Research on Exhibition Design of Comprehensive Expositions in Beijing in 2011

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Abstract—Starting from comprehensive expositions held in Beijing in 2011 with two typical cases as references referring to two typical expositions cases, integrating application factors in modern exhibition design, on the principle of analytical research on features of exhibition design structure and expression and manifestation of comprehensive expositions, this paper shows that the design of comprehensive expositions particularly emphasizes on the interchange between man and objects, and between human beings, stressing social education and communication functions. Based on field research of exhibitions, design features of “objects” and “space” are summarized from numerous cases of exhibition booths, analyzing the relevance between their design expression and the demand of exhibitors as well as the need of audience, hence concluding a set of practical and efficient exhibition design models.

Key words—comprehensive exposition; exhibition design, object, field

I. ANALYSIS OF COMPREHENSIVE EXPOSITIONS IN BEIJING IN 2011

As an important carrier of exhibition design activities, expositions may be categorized into comprehensive and specialized ones from the perspective of exhibition contents; and into international, intercontinental and national in terms of scope of activities. Generally speaking, expositions are of a larger scope and focus on national social education, knowledge dissemination and international or regional cultural and information exchange and etc. With rapid economic development, accelerated progress in the construction of exhibition venues and facilities during the 11th 5-year plan period and gradually improvement in exhibition planning and management system, professional and brand exhibition and exhibition tourism in Beijing is becoming a new growth point, generating 17.25 billion RMB in 2010 of the exhibition industry and related industries, a 31.8% increase [1] over that of the previous year. With the gradually promotion of influential power on the international scope, Beijing is attracting a growing number of exhibition projects, which boosted the development of relevant industries while promoting local brand exhibitions. A categorized analysis of 100 larger-scale exhibitions in 2010 based on the content of exhibition shows that comprehensive exhibitions accounts for the biggest proportion of 23%[2].

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A. Analysis of the 14th Beijing International Technology Industry Expo

As the first comprehensive international exhibition project in China with high- and new-technology as its themes, Beijing International Technology Industry Expo has been the 14th by May, 2011, providing a comprehensive platform of display, education and services of for China’s high- and new-tech industries in their international exchange and cooperation giving play to its advantage of capital city function and culture. With its large scale, rich contents and extensive international participation, Beijing High-Tech Expo possesses significant influential power in high-tech industry as well as exhibition business as an important platform for China’s engagement in domestic and international high-tech exchange and trade.

With Technology-led Transition and Innovation-driven Development as its theme, this Expo especially propagandizes and interprets the connotation of wisdom city consisting of wisdom urban operation, wisdom governmental services, wisdom enterprise operations and wisdom life for residents, showcasing for the first time the latest achievements in technical application in wisdom city construction in full scope. Distinguishing itself from the past events dominated by international famous brands, the 2011 event designed an SOE Exhibition Zone for the first time where 15 prominent state-owned groups including COFCO, Shenhua Group and China Huaneng demonstrated the strength of proprietary IPR in high- and new-tech industries in China. The event included 12

thematic exhibitions which attracted 2,070 participating enterprises from 12 countries and regions and received 210,000 visits during 5 days. Organizers fully mobilized all available sources of communication, leading the tune of promotional activities and further expanded the influential power of the event in intensity, profundity and extensiveness of communication, forming a well-jointed pattern of TV, radio, newspapers and magazines and new media such as Internet. Mainstream media in Beijing as well as over 800 journalists from approximately 200 local and overseas media covered the event, which generated satisfactory communication effectiveness and exhibition effect [3].

B. Analysis of the 6th Beijing International Cultural and Creative Industry Expo (ICCIE)

As China’s only large-scale exposition for international cultural and economic and trade exchange with its theme of cultural and creative regularly held in Beijing, ICCIE has become an important platform of pooling cultural and creative resources in China, predicting the trends of cultural industry and promoting international cultural and creative exchange and cultural product trade. Based on cultural and creative industry, the event aims at facilitating cultural and technology innovation and application, creating brand value as a prestigious and representative exhibition event in cultural and creative industry and economy in China with prominent international influence as well as cultural and economic attractiveness.

