



# The Spreading Influence of "Tide of Calligraphy — Itinerant Exhibition for Forty Years of Henan Calligraphy in the New Period"

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**Abstract:** The 2019 annual communication and promotion project of the National Art Foundation, "Tide of Calligraphy — Itinerant exhibition for Forty Years of Henan Calligraphy in the New Period", has been completed in Zhengzhou, Changsha, Chengdu, Xi'an and other cities. At present, the COVID-19 epidemic has affected every link of the ecological chain of the exhibition industry, and the work of "Tide of Calligraphy" has also been affected. The epidemic has changed the inherent pattern of exhibition behavior and strongly promoted the development of industries such as "cloud exhibition hall", which provides the public with more aesthetic perspectives and thinking programs. As a beautiful name card of development of Henan calligraphy for 40 years, "Tide of Calligraphy" also adopts the communication method of "cloud exhibition hall" in the exhibition, which stands out from many exhibitions. All of them show their strong cultural communication and influence, which is of great reference value for us to re-examine the exhibition hall mode and the transformation of calligraphy aesthetics under the COVID-19 epidemic.

**Keywords:** "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition, the exhibition hall, aesthetics, thinking

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## 1. Introduction

Calligraphy, as an inseparable part of Chinese culture, has been enduring for thousands of years and has shown its profound cultural connotation. As "an important part of Chinese culture, Chinese calligraphy presents the spiritual world of Chinese aesthetic personality, and plays an important role in the world cultural history because of its uniqueness and long history"[1].

At present, the COVID-19 epidemic has an impact on every link involved in the ecological chain of the exhibition industry. In the new era of particularly rapid cultural transmission, how to use the specific advantages of "cloud exhibition hall" to play various functions of the exhibition hall has become an urgent problem to be solved. This article aims to re-examine the important issues in the process of calligraphy communication and provide reference for the development of calligraphy at present through the relevant dissemination experience of "Tide of Calligraphy — Itinerant exhibition for Forty Years of Henan Calligraphy in the New Period", (hereinafter referred to as "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition).

As one of the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of Henan calligraphers association, the exhibition represents the outstanding achievements of Henan calligraphy in recent years. The itinerant exhibition has been successfully held in Zhengzhou, Changsha, Chengdu and Xi'an. Due to the impact of the epidemic, Chengdu and Xi'an adopted a combination of "cloud exhibition hall" and offline exhibition, so that the public can not only perceive the square space of the mobile phone screen, but also experience the shocking effect of calligraphy on site.

Significant changes have taken place in the communication mode of Chinese calligraphy. Some scholars have divided calligraphy communication into reproduction communication, inscription communication, borrowing communication, teaching communication and display communication[2]. Calligraphy communication in the exhibition fully shows the spiritual outlook of calligraphy and the actual effect of face-to-face communication. "Network Exhibition", "Cloud Exhibition" and other calligraphy exhibitions have also changed the public's thinking, and more and more calligraphers are widely known. The phenomenon of "Tide of Calligraphy" of Henan calligraphy has also burst out of vitality, which shows its strong cultural communication and influence. The itinerant exhibition gathers many classic works of Henan famous artists, including Zhang Hai, Li Gangtian, Zhou Junjie and so on. These works represent the overall standard of Henan calligraphers to a certain extent.

## 2. Works by famous masters in "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition

The content of calligraphy communication is not clearly defined, which makes the network full of extremely low and even vulgar calligraphy works. These works with mixed qualities all affect the aesthetic orientation of the public. In contrast,

many calligraphers in the exhibition are highly skilled and expressive. Just as Zhou Junjie said, "Those who have been active and leading the calligraphers since the revival of calligraphy 30 years ago are all active explorers with rich cultural background, agile artistic thinking and never satisfied with their existing achievements." [3] There is no doubt that the 59 authors of this exhibition are explorers and pioneers. The overall works of "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition are of high quality and deep self-cultivation of calligraphers, which changes the bad wind of calligraphy at present.

