

# Research on narrative design of Shandong Museum

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**Abstract:** In recent years, with the rise of cultural tourism, the integration between museums and the tourism industry has become increasingly close. The popularity of museums has attracted more people to experience their unique charm. Museums are also exploring their public value and embracing the curatorship concept of "people-oriented" to meet the growing cultural consumption demands. However, many museum exhibitions remain conventional and lack innovation. Visitors often merely stop to take photos and check in, which limits effective interaction and fails to convey the essence of the exhibits. Through the gradual application of narrative theory in museum exhibition design, large and some small to medium-sized museums in China have widely adopted narrative techniques, achieving excellent storytelling effects that immerse audiences. This study establishes a theoretical foundation through a review of narrative museum concepts and related literature. Furthermore, employing on-site research methods, the Shandong Museum is taken as a case study. It analyzes the museum's narrative features in terms of external architectural form and internal spatial organization. Specifically, it examines two representative permanent exhibitions—General History Exhibition and Ecology Exhibition—analyzing their themes, narrative content, structure, and techniques. Finally, the study summarizes the Shandong Museum's strengths in narrative exhibition design, offering insights for narrative development in other museums.

**Keywords:** Shandong Museum; museum narrative; exhibition

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, with the rise of cultural tourism, museums, possessing abundant tangible and intangible tourism resources such as nature, history, and cultural heritage, have repeatedly entered the public eye. From the popularity of distinctive themed exhibitions, to the high viewership of cultural programs, and the buzz surrounding cultural creative products and archaeological excavations, a wave of "internet-famous" museums has emerged in front of the public. Museums no longer merely serve the function of cultural preservation; they have also become providers meeting the public's demands for cultural tourism consumption. However, despite the abundant cultural relics, independent display cases, and dim lighting, many visitors find themselves faced with nothing more than dry artifact descriptions. Despite the multitude of artifacts and the grandeur of museums, the pervasive "expressionless faces" everywhere often leave visitors feeling that everything is disappointingly uniform. This is the current situation for most small to medium-sized museums in China. Museums need to explore new ways of engaging with visitors, revealing history through artifacts, and telling compelling stories behind cultural relics.

Narrative theory, originally applied in literary fields, has gradually extended into museum exhibition design after a period of development and evolution. This approach presents museum exhibitions in a novel manner, integrating the "people-oriented" concept into museum curation. By employing coherent and complete storylines, it guides visitors through immersive learning experiences, allowing them to explore and appreciate exhibits unconsciously. This satisfies public cultural demands, enhances museums' social value, and effectively reveals the stories behind the artifacts<sup>[1]</sup>. Many Chinese scholars have extensively researched narrative exhibition techniques in museums. Large and some small to medium-sized museums in China have widely adopted narrative theory in practice, achieving excellent storytelling effects that engage audiences. Introducing narrative design in museum exhibitions represents an innovative approach bestowed upon museums by the times, catering to new public expectations for museum experiences.

Research on museum narrative, which began earlier in foreign regions, has yielded richer results. The origins of narrative studies can be traced back to early 20th-century Russian formalism and French structuralism<sup>[2]</sup>. In the 1990s, narrative studies gradually began to be applied in museum research.

