

Technological Innovation in Exhibition Design

Location: UC Davis

In-Country Partner Organization/Client: UC Davis, Manetti Shrem Museum of Art

Project Background: The Manetti Shrem Museum opened to the public in 2016. With the same passion for experimentation that first brought prominence to the arts at UC Davis, the Manetti Shrem Museum cultivates transformational art experiences to inspire new thinking and the open exchange of ideas. Serving both the public and our university community with a dynamic artistic program, the museum: presents exhibitions and events that advance students' understanding of their place in the world; connects to faculty teaching and research; and creates a lively forum for community engagement and creative practice.

Display strategies of art objects in galleries and museums add context and meaning to the art works in the exhibition. Contemporary art works often use non-traditional materials and rely on heavily constructed installation environments. The complex constructions and diversity of mediums and technologies employed by contemporary artists require a complex museum infrastructure that is adaptable and responsive to the art on display. Museums usually lack the time and resources to research progressive design innovations.

Project Problem Statement:

The project group will research the field of contemporary exhibition design in order to invent improved methods of displaying complex works of art. New technologies will be applied to traditional museum design methodologies to create more flexible installation environments.

Examples of current technologies:



a. Maurizio Cattelan Retrospective at Guggenheim Museum (left). The artist's oeuvre is suspended from a massive circular scaffolding in the rotunda of the museum. No art is on the walls. The artists entire body of work is suspended in air.

b. For the 20 year anniversary of The Santa Monica Museum of Art (below) Michael Asher takes the all the gallery floorplans from each of the archive of exhibitions in the museum's history and rebuilds the metal framing for all the walls at once which creates a Piranesi-like labyrinth for museum visitors to navigate. This is the art.

Project Goals and Objectives:

1. Feasibility Study
 - a. Research museum exhibition design technologies, alternative artistic concepts, and design challenges
2. Conceptual Design





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- a. Conduct prior art research on current technologies and designs utilized in museums and other spaces where art is displayed
- b. Work with the client to determine design criteria