

## Case Study / Practice Report

# Exhibitions Outside the Gallery Space in China in the Twenty-first Century

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## Abstract

Traditional exhibition space has widely been described as a "white cube" as it is usually built in museums and art galleries and uses white boxes or white backgrounds to set off exhibits. Placing exhibits in white square boxes can emphasize the artworks' value, but widen the distance between visitors and exhibits. Artists, designers, and curators have paid efforts to explore exhibitions in non-gallery exhibition spaces outside the white cube all over the world throughout history. This paper will focus on the exhibitions in non-gallery exhibition spaces practiced in China in the twenty-first century. Through field visits and case studies, this paper displays non-gallery exhibitions in three types of space involving the tourist space, the living space, and the shopping space. By reflecting on the interaction among exhibits, the space, and the public, three characteristics of exhibitions in non-gallery exhibition space are summarized, including exhibits re-created for the space, integration of the exhibition into the space, and integration of exhibits, the space, and the public. Understanding exhibitions in non-gallery space in modern China is expected to extend the traditional "white cube" exhibition mode and encourage explorations of exhibition modes in different types of space in the Chinese context.

## Keywords

Exhibition space;  
Non-gallery exhibition space;  
Exhibition in China;  
Interaction within the exhibition

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## 1. Introduction

As a carrier of information such as art, culture, and history, the exhibition space carries out exhibition activities and achieves the purpose of the exhibition through different exhibition modes in the established space (Chang, 2015). The exhibition space has also shown innovative changes in different historical backgrounds and national cultures (Green, 2018). The exhibition activities, therefore, have been changing in their modes with the change of the exhibition changes. This section focuses on the changes in both the exhibition space and the exhibition activity outside and within the Chinese context. Section 1.1 combs the history of the formation of the exhibition space, provides an overview of the white cube exhibition mode, and critically discusses the white cube exhibition space. Section 1.2 sorts out the origin of exhibitions outside the white cube and reviews the related practices in non-gallery exhibition spaces outside China. Section 1.3 focuses on the Chinese context, describes the history of and reviews the relevant research on non-gallery exhibition space in China in the twenty-first century. This section is summarized by describing this article's research aims and objectives.

### 1.1 Exhibition space and the white cube: a conceptual point of departure

As early as the 17th century, the royal power of Europe used the "cabinet of treasures" to collect treasures as the original symbol of exhibition space (Smith, 2012, p. 28). In 1763, the Galerie Voter Gallery in Germany first hung paintings on the wall in a centrally symmetrical and overall balanced way, indicating the beginning of the modernization of the exhibition space (Schubert, 2000). The practice of cutting paintings freely during the Baroque period to fill the gaps in the walls, although the approach of using irrelevant paintings against the walls is completely different from the contemporary understanding of the aesthetic paradigm of the exhibition space layout and the relationship between art and space, formulated the original idea of using the white background as the exhibition space. This mode of exhibition, which highlights the exhibits or artworks themselves with pure exhibition space, is often described as a white cube as initially proposed by O'Doherty (1976, cited in Schubert, 2000, p. 5). The proposed white cube model indicates that the exhibition has moved from random placement to a regular and aggregated pattern (Green, 2018). In 1929, the internal exhibition of New York's Museum of Modern Art (MOMA Museum) was widely recognized as the origin of this model even before the term was proposed, and since it was proposed in 1976, curators and designers have adopted the exhibition space dominated by white cube as an institutionalized paradigm (Barker, 1999).

The institutionalization of exhibitions has been widely applied in museums and galleries, especially in those that mainly display artworks (Schubert, 2000). The white cube even became a synonym for the gallery exhibition. As a universal exhibition mode, the white cube represents the authority of museums and other exhibition spaces (Barker, 1999). However, the white cube exhibition mode is essentially a simplified treatment of the exhibition environment, providing the exhibits with a pure white background in a four-sided space for simple suspension and placement (O'Doherty, 1999). The authority of the white cube model proves the artistic value of the exhibits, but it also destroys the uniqueness of different exhibits (Schubert, 2000). This prompted artists to question and rebel against this model. The focus of curators and exhibition designers has shifted from observation, experience, and examination of the physical space into analysis and critique of the art system behind the space, which led to further evolution of the exhibition space (Chang, 2015).

