

Chinese Museums in the Digital Age: Legitimacy, Discursive Power and New Engagements

Author: Paloma Berggren
Supervisor: Marina Svensson



Abstract	4
List of Figures	5
List of abbreviations	6
Acknowledgements	7
Chapter 1	8
Introduction	8
Disposition	9
Problem	10
Aim and Purpose	11
Critical Heritage Studies	12
Authorised Heritage Discourse	13
Research Questions	13
Chapter 2	15
Politics of Display	15
Heritage in China	17
The Digital gate	22
Chapter 3	26
Research Design	26
Epistemology and Ontology	26
Research Method	27
Selection and Analysis of Materials	28
Ethical Considerations	28
Challenges and limitations	29
Reflexivity	29

Chapter 4	31
Theoretical Framework	31
Foucauldian Discourse Analysis	31
Discursive Practice	33
Regimes of truth and Discursive Formations	33
Chapter 5	35
Virtual heritage in the making	35
Chapter 6	37
The National Museum of China	37
Ancient China	38
The Road of rejuvenation	39
Chapter 7	42
The Palace Museum/The Forbidden City	42
The bronze and jade virtual galleries	43
Virtual Tours: The Period halls, galleries and palaces	44
Across the Silk Road	45
Chapter 8	48
The Digital Tiang Ming	48
Chapter 9	53
The digital as a material culture	53
Chapter 10	59
Disciplinary Cultural Heritage	59
Contribution to the Research Area	62
Literature	64

Abstract

This proposal addresses the problematic of heritage in the making and how the digital engages in museum practices. Questioning reconstructions of the past, and the ways in which material culture and museums are used, to support heritage discourses. It concerns the ability of Chinese digital museums, to turn the past into present. Inspired by Foucault, this research, questions whether digital is material culture and how politics of display operates in the construction of heritage.

List of Figures

Figure 1. Screenshot the Road of rejuvenation	40
Figure 2. Screenshot the Road of rejuvenation	41
Figure 3. Screenshot gallery the Silk Road	46
Figure 4. Screenshot gallery the Maritime Silk Road	47
Figure 5. Screenshot gallery the Maritime Silk Road	47
Figure 6. The Palace Museum trajectory collection app	52

APENDIX

Figure 7. Screenshot The Palace museum Silk Road	71
Figure 8. Screenshot The Palace museum Silk Road	71
Figure 9. Screenshot The Palace museum	72
Figure 10. Screenshot The Palace museum	73
Figure 11. Screenshot The Palace museum	74
Figure 12. Screenshot The Palace museum	75
Figure 13. Screenshot The Palace museum	76
Figure 14. Screenshot The Palace museum	77

List of abbreviations

AHD Authorised Heritage Discourse

CCP Communist Party of China

ICOMOS International Council on Monuments and Sites

NMC National Museum of China

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

IJHS International Journal of Heritage Studies

JOCH Journal of Cultural Heritage

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Marina Svensson for her support, for her insightful gaze and sharp comments. But mostly for her engagement with the topic and continuous encouragement throughout this journey.

I am particularly grateful with the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies for the extraordinary engagement with students in general. I would like to thank to all lecturers and classmates from the China path, all of them gave me new insights that significantly contributed to this work and to my understanding of Chinese society.

I would also like to thank to my dear friend Yutsie Wan for helping me with Mandarin translations and Huong Nguyen for her wonderful feedback.

Finally, and by no means least, I thank my beloved child for the unfailing love, support and patience.

Chapter 1

Introduction

“[...] Defending cultural heritage is more than a cultural issue, it is a security imperative, inseparable from that of defending human lives [...] Building peace requires culture also; it requires education, prevention, and the transmission of heritage. This is the message of this historic resolution” Irina Bokova Director-General of UNESCO intervention during the Security Council, on March 2017 for the Resolution 2347 (2017)¹.

This statement is an example of how theorisation and conceptualisation of cultural heritage is one of the most fundamental pillars for constructing political discourses of belonging, identity and nationalism.

How heritage is managed in different countries does not vary much in their legislated and technical forms (UNESCO's 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage) but in the depths of its discursive treatment is where we can find ideological, political, religious and practical differences.

Heritage as industry has become quite relevant in China. Since the 1990s; the World Bank Partnership for Conservation has supported 12 projects, with loans that reached US \$1.3 billion, including US\$260 million of direct support for cultural heritage conservation projects.

This is the largest single country program supporting the conservation of cultural heritage in the World Bank (World Bank report 2011:VI). China follows UNESCO recommendations on paper in the most disciplinary fashion, and yet with ambiguity when it comes to implementation.

Academic debates on heritage in China, largely emphasise the management, preservation, and economic impact of cultural heritage (Silverman & Blumenfield 2013; Denton 2014; Varutti

¹ Resolution 2347 (2017) Adopted by the Security Council at its 7907th meeting, on 24 March 2017.

2014; Evans & Rowlands 2015, Fiskesjö 2010 Kraus 2004 Svensson 2006; 2011, Taylor 2015, Zhang & Huo 2015).

Further, several works (Denton 2005, Bennett 1995; 2005, Benton 2010, Harrison 2005, Macdonald 1998; 2007, Smith 2004; 2006, Brumann & Berliner 2016 among others) have been written on cultural heritage in global and local contexts, their relationship with the construction of the idea of belonging and nation -state, as well heritage as a political tool of inclusion and exclusion. To all these previous works we must add, research on the heritage industry and the role of museums as institutions, that constantly generate, reinforce, change and update knowledge about the past (Harrison 2015:100).

Disposition

After the introduction, I describe the aim and purpose of the present research; Chapter 2 will provide an overview of the literature concerning heritage in China, thereafter I introduce few studies about politics of display and relate them to this account of virtual museums. In Chapter 3, I describe the research design and methodological approach and Chapter 4 develops the theoretical framework that had guided this work, and deal with the Foucauldian discursive approach, placing heritage as the unit of analysis.

In Chapter 5 heritage in the making is approached. I look into how cultural tradition moves to politics and thereafter to discursive practices, all this promoted by the government and economic elites. I will also discuss, how digital technologies shape and mediate encounters among heritage discursive practices, the authorities (museums and experts) and online exhibitions.

Chapter 6 addresses the National Museum of China and two permanent exhibits, in which I trace links between the Chinese ancient past and the construction of the modern Chinese Nation. Chapter 7 analyses the Forbidden City or Palace Museum digital website, where

Chinese Imperial past is broadcasted and interpreted as a long trajectory of legitimation of the current Chinese government.

Chapter 8 discusses both digital exhibitions National Museum of China and The Forbidden City focusing on ethical negotiations, discourses of heritage that emerge through encounters of digital/technological capacities and the intersection of politics of display, indicating how Chinese heritage is used.

Chapter 9 is a recapitulation of the key points from each chapter and a review of the research questions.

Problem

Regarding the production and reproduction of knowledge, within heritage studies, Winter (2013) warns us about the division between sciences and humanities; as an abyss that seems stubbornly difficult to solve. He uses as an example two different scientific journals; the *International Journal of Heritage Studies (IJHS)* and the *Journal of Cultural Heritage (JOCH)*, which exist in entirely different fields of the production of knowledge, and are related to certain academic traditions.

The IJHS –he argued– operates in the social sciences and humanities, with all its epistemologies and methodologies (issues such as politics, power, and values). The *JOCH*, has articles of scientific nature, focusing on technical and technological aspects of heritage conservation (documentation, carbonation, microscopy, photogrammetry and so on). Winter (2013) stresses, that this division shows that there is very little overlap; that is to say, ideas about heritage are intellectually embedded, divided by practices of knowledge that are invariably mutually exclusive (Winter 2013:540).

For this reason, it is important to produce more studies that delve into museums where heritage is created, embedded, distorted, invented or invisibilised and embodied in every single artefact. Museums no longer operate as a part of a Victorian technology, and therein lies the importance of studying museums as places of convergence of different types of knowledge that do not need to be mutually exclusive.

Nevertheless, it is a problem trying to understand museums as non hierarchical and neutral institutions in time and space contexts. Museums have agendas and are part of micro-political formations, their narratives establish hierarchies, truths, produce knowledge and have authority to decide which objects are more valuable than others or which objects should be displayed. Previous research has discussed the civic shaping capacities of museums (Bennett 2005), how museums were devised in the nineteenth century as a machinery to highlight racial differences and denote power, and how these institutions play an important role in politics of display, policies and legislative issues (Bennett 2005, Denton 2005, Denton 2014, Silverman and Blumenfield 2013; Svensson 2011, Varutti 2010). I have therefore chosen to focus on the lack of studies about heritage in the making in virtual platforms and online museums collections in China.

Generally speaking, research on digital/websites in China has predominantly been engaged with political activism, networking social platforms (Svensson 2006; 2014; 2015; 2016), e-commerce and e-governance (Svensson 2016); little has been written with regard to websites and heritage together (Svensson 2012b Svensson and Maags 2018 forthcoming) or virtual museums, as a unity of analysis, and as a complex way to broadcast politics of display. Moreover, many scholars (Huo 2016, Denton 2005, Denton 2014, Silverman & Blumenfield 2013, Svensson 2006; Svensson 2012a; Svensson 2012b; Svensson 2017; Rowlands & Were 2012, Nitzky 2013, Varutti 2014, Winter 2013, Waterton and Watson 2013, Zhang & Wu 2015) have addressed how heritage discourses in China can construct, maintain, reproduce, intensified or gradually change notions of nation, identity, culture and belonging. These previous researches focused on the relationships between government and stakeholders, the economic and conflictive side of heritage/tourism combo, the top-down and bottom up heritage interactions, the reinvention of tradition and consumption of heritage and finally the debates on and about heritage in the making.

Aim and Purpose

Thus the aims of this research is to address two important axes; first to understand how certain discourses on Chinese heritage are produced in the virtual realm through permanent online collections, and the second axis is connected to the digital theme, which aims to focus on the ontological conception of the digital as material culture.

Drawing inspiration from Foucault's account, I will argue that heritage is a disciplinary tool, based on regimes of truth (scientific truths) which in turn are continually reinforced by discursive practices (museums exhibitions and statements) in constant flux.

Further, I shall argue for a broader approach in which museums websites - or namely the digital collections- constitute part of the material culture of the nation building and heritage in the making; thus becoming a discursive formation. In so doing I attempt to make evident that these websites broadcast politics of display, showing that heritage in China is a resilient political statement that can be interpreted and reinterpreted by what Smith (2006) has called Authorised Heritage Discourses.

Critical Heritage Studies

Harrison (2013:98) places the mid-1980s as the emergence of critical heritage studies, marked by the publication of three books—*The Past is a Foreign Country* by David Lowenthal (1985), *On Living in an Old Country* by Patrick Wright ([1985] 2009) and *The Heritage Industry* by Robert Hewison (1987). The three authors basically agreed that the past has been used as a tool with political motivations for the production of a nostalgic past .

According to Winter (2013), Critical Heritage Studies means a better understanding of different ways in which heritage can act as a positive enabler for more complex and multi-vectorial challenges that we have to face today, such as cultural and environmental sustainability, economic inequalities, conflict resolution, social cohesion and the future of cities just to name few (Winter 2013:533).

For the purposes of this thesis, I have widely used research classified as within Critical Heritage Studies henceforth (CHS). The CHS have been defined as an interdisciplinary research field, aimed to approach heritage from a global perspective, and explore how the past can be mobilised for different purposes. In doing so, the past can be invented and reinvented to create new meanings, notions and types of cultural heritage. These in turn, are closely related with the effects of globalisation and the mobilisation of people and ideas (Bennett 1995, Macdonald 1998, Denton 2004, Smith 2006, Rowlands 2010, Harrison 2013, Winter 2013).

However, this thesis is not inscribed in the so-called Critical Heritage Studies. Although this work shares the idea that heritage is constructed from “narratives of conflict” (Daly and Chan, 2015, p. 492). It is not my goal to classify this monograph in a specific field of Heritage Studies, since its nature is rather based on digital ethnographic observation.

Authorised Heritage Discourse

One of the most interesting contributions to heritage studies is Laurajane Smith’s work(2006) and her statement ‘there is no such thing as heritage’. She understands that what exists is only a discursive construction (Smith 2006:13).

Smith’s (2006) prominent notion of authorised heritage discourse (henceforth AHD) discusses how this self-referential Western mainstream discourse (Smith 2016:11) shapes the means in which heritage is constructed, conceived, interpreted, identified, valued, conserved, and managed (Smith 2006:29-33). The AHD has its roots in the idiosyncrasies of nineteenth-century nationalism, legitimised through state institutions and international agencies, such the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) as well through educational institutions.

The authorised heritage discourse AHD focuses attention on aesthetically pleasing material objects, sites, places and/or landscapes that current generations ‘must’ care for, protect and revere so that they may be passed to nebulous future generations for their ‘education’, and to forge a sense of common identity based on the past.

(Smith 2006:29)

Research Questions

Scholars such as Samuel (1994) have argued about the potential of heritage in promoting democracy through representation, and as an agent of social change, supporting a transformative power of history. Samuel (1994:303) understands heritage as a social process; precisely as other authors approached heritage few years later (Harvey 2001; Smith 2006; Byrne 2008; Harrison 2010c). Nevertheless, besides the capacity to promote social change and open democratic spaces for debate, heritage has also the capacity to become a double-edged tool, a (social) process trapped in his own discourse and discursive practices.

Howbeit Smith (2004; 2006) has already drawn on Foucault's discourses, exposing how knowledge produced by archaeology and heritage is used as a *techne*², suggesting a connection amid power and heritage that creates a particular set of socio-political practices (2006: 16). Notwithstanding the foregoing, this work aims to explore further the role of heritage and its discursive practices in the digital museum context in China.

This research aims to explore the following questions:

-Are the Chinese digital cultural heritage collections political statements?

As we are aware that there may be different social, political and economic motivations that lay behind the preservation of the past and display of cultural heritage, we also know that culture is a way to legitimise any type of power.

-In which ways are discursive practices of heritage displayed in Chinese museums' websites?

There is an extensive set of interactions between data, people, and technologies to attend this process. Therefore I will focus on discursive practices reflected in the interface of two museums websites.

-Can the digital be considered part of the Chinese heritage in the making?

I intend to show that the digital is able to build notions of heritage and become heritage itself.

² *Techne* according to Foucault is a practical rationality governed by a conscious aim

Chapter 2

This chapter will provide a summarised literature review, which focuses on three topics that are significant to this thesis: politics of display in museums, cultural tangible heritage in China and the use of digital technologies in museums.

Politics of Display

Sharon Macdonald in “An introduction to the politics of display” (1998) asks who decides what should be displayed? When it comes to talk about heritage, this is rather an important question, and often an issue taken for granted. Who or whom has the authority to decide what is to be considered important to be displayed or called heritage? And who gets to speak in the name of ‘science’, ‘the public’ or ‘the nation’? (1981:1). This is a reference to the absence / presence of objects in museums and how the selection process is a political exercise rather than scientific (Ibid).