Most of the authors of the exhibition are explorers of calligraphy, whose calligraphy works can be recognized highly. On the basis of being rooted in tradition, calligraphers can show their personal style, which is particularly valuable in the phenomenon of "calligraphy homogeneity" in today's calligraphy exhibition. Different from the calligraphy performance art filled in the Internet, the calligraphers of "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition are fascinated by calligraphy and have profound insights into calligraphy. With the rapid development of the Internet, the overall artistic style and spiritual outlook of calligrapher have formed a sharp contrast with the current style of calligraphy, which also makes more and more calligraphy masterpieces enter the public's vision through the exhibition hall, providing more aesthetic perspectives and thinking programs for the public.

Calligraphy has been written by literati since ancient times. It represents the state of mind and spiritual thinking of calligraphers, which are far from the comparison of amateur calligraphers. The calligraphers of "Tide of Calligraphy" have high self-restraint, and their calligraphy works do not pursue the current fashion and "exhibition style", but show the natural writing state of calligraphers. The large scale works in "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition are more than eight feet high, which is different from the visual effect of the "cloud exhibition hall". In particular, calligraphy exhibitions are springing up everywhere, and the size alone cannot make the public favored. "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition can get rid of the criticism of "exhibition style" at present, and form the unique creation mode of Henan calligraphers, which is largely due to the active exploration of Henan calligraphers.

With the rapid development of "we media", "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition has been praised by scholars inside and outside the province, which shows its high standard. The exhibition author is a true expression of language and emotion with words. "Calligraphy can reflect personal inner cultivation and character, and show the true portrayal of a person's heart." The lively grass works in the exhibition hall are particularly impressive. Cursive works of different styles compete on the same stage. What you see is the vivid technical performance of each work, not only the skillful and changeable techniques, but also the author's own emotional catharsis and artistic expression.

Different from the page turning and pull-down in the "Cloud Exhibition Hall", the calligraphy works on "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition are quiet or bold, which can be described as flowers competing for their own merits. The exhibition works are in various forms, including seal script, clerical script, regular script, cursive script, running script and seal carving works. Especially the calligraphy works under the treatment of "rising ink" are unique, and the visual feeling of the audience is constantly refreshed. The Times call for classic Chinese calligraphy masters, and famous calligraphers play the important role of promoting calligraphy culture. Under the influence of the thought of "Tide of Calligraphy", Henan calligraphy has stepped into the ranks of strong calligraphy province, and also produced a number of leading calligraphers in the forefront of the times, whose works have obvious regional characteristics of "the style of Central Plains calligraphy". But in terms of its calligraphy style, this regional feature has been in line with the public's choice and aesthetic standards, but also gave birth to the characteristics of solitary Henan calligraphers.

### **3. The breadth of "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition**

Different writing models show different emotional catharsis, now writing has become a popular art form, with the flourishing today. Especially in the live streaming industry, the appeal of the exhibition hall effect seems to be weakening, because the writer can get the calligraphy and high-definition pictures download at any time, and then the public's vision and ability to identify the calligraphy. Zhu Shuai once mentioned that "the characters arranged in alphabetic or stroke order in all kinds of calligraphy dictionaries have almost no difference in size. Compared with the engravings, people have lost all sense of scale in the original works" [4].

The advantage of the cloud exhibition hall and the Internet is that you can enjoy the fine works of all kinds of exhibitions without leaving home. Although it saves a lot of time and improves the efficiency of exhibition viewing, it lacks the affinity of public perception of calligraphy works. On the platform of obtaining resources, it is difficult for people to pay attention to the integrity of the works, and some pictures are just the tip of the iceberg or distorted, which greatly affects the public experience of exhibition.

"Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition perfectly shows the authenticity and originality of the original calligraphy, the shock power of the long masterpiece and the texture and line of the brush and ink. The series of promotion of "Tide of

Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition brings to the public a series of vivid and jumping calligraphy works, so that the viewer can understand the expression of the emotion and interest of the calligrapher in the exhibition hall. The visual impact of the stimulation effect is not comparable to simple printing and high-definition pictures.

Due to the difficulty of the writing of Chinese characters and the influence of cultural cognition, most works in "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition represent the unique writing style of the masters, their habitual movement and their original experience. Compared with the public's lack of ability to write and recognize traditional Chinese characters, the works also make the public re-examine the charm of Chinese calligraphy language and characters.

