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Y. Hasegawa

The New Museology and Curatorial Practice¹

Hello. Good afternoon. I'm so pleased to come back to the New Tretyakov gallery and this hall. Just one year ago, I participated in a press conference dedicated to the opening of the Moscow Biennale, and the museum's staff was really supportive during the coordination of such a great project. I also wanted to thank you for inviting me to this conference. This project is more focused on the museums, so I hope to discuss the relationships between permanent and temporary exhibitions: that is what every museum currently has to deal with.

We have just had a great presentation about the reconsideration of history. Museums are also responsible for making history, and the contexts of what art history is. It is a kind of storytelling and curators take responsibility for the local history and even the history of their own country. The museum has two roles:

As an experimental laboratory, via temporary exhibitions

As a memory storage, via collection exhibitions

These two are important in how they work together. Nowadays, there are a lot of new media, and also new cultural environment. That means we have to constantly re-theorize the definition of contemporary art. That is something the museums have to deal with. This is our responsibility; this is not some kind of process that just goes on by itself. We have to take responsibility for what is happening with contemporary art. It is very important to synthesize between these two roles.

So, I will pause and explain about my own experience in my museum. It's an experimental exhibition which is also a very cross-disciplinary project. As you know, Japan is a highly developed country, and started its modernization in 19th century, which was very early in Asia. We are very strong in the creative areas: design, architecture, and fashion. Sometime it is as strong in so-called fine arts. But recently, we don't have any strong definition between high and true art, pop-culture and fine arts. That means the hierarchy turns into a very horizontal structure. What this means is that these three exhibitions are very cross disciplinary.

I will start with "Space for your future" which deals with art, design, fashion, and architecture. This was my first exhibition that started in MOT. My second one is focused on art and architecture, and the third on art and information. Each time I invited co-curators who had an expertise in those different categories and disciplines.

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The title “Space for Your Future” is a metaphor of how you adjust to your space, to your living, your affairs, and your kind of being in the future. This is by SANAA and this model is a half-size of the real scale. This house does not have any columns or walls. It presents the structure of the house. It is the open floor plan taken to an extreme, and questions how our private and public spaces are going to be in our future.

The question here is what is the line between the sculpture and architecture? This work is made by Junya Ishigami and he is a very talented architect. Sometimes he does a lot of big projects, like when he made a big balloon. It is a six meter-high aluminum square filled with helium gas. The balloon weights almost a ton and is big like a building, highly floating and reflecting around. This balloon stands just between architecture and sculpture. Ishigami always thinks about what architecture means and just transforms the ideas of the people between the space and themselves. This works quite well. This is made by AMID, a Spanish architecture team. They surround buildings with the flowers and roses — a kind of object in the city. This is a work by Tobias Behrenger. He is an artist who also works in design, and this is a garage of his design. He said that no one has any kind of conventional design for a garage, because it is such a free-standing form. Anybody can imagine their own kind of garage, that's his idea. This is the Brazilian artists and they don't want us to focus, they just correct all kinds of objects in the city and from this they make their own utopist spaces.

This is one of the Japanese artists, who uses telephone booths. Public telephone booths aren't used anymore, and he transformed one of them in to a disco platform with half-reflecting mirrors. This is a very interesting idea about what your private space going to be like in the future and how you can use that space for your entertainment.

This is quite interesting project. You may use this if you crying or bored. I talked with Daikin, an air conditioner company. They have a lab where 50 people are conducting research on what air is. That is an amazing laboratory. So I just asked them to make us three different types of air, capable of triggering intense reactions like sudden energy, or nostalgia. They made three different “types” of air. We put these airs in three different glass rooms and invited people in there. Daikin representatives said that they can't do this experiment in their lab because of the public responsibility as corporation. And in the museum, in the space of metaphors, you can just invite the visitors to do the experiments and see if someone really does feel nostalgic in a certain air. So that's a kind of metaphor of the spaces. That also is kind of the museum function — they work with that.

Ernest Sometos' work is just a funny chair that you can carry around with you. *Santeria* is a dress with laser beams attached that cover not just the body, but the space around it. This is the same idea — a young fashion designer has made a wearable tent and they just wear it. This is a Dutch designer that makes the fences with the beautiful traditional lace. Fences as you know are very offensive, but with the beautiful additions even the character of the fences has been changed. The design creates with those small details the kind of spacing that totally changes people's mind. I tried to choose the different type of arranges to show the people how the visual power changes the society and consciousness.