## 1.2 Non-gallery exhibition spaces outside the white cube: global developments

Building on the conceptual discussion of the white cube, this section first provides an international overview of exhibitions outside the gallery space, in order to outline a global framework for understanding non-gallery practices.

There have always been artists or curators trying to refuse to exhibit in the white cube worldwide. Since 1855, the French painter Gustave Courbet, a representative of realist art, refused to display his paintings in enclosed spaces similar to white boxes (Schubert, 2000). By 1910, sculptor Medardo Rosso preferred to show his artwork in natural light to convey the concept, which was not possible with the closed walls and artificial lighting in the mainstream white cube space in the late eighteenth century. Curator Seth Siegelaub has always emphasized the rights of artists in exhibitions and his opposition to institutionalized exhibitions (Stallabrass, 2004). This kind of anti-institutionalized exhibition behavior seems to be able to be observed in Duchamp's exhibition in advance, even before the white cube exhibition standard was proposed. Duchamp's most famous design, the Fountain, was a urinal designed in 1917 for the Association of Independent Artists. It not only shows that artists can give imagination and creation to any work but also shows that artists must have such rights in all spaces and places. His other work, The Box in a Valise, consists of twenty-four suitcases filled with miniature works created between 1935 and 1941, which looks like a portable gallery and breaks the white cube space display method (Altshuler, 1994).

In the 1960s and 1970s, artists made practical attempts to display their artworks outside the white cube (Smith, 2012), such as in the restaurant where diners are spectators. Seth Siegelaub's most famous exhibition, the Xerox Book, which takes the book as an exhibition space and puts aside the medium of the alternative modes of anti-traditional exhibition venues for contemporary art exist as avant-garde activities in anti-mainstream spaces (Smith, 2012). Altshuler (1994) reflected on two exhibition trends in response to the exhibitions in the 1960s and 1970s, known as the museum's self-reflection movement and escape from the museum. These practices were defined as performance art or avant-garde activities, which had an impact on the mainstream white cube in a short period.

Non-gallery exhibition space appeared after many attempts at exhibitions outside the white cube. In 2000, the Selfridge Mall in the UK officially launched its art exhibition program, led by Harry Gordon Selfridge, the mall founder who realized that art exhibitions can attract customers. This is the first time that the shopping mall is innovatively practiced as an exhibition space (Woodhead, 2013). However, this initiative has not been widely discussed among artists and curators. It seems that this is only a commercial trick (Woodhead, 2013). In 2015, Gladstone proposed the development of tourist attractions as exhibition spaces, questioning the traditional exhibition space system that restricts contemporary art (Chang, 2015). For example, the Thailand Biennale Beyond Wonderland in 2018 caters to the outdoor art display after the Echikotsu Art Triennale in 2000 on Krabi Island, a tourist attraction (Jiang, 2018). Curator Jiang Jiehong hopes that the local practice of contemporary art can also be further promoted through enabling the participating artists to engage with local communities, develop works for specific venues, and contribute to the sustainable development of the region.

### 1.3 From global to local: non-gallery exhibition spaces in the Chinese context

Turning from the international scene to the Chinese context, this section traces how non-gallery exhibition spaces have emerged and developed in China since the late twentieth century, in dialogue with but also partly diverging from the global trajectory sketched above.