In addition, it is difficult for the public to grasp the size and rendering effect of works through electronic technology products. Under the influence of various calligraphic communication phenomena, especially the public's attitude towards calligraphy appreciation is constantly changing, so the artistic appreciation of books needs to be improved, and the ability to identify excellent works also needs to be improved. At present, the reproduction of calligraphy has a great impact on the public calligraphy aesthetic. "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition explores the development direction of calligraphy with its calligraphy works full of cultural charm, and satisfies the public's many thoughts on calligraphy.

The works in the exhibition include both large characters and continuous cursive calligraphy, so that the audience can feel the original taste of calligraphy creation and the air of the book. It is this artistic expression that contributes to the integrity and unity of calligraphy forms and characters, and also expands the breadth of "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition.

As an indelible event in the book world for several generations, the series of "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition shows Henan calligrapher's thinking and practice on the mainstream style of writing, and also promotes the vigorous development of Henan calligraphy. "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition continues the current aesthetic interest, which not only highlights the personality of calligraphers, but also conforms to the development of calligraphy. Different from the prevailing P-drawing and pruning technology, "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition ensures the original size and style of calligraphy works. There is no background color mixing and excessive splicing techniques in calligraphers' works, which shows the profound traditional accumulation of calligraphers.

The threads in each work in "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition are clearly visible, filled with the vigorous atmosphere of everyone's books. "Only when calligraphy is not written deliberately and relaxed at the initial stage can it reach the state of natural writing" [5]. The works presented in the exhibition are the most authentic image expression under the original taste, especially the traces of brush walking and the true perception of the fine ink of calligraphers.

Nowadays, calligraphic works emphasize more on the original writing mode. The calligraphic works free on paper are the expression of the calligrapher's personal interest and the concentrated embodiment of the calligrapher's stage level. The works in the exhibition show the most primitive and natural writing state of the calligraphers. When the visitors are in the exhibition hall, they can clearly understand the writing materials and the details of using pen and ink, showing the real writing level and emotional appeal of the calligraphers.

#### **4. Influence of "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition**

From the perspective of the artistic dissemination of the exhibition, it represents not only the pros and cons of the calligraphers' own writing level, but also the transformation of the aesthetic orientation of calligraphy. "The communication of calligraphy art is the aesthetic activity of the self-consciousness of the calligrapher and the appreciator, as well as the reconstruction process of their personality and aesthetic subject. The driving force is the need for the free publicity of human vitality and the aesthetic needs of people"[6].

The public aesthetic influences the direction of calligraphy communication, and the communication under different paths has the change of the public aesthetic demand. The works of "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition show the strong voice of the era of "the style of writing in the Central Plains", whose influence extends to other provinces of the country. The calligraphy aesthetic in the new era is also reflected in "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition.

Calligraphic works created in different periods have different appeal to the audience, and viewers have different understandings of different works when they are familiar with the development trajectory of calligraphy, which lays a foundation for the original appearance of calligraphy in the eyes of the public. The exhibition has changed the public's perception of calligraphy in the past, making the public think about the internal rules of calligraphy when they receive overwhelming information about calligraphy culture. The works in "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition emphasize the writing principle rooted in the tradition, inheriting the past and opening up the future, which is different from the previous concept of calligraphy. The works of calligraphers should not only express their own feelings, but also convey the ultimate charm of calligraphy, and meet the public's cognitive needs and ideas for calligraphy.

After the formation of the brand of "Tide of Calligraphy", it has greatly changed the public's aesthetic taste of calligraphy, and a wave of "calligraphy fever" has been blown up in the country. "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition conforms to the calligraphy concept of different regions, and then collides with the calligraphy concept of different provinces, resulting in different "chemical reactions". The seminar after the exhibition is more conducive to in-depth discussion among different calligraphers, scholars and media workers, and also gives a new meaning to the name card of "Tide of Calligraphy" in the new era such as the combination of theory and creation, inheritance of tradition and the development of the times and other issues, which also pushed the development of calligraphy to a stage height.

From the preliminary preparation of the exhibition to the smooth holding of the exhibition, it benefited from the help of many media. Especially under the influence of the COVID-19 epidemic, the effective integration of new media and modern exhibition hall also highlights the current trend of calligraphy communication. The art communication of new media also depends on the promotion of public accounts and editorial articles. Real-time reports of media such as Sohu client and Sichuan Calligrapher website all play a positive role in promoting the exhibition.