The second theme is architecture and the environment. In Japan there are many kinds of interesting architects. In Japan there are a lot of all kinds of natural disasters, we always have to think about how to build and rebuild. This is a model of different kinds of programs and

simulations by SANAA. This is a museum which is founded in 21st century, a totally democratic building.

That architecture idea belongs to a very famous African artist El Anatsui, who recycles old wine corks and whisky bottle caps to make these spaces.

This is Doug and Mike Sturn; they construct giant structures using bamboo, and in doing so try to rethink what an architecture space is. They also solicit unconventional architectural ideas from other people.

This is Studio Mumbai and their outdoor workshop; the studio works closely with local carpenters. They don't use computers and rendering, only basic and primitive drawings, because this is a very useful language in talking with local carpenters. That works very well. They can share their ideas with local carpenters and this way resolve a lot of problems in the architecture process and the infrastructure of India. Modernism doesn't bring them a proper solution; local carpenters bring up their own knowledge to make the new adjustments. This is Sari. This architect group did a lot of research. So I know many things about those people and they are also designers, artists and anthropologists. So they expand their areas of work and the architecture is going to be one of them in this exhibition.

That's another building design. This is Gehry and he has built many very beautiful buildings. These tables are very transparent and they seem to be floating. This is the exhibition projects. This is AMID again. These Spanish artists created this temporary balloon roof and anyone can use it. And all those small sculpture and works are ideas for creation of your own space.

The third exhibition is a very important contemporary topic about art and information. The title is "Bunny Smash" and its very design is, in a word, confusing. This is a very strange title. But the bunny is a rabbit from *Alice in Wonderland*. So this is a view of the rabbit thinking and looking at a big diagram. This diagram shows us all the world governments — all the related armies, economies and companies — everything is in the big diagram. That's a group from France. The question is how this rabbit can read. In an information society, how can we reach all the information? And how can we even know about all the things what happen in the world?

The overall installation was laid out to look like a laboratory. This is famous OMA and its very important agent AMO which is also research institution also focusing on design. So they make a research about the functions of the library. What people are expecting of the library? There is an authorized program. So with this program they just made a poll. That's a very democratic process. So this is the result — the Seattle Central Library. How you read all the data, how your read all the information — this is an important and crucial topic for us.

Artists included Burak Arıkan and Bureu d'Etudes. This is CAMP, an Indian artist; they just put the SCVT cameras and just invited the people to the neighbors in the SCVT camera rooms, because they look at the neighbors rather than themselves, exploring the shifts and balances in being the observer, then the observed.

Another artist, Judi Werthein, makes shoes that she gives to those on the U.S.-Mexico border. These shoes have a special function: they each contain a compass and a map. This is very useful. This piece had become very scandalous and controversial because the question is whether she should have helped illegally migrated people or not, or whether she saves the people or not. She said that the art is beyond this. So this artist is not on any side. But the artist makes the proposal so people might make a decision whether this is a crime or not.

So this is also an interesting idea. This is Revital Cohen and Tuur Van Balen on how to live with the animals. This is Sissel Tolaas, she is also invited to the Moscow Biennale. This work is about the sense of smell; she sniffs the smell and then analyzes it in order to make a reproduction of the smell. The smell says many things about a person and is a totally different way to search the world — her installation made for a very popular exhibition.

The collection has a strong relationship with the temporary exhibition. All these pieces come from the temporary exhibition, and we use the commission from collection budget to make the huge installations. We just purchase and put down the long-term installation as the permanent installation.

Large-scale artists include Do Ho Suh and Tobias Rehberger. At the temporary exhibition we just purchased these as permanent installation. So how is the memory of the collection stored? Here, the museum's expertise on proper presentation is paramount. The most important thing is what people have to see so many things happen every day, because they forget them quickly. The museums have to fight with this perpetual amnesia.

The back of the painting can tell us a lot. In the back of the painting we see history: how this piece was collected, who the previous collector is, how this was transported. This is an analysis of the artworks and the process of the artworks becoming a part of the collection. So there are many interesting structures and presentations in this exhibition. This shows us the stories behind the artworks as objects.

This is a chronological series because it has a particular point. It doesn't only focus on the 1940s as a period, instead we had pointed out certain years as touchstones: 1945, 1951 and 1957. This provides an intensive narration by pointing out the meaning of the artworks through the context of those years, inscribing into peoples' memory what happened that year. Particularly in the postwar period, we would see many socio-political pieces, so the exhibition was presented with the story of what happened in those years. Another consideration is the term "Independent", because "Independent" actually refers to a very important avant-garde movement in Japan: a free-style exhibition, open to all participants. A lot of the avant-garde artists come from there, because of its focus on the independent.