Overseas scholars predominantly emphasize practical applications in museum narrative research, often combining it with analysis of curatorial design. In 1991, Jerome Bruner discussed the depth of narrative perception in exhibition planning, suggesting it as a practical tool for exhibitions. In 1992, Mieke Bal analyzed exhibitions in American natural history museums, introducing narrative theory concepts such as narrative focus, narrative voice, and temporal aspects for the first time<sup>[3]</sup>. She later proposed the idea of "narrative participation by the audience" when analyzing exhibitions at the Munich Art Museum in Germany. David Carrier emphasized the importance of narrative in museum exhibitions in his writings, advocating for museums to effectively use the connections between exhibits to construct stories that offer audiences comparative perspectives<sup>[4]</sup>. Research on narrative design in Chinese museums started relatively late; however, in recent years, through continuous efforts and exploration by domestic scholars, significant progress has been made in this field. In her book "The Narrative Turn in Contemporary Museum Exhibitions," Zhang Wanzhen points out that narrative possesses unique artistic charm and has become a subject of study in museum exhibitions, characterized by a basic narrator telling a story<sup>[5]</sup>. Zhang Xiaoqing, in her work "Exploration of Narrative Display Design in Museums," introduces narrative thinking in historical reproductions, exploring how abstract narrative displays can be concretely presented in curating historical museums<sup>[6]</sup>. Li Degeng, in "Mobile Museums," eloquently discusses the enhanced narrative in museums and its integration with secular society, adapting exhibition narrative structures and forms to these dual changes<sup>[7]</sup>. Guan Xiaorui focuses on exhibition text narrative, analyzing exemplary exhibition texts with strong narrative elements to establish a foundational framework for museum exhibition narrative analysis from the perspectives of story and discourse<sup>[8]</sup>. Zhang Shumiao and Xu Lei, starting from the narrative structure of exhibition design, explore the construction of museum narrative structure systems through analyses of narrative elements, narrative structures, and narrative experiences<sup>[9]</sup>. Finally, Xu Jie, in his paper "Research on the Structure and Construction of Narrative Exhibitions," examines the core structure of narrative exhibitions, the logical relationships among various structural elements, and the construction strategies for narrative exhibitions<sup>[10]</sup>.

This article starts from the perspective of narrative design in museums, using the Shandong Museum as a case study to systematically analyze its narrative design in exhibitions. It primarily investigates the following questions: How does the Shandong Museum "tell stories" to visitors? Under the current trend of museums embracing a "visitor-centered" exhibition philosophy, how can diverse experiences be provided to visitors? Through these analyses, the article aims to offer theoretical and practical references for other museums.

## **2. Museum Spatial Narrative Design**

### ***2.1 Overview of Shandong Museum***

Shandong Museum, the first provincial comprehensive museum established in New China, opened to the public officially in 2010 and was designated a National First-Class Museum in 2012. It houses a large and diverse collection of various cultural relics, including oracle bones, bronzes, ceramics, paintings, Han stone portraits, modern artifacts, as well as fossils, minerals, and specimens reflecting natural environments and resources, totaling 31 categories. These collections concentrate on the social history and development of Shandong, illustrating the region's social evolution and natural environmental changes.

### ***2.2 Museum Architectural Spatial Narrative***

#### ***2.2.1 Exterior Architectural Form of the Museum***

Shandong Museum covers an area of 210 mu, with the main building occupying 80 mu of land and a total construction area of 8.29 mu. The architectural design of Shandong Museum embodies concepts from China's excellent traditional culture, such as "heaven is round and the earth is square" and "harmonious development between humans and nature." Overall, the three-dimensional square structure is dignified and majestic, with inwardly stacked corners that lend the building a dynamic and vibrant appearance. The main structure is divided into two parts: the top features a silver-white semi-circular water spray dome, resembling a cluster of upward surging springs, symbolizing the concept of "Boshan soaring into the sky"; the lower part is an inwardly intersecting cube with colonnades added to the southeast, northwest, and other sides, reflecting both the profound cultural heritage of Qilu and adding novel elements of the times (Fig.1). The exterior walls are adorned with

Taiyi snowflake bluestone unique to the Taiyi Mountains of Shandong, symbolizing the grandeur of Mount Tai. The entire architecture subtly conveys the essence of Qilu culture. This marks the beginning of the museum's narrative, immersing visitors in the cultural stories of Qilu land.