Crucially Macdonald (1998) stresses that museums in particular, present exhibitions as unequivocal statements, and in doing so, society as a whole does not understand the exhibition as a result of research but as a truth/statement (Macdonald 1998:1).

According to Macdonald, museums and science have a discursive interrelationships, in which museums are creating particular kinds of science/knowledge (1998). Her Foucauldian analysis is so accurate in pointing out that there is a political chain in the production, distribution and consumption of knowledge. In this/such political chain, knowledge and power are always intertwined; making an early connection with Foucault’s governmentality and the techniques that are used to manage populations (Macdonald 1998:2).

Display is not only about the exhibit, but also about visitors, inclusion and exclusion. Macdonald (1998:4) highlights that there is a relation between the producer and the audiences in which, spatial fixity plays an important role. At the same time, she points out, there is a need to acknowledge that displays do not exhibit a detached representation, on the contrary displays have a meta-message and are related to other events.

Following Macdonald, Nelia Dias (1998) suggests that displays were designated by the exercise of the gaze connected to a (new) visual regime, where the major concern was the sight, what should be seen and how and by whom, displaying differences more related to issues of race and belonging (Dias1998:31).

Museums for Dias (1998) worked as systems of evidence and proof as interlocutors between scholars and public, as institutional mediators. However, scholars (anthropologists) who were committed to liberal and democratic ideas about equality, continued underneath maintaining the idea of a natural inequality between human groups (Dias 1998:43) In doing so, museums harboured structural racial inequalities (Ibid).

Concerning politics of display, Smith (2006) based on Foucault's thought, argues that there is a dominant archaeological discourse privileging disciplinary and expert positions regarding the exhibition and consumption of heritage (Smith 2006). The AHD identifies the authority of expertise (archaeologists, historians and architects) as caretakers of the past disempowering the present (Smith 2006:29). In regard to the narratives of nation, Smith (2006) points out that, heritage discourse promotes the experience and values social elites (Smith 2006:30). Heritage itself, Smith (2006:17) argues, is a notion created by the enlightenment elites, in which museums are a consequence of these narratives, and are entangled with discourses of nationalism and patriotism, something that Bennet (1995) and Macdonald (1998) had noticed before.

Smith (2006:299) addresses that the AHD power lies in its legitimation, which is carried out through, institutional and expertise narratives, but also through discourses about nation, class, culture and ethnicity. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the AHD is open to contestation, not just from external actors but from heritage experts and institutions as well (Ibid).

While Kirk Denton (2014) invites us to think in tradition as a way to connect with the past, but also pretty much connected with nationalism, suggesting a historical process from ancient past to the modern present (Denton 2014:27). Museums, Denton (2014:27) argues, are modern cultural institutions as a way to (re) invent tradition, being the public face of expertise (archaeology) and together serving important political and ideological functions in the nation building process (Ibid). For him, claiming a past and its materialities is a political act (Denton 2014:28). Albeit expert museums not always serve the interests of the nation

state (Ibid). Rather they can benefit identity politics claims from indigenous groups or minorities (Denton 2014:28).

Heritage in China

Heritage, in the Chinese context is related with the word *wenwu* which means anything coming from the past (Varutti 2014:9). In this regard, it is accurate to explore two paradigms in China—*wenwu* (cultural object) and *wenhua yichan* (cultural heritage). Linling Bi et al. (2016) argued that the conceptual development of cultural heritage from *wenwu* to *wenhua yichan* reflects the internal and the cross-cultural dialogic dynamics of cultural heritage in China (Linling Bi et al. 2016:193).

Evans and Rowlands (2015:275-276) observed that UNESCO took the *wenhua yichan* as a positive sign and engagement from the Chinese government. Supporting local heritage projects however, has provoked frictions between provinces and groups, over how is heritage understood and implemented in China.

Wu (2012) explains, that traditional Chinese constructions of the past, are intended to activate a sense of virtue instead of retaining the materiality of heritage. It becomes a site of heritage as long as the later generations admire it. What Wu (2012) suggests, is the importance of engaging in different ways of making 'heritage'.

According to Linling Bi et al. (2016), the word *wenwu* was first recorded in the Tang Dynasty (618–907) referring to relics from the past. As it is explained in their article, the word trajectory goes through the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127), as *guqiwu* or *guwu* referring to ancient objects, specifically for the study of ancient bronzes and stone inscriptions. While during the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368–1911), *gudong* and *guwan*, which means antiques, replaced the former words to make reference to ancient objects, but not to calligraphy and painting. While in the mid-1930s the word *wenwu*, were established with a more inclusive meaning (Linling Bi et al 2016:193; Fiskesjö 2010:234).

During 2005 the Notice of the State Council on Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Heritage (Notice 2005), decided to make a shift to a broader concept: *wenhua yichan*. This term includes notions of tangible and intangible public cultural heritage. Acknowledging that

heritage interacts with social dynamics, and at the same time this shift acted as response to internal urgencies and as a way to embrace the concept of cultural heritage (Linling Bi et al. 2016). Eventually a year after a Cultural Heritage Day was created as a follow-up initiative to promote cultural identity in heritage and enhance public awareness (Linling Bi et al. 2016:201).

While Denton (2014:29) explains that in China, the past was viewed as a repository of moral knowledge, although the notions of history are an import of Western conceptions in order to fulfil the nation building agenda. Curiously, the author points out the so called socialist governments (Cubans, Vietnamese and Soviets) like China created museums to enact their respective revolutions. Becoming also a distinction of other revolutions like the French and the North American (Denton 2014:45). From Denton's perspective, museums become political statements.

In recent works dedicated to Chinese heritage, an important contribution has been done by Marzia Varutti (2014) who argues that museum objects in China are indexes of antiquity and achievements of the Chinese (Han) civilisation. Museum narratives apply these attributes through discourses of longevity and continuity, upholding legitimacy of the Communist Party (Varutti 2014:159).

Varutti (2014) argues that museums in China can be traced back to the Temple of Confucius in Qufu Shandong Province, where Confucius home was transformed in a temple and his belongings became sacred objects to be preserved (Varutti 2014:25). This claim that the first museum or place to be preserved dates back to the fifth century, denies the idea that museums are a western import. However, Varutti (2014) understands here that temples can be considered proto-museums, sites concerned with commemoration and remembrance.

According to Varutti, there is a cultural tradition of collecting things, a widespread interest in the past, where government officials and elites have been dedicated to this task since approximately the Song dynasty ca. AD 960-1279 (Varutti 2014:15) Another motivation for collecting relics (which is the term for antiquities in China) is to remember ancestors and ancient rituals that have been passed from generation to generation (Varutti 2014:16).

This collecting tradition has been based mostly on inheritance, gifts and confiscation, mainly promoted by elites driven by economic and prestige values. Whereas scholars were motivated more by historical reasons (Varutti 2014:16).

Although most dynasties collected and safeguarded some relics of the past, it was not until the 19th century that the first museums were established, namely the Shanghai Museum in 1871 mostly as a sign of modernity (Varutti 2014:26). Nevertheless, it is no coincidence that these museums opened in a time of crisis, rather as an outcome of industrial civilisation and coercive colonialism (Varutti 2014:29).

Zhang Qian, was an industrialist who opened the first museum in Nantong (Jiangsu Province) around 1905. Zhang wanted to establish a Chinese Imperial Palace Museum, but did not have the approval of the Qing court. His project was limited to historical and artistic items only for pedagogical purposes. Zhang was convinced that the principal function of the museum should be to restore the trust of Chinese peoples in themselves and to become a nationalistic museum (Varutti 2014:27).

At the beginning, the relation with relics/heritage was rather frowned upon. Collections were seen as an elitist practice, related with imperial times and with private property, being a token of backwardness. However, after the Chinese Communist Party took power, museums have been conceived as propaganda tools, somehow close to what Zhang believed was the purpose of a museum; being the army the ones who set the guidelines in the area of cultural policy (Varutti 2014). The Chinese Communist Party (henceforth CCP) needed to create an ideal of shared mythology, using heritage and museums as a tools for this purpose. Varutti (2014) notes the complex relation between cultural heritage and political authority in China, being something decisive in understanding the development of museums (Varutti 2014:21) and becoming active agents in the dissemination of cultural nationalist discourses (Varutti 2014:90).

During the Great Leap Forward (1958 - 1961) the national government allocated resources to the creation of a national museum, the museum of Chinese History, under the slogan “Every country must have its museum, every commune its exhibition hall” (Varutti 2014:29).

Remembrance, morality and the collective memory connected to the past are active agents for Chinese society (Fowler 1987:238). For the Chinese, the act of commemorating is almost a mission, demanding the transmission of memory (Schwarcz 1991:90) which provides a

rhetoric of unity and longevity. The latter closely relates to what Silverman and Blumenfield (2013) noticed regarding museums as the key attribute of nation-states; which are used as a venue in the itinerary of official visits from other countries. In so doing Silverman and Blumenfield (2013) suggested that museums collaborate in creating national identity. Nevertheless, during the Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1976) the new paradigm imposed by the young Red Guards, treated cultural and ancient art expressions as a luxury, as unproductive and pro imperial activities, for which they were regarded as reckless, forbidden and unpatriotic. For these reasons, the red army encouraged the destruction of cultural objects and the prohibition of ancient practices (Varutti 2014:29).

During the Cultural Revolution, museums were closed down, however some relics were protected by the same government probably aware of the historical and economic values of some items (Varutti 2014:29).

But it was not until 1982 that China became member of the International Council of Museums ICOM with the implementation of a large number of museums.

In this context, museums promoted patriotism validating the national imaginary, and the Chinese government addressed the propaganda role of museums, as another important functionality (Denton 2005, Silverman & Blumenfield 2013).

The museum boom or the so called museum fever in China can be estimated to have at least 2,310 museums in 2008 excluding private initiatives (Silverman & Blumenfield 2013).

In this regard there is a relationship between the museum fever and the heritage industry. Was Hewison (1987) who suggested that there is a link between postmodernity and heritage industry, in order to capture a middle class nostalgia for the past.

Hewison (1987:35) argued that we have no understanding of history in depth and that is one reason why heritage became somehow a popular entertainment. This postmodern condition associated with resilient forms of capital accumulation and unequal distribution, are a favourable ground for heritage industries filled of contemporary narratives recreating our past (Hewison 1987:35).

In this respect, it is noted that China is at this stage of capital accumulation form.

Consequently there is a strong probability, that its nostalgia for the past is used to create narratives that legitimises power at governmental level, and also the power of the Chinese

economic elites through their heritage industry; that is to say through museums, art, and cultural expressions in general.

Svensson and Maags (2018) argue that heritage production in China is shaped by its communist political system as much as by its pre-communist past (Svensson and Maags 2018:13)

The heritage boom in China or the so called heritage turn by Svensson and Maags (2018) started in the 1990s due ideological shifts in the Chinese Communist Party, seeking to find new forms of legitimacy beyond communism (Svensson and Maags 2018:14). Furthermore, the authors take into account that this heritage boom, was and still is, selective regarding sites and practices elevated to heritage status. In short Chinese government is using the heritage discourse, as a means to control cultural and religious practices (Svensson and Maags 2018:14).

According to Varutti (2014), in China priority is given to the cultural-symbolic dimension rather than physical aspects of historical buildings (Varutti 2014:9). *Chuantong* is the Chinese word for tradition, and it is precisely how Chinese understand the idea of transmission of values (Chang 1999:86 in Varutti 2014:9). Memory and remembering are close to Confucian principles, as Varutti (2014) noticed Confucianism shaped connotations of the past and materialities (Varutti 2014:9).

While Denton (2014) draws attention to the fact that at the end of the 1990s, revolutionary history museums were in a state of crisis. These institutions were losing their status, for instance by using museum spaces to perform dog shows; thereby provoking critical assessment of the state of revolutionary heritage.

Denton (2014) highlighted the fact, that this crisis led to rethinking the role of revolutionary museums. This narrative confronted a new ideological phase, embedded in a new market economy, that in many ways did not match the revolutionary ideology of Mao's time. Basically from the mid-to-late 1990s, there is an ideological transformation fostered by the government and the CCP in which the term "class" *jieji* is replaced by the term "social stratification" *shehui jieceng* (Denton 2014:86).

In short we can say that this, represents an ideological shift in how China tries to reconcile different narratives of its past. Apparently, the government wants to ensure that the revolution will not fade from the collective memory, becoming part of a renewed interest in imperial history.

The Digital gate

Research on digital and virtual realms have highlighted the importance and consequences of acknowledging the materiality of digital words. That means understanding virtual worlds as a type of materiality, producing and promoting choices and new ways of redefining individuals and communities (Boellstorff 2012). Horst & Miller (2012) stressed that the digital should and can be a highly effective means for reflecting upon what it means to be human, the ultimate task of anthropology as a discipline and how materiality is a mechanism behind our final observation and therefore a justification for an anthropological approach (Horst & Miller 2012:3-4).

The non-media-centric approach used by Pink et al. (2016) emphasises that digital realities should not be reduced to media texts, but that they should be studied together with other non-digital aspects of everyday lives, material realities and offline-online experiences (Boellstorff, 2012)

‘Images are everywhere. They permeate our academic work, everyday lives, conversations and dreams’ that is how Pink et al. (2016:17) invites us to rethink the so-called digital ethnography. An important implication when doing digital ethnography about things / materialities, explains Pink et al. (2016), is the way in which people relate to digital media technologies, being in motion and mutable (Pink et al. 2016:75).

Pink et al.(2016) work, addresses a different digital ethnographic approach, that begins with the premise that the purpose of analysis is not to translate 'visual evidence' into verbal knowledge, but to explore the relationship between visual and other knowledge (Pink et al. 2016:96).

Concerned with virtual worlds Boellstorff et al. (2012) stressed the importance of virtual artefacts acting in the same way in physical worlds, all this in order to understand any culture, its production, circulation, meaning and incorporation to everyday life (Boellstorff et

al. 2012:121). For Boellstorff et al. (2012) virtual worlds are not just a metaphor, albeit its work on virtual artefacts is focused on video games experiences, the approach could be useful when doing ethnography in virtual contexts, basing our analysis on data from images, photographs and videos, instead of interviews and participant observation offline.

Many scholars have written about the use, appropriations and meaning of digital media technology in peoples everyday life. In relation to China specifically, digital media technologies have been approached as tool for political activism, as a tool used for e-governance and as means for consumption in large scale. The three topics insightfully studied, have unveil different digital media technology' patterns of use in China.

Specifically, in relation to heritage and digital technologies, Michael Rowlands and Leslie McTavish have a more insightful approach, the former in relation to China and the latest in relation to virtuality and museums.

Rowlands, as an anthropologist has studied another connotations about the relationship between material culture and digital technologies. For instance, he proposed that visibility has been linked to modernity using displays as a mechanism, improving control and manipulation of digital objects (Rowlands 2011).

Rowlands and Were (2012) suggested that digital technologies can sustain knowledge and practices without the need of physical objects, due to the demand of increasing access to ethnographic museums collections. They also identified that one of the problems in making use of digital technologies to replicate material culture, is that the legacies of European epistemologies of the nineteenth century are still present to some extent (Were & Rowlands 2012).

