

week7 From research to executable exhibition structure

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1.summerhall 2.

Understanding enforceability from cases

The exhibition “Disappearance at Sea” of the Baltic Center for Contemporary Art focuses on the dangerous journey of refugees and immigrants across the Mediterranean and discusses issues such as death at sea, displacement, and border politics. It does not rely on a super-famous work to support the theme but establishes the topic and emotional structure through many artists and different media.

This case made me realise that the depth of an exhibition does not necessarily come from “big-name works”. Sometimes the works of emerging artists with more controllable budgets are more direct in emotional expression and easier to form the audience’s empathy with.

The Choice Logic of Returning to the Core Characteristics of Works

In the previous research, the project hopes to use Ai Weiwei’s “The Animal Head of the Twelve Zodiacs” as an important reference because this work is highly compatible with the exhibition theme: it involves the relationship between myth, symbol, and power, and at the same time, it also transforms political issues into strong visual symbols and creates an obvious sense of power through materials and volume.

However, for the student curatorial project with a budget of about 10,000 pounds, the cost of transportation, insurance, installation, and loan exhibition coordination is too high, so it is difficult to enter the actual implementation stage. At first, I thought about whether I could replace the original work with related videos, but now it seems that this approach only solves the budget problem and does

not really solve the decision-making exhibition problem. The video may not be able to convey the most important part of this work. If what I really value is how it builds a sense of power through volume, materials, and visual symbols, then these core characteristics will be weakened after being simply transformed into images.

This also changed my understanding of the artist's choice logic. Previously, I was more inclined to take the works of famous artists as the direct target, but now I gradually realise that a more effective way is to extract their core characteristics, such as political, dramatic, or empathetic expression of social issues, and then find the works of emerging artists with suitable styles and feasible budgets to carry these characteristics. In this way, Ai Weiwei can still appear as an academic reference in the exhibition wall, research text, or case analysis, which constitutes the theoretical background of the project, but it is not necessary to directly become the object of the final exhibition.