

Electronic Gallery : Case Study of A New Design Approach in Malaysia

SHARJI Elyna Amir, HUSSAIN Hanafizan and MOHAMED Ahmad Rafi Eshaq

Faculty of Creative Multimedia, Multimedia University,
63100 Cyberjaya, Malaysia

elyna.amir@mmu.edu.my, hanafizan.hussain@mmu.edu.my, ahmadrafi.eshaq@mmu.edu.my

A building comprises of more than the skin and the structural works. It is the soul that comes in the form of SPACE that is intriguing and provokes the mind. To be able to experience a building relies heavily on the spatial concept and internal lay out. How one is captured right from entering the entrance and through the layering of space, of horizontal and vertical planes and finally the euphoria, or depressed feeling that concludes the tour depending on the feeling intended (Miller, 1995). The common norm at present celebrates the outer skin and grandeur of facades. Not many include the hidden grids and fragmentation that can lead to a surprisingly good form AND space. Thus a number of them fail, in the sense of a sensuous building. 'The circulation path can be conceived as the perceptual thread that links the spaces of a building or any series of interior or exterior spaces, together. Since we move in TIME, through SEQUENCE of SPACES, we experience a space in relation to where we've been, and where we anticipate going' (Ching, 1979). This research intends to study and analyze the unconventional electronic gallery or 'e-gallery' as a versatile hybrid container. The focus of the research will be on documenting spaces in the e-gallery, bringing to light the unlimited possibilities that can take place in such a space.

Keywords: Space: multimedia tools; connectors; digital artifact; flexible planning.

Introduction

Multimedia is fast absorbing into everyday life, impacting people onto every action and idea (Martegani, 2000). Artifacts are now also kept in the form of digital information. This means that apart from visual exhibition, sound in the form of video, animation and music accompanies the artifact. Thus, a new design of space is essentially required at this point of time, to cater for the growing number of galleries that are buying the idea of light and sound exhibition, if not for the

entire space concept, perhaps to be implemented in a part of the whole gallery. Together with the space design comes the technical part, dealing with appropriate machines and multimedia tools with state of the art system. Integrating gallery space with multimedia presentation tools proves to be creative and challenging. A museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits for purpose of study, education and enjoyment. Material

evidence of man and his environment (Matthews, 1991).

Methodology

This research is conducted at the E-Gallery, Multimedia University, Cyberjaya, Malaysia. The research is at its initial stage. Survey consists of questionnaire and case study.

Questionnaire

The questions are based on impression of internal lay out, comfortability of space, level of concentration, level of interactivity, flexibility and efficiency of space and level of audio and visual.

Case Study

Case study is done by taking still images and a walk through coverage of each part of the gallery, according to the function of the space.

E Gallery

The objectives of the e gallery are, to promote a new media as a medium for creative expression,

to enhance the teaching and learning environment, to set up a new media showcase and R&D unit, and to showcase the best of student's works of the Faculty of Creative Multimedia. The main function is to exhibit permanent portfolio of student's works through analogue, digital and on line system. Also included are seasonal showcase of a group or one-man show and workshops, demonstrations, presentations and drawing sessions. The exhibits are models, sculptures, paintings, drawings, printed material, projected images, on screen display and interactive display. The components are from 4 majors offered in the faculty. They are, the animation process, interactive design process, idea development process, 2D and 3D animation, interactive display, web design, photography, sculptures, painting and drawing (<http://www.mmu.edu.my/~mmcampus/web/home.html>: Jan 2002).

Synthesis

From the questionnaire and case study there are a number of architectural problems regarding the

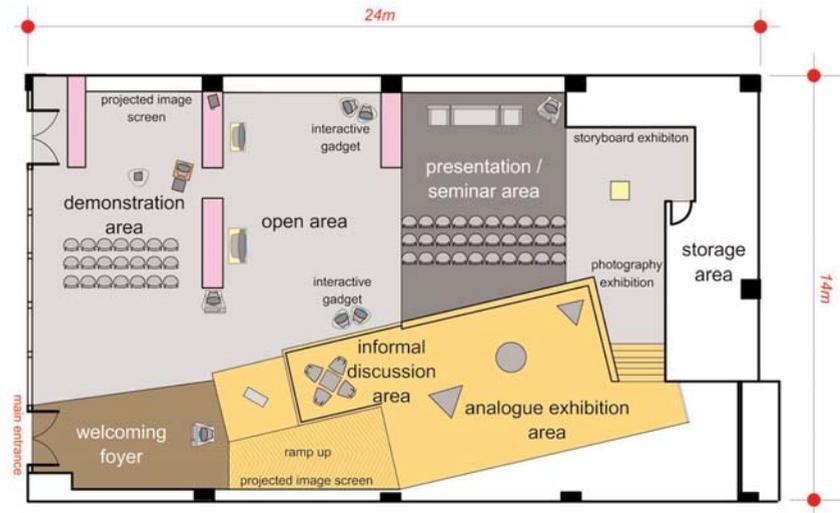


Figure 1. Plan of E Gallery, courtesy of Multimedia University.



