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Art and Word — How Curators Can Express an Art with Words

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Nowadays, museums not only exhibit artworks or relics but also enormous words as supplements for that stuff. Words describe their subject, theme, historical background, or even how to comprehend the relics which come across different cultures. According to the International Council of Museums, “a museums is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museum foster diversity and sustainability.¹” The definition includes any type of museums; i.e., historical, artistical, anthropological, and so on. In such wide definition of museums, this paper focuses on art museums that especially exhibit paintings and sculptures. However, in those museums, words play a crucial role in helping visitors to appreciate the artworks. Words in art museums, for example, are titles and sentences in captions for a single work or for a section. Here, the words are working as a kind of knowledge sharing or the restriction of thoughts for viewers which are supplied by museums. In addition, words related to arts are also provided outside of museums, such as catalogues, dialogue or letters by artists, critics, etc. Particularly, curators who create these words often must pay close attention the powerful influence of words as the third person of artworks when they compose.

Whereas there is so much textual information, the public education for the arts has not yet caught up with the current situation to read high context art explanations. In Japan, for instance, the curriculum guideline for art aims to acquire enrichment in linguistic activity at the stage of the 2nd to the 3rd grade of junior high school². There is no concrete criterion for how to acquire it and evaluate its achievement in the guideline. The United Kingdom’s National Curriculum for art is similar to Japan, according to the remark of Stibbs (1998)³. The National Curriculum in Art focuses on craft, design, production, usage of materials, and so on. In the curriculum, three key stages were set for each segment of pupils, respectively, as requirements for public schools in the United Kingdom. The Key Stage 3, which corresponds to 11 to 14 year-old pupils (i.e., almost the same as junior high school students’ age in Japan), requires that they should be taught how to broaden their critical and technical language⁴. While this “language” teaching is in charge of the English teacher, Stibbs (1998) indicated that the teaching does not take root in pupils’ practical experience in art⁵. It

is often that the language for art is poetic, not rooted in practical activities in art courses. The similar situation is occurred in Japan: expressions in art are too poetic and apart from actual art activity.

Since art itself is relatively more abstract than other subjects, it would be difficult to educate students fairly in the same fundamental experience and corresponding vocabulary. Not only in Japan and the United Kingdom, but other countries might face the difficulty in the educational difficulty above. In such art fundamentals at a young age, textual information in museums must avoid overusing terminology. It needs to stay in standardized and understandable wording for general viewers to some extent⁶.

Furthermore, Temme (1992) found that infrequent museum visitors need for appropriate length of information in terms of their aesthetic appreciation⁷. It can be assumed that infrequent visitors would be less interested in art and have little knowledge about it. Then, the explanation might be helpful for them to enjoy a museum. Both the quality and the quantity of textual information are important for viewers to appreciate artworks.

In addition to educational considerations, the growing diversity of museum audiences further underscores the need for accessible and carefully chosen language. Visitors now arrive with widely varying levels of familiarity with art, shaped by differences in age, cultural background, and prior exposure to visual literacy. As a result, curators cannot assume a shared interpretive framework or a uniform level of knowledge. Clear and inclusive language becomes essential not only for supporting understanding but also for ensuring that artworks remain open to multiple perspectives. This context strengthens the rationale for examining how curatorial language should be constructed and adapted.

There are several cognitive experiments regarding the influence of textual information and visual information. It is essential to know the power balance between them due to museums with full of texts. First, Szubielska, Imbir, and Szymanska showed that curatorial information, such as explanations in captions, were positively affected to appreciate and judge artworks in 2001⁸. This result is accordance with the previous researches by Belke et al. (2010), Cupchik et al. (1994), Gerger and Leder (2015), Jucker et al. (2014), Leder et al. (2006), Millis (2001), Russell (2003), Russell and Milne (1997), Specht (2010), and Swami (2013)⁹. Needless to say, suppose visitors to museums have enough knowledge about artworks, they can easily appreciate the artworks well

without curatorial information. However, in Szubielska, Imbir, and Szymanska experiment, they chose installation works as an experimental tool, which was an example of conceptual art. They supposed that installation art would be challenging for viewers if they were not experts in the art field, as referenced Pelowski et al. (2018). Participants answered their aesthetic experiences in several variants, and the variants differed in how much they knew about the artworks from the explanations. This experiment indicates the quantitative effect of words (title and description in this case) on artworks.

Temme (1992) additionally reported that participants in his experiment answered that they enjoyed paintings with reading explanatory labels, when viewing “artistically ambiguous” paintings¹⁰. This supports that textual information supplements the ambiguity in artworks not literally but empirically.

Specht (2010) revealed how an artist’s statement is effective on aesthetic appreciation¹¹. He quoted the research of Schwarts (2007), which showed that textual information detracts visual experience of viewers¹². He conducted an experiment to compare representational and non-objective paintings with explanatory labels and how each is rated by participants. The result showed that participants liked representational artworks more when read artists’ statements; and both types of artworks are rated significantly different before and after reading the statements¹³. It can be assumed that explanatory labels enhance the aesthetic appreciation in viewers¹⁴.

Also, just a title affects even the auction price according to the survey by Park, Park, and Park¹⁵. Based on Grampp’s (1989) conclusion which stated that a title was the basic information for the artwork, they took surveys in auctions held in 2017 to 2019 in Korea and compared among descriptive (“often used for representational paintings such as religious, historical, still-life and portrait paintings”), elaborative (having “the function of implying the meaning of the artwork and expressing it metaphorically”), and untitled¹⁶. Parks took a regression analysis of each type of titles and hammer prices of artworks¹⁷. The results indicate that: (1) a descriptive title has a negative effect on the price, (2) an elaborate title has a positive effect on the contrary, (3) no significant effect when an artwork is untitled on the price¹⁸. They also held further research based on their result, and showed that there was a relationship between artworks and external aspects of artworks, such as the artist’s popularity¹⁹. Whatever, it was certainly influenced by the title, which was linguistic information for artwork, on an artwork in terms of financial value as well as qualitative

value above. Whereas financial value does not mean aesthetic value directly, titles for specific art types and artists' influences on artworks' value.

Here, it should be considered the strength of linguistic information in brain processing. In the field of psychology, there is Stroop Effect, which was found in experiments by J. R. Stroop in 1935²⁰. Stroop Effect occurs by the interference of language processing to color processing in our brain. When people are asked to answer the color of a word like “red” or “blue” (in this case, the answer is black), it takes time to answer the color of the word since we are likely to answer the meaning of the words, “red” or “blue.” This is because the human brain tends to proceed linguistic information automatically and initially, thereby answering the color itself delays. Especially, this tendency was found in serial words of color in Stroop’s experiments; therefore, it would be difficult to apply Stroop Effect to the relationship between artwork and word. However, the effect implies that linguistic information is stronger and faster than visual information in brain processing. This is also pointed out by Yeazell (2015) as once people are capable of reading words; it is impossible to ignore the habit “to read” practically²¹.

While textual information has firm influence on our appreciation, curators should accomplish their roles in terms of museology. The message from museums makes them become media to communicate with visitors or society²². Museums are the place to send out the culture with their collections which following their policy. They select values which are worth to exhibit there, collect relics, and then arrange them into appropriate places as curators intend²³²⁴. Accordingly, the curator’s intention appears visually in an arrangement of collections. Here, words by curators are attached to this arrangement; accordingly, the intention is enhanced more. Yoshiaki Nishino, a researcher of museology, mentioned this enhancement induced by words (“label” in his words) that “curators must have been particular to the ‘materiality’ of labels²⁵.” (Author’s translated) What the meaning of the message is determines the direction of the museum; therefore, curators who produce messages must be careful of the wording for artworks, which would be a method for museums as media. Curators’ intention in their linguistic information will reflect on how viewers appreciate artworks and comprehend the purpose of museums. In other words, the curator’s words are necessary to be coherent with the museum’s significance. Words in museums have pivotal roles as not only for appreciation of artworks, but also the message function for museum.

As above, words and sentences (i.e., titles or explanations) significantly effect on appreciation of artworks. This linguistic information is often created by curators. It means that curators control how visitors appreciate artworks in the museum or museum itself. In other words, as far as curators belong to museums, the linguistic information which is created by curators is the message from each museum. Hence, this paper examines the importance of words for artworks through several exhibitions as case studies. Until today, there is few papers which consider or organize how curators can express artwork with words. The paper attempts to observe the history of relation between artworks and words and propose the relation it should be.

Firstly, the paper classifies the relationship between words and artworks into five categories based on the references and observation. The relationship seems to be developed chronologically according to the art development in the Western and American stream, thereby the recent one is quite complex. Also, the method to share word expressions will be considered at the end of the same chapter. Based on the classification and sharing methods, the five case studies is going to be introduced in the Chapter 3. Each case study is different in terms of the concept, the theme, the location, and, of course, the sharing method of textual information. Afterwards, we will discuss from the case studies with what points to be considered by curators for the exhibition conditions.

Chapter 2. Word Expression of Arts

This chapter examines what kind of word expressions are relevant to artworks with their creation they, and how viewers can read them. The author hypothesized that there is a chronological development in the expression of art from primitive ideas which are coming from artists themselves to philosophical and conceptual one. Particularly, after the modern art, artworks have their own autonomy and tend to minimize textual information; in the contrast, contexts are essential to appreciate in the post-modernism. In this development, linguistic information increasingly becomes important, complicated, and highly contextualized. The transition used to be the organization in the framework of art history, but now it becomes social scientific and deconstructive organization. Through looking at the remained resources and referring to current exhibitions, the type of explanation will be classified into five as below. Then, the chapter exemplifies how to share textual information inside and outside of the museum. The methods are mainly divided into linguistic or audible.

2-1. Artists' Intention

Artists' intention is the original ideas or thoughts that artists created artworks by themselves. Artists were influenced by their surrounding seniors or society, and they developed their personal ideas towards creation. In other words, the ideas describe the position of artwork in artists' culture and how to appreciate it (i.e. what is drawn on the canvas). Therefore, viewers can straightforwardly enjoy artworks once they read the artist's intention, because it is a raw guide from the artist for an artwork. It helps not only to understand what is on the canvas but also the background of the creation.

There are a lot of references available to read the artists' intentions from ancient time to the present. For instance, Odilon Redon stated about his works and talent in terms of methodology and thinking process²⁶²⁷. Redon is famous for his symbolism paintings and prints around the end of the 19th century. While there are colorful bouquet motifs, such as "Grand Bouquet" in Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum, Tokyo, he created weird creatures such as "The Eye-Ballon" in monochrome printing as well. Between these contrasts, it is sometimes difficult to comprehend his works. In such

a case, a real comment from the artist would be helpful for appreciation as a guidance. In addition, Robert Smithson, a well-known land art artist in the United States of America in the 20th century, maintained his thoughts and criticism in the contrast of land art and institutions²⁸. He criticized the museum as a “cultural prison,” and that was why he transferred to create land art, which jumped out from the institution²⁹. This reason or mechanism could be analyzed by critics or researchers; however, it would be essential what the artist actually felt to do so. Furthermore, Joseph Kosuth discussed conceptual art through his work “One and Three Chairs” in several papers^{30,31}. Conceptual art will be considered in the later section, but his statement for conceptual art is significant to examine the shift of modernist art as one of the representative conceptual artists. In particular, the raw explanations by artists about how they created the artworks (i.e., the concept) are the most trustworthy to understand the relationship between their visual and the concept.