Integrated in its own historical and cultural context, China's non-gallery space was first formed during the 85 Art Movement, which contributed to the "apartment art" later (Gao, 2011, p. 323). From the Cultural Revolution to the 85 Art Movement, some fringe artists did not have the opportunity to display their works in traditional exhibition spaces (Gladstone, 2015). They chose to create art in the apartment as an alternative exhibition space. The private living space, the apartment, became the most avant-garde art salon in China at that time. Under certain historical and political contexts, Chinese exhibition in the apartment is an unavoidable or even forced form of artistic communication outside the white cube system (Gao, 2011). For the subjective aspect, this kind of exhibition out of the white box exhibition space does not form a new model. For instance, Datong's artist Zhang held small exhibitions in private spaces (Gladstone, 2015). These exhibitions are usually temporary, but they express a new artistic practice and concept, challenging the traditional way of art exhibition and the aesthetic habits of the audience (Chun & Dazhang, 2016).

In the 21st century, the compatibility of new exhibits with traditional exhibition forms has declined (Chun & Dazhang, 2016), and curators have begun to reflect on traditional art exhibition methods, resulting in projects such as the yellow box. Therefore, the essence of the yellow box considers both the space and the construction mechanism. It breaks the institutionalized public display mode and connects exhibition space with tourism and living space (Gladstone & Howarth-Gladstone, 2017). Over time, non-gallery exhibitions have gradually developed into a separate art field, attracting more and more artists, curators, and audiences. Since then, the form and number of non-art museum exhibitions in China have been increasing (Wu, 2015), including exhibitions held in public places, industrial sites, residential buildings, and so forth. These exhibitions usually have a strong scene feeling and interactivity. Artists can express their creative ideas and practical methods more freely, and the audience can also participate more directly in the works of art.

### 1.4 Research Aim

This article introduces the concept of non-gallery exhibition spaces and explores the historical factors influencing the development of exhibition practices, offering readers a detailed understanding of exhibitions outside the white cube. As discussed in the historical review of exhibition spaces, with the establishment of the modernist art museum system, the white cube gradually evolved from an exhibition display technique into a widely accepted institutionalized paradigm. It not only signifies a professional exhibition environment but also symbolizes the authority of art museums and galleries. Particularly in the Chinese context, most contemporary art institutions that have rapidly emerged since the 1990s have adopted the white cube-style space as a symbol of "internationalization" and "standardization." This has led to a significant overlap between the "white cube" and the "mainstream exhibition system" at the practical level. Non-gallery exhibitions in modern China have become widely practiced due to various political and cultural factors. Therefore, positioning the white cube as the theoretical starting point for examining "non-gallery spaces" provides a clear comparative framework for organizing diverse cases in terms of methodology. By carefully observing these non-gallery exhibition practices, this article aims to better understand their characteristics and hopes to inspire further exploration of exhibitions beyond the white cube.

## 2. Research Method

This article employs a qualitative research strategy to explore the nature and characteristics of non-gallery exhibitions. To gain a deeper understanding, case studies were conducted through both online and field visits to non-gallery exhibitions in China. The selected cases were chosen based on purposive sampling criteria, aiming to represent the diversity of exhibition spaces and practices. Four exhibitions were examined through online methods, including the exhibition's official websites, curators' statements, and articles in newspapers and journals. These exhibitions were selected for their influence, accessibility of data, and their representation of non-gallery spaces in contemporary China.

From 2017 to 2019 and again in 2023, four exhibitions located in Nanjing and Shanghai were visited, experienced, and discussed in person. During the period from 2020 to 2022, due to COVID-19 restrictions, physical visits were not feasible, and online data collection became necessary. In this phase, official exhibition websites, curatorial statements, and secondary sources (such as media reports and academic articles) were used to replace in-person fieldwork. These online resources provided valuable insights into the curatorial intent and general exhibition characteristics.

### 2.1 Fieldwork and Data Collection

For the physical visits, the research team employed a combination of participatory observation and semi-structured

interviews with curators, artists, and visitors. The interviews aimed to capture the exhibition's conceptual framework and audience engagement. Field notes and photographs were taken during the visits to document spatial arrangements, exhibition features, and visitor interactions. These materials, along with the interview transcripts, were analyzed using content analysis and coding to identify themes and patterns within the data.

