



UNIVERSITAT DE  
BARCELONA

## Museums' International Collaboration with Case Studies of Cross-border Exhibitions in China and Japan in the 21st Century

Jinghao Tong

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## Society and Culture: History, Anthropology, Arts, Heritage and Cultural Management



# Museums' International Collaboration

## Case Studies of Cross-border Exhibitions in China and Japan in the 21st Century

# Jinghao Tong



UNIVERSITAT DE  
BARCELONA

Facultat de Geografia i Història  
Programa de Doctorat Societat i Cultura

# **Museums' International Collaboration with Case Studies of Cross-border Exhibitions in China and Japan in the 21st Century**

Thesis submitted for the degree of  
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## Abstract

This thesis aims to analyse the processes of museums' international collaboration through cross-border exhibitions displayed in China and Japan to understand the mechanisms of collaboration between museums, cultural diplomacy, and its functionality. After theoretically analysing the phenomenon of international exhibitions and the characteristics of the museum systems in China and Japan, four case studies of cross-border exhibitions opened to the public from 2015 to 2021 are examined. The selected case studies mainly focus on the twenty-first century, when vast museums and exhibitions have become essential to their national cultural policies. In the past decades, cross-border exhibitions have attracted the attention of millions of visitors in the analysed societies and provided valuable opportunities for museums to reach wider audiences through exhibitions and improve their global reputation.

China and Japan have encountered challenges ranging from exhibition narratives to display requirements in cooperating with foreign museum colleagues from the UK and France. However, the solutions to these challenges and the motivations behind them were different, which became the key to understanding the various cultural policies in these two countries. In this thesis, four cross-border exhibitions between Europe (UK and France) and East Asia, mainly (China and Japan), have been analysed. Each exhibition was open to the public for 71 to 95 days. The display time depended on aspects including the rental cost, the calendar of the touring exhibition, the vulnerability of collections, and the curators' research interests. Two discussed exhibitions were displayed in China's leading political and economic cities, the National Museum of China in Beijing and the Shanghai Museum. In contrast, the other two were exhibited in Japan at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science.

The methodology of the thesis has been based on the combination of various procedures, including fieldwork in all four museums in China and Japan, face-to-face interviews with curators and official responses from the museums to the researcher's questionnaire sent via email. The documentation of the exhibitions, including their catalogues and photographic images, has also been consulted, further enriching the analysis of the exhibitions. Combining the study of the exhibition organisation process and the results of these four cross-border exhibitions, this thesis aims to contribute to understanding the mechanisms of international cooperation and cultural diplomacy between museums.

**Keywords:** museum, international exhibition, cultural policy, heritage management

## Resumen

Esta tesis tiene como objetivo analizar los procesos de colaboración internacional de los museos a través de exposiciones transfronterizas realizadas en China y Japón, para comprender los mecanismos de colaboración internacional entre museos, la diplomacia cultural y su funcionalidad. Tras analizar teóricamente el fenómeno de las exposiciones internacionales y las características de los sistemas museísticos en China y Japón, se han examinado cuatro casos de estudio de exposiciones organizadas en cooperación de museos europeos y de estos países, que fueron realizadas entre 2015 y 2021. Estos estudios de casos seleccionados se centran en el siglo XXI, en un momento en que los grandes museos y exposiciones han sido utilizados como elementos esenciales para las políticas culturales nacionales y museísticas. En las últimas décadas, las exposiciones transfronterizas han atraído la atención de millones de visitantes en estas sociedades y han proporcionado valiosas oportunidades para que los museos lleguen a audiencias más amplias a través de exposiciones, mejorando asimismo su reputación mundial.

Al mismo tiempo, los museos de China y Japón se enfrentaron a nuevos desafíos al cooperar con sus colegas de museos extranjeros, desde las narrativas de las exposiciones hasta los requisitos de exhibición. Sin embargo, las soluciones y motivaciones fueron diferentes, como consecuencia de las diferentes políticas culturales de estos dos países. En esta tesis se han analizado cuatro exposiciones transfronterizas entre Europa (Reino Unido y Francia) y Asia Oriental (China y Japón). Cada exposición estuvo abierta al público entre 71 y 95 días. El tiempo de exposición dependía del costo del alquiler, el calendario de la exposición itinerante, la vulnerabilidad de las colecciones y de los propósitos de investigación académica de los conservadores. Dos exposiciones se realizaron en las principales ciudades políticas y económicas de China (el Museo Nacional de China en Beijing y el Museo de Shanghai, en el centro de la ciudad) y las otras dos en Japón (el Museo de Arte Metropolitano de Tokio y el Museo Nacional de Naturaleza y Ciencia de Tokio).

La metodología de la tesis se ha basado en la combinación de diversos procedimientos, incluyendo un trabajo de campo en estos cuatro museos de China y Japón, junto con entrevistas cara a cara con conservadores y respuestas oficiales por correo electrónico al cuestionario de la investigadora por parte de los propios museos implicados. También se ha consultado la documentación sobre las exposiciones, incluyendo sus catálogos e imágenes fotográficas, lo que ha permitido el análisis de las exposiciones. Combinando el análisis de los detalles del proceso y los resultados de estas cuatro exposiciones transfronterizas, esta tesis quiere contribuir a la comprensión de los mecanismos de cooperación internacional y diplomacia cultural entre los museos.

**Palabras clave:** museo, exposición internacional, política cultural, gestión del patrimonio

## Resum

Aquesta tesi té com a objectiu analitzar els processos de col·laboració internacional dels museus a través d'exposicions transfrontereres realitzades a la Xina i el Japó, per comprendre els mecanismes de col·laboració internacional entre museus, la diplomàcia cultural i la seva funcionalitat. Després d'analitzar teòricament el fenomen de les exposicions internacionals i les característiques dels sistemes museístics a la Xina i el Japó, s'han examinat quatre casos d'estudi d'exposicions organitzades mitjançant la cooperació de museus europeus i d'aquests països, que van ser realitzades entre el 2015 i el 2021. Aquests estudis de casos seleccionats se centren en el segle XXI, en un moment en què els grans museus i exposicions han estat utilitzats com a elements essencials per a les polítiques culturals nacionals i museístiques. En les últimes dècades, les exposicions transfrontereres han atret l'atenció de milions de visitants en aquestes societats i han proporcionat valuoses oportunitats perquè els museus arribin a audiències més àmplies a través d'exposicions, millorant així mateix la seva reputació mundial.

Alhora, els museus de la Xina i el Japó es van enfrontar a nous desafiaments en cooperar amb els seus col·legues de museus estrangers, des de les narratives de les exposicions fins als requisits d'exposició. Tanmateix, les solucions i motivacions van ser diferents, com a conseqüència de les diferents polítiques culturals d'aquests dos països. En aquesta tesi s'han analitzat quatre exposicions transfrontereres entre Europa (Regne Unit i França) i Àsia Oriental (Xina i Japó). Cada exposició va estar oberta al públic entre 71 i 95 dies. El temps d'exposició depenia del cost del lloguer, el calendari de l'exposició itinerant, la vulnerabilitat de les col·leccions i dels propòsits d'investigació acadèmica dels conservadors. Dues exposicions es van realitzar a les principals ciutats polítiques i econòmiques de la Xina (el Museu Nacional de la Xina a Beijing i el Museu de Xangai, al centre de la ciutat) i les altres dues al Japó (el Museu d'Art Metropolità de Tòquio i el Museu Nacional de Natura i Ciència de Tòquio).

La metodologia de la tesi s'ha fonamentat en la combinació de diversos procediments, incloent-hi un treball de camp en aquests quatre museus de la Xina i el Japó, juntament amb entrevistes amb conservadors i les respostes oficials per correu electrònic al qüestionari enviat per la investigadora per part dels mateixos museus implicats. També s'ha consultat la documentació sobre les exposicions, incloent-hi els seus catàlegs i imatges fotogràfiques, el que ha permès l'anàlisi de les exposicions. Combinant l'anàlisi dels detalls del procés i els resultats d'aquestes quatre exposicions transfrontereres, aquesta tesi vol contribuir a la comprensió dels mecanismes de cooperació internacional i diplomàcia cultural entre els museus.

**Paraules clau:** museu, exposició internacional, política cultural, gestió del patrimoni

## *Acknowledgement*

I am indebted to professors, curators, friends and institutions for making this study possible. In 2019, this research was proposed in the context of analysing cross-border exhibitions among museums between Europe and East Asia. The relationship between China and Japan has improved since the national open-up policy in China in 1978, so I could travel to Japan for the first time in 2014 and visit several museums personally, where the impact of European museology was reflected in both architectural and gallery organisations. The differences in exhibitions between China and Japan attracted me to look into history, such as the person who translated the word “museum” from English into Japanese. New social contexts take time for local people to digest since the cross-border exhibitions contain different items and concepts. The different reactions between curators and museum workers in China and Japan towards the same collection reflect their cultural policies.