One thing to be noted is that the artists’ intention is rarely reached inside of museum. In the coming chapter, there is a unique case in which an artist wrote all the explanatory statements, but such a case is few nowadays. The way to read this kind of information is to go to libraries; there are books which compile letters, reports, memos, or papers by artists in those days as the author introduced above. Almost all artists retained their own thoughts for the works in letters or papers. These are so-called primary sources, which are utilized in research as well. Ancient artists’ thoughts are reinterpreted by researchers or critics based on these primary sources. They may be sometimes abstract, but they are worth to read to deepen our appreciation.

The author regards this information as the oldest word expression for artworks in history. The intentions are always with the artworks as they are produced. We will look over the connection between word and art in historical order; however, what artists imagined is always the origin. Nothing can be the first before the artist’s idea³².

2-2. Title

A title is now commonly associated with artwork wherever it is, such as a museum, a gallery, or even in a catalogue. It seems obvious to be with an artwork in a caption, but it is not used to be in the past, according to Yeazell (2015)³³.

Yeazell (2015) unraveled the history of title and artwork in her book titled “Picture Titles: How and Why Western Paintings Acquired Their Names.” She pointed out that the primal title was given by a mediator who sold an artwork especially a painting instead of the artists. Until then, it was said that paintings are regarded as “books” for those who unread letters according to Pope Gregory I since around A.D. 600³⁴. As we often see artworks named “untitled” recently, artists could choose whether to name an artwork or not (i.e., art itself tells its story visually if an artwork does not have a title)³⁵. However, around the 15th century, artworks were traded among different regions thanks to expanding commerce; consequently, the seller and the buyer did not always belong to the same cultural background. In this case, it would be difficult to understand “what was drawn” or “what was intended” in an artwork by just a piece. Hence, mediators entitled each artwork instead of the artists to sell artworks smoothly to fill in a gap between the artist and the buyer³⁶³⁷. Yeazell (2015) quoted E. H. Gombrich, an art historian, that a title is “a by-product from art trading³⁸.” (Author’s translation) Those titles (and explanatory statement in some cases) were printed in one sheet called “livre” and distributed in trades in the 17th century. The “livre” had remained until the 19th century as the main explanatory brochure for artworks³⁹.

From the 18th century, the explanation by “livre” was shortened as a title; therefore, a title just stated the subject in the artwork as it is or complemented the content when the artwork differed from history. However, in 1785, Jacques-Louis David titled his work by himself⁴⁰. This was the historical turning point in entitling. As mentioned below, mediators or the third person would mainly have entitled artworks until the 20th century; however, some artists started to put a title by themselves started by David⁴¹. Especially, abstract paintings in the 19th century, by Joseph Mallord William Turner, for example, were supported by titles to indicate what was drawn on the canvas by titles since they were difficult to distinguish their subjects⁴².

In the 20th century, still not all did artists put a title on his/her work. Even Pablo Picasso glanced about a title in an interview that collectors, critics, or sellers were enthusiastic to entitle an artwork⁴³. Here, it is possible to observe the ideal purity in art, which Clement Greenberg, a critic, suggested in his statement. Greenburg indicated the importance of figurative and abstract independence which is so-called “rigorism,” whereas it was not grounded to the public until the middle of the 20th century⁴⁴. Artists might believe the purity or the autonomy of artworks which were provided through its visual. This was the reason why artists tend(ed) to entitle their artworks

“untitled.” Later in the 20th century, Rene Francois Ghislain Magritte and Marcel Duchamp entitled their works not as they were: the coming section will discuss this distortion in detail.

Currently, the artworks entitled “untitled” could be evidence of how Greenberg’s idea has been spread out. “Untitled” can be understandable from the viewpoint of Greenburg’s rigorism. Akira Asada, a Japanese critic and a philosopher, indicated that untitled artworks can maintain their purity and autonomy as artworks. As shown in the Chapter 1, textual information intervenes in visual information, namely the purity of art. Artists deliberately avoid putting a title in order to protect their position to express their ideas only with their visual images, not words⁴⁵. This is very reasonable option for artists.

On the other hand, titles have become descriptive as the people’s literacy rate has risen. Titles originally assisted in understanding what the artwork intends, but artists became to give titles to artworks by themselves. Those titles are likely to be original, thereby viewers prefer to read them as a method to comprehend the artworks more easily. Nevertheless, Kyoko Tanaka, an interpreter of Yeazell (2015), indicated in its afterword that painting was ironically shifted to be difficult to comprehend due to the high readability of viewers, while it used to be capable to do the same without any literal information⁴⁶. Thus, a title had not been with an artwork at first, then it was attached to an artwork by mediators to supplementary information. Afterwards, artists started to entitle them regardless of the title for indicating the subject or not. At the same time, as viewers literacy rate become rising, the title interferes the artwork complexly, and people count on the title too much to comprehend artworks.

There were several cases where a title never describes an artwork directly. For instance, Whistler and Magritte strongly denied that their titles were based on literature⁴⁷. “The Waterfall (La cascade)” by Magritte means a waterfall literally, but the painting has a riverside scene in a drawn easel with surrounded greens. Magritte said that the title was intended to be his inspiration when he drew it⁴⁸. This tendency occurred and became active when conceptual art or Surrealism appeared. We will discuss it in detail in the following section.

2-3. Explanatory Statement

When visiting museums, visitors often read captions attached to each artwork. Captions are displayed on the same panel of a title, or sometimes they are created for chapters in an exhibition. Here in this section, the author divides a caption into three factors: a title, which is discussed in 2-2, a factual information, and an explanatory statement. Factual information is aggregated from the artwork itself without anyone's intention. As it is said, "fact," it includes the artist's name, the production year, materials, or size. Since this factual information cannot be changed in almost all cases, and it is not a matter of wording, this paper does not focus on it. In comparison with factual information, an explanatory statement is the issue of how to use a word to express an artwork is by curators. Therefore, this section sees an explanatory statement only.

An explanatory statement can be distinguished into two types. One is historical content and advise to appreciate based on the research; the other is curatorial appreciation suggested by curators⁴⁹. The former contents in an explanatory statement are, for instance, indicated the composition of objects, where to see on the campus at first, and how the artwork was produced in terms of historical background⁵⁰. Particularly, the guide to appreciate has been established in a long history and research. These are the facts; hence, they would not be troublesome as long as the writer is knowledgeable about the artwork or researches enough. Neither is the description of artwork tough if he or she follows the manner of description writing.

On the contrary, convincing statement in curatorial appreciation must be careful for both the writer and viewers (i.e., readers)⁵¹. This type of statement is presumable idea for the interpretation of objects in an artwork. As discussed in 2-2, artwork can fundamentally express itself without words; however, if a writer gave his or her own opinion near the artwork physically, viewers would be affected by that opinion due to the textual information. Accordingly, the viewers' appreciation might be distorted by captions. Foucault pointed out that the concept of "author" is just an artificial pipe which prevents free circulation for ideation⁵²⁵³. Foucault's remark can apply to writers of explanatory statements in an exhibition, namely curators. Even if curators write captions to describe artworks in their viewpoints, artworks never belong to the curators. They are independent from the curators' private opinion as they used to be free from being titled.

As introduced in the Introduction, an explanatory statement influences the aesthetic experience of viewers. According to Barnett (2010), it is essential to take validity, rationality, and suitability into consideration when writing a description⁵⁴. Particularly, word expression in the art

field is not mature in early education, as its achievement is defined vaguely. Therefore, an explanatory statement is expected to provide the same interpretation in the same language when anyone reads it.

Captions are also varied in their wording depending on the target of an exhibition. Some exhibitions aim to invite infants or children. In this case, the writing style will be soft and clear for children with easy wording; or, sentences consist of appealing phrases like “Hi!” to involve them. Writers attempt to be understandable and to stay close to viewers. Otherwise, exhibitions for the general public who are not familiar with the exhibited artworks adjust the style of explanatory statement to make it readable. Curators add more historical context about the artwork and descriptive comments to guide the viewers’ eye tracts⁵⁵. In particular, old master pieces have manners to appreciate them because even the composition has a specific meaning: where to start to see and to track their eye contact among the objects on the canvas. An explanatory statement would be helpful to follow the rules to appreciate pieces as long as they are appropriately written.

2-4. Criticism

Without visiting the museum, criticism is now available in catalogues, publications, or even online. There is professional art criticism, whereas curators or other professionals write it for each piece or the entire exhibition. In recent years, especially after modern art, the way of expression in artworks has varied a lot, and those need to be organized by the third person⁵⁶⁵⁷. In this case, criticism effectively works to evaluate artworks in an objective way.

Let us focus on how Japanese museums have treated criticism in the past. In Japan, most of the special exhibitions were co-organized by newspaper companies and museums similar to the present. It was because newspaper companies at that time few positions which had foreign correspondents in all over the world and be able to deal in foreign currencies. Therefore, museums could easily negotiate to rent artworks from overseas through newspaper companies. Here, newspapers publicized their exhibitions in their papers with criticism. Since exhibitions are in charge of the cultural department, but the criticism is by another, a single company can criticize the exhibition or the main piece fairly.

One thing to be noted is that criticism require knowledge about art to some extent. Even though it is a short passage, the author of the criticism needs to be careful with the structure, points to be mentioned and to stay in objective to the same level with adequate research, as being common to caption writing.

Nevertheless, similar to an explanatory statement, criticism for an artwork has a structure in itself. Usually, it starts with a description, such as what is drawn in or the historical background, then, critic persuades his or her opinion afterwards. Here, critique should take care of the use of word as the same as explanatory statements with considering the target reader; however, criticism is relatively read by those who are interested in art or the artwork. While an explanatory statement is for any visitor in a museum, readers of criticism are higher conscious in art. Therefore, wording is not a huge issue when writing a criticism and does not have to be flat. In addition, since readers are sure that it is a criticism, it would be welcomed to include a writer's personal opinion more than explanatory statements.

2-5. Supplementary Description

Emergence of conceptual art in 1917 by Duchamp's "Fountain", the relationship between an artwork and words have been distorted by artists themselves. As slightly discussed in 2-2, a title, which is directly attached to the artwork, does not represent what the artwork expresses.