Due to the shift from field visits to online data collection, the research acknowledges potential limitations in capturing the physical experience of the exhibitions. To mitigate this, the study triangulated online data with secondary sources, such as previous academic studies on the exhibitions, and supplemented the analysis with insights from remote interviews conducted with curators and artists. This adjustment in the methodology is noted, and the study suggests that while online data may not fully replicate the on-site experience, it still provides valuable insights into the conceptual and curatorial dimensions of the exhibitions.

### 3. Findings: Non-gallery spaces in China in the twenty-first century

This section categorizes non-gallery exhibitions in China according to the type of space in which they occur. Chinese non-gallery exhibitions are observed in three spaces in general, including the tourism space, the living space, and the shopping space. The characteristics and unique attributes of each type of space as an exhibition venue are then discussed.

#### 3.1 Tourism spaces as exhibition spaces

The transformation of public places such as tourist attractions into exhibition spaces protects the traditional cultural architectural heritage, promotes the development of local tourism (Chang, 2015), and provides a new experience for the audience. In 2005, a furniture exhibition was held in the Channing Hall of the Summer Palace in Beijing. The exhibition displays furniture collected from the Ming and Qing Dynasties; objects that co-exist with the venue in history. In the same year, the old photos of the Summer Palace were exhibited in the front yard of Qinghua Xuan in the Summer Palace. The selected exhibits seem to exist within the context built up by the selected tourist attractions as exhibition spaces from historical and cultural perspectives. The galleries represented by white cubes are isolated from the surrounding environment through a white background and are not associated with the site environment (Green, 2018), while exhibitions within tourist attractions are more closely related to the environment. For example, the Yellow Box exhibition project was held on the moat of Qingpu's ancient town, Xiaoximen, Shanghai, in 2006. The exhibition aims to reproduce the architectural aesthetics of Jiangnan's ancient town (Chang, 2015) by displaying contemporary art in a traditional Chinese space. In this project, the windows are re-designed as art installations, the wooden stairs are artistically painted colorful, and even the most inconspicuous trash cans are displayed as exhibits (Figure 1). The Yellow Box project advocates contemporary art not to rely on gallery and white cube space, but to explore the possibility of combining local and traditional architecture with the contemporary exhibition.



Figure 1. Qingpu - Yellow Box exhibition project: Garbage cans as exhibits. Source: Photo by one of the authors, 2018

The exhibition in the tourism space also enables an immersive experience supported by emerging technology. The 2022 Sandbox Immersion Art Season was held in Anaya, a coastal tourist resort founded in 2013 in Qinhuangdao, Hebei Province. The exhibition takes visitors to Anaya as exhibition audiences. The exhibits that apply emerging technologies are scattered along the coastline, formulating multiple exhibition areas within the tourism space. Different exhibition areas are interspersed with installations that fit into the tourist attraction sites, especially because they provide a unique underwater VR experience that conforms to the seaside vacation.

The regional characteristics of tourism spaces enrich the cultural context and meanings of the exhibition. The Nanjing Yunzhang Office has been renovated and opened to the public as a historical site in 2022, and its special location is adjacent to the Wanxiang Tiandi shopping mall and block. In early 2023, the exhibition "MEGA SPACE MOLLY" was held, which runs through the attraction and surrounding commercial spaces (Figure 2). The exhibition area covers historic buildings and commercial spaces. It is in the form of a Bubble Mart blind box to commemorate the last ten years of Warner's animated images. The commercial display means to express the historical display content, which matches the specific location of the exhibition.