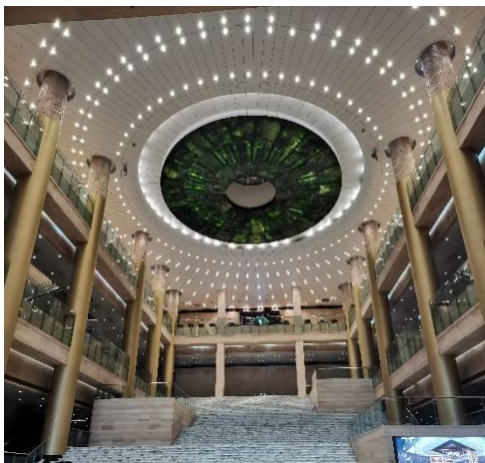
*Fig.1 Exterior of the main building of Shandong Museum*

### **2.2.2 Museum Interior Spatial Organization**

The interior decoration of the museum continues to embody the concept of "round sky and square earth". Upon entering through the main entrance, visitors encounter the Qilu Ritual Hall (Fig.2). This hall spans from the second to the fourth floor exhibition halls. The predominant color scheme inside is yellow, symbolizing the Yellow River and the loess, emphasizing the solemnity, dignity, and brilliance of the exhibition halls. In the center of the hall, there are grand and spacious white marble steps, layered like the steps of Mount Tai. At the top center of the hall hangs a translucent jade bi, originating from an unearthed jade bi found in the Warring States period tomb of the Lu state capital in Qufu, recognized as one of the museum's ten treasures.

On both east and west sides of the main hall are 18 columns each, symbolizing the pillars of ancient mythology that support the heavens. The capitals of these columns are adorned with auspicious clouds representing heaven and earth, while their bases feature exquisite taotie patterns. The eaves of the hall are carved with dragon patterns from the Qigu dragon jade pendant, showcasing the Chinese reverence for dragons(Fig.3). The four walls of the hall are built with yellow stones, intricately carved with phoenix patterns at the junctions with the ceilings, symbolizing the phoenix soaring to the heavens. The entire interior hall vividly displays the profound cultural heritage and grandeur of the Qilu region.

The open exhibition area includes 21 galleries and an additional 4 function halls, displaying both permanent exhibits reflecting the basic culture of Shandong and temporary displays.



*Fig.2 Shandong Museum's ceremonial hall*



*Fig.3 Architectural ornamentation of Shandong Museum*

### 3. Museum Content Narrative Design

#### 3.1 Comprehensive History Exhibition - Shandong Historical and Cultural Exhibition

##### 3.1.1 Exhibition Theme

The Shandong Historical and Cultural Exhibition is a large-scale local historical and cultural display at the Shandong Museum, focusing on the historical development of the Shandong region. It comprehensively showcases the development of ancient Shandong during different historical periods. This permanent exhibition is located in galleries 6, 7, and 8 on the second floor of the Shandong Museum, across three galleries.

##### 3.1.2 Exhibition Narrative Content Analysis

The Shandong Historical and Cultural Exhibition begins with the "Prehistoric" section, displaying the cultural features of human production and life during prehistoric times, including significant artifacts unearthed from sites such as Dawenkou and Longshan cultures. The "Xia, Shang, Zhou" section follows, systematically describing Shandong's development in politics, economy, culture, and technology during this period, particularly focusing on the Qi and Lu states. The final section, "Qin-Han to Ming-Qing," primarily showcases the flourishing developments in agriculture, commerce, iron smelting, textile industries since the Qin and Han dynasties, and the unprecedented prosperity in socio-economic life facilitated by the Grand Canal.

##### 3.1.3 Analysis of Exhibition Narrative Forms

###### (1) Exhibition Narrative Structure

*Table 1 Narrative Structure of Shandong Historical and Cultural Exhibition*

First -level unit	second-level unit	third-level unit	
Prehistoric Era	Dawn of Civilization - Shandong during the Paleolithic Age		
	Radiance of Civilization - Shandong during the Mesolithic Age		
	Brilliance of the Eastern Yi - Shandong during the Neolithic Age	Houli Culture	
		Beixin Culture	
Dawenkou Culture			
Longshan Culture			
Xia, Shang, Zhou Dynasties	Light of Mount Tai	Bronze Age Brilliance	
		Clearing the Fog - Unveiling the Sun	
	Shang and Yi Shine	Integration of Shang and Yi	
		Major Events of the State	
		The Beginning of Diverse Industries	
		Qi's Great Wall	
	Qi and Lu Cultural Essence	Feudalism of the Western Zhou Dynasty	
		Flourishing Qi State	
		Rituals and Music of Lu	
		Shining Stars	
Qin, Han to Ming, Qing Dynasties	Qin Dynasty - Mysteries of the East	Basically divided according to the corresponding periods of politics, economy, culture, and social life.	
	Han and Wei Dynasties - Elegant Exemplars		
	Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties - Blending of North and South		
	Sui and Tang Dynasties - Prosperous Times		
	Song and Jin Dynasties - Leading in Style		
Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties - Wealth and Canals			

