between artistry and market demand.

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20 My Peer Review of Zhouyuan WU

written by Aobing Wang

Individual Curatorial Project：

Your blog posts so far have featured a series of discussions around the theme "Exhibitions that challenge traditional curatorial models", showing your critical thinking about your personal curatorial projects, particularly in questioning traditional exhibition models and exploring alternative curatorial strategies, as you try to integrate approaches to decolonization, site specialization and audience interaction into your curatorial thinking.You have a solid theoretical foundation, but how to translate these theories into actionable practice for your personal curatorial projects is a question worth thinking about. In exploring exhibition Spaces, you look for many modes that break the limits of traditional exhibitions, such as family Spaces, nomadic exhibitions, and participatory installations. But how do you deal with the logistical constraints of using these non-traditional

exhibition Spaces? How do you ensure that audience interaction is effective and not superficial? Perhaps you can further clarify the way the audience interacts, specifically explaining how different groups of viewers can participate and understand the content of the exhibition, especially those who lack artistic foundation.

Some exhibitions for reference:

The exhibition *"Living as Form" (Creative Time, 2011)*, curated by Nato Thompson, offers valuable insights into socially engaged art and alternative exhibition formats.

"The People's Biennale" (2014) — This biennale focused on alternative ways of exhibiting and audience accessibility, which might inspire strategies for engaging diverse audiences.

Collective Curatorial Programme

The blog about The Sleepwalkers shows your ability to collaborate, negotiate, and adapt in a team. In the discussion of the collective curatorial programme, you continue to focus on the mobility and decolonisation of exhibitions. The Sleepwalkers' collective curatorial programme is also ready to break with the traditional exhibition model, emphasizing decentralized and diversified viewing perspectives. However, there are still limitations to the research that can be seen on the collective curatorial programme: decentralized exhibitions may suffer from a lack of thematic coherence. Without a clear structural narrative, the exhibition as a whole may appear fragmented and lacking thematic cohesion. Secondly, the arrangement of exhibition personnel coordination remains to be discussed. The flexibility of exhibitions is a strength, but it is important to ensure that the work of artists, curators and institutions is coordinated, and further discussion is needed about the transportation of works, the distribution of exhibitions and the accessibility of audiences. In addition, diverse viewing perspectives create conditions for audience participation and open interpretation,

but at the same time may pose barriers to certain audiences, such as those who are unfamiliar with conceptual or participatory art. In subsequent discussions, we should focus on the balance between decentralization, exhibition coherence, and accessibility of audience interaction, while reconciling concept promotion and practical implementation.

references：

Independent Curators International. *Living as Form (The Nomadic Version)*. Accessed March 21, 2025. https://curatorsintl.org/exhibitions/9475-living-as-form-the-nomadic-version.

Biennial Foundation. *People's Biennial (USA)*. Accessed March 21, 2025. https://www.biennialfoundation.org/biennials/peoples-biennial-usa/.

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19 Further planning for personal exhibition projects

written by Aobing Wang
After the presentation in week6, I received many suggestions from teachers and classmates about my personal curatorial project. Therefore, I have started to think deeply about several aspects of the exhibition that are lacking at present. The first is the exhibits. Although this project does not need

to be realized, I still have to consider everything as an emerging curator during the planning, so some works by well-known artists that I envisioned at the beginning need to be excluded from consideration (such as some works by Dali and Yayoi Kusama). I need to find some emerging artists who are waiting for exhibition opportunities to fill my exhibition. Secondly, the exhibition is mainly for the group. Since the exhibition could not be directed by very well-known artists, I needed to focus on the groups who were more easily attracted by the publicity information, such as local students and art lovers. There is also the issue of venue and funding allocation. As an emerging curator, I do not have a large exhibition budget, so I should pay more attention to cost performance and fit with exhibitions when choosing venues, rather than blindly pursuing some well-known venues. I will go into more detail about all aspects of the exhibition planning in the following blog posts.