Figure 2. "MEGA SPACE MOLLY" exhibition. Source: Photo by one of the authors, 2023

### 3.2 Living spaces as exhibition spaces

The tourism spaces described in 3.1 take public spaces as exhibition spaces as the white cube exhibitions do, while the living space is more private, and the exhibition is hidden to some extent. As described in 1.3, exhibitions in apartments were practiced in the Chinese context in the 1970s under a specific political context. Whereas the original intention of the exhibition of apartment art at that time was more concerned with the political circumstances, the exhibition in the living space in the twenty-first century in China is intended to be an exploration of the exhibition forms. The Xunyidu Gallery in Building 3, the Clement Apartment, Shanghai (Figure 3) is a typical example of exhibitions in living spaces. Although it is named a "gallery", it is different from the traditional white cube exhibition space. Visitors need to look through the narrow aisle and follow the door number to reach the exhibition. There is no high-profile sign at the entrance. Only a note under the door number saying "to watch the exhibition, please ring the doorbell" indicates it as an exhibition space (Figure 4). The experience of entering this space is like visiting a friend.



Figure 3. Building 3 of Clements Apartment. Source: Photo by one of the authors, 2017



Figure 4. Exterior house number and interior exhibits of Xun Yi Du Gallery. Source: Photo by one of the authors, 2017

The living spaces in China are often reconstructed before being used as exhibition spaces in the twenty-first century. In 2011, the Prada Foundation rented Rongzhai, the former residence of Zongjing Rong, in Shanghai. After reconstruction, it abandoned the living function, retained the internal structure and living furnishings, and created a public exhibition space to enhance the brand influence. One of the exhibitions this space held is Liuye solo exhibition. The exhibition displays Liuye's painting within Rongzhai's living environment (Figure 5). Rongzhai is currently a spectacular school that opens art to the Chinese public, not just the exhibition audience. This localized approach has brought the Chinese community closer together and helped the brand target new customers.



Figure 5. The Liuye's painting displayed on the fireplace wall in Rongzhai. Source: Photo by one of the authors, 2017

The living spaces as exhibition spaces eliminate the audience's awe and distance to the artwork and exhibition and realize the popularization of art. Its privacy and concealment help some works stand out, at the same time filtering out the blind conformity of the audience, to obtain the target group that can resonate with the exhibition.

### 3.3 Shopping spaces as exhibition spaces

Most shopping malls in China are beginning to exhibit in their own commercial spaces, which combines commercial and cultural consumption (Cartier, 2019). The introduction of art exhibitions helps increase the consumption flow and prolong the time that customers stay in shopping malls. The more time customers spend in the field of consumption, the more goods they are possible to buy (Henderson-Smith, 2003). The integration of art space enriches the commercial space, increases its artistic and fashionable atmosphere, and enhances its interaction with the public. The planning of exhibits in the K11 shopping mall in Shanghai combines the exhibits with the shopping routes (Figure 6). With art exhibitions set in the shopping mall, the commercial space is no longer just a material-based trading venue (Alter, 2003). The exhibition in the shopping center is a personalized scheme design combining the special layout of different commercial spaces considering the fluidity of the commercial circle.