The Shandong Historical and Cultural Exhibition is a typical local historical and cultural display that employs a linear narrative approach. It organizes a series of events according to the chronological development of Shandong's history and culture. The prehistoric exhibition selects representative archaeological sites to showcase characteristics and styles of different eras due to the lengthy time spans between various periods of the Stone Age. It extensively introduces the achievements of the Neolithic Age based on the rich unearthed artifacts and materials from different cultural periods. The Xia, Shang, and Zhou Hall categorizes artifacts by type and time, with sections such as "Qi Feng Lu Yun" featuring a specialized display of the Qi Great Wall. It introduces the Qi and Lu states under the feudal system, highlighting Qi's advanced economy and society in the Eastern region through the theme "Yong Yong Qi Bang," and presenting Lu as the land of etiquette under the theme "Lu Chuan Li Le." The concluding theme "Qun Xing Cui Can" illustrates contributions from other ancient states to Shandong. Similarly, the Qin to Ming-Qing Dynasty Hall is laid out chronologically, emphasizing

unique aspects of each historical period (Table 1). Overall, the first and second-level units of the Shandong Historical and Cultural Exhibition use a time-based narrative method, while the third-level units integrate achievements of their respective periods into thematic divisions based on the timeline, combining chronological and categorical narratives.

(2) The exhibition employs various means of narrative expression

**Display of Physical Exhibits:** The exhibition combines series of artifacts, displays iconic items independently, and restores items when feasible. For instance, the Xia, Shang, and Zhou Hall restored the burial of the Su Bu Tun No. 1 tomb. Isolated exhibits, like the "Gongzi Tu Zhe Hu" bronze pot in the same hall, use inscriptions to depict touching stories, enhancing the educational value of the exhibits.

**Supporting Exhibits:** Modern multimedia technologies, textual exhibitions closely aligned with themes, photographs, and illustrative materials assist in understanding inscriptions, excavation scenes, geographic environments, murals, and craft processes. Scene restorations include life scenes of *Yiyuan Homo erectus*, pottery making scenes from the Dawenkou culture, and a sand table of the Grand Canal of Jing-Hang.

**Spatial Narratives:** The exhibition's spatial layout enhances thematic and narrative effectiveness through distinctive wall textures, thematic color schemes, and varied lighting strategies. Each hall's design and lighting aim to highlight exhibited items while providing an immersive visitor experience.

This comprehensive approach ensures that the Shandong Historical and Cultural Exhibition effectively conveys the richness and diversity of Shandong's cultural heritage to its visitors.

### 3.2 Ecological Exhibition - The Great Migration of African Wildlife

#### 3.2.1 Exhibition Content and Format

(1) **Exhibition Perspective:** The African Wildlife Migration Exhibition is primarily aimed at adolescents, aiming to allow them to experience nature firsthand and explore its allure. Therefore, the curators have designed the exhibition from perspectives that are easy for young people to experience and understand. This approach enables adolescents to explore the migration process while discovering underlying truths, thereby fostering an awareness of environmental conservation among visitors.

(2) **Exhibition Content:** The exhibition focuses on the migration routes of African animals. The first part, "Serengeti Plains in the Dry Season," features gatherings of zebras, wildebeests, and antelopes. The second part, "Towards the Mara River," depicts wildebeests and antelopes racing towards the river while being watched by vigilant wild dogs. The third part, "Crossing to Paradise," shows a frenzied rush of wildebeests downhill towards the tumultuous Mara River, where crocodiles lurk. Hippos are startled, their gaping mouths displaying formidable teeth, while lions, hyenas, and vultures await across the riverbank for a potential feast. The fourth part, "Masai Mara Grasslands in the Rainy Season," showcases zebras playing, elephants and giraffes drinking water, and various animals like Egyptian geese, black rhinos, and white-faced ducks peacefully coexisting (Table 2).

