

From collecting natural objects to presenting the future anthropocene: exhibition design for the anthropocene theme in museums



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Abstract

At present, frequent natural disasters have led to serious concerns about the environment and the future of human beings in both the academic and public spheres. In this context, The Anthropocene no longer only refers to the geological era shaped by the environment but gradually evolves into a word with multiple symbolic meanings linked to environmental protection and ecological crisis, on the other hand, which also reflects that human beings are responsible for the current ecological changes.

Traditionally, in many natural or science-themed museums, this type of museum has tended to establish the scene from a collection of fossils, animal bones and fake indoor nature artefacts. However, several museums seek to exhibit the future "Anthropocene", which does not exist and for which no historical evidence exists. Meanwhile, scholars associate museums with the "Anthropocene", and the keyword "Anthropocene" often appears in exhibitions with such keywords as environmental protection and climate change, which also show the relationship between the Anthropocene, climate change, and ecological and natural environments to some extent. By illustrating the before and after of the Anthropocene and the potential future crisis, it inspires the audience to reflect on the present ecology, thus fostering the propagation of sustainable development concepts.

Unlike other knowledge export channels, the museum provides an accessible and hands-on knowledge platform by combining expertise in the fields of art and science, allowing audiences to experience the concept of the Anthropocene from multiple perspectives and senses and also evoking a certain degree of reflection on environmental protection and a

sustainable future. In modern society, museums have evolved in their functions, and future-themed museums have become one of the current trends in museum development.

In the design area, the Anthropocene is increasingly integrated with diverse design subjects, such as some design trends include speculative design, object-oriented design, biological design, non-anthropocentrism, human hegemonism, and so on. Many disciplines have attempted to approach the Anthropocene from different perspectives, stepping away from post-humanism studies focusing on human centralisation and thinking more about globalisation, the natural environment, and sustainable development. This literature indicates that humans need to take on the material consequences of improving their well-being and no longer be passive, marginal agents shaped by the changes in the Earth's environment. Trends such as the Anthropocene and Speculative Design cultivate a sense of crisis among the public, encouraging architects and designers to react in advance by moving forward in geological time and responding intentionally to future expectations.

Through a range of research methods, this study wants to focus on the emerging theme of posthuman-world narratives in museum contexts, especially in relation to the future, and examine the power that design methods can contribute to the production of knowledge in contemporary museums. This study aims to expand the horizon to explore the reasons, purposes, and needs for the rise of posthuman world narratives in museums from an epistemological perspective, and to focus on the impact of posthuman narratives in museums at the level of society as a whole.