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18 Sleepwalker Archives Vol.1: Artists Who Make Reality

written by Aobing Wang

First Group Meeting (4 March 2025)

In order to initially define the theme of the collective Curatorial Programme, we unfolded the first short session. Based on the discussion of "Kaleidoscope" and "zoetrope" in the previous class, we decided to further extend the theme on this basis and decide the intention of the exhibition. Due to the limitation of the venue, we decided to collect and vote online again after an agreed time.

My theme is "Who defines' real '?" This theme is an extension of my personal curated project. With the concept of "reality" as the central point of the exhibition, it discusses how people deconstruction and reproduction of reality through visual technology tools from the appearance of kaleidows to the present digital age, and how art as a carrier guides the audience to think about how the definition of "reality" is constantly transferred with the iteration of visual media. The topics raised by other students are also very interesting. For example, Yubing Hu proposed "Shifting Memories: How Is History Edited? . Using "Kaleidoscope" as a metaphor, she hopes to explore how historical narratives change with position, power and time through the exhibition. I think this theme and my theme have similarities and differences, can be used together as the exhibition discussion content. "As you step into this exhibition, you are no longer just a passive observer. You are placed in the position of different narrators, witnessing the same historical event from multiple perspectives. "I think the idea is interesting. Giving the audience a special identity in the exhibition can bring the audience a more immersive audience experience and attract them to actively participate in the exhibition. Puxian Wang's opinion is also worth mentioning. In the exhibition, she plans to let the audience piece together the meaning of the exhibits by peering into different Windows, so as to imply the limitations of the act of "watching" itself, which I think can also constitute an interactive installation.

After voting within the group, my theme was finally selected

as the theme of the collective Curatorial Programme. Further framing We decided to discuss further after entering summerhall.

Second Group Meeting (11 March 2025)

While waiting for The other groups to visit summerhall, The Sleepwalker conducted a second group session. The topic of discussion in this session was to select works of art that fit the theme for the collective Curatorial Programme. We first confirmed the main direction of the exhibition, and then according to this direction, we began to search for art and artists, aiming to find at least one work of art in line with the theme. The work I found was Lynn Hershman Leeson's transmedia art *Infinity Engine.* The work's interactive art installation shows the viewer a replica lab with samples of 3D bioprinters, microscopes and genetically modified organisms, while the viewer steps into the installation to listen to recordings of geneticist interviews. Once viewers enter the device's "scanning booth," a computer program inside the device reversed-calculates their genes based on their facial and body features. This work is intended to discuss the controversial nature of DNA programming. Of the works found by others, I was most interested in Ye Din's *mAcHiNe E.L.F.* Author Tony Oursler reveals the process of the gradual mythification of science under the trend of the gradual alienation of the public from academic science through digital cuts and collages and crystal installation, which not only

criticizes the mystification of technology, but also recognizes the charm of the unknown world. I think the visuals are very good. Next is *Event Horizon*, found by Shiming Wang. The work is a multi-channel installation that generates high-definition audio and video, in which the image changes when the viewer stands at different angles. I think the central idea of this work coincides with the theme of our collective Curatorial Programme.

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17 How to arrange time in an exhibition

written by Aobing Wang

This week's lecture focuses on "Time-Based Media" (such as experimental film, video art, installation, immersive experience, performance video, etc.), in which Marcus analyzes how artists use these mediums to structure their exhibitions and shape their unique viewing mechanisms. "Time" is a realistic factor that cannot be ignored in curating exhibitions. How to control the rhythm of time and let the audience experience some transformation in the passage of time is one of the core issues that need to be considered in curating exhibitions.

Images, sounds, performances and other fluid works are not a single object, but more like an event, and these works may not have a clear beginning and end point, which requires the curator to no longer just arrange static objects, but to arrange the dynamic rhythm of time. In Thoughts About Curating Moving Images, Erika Balsom proposes that images are not suitable for frames; they are like a fluid that needs to be shaped by curators. I can't agree more with that. What a

curator needs to do when arranging "Time-Based Media" in an exhibition is not only to display the content, but also to design the audience's viewing experience.