Table 2 Narrative Overview of the Great Migration of African Wildlife Exhibition

Storyline	Plot Arrangement	Exhibition Items	Narrative Content
Great Migration of African Wildlife	Serengeti Plains in the Dry Season, Heading towards the Mara River, Crossing to Paradise, Masai Mara Grasslands in the Wet Season	Animal Stereoscopic Specimens, Interactive Touchscreens, 3D Projection Animations, Live Sound Effects, "Migration" Checkers Game, AR Technology Intelligent Guide	Replicating Africa's geographical landscapes, providing an immersive experience of the wildlife migration process, enabling visitors to personally witness this biological marvel, rekindling a sense of awe for nature, and fostering awareness for protecting ecological habitats
Colorful Africa	Wetlands, Mountain Plateaus, Vast Deserts, Sparse Grasslands, Enigmatic Rainforests, Vital Ecological Components, Armored Pangolins, Termite Kingdoms	Animal Stereoscopic Specimens, Habitat Models, Photo-Text Panels, Guided Boards, Cave Exploration, Interactive Ant Game	Interwoven with the migration theme, showcasing the vibrant ecosystems and habitats of Africa, along with introductions to various animal species, highlighting biodiversity
Harmonious Coexistence	Insights into the Maasai People, Coexistence with Animals, Harmonious	Maasai Figure Models, Clothing, Instruments, Daily Items, Animal	Integrating displays of Maasai customs, showcasing animal-environment and animal-animal harmonious coexistence,

	Recipes, No Family Left Behind, Coexistence on the Grasslands	Stereoscopic Specimens, Photo-Text Panels	maintaining balance in the grassland ecosystem. Advocating for environmental conservation and animal protection
Beilin Hut		African-themed Coffee Shop	Provides leisure and entertainment for visitor
Beilin African Expedition Vehicle		Window-style Screens, Off-road Vehicle, Interactive Games, Science Education Classroom	Further systematic popularization of knowledge related to Africa, allowing visitors to participate in scientific experiential classrooms

(3)Exhibition Approach: The African Wildlife Migration Exhibition has a clear thematic focus on animal migration. The entire exhibition follows a linear storytelling approach with a distinct narrative arc, structured around a "beginning - development - climax - conclusion" layout that creates a strong sense of rhythm. Additional sections like "Colorful Africa" and "Harmonious Coexistence" further elucidate the meaning and content conveyed by the stories. Interactive experiences such as the "Berlin Africa Research Vehicle," interactive games, and cave exploration engage visitors in hands-on learning and entertainment.

### 3.2.2 Exhibition Pathway Design

The design of the African Wildlife Migration Exhibition's pathway is inspired by an understanding of wildlife migration stories and exhibition space, serving as the route for visitors. Using pathways effectively showcases the migration process and stories within the exhibition space, creating a narrative space that combines peaks and valleys, motion and stillness. The exhibition's theme revolves around habitat - migration - new habitat. It categorizes the exhibition space into three main types: pre-migration habitats and animal life scenes, the core exhibition focusing on the great migration journey and its challenges, and post-migration new territories, representing a flourishing and vibrant world. Apart from the main storyline, numerous exhibits will also be presented to visitors, highlighting Africa's rich ecological environment and the atmosphere of Masai.

### 3.2.3 Exhibition Scene Design

The African Wildlife Migration Exhibition hall features towering and deep spaces with exhibits positioned at elevated levels, offering a rich variety of displays. The scene production aims to simulate environmental characteristics of different ecosystems as accurately as possible, with a reasonably realistic distribution of animals of various sizes and postures. Exhibits showcase different animal behaviors and require varying depths to create a profoundly moving effect. Information is provided to visitors through themes of drought and adversity, helping them understand the reasons behind animal migration. Scenes of migration emphasize both the hardships and magnificence of large-scale movements across rivers, enabling visitors to appreciate the profound implications of natural selection. The scenes of harmonious coexistence illustrate how different ecological environments and animal adaptations are interconnected, enhancing visitors' understanding.