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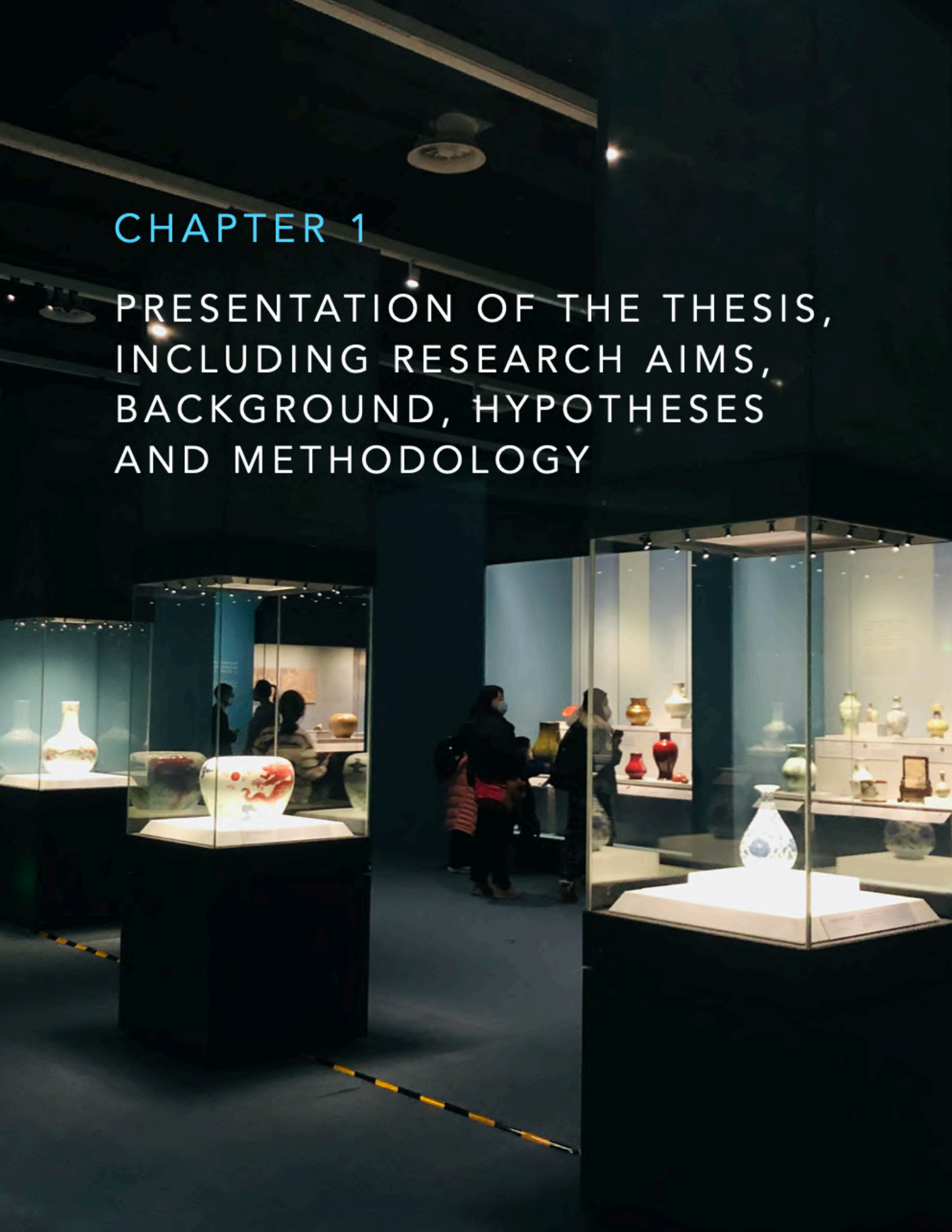
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## CHAPTER 1

# PRESENTATION OF THE THESIS, INCLUDING RESEARCH AIMS, BACKGROUND, HYPOTHESES AND METHODOLOGY







## 1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the structural details of the thesis, from the research background to the motivations, the current research results, the objectives, the research questions and the hypotheses, study cases selected principles and methodology, in total six sections. In the second part of this chapter, the four motivations of this thesis will be explained from the scientific, political, applied and personal perspectives. As research about cross-border exhibitions, it hopes to contribute to the scientific investigation of the interaction of multiple-national cultural policies and global museum development. From a practical point of view, it will analyse the two different models in China and Japan through cooperation systems with Western museums, which can be used to generate similar types of international exhibitions and expand methods for heritage management in the future; also, there is a strong personal commitment to international exhibitions and museums' collaboration of the researcher. Thirdly, in the topic development part, the selection process of four chosen case studies will be explained to enrich the research in this thesis from the theoretical analysis to an applied area. Fourthly, three hypotheses and their corresponding six objectives combine the investigation of this thesis from the understanding of museums' international cultural policies to the application of cross-border exhibitions' collaboration processes and results. In the fifth part of this chapter, details of the methodologies used in the research have been introduced, including face-to-face interviews with curators and questionnaires for directors and the museum's public relations department, which have been answered through emails. The weaknesses and strengths of the methodology of this work have also been discussed to show the limitations of this study. Finally, a summary of each thesis chapter has been offered to generate a guideline of its total content for the readers.

This study with the title “Museums' International Collaboration: Case Studies of Cross-border Exhibitions in China and Japan in the 21st Century” examines the cultural diplomacy of two countries, China and Japan, through their museums' international cooperation with Western museums, mainly the UK and France, in the past two decades. The function of collections in these international exhibitions inspires the researcher to create a concept of “cultural cornerstones”. Since heritage may have its nationality, however, after being interpreted in other languages and displayed in different countries, the history and knowledge of these collections could be understood without the limits of borders. The global heritage could be transferred into the shape

of cultural cornerstones with visitors' understanding. In other words, there is tangible and intangible heritage, while "cultural cornerstones" are experiences and processes created after the visitors encounter these national treasures or essential items.

The "cultural cornerstone", by definition, refers to the experience of a visitor who has access to cultural collections or heritage. Museums' exhibitions allow visitors to observe these historical items from the past, while cultural cornerstones are experiences these visitors could take away when they leave museums. A visitor and a museum collection were born or found in certain places and times, while a cultural cornerstone could be created in the future at any time and anywhere. It has no nationality. For example, a Chinese-made porcelain vase was made in the fifteenth century, bought by the Middle East royal family, added gold, and then given to the British as a diplomatic gift. When this well-travelled historical item returned to China from Britain in 2022 for an international exhibition, its global journey became a cultural cornerstone for visitors to inherit. The collections in the museum exhibition need security and stay in the glass cases during display, while visitors could take cultural cornerstones back home. The scope of heritage which visitors can understand is expanding with the development of museums' international collaboration. By understanding these international collections, visitors are accumulating their cultural cornerstones, which could be added to their apprehension of the world heritage. Although most museums depend on financial support from their governments, cross-border exhibitions create parallel narratives in these temporary exhibition galleries for audiences who could visit the permanency exhibitions simultaneously.

The thesis concentrates in depth on the diverse and varied museums' collaboration processes and analyses the role of collections in these exhibitions. Cross-border exhibitions provide cultural cornerstones in the shape of collections from multiple civilisations, generating an international understanding of the challenges at the beginning of the global transition. When international exhibitions draw the attention of millions of visitors, the hidden cooperation process between these two sides of different countries has rarely been explained. To cooperate with these kinds of expensive exhibitions, which include insurance, international transport, display cases and so on, the motivations of these interest groups were crucial for the preparation of cross-border exhibits. From a perspective of cultural diplomacy, four case studies in China and Japan have been selected to illustrate the motivation and outcome of these international collaborations.

## 1.2 Research Background

The research background contains two parts: the motivations of this thesis and an abstract of former research. Firstly, four motivations of this thesis made this journey of studying museum's international cooperation started in the autumn of 2019, with the help of professional supervisors: Prof. Dr. Xavier Roigé Ventura and Dr. Laura Coltofean-Arizancu. Secondly, regarding international exhibitions and cooperations in museums, the existing research contents allow further exploration with the influence of cultural diplomacy possible. This thesis has a more specific lens towards China and Japan. By comparison, these museums' cooperation strategies could be seen more clearly than separately.

Although there is no time machine for the researcher to go back to 2017 to investigate the case study of “A History of the World in 100 Objects” at the National Museum of China, I still remember the experience when I went to that exhibition personally as an excited visitor. To look at these valuable treasures from the British Museum, hundreds and thousands of Chinese visitors willingly wait in the queue for hours, including children and older people. These collections from multiple countries and centuries were displayed in Beijing for three months before they headed to the second museum in Shanghai. During those three months, I visited the exhibition twice and couldn't observe all the narratives these 100 objects carried. Even though each collection symbolised a specific period and culture, these curators in the British Museum had created a united storyline to put all these collections into the global context. The researcher is optimistic about international cooperation through cultural diplomacy in the current challenging climate. But they were needed.