The exhibition has given full play to the media effect and has been praised by scholars, experts, teachers and students. As a regional exhibition, "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition can have a wide impact across the country, which is enough to prove its brand influence and creativity. This phenomenon of calligraphy influenced by the regional style of calligraphy nationwide is worth thinking about. Especially in the context of the Internet era, calligraphy communication should give full play to the advantages of local culture and actively promote the development of traditional calligraphy culture.

As a national art fund promotion and exchange project, the exhibition aims to review the progress of Henan calligraphy in the past 40 years of reform and opening up, and provide thinking for the development of calligraphy in Henan and even the whole country. The development and innovation of calligraphy is an important issue in the new era, and a group of outstanding calligraphers who emerged from "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition conducted the principle of innovation through their own exploration, and their positive steps of innovation are also the epitome of Henan calligraphers' constant pursuit of change.

In the Qing Dynasty, Liu Xizai said, "What is calligraphy like? It is like a person's ambition, knowledge and ability. In short, it can show a person's moral conduct." [7] It can be seen that the final artistic pursuit of calligraphers is that "both calligraphers and written words have reached a very high stage", and the creation level of the calligraphers in this exhibition is very high "both calligraphers and written words have reached a very high stage". The older the calligraphers are, the more vibrant the books under their pen will be. This kind of calligrapher's writing state is also the true embodiment under the influence of "Tide of Calligraphy", which has a strong appeal of works.

## 5. The reflection of "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition

"Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition explains the lack of calligraphy development is not works, or more influential representative works. For all kinds of celebrity calligraphy and behavior calligraphy filled on the Internet, it is indeed eye-catching, and even causes the undesirable phenomenon that everyone can write and books can be written everywhere. Calligraphy seems to be reduced to a tool of grandstanding. However, a close study of the booming development of calligraphy at present shows that most of the works are ephemeral, while calligraphy works with deep self-cultivation are rare.

The epidemic has changed the inherent exhibition industry model, and effectively promoted the development of "cloud exhibition hall" and other industries. "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition can stand out from many exhibitions, not only because of the spread of "calligraphy brand" influence, but also represents Henan calligrapher's adherence to the tradition and bold innovation for the future calligraphy career. These calligraphists are willing to remain silent and their decades of silent exploration have created a strong calligraphy atmosphere in Henan and also provided a reference for the development of calligraphy in the new era.

The popularity of the calligraphy works in "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition is of great reference value. However, there are many shortcomings, first of all, the exhibition has a symposium held after the opening, but the information of participants and content failed to be arranged timely for the public. As a result, the content of the symposium and the problems we thought about were not developed in depth. To some extent, the sorting out of these problems is no less than the value of the exhibition works; Second, there is no explanation attached to the works in the exhibition hall. Considering the different levels of public appreciation and cultural level. Especially seal script and cursive script, which are not easy to distinguish, should be attached. Third, there is little communication with the audience, and the needs and opinions of the visitors can not be grasped in time. All these also reflect the deficiencies of "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition.

In general, the exhibition not only promoted the exchange and promotion of Henan calligraphy, but also influenced the development trend of calligraphy in the whole country. Most importantly, the exhibition gives full play to its time and

originality, bringing together many famous Henan artists and demonstrating the development of Henan calligraphy over the past 40 years. Re-examining the spreading influence of "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition is conducive to analyzing the development of calligraphy in Henan, and to observing the transformation of the public aesthetic orientation, so as to provide a reference for the spreading and development of calligraphy in the new era.

## 6. Conclusion

The orderly implementation of the exhibition depends on the comprehensive design of the exhibition hall. The public can get more extensive information through the exhibition hall, and also expand the influence of the brand of "Tide of Calligraphy". Under the influence of COVID-19, the exhibition hall mode and aesthetic concept of "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition play an extremely important role in our re-examination of the communication mode of calligraphy. As an important part of Chinese literature and art, calligraphy art is particularly critical to guide the public's aesthetics correctly. Through the review of the series of "Tide of Calligraphy" itinerant exhibition, it highlights the active exploration and cultural conservation of Henan calligrapher in the new period, which has influenced the spread and development of today's calligraphy. Henan calligraphy at a new starting point is bound to usher in new development opportunities, and the calligraphers and cultural workers in Henan will continue to maintain full artistic enthusiasm and serious and responsible spirit in the new period, and make positive contributions to the prosperity and development of contemporary calligraphy.

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