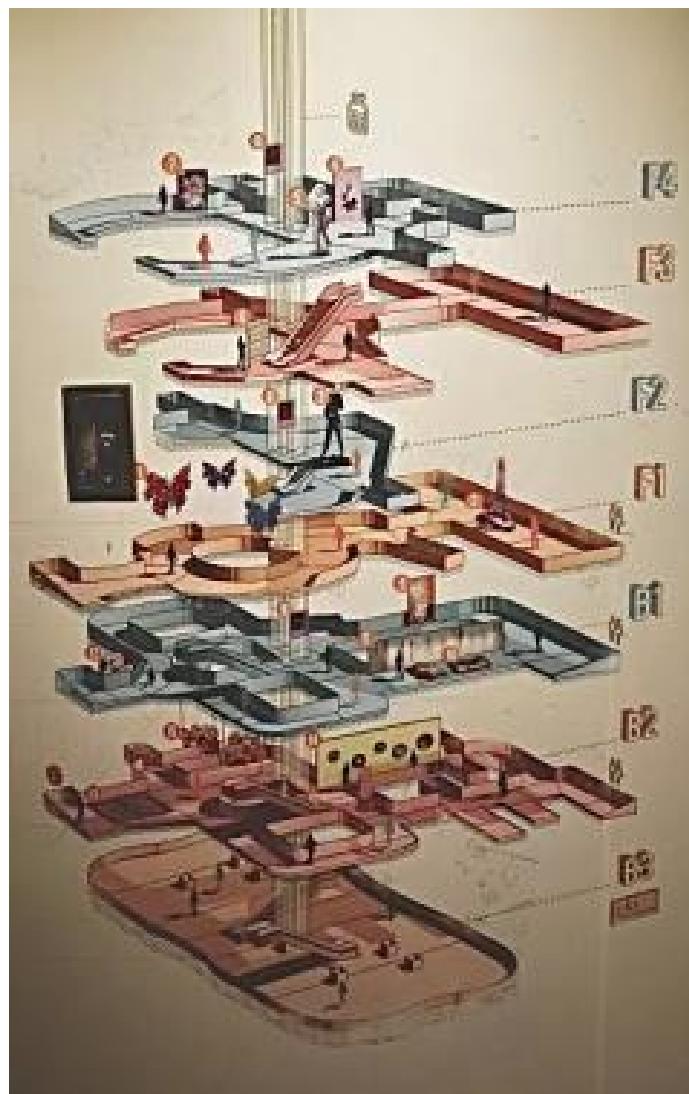


Figure 6. Map of different exhibition areas of K11 Shopping Mall in Shanghai. Source: Photo by one of the authors, 2019

Through the personalized configuration of the mall, visitors can experience different artistic styles from the galleries. Shopping malls become tourist spaces, and consumers become tourists to some extent. Audiences regard the consumption process in shopping malls as an entertainment process with the same experience value as the tourism process (Law et al., 2017). The fourth Guangzhou Triennale: The Unseen, exhibits installations and sound and performance artworks. In addition to institutional spaces, including the Guangdong Museum of Art as the main venue and the Guangzhou Opera House as the performance space, the curators also chose a public and non-art space, the Zhengjia Square, one of China's largest shopping malls, as part of the Triennale. Based on the concept of experimental consumption, the exhibition provides the audience with information dissemination and also provides mall consumers with extraordinary daily experiences. The exhibits, without any labels as common exhibits do, are scattered in a shopping center of more than 400,000 square meters. The audience can meet those unlabeled artworks unexpectedly, where there is often a sense of surprise and discovery. Curator Jiang pointed out that any available area within the mall can be selected as an exhibition venue, which encourages artworks to leave the art space, integrate themselves with daily life, and contact the public (Jiang, 2018).

#### 4. Discussion: Interaction within the non-gallery exhibitions

The classification in Chapter 3 is based on "Space Type" – Tourism, Living, and Shopping – addressing the question: "Where does the exhibition take place?" Chapter 4, on the other hand, reclassifies exhibitions according to their "Interactive Characteristics" – including Re-creation of Space, Integration of Exhibitions into Space, and Integration of Exhibits, Space, and Public – answering the question: "How does the exhibition operate within these spaces?" First, exhibits are re-created according to the selected space environment to realize the harmony of space and exhibits (section 4.1). Second, the exhibits are integrated into the space through the design and planning of display props (section 4.2). Third, the exhibits, space, and the public are integrated through the planning of the visiting routes (section 4.3).