Both acknowledge that digital heritage provides the opportunity to wider access to material culture and to collaborate through tags and community virtual curation (Were & Rowlands 2012:1).

Were and Rowlands (2012) argued that digital technologies, in the context of ethnographic museums, do not lack authenticity, on the contrary they become an independent source of potency (Were & Rowlands 2012:4). These observations, based on a case study done in the Solomon Islands, suggest that digital objects – through their handling and possession – are tangible assets, for many indigenous communities, which means they possess their cultural goods, even if those are in the cyberspace (Were & Rowlands 2012:11). In short both authors

sees that the collaborations between museums and communities (indigenous / local in this case) are mediated by the digital or rather by the digitisation of objects.

While McTavish (2006) pays attention to virtual displays at Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the Virtual Museum of Canada. Using Derrida's critique to Kant's *Parergon*, McTavish argued that virtual museums are Parerga, that is to say, simultaneously produce and challenge binary distinctions between essence and ornament, the art work and its exterior (McTavish 2006:231) differentiating between the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of a work (Ibid).

Focused on the ambiguity of museums websites, McTavish (2006) attempts to show that virtual museums which promote digital exhibitions exclusively available online are different from virtual reality galleries, but no less paradoxical (2006:243). The Virtual Museum of Canada is an example of only online display and Rijksmuseum have implemented virtual exhibitions, which according to McTavish (2006:231) potentially promotes critical appreciation of the role of museums.

However, according to McTavish (2006) both broadcasting versions reinforce the traditional role of museums, rather than challenging the physical (museums) places for contemplation and intellectual engagement, they give a contradictory message. Virtual museums often continue imposing narrative structures on objects, like the well behaved visitor, reinforcing the relationship between museums and public (McTavish 2006:233) being another disciplinary technology encouraging self surveillance (Foucault 1977; Bennett 1995).

However, the positive side of virtual museums is that they enable a more universal access, with visitors from everywhere, providing perhaps a liberating and educational experience, that nevertheless has certain spatial limits.

Geismar (2012) explored how digital technologies in museums produced social and material encounters, classifying and forging representations of relationships between people and things (Geismar 2012:266). The digital is a practice, in which museums objects are part of a broader field of representation and mediation (Geismar 2012:267).

In her analysis, Geismar (2012) mentions Isaac's (2008), perception of digital technologies as a part of new museological strategies of display, trying to take distance from colonial legacies of objectification providing a sensory engagement in museums (Geismar 2012:268). However, Geismar's work is more focused on crowd curation, tagging and open participation,

exploring if the intent of the museums to alter the public's perception about becoming open and non-hierarchical places thanks to technologies is a reality, or rather is an overrated image of what digital technologies can actually do in/at museums, thus sustaining relations of power (Geismar 2012:273).

For Geismar (2012:280-281) digital technology has the same epistemologies of cultural representation as other types of artefact and museum practices.

However, Geismar point out that museums managed by indigenous communities, can use digital technologies as a tool for criticising mainstream museum practices.

But most importantly these communities can see the digital as another object through which practices are channelled within museums (Geismar 2012:283).

Thus far, I have outlined how digital technologies in conjunction with politics of display have been previously studied in museums context.

Chapter 3

Research Design

This section presents the qualitative methodology adopted in this research and outlines the epistemological and ontological views. The approach to the analysis is then discussed followed by ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Epistemology and Ontology

Epistemology is concerned with how we know the world, with the question what is regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline (Bryman 2012:27). Therefore the interpretive nature of heritage calls for a reflection regarding epistemological decisions.

While ontology is concerned with social entities, with the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors. (Bryman 2012:7) Thus in this research heritage is produced by an individual thought, followed by the discourse/ social interaction, ending in the organisation/ institutionalisation

Discourse is not simply a neutral device for imparting meaning (Bryman 2012:529) Thus the emphasis is placed on the versions of reality propounded by members of the social setting being investigated and on the fashioning of that reality through their renditions of it (Ibid).

According to Bryman (2012) discourses should be examined in relation to social structures, including the power relationships that are responsible for occasioning them (Bryman 2012:537) As a researcher I seek to trace how discourses are constructed and maintained in relation to certain phenomena (Ibid).

This research is based on discourse analytical method, taking into account ontological and materialist approaches. This thesis acknowledges the ways in which museum objects, are mutually constitutive and constructed from discursive practices.

Furthermore this research understands the digital as a discursive formation, used to reinforce scientific truths (regimes of truth) and to hold political ideologies and power.

Research Method

It is important to highlight that there is no strict method of Foucauldian discourse analysis and Foucault himself explains this in his inaugural lecture at the College de France. In the order of discourse (1981) specifically he argues what ‘discursive analysis’ should entail, arguing that in every society the production of discourse is at the same time controlled, selected and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose function is to conjure up powers and dangers, to dominate the random event and to dodge its heavy and fearsome materiality (Foucault 1981:52)

According to Foucault, discourse is a conceptual domain in which knowledge is formed and produced. Discourse, as well is culturally constructed being a representation of reality where re/produces both power and knowledge simultaneously (Foucault 1981).

To Foucault (1970; 1975; 1981; 2002), discourse analysis can reveal hegemonic perspectives or authoritative knowledges. At the same time, when analysing discourses we are performing an exercise of power, in order to understand practices and through which, different social phenomena are perceived and constructed. We are performing, so to speak, a diagnosis by exploring effects and consequences-criticising most of the time—claims of truth. It is therefore necessary to examine how critique is also a discourse constructed from the subjectivity of the researcher (Foucault 1975-1976, Foucault 2002) and therefore producing -if not- new truth (s) a different truth(s).

To attend to the processes mentioned above, I have based this research on two case studies. A sample of museums with different characteristics in terms of collections, time a space were virtual observed/visited. According to Bryman (2012:66) case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case, and it is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question (Ibid). According to Bryman (2012:45) case studies have to collect data as well, because they are not a method itself. This case study heavily relies on observation, and examination of texts, images and documents, considered research methods in order to provide data (Bryman 2012:45).

Following Pink's (2016) approach of the so called digital ethnography, considering that digital media technologies, are mutable and in constant motion (Pink et al. 2016:75). I have conducted online observations of both museums and their virtual exhibits; in which the field site was comprise of images, texts, video and even virtual reality.

Selection and Analysis of Materials

Studying museum collections has been a long tradition among archaeology, heritage studies and anthropology. However studying virtual collections and politics of display all together is relatively an emerging area.

I chose two museums that have the following characteristics:

- Accessibility to virtual visits and exhibitions, including interactive tools and even applications, games or other items related to digital connectivity.
- Museums that have an important institutional representation in Chinese society, so to say museums that are run by the State.
- A multilingual website or at least have access to information in english language.

The primary data consists on four permanent virtual collections of two museums located in Beijing, the digital collections are physically located at the Forbidden City/The Palace Museum and at the National Museum of China. The second part of my data consists of academic papers, books and media articles related to digital media, museums, heritage and Chinese heritage collections.

Ethical Considerations

Neither contact with informants nor interaction with users were performed. This research strives to present an open and detailed interpretation of the multiple images that are provided by two different museum websites. Drawing inspiration on Pink' et al. (2016) about digital ethnography I understand that the researchers subjectivity is central in the research process, inasmuch as visual technologies may be interpreted differently by those who participate in the research. The author (researcher) has a regulatory function of meaning; at the same time, this function acts as an element that controls meaning. According to Pink' et al. (2016) authors as individuals are capable of start discourses and disappeared into the discourses.

Challenges and limitations

One of the main challenges was how to study virtual museums, that is, to try to combine discourse analysis with a sort of multi-sited ethnography as a spectator from the other side of the screen.

Another challenge and limitation is that this is a virtual fieldwork therefore, I have only made references to museum websites who have English language entrance. This has been a deliberate choice due to lack of Chinese language proficiency, acknowledging this fact as an aspect that can condition not only the methodology but can also restrict the objectives and results of the research.

Furthermore, this research heavily relies on most available English-language literature about politics of heritage in China, as well as references in Chinese websites in English language. As a consequence, there may be a potential risk of missing accurate information displayed in the museums' websites; likewise translations of specific contexts may affect and thereby limit the analysis of this work.

However it is worth mentioning that for most of the cases in which translation was required, I had access to a Mandarin native speaker.

Reflexivity

The design of this qualitative study is shaped not only by the nature of the topic but also by the way in which I understand the social world from a position that has been fuelled by different non Western and Western perceptions of heritage. This [researcher] role, despite gender or ethnic background, drives and shapes the present study, through the authority that academy grants to the production of knowledge developed within its boundaries, is to say, as a valid interpretation of a determined social phenomena. Nevertheless the present research is not free from subjectivity of previous research experiences.

As an anthropological archaeologist I am biased in different points regarding heritage, production of knowledge, and discourses about the (non) importance of heritage. It does not however mean, that my relation with heritage and museums is reduced to technicalities and particular ways to interpret/study collections. I consider that engagement with heritage has

emotional features that can provoke different reactions. Moreover as an archaeologist, I want to encourage self-reflection about concepts of heritage and knowledge.

Chapter 4

Theoretical Framework

According to Bryman (2012:528) Critical Discourse Analysis, henceforth CDA seeks to link language and its modes of use to the significance of power and social difference in society. CDA emphasises the role of language as a power resource that is related to ideology and socio-cultural change Bryman (2012:536).

Somehow close to the CDA we find Foucault's approach to discourse, which is the path that this thesis will pursue. In what follows I shall account for the Foucauldian notion of discourse.

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Foucault understands that the materiality of discourse obeys a historical a priori that has given it life, and it is a set of 'practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault 2002:49). That is to say the process of meaning-making and the interaction of knowledge/power (Foucault 2002). Now this task has remained in the hands of discursive practices, which create objects and subjects, and give meaning to the world from the intertwining, from the opposition, from the void in which discourses are articulated (Foucault 2002).

The discursive analysis of Foucault (2002) sees the subject constantly displaced, projected into perennial agony. By discourse, Foucault does not understand a simple verbal update, but "a group of sequences of signs, this discursive formations are a set of statements that depend on the same system of formation" (Foucault 2002:107).

Discourse is constituted in the discursive formations and it takes power in the subject that makes it the object of desire. Desire and power insert it into the 'will of truth' which controls, selects and redistributes discursive production (Foucault 1981).

Discourse thus, is embedded in every practice or as Foucault (2002) argued that nothing is outside the discourse, therefore discourses constructs truth and knowledge, thus power (Ibid).

They (discourses) are meanings, images and ideas operating ontologically and epistemologically in every realm. Foucauldian genealogical analysis, may help to understand which of the digital discourses displayed at the museums' websites, have historical and political roots. Which in turn, could be used to question and transform heritage and digital practices.

The processes that have characterised the limits of discursive activity - motivated by desire and power - are exclusion - forbidden - separation, rejection and the will to truth. Not everything can be said, not everything is allowed to say it and not anyone can do it.

The second control group is the 'event and chance' which involved the comment, the author and discipline.

Foucault's analysis of discourses strongly rejects self-consciousness and continuity as the basis for discursive analysis. He emphasised that discourses are functional units. In that context, he argued, is not only the language that enables us to say things but discourses that have been said (Foucault 1998:290).

In the order of discourse ([1971]1981) Foucault assumes "that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality" (Foucault 1981:52). Acknowledging that there are internal procedures to control discourses, since discourses themselves exercise their own control. This own control occurs between a division of canonical texts and their commentaries, said otherwise that some texts are privileged and follow a hierarchical order. In this regard, the commentaries will be the opposite to truly/original/authentic. Furthermore allowing that a discourse can always be re-actualised (Foucault 1981:56-57).

The author, plays also a role of as principle of rarefaction in discourse, as focus of coherence; whose function has been eroded in scientific discourse (Foucault 1981:58). Another principle of limitation, which it is relative and mobile is called disciplines. Disciplines are opposite to the author because are defined by objects, by a set of methods, definitions of techniques and propositions considered to be true (Foucault 1981:59). Moreover disciplines are made up of errors as well as truths (Foucault 1981:60) becoming a principle of control over the

production of discourse; setting limits for discourse by re-actuation of the rules (Foucault 1981:61). Lastly Foucault compares the institutionalised act of writing with the societies of discourse, which though diffuse is certainly constrained (Foucault 1981:63).

Discursive Practice

This term refers to a historically and culturally specific set of rules for organising and producing different forms of knowledge. It is not a matter of external determinations being imposed on people's thought, rather it is a matter of rules which, a bit like the grammar of a language, allow certain statements to be made (Foucault 2002:131).

Albeit Foucault (1998 [1967d]) argued that discourse does not underlie all cultural forms, such as art and music; he also noted: that there is nothing to be gained from describing autonomous layer of discourses unless one can relate it to other layers, practices, institutions, social relations, political relations, and so on (1998:284). Nonetheless, analysis of these discursive practices can reveal the hegemony of certain concepts or perspectives.

As Foucault (1998:284) pointed out description of statements (discourses in history, ethnology, linguistics) is twofold and therefore is infinite; it is closed, insofar as it tends to establish the theoretical model of accounting for the relations that exist between the discourses being studied.

To analyse a current discursive practice, it must take into account the discursive accumulation rather than overcome differences (within the discourse). To describe is to refer discursive practices, positivities, essences to the discursive formations in which they have arisen, and why they occur in a certain time and space (Foucault 2002).

This analysis does not seek to uncover or to interpret, rather to describe how it has been possible to say (make) a statement (Foucault 1981).

Regimes of truth and Discursive Formations

Foucault introduces the concept of 'regime of truth' first in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and subsequently in 1976' lecture of "Society Must Be Defended". Regime of truth is defined as the historically specific mechanisms which produce discourses which function as true in particular times and places. Foucault (1976) argued that truth is "a system of ordered

procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and functioning of statements”. Truth it is linked “by a circular relation to systems of power which produce and sustain truths.

For Foucault, one of the essential political problems was try to change our “political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth” where truth is modeled on the form of scientific discourse (Foucault 1976:113-114).

Discursive formations are not fully transformed into their structure when they give way to discourses. In them there are gaps, limits, cuts; they are not a uniform totality, but a dispersion of statements. Discursive formations only resort to the supposed continuity of history in order to indicate the moment of birth and the rupture of a given discourse. In the fracture there is no continuity, there is no time or becoming (Foucault 2002:32-34).

The statements are in close correlation with the discursive formations, and every statement is the product of a certain discursive regularity. They are not invented, their configuration is given within the discourse itself (Foucault 1981, Foucault 2002).

Chapter 5

Virtual heritage in the making

Cultural heritage has been defined by various authors as a discursive formation (Fowler, 1992; Smith 2004; Waterton et al. 2007; Winter 2012; Wu 2015); as a process in constant construction (Harrison 2015) or as experience of consumption (Kvan 2008). But since heritage can be translated from different perspectives, I argued that heritage is in constant negotiation with its disciplinary role.