### 3.2.4 Exhibition Experience Design

The African Wildlife Migration Exhibition incorporates multiple interactive electronic screens in each exhibition area to guide visitors in understanding the characteristics and habits of African animals. Within the research vehicle, visitors can watch high-definition educational programs on several window-style screens and even simulate driving off-road vehicles across the African savanna. Various interactive games attract visitors to engage actively in the narrative. Additionally, the museum has designed extensive educational activities for adolescents, integrating them into scientific experiential classrooms to deepen their understanding of the exhibition.

## 4. Museological Narrative Design Inspirations

### 4.1 Analysis of Narrative Advantages in Shandong Museum Exhibitions

#### 4.1.1 Narrative Thread Throughout Exhibitions Facilitates Visitor Engagement

A compelling story has the power to captivate, provoke thought, and leave a lasting impression. Shandong Museum utilizes storytelling to present the content of each exhibition hall, unfolding narratives gradually as visitors progress through them. For instance, the exquisite artifacts unearthed from the Ming Dynasty Zhu Tan's tomb are showcased under the theme "The Royal Life of Zhu Tan," covering royal rituals, daily life, precious cultural relics, and ceremonial processions. This comprehensive approach vividly portrays the opulent life of a prince. Similarly, the exhibition on the Great African Migration tightly revolves around the theme of "Animal Migration," showcasing

migration routes and providing educational insights. These exhibitions are strategically themed and positioned, complemented by artifacts and supplementary materials, with fluid and flexible pathways that effectively guide visitors. In-depth research into cultural relics allows for the extraction and reworking of crucial keywords and data.

#### ***4.1.2 Multi-dimensional Narratives Enhance Vividness and Depth of Exhibitions***

Shandong Museum innovatively designs exhibitions from the visitor's perspective, employing various narrative techniques. Innovative design is evident in the emphasis on spatial integrity, aligning museum interiors and exhibition layouts with thematic content to immerse visitors. The museum incorporates technology judiciously, utilizing online digital galleries, audio guides, and virtual technologies to enhance content delivery, aiming for authentic experiences that resonate emotionally and intellectually with visitors. The exhibition texts emphasize overall layout, combining linear narrative storytelling with modular categorization, ensuring mutual reinforcement and coherence. Each exhibition theme and narrative differs, utilizing physical exhibits, textual narratives, scene reconstructions, interactive technologies, and atmospheric spatial arrangements to integrate material, historical, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. This approach creates a holistic, immersive experience from macro-narratives to micro-descriptions.

#### ***4.2 Recommendations for Narrative Exhibitions in Other Museums***

##### ***4.2.1 Adhere to A People-oriented Approach, and From the Perspective of Visitors, Attempt Diversified Narrative Contexts.***

Traditional museum exhibitions primarily revolve around artifacts and textual presentations aimed at conveying scientific, systematic, and accurate information. In today's evolving theoretical and cultural landscape, the core dimensions of "public engagement" and "knowledge dissemination" are pivotal for modern museums, fostering closer relationships with visitors. Therefore, it is essential to move beyond artifact-centric thinking and prioritize visitor perspectives. Tailoring exhibitions to diverse thematic demands and integrating knowledge and characteristics from various disciplines enriches cultural narratives, making them lively, engaging, and enjoyable. Exhibitions should communicate in accessible language that resonates with visitors, ensuring universal appeal. Adopting an approach that integrates societal experiences and current trends allows for multi-directional, multi-dimensional, and multi-perspective narratives of artifacts. Integrating narrative exhibition designs with academic lectures, educational activities, online digital exhibitions via apps, and cultural products enhances museum visibility. Leveraging "museum fever" and new media platforms helps create distinctive cultural brands, fostering new social relationships between museums and people. Understanding visitor patterns, behavioral characteristics, and cognitive profiles enables museums to effectively tell compelling stories.