#### 4.1 Exhibits re-created for the space

This type of exhibition exists in a space with other functional attributes, in which the exhibits displayed are unique to the space. For example, dozens of renowned architects and artists from different countries showcased their works and ideas in the Yellow Box project specially designed and re-created for the exhibition space, Xiaoximen, Qingpu (Figure 7). The role of the curator is more as an organizer, while the artists involved in this exhibition project also play some roles as curators to integrate the exhibits into the space (Gladstone, 2017). The Yellow Box project advocates contemporary art not to rely on gallery and white cube space, but to explore the possibility of combining local and traditional architecture with the contemporary exhibition. The traditional exhibition space in the white cube hinders the performance potential of contemporary art and experimental architecture and limits the creation of exhibitions in daily life space (Jiang, 2018). Therefore, the essence of the yellow box considers both the space and the construction mechanism. It breaks the institutionalized public display mode and connects exhibition space with tourism and living space (Gladstone & Howarth-Gladstone, 2017).

Curators and designers hope to break the standardized artworks often displayed in the traditional white cube by redesigning exhibits adapted to local space conditions. For example, there are nearly three thousand pieces of Ming and Qing furniture displayed in the furniture exhibition in the Summer Palace in 2005. Through the curation of some furniture on the site itself, a public exhibition is carried out in one of the architectural courtyards. The environmental background of Chinese gardens on the site co-exists with these exhibits.



Figure 7. Artists redesign the stars into exhibits in yellow box exhibition, Xiaoximen, 2015. Source: Cited by Gladstone, 2017

#### 4.2 Integration of the exhibition into the space

Non-gallery exhibition space is not a professional exhibition space, but the exhibition is often set in a non-isolated environment. For example, in Shanghai Rongzhai as a non-gallery exhibition space, the exhibition and its space are harmonious. Compared with the traditional exhibition space, the exhibition planning needs to be closely related to the space itself in the non-gallery setting. In the exhibition in Rongzhai, the paintings are not directly hung on the original walls, but Germano Celant, the curator, used bamboo to form temporary walls, trying to coordinate the paintings with the space (Figure 8). The allegorical narrative exhibition in Rongzhai displays thirty selected paintings of Ye Liu since 1992. In this exhibition, the integration of the exhibits and the space cannot be provided by the white cube. For example, one screen in Rongzhai, as a daily item, is used as a booth to display a portrait in the exhibition. This collocation fits well with the theme of the artwork and is integrated into the Rongzhai environment. Rongzhai is different from the professional exhibition space that provides professional lighting. The exhibits here rely on the silhouette of the window without artificial lighting. This work by Liu shows a hidden and arrogant imagination, which is more in line with the theme of the exhibition (Figure 9). Entering a vacant room with a piece of artwork hanging on the wall is like opening the cover of a book and listening to a new story, which are characteristics that traditional exhibition spaces cannot give (Schubert, 2000).



Figure 8. Chinese bamboo as display props. Source: Photo by one of the authors, 2017



Figure 9. Rongzhai's screen serves as a display background for the portrait with natural light provided by the windows aside. Source: Photo by one of the authors, 2018

In the Non-gallery exhibition space, visitors can feel the integration of the space and the exhibits. Shanghai K11 mall uses clever design to add art to the environment, which can amplify the leisure characteristics of the public space and highlight the experience in the shopping mall. For example, the Cartier Art Experience area is arranged in the atrium, and artworks associated with the Cartier brand are arranged in the surrounding areas and on each floor. The curators and designers design or plan the entire project according to the space environment and the theme of the exhibits. The Unseen pieces from Guangzhou's triennial at the Grandview Square display all exhibits unlabeled and completely hidden in the shopping space. The entire public space of the mall is integrated with the artwork. All of these are examples of how the curators select appropriate exhibition locations according to the artwork so that the exhibition can be integrated into the space.