To discuss this distortion, it is inevitable to overlook Ferdinand de Saussure's idea of language. Saussure was a Swiss linguist in the 20th century and established the basis of structural linguistics in his book *Course de Linguistique Générale*. In structural linguistics, he suggested the primary principle which regarded language arbitrariness between word pronunciation and meaning⁵⁸. He called the former as *signifiant* and the latter as *signifié*. Saussure developed his idea from comparing linguistic which focused on individual language; but he tried to generalize the theory which is common to all languages as much as possible. Saussure stated that there was no necessary connection between meaning (*signifié*) and sound (*signifiant*.) These two are combined by social custom: this is the arbitrariness. Suppose there is no arbitrariness, there would be no distinction among languages (i.e., any language does not follow social *significances*.)

Arbitrariness brings three essential characteristics in language. Firstly, arbitrariness realizes the sociality of *langue*. Precisely, Saussure defines *langue* to analyze language more in detail. *Langue*, which is contrasted to *parole*, is the shared system in a community using a common language. A word is the maximum unit of a *langue*, and the actual utterance is called *parole*. With distinguished *langue* and *parole*, Saussure focused on *langue* to analyze in his study. Ken Machida (2003) described the sociality trait that, however you remember phonetics in a language, it does not mean to remember a word in the language. Moreover, words are varied in each language, thereby inimitable words cannot work as words which are not lost upon the people⁵⁹. Secondly, arbitrariness makes it possible to change a word for long stretches. Since *signifié* and *signifiant* are not connected inevitably, both can be gradually changed their linkages according to the social circumstances. One thing to be noted is that this change is not drastic: for instance, *signifiant* /dog/, which *signifié* is an animal barking “bowwow” with four legs, could be /dok/ or /tog/, but rarely become /pig/. Here, it might be some social regulations to accept the changes to some extent⁶⁰. This point will be essential for the upcoming consideration of the supplementary description in the next section of this paper. Third, the most important characteristic of arbitrariness is to disassemble a sentence into words. Arbitrariness is the trait of a word which is *langue*; therefore, a sentence which is not a *langue* is resolved into words to comprehend the meaning of the sentence. If there is no arbitrariness between *signifié* and *signifiant*, it is not necessary to decompose the sentence because any *signifiant* can mean any *signifié*.

Referring to the arbitrariness of *langue*, let us consider Duchamp’s “Fountain” in 1917. “Fountain” is regarded as the first conceptual art in the art world, while the conceptual art itself was in its prime in the 1960s to 1970s⁶¹. “Fountain” is also a well-known artwork as a ready-made, which used a urinary as a work. Duchamp signed “R. Mutt” on the urinary, and he finished his work. In this case, suppose the artwork uses a urinary, its *signifiant* should be “urinary” according to the current arbitrariness. Nevertheless, the artwork was titled “Fountain,” which is not correspond to *signifié* “urinary.” It might be because conceptual art is more concerned with the concept or the idea of artists rather than its visual; hence, Duchamp distorted the *signifié* and the *signifiant* within the structure of conceptual art and ready-made. At this point, the title of an artwork had changed its role in some aspects. The title often described the subject or the motif on the canvas to indicate

them before Duchamp, but it gained another arbitrariness which was outside of social constraint, between the artist and the artwork.

After Duchamp, the Surrealists in the 1920s also brought out their own arbitrariness in their artworks and titles. Magritte is one of the distorted title givers in his works, but it looks back in time in the early 20th century. As the paper introduced in 2-2, Magritte gave antinomic titles to his works. For another instance, he drew a painting of a pipe in 1929. However, he wrote “Ceci n’est pas une pipe (this is not a pipe; author’s translation)” under the pipe, and entitled the artwork as “La Trahison des Images (The Trade of Images; author’s translation).” Similar to Duchamp’s “Fountain,” the visual image on the canvas and the phrase beneath are contradicted. Whereas the phrase beneath the pipe is not a *langue* (i.e., words), the *signifié* and the *signifiant* are distorted, suppose the meaning of the phrase works as *signifiant*. Magritte actually answered in an interview that he never expressed his expression or idea in his artwork. He would like his artworks to be separated from textual information.

In the 1960s to 1970s, the time was for conceptual art. Conceptual art is an attempt to express ideas in an artwork: thus, how the artwork looks like is not a big issue. Conceptual artists always value more in their concept than the artwork’s aesthetics. The representative of conceptual art, Kosuth himself, indicated that from Duchamp to conceptual artists after the 1960s shifted the format of language from as morphology of which was being said to as a function via conceptual art⁶². Not only Duchamp, but Kienholz’s “Plaque,” drawing frames of Rauschenberg, or de Kooning are examples of the distortion between titles and objects in conceptual art⁶³. Since these conceptual artists proceeded their concepts, their titles for artworks might be apart from the subject of the artwork as they used to be. This tendency expands to contemporary arts nowadays.

As a discrepancy of *signifiant* and *signifié* occurs, there must be an explanation of what happens in that artwork. The author would like to call this explanation as a supplementary description. Of course, the explanation could be in the artists’ intention or captions, but now we have enormous conceptual and contemporary arts currently⁶⁴. The logic of distortion has plenty of variances, not only artists’ ideas but also social factors such as environment, culture, humanity, economy, and so on: the deconstruction in description had been required to comprehend artworks entirely⁶⁵. Deconstruction in description means that a description does not focus on the art itself, rather on its background as above. It might be difficult to organize and mention comprehensively by

an artist. In addition, this supplementary description mentions not only the artwork itself, but the relation between the title and the artwork that is outside of the canvas. The distorted arbitrariness must be explained otherwise it is impossible to understand. The combination between an artwork and its supplementary description realize the completion of the artwork. In almost cases, the distortion is caused by environmental background in art production. Curators should research the reason for the distortion, and tell them to viewers. Nevertheless, suppose curators include every background in the caption, the exhibition would be overwhelmed by texts as if visitors were immersed into a book. Hence, it is often to be omitted this kind of information in captions due to the complexity, despite its necessity: that is why the author would like to name this textual information as the supplementary description.

2-6. How to Share the Explanations

Explanations above are shared in various methods. Some, for example, cannot reach inside museums, but curators manage to read them there. This section considers the methods to share the explanations inside of a museum.

The most famous method is a label on the wall. As we often see in a museum, there are labels next to (or beneath) artworks. Even though some artists shifted their stances to entitle their artwork by themselves in the 18th century, museums, Musée du Louvre for instance, still used “livre” because they believe the visitors were capable to read documents. “Livre” provided a basic information of artwork to distinguish artworks, while it was expensive. At that time, those who could read documents were wealthy as to be able to reach high education. However, in 1830, Gustav Friedrich Waagen at Gemäldegalerie (one of the Berlin State Museums) started to place a small label which includes the subject of the artwork and some related information in addition to expensive inventory⁶⁶. Thanks for the labels, any people can reach the detail information about the artwork without any extra fee. A label usually has both a title and an artist name at least, then the size, the production year, and the production place as part of the caption. In some cases, there are even the birth and death year of artists. Depending on exhibitions, every artwork or selected ones has an explanatory statement in the same label⁶⁷. When the explanatory statement is only for selected works, the works might be regarded as the key pieces in an exhibition in terms of the

curators who coordinate them. A label, however, should not be too large or too small in order to avoid interfering exhibition experience and text readability. Curators (and designers) must take this point into consideration.

If a curator or a director would like to maintain the pure appreciation experience in a museum or a gallery, he/she can distribute handouts instead. Particularly, galleries tend to use handouts to share information to keep the purity in the exhibition space. Adopting handouts, there is little textual information in an exhibition space, so it would be sophisticated. Handouts can be distributed to visitors one by one or shared some copies. To indicate which textual information is for which artwork, handouts need to include a photo of an artwork or a map of the space; otherwise, curators give a number on an artwork and associate it with the information by putting the number on the wall as well. Hence, it is necessary to strike a balance between how much textual information is to be with artworks on the same flat. This decision is made by curators, basically. Usually, handouts contain almost the same information as a label, and add more detail information in several language. Some handouts have a map of the exhibition space to show how the exhibition was deployed.

Thanks to accelerating digitalization and becoming popularity of smartphones, handouts can be shared online, not as a paper. Viewers scan a two-dimensional barcode at the entrance and access a website or download a PDF. In this case, as the same as other methodologies above, the curator can adjust the amount of information on the medium. They may put only a title, an artist name, or other basic information; otherwise, they may add an explanatory statement for some pieces. Currently, the online method has not been made most of: it is used similarly as a paper handout or a label. However, online method can include enormous information as much as possible and easy to bring them back by visitors. Curators may consider its utilization more⁶⁸. This method is less costly and nimble, and does not interfere with appreciating artworks. Of course, it might be weird that many viewers look at smartphones and artwork one after the other. However, it might exclude those who do not have smartphones or are not good at using them. In particular, elderly people still do not make full use of smartphones, so the methodology does not have perfect accessibility. Curators need to consider the balance between the usefulness and the accessibility for viewers, considering the exhibition structure.

The three methods above are visual information; on the other hand, there is audible information in a museum. As we have often seen at the entrance of the museum, there are audio guides which is provided by rental small terminals in 500 JPY or so. There are number plates beside artworks, and viewers tune the terminal to listen to the audio guide. This audio guide explains some picked-up pieces and usually provides a different information from visual information on a label or a handout. Therefore, an audio guide deepens the understanding of artworks with rarely interrupting the visual experience. Huge museums, such as Musée du Louvre, do not have enough space to put labels or to distribute explanatory handouts to enormous numbers of visitors, while artworks have a long history to know. In this case, an audio guide is efficient to spread the information to as many people as possible. However, recently in Japan, most of special exhibitions appoint (famous) actor or actress in audio guide. Asada indicated that it might be because museums aim to attract general people to museums by the popularity of the person who is in charge of the guide. He remarked that appointing such actors and actresses are not fundamental method to attract visitors. It should be discussed who is suitable for this position; i.e., actors, announcers, voice actors, and so on.

Not only the terminal, but the communicative method is also available as an audible method in an exhibition. In some museum, curators hold gallery talks in a museum or a place. A gallery talk is held only by curators, or with artist(s) if he or she is alive and possible to come. Since a gallery talk is a live session, it is difficult to have many times during the exhibition and to involve so many people in one session at the same time. A museum often introduces a limitation by first come, first served. Whereas the talk is limited, visitors can know the detail of an exhibition by curators or artists directly. Artists sometimes talk about the background of creation which is quite interesting. Besides, visitors may ask questions to them as well, thereby it will be helpful to comprehend artists' intentions and curators' intentions simultaneously.

The last explanatory method is a direct guidance by monitors in a space. Usually, monitors are not curators and do not have enough knowledge about the works. However, some museums start to train guides to be capable of explaining or answering questions about the exhibition⁶⁹. Therefore, visitors can ask questions on site and have communication in real time. While the methods above all prepared information, communicative explanations can be varied according to a situation. It is, however, costly to educate monitors enough to answer any question from visitors, but the

experience in a museum will be enriched thanks to the communication. If an exhibition has enough budget and time to educate monitors, this guidance would be a good option.