In tangible heritage and even interpretation of intangible heritage, there is no such thing as heritage making from below (Aigner 2016). There are experiences in Oceania, Canada, North America and South America about, how indigenous populations conceive and curate cultural expressions, and material culture at sites and communitarian museums. This is something however in developing, being in some cases a double-edged experience. Although still constricted to the approval of the experts or their perspectives; has become a political experience, considering that at the bottom it is about policies and resources.

These implementations mentioned above, may be conceptualised as anti-colonialist practices. Nonetheless, diverse experiences show that the local dynamics are much more complex, power relationships of internal colonialism are persistent and can shift between social and ethnic groups. Another issue to take into account, is the emergence of new elites, which in turn, have taken the responsibility and the right to categorise which items deserved to be seen or considered heritage or not.

In the Chinese case, tradition or the invention of tradition moves to the politics of representation and thus into politics of display promoted by the state, becoming heritage. The power of heritage (material and immaterial culture, sites and landscapes) plays now, more than ever, an important role in the transnational arena, not only for its economic and symbolic importance but above all for its political connotations.

The control of cultural heritage in modern China it is a political issue first and foremost (Lai 2016:79). In this sense, focusing on the digital engagement of heritage, there is a critical question about how the state makes use of the past and reinforces heritage in the making. Thus from a Foucauldian perspective, discourses of heritage not only can be said, the discursive production of space and location (displaying) can be seen (virtual heritage collections) and its consequences are key when it comes to sustain authority and truth at epistemological and ontological levels. As Maags & Svensson (2018) pointed out, heritage production in China is shaped by its present and past political system and in this particular case, regardless of whether it is virtual or tangible.

Another issue that should be discussed within the frame of Chinese heritage in the making is the destruction of objects (unmaking) related with the Cultural Revolution. Destroying heritage, material and symbolic elements is a manifestation of power. In this matter it is important, to think about the political exercise of recognising or rejecting something as (mine, our, yours) heritage. Although, if we look at the past, we will find that destruction is a solution beyond being a political act (Benton 2010:126-128).

Throughout history, we have seen how the destruction of heritage is a way of rewriting history, of erasing subaltern narratives, ethnic and social groups in short is an explicit and violent way of exerting power through the invisibilisation of the other.

In the following chapters, two websites of two Chinese State museums are analysed, the National Museum of China, henceforth NMC and the Palace Museum or Forbidden City.

Chapter 6

The National Museum of China

The National Museum of China, henceforth NMC has about a century of trajectory, in 1912 started with the Preparatory Office of the Museum of Chinese History, founded on July 9 of the same year. After the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1st 1949 the museum was renamed as the Beijing Museum of History. Around 1959, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China decided to begin constructing the National Museum of Chinese History and the National Museum of Chinese Revolution. In 1969, the National Museum of Chinese History and the National Museum of Chinese Revolution merged and renamed as the National Museum of Chinese Revolution and History. However, in 2003 the museum adopted its current name the National Museum of China.

Like many architectural structures that embodied political ideas (Benton 2010:130) the atrium and the general view of the NMC is designed to overpower the individual by its scale (Ibid). Albeit Benton (2010) used this terms, making reference to the German National Socialist Air Ministry Reichsluftfahrtministerium, describing the building as an archetypical Fascist construction. The disciplinary structure and dimensions (Foucault 1975) of the NMC clearly intended to denote power. However, Denton (2014:70) related this more to monumentality and imperial nostalgia.

The NMC has a large collection of archaeological artefacts (jades, bronzes, pottery, pictorial bricks, porcelain and gold and silver objects), calligraphy and paintings from the Tang and Five Dynasties, to modern periods and numismatics. I have chosen the permanent online exhibitions due its discursive connotation about China. The website (english version) is relatively user friendly. I use the term relatively because there is not a diversity of options, as it happens with the website in Chinese language.

Besides Chinese there are nine language options, all of them have the same restrictions as the english version, understanding restrictions as the amount of information available, to read, to see, to watch, to comment and to share.

While the Chinese version is different regarding the use of aesthetics, the space distribution, shapes and colours are carefully designated to display an overwhelming amount of information between images, texts and links.

The museum website has many options for audiences to engage with the artworks and free-choice interactive and participatory educational components such as games, quizzes, and storytelling for children. There are also links to the accounts that the museum has on Sina Weibo, Baidu, Youku, QQ International Tencent Weibo and a link with the China Central Television CCTV.

Ancient China

This is a permanent exhibition, featuring 2,520 objects, of those 2,026 are cultural relics, with 521 being first-rate (NMC website). The NMC website broadcast the following introductory text:

One of the permanent exhibitions hosted by the National Museum of China, Ancient China is on display in altogether ten galleries. Using a large number of valuable cultural relics, it gives a complete picture of the long Chinese history from the prehistoric times to the late Qing Dynasty and shows in a comprehensive way the vitality and continuous evolution of Chinese civilisation. It also demonstrates the historical process of building a multi-ethnic country by Chinese people from different ethnic groups, their splendid political, economic, and cultural achievements, and their contributions to human civilisation. This exhibition incorporates advantages of its forerunner, the exhibition entitled General Chinese History, and draws on the latest academic findings as well as advice from renowned Chinese experts. Ancient China features 2,520 objects, including 2,026 cultural relics, among them 521 being first-rate. These objects are grouped into eight sections: "Prehistoric Times", "Xia, Shang, and Western Zhou Dynasties", "Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods", "Qin and Han Dynasties", "Three Kingdoms, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties", "Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties", "Liao, Song, Xixia, Jin, and Yuan Dynasties", and "Ming and Qing Dynasties."³

³National Museum of China Ancient China. Introductory text published on the museum website: <http://ancientchina.chnmuseum.cn/en/> [15 May 2017]

The gallery of images are accompanied by brief explanatory texts, the Ancient China collection are grouped into eight sections from prehistoric times to Ming and Qing dynasties.

- 1) From Prehistoric Times (c. 2 million years ago)
- 2) 2) Xia, Shang, Western Zhou Dynasties (c. 21st century–771 BC)
- 3) Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods (770–221 BC)
- 4) Qin and Han Dynasties (221 BC–220 AD).
- 5) Three Kingdoms, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties (220–589 AD)
- 6) Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties (581–960 AD)
- 7) Liao, Song, Xixia, Jin, and Yuan Dynasties (916–1368)
- 8) Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368–1911)

The Road of rejuvenation

‘The Chinese nation, a country of diligence, courage, wisdom, and peace, has made indelible contributions to the progress of human civilisation. National prosperity has been the object of unremitting pursuit for many generations. The Road of Rejuvenation is one of the museum’s permanent exhibitions that reflects the Opium War of 1840 onward, the consequent downfall into an abyss of semi-imperial and semi-feudal society, the protests of people of all social strata who had suffered, and the many attempts at national rejuvenation particularly the Communist Party of China’s fight for the liberation and independence of people of every ethnicity. The exhibition demonstrates the glorious but long course of achieving national happiness and prosperity and full reveals how the people chose Marxism, the Communist Party of China, socialism, and the reform and opening-up policy. It attests to the Chinese priority of holding high the unwavering banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and of remaining firmly committed to the Chinese socialist road and theory. Today, Chinese civilisation already stands tall in the East. With the bright prospects of the Great Revival already before us, the dreams and pursuits of Chinese sons and daughters will surely be achieved’.⁴

The above-mentioned text is the opening of the online permanent exhibition (English version) at the NMC website, a narrative showing what Denton (2014) already pointed out: a

⁴ National Museum of China, The Road of Rejuvenation introductory text published at the museum website <http://www.chnmuseum.cn/english/tabid/520/Default.aspx?ExhibitionLanguageID=83> [15 May 2017]

division between Ancient and Modern China after the Opium War of (1839-1842) ignoring whatsoever domestic forms of modernity. The abyss of semi-feudal society makes reference to class, to imperial and feudal previous social organisations, trying to portrayed the revolution as the enlightenment, as if where the only and principal narrative of this exhibit (Denton 2014:63-66). In the outskirts of this text there is no other narrative(s), images, videos or virtual tour on the English version website. Changing the browser to Spanish and Italian version, the name of the exhibit uses the word ‘Renaissance’ which has much stronger connotations in philosophical and aesthetic terms than Rejuvenation. Nevertheless, when the browser is changed to Mandarin version, the exhibit becomes a set of discursive practices of images and texts, the virtual tour turns on a political statements.



Figure 1. Screen shot The Road of Rejuvenation. National Museum of China website Chinese version

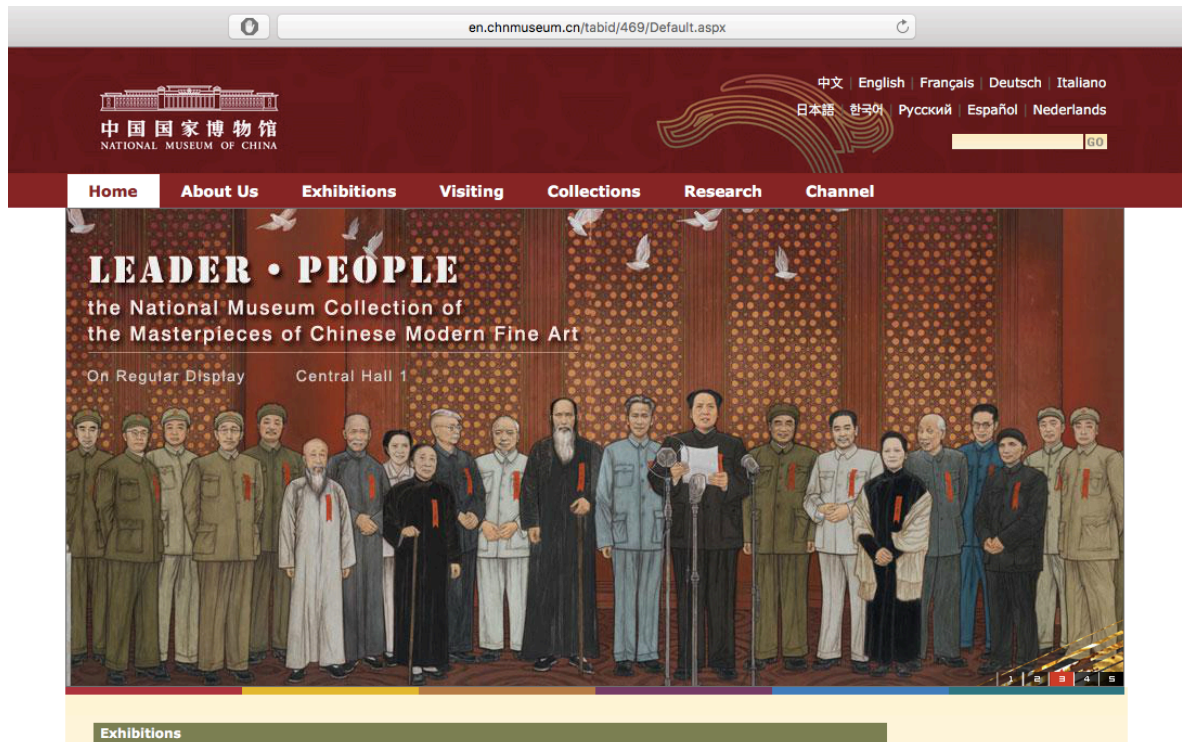


Figure 2. Screen shot The Road of Rejuvenation. National Museum of China website English version

Chapter 7

The Palace Museum/The Forbidden City

In order to understand the magnitude of the Palace Museum /Forbidden City, it is necessary to go back to its origins and the trajectory towards a cultural state institution. In the following section I will first refer to the circumstances in which the Forbidden City becomes a museum. Thereafter I will focus in the current permanent online exhibitions and the digital capacities of the Palace Museum/Forbidden City.

The Forbidden City was built from 1406 to 1420 by the third emperor Yongle (r. 1403-1420) of the Ming dynasty. As a result of the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, most of the objects were moved to the Forbidden City for public display (Chang 1996; Shan 2005).

The origins of the Palace Museum go back to 1914, and it was known as the Guwu Chenliesuo, or Gallery of Antiquities. Its creation were politically motivated, primarily by the need to occupy the palace space, in order to frustrate any intent of restoration of the monarchy (Chang 1996). In 1925 The Palace Museum became a public institution. During 1926, the government proposed that the Government Museum shall be integrated with the Palace Museum to form a Guoli Bowuyuan or a national museum. Eventually this happened in 1948 (Varutti 2014).

The website section *About the Museum* recounts how collections were evacuated just after the outbreak of World War II to Shanghai, while another artefacts were sent it to Nanjing. The Sino-Japanese war and the Chinese Civil War are brought into the collective memory through paragraphs written in this section. The efforts that were made to protect relics from Japanese hands are mentioned as well as the different routes that the crates took.

These collections ended in Taiwan, the Kuomintang selected 2,972 crates to be shipped across the Strait for storage in Taichung. Since then, those artefacts are part of the Taipei Palace Museum, collection.

The current collections of the Palace Museum consist of artefacts from Qing imperial collection, pottery from prehistoric times, bronzes and jades from the Shang and Zhou dynasties, pottery tomb figurines from the Han dynasty, stone sculpture from the Northern and Southern Dynasties, and pottery from the Tang dynasty. An extensive collection of paintings, scrolls, and calligraphy from the Jin, Sui, Song and Tang dynasties, around 1.8 million works of art, according The Palace Museum website.

The bronze and jade virtual galleries

The collection currently includes over 15,000 works of bronze from throughout Chinese dynastic history. Notably, approximately 10,000 articles in the collection date from before the Qin dynasty (221-207 BCE). The Bronze Age of China it is situated among the Shang and the Zhou, bronze was a fashionable, elitist good, linked with war, rituals and status. Early foundries were located at Anyang, the capital of the late Shang dynasty from about 1300 to 1050 BC. Located in northeastern Henan province (Thorp 2013).

Bronze artefacts production are linked with a high level of technical development. The Palace Museum has among its collections Chinas early bronze artefacts, related with the Xia dynasty (ca. 1900-1500 BC). As technical this information may appear, lies another intrinsic connotation, and is the technical capacities of Chinese ‘civilisation’ since prehistoric periods. This connotation tells us that beyond the dynasties, China has a long trajectory of early development, a high technological capacity for thousands of years. This helps to legitimise the Chinese ADH.

As I have stressed elsewhere, jade has an intimate relation with Chinese heritage, it is a representation of authority and divinity. Following this discursive use of jade stones, the Palace Museum collection includes approximately 30,000 articles of jade or precious stone.

Besides the Bi disk and the Tsung, another three representative jade relics recall attention, two from early periods are displayed at the website: the great jade dragon, a neolithic piece related to Neolithic Hongshan culture (ca. 8000-2000 BCE) and the jade Bixie dated within

Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) And a piece called the Sculpture of the Nine Elders of Huichang, related to the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). The Palace Museum, invites to explore the intrinsic relation of jade stone as a token of the legitimacy, moral authority and virtuosity from antiquity to nowadays. Therefore the museum has an entire hall dedicated to this stone The Jade Gallery.