The touring exhibition team with a centralised department in the British Museum didn't exist until the twenty-first century when the political environment and technology created the possibilities for museums on two sides of the Earth to cooperate<sup>1</sup>. These collections of the international exhibition belonged to different galleries under traditional segregation, and visitors had to walk through multiple galleries to check them separately. Since the British Museum has limited space, quite a big part of its collections could never be displayed in the London building

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<sup>1</sup> British Museum touring exhibitions | Amanda Mayne interview | blooloop <https://blooloop.com/museum/in-depth/british-museum-touring-exhibitions/> (consultation: 22 March 2023).

but in other countries through loans and touring exhibitions. While started in 2009 from the British Museum as a touring exhibition, with the hard work of curators and operators in different museums, these collections became essential parts of a new global history and travelled worldwide from Canada and Japan, then arrived in China in 2017 as the international exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects”. At that time, I didn’t know that the narrative and collections I saw in Beijing of this international touring exhibition differed from Japanese exhibitions since they had the same exhibition theme and poster. The following chapters about case studies will analyse the reasons for changing specific collections.

### 1.2.1 Motivations of the Thesis

There are four motivations for this thesis about cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan. Firstly, with the global political background, research involving multiple countries and languages is becoming possible and necessary simultaneously. Museums’ international exhibitions are encountering different national cultural policies directly, which provide valuable changes to understanding how to improve international relationships through cooperation. Secondly, the discussion about the future of museums from the design, organisation and management, including organisational change and innovation, creates space to imagine what museums could achieve outside of their geographic area. Thirdly, museums’ overseas practices can be helpful for the study of the international museum development of similar types of heritage management programs. In the end, this thesis responds to a personal quest to study and understand exhibitions in museums to answer the question of what will a global society need and want from museums in the future.

#### *Political motivation*

Geo-political tension is increasing, which causes more competition than cooperation. Communication between cultural organisations globally is becoming more frequent and necessary for a peaceful international political environment. Politically speaking, China and Japan are two essential participants on the global stage, both with a long history of closing their borders to foreign countries. In these two countries, the form of museums is still new compared to the development

of European museums, which shows in their basic collection setting and national-interest-focused museum practices. Cross-border exhibitions from other museums explore alternative content creation methods for more comprehensive visitors. Some of these cross-border exhibitions had not only designed for Chinese and Japanese visitors but also went to Canada and Arabic countries. To display collections in China and Japan, which pushed the curators in the west to rethink their work from the perspectives of post-colonialism, sustainability, and relevance to display more expansive collections from all over the world. However, effective communication is based on mutual effort. During the pandemic, individuals' international mobility was limited. China applied strict border policies, creating more difficulties for foreign researchers to go there. The role and responsibilities of museums as social institutions include helping the understanding among nations and people by displaying historical items, international collections and global narratives. A 40-day fieldwork experience in four museums in China and Japan was related to the case study during January and February 2023. The researcher hopes to use this thesis to reflect the Chinese and Japanese hidden cultural policies towards other countries.

### *Scientific motivation*

From a scientific point of view, cross-border exhibitions provide new opportunities to display cultural heritage to wider audiences globally, enriching the opportunities for museums in the twenty-first century. The trend towards urbanisation changes museums into high-ranking tourist attractions, which challenges the old and parochial narratives of museums, such as the word “We” on the display boards of museums is losing its meaning, since more and more museums are welcoming international visitors, who have different cultural backgrounds and historical memory. They are these outsiders of the critical word “We”. Also, it is not enough for museums nowadays to only display local history and national collections anymore. Chinese and Japanese museums face competition from international museums and exhibitions, which can be seen by comparing visitors' number of these local permanent and special international exhibitions. Cross-border exhibitions create exciting and rare opportunities for visitors, who cannot travel to foreign countries, to see historical items and collections from other countries personally. Eventually, these visitors could try to build their cultural understanding of their neighbours and past civilisations through their experience of these international exhibitions.

The reason for choosing four case studies of international exhibitions is because they are all fruitful practices that can contribute to the innovation of museums' heritage management and global collaboration. Curators' communication with the existing language barriers and different display requirements generates common challenges for cross-border exhibitions. However, a practical and bilingual handbook was created to smooth the cooperation process in the international exhibition in Shanghai. Other difficulties recently also created opportunities for curators to invent long-distance cooperation skills for display exhibitions on time. Such as Covid-19 from 2020 lasted for more than three years, which forced the curators in the Shanghai Museum and its international partners to use digital communication when these foreign curators could not travel to China personally. The combination of disciplines chosen in this thesis is motivated by current research about exhibitions, and museums do not often look at these international exhibitions with a cooperative, multi-disciplinary view.

Although most scholars agree that the local and national exhibitions in museums could not achieve the goal of helping visitors understand global joint development, a part of the history of a single nation has been cut from the connected international background, in which collections with national orientation build up an uncompleted cultural expression. Successful exhibitions require cooperation on the multilateral level and knowledge from skilful researchers and curators who have experience contributing and transferring historical information into the form of easy understanding for visitors. There is a growing awareness of the fact that national borders could become unclear with the development of historical interaction and changing international situation. Cultural diversity and similarities are moving forward hand in hand; museums and exhibitions need to widen the scope geographically beyond the artificial creation to bind societies and civilisations together. Nowadays, although most global cooperation among international museums is product of national diplomacy and policies, museum professionals also play essential roles in these processes. From the topic to collections of one international exhibition, the motivations and the tastes of curators impact the main structure of the display arrangements.

### *Applied motivation*

Since the narratives in museums are never neutral and have been guided by national interests and benefits, these local and permanent museum exhibitions could deepen the misunderstanding of other nations and strengthen national pride through well-designed narratives. The research on international exhibitions provides a valuable chance to show the national cultural policy by selecting collections from global touring exhibitions. Comparing China and Japan, this research contributes to understanding the similarities and differences between Chinese and Japanese museums' cooperation policies. Although these two countries are next to each other, the different development paths of cultural organisations reveal the reasons for the current political choices of museums. For example, why did these Chinese museums remove the 86th and the 94th collections from the exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects", while Japanese museums accepted them? These cross-border exhibitions are like test papers for culture. With the analysis of the collection, the invisible cultural policies of these two countries could become noticeable, which is helpful for further research about cultural policies of international exhibitions.

Also, by analysing the same international exhibition, "A History of the World in 100 Objects" exhibited in Japan and China in 2015 and 2017 separately, which the British Museum created, this examination of the cross-border exhibitions contributes to understanding the Chinese censorship principles about cultural activities. Furthermore, there are huge differences between the cultural policies in Japan and China. Although as two neighbouring countries in East Asia, sharing a similar geographic location does not create an analogical environment for cultural activities. Both Chinese and Japanese museums adjusted the narrative to make the exhibition's content close to their national interest. Some decisions were based on the consideration of censorship, while others were the results of marketing purposes, such as on the one hand, Beijing and Shanghai museums did not display the 86<sup>th</sup> collections displayed in Japanese museums for political censorship on the former dynasty. On the other hand, these two museums also chose different "the 101st object" to add to the exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects": The WTO hammer displayed at the National Museum of China and a QR code of the Shanghai Museum's WeChat account, like the Chinese Facebook, which showed the National Museum of China wanted to promote the successful decision of China, who joined the WTO in 1997 while the Shanghai Museum preferred to get more online followers through that international exhibition.



### *Personal motivation*

My interest in museums and exhibitions started in 2017 when I visited the National Museum of China in Beijing on a typical weekend. Little did I know that several months later, I would quit my well-paid internet job and move to London to pursue a master's degree in International Development Management, in English. After graduating in the summer of 2012 with a bachelor's degree in Journalism and Communication from China, I stopped learning English for years. Chinese was enough for me, and I would live in China for the rest of my life; at least, I thought like this before the day. Everything changed after I went to the cross-border exhibition, an accident before my leaving. The entrance was relatively small, but the poster attracted my attention. I noticed an exhibition that cooperated with the British Museum called "A History of the World in 100 Objects". It was a small room but different from other exhibitions I had seen, in which all the collections were about China's ancient or modern history: the long struggle of the old China and the tough reborn of the new China. It was an exhibition about global history and connections among each other, and the first item was a mummy coffin from Egypt, surprisingly, which meant unlucky in the traditional Chinese culture. As a post-agricultural society, I had never seen a coffin in Chinese museums; disturbing the dead people meant great disrespect in the community, which had several festivals to worship the dead for good fortune. The exhibition only occupied a gallery room in the corner of the vast museum, which was proud of its size. As a result, so many people gathered in front of these glass cases, and usually, visitors had to wait for almost one to two minutes to see one collection.