Figure 2. Interior view of E Gallery from the entrance.

designing and development of e-gallery that need to be looked into. They are:

Ways to connect Real and Virtual

In this case, the 24m x 14m space is the existence of area that patrons can use for their multipurpose agendas. The virtual artifacts therefore need to be planned articulately to ensure the connection between real and virtual. We then began to see a functional, objective aspect to circulation which then weaves in psychological, emotional, cultural and ritual considerations (Miller, 1995). The connectors are:

Space

Dimension, treatment, circulation and theme. Scale in proportion to number of people and spatial activity clearly determines the width, height and shape of each space (Miller, 1995).

Technology

Multimedia tools of presentation, which are able to translate all types of messages: drawings, photographic images, video, speech, music and much more. These tools perform a multitude of functions and present an interactive environment. Architecture, and therefore design can be observed through film, new media, video and ani-

mation (Martegani, 2000).

Artifacts

Real and virtual artifacts.

New ideas in designing e galleries

The planning of an electronic gallery requires additional necessity apart from the stated building requirements. Gallery requirements (Tutt, 1979), consists of internal planning layout, display layout, display details, security, environmental control and storage.

New Ideas

Transparency is a metaphor for expressing lightness and depth of space (Martegani, 2000), therefore the gallery is designed with minimal furniture and fuss. Flexible space is practised to allow for fluidity of sensuous emotions.

Minimal space allocation for each digital artifact can be achieved through the media of presentation. Adequate space is calculated for the comfort of patrons appreciating the artifact which can be projected on the screen, wall or ceiling, digital images on the computer screen or television screen, and cyber interactivity.

Lighting. There exists a dramatic interplay between the functional usage and the aesthetic

value (Miller, 1995). Moreover multimedia exhibits often relay heavily on lighting to bring out the message or to enhance certain images. (Pegler, 2001)

Material. As no permanent walls or heavy structures are implemented, the floor material and ceiling denotes the territory of different functional space. The furniture also gives a sense of place, either an exhibition space or a discussion area.

In relevance to architecture and CAD

The vast choice of graphic quality, point of view, illumination, colour and texture (difficult to obtain with traditional ways) helps the creator to be creative and expressive and to avoid stereotypes and facile effects. Furthermore in eliminating a lot of execution time and traditional material (paper, pencil and ink), CAD has enormously shortened time between an idea and its taking shape to a speed never before known (Martegani, 2000). CAD also enables the 3D visualization before construction. Effectiveness and condusiveness can be tried at the planning stage. Areas that are difficult to cover through the naked eye can be explored fully. Designers can now create and simulate design in space and time by using computer models (Engeli, 2001).

Conclusion

Trying to fit modern technology into conventional space can prove to be challenging and impossible. There are a number of reasons such as the comfort of patrons and the lack of physical conceptual passages and spaces that usually accompany galleries in order to provoke and stimulate visitors. Also the level of multimedia tools to translate each spatial idea into physical presence, the integration between artifacts and presentation tools, and the task of producing a versatile space. Multimedia tools are versatile as they cover all senses needed to appreciate art works, but not

necessarily able to take the place of a normal efficient and conducive gallery setting.

As a conclusion, multimedia technology as a presentation tool goes hand in hand with the advance norm of the electronic gallery, saving up spaces previously required for storage area to a space with multi use at the click of the finger. Therefore, it is found that initial planning of space, multimedia tools, types of artifact and the different functions of space should be planned systematically from the start to integrate all of the factors to form a versatile hybrid of a gallery space. There is no architecture without event, without action, without activities, without functions: architecture is to be seen as the combination of space, events and movements (Tsumi, 1991).

Future Works

In the future, after all data and case study work have been completed, the author shall come up with several 3D animation and simulation designs with different themes and requirements.

References

- Ching, F.: 1979, *Form, Space and Order*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York.
- Engeli, M.: 2001, *Bits and Spaces*, Birkhauser.
- Martegani, P.: 2000, *Digital Design – New Frontiers for the Objects*, Birkhauser.
- Matthews, G.: 1991, *Museums and Art Galleries*, Butterworth Architecture.
- Miller, S. F.: 1995, *Design Process – A Primer for Architectural and Interior Design*, Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Pegler, M. M.: 2001, *Contemporary Exhibit Design*, Visual Reference Publication, Inc.
- Tschumi, B.: 1991, *Event Architecture*, in Noever, P., *Architecture in Transition: Between Deconstruction and New Modernism*, Prestel, p. p 125-132.
- Tutt, P.: 1979, *New Metric Handbook*, Butterworth Architecture.