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Cabinets of Wonder
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Cabinets of Wonder: Design Manifesto
The Full Immersion of Visitors Into Life Within A Joseon Dynasty Village/Town

Within my personal design manifesto I asked the question how do you create a spark of interest, a spark of motivation for visitors to learn more about any subject matter that they may encounter in any exhibition or museum. I answered that question by first stating the fact that I believed that this spark is within every visitor but it is through the overall design of and use of the environment within the exhibition space in which this spark can become present within the visitors thoughts.

I then acknowledged that attempting to help the visitor realize this spark was indeed a very complex question but it my personal belief that the process of full immersing visitors into the overall experience of the exhibit allows for a deeper sense of connection, a greater sense of awareness and a deeper appreciation by the visitors of the exhibition matter, thus enabling the creation of this spark of interest.

I felt this firsthand on my recent trip to Korea. I was both excited about this adventure because I did not know the language or customs and everything was new to me except the food. It was two events within this unfamiliar environment that sparked my interest in the Joseon Dynasty. The first event occurred when I was touring the Korea Folk Museum and noticed some very beautiful books and a brief description of the dynasty and the second event occurred when my tour guide spoke about the accomplishments of this dynasty when I was at the Gyeongbokgung Palace. These two events helped create a spark of interest in me which allowed me to further research the Joseon Dynasty on my own. I truly believe that through careful design and use of the environment within the exhibition space you can truly help create that spark of interest, which can become present within the visitors thoughts.

I believe that through the immersion of visitors into a Joseonian Dynasty village or town, they can truly experience, understand and even appreciate the richness of this culture. I believe that thorough the use of dioramas and use of actors to portray inhabitants of this village, the visitors can interact with at their own pace and learn more about, they can fully appreciate this time period within Korean history.

One of the overall goals within my design manifesto is to immerse the visitors within the subject matter of the exhibition with the use of dioramas and other mechanisms of self-directed discovery by the visitor.

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Here are a few questions I asked myself in order to understand why I chose the Joseon Dynasty to be the focus of my research and museum center.

How old is the Korean culture?

Korea has a historic legacy reaching back over 5,000 years, Korea has preserved its ancient cultural roots alongside thriving urban centers, bustling with technology and commerce. Religion, language, food, song, dance and sport make up the cultural mosaic—infused with influences from east and west, old and new, with a distinctive Korean flair.

Which period would you pick to cover?

I would like the museum and research center to exhibit how life would have been during the Joseon Dynasty which is also known as the Yi Dynasty which lasted from 1392-1910.

Why?

I would like to pick the Joseon Dynasty because it was during this period that the dynasty consolidated its absolute rule over Korea, encouraged the adoption of Confucianist ideals and doctrines within Korean society, massively imported and adopted Chinese culture, and saw the height of classical Korean culture, trade, science, literature, and technology. This dynasty also became modern day Korea and last for five centuries as one of the world's longest running monarchies.

The Joseon Dynasty's rule also left a deep impact on the modern face of Korea; much of modern Korean etiquette, cultural norms, societal attitudes towards current issues, and even the modern Korean language and its dialects stem from the traditional thought pattern that originated from this period.

It is within this time period that Korea became known as the Hermit Kingdom and truly focused on preserving its own rich heritage and isolating itself against foreign influence. Their historical importance is so widely recognized that the Royal Tombs (The Jongmyo Shrine) of the Joseon Dynasty has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Centre.