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16 One day fieldwork trip in Glasgow

written by Aobing Wang

On March 5, all of us went to Glasgow for a field trip with the purpose of studying and observing some practical curatorial methods and discourse. Since my exhibition project is still in the process of thinking about the ideal site and exhibition layout, I focused more on observing the site characteristics and exhibition layout planning of the museum during the field trip.

HunTErian Art Gallery

As part of the University of Glasgow, Hunterian Art Gallery has a strong academic atmosphere. The exhibition hall on the first floor of the venue is a very classic way of traditional academic exhibition, which may be related to the fact that most of the exhibits are oil paintings, prints and other paintings.

One of the galleries on the first floor of the Hunterian Art Gallery

The arrangement of these two landscapes is very interesting. The painting on the left is bright and full of the light of the day, depicting the harbor scene; The painting on the right shows the night atmosphere, with deep colors and an orange sun or moon. This contrast enhances the narrative of the exhibition and makes it easier for the audience to notice the differences in light, color and atmosphere between the two paintings. The two works complement each other, forming a visual comparison and dialogue. In my opinion, this kind of arrangement of comparing works of similar themes can lead the audience to think about different expressions of the same theme, such as how to express time and emotion through color and composition.

One of the galleries on the first floor of the Hunterian Art

Gallery

In the exhibition hall on the first floor, this arrangement of many paintings of different sizes can also be seen everywhere. This way of display breaks the strict sense of symmetry and makes the arrangement of the exhibition more dynamic. During the tour, Kristeen asked us a question: Why are some of the frames on the walls empty and there are no paintings? Most of the students thought it was a painting being lent out or maintained, and I was no exception. But in retrospect, if this was the curator's intention, what was it for? I think this may be a way for curators to try to increase the audience's participation in the exhibition. The empty frame itself, as part of the artwork, allows the audience to imagine what it should show. This open way of display can encourage the audience to actively think about the connotation of the work, rather than passively accept the information.

Tramway

Tramway is a former tram garage that has since been converted into a contemporary art center. The architectural style and spatial character of the venue itself retains many of the original structural and industrial features of a streetcar garage, such as soaring metal columns, exposed ceilings and wide-span open Spaces.

The naked deconstruction of the venue

The ceiling's heavily exposed walls, black metal beams and pipes echo Tramway's past as a tram garage. This unadorned design preserves the building's original appearance to the greatest extent possible, allowing visitors to experience the venue's past while visiting contemporary art exhibitions on Tramway. Tramway's curatorial concept of displaying avant-garde and experimental art works in historical space is in line with the design language of preserving historical features, which can make the audience feel the sense of dialogue in time.


Exhibition space on the first floor of Tramway

A small white box space in the exhibition

Tramway's historic predecessor gave this exhibition space a very high height and wide open area, allowing the curators to arrange large-scale installations in this space. There is no fixed wall structure in the exhibition hall except for the four sides, so the curator can adjust the layout according to different curatorial needs. In the exhibition we visited, the curators did not use many fixed partition walls, but used the original metal columns, scattered small white box Spaces and hanging translucent screens to divide the space between the exhibits. I think this has something to do with the fact that the exhibition is mostly video art and immersive installations. The multiple layers of walls and cloth add a sense of atmosphere to the display of video works. When the audience moves freely through the space, their shadows may also appear on the curtain or the wall, which also adds to the interactive nature of the exhibition.
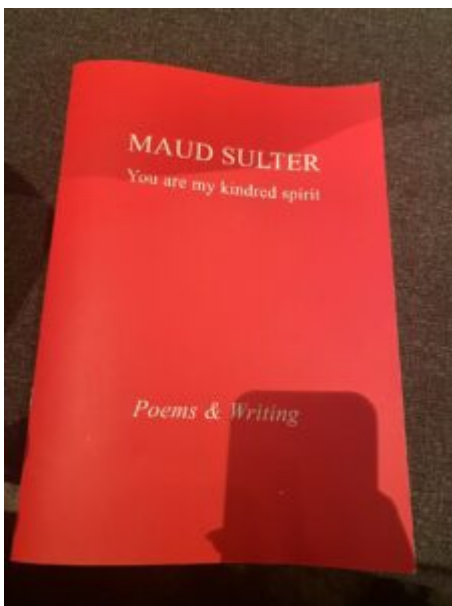
A collection of texts from the exhibition