From these initial considerations, this doctoral thesis aims to promote international cooperation through international exhibitions in China and Japan. This analysis presents theoretical and methodological challenges since it is the analysis of exhibitions already made. Although direct observation of these exhibitions during their realisation is not possible, combined with the historical documents, such as category books published by the museums, former reports from newspapers and television programs of these case studies, detailed analysis with purely museological, political and geopolitical relations come into play.

## 1.2.2 Former research abstract

In recent decades, there has been a significant growth in the literature discussing international collaboration among museums. This growth has involved multiple disciplines and approaches. It can be seen in the establishment of ICOM's esteemed peer-reviewed journal, *Museum International*, which was published on January 1, 2019, by Taylor & Francis. Additionally, this chapter references other works that explore the topic of museums and exhibitions, specifically focusing on how museums' diplomatic practices contribute to intercultural relations. The development of international exhibitions has been through the age of building nations to selling nations in the past two centuries. For example, when Stoklund Bjarne published research about the role of international exhibitions in 1994, whose research mainly focused on the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when great exhibitions were part of nation-building, which was related to the trade fair to compete with all the other nations on the earth, by displaying the exhibited goods and products.<sup>2</sup> The number of visitors reached 6 million in 1851 with the international exhibition hosted by London, then in 1900, the Paris exhibition attracted more than 50 million people.<sup>3</sup> Later, exhibitions of national content became a part of the country's policy to promote its local culture. Such as Wallis Brian's research about international exhibitions and cultural diplomacy, which used the case of a self-portrait of Frida Kahlo displayed in bus shelters throughout New York City as a part of a \$10 million campaign by Grey Advertising to promote Mexico.<sup>4</sup>

Also, Hooper-Greenhill's work about the relationship of education, postmodernity and the museum argued the international movement to renegotiate the purposes of museum for responding to the demands of the twenty-first century, to an education-oriented model.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Tony Bennett reminded the researcher that international connections among museums was not a recent phenomenon since museums were building an active global network for changing technologies and collections and expertise a long time ago. The new part was the connections affected by the

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<sup>2</sup> Stoklund, Bjarne. "The Role of the International Exhibitions." *Ethnologia Europaea Vol. 24: 1: Ethnization of Culture* 24, no. 1 (1994): 35.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid: 37.

<sup>4</sup> Wallis, Brian. "Selling nations: International exhibitions and cultural diplomacy." In *Museum culture*, pp. 285-302. Routledge, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. "Education, postmodernity and the museum." In *Museum revolutions*, pp. 393-403. Routledge, 2007.

sense of cosmopolitanism.<sup>6</sup> This idea has been pushed forward by Sharon Macdonald, who believed that in museum studies, collecting objects this behaviour itself was boundary-crossing, which needed the curators to trace the multifarious links among objects, designing a critical and reflexive network to move beyond the limits of the museum as a building in reality, and following the meanings and importance of collections to explore more possibilities to display.<sup>7</sup>

However, our thesis goes further by pointing out that cross-border exhibitions involve multiple interest sectors, along with the analysis of the different cultural policies in China and Japan. These existing topics rarely covered the cases in the twenty-first century and collaboration between Western and Eastern museums simultaneously. Our thesis points out three main contributions: 1) two models of the international cooperation process within museums based on four case studies of cross-border exhibitions; 2) the hidden reasons for China to change the general narrative from the touring exhibition British Museum, and the different collections in Japan with the same exhibition; 3) the invisible exhibitions logic among Chinese and Japanese museums, which reflected from their cooperation motivations, selections of exhibitions, principles of censorship.

As one of the main contributions of this thesis, these international exhibitions go along with the standard part in these Japanese and Chinese museums, promoting nationality. China went even further when the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science designed only two galleries: Japan Gallery and the Global Gallery, to separate the whole world into two places. The National Museum of China has only two kinds of galleries: Ancient China and Modern China. But after looking closer, even the existence of these ancient collections becomes vague within the location of the ground floors. The glory on the first floor and above were designed carefully to display modern China exhibitions, surrounded by the latest technologies and narratives with national pride. Another example, for Japanese museums, booklets have been translated into Chinese and Korean more than the English version, which shows that China and Korea are these countries when Japan looks west at first. "Being international" does not mean "being English" but adapting more Chinese and Korean in Japanese exhibitions, explained by the Japanese curator.

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<sup>6</sup> Bennett, Tony. "Exhibition, difference, and the logic of culture." In *Museum frictions*, pp. 46-69. Duke University Press, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Macdonald, Sharon. "Collecting practices." *A companion to museum studies* (2006): 81-97.

## 1.3 Topic Development

### 1.3.1 Research aims

This thesis seeks to engage by analysing the policy of museums' international exhibitions on both sides of the cooperation and the motivations, trying to fill the gap between Western and Eastern cultural practices about heritage. It includes the two perspectives of these lending and hosting museums that made these international exhibitions possible, explicitly focusing on China and Japan. The motivations of China and Japan for accepting the same exhibition invitations will be compared, including the cooperation process and public reaction to these exhibitions in the two countries. Nowadays, many museums face the challenge between ideological conflicts and post-colonialism; multiple interest groups criticise that international exhibitions use historically illegal collections to spread narratives benefitting the host museum. However, international exhibitions could reach more global audiences and distribute knowledge with the new theme created with historical heritage collections. Indeed, these costly exhibitions are time-consuming with high insurance costs and complex bureaucratic processes, which would be analysed along with the outcomes of these international exhibitions.

Also, international exhibitions are often attractive with the success of a considerable number of visitors. Touring exhibitions have broken records at museums in recent years. Such as, in 2016, *The Art Newspaper* reported that the most successful exhibition of the year was the National Palace Museum Taipei's touring exhibition *Hidden Talent: Chen Cheng-po*, which reached a visitation of 1,607,736, which meant 13,860 visitors went to that exhibition every day during the exhibition period from 2014.12.5 to 2015.3.30, in total 118 days.<sup>8</sup> Based on a special report, "Exhibition and Museum Visitor Figures 2019", published by *The Art Newspaper* in 2020, more than 3.8 million visitors went to the National Palace Museum in Taipei in 2019.<sup>9</sup> One touring exhibition like *Hidden Talent: Chen Cheng-po* could count 42% of its annual visitors. The growing number of visitors reflects a border trend towards building international cultural exhibitions, which takes advantage of this forging interconnected global community. Cultural exchanges have

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<sup>8</sup> Davidson, Lee, and Leticia Pérez-Castellanos. *Cosmopolitan Ambassadors: International exhibitions, cultural diplomacy and the polycentral museum*. Vernon Press, 2019: 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Exhibition and museum visitor figures 2019*. <https://www.museus.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Arts-Most-Popular-visitor-figures-2019.pdf> (consultation: 22 March 2023).

become increasingly crucial for fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. As institutions dedicated to preserving and disseminating cultural heritage, museums have a unique role.

Moreover, this study focuses on cross-border exhibitions, which showcase the well-selected collections combined with art, history, and traditions of different cultures, hoping these international collaborations could help bridge divides and communities. Through exhibitions, educational programs, and outreach activities, museums' international collaboration can foster intercultural dialogues and promote understanding among people from different backgrounds. In short, cross-border exhibitions represent a valuable resource for cultural diplomacy, and international collaboration has more potential to contribute to intercultural activities, enhancing these visitors' understanding of the world. An active partnership among diverse communities will create inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the past and the future. The conflicts and challenges for international exhibitions always exist, from navigating complex ethical and legal issues related to ownership to repatriating cultural artefacts, sometimes leading to contentious disputes with other countries or indigenous communities.

At last, this research about international exhibitions also wants to analyse the potential impacts of cross-border cooperation. For example, when museum exhibitions serve as platforms for promoting collections from multiple countries and societies, local visitors could become future tourists inspired by the content of the items in these temporary exhibitions. By attracting tourists and visitors worldwide, museums generate revenue and create jobs in local communities. In addition, cross-border exhibitions are cultural ambassadors to introduce the history, society, value, and ideal expectations from the home museum to the host museum. The communication through items and collections generates an object-oriented story, which satisfies the museum's educative, ethical, and aesthetic roles. By leveraging the power of cultural diplomacy to promote narratives and exhibitions on the global state, museums can help to create a more prosperous and sustainable future for their communities.

### 1.3.2 Case studies in China

The selection of case studies focuses on two sides of cooperation partners, one from Europe and the other from East Asia. All cases respond to two criteria: whether the international exhibition could show the process of collaboration and reflect the cultural policies of the host venue on the other hand, whether these exhibitions displayed in the twenty-first century contribute to a new model of global heritage management. This means that the selected exhibitions not only display collections in China and Japan from these European countries but also apply cultural policies to change or design narratives to suit the interests of host museums and communities, which makes the invisible national diplomacy obvious.