Chapter 3. Case Study

This chapter looks over the five exhibitions held in 2025 in Japan as case studies to examine how to share the textual information according to the specificity of exhibition. The author chose them in terms of the variation of the exhibition theme, location, exhibited work year and artist, and description. In addition, the places emphasis on picking up exhibitions which the author directly visited.

Artizon museum, a white cube, exhibited their collections which were created in the 18th to 20th century. National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, held a special exhibition collaborated with San Diego Museum of Art. They showed the oldest artworks among these case studies. Anselm Kiefer also had an exhibition at Nijo Castle where is the historical World Heritage in Kyoto. Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, invited Kenjiro Okazaki and held his solo exhibition with his recent works. Since Okazaki is alive, the explanations were written by himself. THE RABBIT HALL is a private institute specialized in conceptual art. It was established in 2025 and holding three-year special exhibition based on the founder's own collection.

While the five case studies examined in this research offer a diverse range of curatorial approaches, they do not represent every genre of exhibition practices. The selection was inevitably shaped by the availability of materials, the accessibility of curatorial statements, and the degree to which documentation was publicly provided. Moreover, this study does not incorporate direct visitor research; therefore, the impact of word expressions choices on audience interpretation remains an area for future investigation. These limitations do not undermine the findings, but they do highlight the contextual nature of word expressions and the need for further empirical work.

3-1. Collection Exhibition at Artizon Museum

Artizon Museum is a modern and contemporary museum nearby of Tokyo Station. It was founded by Shojiro Ishibashi in 1952 as Bridgestone Museum, which exhibited his personal collection. Initially, later, the museum was organized under the Ishibashi Foundation. The collection is mainly impressionists, but afterwards expanded to the contemporary including Asian artists recently. In

2020, the museum itself was revamped and renamed Artizon Museum. The exhibition floor is 4th to 6th, and it is free for graduate students when an exhibition is even special one.

The author visited “The Ishibashi Foundation Collection Highlights” held during March 1st to September 21st in 2025. The exhibition changed its contents once in the middle of the term; however, it was basically exhibited western collections during the 19th century to the 20th century, abstracts within the 20th century to the present, and the Japanese contemporaries from Ishibashi Foundation’s collection. Through the exhibition term, 77 artworks were exhibited in total. When the author visited the museum on May 11th, there were two other special exhibitions in different floors: one is “Sophie Taeuber-Arp & Jean Arp,” and the other is “Hazama Inosuke⁷⁰.” Since both special exhibitions were held on the 6th and 5th floors, which viewers first visited, the collection exhibition was a kind of bonus for them.

Only the collection exhibition provided an audio guide via visitors’ smartphones. Visitors scanned the barcode at the entrance of the 4th floor and listened to the guide if they wanted; hence, it was offered free. The audio guide was not by actor or actress unlike other museums. The basic caption consists of as following, both in Japanese and English: a title, an artist name, the production year, materials, and collector(s). This information was put on the wall in a small label left below of the artwork and distributed a brochure was distributed as well. Some labels were lit by cutting lights effectively to emphasize them in the space.

The explanatory statement was only provided in Japanese picture scrolls to complement its story textually. The artworks were: a picture scroll from Genji story and two picture scrolls from Ise story. It is observable that only Japanese picture scrolls, not all of Japanese traditional works, have explanatory statements in this exhibition. Western collections should be accompanied with explanatory statements to deepen the appreciation as the same as with picture scrolls. Here, the author hypothesizes about the museum's stance for the explanatory statement. The museum would like to create a sophisticated space without textual information. Excluding the new collection, all of the artworks in the exhibition had been exhibited before in the museum because they were the collection. However, picture scrolls are parts of the long story, thereby the museum put explanatory statements to support what are illustrated in the scrolls as exceptions while they were the collections. The explanatory statements are needed to understand the background of the picture scrolls. The museum might prioritize to minimize textual information in the exhibition basically.

Artizon Museum provides the list of exhibited works on their website as well. It was slightly different the actual handout distributed in the museum; however, it makes it possible to check out the birth and death year of the artist and size, in addition to the basic caption information additionally. As an archive, they also provide 360 degrees view of both exhibitions of the first and the second half. Instead, there was no catalog for this exhibition⁷¹.

3-2. Emulation and Admiration: Two Stories of Collecting European Art at the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo

The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, is located Ueno in the center of Tokyo. It was established in 1959 with Koshiro Matsukata's collection, which used to belong to the French Government⁷². According to San Francisco Peace Treaty, the Matsukata collections were belonged to the French Government as Japan was under control of Allied powers. However, when signing the treaty, the prime minister Yoshida at that time asked to return the collection to Japan. Since then, both Japan and France started the negotiation as government. In the negotiation, it was mandatory request to establish French museum in Tokyo to return the collection. Le Corbusier conducted his architecture which was eventually registered as a World Heritage site in 2016.

In this exhibition, the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, collaborated with the San Diego Museum of Art to exhibit the paintings from renaissance to impressionists⁷³. This is the first time for San Diego Museum of Art to bring their artworks in Japan. The exhibition was held from March 11th to June 8th in 2025. The author visited there on May 11th. In Japanese, the exhibition was titled "In Which Point to See, European Paintings⁷⁴." (Author's translation) Therefore, 93 paintings in total were combined into small 36 pairs or groups to compare the similar subject paintings⁷⁵.

They provided audio guides by Dean Fujioka, a Japanese actor, and an announcer who belonged to the sponsored company. Visitors could rent an audio guide by 500 JPY to reach the information in detail. There is no relation between Fujioka and exhibits; therefore, he might be appointed to attract people those who do not have strong interest in the Western arts.

Each painting has a label on the wall near each artwork. It has a title, an artist name, his/her year and place of birth and death, the production year, materials, and collector(s); all were in

Japanese and English except for the title and the artist's name, which were in Chinese and Korean additionally. Therefore, the labels were relatively larger than the typical ones we saw in other museums. Besides, the collector record is provided only in English. The summarized artwork list was distributed at the entrance and is also available online on the museum website. The information is slightly lacking compared to the captions in the museums, but it is possible to trace what and where they were there, both in Japanese and English.

The museum also distributed a junior passport for elementary and junior high school students⁷⁶. The junior passport introduces each museum and picks up several paintings for comparison. Students can establish their opinions according to the guide questions by using the junior passport. Since the exhibition theme is not professional as the theme is "how to see artworks," this attempt works well for family or young visitors. Particularly, the junior passport is educational, thereby this corresponds to the exhibition theme.

For each pair or group, there were other caption panels which described historical facts or the common composition between/among the same artist or subject. Interestingly, some comparisons took up actual two to three paintings, but the other comparisons took up one actual painting, then compared historical fact or master pieces such as "Mona Lisa" by Leonardo Da Vinci. The author is skeptical of this reference attitude of the exhibition. Suppose the exhibition tried to enlighten viewers about the knowledge of Western pieces; the necessary information for comparison must be offered by the museum. On the other hand, in some cases, as above, referring to Da Vinci or master pieces, they are precisely expected to require viewers' art knowledge to some extent. If the exhibition were to become through an educational stance, such expectation might be excluded.

In addition to the explanatory statement, there were exclusive panels to ask questions to viewers, both in Japanese and English. For instance, a panel asked viewers the reason for the common composition between two regional pieces. The wording tone is for a young viewer; therefore, the question is not difficult. To exaggerate the exclusive panels, their shapes were triangle or circle. The panels worked effectively to induce viewers to interact with paintings as curators intended. Nevertheless, there was no question-like text in the exhibition catalogue: it was a typical catalogue which explained the historical background and description of each piece.

At the cost of induction of curator's intention, the exhibition was likely to read texts, not to appreciate paintings purely. The exhibition space was full of texts for chapters, pairs and groups, and each painting. If the exhibition mentioned the composition or lighting in the painting, it could illustrate them in a diagram. Diagrams might be a good buffer among a lot of texts. In addition, as information was stuffed up in a panel, which is comparatively bigger than usual, the font size is smaller: it took time to read everything, and it caused people to stuck in a space in front of a small panel. The massive information occurred a cycle of negativity to looking around in a museum. Moreover, once there was a numerous amount of textual information, viewers would satisfy just to read the texts as the tendency of text inferentiality. Therefore, it was skeptical that viewers faithfully appreciated the artworks.

Furthermore, there was another issue as for an explanatory statement in the exhibition. Those explanatory statements and question panels were not merely facts: they included curators' intention to guide how curators wanted to appreciate artworks "properly." As we discussed in Chapter 2, artists are sometimes not sure about his or her artworks. At that time, all the artworks were by the late artists, so the statements or questions were basically produced based on the primary sources because curators could not discuss with them. However, if statements included a particle of the curator's personal opinion, viewers who were expected to visit could not distinguish which fact was and which opinion was because they would not have high-level knowledge about Western artworks: they might swallow all the explanations. To appreciate artwork critically, viewers are required to have some factual and their original knowledge about artworks. While there were some strong inductive explanatory statements and questions, such textual information was not suitable in this exhibition, considering its exhibition theme. So to speak, it could be said that viewers might be deprived of the freedom to appreciate paintings implicitly.

One thing which was quite unique in this exhibition was the commentary corner at the end. As the theme was how to appreciate, viewers could share how they saw paintings by sticky notes, and anyone could see them. Not only reading the provided statements by curators, but also being able to read other viewers' comments was good to know in terms of education.

3-3. Anselm Kiefer SOLARIS at Nijo Castle

This exhibition was held outside of museum. The Place is Nijo Castle, which is in the western-center of Kyoto city. Nijo Castle was established in 1603, by Ieyasu Tokunaga, who was the first general of the Edo period⁷⁷. The castle aimed to protect the emperor who lived in Kyoto at that time and to use accommodation when the general visited Kyoto. It has the main castle, surrounding great gardens and the imposing gate⁷⁸. The entire region of Nijo Castle was recognized UNESCO World Heritage in 1994⁷⁹. The exhibition of “Anselm Kiefer SOLARIS” was held in the main castle and courtyards such as historical places. It exhibited several of his large works after 2013, which were recent. It was held from March 31st to June 22nd in 2025, and the author visited on April 22nd.

There was no greeting panel from the organizer, which visitors often read at the beginning of an exhibition. Instead, Min Tanaka, a Japanese contemporary dancer and an actor, narrated for the entire exhibition⁸⁰⁸¹. Both Kiefer and Tanaka were born in the year of the end of World War II, 1945; therefore, they shared the contemporaneity between them. In terms of this contemporaneity, the appointment of Tanaka for narration is different from other appointments of actors and actresses.

