

Summary

“Interactive Exhibits” – From the Collection

MIYASHITA, Tohko

As part of their educational activities, many art museums have recently held “interactive exhibits,” focusing on individual sensations. Based on these exhibits, I am investigating how best to put on an “interactive exhibit” where visitors can relax and enjoy the show without relying on any prior knowledge.

In my article, I put forth three pieces. In Ryuumi Hashimoto’s “Song of Wind,” the pictures of the Jizo force the viewer to pay closer attention, which reveals a mysterious world hidden in the darkness. In Sadamasa Motonaga’s “Work, Pink-Red-91” the viewer’s eyes are drawn to the way the piece was painted, allowing the viewer to see the work with a scientific eye. In Kojin Kudo’s “Night,” viewers are made to search for the presence of “something” in the piece.

In this article, I have investigated interactive exhibits through focused questions on the three pieces listed above. With such a specific focus, it is easier to gain a deeper understanding of the works without needlessly convoluting the discussion. Additionally, I have concluded that it is important to look for a reason for people’s opinions on the pieces, to use a variety of viewpoints, to not disregard any opinion, and to encourage discussion of the pieces by rephrasing and connecting the individual opinions.

(Curator, The Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art)

Trees in the Symbolist Paintings of Maurice Denis

HIRAISHI, Masako

One of the unique points of Maurice Denis' symbolism is how he brings out the mystical in everyday life. Trees play a particularly important role in Denis' unique brand of symbolist expression.

“Marthe in the Evening (Marthe Symbolist)” (The Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art/The Bandaijima Art Museum) is an intimate portrait of the artist's fiancée, and at the same time, a mysterious painting full of symbolic meanings. The key to understanding the message of this work is the tree behind Marthe which hides the sun to produce the nightly scene. The tree acts as a border or a gate between day/night, ordinary life/extra-ordinary life, and profane/sacred. From the artistic point of view, trees are a critical motif as well. The decorativeness of leaves and the shape of the trunk give the painter the possibility of opening a new horizon in the painting.

(Curator, The Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art)

Nikodim Kondakov and Czechoslovakia

KO, Seong-Jun

Nikodim Pavlovich KONDAKOV (*b.* Khalan', Kursk in 1844, *d.* Prague in 1925) was a prominent Russian art historian who focused on Byzantine and medieval Russian art, and is quite well known for his works "The History of Byzantine Art and Iconography according to Miniatures of Greek Manuscripts" (Odessa, 1866) and "Iconography of Mother of God" (Petrograd, 1914-1915). Due to his use of new methodologies and his various cutting edge studies, he is considered the father of Byzantine art history.

In this paper, I will focus on Kondakov's work during the later years of his life when he lived in Prague, the capital of the new country of Czechoslovakia. With the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the civil war that followed, Kondakov, along with many other intellectuals, was forced to flee Imperial Russia. He first fled to Istanbul, where the British army had taken control following the Ottoman Empire's loss in World War I. Following this, he moved to Sofia in Bulgaria, before finally settling in Prague. In 1922 he was invited as a professor of Prague Charles University, and taught students Byzantine and Slavic art until his death in 1925.

Professor Kondakov was warmly received in Prague due to the "The Russian Action," a policy to accept Russian refugees implemented by the Czechoslovakian government under the direction of President Masaryk, in which scholars and intellectuals were given preference.

In this paper I will introduce the academic exchanges that occurred between Kondakov and Czech scholars and artists such as Alfons Mucha, as well as the academic conference *Seminarium Kondakovianum* that was created by Kondakov's pupils.

(Curator, The Niigata Bandaijima Art Museum)

Current State of the Database Collection in its 4th year

SATOH, Katsumi

It has now been four years since the museum created its collection database. During this time, the museum has upgraded the software they use to File Maker Pro12 Advanced, which allows for smoother editing of the layout. During the third and fourth year, improvements made to the database by the museum first included creating a data system that could handle a variety of requests.

The data system is made of the following 5 tables, which have been interconnected.

- Museum Collection Database (160 fields, 7,106 records)
- Artist Database (69 fields, 795 records)
- Exhibition Database (19 fields, 329 records)
- Donor Database (12 fields, 208 records)
- Consigner Database (12 fields, 6 records)

Additionally, the museum has created 230 layouts and 263 scripts to make the database easier to use.

The library has also arranged images of the pieces and folders for paper base works, and linked them into the database. There are also plans to create a database for visitors to the museum, and an online database as well.

(Educator, The Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art)

Initiatives in the Exhibit “Bijutsu no Asobiba”

IZAWA, Tomomi

The special exhibit “Bijutukan no Asobiba” (held from February 28th, 2012 to April 15th, 2012) was an interactive art exhibit developed with the theme of “playing at an art museum.” For example in the “Oshaberi Hiroba” area, visitors were asked to imagine what the characters in the paintings could be talking about, and in the “Oto no Hiroba” to image what kind of sound each painting would make. This kind of “playing” was introduced as a way for people to enjoy the art, and furthermore to let visitors have “fun” with a variety of experiences at an art museum.

In order to understand how people felt about this kind of participatory exhibit, we distributed a questionnaire to visitors. From the answers we could see that they were actively trying to get involved with the pieces through “play.” In this exhibit, we tried various approaches, not just in the way the exhibit was put on, but through related events and operation structure too. In workshops as well, we were able to form a new partnership with the surrounding community by having outside volunteers be involved in everything from the planning to the implementation of the workshops.

Additionally, the introduction of the exhibition support volunteers is something we’d like to do again in the future. Though most of the plans for “Bijutsu no Asobiba” have yet to take off and a number of problems remain, we hope to provide a more welcoming environment for visitors to the art museum.

(Curator, The Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art)