There are two case studies about the cross-border exhibition in China: "A History of the World in 100 Objects" and "West Encounters East——A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics". The reason for choosing case studies has been supported by previously existing information about the aim of this thesis and thanks to my previous personal visiting experience with some of them, such as the second case study displayed during the pandemic, which generated new experiences for long-distance cooperation and online innovations such as the website of the exhibition through the internet. This can also be seen as a threat to impartiality. However, the acquisition of overall insight is related to personal experience. The selected study cases aim to showcase two types of successful or partially successful cross-border exhibition processes and outcomes in international museum cooperation.

**Table 1.1: Case studies in China**

Case study number	Name of the venue museum	Location	Exhibition Title	Date	Days	Cooperating Museum	Vistors
1	the National Museum of China	Beijing, China	"A History of the World in 100 Objects"	2017.3.2-5.31	90	The British Museum	340,000
2	the Shanghai Museum	Shanghai, China	"West Encounters East——A cultural conversation between chinese and european ceramics"	2021.10.29-2022.01.16	95	The Guimet Museum	200,000

Source: Own elaboration

### 1.3.3 Case Studies in Japan

Two case studies in Japan have been selected to compare Chinese and Japanese museums' cooperation policies. The first is the same touring exhibition displayed in China, starting from a BBC Radio podcast named "A History of the World in 100 Objects". A narrative designed for people who could not see the original items with their eyes but imagined them through the voice of Neil MacGregor, the director of the British Museum at that time. Japan exhibited in three museums: the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum from the 18th of April to the 28th of June in 2015, then the exhibition went to the second venue, Kyushu National Museum, from the 14th of July to the 6th of September the last station was Kobe City Museum, which exhibited from the 20th, September 2015 to the 11th January 2016. Since the narrative of this exhibition in three museum venues was the same, the exhibition in Tokyo received an impressive number of visitors, 300,436. In this research, the cooperation between the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and the British Museum will be analysed with the same exhibition in Beijing, China. The second case study, "Treasures of the Natural World", came from the Natural History Museum, London, which started to display in Japan at the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science in 2017 as its first station globally before it went to Singapore, Taiwan, Canada and Australia to audiences approaching 750,000 people before the last station.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 1.2** Case studies in Japan

Case study number	Name of the venue museum	Location	Exhibition Title	Date	Days	Cooperating Museum	Vistors
3	the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum	Tokyo, Japan	"A History of the World in 100 Objects"	2015.4.18-6.28	71	The British Museum	300,436
4	the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science	Tokyo, Japan	"Treasures of the Natural World"	2017.3.18-6.11	85	Natural History Museum, London	300,000

Source: Own elaboration

<sup>10</sup> Treasures of the Natural World exhibition reaches final stop on world tour | Natural History Museum <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/press-office/press-releases/treasures-of-the-natural-world-exhibition-reaches-final-stop-on-.html> (consultation: 15 March 2023).

## 1.4 Objectives and Hypotheses

### 1.4.1 Objectives

The main objective of this thesis is to *examine the role of international exhibitions and cultural diplomacy in global museums' collaboration, the motivations and benefits of museums which hold cross-border exhibitions in these countries, and how these international collaborations challenge the traditional curatorial institutions in China and Japan*. The complexity of the study object, its multi-functionality from heritage management to cultural diplomacy of four case studies, force the choice of multiple objectives, which lead to the subsequent research questions and hypotheses. Also, provided this thesis's threefold political, scientific and applied motivations, the objectives can be divided into these three main categories. These secondary objectives stemming from the above main goal can be classified as follows:

**Table 1.3:** Secondary objectives of the thesis, related to research questions and hypotheses

Number	Secondary objectives	Character	Subquestion, Subhypothesis
1	To evaluate the outcome of international collaboration from the perspective of cultural diplomacy;	scientific/applied	1
2	To analyse the challenges of cooperation between museums (e.g. technical questions, expense, huge insurance, shipping of museums' items, transportation of valuable collections. )	applied	1
3	To investigate the historical and evolutionary process of selected cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan in the twenty-first century;	scientific/applied	2
4	To compare and contrast the construction of the collaboration on cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan;	political/scientific/applied	2
5	To assess the impact on museum narratives and curatorial practices in China and Japan with globally touring collections;	political/scientific	3
6	To summarise the effects of international collaboration on long-term museum policies in China and Japan;	political/scientific	3

Source: Own elaboration



### 1.4.2 Research questions and hypotheses

With continuous research, this dissertation wants to delve into these museums' cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan, observing the outcome of these museums' international collaboration. This will lead to the validation (or invalidation) of the hypotheses about international cooperation and cultural diplomacy. It analyses the similar procedures of Chinese and Japanese museums' cultural policies and the differences between their official objectives. At large, it examines the role of international exhibitions and cultural diplomacy in global museums' collaboration, the motivations and benefits of museums which hold cross-border arrangements in these countries, and how these international collaborations challenge the traditional curatorial institutions in China and Japan.

The main research question and hypothesis are directly related to the main objective of the role of international exhibitions and cultural diplomacy in global museums' collaboration. With this question, the researcher hopes to answer directly if cross-border exhibitions could improve the cultural curatorial practices of the museums involved, and if yes, how they could adapt to the different cultural policies in the context of the globalisation of museum actions. Each subquestion/hypothesis responds to two simultaneous objectives. This thesis has six objectives from the political, scientific and applied perspectives to investigate the role of international exhibitions and verify these cooperation processes to find out the motivations, outcomes and further influence on Chinese and Japanese museums.

**Table 1.4:** Main research question/hypothesis

Main research question:	What was the role of the international exhibition and cultural diplomacy in global museums' collaboration?
Main hypothesis:	International exhibitions are not only a system of knowledge exchange of different museums, which allows benefiting the cultural curatorial practices of the museums involved. Above all, they are elements of cultural diplomacy in socio-political terms and of projection of museums in the context of the globalisation of museum actions, implying a system to increase the cultural influence of the museum it provides in the host country.

Source: Own elaboration

Every two objectives have a shared subquestion and sub-hypotheses. In total, there are three subquestions/sub-hypothesis of this thesis. Most international exhibitions are also touring exhibitions, which have a timetable for other countries and cities based on contracts negotiated ahead. Also, the popularity of cross-border exhibitions is highly dependent on the display collections and narratives, which also need to take the host museum's political concerns; sometimes, when there is a collection that could fulfil the cultural agenda of the country, the collection has to be replaced, when the situation happened to a touring exhibition globally, which provide a unique chance to see the national invisible censorship principles. Hence:

**Table 1.5.1:** Sub-question 1 / sub-hypothesis 1

Subquestion 1:	If cross-border exhibitions could improve the cultural curatorial practices of the museums involved, and if yes, how could they adapt to the different cultural policies in the context of the globalisation of museum actions?
Hypothesis 1:	Cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan can benefit the cultural curatorial practices for the local museums, and improve visitors' understanding of diverse cultural contexts, each exhibition has to go through the negotiation with the host venue on collections and change certain items to display smoothly.

Source: Own elaboration

The understanding of the cross-border exhibitions needs to analyse the motivations of both sides, which leads to the outcomes of this international cooperation from visitor numbers, tickets and educational lecture income, media reports (including magazines, TV programs, and social media such as YouTube videos about the exhibition and museum), sales of merchandise, new subscribers for official accounts, family and school activities, and so on.

**Table 1.5.2:** Sub-question 2 / sub-hypothesis 2

Subquestion 2:	What are the motivations and benefits of museums which hold cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan?
Hypothesis 2:	Cross-border exhibitions could create opportunities for both sides of international collaboration, displaying the collections with new narratives, spreading knowledge to wider audiences and generating income from the global communities.

Source: Own elaboration

The cooperation processes among museums from the East and the West need to exchange the details of museums' curatorial practices, which could be very challenging for Chinese and Japanese museums to cope with, from the design layout to display requirements and so on. To compare and contrast the international collaboration of museums in China and Japan in terms of both the institutional point of view and the narratives related to collections displayed, subquestion and hypotheses related to the construction of museums have been made as follows:

**Table 1.5.3:** Sub-question 3 / sub-hypothesis 3

Subquestion 3:	How do these international collaborations challenge the traditional curatorial institutions in China and Japan?
Hypothesis 3:	Museums' international collaboration could contribute to the construction of a global identity with collective heritage of humankind, motivating museums in China and Japan to join in the international museum network and develop more universal narratives in further curatorial activities.

Source: Own elaboration

As can be seen, the set of questions and hypotheses follows from a general and theoretical background perspective to a more detailed, applied and manageable investigation. These research objectives start from the cultural diplomacy of a country and then move to four specific case studies in China and Japan to show the exact cooperation processes. At last, this thesis wants to find out what changes happen in the Chinese and Japanese museums under international influence, which leads to the methodology in the next section.