Virtual Tours: The Period halls, galleries and palaces

Period halls, palaces and galleries at the Palace Museum are the embodiment of the elites and their ancestors, a physical and symbolical remainder of the ideological enemies of the CCP and the revolution. These sites served for collective rituals and festivals in which people make obeisance to their ancestors, bringing offerings of food, flowers, incense and other material items. Lineage feasts and meetings weddings and other celebrations were carried out there.

Among the most impressive palaces are: the Palace of Heavenly Purity, was the place where emperors slept and worked. The Palace of Longevity and Health was reserved for empress dowagers. The Palace of Eternal spring, where the emperor's consorts resided, on the walls of the corridors are a series of 18 paintings of scenes from 'Honglou meng' (classical novel of Chinese literature).

Lineage halls vary in their level of construction and decoration, depending on the wealth of lineage members. But they all have elements in common, such as furniture and ritual objects and their placement. Inside the halls, altars take different forms facing the entryway.

Ancestral tablets embodying ancestors are displayed by seniority, and ritual items such as incense censers, divination blocks, and figures.

Between the 1950's and the 1960's, ancestral halls were considered counter revolutionary. During this time, ancestral halls were either destroyed or secularised to function as village schools or granaries during the land reform. Fortunately the halls that compose the Palace Museum were protected under the same tuition of the government.

The Hall of Supreme Harmony is the most important in the Forbidden City, in terms of size and architecture, is commonly referred to as the Hall of Golden Chimes. Another important building is the Hall of Understanding and Bringing Peace is located in the northern part of

the Garden of Compassion and Tranquility; the main hall has a hip-and-gable roof in yellow glazed tiles and the enclosed porch has a round-ridge hip-and-gable roof. Originally was a place to enshrine the statues of Buddha and to store the Buddhist scriptures. Finally the Hall of Union, was assigned to the empress.

An idea of dissonance concerned with the symbolism of halls and palaces all together with the Chinese government might be expected. Nevertheless, the online presentation has been carefully prepared to exploit the aesthetic and focus more in architecture, murals and functionality.

The use of virtual reality lenses enhances the quality of the experience. Much attention has been paid to architectonic details, the significance and distribution of the murals and so on. Every hall, palace and gallery have its own location map, usually displayed on a floor plan in an upper corner of the screen.

Across the Silk Road

The feeling of being without being in the Forbidden City, never ceases to amaze, being able to be part of this experience makes this site one of the most important and visited in China. The connotations that carry the virtual tours pass from space intervention to the appropriation of the digital as another form of material culture.

With not doubt The silk route exhibition its not only one of the most interesting, but also the most visited digital proposals at the Palace Museum.

To briefly contextualise, the Silk Road formally established during the Han Dynasty, as a trade route. From the 10th century onwards a newly chartered maritime silk road carried Chinese porcelain and tea to North Africa⁵ and Europe. The silk road linked regions of the ancient world in commerce and even broader multiethnic relations with India, Mesopotamia, Greece, Rome, and Britain (Chang 1986).

⁵ The Forbidden City Museum Palace, fragment of the text published at the website in the virtual tour of the maritime silk road <http://www.artronpano.com/scene/b3wRJ7G4dqzScfUM1XScQXVxILuvXsRe/ggsiluzhan//tour.html>

The Silk Route display has 142 items especially related to the Maritime Silk Road. The objects exhibit here, represent mostly the imperial past. It is interesting that among antiquities such as jades, Buddhas, bronzes and porcelains, there are framed portraits (in baroque style) of the Chinese emperor. Additionally to this exhibit, there is a painting exhibitions, announced on the website of the Palace Museum "Tribute to 'the Belt and Road Initiatives': The Silk Road Spirit and a Brand New Chapter of Contemporary Chinese Painting".

Another feature that caught my attention, was Edward Elgar's Op. 12 as a background music, performed by Chinese pianist Di Xia while other virtual tours at the Palace Museum website use *Guoyue* (national music) and traditional Chinese music as background. It's still a mystery to me why engage the display with music of an English composer. I have translated this as an attempt to highlight the international character of the Silk Route through Di Xia's interpretation as an international artist and influential personality in China.



Figure 3. Screenshot The Silk Road gallery

The Palace Museum website

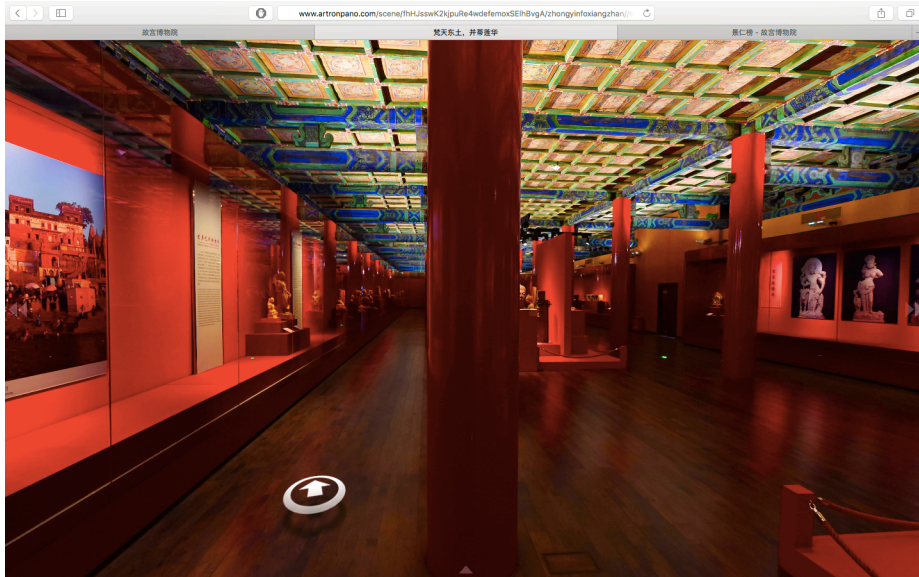


Figure 4. Screenshot The Silk Road gallery

The Palace Museum website

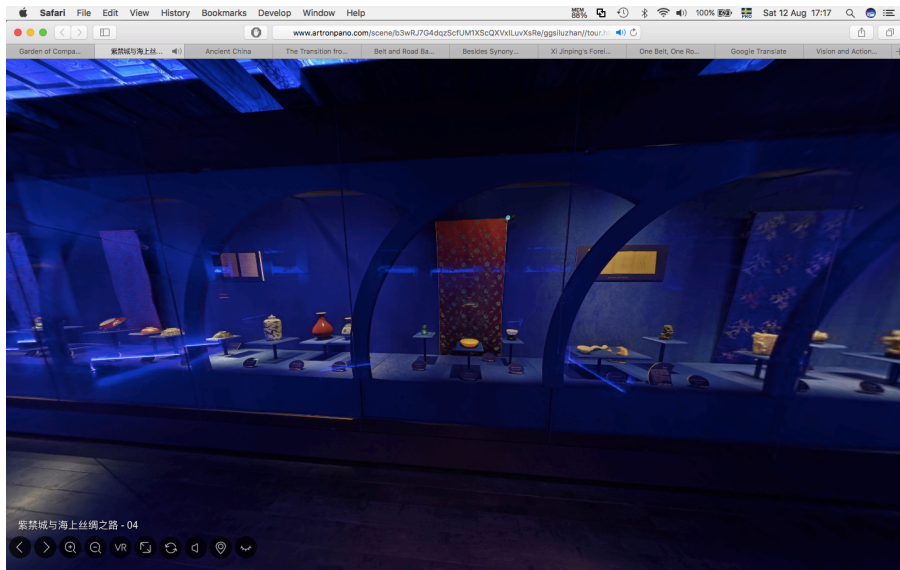


Figure 5. Screenshot The Maritime Silk Road gallery

The Palace Museum website

Chapter 8

The Digital Tiang Ming⁶

Bennett (1995:19) argued that museums were fashioned as a vehicle for new forms of exercising power. That is to say that items displayed in a museum have political connotations that must be seen. Following this idea and based on the online collections at the Palace Museum website and at MNC, I have chosen bronze and jade objects, the Silk Route, the Road of rejuvenation and halls and palaces as the most representative elements of digital Chinese heritage online.

Precisely as Varutti (2014) criticised in strict terms of display boards, the NMC lacks information or context for more than a few objects. If we follow what Smith (2006) identifies as a part of the AHD I shall argue that specialists (in China) in their roles of experts and care takers of the past (Smith 2006) validate that certain objects are exposed only by their aesthetic attributes, leaving aside its social life (Appadurai 1986:5).

This certainly is an extreme top-down heritage view. However, there may be other reasons why the objects in this collection lack contextual information. The first explanation, is quite simple and technical, and occurs in other museums of the world. There are a number of archaeological objects that were found out of context, either because they were expelled, looted, stolen, donated, acquired under doubtful circumstances or because they were obtained without proper archaeological techniques that can provide some cultural context. For any of these reasons, the object in question may lack information or as Varutti (2014) prefers to call social biography. In any case to solve these questions, we should start another research thesis on curatorial work and the provenance of objects in museum collections and ask why the NMC decided to exhibit decontextualised objects.

The second explanation it may be, that despite museum experts are aware that there are decontextualised objects, who may provide very little information. These objects are exhibit for their aesthetics and above all symbolic value. In the eyes of non-specialised audiences,

⁶ Tiang Ming (天命) could be understood as a political-religious doctrine used to grant legitimacy to the emperor, being considered the son of heaven. Therefore the term Tiang Ming can be read as the mandate of heaven or the legitimacy of rulers.

the symbolic and the aesthetic will become main attributes. Since in the public arena, any objects displayed in museums are understood/legitimised as highly scientific and/or cultural value. None dares to question what museums decide to exhibit.

Based on the above, a third possibility is that experts are aware that whatever object is exhibited in the museum, enjoys scientific legitimacy. Since museums are based on regimes that are reinforced by a set of rules that organise, and produce knowledge; displaying or not an object as heritage is a political exercise, and might as well be part of a deliberated museum policy in China, rather than a technical problem.

This is not of course a condescending explanation. Conversely China is broadcasting purposefully its political power through heritage, aesthetics and cultural expressions at local and international level.

During 2011, one year before Xi Jinping and its Chinese Dream takes over the power, the exhibit the Road of Rejuvenation was called 'The Road to Revival'. As Varutti (2014:113) noticed, spatially the Road of Rejuvenation, starts precisely where Ancient China ends in a linear storytelling. What has caught my attention, is that in the english version website the Road of Rejuvenation it is represented by a single graphic, and a very short text. As if there were only two periods in the eyes of the state: Ancient /Imperial China and contemporary China or the Chinese Dream era.

The Road of Rejuvenation is marked by looking back at the roots (Ancient China) as an inspiration, as a model of power and legitimation. It is no coincidence that OBOR based on the ancient Silk Route is part of Xi Jinping's Chinese Dream. Rejuvenation has become a political word, clearly associated with Xi Jinping policies. Here rejuvenation is understood as renaissance, although not explicitly, perhaps as a sign of semantic shyness in front of the Anglophone world or simply as a strategy based on different targets.

This Chinese renaissance is partly based on adaptations of ancient details (ideological, political, aesthetic, social, cultural and technological) and compositional forms to contemporary uses, characterised by unique expressions. At first glance they may seem free and inventive. They are using however, isolated details from the past with special attention, to

the formulation and composition of words, images and things (objects) to broadcast a message.

The motifs, sculptures and photographs, are political statements, the walls in red and pink are the preamble of Mao Zedong photographs in a pop-fashioned aesthetics. This deliberated contemporary pop icon-glory displays the revolution as a form of art, as a romantic view of the leader. It is a nod to the imperial past and it is a praise to the socialist market economy. But above all is broadcasting a regime of truth.

These assemblages of things, images and colours that construct a discourse about the past, play with the collective memory in conjunction with individual emotions. The composition also shows that important events have been omitted such The Cultural Revolution and The Great Leap Forward (Varutti 2014:117). Instead a strong visual impact of sculptures that recreate historical moments, suggest an epic revolutionary narrative, in which China is a new nation, born and unified thanks to the revolution (Denton 2014:31).

In both virtual galleries, display techniques and discursive practices, become one ensemble, reenact a past of longevity, tradition and struggle with a present of diversity and unity. As Denton (2014:267) argues the state may not have the same hegemony over political discourses that may have in earlier years; however still have the power to shape representations of the past and influence historical memory (Ibid.)

Displays of archaeological and ethnographic collections conceived within institutions (academic and governmental) are always produced and regulated by the experts. This is exactly what we can observe at the NMC website; bronze representations are related with political authority from Shang and Zhou periods. In this sense, bronze artefacts are tokens of a cultural system bearing political meaning by virtue of their link to the nation (Varutti 2014:17).

Bronze in China represents expansion, unification, and imperial power. Moreover a statement made with bronze objects in China, is a reminder of legitimacy, unification and power.

Within Chinese traditions, jade embodied the five virtues: charity, modesty, courage, justice and wisdom symbolising nobility, perfection and immortality (Chang 1986). In addition it

was considered to be the key to earthly protection and everlasting life (Thorp 2013). In sum, throughout China's history, jade has been a symbol of immortality and virtue. For millennia, jade has been an intimate part of the history of the dynasties, which are now recognised as part of an inheritance of the Chinese nation –as a whole– and not just as a Han legacy.

The broadcasting message here, is that China owns its past, and therefore is capable of shaping the future through the revolution. The past is important and is pedagogical, the past is an interpretation of the present, just in order to teach new generations about the importance of the Chinese Dream and the revolution.

Whilst the Palace Museum / Forbidden City is a complicated entanglement of Chinese heritage. The most important exhibits are the Maritime Silk Road and the Silk Road.

Nowadays, both (roads) have found its contemporary version, known as the One Belt One Road initiative (OBOR) as the most ambitious political and economic project, launched in 2013 by Xi Jinping. OBOR is aimed to promote joint development, common prosperity and cooperation between China and many countries across Asia.

OBOR is based on connectivity and economic cooperation between China and the rest of Eurasia (Nie 2016) precisely as a *techne* (Foucault 1977) who focuses on the economic-financial and political governance spheres.

It seems that the background idea of this display, is to show an almost natural sequence of heritage in China, from the imperial period to our days. All this using objects, and images as analogies of the discourse of One Belt One Road (OBOR).

The Silk Road as the OBOR promoted cultural exchange, a flow of goods and ideas from Orient to Western and vice-versa. Both promoted economic integration of central and south Asia, promoting the use of technologies, translated to our days in infrastructural development. Both roads, build diplomacy and relations with different social groups and political units, nowadays we can understand that as foreign policy. Finally the ancient and the contemporary route, enabled connectivity between groups of different geographical points, producing different goods, inasmuch accelerating cross border investments.

The Silk Road virtual tour, it is important by virtue of being a political display about China as an imperial power. This exhibit is a political statement, a matter of security and surveillance. Asia in general, is in need for improvement of its infrastructure. The Silk Road exhibit, it is a direct reference to One Road One Belt, as an answer and opportunity to re-exert economic and political power in transnational terms.