#### 4.3 Integration of the exhibits, space, and the public

Exhibits, space, and the public are closely linked in non-gallery exhibitions. Exhibitions must think about the display of exhibits based on the preference of the public and the characteristics of space, to optimize the experience of the audience in the exhibition (Law et al., 2017). Compared to the white cube, non-gallery exhibition spaces, due to their environmental context, have to consider how to link the exhibits in scattered areas to enable a better visiting experience. In Ayana, the space is large and dispersed. The exhibition is open to all visitors and there are no fixed entrances or exits. In this exhibition, the visitor as the viewer is able to experience the different installations in the dispersed areas. The exhibitions in K11 are divided into human nature, natural shadows, and traces of art. It introduces different works of art based on three thematic settings. This model combines different artistic styles from different regions, and each audience forms its exhibition line (Figure 10). A well-designed exhibition provides the audience with a potential personal sense of transformational experience by inspiring imagination and challenging the past, present and future worlds (Lorenc, 2007). Art in the mall breaks down the spatial barriers between shopping centers and art galleries, delivering exhibitions to crowded shopping centers (Cartier, 2019), where those entering the mall are both customers and spectators.



Figure 10. Brochures on different exhibition topics at the mall entrance. Source: Photo by one of the authors, 2019

The audience's expectations of the exhibition are closely related to their concerns, so the means of audience interaction is advocated to disseminate information on the one hand and to arouse the interest of the audience on the other. The aim is to embody the cultural exchange between space and audience in an exhibition (Tucker, 2003). The means of interaction here lies in intervening in the audience experience through curatorial design, a viewing experience that caters to the audience and draws art closer to the public. At Xunyidu Gallery in Shanghai, the intimacy of the venue's residences and the preservation of spatial attributes are used to offer the viewer a new experience. The visitor is inspired to wonder by looking for the door number, invited in by ringing the doorbell as a guest, and all works are displayed in the home itself, making the exhibition akin to viewing objects from a friend's home.

## 5. Conclusion

The white cube is the dominant exhibition model used in museums and art galleries. This institutionalized model was influenced by the avant-garde movement and multiple exhibitions outside the white cube sprang up around the world, with exhibitions beginning to take place in the non-gallery exhibition space, which fulfills the need for innovation in exhibition space while also enabling the integration of art with everyday life. This distinguishes itself from the white cube by not overshadowing the exhibition environment with a fixed background color. It enhances the shared nature of art by highlighting the spatial attributes of the exhibition. Through field visits and case studies, this article reviews non-gallery exhibitions in China in the twenty-first century in the three different types of exhibition spaces including tourism space, living space, and shopping space. First, different spaces are distinguished based on their contextual and functional dimensions (experiential aspects). Then, by transcending the three space types, three interaction models (analytical dimensions) are identified, culminating in a higher-level theoretical generalization. Between 2020 and 2023, there will be many changes to the exhibition mode. The coronavirus has created a need for distance and independence. Therefore, in addition to the non-gallery exhibitions with physical spaces studied in this paper, there are many virtual forms of non-gallery exhibitions. Compared with on-site observations, the materials obtained through official websites, curator statements, media reports and academic articles during the epidemic are more inclined to be texts and images produced by institutions, making it difficult to directly capture the physical experiences of the audience, spatial atmosphere and other dimensions. Therefore, the cases at this stage are more often used to analyze curatorial discourse and spatial strategies rather than the audience behavior itself. The exhibition mode is also changing with the change in people's lifestyles and behavior. Will the exhibition return to what it was three years ago after the COVID-19 pandemic, or how will it change? Future exhibition patterns are worth further exploration. The study on non-gallery exhibition space can help exhibition practice projects better highlight the original features of the exhibition space, realize efficient dissemination of exhibit information and exhibition theme, intuitively reflect the content of the exhibition, and provide theoretical reference for further innovation and exploration of exhibition design and planning.

## List of Abbreviations

### Data Availability Statement

Data generated during this study are included in this published article.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

## Author's Contributions

Conceptualization: Z.H. and Y.Z.; Methodology: Z.H.; Writing—Original Draft Preparation: Z.H.; Writing—Review & Editing: Z.H. and Y.Z.; Visualization: Z.H. Z.H. and Y.Z. have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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