## 1.5 Methodology

The methodology used to research the selected case studies is mainly based on qualitative analysis such as a bibliographic survey, interviews (face-to-face and questionnaires sent through emails), and field visits to get more direct insights into the cooperation process among museums of cross-border exhibitions. Also, existing research and reports with multiple languages have been considered, as some of them are Chinese resources, with English translations of the titles and names in the footnote section to widen the range of information. It shows the results and outcomes of these recent exhibitions, in which the earliest case study was displayed in 2015, and includes the development history of Chinese and Japanese museums. That is precious information to understand how these cultural policies in these two countries have changed in the past and why they have different principles for international cooperation. Moreover, multiple languages also play essential roles in the research process. For example, one of the Japanese museums, the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science, only accepted the questionnaire in Japanese and answered these questions in Japanese; the original reply with an English translation would be added to the related case study in Chapter 7.

At the same time, this research combines primary and secondary data to gain better insights into the motivations and outcomes of the museums' international collaboration from both institutional points of view and the narratives related to the collections displayed. Such as, although the museums in China and Japan are interested in adding introduction information in other languages and digitalising the collections, the reality of the museums shows a different attitude towards the ideal situation. The primary data was collected through interviews by the researcher with curators and museum professionals. The secondary data were coming from other researchers' publications, articles published on museums' official websites or media, in which the number of visitors, the date for display, the full list of collections and cooperation details would be taken into consideration to identify the impact of cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan. Since the thesis aims to compare and contrast the international collaboration of museums in China and Japan, two case studies, each in these two countries were chosen carefully to compare the similarities and differences simultaneously.

### 1.5.1 Literature review

The literature review contributes an essential part of this work from three perspectives: cultural diplomacy, museology, and international cooperation through exhibitions, which will be analysed in Chapters 2 and 3. The written sources covered both scientific and non-scientific literature. Not all case studies have the same quantity and diversity of literature. Therefore, the search has been eclectic from systematic keywords used in Google Scholar and university portals, etc. References and written documents about the earlier international exhibitions are more than the latest ones, while the latest exhibitions show more digital and technological attempts. Such as, the curator of the National Museum of China attended a podcast in 2017 to share the preparation process and details of the team of the exhibition as a part of the promotion. The Shanghai Museum created an online interactive introduction for the visitors, which included of the background and information of several collections of the exhibition of “West Encounters East”. The podcast and online introduction are all in Chinese. Screenshots of the webpage and an English abstract translation will be considered grey literature.

#### *Scientific literature*

First, to give a theoretical background of the hypotheses and research questions, the multidisciplinary the scientific literature draws a line for this thesis. It creates a conceptual basis for the keywords and development of definitions, which have been used in the case studies chapters of the context. Within the context of this thesis, the scientific literature covered the following areas of interest: museums, cross-border exhibitions, international cooperation, cultural policy, heritage management, cultural diplomacy, etc. Several reference texts from specific disciplines, such as history, language, anthropology, international development and relations, have been reviewed as part of the research background. To describe the construction process of international collaboration of museums' exhibitions in China and Japan, this thesis includes analysing past exhibitions' documentation, how to set up, visitor numbers, marketing, communication and education activities, etc. Then, the evolution of the leading contemporary narratives of the museums' exhibitions in China and Japan follows to illustrate the historical changes in museums' exhibitions under international collaboration.

### *Documentary research related to the exhibitions*

In addition, documentary research will be applied to gather information from former newspaper reports, press clippings during the exhibition period, online yearbooks, photos, and publications issued by museums, including the visitors and income data about the cross-border exhibitions. The point of view from the local press in China and Japan provides exciting insights into the cooperation process, from the discussion about whether to ask the British Museum to give back the collections that came from China to the surprised reaction to the age and gender of the employees of the British Museum. Moreover, the Shanghai Museum has published yearbooks which include budget details for these international exhibitions and further arrangements for cooperation internationally. Also, information published by the museums on their official social media accounts, comments to these posts from the public, museum websites and promote programs will be analysed to summarize these differences in institutional structures of these cross-border exhibitions.

Given that this thesis aims at the prospects of the museums' international collaboration with cross-border exhibitions, most of the literature examined consists of documents expressing the current situation of future suggestions for building a global museum network. This kind of grey literature includes books published by museum professionals. Such as, there is a book published by the former vice-director of the National Museum of China, Chen Lvsheng, *The Beauty of Museums*, who visited more than 370 museums in the world and still kept the idea that the National Museum of China should focus on Chinese national treasures rather than collection foreign items.<sup>11</sup> His ideas are not in the official articles of the National Museum of China but in his book about the museum, which had never been translated into other languages. The national pride affects the leading leadership group so profoundly in the National Museum of China, which could explain why it does not cooperate with the Natural History Museum in London for the "Treasures of the Natural World" exhibition.

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<sup>11</sup> Chen Lvsheng 陈履生 *The Beauty of Museums* 博物馆之美 – 2020 - Google Books  
[https://books.google.es/books/about/%E5%8D%9A%E7%89%A9%E9%A6%86%E4%B9%8B%E7%BE%8E.html?id=LWWnzQEACAAJ&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.es/books/about/%E5%8D%9A%E7%89%A9%E9%A6%86%E4%B9%8B%E7%BE%8E.html?id=LWWnzQEACAAJ&redir_esc=y) (consultation: 01 March 2023).

## 1.5.2 Documentation of the Exhibitions

The research focuses on international exhibitions hosted from 2015 to 2021 in China and Japan as four case studies in the twenty-first century. These four exhibitions shared a similar background and technological progress, in which the context of global museums' cooperation was undergoing between Europe and Asia, and cross-border transport was getting cheaper and more affordable. The global pandemic that started in 2020 added unexpected difficulties to international collaboration. However, since curators from the lending museums couldn't fly to China personally and unpack the valuable collections by themselves to communicate and conduct an exhibition in Shanghai ceramics, the American curators from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York wrote detailed documents to help Chinese curators to understand all the principles and orders to unpack their collections transported from America to China by the airline (Figure 1-1). Before the pandemic, the British Museum used to send coordinators to China and display valuable collections by themselves, from the pictures and Chinese newspaper reports of the former international exhibition in the Shanghai Museum of "A History of the World in 100 Objects", only the British coordinators, Lindsey Youell and her colleague were wearing gloves to be able to touch "The Lewis Chessmen", the Chinese curators didn't have access to touch the original collections.



Figure 1-1: The exhibition gallery of ceramics at the Shanghai Museum.| Source: Jinghao Tong<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the Shanghai Museum of China fieldwork. (Photo date: 09 February 2023).



For researching international collaboration, the ability to interpret multiple languages is essential because some official and critical data have only been published in Chinese and Japanese, such as the annual financial plan of the museum and local newspaper reports about these exhibitions. Although all these four museums in China and Japan have official English websites along with their Chinese and Japanese websites, the content of the English webpage hadn't been updated for a long time, or only part of the exhibition's information had been translated. For example, on the official website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum for “A History of the World in 100 Objects”, the English word “Exhibition” was correctly spelt on the left corner of the website, while in the title, the “i” was missing (Figure 1-2). The English spelling mistakes on the Japanese website could be reviewed as careless behaviour. In contrast, on the original Japanese website, there was a commemorative lecture given by the curator of the British Museum, Belinda Crerar. Ironically, this information hasn't been translated into English at all. The English version of Japanese websites was not a direct translation of the Japanese version, rather than a website to pretend to be in English with extremely limited information (Figure 1-3).



Figure 1-2: The official website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum for “A History of the World in 100 Objects”.

Source: The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum<sup>13</sup>.

In 2017, the British Museum sent a five-colleague team to Beijing to check all the collections delivered to the National Museum of China, such as Lindsey Youell, the British

<sup>13</sup> The official website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum for “A History of the World in 100 Objects” [https://www.tobikan.jp/en/exhibition/h27\\_history100.html](https://www.tobikan.jp/en/exhibition/h27_history100.html) (consultation: 05 September 2022).