The event was held in November 2011 with its main venue covering a floor space of 55,000m2 and divided into 17 themed exhibition sections including achievements of “Culture Beijing” construction, radio, film and TV, news publications and copyright trading, creative design, cartoon and games, cultural tourism, cultural relics and museums, arts and crafts, gallery and art trading, sports industry and cultural & creative industry on provincial and city levels, international cultural and creative industry, cultural and creative boutique in Taiwan, cultural and creative industrial hub, cultural, creative and innovation achievements of youth, etc., with 11 special thematic sessions, 5 comprehensive activities, 7 summit forums, 14 business promotional sessions and 11 creative activities, covering a total area of approximately 125,000m2, an unprecedented event in all past sessions of ICCIE [4].

II. ANALYSIS OF “OBJECT” DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS IN COMPREHENSIVE EXPOSITIONS

For exhibition design targeted at comprehensive expositions, the primary task is to define the scope of contents and to lay down the theme of exhibition whatever objects on display. Different with clearly commercial trade show, comprehensive exposition particular emphasis on functions of guidance, education and communication of social culture, values and concepts, emphasizing the reflect of social values in the information communication of exhibits, hence the creation of cultural atmosphere in the exhibition form and design manifestation. Rather than display focusing on marketing functions, it is more often than not a special exhibition form with more investment in space and exhibit design in the booths that is featured in comprehensive expositions for maximum image promotion, emphasizing the brand awareness and social contribution. From the perspective of visual effect at the exhibition venue, exhibition and design behaviors are mainly targeted at design related to exhibits and design expression of the exhibition space. This paper defines the most common forms of exhibit and exhibition space design as “object” and “field” based on field research of a number of typical exhibitions, concluding a set of practical and effective exhibition design models for comprehensive exhibitions through analysis of the relevance among the design manifestation and the exhibitors’ demand and audience’ need at the exhibition venue.

Object is a general term for all items on exhibition which may refer to all types of tangible exhibits at the exhibition venue with the function of material media through which information is communicated in the exhibition. Such material media may be either real merchandise or models of exhibits or symbolic forms or images, which are generally categorized into three types in terms of exhibition form: material object exhibition, interactive experience and model representation.

Material object exhibition is a form of product exhibition mainly applied in visible exhibits or products featuring technology and performance, with strong relevance between exhibit and theme of exhibition which makes information readily accessible for spectators through unambiguously visible content, hence it is in favor of accuracy and integrity of exhibition theme communication. In the planning of design, such exhibits are usually placed at the center of demonstration for which a stage of expression is customized, bringing spectators into direct contact with the appearance, performance and characteristics of the product. An example is Beijing Orient booth at the High-Tech Expo (Figure 1) where independently developed products are placed at an eye-catching position in the booth and a stage is designed specially for key exhibits, fully displaying the product features and relevant parameters.

Interactive experience is suitable for all products featuring operability and direct contact, or installations designed for exhibition purpose, emphasizing the acquisition of information through spectators’ participation and practical experience. Designer places the exhibit or installation at the center of exhibition booth, guiding spectators to participate in use or experience, communicating the exhibition information through their attitudes, feedbacks and comments. For example, the space functions of Yizhuang booth at the High-Tech Expo (Figure 2) are designed for practical experience, attracting spectators to try exhibits and enjoy the audio-visual effects created through technology.


Model deduction is mainly applied in exhibition contents of enormous size and volume, which aims at promoting spectators’ awareness of exhibits through display of imitations with the support of audio, optical or electronic effects, video clips or texts. An example is the wooden miniature of the Forbidden City exhibited at ICCIE (Figure 3). Besides, this form of exhibition is oftentimes applied in exhibits of aesthetic effects and cultural features with the creation of abundant sensual entertainment and spatial atmosphere on a multimedia platform by means of high technology for the emotional communication under a certain theme. For example, the entire booth maybe designed as a scene in ancient times or in video games, where staff is dressed in special costumes, creating a vivid experience of time warp for spectators.