Furthermore, promoting that restless neighbours cooperate and reduce tensions with China. Broadly speaking, this initiative brings the past in order to shape the present and the future with very clear objectives, Chinese control over investment and projects in south east and central Asia. As Nie (2016) explains, China is using One Belt, One Road to shape international rules and norms, to influence global economic order, aimed to achieve Xi’s domestic “China Dream” and international “national rejuvenation” (Nie 2016:423). In sum The Silk Road exhibition is another way to legitimise a political aim through heritage discourses, reshaping memory in order to regulate the present.



Figure 6. The Palace Museum app ceramic trajectory time line

The Palace Museum app

Chapter 9

The digital as a material culture

Being a spectator in virtual museum exhibitions, and despite to subjective arbitrary interpretations to which we are always exposed. I emphasise Bryman's (2012) argument that approaching symbols and meanings through signs that underlie in the texts, and photographs of performances, provides an option to see beyond the obvious ordinariness, to uncover a hidden meaning so to speak (Bryman 2012:559-560).

The museum through applications and digital tools, has become a place, where creating personal narratives is now possible. Museum selfies and sharing content is a way of creating interactivity in static settings. In addition, narrative interventions pierced authorised knowledge by common knowledge and even imagination. This is, so to speak, a joint way of curating exhibitions.

All this digital interventions required involvement and interaction with the objects, with the narratives of the museum and with the digital bringing somehow audiences into the museum.

These interventions, which may vary from selfies in museum exhibitions, tags, check in at exhibits, to curatorial discussions online, are somewhat binding and can change perspectives at public level. Promoting access to art as a cultural and consumption good, is possible through online displays. Whilst interventions in physical exhibits are left to the authoritative voice of the experts and to the institutional discourses from above (Aigner 2016:181).

But interventions of personal narratives with and about objects is not the only one. There is another way of intervention, that goes beyond and it is the disciplinary space of the museum itself as an institution. The structures employed in storing, disseminating and communicating heritage, that might be bound into linear forms, become resilient somehow flexible, intertwining temporarily with personal narratives.

Drawing inspiration from the Foucauldian account that in every society, the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain numbers of

procedures⁷(Foucault 2002:52). I attempt to show that discourse is not simply what manifests or hides desire [in this case an object] it is also the object of desire [no pun intended] is to say, discourse is the power which is to be seized (Foucault 2002:52-53).

Following the mentioned above, it is common knowledge that museums deliberately choose which objects are worthy of being displayed in their exhibitions.

The experience of virtual tours and virtual collections, sets the digital in another dimension. Visualisation can be a powerful way to have access to stories, to different perspectives can provide a space for analysis and exploration. And maybe, it can even become material culture, is not only the means rather is a lived experience, allowing us to experience another places and objects at the same time, not as a channel but as a part of the assembly collection.

Legitimacy and ethics are also strongly linked. In this regard, there are ethical considerations about digital practices in museums as Tomislav Sola argued ‘everything said about museums or put into written form is an ethical statement’ (Sola 1997:172) museums practices and ethical concerns still a space of debate, even a grey zone, probably unable to meet the needs of societies and institutions. In the digital realm per se, ethics are even more delicate when it comes to interactivity, surveillance, privacy and the use of visitors data.

Regarding whom and under what parameters are moderated the forums, is still difficult to know. As a user (native Chinese speaker) you are able to leave comments, share, download content, and shop. It is known that forum moderators, will suppress denigrating or politically incorrect comments, as would be done in any other website. Thus the possibility of open forums, sharing of content and leaving messages, does not determine whether a museum website is authoritarian or not.

Thus I argue that museums, as a part of heritage domain are devices that control visual regimes. These institutions decided what should be displayed and how, what is considered valuable and therefore preservable. Museums define who has the authority to write narratives about objects and legitimise them through the exhibitions. Museums are a representation of state authority and are exclusionary spaces with exclusionary narratives.

⁷ The production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain numbers of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality (Foucault 2002:52)

As my own experience when visiting a virtual exhibit, suddenly I found an object that arouses curiosity. The first thing I did is to search information in the web, while paying attention to the narrative of the museum, with the need however, of contextualise what I am observing. This can lead to at least two paths: One with focus on a particular piece, which leads us from search to search to a confirmation or a contested narrative of the object. Creating engagement with the virtual exhibit.

The other path can take to different entries through the search engine, by association, relevance, or by similarity. A never ending search that will lead us to a range of possibilities not only about the object itself, but throughout stories around the object, its social trajectory and even other museums and institutional websites. Something that could be impossible to happen in a physical visit to a museum. In both cases, virtual access is creating engagement with the exhibit.

Both websites are user friendly and engaged with the audience's gaze, the content-based image retrieval tools are related to emotional impressions, according to Artese et al. (2017) this 'feeling' point of view, facilitates users to retrieve images based on visual attributes related to emotions and perceptions (Artese et al. 2017:99-100) making museums websites more appealing and familiar/intimate virtual spaces.

In the case of the National Museum of China and Palace Museum, there are similarities and differences with other online exhibits, in terms of quality and interactivity. In general terms, the Palace Museum website is more interactive and user friendly, besides three tablet/smartphone applications for Chinese speaking audiences are available. I will refer to this in the following section.

Visitor generated content projects are becoming increasingly important in discussions and projects about digital heritage and museums (Giaccardi 2012; King et al. 2016 and Woods 2016) in this regard King et al. (2016:79) are concerned with experiences than with objects and with the cultural value of digital engagement itself, the perception of "actual or potential benefit" (Ibid.)

Of crucial importance, is the discussion about digital heritage and spatiality. We have to accept the idea that objects exhibited in museums are already decontextualised. In that regard,

objects that are exhibit via online platforms, have not lost any essence or meaning since they are already decontextualised in the museum itself. Perhaps the relation between the user/audience and the authoritative figure of the museum has taken a distance. However, is quite difficult to think that the object has been distanced from the discourse and narratives of the museum.

Therefore, spatiality is significant and closely related to how users/audience experience objects and places. For instance, the physical experience of the Palace Museum/Forbidden City could be far more emotional than the virtual tour. Albeit many objects, may be decontextualised in the different exhibitions; the building itself is a separate and unique experience in spatial terms (Taylor 2010, King et al. 2016).

Concerning to the scope that these museums have in the digital world, I was able to observe that there is a wider connectivity with other virtual platforms. Both websites have official accounts on Sina Weibo, Tencent Weibo, Baidu, The People Microblogging and Youku.

Yet both museums are not restricted to local digital platforms, The Palace Museum, has two official accounts on Twitter⁸. Another unofficial account on Facebook: 故宫博物院 The Palace Museum made by a Chinese travel agency⁹ and Forbidden City¹⁰.

Furthermore the hashtag **#thepalacemuseumbeijing** together with **#thepalacemuseum** has 4.147 entrances at Google while the hashtag **#theforbiddencity** has 43.600 results at Google. These hashtags include Twitter, Facebook and Instagram posts. While the hashtag **#nationalmuseumofchina** has 2.170 results at Google and 1.150 000 results when it is written in Traditional Chinese 中国国家博物馆

Thus, both websites are quite interactive on different platforms with no apparent restrictions, at local and international level. That is to say broadcasting operates over local and international audiences.

⁸ <https://twitter.com/thepalacemuseum><https://twitter.com/TZT1999>

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/BeijingPalaceMuseum/>

¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Forbidden-City/112915145389847?rf=1445210868869421>

As can be seen, digital mediation promotes a different engagement with the past. At the same time however, demands a different engagement and approach on the side of the experts, and the institutions that work with cultural heritage.

This means, that authoritative roles of museums and experts must change. As well as the ways in which heritage notions and the past is represented or displayed. Now the question is, if this is really possible and politically feasible?

The Forbidden City, is not just a historic place that represents the imperial past or Chinese nationalism. Nor is it an interactive museum. It is a disciplinary fragment of time, who contains its own sets of specific mechanisms which produce discourses that acts as truths, strengthened by a set of rules that organise and produce different forms of knowledge (Foucault 2002).

The Forbidden City/ Palace Museum have spaces lived directly through its associated images and symbols and the virtual tours and apps, hence the spaces of inhabitants and users (Lefebvre 1991:39) are active moments that needs to be actively produced.

The experience of the Palace Museum is interesting for different reasons: the online exhibits are framed around the digital space, but also constrained by discourses of imperial past and revolutionary heritage, almost in the same fashion as the MNC. It does however mean, that the nation-state is not the only player in the historical memory game (Denton 2014). The diverse narratives, are tensions that reflect post socialist sensibilities, product of a neoliberal and market oriented economy (Denton 2010:267) and the proliferation of private museums.

The Forbidden City or Palace Museum is a display about power (imperial, economic and cultural/ soft). Which in turn, legitimises the current government with a narrative of succession, from dynastic times to the CCP itself. Using discursive formations, that legitimatises the Chinese model, are not mere coincidences. Ancient halls and the Silk Road, have their own narratives about regional integration, the past included in the present. The political opposition and its beliefs are included in the halls and the Buddhist shrines, thus diminishing its political power to a mere aesthetic expression of the past.

Whilst the apps of the Palace Museum are aimed at audiences ranging from school children to adults, their approach seems to focus on the pedagogical level. With a visual gaming aesthetic the apps invites to play with textiles, use the emperor's wardrobe, design and choose fabrics and ornaments. Approaching at the same time, chronology and technological details of diverse objects (pottery, porcelain and bronze) using 3D models and augmented reality, making the visualisation, as mentioned earlier, a powerful tool to create a space of intimacy and horizontality with the objects displayed.

Being these apps a synchronous tools, enable communication between people in real time. The virtual environment in which these apps are developed, allows users to build and create their own content and objects on the network, sharing, tagging, playing, taking pictures and screenshots. In other words intervening, creating and sharing content of virtual collections.

Chapter 10

Disciplinary Cultural Heritage

In this last section, I will reflect over the core topics of this thesis and review my research questions. As Svensson and Maags (2018) point out, it is crucial to understand how heritage production is shaped by particular political and socio-cultural contexts and address the major global social and cultural shifts.

The AHD is with no doubt, an important input. This AHD however, risks becoming a mainstream theory, which in turn generalises notions of heritage, and their experts. Contrary to what Smith (2006:29) stressed regarding caretakers of the past and their task of disempowering the present, few things shall be reconsidered here. First, caretakers of the past in their role of experts, are able to empower the present from actively rewriting the meaning of the past. Experts (archaeologists, historians, architects, anthropologists) are constituents of the regimes of truth, therefore they have the knowledge as a technique of power, in order to reinterpret and reshape objects and notions of the past, considered at some point as heritage. As Denton (2014) pointed out elsewhere, archaeology is a political practice, that have the possibility to empower the present or the past, which in turn becomes an ethical question.

While it would be overly ambitious, trying to describe and analyse all available displays at Chinese virtual museums. The points discussed throughout this work, are relevant in critical rethinking different process of heritage signification, not only as a discursive practice but also as authorised institutional knowledge.

This thesis had posted three research questions

-Are the Chinese digital cultural heritage collections political statements?

-In which ways discursive practices of heritage are displayed in Chinese museums websites?

-The digital can be considered part of the Chinese heritage in the making?

The Chinese digital cultural heritage is a political statement is a tool for legitimacy; Kraus (2004:195) stressed that political legitimacy must be won on two fronts. Not only populations must believe in the rulers legitimacy. But foreign states, must also recognise these same rulers authority through diplomacy, if the notion is to participate fully and conventionally in

international affairs. Kraus (2004) also explained that when political legitimacy is imagined to derive from objects, which can reside outside the nation. A combination of politics arises, internally these objects become the subject of nationalistic politics of popular indignation, externally these objects are associated with the refined elite, political world of fine arts and diplomacy.

The idea *Tiang Ming* can be based in part on beautiful things (Kraus 2004) in discursive practices. In the power that heritage institutions have to commemorate or forget material culture, beings and things.

According to Foucault (1975), discipline is a mechanism of power which regulates the behaviour of individuals in the social body. This is done by regulating the organisation of space (architecture), and time (timetables) and people's activity and behaviour (drills, posture, movement). Enforced with the aid of complex systems of surveillance. Foucault (1975) emphasises that power is not discipline, rather discipline is simply one way in which power can be exercised. He also uses the term 'disciplinary society' discussing its history and the origins and disciplinary institutions such as prisons, hospitals, asylums, schools and army barracks. Foucault also specifies that when he speaks of a 'disciplinary society' he does not mean a 'disciplined society' (Foucault 1975). In this context museums are not disciplinary institutions rather regimes.

This thesis has reached the conclusion that it is possible to understand Chinese heritage (online/offline/tangible and intangible) not as a discursive practice – as Hall (2005:23) proposed to understand heritage and tradition in general– rather this work, understands Chinese heritage as a disciplinary tool, as a mechanism of power which regulates the behaviour of individuals by regulating the organisation of space and people's activity (Foucault 1975). This disciplinary tool called heritage, is based on (historical) specific mechanisms that produce discourses, which function as true in particular times and places; and are constantly reinforced by discursive formations and discursive practices, understood as a specific set of rules [historically and culturally] in constant flux. Consequently organising and producing different forms of knowledge, allowing certain statements to be made (Foucault 1975; 2002).

This Foucauldian understanding of heritage is more closely related to Bennett's (1995) arguments about the role of museums, and the degree to which they participated in the governance and regulation of the social order, personal conduct, and moral improvement.

This leads us to Foucault's discursive formations, understanding these as almost equivalent to a scientific discipline or "regime of truth". Foucault (2002) explained these formations as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and functioning of statements (Foucault 2002:33-38).

In this context, the third question is of particular importance for the digital heritage realm. This thesis understands material culture, as an inherent part of ourselves, of our own physical existence.

Scholars such Henare et al. 2007 driven by the ontological turn, attempt to forge a new direction in thinking through artefacts within ethnographic research; material culture is used to think in both, an explicit and in an implicit way (Henare et al. 2007; Knappet 2005). In which, cognitive processes are distributed among people and things. In that sense, and following the third research question, the present research proposes that the digital is considered part of the Chinese heritage in the making, that is to say a form of material culture. The digital, is not just a mean is actively part of the process and even of the discourse itself. We should consider digital technologies as a way to reinterpret heritage and as a different path to disrupt or reroute our perceptions about the past and the ways in which is displayed.

I argued that the digital is not merely another tool, neither a way to replace curatorial work, rather it is another form of material culture, because it acts as a virtual materialisation, generating the same connotations such status, access, power, knowledge and so on. In this regard, questions linked to equal access will arise, how the digital could deliver a more democratic approach to heritage? Is it really possible to implement digital visitor co-creation in virtual collections of cultural heritage? And what are the implications this has on institutional change?

Following this path, it is important to acknowledge that China is not only shaping its heritage, through explicit political practices, it is apparently also in search of solutions to counteract

the contradictions that conflict of interests may cause. Precisely like many western and non western countries, that are struggling to cope with the demands and contradictions of their own heritage.