Museum project co-ordinator of international travelling exhibitions, was co-working with the curators in China to set collections. All the collections had dozens of pictures from different angles. The British Museum colleagues had checked one by one with the data and pictures to make sure all the collections were safe and in good condition after the journey from the last venue. For example, the first collection in the exhibition was Mummy of Hornedjitef, which took four hours for the British colleagues to check. The local Chinese media emphasised their hard work and carefulness. Although in other countries, some of the collections were displayed without showcases, in the case of China, the British Museum considered that if too many people visited the exhibition, which would cause changes in the humidity rate, all the collections were covered by showcases carefully in the end. The truth was they were correct; in total, 340,000 visitors went to this exhibition in Beijing during these three months.<sup>14</sup>

観覧料	<p>前売券   一般 1,300円 / 学生 1,100円 / 高校生 600円 / 65歳以上 800円</p> <p>当日券   一般 1,600円 / 学生 1,300円 / 高校生 800円 / 65歳以上 1,000円</p> <p>団体券   一般 1,300円 / 学生 1,100円 / 高校生 600円 / 65歳以上 800円 ※団体割引の対象は20名以上</p> <p>※中学生以下は無料 ※身体障害者手帳・愛の手帳・療育手帳・精神障害者保健福祉手帳・被爆者健康手帳をお持ちの方とその付添いの方（1名まで）は無料 ※いずれも証明できるものをご持参ください</p> <p>▼ 夢あふれるあの日へ ▼ シルバーデー ▼ 都内教育施設 ▼ パパママデー ▼</p>
主催	東京都美術館（公益財団法人東京都歴史文化財団）、大英博物館、朝日新聞社、NHK、NHKプロモーション
後援	外務省、ブリティッシュ・カウンシル
協賛	花王、キヤノンマーケティングジャパン、大和ハウス工業、三菱商事、あいおいニッセイ同和損保
協力	国立民族学博物館、日本航空、キャセイパシフィック航空、日本貨物航空、アイディールブレン
PAGE TOP	
イベント情報	<p>○記念講演会</p> <p>大英博物館担当キュレーターによる講演会です。展示会の楽しみ方を解説します。</p> <p>日時 2015年4月18日(土) 14:00~15:30</p> <p>テーマ 「大英博物館展の楽しみ方」</p> <p>講師 ベリンダ・クレラー（大英博物館 本展担当キュレーター）</p> <p>会場 東京都美術館 講堂（交差点 ロビー階/定員225名）</p> <p>※観覧無料。ただし民族観覧券（半券可）が必要です。 ※当日13:00より講堂前で整理券を配布し、定員になり次第、受付を終了。閉場は13:30です。</p> 

Figure 1-3: The comparison of the Japanese and English official websites.

Source: The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The official website of the British Museum

<https://www.facebook.com/britishmuseum/photos/a.418481824722/10155481166554723/?type=3> (consultation: 05 September 2022).

<sup>15</sup> The official website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum for “A History of the World in 100 Objects”

[https://www.tobikan.jp/en/exhibition/h27\\_history100.html](https://www.tobikan.jp/en/exhibition/h27_history100.html) & [https://www.tobikan.jp/exhibition/h27\\_history100.html](https://www.tobikan.jp/exhibition/h27_history100.html) (consultation: 05 September 2022).

### 1.5.3 Interviews with museum professionals

The task of investigating cross-border exhibitions requires the researcher to have access to observe these two sides of museums during the pandemic. During the researcher's master's study period in London in 2019 and my museum-related dissertation, I had the chance to visit multiple museums there. That learning experience motivated me to investigate more about Chinese museums' policies. The same exhibition from the British Museum also went to Japan, where some collections from Chinese museums did not. This finding inspired me to combine these Japanese museums to compare these two countries' national cultural policies. China was conducting the zero-covid policy in 2021, which created difficulties for non-Chinese researchers to go inside China. After Japan had allowed foreign visitors to enter from November of 2022, the researcher had the chance to visit Japanese and Chinese museums personally, from the 4th of January to the 13th of February of 2023, in total for 40 days. The fieldwork covered four museums in this research: the Shanghai Museum, the National Museum of China, the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. At the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, the researcher had the chance to interview its chief curator, Mr. Hitoshi Yamamura, face to face. At the National Museum of China, the researcher joined an exhibition guide tour hosted by the education officer, Ms Yu Yao. Both shared valuable first-hand experiences with the researcher, which will be analysed in the following chapters. Here are the questions for case study in the National Museum of China—the name of the museum changes based on the research case studies.

**Interview form 1: Questions for the museum directors (general), e.g., case study 1: “A History of the World in 100 Objects” in the National Museum of China between China and the UK.**

Question 1 How important are international exhibitions for the museum?

Question 2 Why did the National Museum of China start collaborating with the British Museum from London?

Question 3 How does national cultural diplomacy influence the museum nowadays?

Question 4 What was the role of the international exhibition A History of the World in 100 Objects in the short-term and long-term strategy of the museum?

Question 5 What was the aim of this exhibition and the concept behind it?

Question 6 Why did you consider this exhibition important enough for an investment?

For the National Museum of China: Why did you pay this exhibition?

For the British Museum: How did you negotiate the price of this exhibition?

Question 7 How would you characterize the cooperation between the two museums in organising the exhibition ——“A History of the World in 100 Objects”?

Question 8 How did the museum decide which objects will be included in this exhibition?

Question 9 How were the exhibition’s different narratives negotiated between these two museums?

Question 10 Is the National Museum of China/the British Museum interested in developing more similar international exhibitions in the future? And why?

**Interview form 2: with questions for the exhibition curators(detailed),e.g., case study 1: “A History of the World in 100 Objects” in the National Museum of China between China and the British Museum of the UK.**

Question 1 Which was the target public of the exhibition: A History of the World in 100 Objects?

Question 2 What was the aim of this exhibition and the concept behind it?

Question 3 How long did the National Museum of China/the British Museum prepare for this exhibition?

Question 4 Who were the different persons and departments involved in organising this exhibition?——A History of the World in 100 Objects?

Question 5 How would you characterise the collaboration between the British and Chinese teams?

Question 6 Before the exhibition, how did the museum promote the information about the event?

Question 7 How did you adapt the exhibition to different public categories (e.g. children, elderly) and different personal necessities (e.g. disabled people).?

Question 8 What was the feedback from the public and media?

Question 9 What unexpected challenges did the National Museum of China/the British Museum encounter in organising the international exhibition A History of the World in 100 Objects?

Question 10 What suggestions would you like to give for a similar exhibition in the future?

### 1.5.4 Museum Visits in China and Japan

All four case studies are temporary international exhibitions in China and Japan. Although these two countries belong to East Asia, they conduct different cultural policies and maintain other relationships with these European museums. This thesis will analyse both from the institutional point of view and the narratives related to the collections displayed. To answer three critical questions about their cultural diplomacy in global museums' collaboration, two interview lists have been conducted for general members of the museum and specific curators or directors who could interpret the background for the cooperation. With the different museums' cross-border exhibitions case studies, this part introduces the structure of museums' exhibitions in China and Japan through case studies, which play an essential role in the institutions' curatorial practices.

The museum visits for this research started in January 2023, when international travel was possible again. From the 8<sup>th</sup> of January of 2023, China cancelled the compulsory quarantine for all international travellers, including Chinese. Japan started to allow foreign visitors to travel as independent tourists from the 11<sup>th</sup> of October, 2022.<sup>16</sup> Before visiting museums of China and Japan in January 2023 as fieldwork, I had several visiting experiences at the National Museum of China when I lived in Beijing for five years, from 2012 to 2017. In 2017, when the exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" was displayed in Beijing, I visited the exhibition twice. Since that exhibition only lasted three months, it would transfer to Shanghai Museum for the next stop. After I went to it once, I decided to go there again. After these two times visits, I became fascinated by the creation of international exhibitions, the function of museums and how people could figure out who they are through these historical collections and narratives of heritage. At that time, I wondered what the word "culture" meant. Like the DNA of the human body, does culture also have its DNA as "cultural cornerstones" to make up the human brain? If we could inherit "cultural cornerstones" as "cultural DNA" from museums and exhibitions, the similarities among human beings would develop beyond the differences. If the "borders" and "nations" are artificial products of imagination, how do we cross and enter them? With the development and understanding of these concepts, some words used in this thesis would also be updated, such as "international" and "cross-border", since ICOM (The International Council of Museums) also mentioned in its slogan:

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<sup>16</sup> Japan opens up to foreign tourists after two years - BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-61612599> (consultation: 31 March 2023).

“Museums have no borders, they have a network”.<sup>17</sup> So do these cultural cornerstones, which are the growing experiences of people.

Then, understanding the impact of museums’ cross-border exhibitions on the host and lending museums requires me to combine both sides' information. For the lending museum, these collections displayed in the Chinese gallery as an international exhibition could be kept in the museums for years, without changes to display caused by the limited space, such as a collection in the Shanghai Museum international exhibition: *West Encounters East: A Cultural Conversation between Chinese and European Ceramics*, from the 29<sup>th</sup> October of 2021 to the 16<sup>th</sup> of January of 2022, its situation in the British Museum on the official website showed it was not on display<sup>18</sup>. The international exhibition in Shanghai created chances for this kind of inactive collection in the British Museum to be shown to Chinese visitors in glass cases.



Figure 1-4: Museum visit to the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Official website of International Council of Museums - The global museum network -International Council of Museums <https://icom.museum/en/> (consultation: 16 March 2023).

<sup>18</sup> Exhibition history and location | British Museum [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A\\_1904-0714-1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A_1904-0714-1) (consultation: 05 March 2023).

<sup>19</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the Japanese museums. (Date: 09 January 2023).