##### ***4.2.2 Clearly Define Narrative Themes, Utilize Content, and Employ Diverse Narrative Forms***

Stay closely aligned with the exhibition's content, emphasizing thorough research of the exhibits to uncover their stories, which can be approached from three aspects. Firstly, establish the exhibition's theme based on its content and exhibits, outlining a comprehensive plan, particularly focusing on meticulous planning and organization in areas such as selection of exhibits, exhibition outline, exhibition objectives, and content structure. Ensure that the exhibits serve the theme and that the theme is integrated into the exhibits. Secondly, select appropriate languages and supplementary materials for the exhibits. There are various forms of exhibit language expression, including textual explanations, lighting effects, exhibit restorations, images and graphics, multimedia presentations, online digital exhibitions, guided tours, electronic audio guides, apps, and more. Thirdly, exhibition and supplementary exhibit presentations should not be limited to traditional artifacts, texts, and images; modern high-tech methods such as 3D modeling, audiovisual virtual technologies, digital virtual reality technologies, and display-free technologies should be applied in narrative design, using digital and intelligent integration to tell the stories behind the exhibits. This approach better engages visitors, allowing them to delve deeper into the stories behind the exhibits and satisfying diverse cultural interests of the public.

##### ***4.2.3 Reasonably Utilize Spatial Elements to Enhance the Experiential and Interactive Aspects of the Exhibition***

The design of spatial forms adorns the exhibition with a splendid appearance. The overall spatial layout and environment of the exhibition significantly impact visitors' experiential sensations, playing a

crucial role in museums' endeavor to establish connections between people and exhibits with a "people-oriented" philosophy. The overall spatial design of the exhibition should not only create an atmosphere that aligns with the theme, presenting the deeper meanings intended by curators, but also harmonize with the presentation of exhibits, enhancing their cultural connotations and bringing artifacts to life. Reasonable use of different forms of display platforms, lighting, materials, and other spatial elements according to the exhibition theme creates a conducive exhibition atmosphere. These spatial elements are not merely decorative means for exhibit display but integral components of the narrative exhibition, inseparable from the exhibition itself. They immerse visitors in the environment related to the exhibits, enhancing the persuasive power of the exhibition in multiple ways. Emotional creation for visitors involves merging visitors' viewing emotions with design emotions through rational spatial division and content layout, fostering a suitable emotional atmosphere. Through firsthand experiences and sensations, different visitors interpret, imagine, and contemplate the same exhibits, texts, or scenes differently, enabling exhibits to speak in new ways in museum exhibitions.

## 5. Conclusion

Exhibitions in museums serve as the primary form of dialogue between museums and the public, as well as crucial platforms for educational activities and meeting cultural needs of the masses. Currently, cultural confidence in our country is growing, leading to a surge in museum popularity. Curatorial theories for museum exhibitions are continually being explored and developed. Narrative design research in exhibitions has become a hot topic, aligning narrative design with a "people-oriented" curatorial philosophy can better arrange and plan exhibitions from the perspective of visitors, providing new ideas and directions for museum exhibition design, offering broader thinking space and diverse perspectives.

Based on the above, this article explores narrative design in museum exhibitions, using Shandong Museum as a case study to systematically analyze its narrative design. The design of Shandong Museum fully embodies the unique cultural connotations of the Shandong region, with the permanent exhibitions "History and Culture of Shandong" and "Great Migration of African Wildlife" selected as excellent cases for narrative analysis. It summarizes the strengths of Shandong Museum exhibitions: weaving storytelling throughout the exhibition to engage in dialogue with visitors, and integrating multidimensional narratives to vividly present the exhibition's effects. Furthermore, it provides suggestions for exhibition design in other museums: firstly, adhering to a people-oriented approach, attempting diverse narrative contexts from the visitors' perspective; secondly, clearly defining narrative themes based on content and employing more diversified narrative designs; thirdly, utilizing spatial elements effectively to enhance the experiential and interactive aspects of exhibitions.

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