China has become a cultural power, having positive relations with UNESCO, being a BRICS member, all together with the heritage boom, and the symbolic representation of the Silk Road as a World Heritage Site, China possess a privileged position (Svensson and Maags 2018) in the heritage debate.

Heritage thus, is powerful and disciplinary. I bear in mind however, Rodney Harrison's idea to remain vigilant and deeply suspicious of heritage. Heritage, is rarely deployed innocently in the absence of some form of claim, toward a self-evident truth, that is often divisive or exclusionary, defining the forms of difference it specifies as a function of the past (Harrison 2015:39).

This thesis attempted to problematise discourses about heritage. So far, I have tried to illustrate how the disciplinary discourses of heritage in China broadcast political statements through digital platforms. However, heritage is a construction, is a process and a praxis and it is embedded in traditions, institutions, narratives, and hierarchies. Is to say a discursive and non discursive practices. This disciplinary role of heritage nonetheless, is not an isolated phenomenon in the Chinese context, rather belongs to a much larger apparatus operating in every level of Chinese society. In Foucauldian terms the so called *dispositif*.

Contribution to the Research Area

Heritage issues, lately have become the centre of attention due a shift in the international arena. The mutual constitution of symbolic and conceptual boundaries, as a result of recent armed conflicts, have provoked a re-examination of how academy and institutions in general should approach heritage.

As I mentioned elsewhere the Authorised Heritage Discourse AHD, coined by Smith (2006) it remains prevalent and key in several studies. To attend process of heritage, at global and local levels, the AHD in the Chinese contexts, is not stranger to the conjuncture. Previous studies (Waterton and Watson 2013) have evidenced, that the AHD has changed over time, especially in legal and symbolic issues. Questioning who are the owners, who are the experts

and who are the consumers. All that, without mentioning lack of participation of minorities that may be connected to the objects in question. Several studies about economic connotations of cultural heritage and tourism, shed light on how prospects in rural areas have begun to change. Places that were state-monopolised, gradually have become multiple-channelled social projects (Evans & Rowlands 2014, Lai 2016, Nitzky 2013, Svensson 2016).

However new questions arise. How China is addressing its heritage in regard to their resilient ethics and politics? Albeit with seemingly ambiguous practices, the Chinese government has increased its involvement in UNESCO, with 1372 items on the national list, and 1986 national level transmitters (Svensson and Maags 2018) apparently with a massive technological and political capacity to prioritise not only Chinese heritage.

In the light of this conjuncture, this thesis attempted to contribute with two perspectives. On one hand, inspired on Foucault's work, I examine how heritage is a disciplinary tool. Which in turn, regulates relations through museums, between individuals, and the state. This disciplinary tool called heritage, is based on discursive practices, capable to provoke exclusion, inclusion, resistance, discomfort, that is to say a range of emotions.

On the other hand, I aim to discuss how in China—who despite strong internet and media censorship— digital technologies perform a key role in order to democratise access to state-run museums, using the internet to shape their heritage and vice versa. This research proposes that the digital can become another form of material culture, constituting itself part of a discursive formation.

Literature

Artese, M., Ciocca, G., Gagliardia, I. (2017) 'Evaluating perceptual visual attributes in social and cultural heritage web sites' in *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 26 (2017) 91–100. Elsevier Masson SAS. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.culher.2017.02.009>

Bennett, T. (1995) *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. London: Routledge
_____ (2005). Civic laboratories: museums, cultural object hood, and the governance of the social, CRESC Working Paper No.2, Cultural Studies Vol. 19, No. 5 September 2005, pp. 521 /547 Taylor & Francis <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals>

Benton, T. (2010) ed. *Understanding heritage and memory*

Boellstorff, T. et al. (2012) *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds a handbook of Method*. Princeton University Press Princeton and Oxford.

Bryman, Alan. (2012) *Social Research Methods*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chan, H.L. and Cheng, C. (2016) Building homeland heritage: multiple homes among the Chinese diaspora and the politics on heritage management in China, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 22:1, 1-13, DOI: 10.1080/13527258.2015.1068211

Chang, K. C. (1986) *The Archaeology of Ancient China*. New Haven: Yale University Press

Chang Li-sheng,(1996) 'The National Palace Museum: A History of the Collection', Wen Fong and James C. Y. Watt, eds., *Possessing the Past*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Denton, Kirk (2005). 'Museums, Memorial Sites and Exhibitionary Culture in the People's Republic of China', *The China Quarterly*, 183: 565–86.

_____ (2014) *Exhibiting the Past : Historical Memory and the Politics of Museums in Postsocialist China*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press).

Evans H. & Rowlands M. (2014) *Reconceptualizing Heritage in China Museums*

Fiskesjö, M. (2010) 'Politics of cultural heritage' in *Reclaiming Chinese Society. The new social activism*. Edited by You-tien Hsing and Ching Kwan Lee. Routledge Taylor & Francis.

Forsyth, A. (1991) 'Neolithic Chinese Jades', in *Jade*. Ed. Roger Keverne. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold,

Foucault, M. (1998 [1967d]) *On the Ways of Writing History* interview, conducted by Raymond Bellour, appeared in *Les Lettres Françaises* 1187 (15-21 June 1967). Robert Hurley's translation. In *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology. The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984. Volume II*. J. D. Faubion. (Ed.). Tr. Robert Hurley and others, Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1970). *The order of things*. New York: Pantheon.

Foucault, M.(1981 [1971]) *The Order of Discourse*. Translated by Ian McLeod in R. Young (ed.). *Untying the Text : a Poststructuralist Reader*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 48-78.

Foucault, M. (1975) *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison*, Paris, Gallimard; trans. A. Sheridan, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, New York, Vintage Books, 1977.

Foucault, M. (1975-76), " Il faut défendre la société ". *Cours au Collège de France*. 1975-1976, ed. M. Bertani and A. Fontana, Paris, Seuil/Gallimard, 1997; trans. D. Macey, "Society Must Be Defended". *Lectures at the Collège de France. 1975-1976*, New York, Picador, 2003.

Foucault, M. (2002) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge

Geismar, H. (2012) *Museum + Digital = ?* In *Digital Anthropology*. Edited by Heather A. Horst and Daniel Miller, Berg London NY.

Gosden, C. and Marshall, Y. (1999) *The Cultural Biography of Objects*. *World Archaeology*, Vol. 31, No. 2, *The Cultural Biography of Objects*, pp. 169-178.

Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/125055>

Harrison R.(2010) ed. *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*

Horst H. & Miller, D. (2012) eds. *Digital Anthropology*. Berg London NY.

- Huo, Z. (2016) Legal protection of cultural heritage in China: a challenge to keep history alive, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 22:4, 497-515.
- Keane, M. and Chen, Y. 2017. *Digital China: from cultural presence to innovative nation*. *Asiascape: Digital Asia*. 4 (1-2): pp. 52-75 <http://doi.org/10.1163/22142312-12340068>
- King L. Stark, F. J. & Cooke, P. (2016) Experiencing the Digital World: The Cultural Value of Digital Engagement with Heritage, *Heritage & Society*, 9:1, 76-101, DOI: 10.1080/2159032X.2016.1246156
- Kraus, R. (2004) When legitimacy resides in beautiful objects Repatriating Beijing's looted Zodiac animal heads in State and Society in 21st-century China Crisis, contention, and legitimation. Edited by Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen. Routledge Curzon
- Lai, G (2016) The emergence of 'cultural heritage' in modern China: a historical and legal perspective. In: Matsuda, A and Mengoni, L E (eds.) *Reconsidering Cultural Heritage in East Asia*, Pp. 47–85. London: Ubiquity Press. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/baz.d>. License: CC-BY 4.0
- Maags, C. & Svensson, M. (eds),(2018) *Chinese Heritage in the Making: Experiences, Negotiations and Contestations*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- McTavish, L. (2006) "Visiting the Virtual Museum: Art and Experience Online" in *New Museum Theory and Practice. An Introduction*. Edited by Janet Marstine. Blackwell Publishing.
- National Development and Reform Commission NDRC (2015) *Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, with State Council authorization. First edition March 2015.
- Nitzky, W. (2013) 'Community Empowerment at the Periphery? Participatory Approaches to Heritage Protection in Guizhou, China', in *Cultural Heritage Politics in China*, ed. by Tami Blumenfield and Helaine Silverman (New York: Springer), 205–233.
- Pink, S. et al. (2016) *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice*. London, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Shan Shiyuan, (2005) *The Story of the Imperial Palace and its Buildings*, Beijing: New World Press.

Silverman, H. and Blumenfield, T. (2013). 'Cultural Heritage Politics in China: An Introduction', in: *Cultural Heritage Politics in China*, ed. by Tami Blumenfield and Helaine Silverman (New York: Springer).

Smith, Laurajane (2006) *Uses of Heritage* (London and New York: Routledge).

Sola, T, (1997), 'Museums, museology, and ethics: A changing paradigm' in Edson, Gary, 1997 (ed) *Museum Ethics*, 168-175 London: Routledge.

Svensson, M. (2006) *In the ancestors' shadow: cultural heritage contestations in Chinese villages*. (Working papers in contemporary Asian studies; No. 17). Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University.

Svensson, M. (2011) 'Cultural Heritage Protection in the People's Republic of China:

Preservation Policies, Institutions, Laws, and Enforcement in Zhejiang', in *Making Law Work: Chinese Laws in Context*, ed. by Mattias Burell and Nina Svensson (New York: Cornell University Press).

_____ (2012a) 'Lineages and the State in Zhejiang: Negotiating and Re-inventing Local History and Heritage', in *Organizing Rural China*, ed. by Ane Bislev and Stig Thøgersen Lanham (MD): Rowman and Littlefield), 157–172.

_____ (2012b) 'Heritage Struggles and Place-makings in Zhejiang Province: Local Media, Cross-regional Media Interactions, and Media Strategies from Below', in *Mapping Media in China: Region, Province and Locality*, ed. by W. Sun and J. Chio (London: Routledge), 193–211.

_____ (2016) *Evolving and contested cultural heritage in China: the rural heritage scape Reconsidering Cultural Heritage*. In: Matsuda, A and Mengoni, E

(eds.) *Reconsidering Cultural Heritage in East Asia*, Pp. 31–46.

London: Ubiquity Press.

Svensson, M. (2016). *Mediatization and cultural heritage: Plural voices and new platforms.*

Abstract 14th Chinese Internet Research Conference (CIRC), Shanghai

_____ (2017) *The Networked China Researcher: Challenges and Possibilities in the Social Media Age.* In : *Asiascape: Digital Asia.* 4, 1-2, p. 76-102.

Taylor, K. (2015) *Cultural heritage politics in China*, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 21:3, 309-311, DOI: 10.1080/13527258.2014.989355

Thorp, R. L. *China in the Early Bronze Age: Shang Civilization.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. Project MUSE.

UNESCO Resolution 2347 (2017) <http://undocs.org/S/RES/2347%282017%29>

Varutti, M. (2010) *Using Different Pasts in a Similar Way: Museum Representations of National History in Norway and China.* *Culture Unbound*, Volume 2, 2010: 745–768. Hosted by Linköping University Electronic Press.

_____ (2014) *Museums in China : the politics of representation after Mao.* The International Centre For Cultural & Heritage Studies, New Castle University. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge.

Waterton, E. (2007) 'Heritage as Discourse: An Institutionalised Construction of the Past in the UK' in D. Hull, S. Grabow and E. Waterton (eds) *Which Past, Whose Future? Treatments of the Past at the Start of the 21st Century* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports) pp 31–9.

Waterton, E. and Watson, S. (eds) (2015). *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan).

Were, G. Rowlands, M. (2012) *Digital heritage technologies and issues of community engagement and cultural restitution in "New Style" ethnographic museums.* Conference paper at International Colloquium: Beyond Modernity. Do Ethnography Museums Need Ethnography? Proceedings of the International Colloquium RIME: Réseau International de Musées d'Ethnographie, Rome, 18-20 April, 2012

Winter, T. (2013) Clarifying the critical in critical heritage studies, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 19:6, 532-545, DOI: 10.1080/13527258.2012.720997

Zhang, Y. and Wu, Z. (2015) The reproduction of heritage in a Chinese village: whose heritage, whose pasts? *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 22:3, 228-241, DOI:10.1080/13527258.2015.1114505

APENDIX

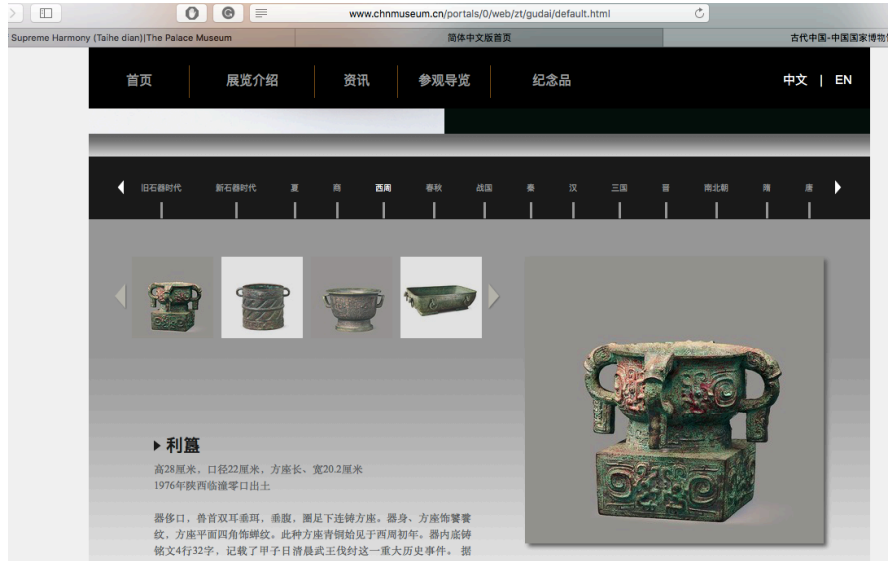
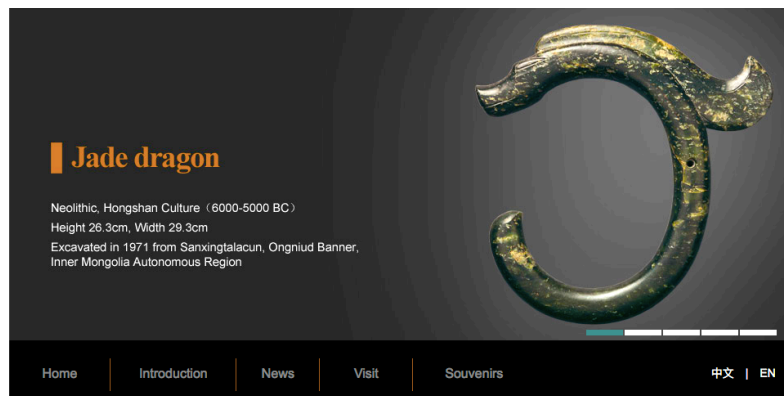


Figure 7. Screenshot Ancient China

National Museum of China



Date: On permanent display
Venue: Galleries N20-N25, S15-S18, S20

One of the permanent exhibitions hosted by the National Museum of China, Ancient China is on display in altogether ten galleries. Using a large number of valuable cultural relics, it gives a complete picture of the long Chinese history from the prehistoric times to the late Qing Dynasty and shows in a comprehensive way the vitality and continuous evolution of Chinese civilization. It also demonstrates the historical process of building a multi-ethnic country by Chinese people from different ethnic groups, their splendid political, economic, and cultural achievements, and their contributions to human civilization.