The most unique point of this exhibition was the place. Since Nijo Castle itself is a World Heritage, no one can stick or nail labels on the wall directly, even hang something from the ceiling. Whereas the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, is also a World Heritage, it is possible to stick or nail something on the wall or hang something because it is registered as a museum. Though both sites are World Heritage, the how and why they were registered make differences of capability as an exhibition space. Hence, in Nijo Castle, all the textual data was provided by an online PDF to preserve the place. There was a two-dimensional code at the ticket box, and visitors read the code to access the PDF by their smartphone. The PDF includes only the basic information of artworks: a title, the production year, materials, the size, a photo, a photo credit, and collector(s) for some of the works. Only the title is in English, but the rest is in Japanese. There was no artist's name because it was Kiefer's solo exhibition.

As it is impossible to put something on the wall inside the castle, there was no explanatory statement accordingly, even in the PDF. In the contrast, the exhibition itself was very highly contextual. Visitors would be required to have some knowledge about Kiefer to some extent; Germany in post-war, Joseph Beuys influence, and so on. In particular, Kiefer is the artist of postwar; therefore, his artworks would be better to be described in deconstruct according to Barnett

(2010). When we compare an artwork and a title, there is no arbitrary connection which was used to be. Namely, a title does not work to indicate the subject in an artwork, so there might be a supplementary description for artworks as well from a different viewpoint.

Accordingly, it was skeptical whether general people (i.e., those who are not art university students, artists or art-related parties) could comprehend him or his works from this exhibition. It is fine if curators aimed to create just an experience to see Kiefer's works, but it seemed superficial exhibition contrasting his deep thoughts in creation without any explanation. This kind of high context exhibition may require objective explanations by the third person; otherwise, viewers would just confuse what artworks are. Of course, there is an option to make an exhibition with little textual information intentionally with making most of the power of artworks. Nevertheless, the option should be considered advisedly.

Since taking photo was prohibited in the exhibition, visitors could access the visual information by the website and the catalogue after they left the place. The catalogue is bilingual and provides both the scenes in the exhibition and the illustrations.

3-4. Kenjiro Okazaki Time Unfolding Here at Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo was established in 1995 in the purpose of collection, researching, preservation and exhibition of Japanese post-war artworks and other contemporary arts, with inheriting over 3,000 artworks and 58,000 publications from Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum⁸². It was the first public institution in Tokyo that specialized in contemporary art.

From April 29th to July 21st in 2025, the museum held a solo exhibition of Kenjiro Okazaki titled "Time Unfolding Here (in Japanese: Jikon-Jigo)." Okazaki was born in 1955 and has been working not only in painting and sculpture but also in architecture, cultural environmental planning, picture book, and robotics⁸³. In this exhibition, visitors could appreciate Okazaki's paintings, sculptures, and some of his picture books. Especially, the new works after 2021 were firstly exhibited at this time. The author visited the exhibition on July 20th.

There was no audio guide for this exhibition, but the curator in charge of this held gallery talks often instead. Also, Okazaki joined an artist talk by himself once with other contemporary artists and critics. The artist's talk was archived online. This project was successful because the

artist was still alive. In Kiefer's exhibition, the artist himself did not show up, and Tanaka delivered a narration instead. Both of the exhibitions were delivered by the alive artists, but the differences might be caused by nationality of artists, their mother tongue, the exhibition place and the distance from their atelier. The Okazaki's case was one of the good examples to involve alive artists in exhibitions. His nationality, the mother tongue, and place were fit in the exhibition: that was why he could join the exhibition actively.

Additionally, all the explanations in the exhibition are provided by Okazaki himself. The content was the introduction of his thought or idea for his artworks, thereby it should be said that it was the artists' intention. At the same time, his explanations filled the role of explanatory statements because Okazaki's works were abstract. Explanations were shown in both Japanese and English while they were originally written in Japanese. It is rare to be able to read raw comments by an artist in an exhibition.

Notably, while his works tend to be titled longer as the work was created recently, they do not work to make clear their subject because they are poetic⁸⁴. Since the artworks are abstract, the titles are seemingly not relevant to the artwork. On the other hand, those titles had a rhythm of words: repetition, sense of speech, and selection of language. To share this rhythm as it is, the titles of the artworks on a certain floor were not translated intentionally. Only on the work list distributed online could we see both the English and Japanese titles. In terms of the abstract paintings and poetic titles, his explanations were also working as a supplementary description which were rarely shown in an exhibition.

Nevertheless, even though the rhythm of titles and artworks sympathize with each other and the resonance might be shared somehow to viewers, it seems questionable to count on viewers to comprehend the connection. Even Okazaki provided the explanations by himself, they were subjective and abstract in some cases. Since Okazaki is alive, curators as the third person, could have discussed with him to provide objective explanatory statements. In contrast to the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, where its inductive guidance by curators is seemingly problematic, it would be necessary objective statement to guide viewers in a high-contextual exhibition with an alive artist. It is not the same as Kiefer's deconstructive description, but this might be another case of the necessity of an explanatory statement.

Hence, the label on the wall has a title in one language (Japanese or English), and the production year, materials, and the collector are in both Japanese and English. As the same as Kiefer's exhibition, there is no artist's name because it is obvious. The labels were sometimes apart from the artwork to emphasize the work in one wall surface⁸⁵.

The exhibition catalogue is available, but the content is limited to a certain period in his activity.

3-5. Collection Exhibition at THE RABBIT HALL

THE RABBIT HALL is located in the center of Okayama prefecture, opening in 2025⁸⁶. Yasuharu Ishikawa, the chairman of Ishikawa Foundation, led to establish this contemporary museum based on their Ishikawa's collections, which are mainly conceptual arts⁸⁷. The museum is named by Ryan Gander: it was named after the hall to another world that appeared in "Alice in Wonderland⁸⁸."

Interestingly, THE RABBIT HALL is directed four members called the director collective: Hiromi Kurosawa, a curator; Jun Aoki, an architect; Taro Nasu, a gallerist; and Ishikawa. These varied directors create a unique exhibition in THE RABBIT HALL. Ishikawa plans to expand this museum to 18 annexes in all over Okayama with his collection. Aoki corresponds to his plan with letting the building to be collapsed in 20 years. Accordingly, the museum is not a typical white cube but a concrete building as mentioned below. The current exhibition is entitled "Ishikawa Collection: Hyperreal Echoes," which will be held for the next three years. This exhibition is composed of 35 works by 20 artists out of over 400 collections by Ishikawa. The author visited there on August 9th.

The museum is a private institute by the Ishikawa Foundation; hence, their financial structure is different from other cases in the sections above. As Ishikawa drew a vision, the museum is not a white cube: it is a three-floor concrete structure, thereby it does not look like a typical museum rather a fancy building. The entrance is lit by a light, which is also an artwork by Philippe Parreno; additionally, visitors can see a number of balloons through the window as an artwork by Martin Creed. Moreover, there is no movable wall to separate the exhibition space. Thus, each artwork is coexisting in the same space. The absence of a movable wall prevents placing a caption or a label on the wall. Instead, a handout is distributed to introduce the artist and artwork⁸⁹. The handout contains a photo of an artwork, a title, an artist's name, the production year, an explanatory statement, and maps for

each floor. Thanks for the maps indicating each artwork by numbers, viewers can follow which information indicates which artworks while there is no number plate in the exhibition floor.

It is notable that guides personally offered interactive dialogue about artworks. Usually, monitors only surveillance the status of artworks and the movement of viewers; however, this museum trained the monitors as to be able to answer any question from viewers. Thanks to this system, viewers can ask anything flexibly. This communicative guidance in dialogue may be a good museum experience for visitors. It expands the interests of viewers. While this is a progressive approach to viewers, investment in monitors is definitely costly. This approach is possible because THE RABBIT HALL is a private institute which may have a richer budget than public institutions. Besides, the exhibition at this time will be held in coming three years; therefore, the investment of cost and the time is worth for them.

Since the museum enriches the guidance by monitors, there is no audio guide by a terminal. Neither is there a catalogue. On the other hand, the brochure which has photos could be a small catalogue instead. In addition, the museum often shares its exhibition through Instagram. Visitors can know the atmosphere there and what are exhibited⁹⁰.

3-6. Summary of Comparison among Five Case Studies

The author takes five cases, which are different in the place characteristics, the theme, the target viewers, methods to share information, and so on. Suppose Artizon Museum is the moderate sample of word expression with considering the relics' traits, National Museum of Western Arts, Tokyo, provided over-explanation; Kiefer's solo exhibition is too minimum; Okazaki's solo exhibition is adequate but too subjective and abstract; THE RABBIT HALL is adequate and progressive.

Whatever the methods, all exhibitions share titles at least. However, even artists' name sometimes are not included in information because the exhibition is solo exhibition. It seems a label is the most common method in museums especially. On the other hand, handouts or online PDF is useful in alternative spaces since there are restrictions to put a label on the wall. Audible methods are developed as well: as shown in the case of THE RABBIT HALL, the real-time communication can be a guide for an exhibition while it would take a lot of cost and time. Guide by monitors is

unique method for an institution which is private, and holding a long-term exhibition, in terms of investment.

While there are various methods in sharing information, the traits of place are strongly affected to determine the methods. In addition, the exhibition theme of course works as a determinant as well. Through these differences and observations, the author will discuss how the methods would be determined in the following chapter in detail.

Chapter 4. Discussion

The five case studies in the third chapter show how conditions of exhibitions influence on information itself and sharing the explanation of artworks. Through the case studies, it seems there are two major factors to determine the type of information and the method to share: one is the character of the exhibition place, and the other is the exhibition theme.

Whatever any method is, textual information formalizes the viewers' appreciation through observing the five case studies. As experiments in the Chapter 1 show, textual information is more inductive than visual information. Especially, this tendency would be enhanced when the exhibition theme is educational: curators tend to draw viewers' attention strongly in their provided word expressions. Also, too much text information makes viewers rely on them. Viewers take a more time to read texts than to appreciate artworks, and they are satisfied in reading. This text dependance should not happen in an exhibition because an exhibition is an opportunity to enjoy artworks themselves, not texts. Even though a certain textual information such as a title is essential, texts must be supplementary for artworks. In the contrast, high context artworks, particularly after the modern art, require explanations to comprehend their origins. It is optional by curators to attach explanations to those artworks in terms of the pure experience in artworks, but it is doubtful that little knowledge about artworks can produce a good experience for viewers. Therefore, the appropriate balance in the quality and the amount of word expressions is the key for supporting viewers appreciation.

4-1. Factors

In this section, let us see the two major factors and the two supplementary factors in detail.

A place is essential factor to determine the method. Such Nijo Castle or THE RABBIT HALL, if the place has a certain reason to be difficult to put labels on the wall, curators need to prepare handout or online PDF automatically to share the information by texts in order to preserve the place or to adapt the wall traits. Nijo Castle has exhibits outside as well, thereby curators must consider how to share information regarding the weather condition in such cases. This problem could be a controversial issue between alternative space and museum. Museum, especially a white

cube, is specialized to exhibit artworks and its information; accordingly, they are relatively easy to put something on the wall⁹¹. On the other hand, alternative space such as Nijo Castle has an original role as an architecture (i.e., historical heritage for Nijo Castle). To preserve its scarcity and the role, and to follow the restrictions of the place, curators should respect them when planning an exhibition.