III. ANALYSIS OF “FIELD” DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS IN COMPREHENSIVE EXPOSITIONS

Here “field” is a general term for exhibition space and site of exhibition activities, i.e. a specific space which demonstrates the exhibition effects. Space is the nature of the most fundamental and universal form for communication. Space design plays a prominent role in the production and life of human society as a medium which brings human interaction into relevance. Designers therefore must create an environment that enables on-site exchange and information communication. The world “on-site” is an indication of characteristics of space, i.e. all on-site exchange and information communication must take place in a specified “space”; where multiple objects simultaneously appear in one “field”, it is their location and relation of primary and secondary in the space that first comes to spectators’ mind and produce corresponding cognition. This exchange in spatial language is especially effective in guiding or restraining the behaviors of spectators compared to the communication in language or text signs.

Comprehensive expositions are usually characterized by larger scale and numerous large booths, which mean higher demand for spatial design compared to conventional standard booths mainly expressed in spatial functions. As it were, the design of booth space for expositions is a behavior of zonal function definition. According to the exhibition purpose, from which perspective the expression of exhibition theme to the manifestation of exhibits, they are the most crucial links, including exhibit display design, installation experience design and activity release or show design, the exhibition form such as exhibition design, experience design and activity publicity or performance design and etc. are all belong to space design; then is the business talk area and spectator rest area, and the final supporting area, including stream of people, ,logistics passageways, storage space and staff-only area, etc.

As a key part of the entire booth design, exhibition space design mainly involves two parts: first, the relationship between exhibits and exhibition space, and second, the design of spectator’s route of movement in the exhibition space. The division of exhibition space is mainly categorized into linear
(Figure 4), concentrated (Figure 5) and grid (Figure 6), which may appear in composite forms for super-sized exhibition space where larger spaces embrace smaller ones which in turn are connected with larger ones. The principle of spatial planning is defined by characteristics of exhibits, or, in other words, the corresponding spatial form is determined on the basis of demand of exhibits, which are connected through design of movement route to form a complete process of information communication. Constrained by the floor area of exhibition venue, the booth space of most exhibitors are limited; hence the central area is usually occupied by large exhibitors, followed by medium-sized ones while small exhibitors are located in the surroundings or the side areas of the exhibition venue in the form of standard booths.

Shared spaces are subordinate to exhibition space for the purpose of satisfying spectator’s needs apart from viewing the exhibition. On one hand, an area for business talks provided for customers, which may be designed as an enclosed area separated from the exhibition space or located at the corner of the booth for the quietness amongst the hustling crowd (Figure 7); on the other hand, a rest area provided for potential customers or general spectators as a reflection of human-oriented design of extended exhibition services.

Supporting space design must satisfy two practical demands: first, the space design for personnel and logistics must meet basic requirements of ergonomics; second, the storage space design for materials and personal belongings of staff should fully utilize the idle space or walls of the booth.

IV. SUMMARY

This paper shows that design behaviors targeted at “object” and “field” are the key links that determine the exhibition effect in such exposition and exhibition design activities based on the analysis of the current situation and design phenomenon of comprehensive expositions in Beijing, combined with features of exhibition design composition. Despite the differences in theme definition and exhibition contents of various exhibitors, such model is generally followed in the expression of exhibition design, with spatial division preconditioned by functions and exhibition form centered upon features of exhibits. The vast majority of booth space is dedicated to exhibition, while spectators’ movement route are designed on the basis of exhibits or installations in the exhibition space, with a public area designed according to predicted size of spectators. So to speak, compared to trade fairs targeted at sales, comprehensive expositions are more focused on the communication between man and objects and between human beings in the orientation of design, with effective social education and value communication functions.

REFERENCES


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