Figure 8. Screenshot jade collection.
National Museum of China

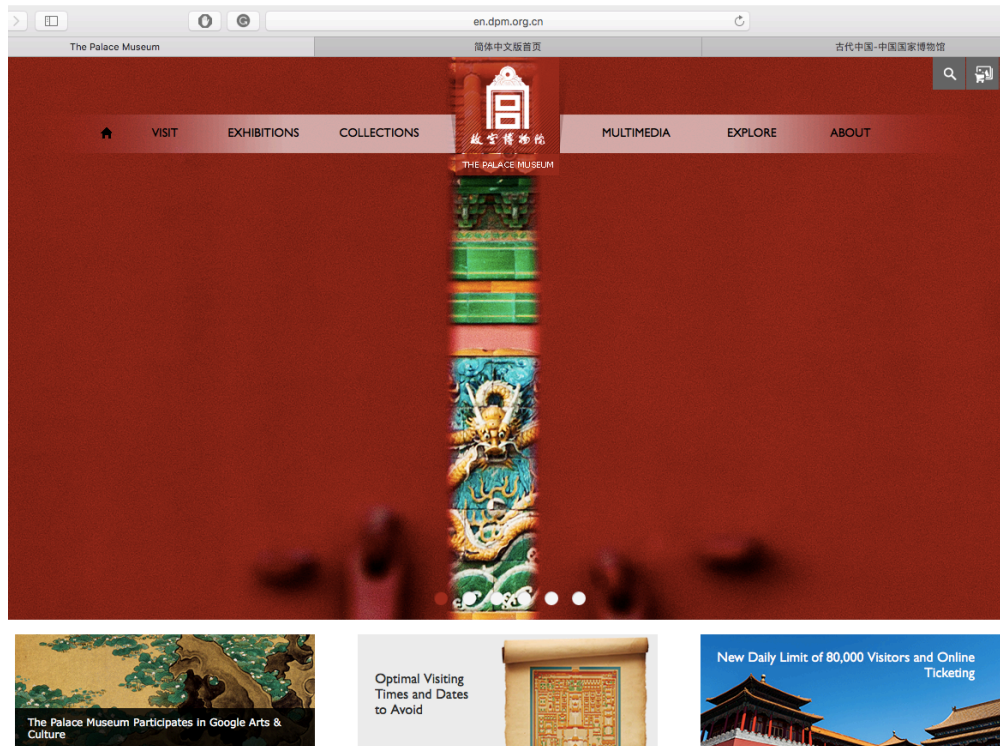


Figure 9. Main webpage (english version)

The Palace Museum /The Forbidden City

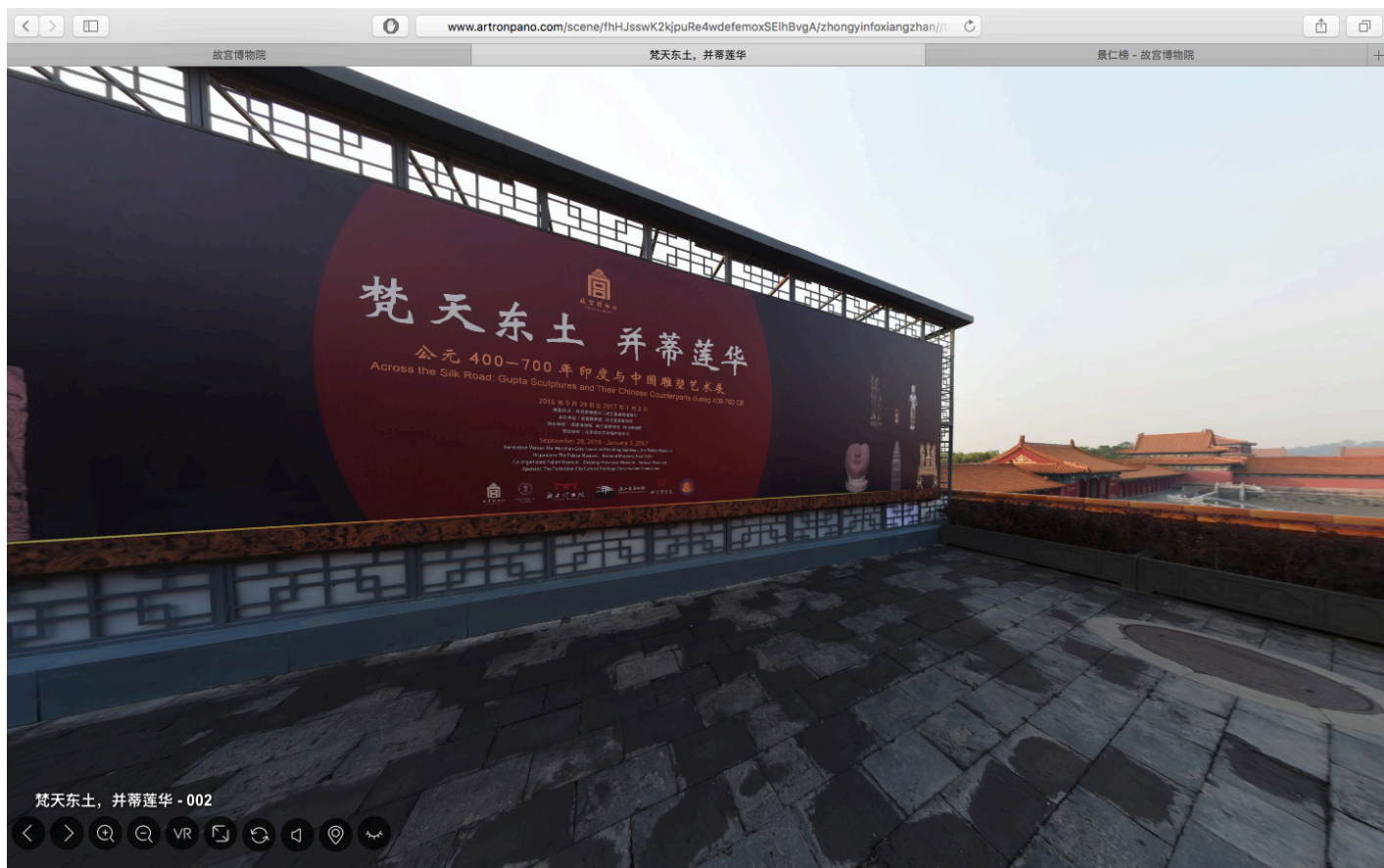


Figure 10.

Virtual Tour The Silk Road

The Palace Museum /The Forbidden City



Figure 11. Virtual Tour The Silk Road
The Palace Museum /The Forbidden City

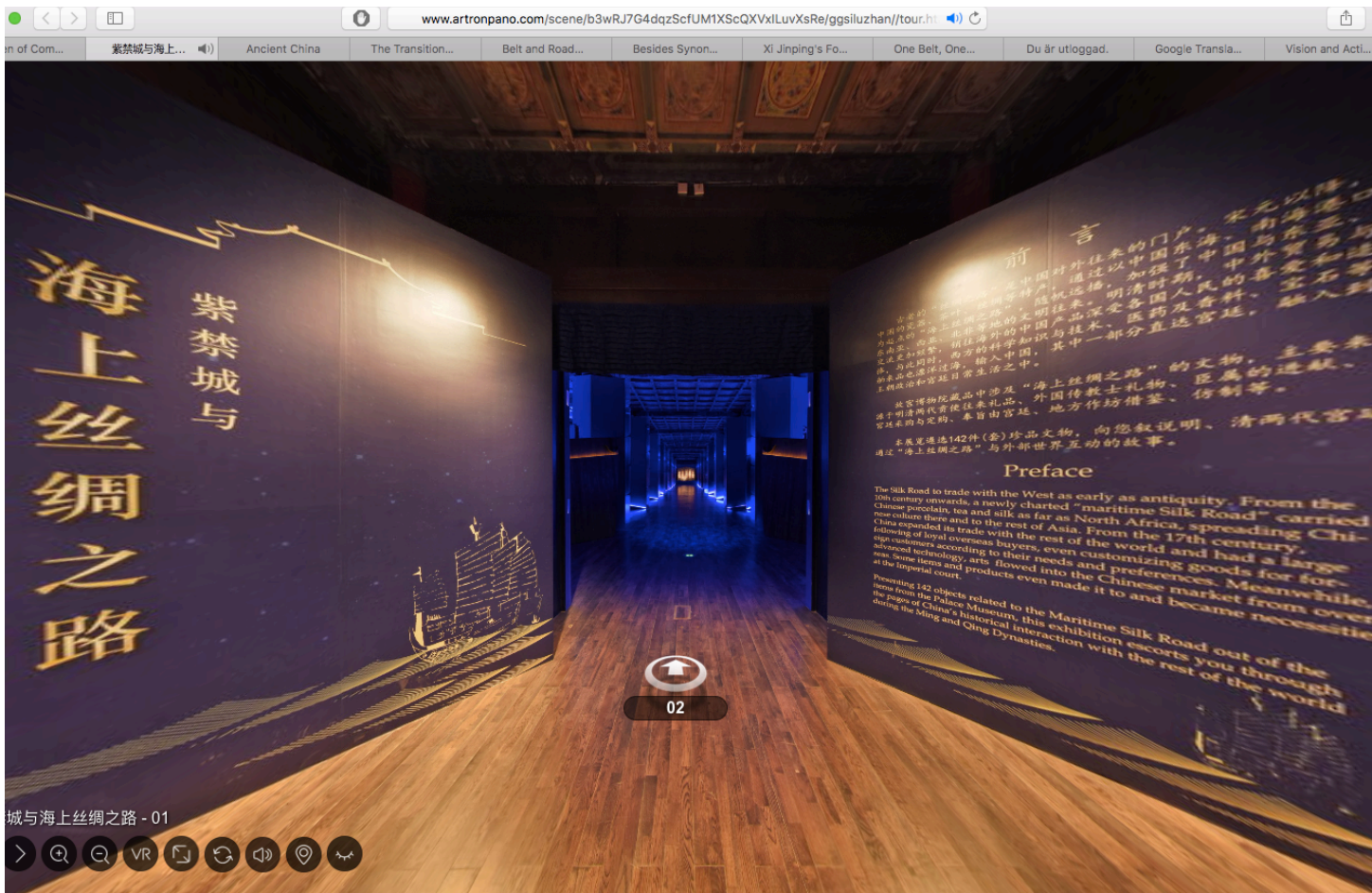
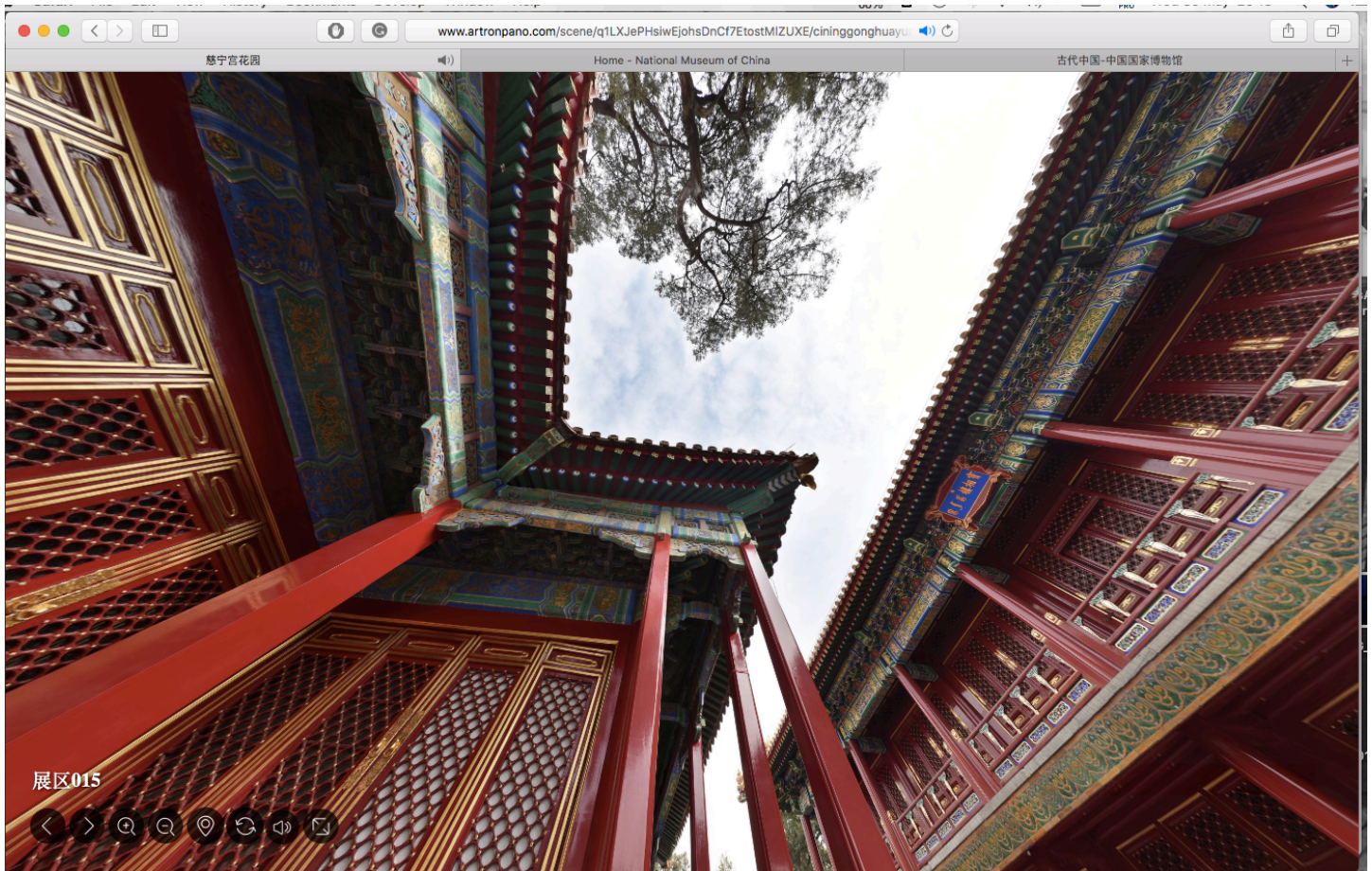


Figure 12. Virtual Reality Tour The Marine Silk Road gallery

The Palace Museum /The Forbidden City)



**Figure 13. Screenshot Virtual Tour the Hall of Understanding and Bringing Peace
The Palace Museum /The Forbidden City**



**Figure 14. Screenshot Virtual Tour the Hall of Understanding and Bringing Peace
The Palace Museum /The Forbidden City**