Not only the roles or restrictions, but also how to make the most of the place is also important to curate an exhibition. Particularly, an alternative space has its own atmosphere and the history which a museum does not have. Historical solid feeling or the feeling of out of the traditional “institutions” produce the originality in an exhibition. Suppose there are a lot of text labels or panels, the atmosphere might be collapsed. Thus, other than labels could be candidates for alternative spaces to share explanations. Curators should be cautious to select one or more tools not to interfere with the experience of appreciation in a place. Here, curators are required to consider the “site-specificity” of an exhibition and how to utilize it in an exhibition.

The exhibition theme directly controls the content of the exhibition, the target of viewers, the atmosphere of the exhibition, or even the composition in the space. The theme is determined by curators basically; therefore, this has a great amount of freedom to be decided. Having said that, the exhibition theme needs to follow the place policy (i.e., the purpose of the museum) in order to ensure consistency in its activity with the policy and a function as media. The place policy varies such as educational, research-based, experience-based, and so on. Those policies may proceed the decision on the exhibition theme as to be social, historical, involving, etc. As the exhibition theme is determined by curators’ will, it should be handled by curators.

The interaction between the primary factors, the location and the exhibition theme, also emerged as a significant element in shaping curatorial word expressions. In several cases, the characteristics of the venue constrained or amplified the thematic intentions of the exhibition. A historically significant building, for example, tended to impose a more restrained linguistic approach even when the theme was contemporary or experimental. Conversely, in smaller or more flexible gallery spaces, the theme often dictated the wording and density of the explanatory text more strongly than spatial considerations. These interactions suggest that curatorial language cannot be understood through isolated variables; rather, it is produced through a negotiation between spatial, thematic, and institutional conditions.

These two determinants control the four variants below. In addition, the liveness of artists and the production period work as the supplementary factors with the two major factors. The liveness of artists is whether the exhibited artist is alive or not during the exhibition. If so, the artist can join talk session or write statements by him/herself. Viewers can hear or read the artists' intentions directly in an exhibition location. The production period affects an explanatory statement: if the artwork is created after the 20th century, it is suggested to consider the social background behind the artwork such as colonialism, economy, environment issues, according to Barnet (2010). It is the deconstruction in a description. The more recent artworks are produced, the more important the textual information is to share the reason why they were produced.

Based on these factors, variants will be determined by curators. The combination of variants produces the entire atmosphere of an exhibition.

4-2. The Method to Share the Textual Information

The two major factors firstly determine the method to share the textual information. In ordinal museums such as National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, or Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, they can accept to put labels on the wall with nails or stickies because they are specialized to do so. On the other hand, like Nijo Castle which is not specialized for the place of exhibition, it is primarily essential to preserve the place before exhibiting something. Thus, not only labels but relics themselves should be considered when curators make a plan how to place in the space. For instance, if there is enough space to exhibit relics and labels together like Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, labels should not be beside of artworks. Then, curators must consider the specificity of the location and the material of the wall as well (e.g., the concrete wall in THE RABBIT HALL.)

As we discussed in 2-6, there are several methods to share the textual information. It is usual to combine several methods to share textual information; for instance, putting labels, distributing handouts, providing rental audio guides, etc. Preparing several tools to share textual information, viewers can select them as needed. Each method affords a different density of information of the artwork; viewers choose appropriate tools according to their interests and needs. It makes curators possible to decrease their effort to adjust the provided information in the

exhibition. Also, various methods contribute to decrease discrepancy among people to reach out the information. In order to avoid the second issue above, multiple options in sharing may be necessary.

Despite the various options to share, it should take into consideration two points. First, the cost for the sharing is needed to take care. Obviously, it is not free to create labels or handouts for thousands of viewers. An organizer of an exhibition must pay the cost of paper and printing. Moreover, preparing audio guides or educating monitors would take more cost and time. Particularly, education for monitors might be difficult: it starts from selecting suitable people who have not certainly studied arts, educating them as to be capable to answer questions flexibly. It takes cost and time as well. Curators should consider the budget for this part, then they decide which method(s) is suitable for an exhibition. Second, the accessibility is also an issue. Distributing PDF online via smartphone has become common recently, but still some people such as elderly people do not get use to use it. Not only that, the Deaf cannot reach the information provided through audio guides. It is often that audio guide provides the unique information, thereby differential between the Deaf and those who are not in reachable information should be considerable.

Curators may decide the methods to share information according to the exhibition theme and the traits of the location. While there is an issue of cost, providing various methods as many as possible would be helpful for the viewers. The density of information, in 4-4, or the type of information could be segregated by the different methods.

4-3. Wording

Based on the target of the exhibition, curators must select an appropriate wording especially in explanatory statement. This selection includes a decision not to provide an explanatory statement in the exhibition as well. It depends on how curators would like to produce the atmosphere of the exhibition; they may select the wording (or the existence of the statement).

At this point, the usage of terminology and the level of adduction of art history should be considered. As in the case of National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, if the exhibition is for viewers who have low to middle class level knowledge about arts, terminology must be few and the adduction should not rely on the viewers. On the contrary, Anselm Kiefer SOLARIS, for instance, curator seemed to produce the entire space with high context to experience the artwork directly.

Therefore, there was no textual information in a space but provided them through viewers' smartphones. There is no correct answer for wording, but it would be better to concern the alignment with the policy or the mission of the exhibition. In addition, almost all of the viewers cannot understand too elaborate terminologies, considering the education curriculums. Typical viewers do not know the subtle difference in the description which can be distinguished those who are educated in higher education of arts. Even describing a brush stroke, there are plenty of variations of words. It is preferable to select elaborate wording in terms of accuracy, but it should refrain from using words which are difficult to convey because viewers cannot catch up with the explanations. Wording might be understandable with clear and appropriate terms with less difficult context if an exhibition would like to aim to welcome any people.

It is also necessary to adjust the volume of texts. Too many texts provoke a difficulty to read them all due to its length and its font size. It takes time to read them all; hence, eventually the long textual information causes congestion in a museum. Furthermore, it is tough for some people such as children to read a lot of texts even if the wording is understandable. They may feel boring with a lot of Kanji in the text. In this case, curators may utilize diagrams or figures to explain artworks visually (not to intervene appreciation of artworks, though.) They can contribute to reduce the volume of texts. There is no exhibition in the case studies which adopts diagrams or figures, but the author would like to suggest them as new methodologies. Of course, diagrams or figures should not interrupt artworks in the first place. Their sizes and the placement should be considered well by curators.

In addition, the inner composition in a label or a panel is also pivotal for museum experience. For instance, the font size is part of the consideration of the inner layout. If it is too small, viewers must come across to read them. People gather in front of a tiny label, and it would cause congestion again in an exhibition⁹². Otherwise, people will give up to read a label and not be able to reach the information even a title. To make an exhibition comfortable, curators (and designers) need to take the design of labels or panels into consideration as well.

4-4. Writer

There are two options who describe an artwork: an artist or a curator. As for this variance, the liveness of an artist is going to be an additional factor with two major determinants. In the first place, curator can write everything depending on the theme of the exhibition regardless of the liveness of an artist. As Okazaki's solo exhibition, in the contrast, artist can write all text instead of curators. Therefore, the liveness of artist is a supplementary factor to decide who write description in an exhibition.

When an artist writes description by him/herself, it will tend to be subjective. Okazaki's case is a good example to compare other exhibitions in how the explanatory statements were subjective. Here, the more subjective the statements are, the more abstract they tend to be. Since artists are not always sure the concept or the thought on their artworks, their verbalization is not suitable for target viewers in terms of wording. It is good opportunity to know the artists' intentions in an exhibition directly, but if the statement is too abstract, viewers might be confused. When curators adopt the raw statement from an artist, the suitability and the understandability should be taken care of.

Curators may write statements instead of artists. In this case, curators would write them based on primary sources. If an artist is alive but a curator decides to write by him/herself, a curator may take an interview to an artist as a source as well. An explanatory statement in this case may be objective because curators are the third person. Nevertheless, curators must be careful of for whom the objectiveness is in the statement. Curators are required to behave as cultural interpreter to tell the information to viewers comprehensively. Even though they create descriptions based on the primary sources, they tend to implicate curators' personal opinion or observation. Particularly, curators must concern about this point when the exhibition theme is educational or inductive for viewers because it would be easily inductive with curator's appreciation. The most important thing is to encourage viewers to appreciate artworks by themselves by supportive descriptions. If curators would like to express their thought or appreciation, they may publish their own papers or criticism outside of a museum or a place. Curators must keep in their minds that a museum is one of media.

Another option is a quotation from artists' left message. Suppose curators feel difficulty to summarize or compose the artists' intention, a direct quotation will be effective to attract viewers in an exhibition. The author did not take such exhibition in the case studies, but some put the prints of quotations on the wall symbolically.

4-5. Density of Writing

As we saw in 2-2, a museum usually put a label nearby an artwork to introduce its information. If a location cannot put a label like Nijo Castle, it can distribute handouts or online PDF instead. There are three layers of the density of information: the basic information such as a title, an artist's name, a size; a factual information which mentions fact (Barsel (2010) defined it is "informative" description); and an explanatory statement. Through a basic information to an explanatory statement, the density of writing is elaborate and complexed.

As basic information is fundamental, it should be provided whatever the method is; otherwise, viewers could not know what the title was for the artwork. In this regard, however, what to write in a label or a handout must be concerned. It is related to the matter of wording as well. For instance, a title must be provided to distinguish artworks, but the production year, materials, a size, or even the birth and death year of the artist might omit from the list of information. As many as curators add information, a label or a handout will be stuck up. What to be included is necessary to consider with the wording of information. In addition, if an exhibition is the solo of an artist, curators may skip the artist's name from the information list. Here, the exhibition theme is connected as a determinant for decision again.

A factual information is very optional for the artwork. As in National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, a factual information will be useful guidance for viewers (especially beginners for arts) if an exhibition theme is educational. It tells viewers what the objects are on the campus beyond the period and the culture. In particular, classic paintings have a certain composition or motives to imply some message; in such case, curator may produce a description to introduce them based on the fact which has been studied by a lot of researchers. One thing to be noted is that a description seems easy to write, but it requires the deep knowledge and observation towards an artwork. It should be accurate without omission. The structure of the description is important for viewers to comprehend artworks easily. Curators must be careful to choose their selection of words as a description is always true to be the fact.

An explanatory statement is the deepest information and high-level writing in these three. An explanatory statement will write about the background history of an artwork or a guide for

appreciation. Sometimes it also includes the supplementary description to explain the distortion between a title and a subject in an artwork. The amounts of words would be the maximum in these three variations due to its various and complex contents; therefore, curators must handle to write an explanatory statement to what extent. Moreover, as case studies indicated, an explanatory statement threatens the purity of artwork by its enormous textual information. Particularly, curators should pay attention when they put an explanatory statement by the side of an artwork; or, viewers may satisfy just to read those texts, and they glimpse at artworks then leave. As to make a space to appreciate artworks themselves, such a situation should be avoided.