"OFF Museum" started from the Gutai group. They staged performances in their own kinds of temporary spaces; they didn't start from a museum. So there are a lot of ideas of museum. Also many artists go on the streets. This artist does such street performance.

That's "Expanding eyes". There are many interesting pop artworks in the city. At the Tate Modern, there is a restaurant-izakaya room decked with paintings — it's a very popular room.

The crucial point is in how we collect performances. Because we have just made a very special exhibition dedicated to the new definition of that sculpture is and how sculpture was used, how sculpture related to behavior, to action. With this kind of idea we show the sculptures and performances. Because we always think this materialistic element: how to present in the museum and also how to collect in a certain way.

The museum is always being questioned by the audience. We always have to try to avoid all kinds of cliché, and also the very strong notion of the authority and hierarchy. In a way, if you are coming to a museum, you are going to die. The question is how to activate a museum to be given the new ideas and new perception to look at an existing original work. How you look at the history from the different points of view. But always we really have to think about how you

connect and activate a very contemporary perception, even the futuristic one.

I will just quickly show my exhibition which I did in Paris in summer. It's an overview of 5000 years of Japanese art history. None of the artworks are from our museum collection. I'm just showing some kind of curatorial experiment, how to use and present a history. (Sorry, this is very long). This is a house. This is the different areas and I just put in each one an element of Japanese aesthetic. It's "Alchemy", "Disappearance/Minimalism", "Peripheries", "Representation of Disaster and Crisis", "Repeated Renaissance", "Coexistence" and others. All the different elements are unique; each room has its own scene. This is called "Echoes". This is "encounters" of all the 5000 years — there you see a Jomon-era vase, a contemporary designer, Picasso, Enku and the 17th-century sculptures. This is a dialogue between the contemporary French artists and Japanese Shibata Zeshin from the 19th century. There you see a very strong dialogue between a bourgeois house and a cracked stony landscape by Lee Ufan. This is Hiroshi Sugimoto. There is a Japanese traditional painter but his paintings were totally unknown. When he had just become 50 years old, he just went to a tropical island in Japan and there he eventually died. He was called the Japanese Gauguin. We placed his works in "Peripheries" in order to give a new meaning to his art; there these paintings become totally modern, because he is in a dialogue with Gauguin in the next room.

This is a work by another contemporary artist, the representation of the disaster. This is a real stream of cyberattacks. The artist is a hacker, programmer and visual designer. He just set up this honey pot as the entire world. All these attacks happen in the world without our knowledge. All these works are about a dialogue robot and human beings.

This is scenery made of bubbles and the landscape changes every 2 hours, so with time you can see different landscapes. This is a transformation, a metamorphose. That Japanese artist always focuses on time.

Title. The New Museology and Curatorial Practice

Author. Yuko Hasegawa — Ph. D., director. Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo. 4-1-1 Miyoshi, Koto-ku, Tokyo 135-0022, Japan; professor Tokyo University of the Arts. 12-8 Uenokoen, Taito City, Tokyo 110-8714, Japan. info.hasegawalab@gmail.com

Abstract. The exhibition might be flat if it only exhibits the museum's own collection. It would be able to make the exhibition narrative and give visitors the whole new historical view by bringing collection from outside its own museum. Collections do not always mean the true collection of fine arts. It also includes works in various fields, architecture, design, and so on. Exhibiting all these various works from different fields in one space allows to create a completely new space and give visitors the whole new experience.

Keywords: new museology, interdisciplinary exhibition

Название статьи. Новое музееведение и кураторская практика

Сведения об авторе. Хасегава Юко — Ph. D., директор. Музей современного искусства Токио. 4-1-1 Мийоши, Кото-ку, 135-0022, Токио, Япония; профессор. Токийский университет искусств. 12-8 Уэнокоэн, Тайто-Сити, Токио, 110-8714, Япония. info.hasegawalab@gmail.com

Аннотация. Выставка нередко оказывается скучной, если на ней представлена только собственная коллекция музея. Привлечение других собраний может дополнить экспозицию и представить зрителю совершенно новый исторический взгляд. Это могут быть не только произведения изобразительного искусства, но и работы из других областей — архитектуры, дизайна и т.д. Такая междисциплинарная экспозиция позволяет создать принципиально иное художественное пространство и обогатить посетителей новыми впечатлениями.

Ключевые слова: новое музееведение, междисциплинарная экспозиция