As part of an immersive audiovisual installation, Maud Sulter loops recordings of herself reading her poems throughout the exhibition and organizes the texts into volumes for the audience to read. The extensive exhibition space on Tramway's ground floor makes the sound installation a more immersive experience for visitors.

Gallery of Modern Art（GoMA）

Banners hanging from the ceiling in the museum

An interactive area in the exhibition

As the building is a former merchant residence, the interior structure of GoMA does not have a very large exhibition hall like Tramway, but a very clear zoning for the exhibition. GoMA's moving line planning is more clear, and most of the visitors are guided by circular or linear paths to get a complete viewing experience. In addition, due to the limited indoor lighting, GoMA's lighting arrangement is very flexible. For example, in an audio work on the fourth floor of the

exhibition hall, GoMA uses lights to frame the area where the sound can be heard on both sides. GoMA's exhibition has a lot of interactive areas, basically using a piece of art as a sample, allowing the audience to imitate the content of the creation. There is also a desk in the center of the exhibition hall on the fourth floor, where visitors can read some books related to the exhibition.

Summary

After visiting three galleries of different styles in Glasgow, I understand the influence of different exhibition Spaces on the presentation of art works, as well as the considerations of curators in the layout of exhibition Spaces, the use of lighting and the audience experience. After comparing the exhibition strategies of the three galleries, I came up with several questions about the exhibition. The first is how does the exhibition space affect the way the audience sees it? The traditional academic exhibition hall of Hunter Gallery can present works intuitively, but it may limit the active exploration of the audience. The open space of Tramway gives the audience a flexible way of viewing the exhibition, but it is slightly weak in the aspect of structured narrative. GoMA encourages the viewer to follow the logic of a linear narrative, but some installations may be restrained by the constraints of the site. The form of the exhibition space should not become the constraint of the content, but should guide the audience to find a balance between immersion and logic through flexible curation to obtain the best viewing experience. Secondly, how does the lighting arrangement affect the shaping of the exhibition atmosphere? The light of Hunter Gallery is uniform and direct, which can show the details of the works to the greatest extent, but it is slightly boring. The exhibition hall of Tramway uses a local light source to create a dim environment, which enhances the immersive feeling of the exhibition, but may cause inconvenience for the audience to read the text and some details of the works. GoMA's lighting system is flexible and able to balance the

needs of different exhibition contents. Exhibition lighting is not only an auxiliary tool, but also a part of the narrative means of the exhibition. When designing lighting, curators should carefully analyze the characteristics of works, rather than simply apply standardized programs. Thirdly, how to balance the academic and interactive nature of the exhibition? The Hunter Gallery is undoubtedly the most academic of the three, but hardly interactive; Tramway's exhibitions are interactive but lack the academic framework in the traditional sense. GoMA tries to balance the two, but still prefers static viewing in the exhibition. The exhibition should not be just a static display board of works, but a field where academic knowledge and interactive experience of the audience can be blended. Finally, whether it is a traditional academic art museum or an experimental art space transformed by abandoned factories, stations and other buildings, it is necessary to consider how to make the audience participate in the exhibition more actively, break the single static viewing, and make the exhibition truly become a communication bridge between the audience and the work, the author and the space.