While the author indicated the caution of an explanatory statement, it has important roles for viewers' appreciation. Especially in the artworks after modern art, an explanatory statement is necessary to supplement their information. The one reason is because, after the modern art (i.e., Duchamp's "Fountain" to be exact), *signifié* in an artwork and *signifiant* in a title are not connected within the idea of arbitrariness as it used to be. Not only Duchamp, but Magritte, Kosuth, or other many artists in the 20th century entitled their artworks out of the general arbitrariness. Who can imagine the reason for the title of "Fountain" for a urinary? In addition, appearing "untitled" increasingly also might be required an explanation for why. It would be easy if all the viewers know Greenberg's idea of the purity or the autonomy of artworks and Saussure's linguistics, but it had not happened. Even though it is difficult to write everything in detail in a label or a pane, curators may be conscious its necessity to share them with viewers.

Furthermore, deconstructionism in a description is one essential factor to consider an explanatory statement. This is the second supplementary determinant, the production period. After the 20th century, there have been a lot of art streams in the Europe and the United States of America, which were influenced by social changes such as economy, environment, colonialism, and so on. Therefore, not just describing an artwork itself it used to be, deconstruction in description may be required to comprehend the entire situation surrounded the artwork. In these cases, an explanatory statement is useful to explain how it occurs whereas how to tell the information to the viewers.

Therefore, the density of writing is required the proper use as to be suitable the exhibition. In particular, an explanatory statement is complicated for viewers. To protect visitors' agency in an exhibition, both over-explanation and too-minimal or poetic explanation should be prevented.

Curators need to consider how to deliver this information in what methods. It could be in a catalogue, via online, or free brochure. Whatever curators write, the balance of subjectiveness and objectiveness is essential. The freedom of appreciation and the purity of artworks should be guaranteed at any reason⁹³.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

This paper attempted to reveal how the word expressions for artworks should be delivered by curators. This kind of research has not been deepened yet; hence, the paper would take the first step to make a structure of word expressions. The paper has the significance in its analysis for interaction among multi-factors such as the location or the theme, not limited to classification of variation of methods or comparison of case studies. The comprehensive analysis is implicated in the theoretical framework for word expressions with artworks, which used to be empirical. In addition, it highlights the importance of accessibility of language in an exhibition.

Initially, the author indicated that textual information was effectively working in human brain more than visual images through several psychological experiments. According to the experiments, the author emphasized the importance to consider the impact of texts in an exhibition. In addition, in terms of museology, a museum is one of media: hence, texts have a strong influence on viewers to comprehend exhibits, a culture, and the message from the museum. Considering textual information is stronger than visual information, texts which curators produce could be the core message from a museum.

Accordingly, the author classified how words are related to artworks into five categories, and how they are shared in the second chapter. As we saw, there are long history between word and art: hence, there are various word relationship by artists, by curators, and by critics. The relationships have been developed chronologically. Among the relations, texts produced by curators, like titles and explanatory statements, are directly influenced on the viewers' appreciation since they are beneath artworks. Especially, the latest relation "supplementary description" is quite complex because its concept comes from linguistics by Saussure. The paper briefly introduced Saussure's *Cours de Linguistique Générale* and how artists after Duchamp broke its assumption by their artwork. This textual information is delivered through various methods like labels or audio sound.

Based on the history and variation of describing above, the five case studies exemplified how to share the textual information in exhibitions. Exhibitions are varied in what they exhibited: the Western arts in the 15th century to the contemporary art made in the recent years. Each study has different characteristics in the location, the type of building, target viewers, artists' liveness, and so

on. The author examined the pros and cons in each case and led two major factors and two supplementary factors to determine describing an artwork in an exhibition. Two major factors are the property of the location and the exhibition theme. The former is, for instance, whether the location is registered as World Heritage or is alternative space: the latter is educational theme or high-contextual theme. In addition to these two, two supplementary factors, the liveness of artist and the production year are working as determinants as well in the certain variances.

The variances are as follows: methods to share the information, wording, writers, and density of writing. Liveness of artist is for writes, and the production year is for density of writing as the supplementary factor here. According to the factors, curators select the methods or other variances as to be suitable for the exhibition. Here, the variances should not be chosen just one: as introduced in Chapter 3, any variance can be combined with multiple options. Multiple options make viewers possible to select the volume of information as they need, without curators' adjustment beforehand. Also, several options realize high accessibility to various viewers. However, curators must be careful of costs for providing information since some methods are costly.

Above all the case studies and discussions, here are the conclusions of this paper: (1) curators must avoid expressions which fix the viewers' appreciation of an artwork; (2) curators should select appropriate methods for the exhibition place and the theme to share textual information; (3) curators must choose the exact wording for the place, the theme, and purpose of the exhibition to help viewers' appreciation.

As for (1), an explanatory statement particularly tends to be inductive due to the curators' wording sometimes. It is often that viewers have a little knowledge about arts or the artwork. An explanatory statement must be supportive information in such case originally; however, if there are much inductive or personal opinion by curators, viewers would confuse and swallow all the information as the fact. The artwork would be appreciated as curators wrote; in other words, viewers might deprive of the freedom to enjoy artworks. On the other hand, the statement works effectively when artworks in an exhibition is too high-context. An explanatory statement can be written by artists as far as they are alive, but the statement tends to be subjective and abstract. In this case, curators as the third person may organize the thoughts of artists in a statement. After all,

an explanatory statement is not merely problematic, rather its wording is the key. Curators have to pay attention the contents of expressions, especially an explanatory statement.

In (2), as discussed, there are restrictions in an exhibited place in some cases. Especially, when the place is not a white cube, which is typical museum building style, the restrictions are imposed to preserve the place. Curators must follow the restrictions initially, then, they may choose several methods to share information by visionally or audibly. At this time, curators should adjust their methods according to the amount of information. Curators must take the target viewers or the expected knowledge level into their consideration when they determine methods. Each method can deliver different density of information respectively, thereby preparing multiple methods is effective to respond the demand of various level of information. Also, they must consider the cost and budget as well. It is impossible to prepare any kind of method inexhaustibly. While it should not be stingy with affording the preparation, the mission of an exhibition is initially to exhibit artworks safely. Regarding of its mission, curators should concern the budget balance among the factors of exhibitions.

(3) is considering the wording in expression for artwork, especially an explanatory statement by curators. In most of countries, there is no concrete definition to acquire “art language” in the elementary education. It is not always that viewers are educated in art field; thus, the wording should be flat and understandable for as many as people. Based on the educational situation, curators adjust the wording to match with the theme, the target, the atmosphere of the exhibition. Suppose an exhibition is for young visitors, the wording could be involving and understandable. In Japanese exhibition, adding phonetic guide on Kanji in guide brochure for children may be good idea to resolve the wording issue. The adjustment of wording is eventually relevant to the accessibility to the information fairly.

As there are several types of word expressions for artworks and methods to share, curators are facing how they can select the appropriate type and the methods for the exhibition. It would be easy to follow typical exhibitions, but it would be obligatory for curators to produce their own exhibitions according to their purpose of exhibition.

Nevertheless, this paper takes only five case studies which are mostly exhibited the Western art, paintings and sculptures. This is because there have been many exhibitions for the Western arts. Also, museums often hold exhibitions for paintings and sculptures due to its easiness of movability.

Suppose an exhibition is specialized in other regions or media (including installation, performance, sound or other intangible ones), the required methods in sharing information would be changed. A larger dataset of exhibitions could test whether the patterns identified here hold across different institutions. Besides, the author slightly mentioned in case studies that there is certainly relevance among text information, movement of viewers, lights, space shapes. The paper focuses on the space characteristics and the exhibition theme as determinants of methods, but they are interacted each other definitely. In addition, digitalization will change the paper's analysis drastically. Digital arts, using AR/VR or immersive arts for instances, require totally different method to input the information. In digital arts, viewers can control how they see or experience the artwork by themselves, thereby it would be difficult to share information in a fixed way. Digital exhibitions could be studied more systematically, especially how layered information changes viewer experience. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is also another factor from digitalization. AI can generate texts automatically based on their quick but deep research, and translate them into multiple languages rapidly. It would be helpful to reduce the research time for curators, but the author is skeptical that textual information is trustworthy to exhibit in a museum. As such, this paper remains several discussions especially contemporary situation. Further research and analysis are expected in the future.

Since the current artworks, contemporary arts, have become complicated and developed rapidly, curators are required to be more sensitive in supportive text message to appreciate them as a part of media. As artistic practices continue to evolve with expanding across media, disciplines, and modes of engagement, the responsibility of curators is not simply to interpret their current works, but to accompany them with word expressions that remains attentive, flexible, and ethically grounded. Curatorial word expressions must adapt alongside the artworks themselves, responding to new forms of expression without reducing their complexity or foreclosing the viewer's interpretive freedom. This requires an ongoing sensitivity to context, an awareness of how words frame experience, and a willingness to revise established habits of explanation. In this sense, the task of curators is never complete: it is a continuous process of negotiating how the best to speak with and through art are as it transforms. The future of curatorial practice will depend not on finding definitive linguistic solutions, but on cultivating the capacity to listen, adjust, and articulate with care as artistic expression continues to shift.

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- ¹ International Council of Museums, *Museum Definition*, Accessed: 08 12 2025, <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>
- ² Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports Science and Technology, “Chugakkou Gakushu Shidou Youryou (Heisei 29 Nen Kokuji) Kaisetsu Bijutsu Hen”, 2017.
- ³ Andrew Stibbs, “Language in Art and Art in Language”, Claire Penketh, *Journal of Art & Design Education*, Volume 17, Issue 2, Wiltshire, The International Journal of Art and Design Education, p. 201.
- ⁴ *Id.*, p. 202.
- ⁵ *Id.*, p. 205.
- ⁶ In this background, museum turned to be open to public in the changes of modernism to post-modernism. In modernism, museum was the place of authoritarianism. However, when it came to post-modernism, museums became to enlighten people by their collection. This change also occurs understandability of texts in museums.
- ⁷ J. Elbert V. Temme, “Amount and Kind of Information in Museums: Its Effects on Visitors Satisfaction and Appreciation of Art”, *Visual Arts Research*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Champaign, University of Illinois Press, 1992, p. 35.
- ⁸ Magdalena Szubielska, Kamil Imbir, and Anna Szymanska, “The Influence of the Physical Context and Knowledge of Artworks on the Aesthetic Experience of Interactive Installations”, *Current Psychology*, New Jersey, Springer, 2001, p. 3710.
- ⁹ *Id.*, p. 3703.
- ¹⁰ Temme, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
- ¹¹ Steven M. Specht, “Artists’ Statement Can Influence Perceptions of Artwork”, *Empirical Studies of The Arts*, 28(2), Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications, 2010, p. 201.
- ¹² *Id.*, p. 201.
- ¹³ *Id.*, p. 197-198.
- ¹⁴ Specht mentioned that the tendency he found is not applied to all cases: in some case artist statements do not work effective to improve aesthetic appreciation. (*Id.*, p. 202)
- ¹⁵ Joo Yeon Park, JiHye Park, and Ji Hyon Park, “What Type of Title Would You Put on Your Paintings?: The Impact on the Price of Artwork According Its Title”, *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, Vol.40(1), Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publishing, 2022, p. 57.
- ¹⁶ *Id.*, p. 60.
- ¹⁷ *Idid.*
- ¹⁸ *Id.*, p. 74.
- ¹⁹ It is not always that a title works effectible in aesthetic experience for viewers. Parks figured out that a descriptive title had negative title in the case of non-famous artists, whereas absence of a title had positive effect.
- ²⁰ J. R. Stroop, “Studies of Interference in Serial Verbal Reactions”, *Classics in the History of Psychology*, Accessed: 10 22 2025, <https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Stroop/?c=012>
- ²¹ Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Picture Titles: How and Why Western Paintings Acquired Their Names*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2015, p. 258. (Translated by Kyoko Tanaka, *Kaiga to Taitoru Sono Chikakute Toi Kankei*, Tokyo, Misuzu Shobo, 2022)

²² *Hakubutsukan No Rekishi/Riron/Jissen 2 – Hakubutsukan Wo Ugokasu*, Nobutaka Imamura, Kyoto, Kyoto Zokei University of Art and Design and Tohoku University of Arts and Design Publishment Geijutsu Gakusha, 2017, Kindle, Chapter 4, Section 1, 2, Hakubutsukan To Iu Media.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ This institutional idea is developed based on the concept of “Art World” by George T. Dickie or Arthur C. Danto. (*Id.*, Kindle)

²⁵ Yoshiaki Nishino, *21 Seiki Hakubutsukan – Hakubutsukan Shigen Rikkoku He Chihei Wo Hiraku*, Tokyo, University of Tokyo Press, 2000, qtd., *Id.*, Chapter 4, Section 1, 2, Hakubutsukan To Iu Media.

²⁶ Odilon Redon, “Suggestive Art, 1909”, Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art*, Oakland, University of California Press, 1968, p. 116.

²⁷ Odilon Redon, “Introduction to a Catalogue”, Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art*, Oakland, University of California Press, 1968, p. 119-120.

²⁸ Robert Smithson, “Cultural Confinement”, Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, *Art in Theory 1900 – 2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Hoboken, Wiley-Blackwell, 2002, p. 946.

²⁹ *Id.*, p. 947.

³⁰ Joseph Kosuth, “Untitled Statement”, Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists’ Writings*, Volume 35, Oakland, University of California Press, 1995, p. 841.

³¹ Joseph Kosuth, “Art After Philosophy”, Ellen H. Johnson, *American Artists on Art From 1940 To 1980*, Milton Park, Routledge, 1990, p. 134.

³² On the other hand, it is not always that artists can successfully verbalize what they think of their artworks. Particularly in recent days, the interactive communication between artists and curators are necessary to deepen or mine artists’ thoughts into language.

³³ Yeazel, *op. cit.*, p. 8

³⁴ Shinichi Takeda, “*The Brazen Serpent and the Crucifix in the Bible moralisée (Oxford-Paris-London Manuscript – The Selective Iconoclasm and the Chirstian Image –*”, Nagoya University Humanities Forum, 2018, p. 234.

³⁵ Yeazel, *op. cit.*, p. 8

³⁶ *Id.*, p. 21.

³⁷ Titles given by mediators controlled which the subject was in artworks; for instance, “Le Bourgeois Au Salon” or “Devant Le Table de M. Manet.” by Honoré-Victorin Daumier according to Yeazel (2015). (*Id.*, p. 112-113).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Id.*, p. 53.

⁴⁰ *Id.*, p. 150.

⁴¹ Paul Victor Jules Signac or Andy Warhol, for instance, left entitling on other persons according to Yeazel (2015).

⁴² *Id.*, p. 39.

⁴³ *Id.*, p. 76.

⁴⁴ *Id.*, p. 123.

⁴⁵ It is not the case of “untitled,” but just giving a number or random wording like Jackson Pollock could be regarded similar type of entitling.

⁴⁶ *Id.*, p. 271.

⁴⁷ *Id.*, p. 227.

⁴⁸ *Id.*, p. 237.

⁴⁹ Barnett expresses in her book that describable and historical is informative, and curators' appreciation is convincing. Additionally, the former is so-called description or "ekphrasis" in the old days. (Barnet, p. 109)

⁵⁰ It is controversial that, artworks like "One and Three Chairs" by Kosuth which includes dictionary definition of chair, are regarded as explained descriptively by the definition in the artwork. Particularly in conceptual art, this discussion should be considered more deeply.

⁵¹ In this viewpoint, Roy Lichtenstein was dismissive of an explanatory statement because he could not believe in its accuracy. (Barnet, p. 28)

⁵² Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, London, Pearson, 2010, p. 29. (Translated by Junichi Takeuchi et al., *Bijutsu Wo Kaku*, Tokyo, Tokyo Bijutsu, 2014)

⁵³ Michel Foucault, "What is an Author", Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, New York, Penguin Random House LLC, 1984, p.101. Foucault indicated that "The coming into being of the notion of 'author' constitutes the privileged moment of *individualization* in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and sciences. Even today, when we reconstruct the history of a concept, literary genre, or school of philosophy, such categories seem relatively weak, secondary and superimposed scansions in comparison with the solid and fundamental unit of the author and the work."

⁵⁴ Barnett, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁵⁵ To be noted, it should be considered whether the length of the explanatory statement is appropriate for reading whereas curators want to include information as much as possible.

⁵⁶ Jonathan Jones, "What is the point of art criticism?", *The Guardian*, 2009, Accessed: 18 11 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonath19anjonesblog/2009/apr/24/art-criticism>

⁵⁷ On the other hand, artists get oral criticism directly in their atelier or exhibition gallery by peers or teachers. This is another type of criticism which this paper does not look at.

⁵⁸ This is not the actual utterance: it includes the sound image in our brain. These sounds are expressed with International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and / (e.g., /p/.)

⁵⁹ Ken Machida, *Kotoba No Nazotoki - Saussure Nyumon*, Tokyo, Kobunsha Shinsho, 2003, p. 107.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* There is antilogy between the first and the second traits of arbitrariness. While the sociality requires to langue to be stable as to keep sharing the same word in the same meaning (immutability), arbitrariness allows the changes in linkages between *signifié* and *signifiant* (mutability).

⁶¹ The name of "conceptual art" was firstly baptizing by Henry Flynt in 1961, then generalized in a paper by Sol LeWitt in 1967. Conceptual art at that time was regarded as the rebound to Minimalism or Formalism. (*Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, p. 804).

⁶² Kosuth, *op. cit.*, p. 843.

⁶³ Kristine Stiles, "Language and Concepts", Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writing*, Volume 35, Oakland, University of California Press, 1995, p. 804.

⁶⁴ After conceptual art, pop arts or graphic posters tended to use word expressions in their artworks themselves. For instance, Tadanori Yokoo or Roy Lichtenstein is a good example for word user in artworks. Interestingly, their origins are graphic designing: here might be a reason why they adopt using words.

⁶⁵ Yeazel, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

⁶⁶ Barnett, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁶⁷ *Id.*, p. 211.

⁶⁸ It is another option that digital information may be distributed for a charge, while there still remains a discussion that how much artworks rely on textual information.

⁶⁹ It is impossible to take charge of everything by guides, so guide assistant is usually used jointly with labels or handouts to share titles or other information. See the next chapter as a case study.

⁷⁰ The paper will examine special exhibition in other case studies so these two are not discussed in this section.

⁷¹ Artizon Museum published their collection catalogue in 2020. It does not include all pieces in the exhibition at this time but it might be a good reference.

⁷² Accessed: 04 11 2025, <https://www.nmwa.go.jp/jp/about/history.html>

⁷³ The exhibition itself went the round to the Kyoto City KYOCERA Museum of Art after, but the scale was comparatively down due to the exhibition space. Especially, large pieces did not come to Kyoto.

⁷⁴ The original title in Japanese is “西洋美術、どこから見るか?”

⁷⁵ In Kyoto City KYOCERA Museum of Art, artwork shrink to 60 and they were relatively small.

⁷⁶ This brochure is also available on website.

⁷⁷ Accessed: 05 11 2025, <https://nijo-jocastle.city.kyoto.lg.jp/introduction/highlights/overview/>

⁷⁸ It is quite famous that Yoshinobu Ieyasu, the 15th general, stated the restoration of imperial rule at Nijo Castle in 1867.

⁷⁹ Nijo Jo, “*Nijo-jo No Rekishi/Midokoro – Gaiyou*”, Accessed: 05 11 2025, <https://nijo-jocastle.city.kyoto.lg.jp/introduction/highlights/overview/>

⁸⁰ Kifer is still alive but he does not narrate like Okazaki in the next section.

⁸¹ Tanaka performed at Nijo Castle on the first day to commemorate this exhibition.

⁸² Accessed: 05 11 2025, <https://www.mot-art-museum.jp/aboutus/>

⁸³ Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, *Press Release Okazaki Kenjiro Jikon Jigo Time Unfolding Here*, 2025, p. 1.

⁸⁴ For instance, “同じものを作るときには、ナイフを使うことも、やすりを使うこともゆるされてなくてね、例えば細枝だって手で折らなくちゃならないならないし、編むときは泥と水の裏打ちを欠かすわけにはいかない。/When you’ re making the same thing, they don’t let you use knives or files, and even a thin branch you have to break with your hands. And when you’re knitting, you’re not allowed to do it without lining the back with mud and water”.

⁸⁵ In case of sculptures, labels were attached on the near wall as it can be distinguished which is which.

⁸⁶ Accessed: 06 11 2025, <https://bijutsutecho.com/magazine/news/report/30541>

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ “Another world” indicates that the museum is the third place comparing to the ordinary museums.

⁸⁹ Besides, the wall and the floor are made of concrete so that it would be difficult to put something there with nails.

⁹⁰ Accessed: 06 11 2025, https://www.instagram.com/therabbithole_okayama/

⁹¹ Some museum presumes to change their walls in certain periods; therefore, it does not matter to open a hole or stick something on the wall.

⁹² In Aichi 2022, Mami Kataoka, the artistic director, decided to make fonts bigger than ever. This decision worked effectively and evaluated quite well.

⁹³ Curators can dig the density of information in any methods as mentioned above; however, recent artworks initially seem to be too subject to textual information. The impact or the message from the artwork itself is getting weaker without the deconstructive comprehension. This would be another issue of art world.

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