Figure 1-5: Museum visit to the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science in 2023. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>20</sup>

As Figures 1-4 and 1-5 show, to evaluate the similarities and differences between the museum policies of four case studies in China and Japan, I visited the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> of January, 2023. Both the Chief Curator, Mr. Hitoshi Yamamura, and the librarian, Ms. Onishi Machiko of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, accepted my interviews at the museums and kindly answered my questions about the exhibition and museum policy. After the interview request was sent to the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science, the public relationship sector officer, Ms. Mai Koguchi answered my questionnaire in Japanese, which would be analysed in the Japanese case study chapters 6 and 7.

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<sup>20</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the Japanese museums. (Date: 09 January 2023).



Figure 1-6: Museum visit to the National Museum of China in February of 2023. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>21</sup>



Figure 1-7: Museum visit to the Shanghai Museum in February of 2023. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the Chinese museums. (Date: 07 February 2023).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

The museum visit in China started from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> of February, 2023, as shown in figures 1-6 and 1-7. These two Chinese museums needed online reservations with a Chinese national ID card or passport; the daily visitor limit was 30,000 people.<sup>23</sup> Chinese curator Dr Yan Zhi, who was responsible for the exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" in 2017, worked for the National Museum of China from 2009 to 2018, had the online interview with the researcher on the 4<sup>th</sup>, April of 2023, which was conducted in Chinese and recorded with the consent of the interviewee. The abstract of this interview has been translated into English as Appendix 1, with the questionnaire about the exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects", including cooperation targets and details between the National Museum of China and the British Museum in 2017.

### 1.5.5 Methodological limits

These four case studies of cross-border exhibitions in Chinese and Japanese museums were displayed between 2015 and 2021, with the most recent opening in January 2021. The timing of these exhibitions and the COVID-19 pandemic during the research period presented significant methodological challenges for the researcher, including travel restrictions for the latest exhibition and reliance on historical documents for past exhibitions. For example, one of the Chinese curators who participated in the case study displayed in 2017 needed help remembering all the details during the interview with the researcher in 2023 about the cross-border exhibition. The researcher has also had to navigate cultural differences and language barriers, essential in museum collaboration processes. Despite these challenges, the researcher remains committed to producing high-quality research on the policy of museums' international exhibitions in China and Japan, utilising creative methods to fill gaps in data and offering valuable insights into the field of heritage management.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher has faced methodological problems. For example, travel restrictions are in place, making it impossible to visit exhibition sites in person in the first two years of this research. As a result, the researcher has had to rely on historical

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<sup>23</sup> [The National Museum reopens, which needs an appointment in advance to visit, and the daily visitor number is limited to 30,000 people] ‘国博重新开放 参观别忘提前预约 每天限流 3 万人-Guóbó chóngxīn kāifàng cānguān bié wàng tíqián yùyuē měitiān xiàn liú 3 wàn rén’, online [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-04/12/c\\_1124355863.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-04/12/c_1124355863.htm) (consultation: 2 March 2023).



documents, such as reports from newspapers and historical television programs. This has made obtaining direct observations of the exhibitions during their realisation difficult. While these documents provide valuable insights into the exhibitions, they offer a different level of detail than direct observations. With these limitations, other methods, such as conducting interviews with experts and analysing related materials from related exhibitions, had been employed to fill in the gaps.

Furthermore, these case exhibitions are between two cultures and two very different organisational systems of museums, presenting a unique set of challenges. For instance, the researcher has had to navigate other bureaucratic processes and understand the nuances of the different cultural contexts in which the exhibitions were created. This has required significant observation and effort to ensure the research is accurate and reliable. Another major challenge has been the language barrier. Many primary sources, such as face-to-face interviews or email communication with Chinese and Japanese curators, are only available in these two languages, making it difficult to summarise and deliver the information in English accurately. To overcome this challenge, the researcher has translated the abstract of Chinese interviews as an original reference with proofreading by an English native speaker, which ensures that the information is accurately represented.

At last, cultural sensitivities have added another layer of complexity to the research. The researcher has had to consider cultural differences and understand the context in which the exhibitions were created to ensure the research findings' accuracy and credibility. In addition, the researcher has had to consider the unique challenges associated with conducting research in a cross-cultural context. This includes being aware of potential biases and assumptions that may be present in the study, as well as understanding the nuances of language and communication styles that may differ across cultures. The researcher has examined various documents and collections about the exhibitions, including historical records that may reveal the hidden cultural strategies of these two nations. Through this rigorous research process, the researcher hopes to offer valuable insights into the cultural policy of museums' international exhibitions in China and Japan and contribute to the broader field of cross-cultural research. By shedding light on the challenges and opportunities associated with conducting research in a cross-cultural context, the researcher aims to promote greater understanding and appreciation of the complexities of cultural heritage management.

## 1.6 Conclusion

This thesis closely examines the policy of museums' international exhibitions on both sides of the cooperation, focusing on China and Japan and the implications for intercultural dialogues and understanding. Cross-border exhibitions provide a unique opportunity for showcasing collections from different cultures for entertainment and educational purposes. For instance, visitors can learn about other cultures' history, religion, art, and customs, enhancing their knowledge and tolerance towards diversity. The thesis analyses the motivations of China and Japan for accepting the same exhibition invitations, the cooperation process, and public reactions to these exhibitions in the two countries. This includes an in-depth analysis of the cultural policies in China and Japan, highlighting their differences and similarities. One of the main differences is that China has a more centralised approach to cultural heritage management, with the government playing a leading role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. In contrast, Japan has a more decentralised approach, with local governments and private organisations playing a more active role.

Furthermore, the research aims to fill the gap between Western and Eastern cultural practices about heritage. This involves exploring the underlying reasons behind these policies, such as historical, political, and social factors. For instance, China's emphasis on cultural heritage is closely linked to its national pride and soft power strategy, while Japan's approach is influenced by its experience of modernisation and Westernization. The study also analyses the potential impacts of cross-border cooperation, including the economic benefits of attracting tourists and creating job opportunities in local communities. This includes a case study of the recent exhibition "West Encounters East——A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics" held in Shanghai, which attracted more than 360,000 visitors and generated significant revenue for the local economy.

Additionally, the thesis examines the broader implications of cross-border exhibitions for the promotion of cultural exchange and understanding and their role in shaping cultural diplomacy on a global scale. In particular, it argues that cross-border exhibitions can result from cultural diplomacy, enabling countries to project their cultural values and enhance their international reputation. It also explores the challenges and opportunities of cross-border cooperation, such as language barriers, funding issues, and cultural sensitivities. Also, this thesis contributes to

understanding the potential and challenges of cross-border exhibitions to promote intercultural dialogues and understanding of the international management of heritage. It provides insights into cross-border cooperation's motivations, processes, and impacts and the broader implications for cultural diplomacy.

Overall, this project is organised into eight chapters, correspondingly to four sequential sectors, which explore the concepts of cultural diplomacy and cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan and examine the importance of cultural collaboration from an international perspective. These nine chapters are: 1) the background of the research topic and aim, with the introduction of hypotheses and objectives, including methodologies such as theoretical analysis, in-depth interview and case research; 2) the first part of the state of arts: museums and exhibitions; 3) the second part of the state of arts: cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan; 4) Case study 1: “A History of the World in 100 Objects” in the National Museum of China; 5) Case study 2: “West Encounters East——A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics” in Shanghai Museum, China; 6) Case study 3: “A History of the World in 100 Objects” in Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Japan; 7) Case study 4: “Treasures of the Natural World” in National Museum of Nature and Science, Japan; 8) Conclusion with limits of the work; the last part as bibliography.

In summary, these four sequential sectors are devoted to gaining insight into cross-border exhibitions and their collaboration processes to generate a management model for museums’ international cooperation. The first part (Chapters 1-3), including this introduction, offers a framework of reference to the issues tackled: concepts about museums and international exhibitions, their definitions and development, according to different researchers this thesis has been based on, along with a description of this thesis’s theoretical position. The state of the art starts from Chapter 2 with a broader background of museum analysis to Chapter 3 with a more specific cross-border exhibition-related line of research. The second part of the thesis (Chapters 4-5) provides China's collaboration process and national cultural policies based on two international exhibitions displayed in Beijing and Shanghai. The third part (Chapters 6-7) focuses on two case studies of cross-border exhibitions in Tokyo, Japan, which covered the motivations of Japanese museums and differences from Chinese museums’ cooperation strategies with Western museums. The last part (Chapter 8) includes the conclusion and bibliography, in which the main contributions of the thesis have been indicated.





## CHAPTER 2

# STATE OF ARTS ABOUT MUSEUMS AND EXHIBITIONS



## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first part of the state of the art, which presents the definition of the terms “museum” and “exhibition” to gain insights into the main concepts used throughout the thesis. Also, the significant changes in museology in the past decades will be analysed as the essential background. Together with the second part of the State of Arts about cross-border exhibitions and cultural diplomacy in Chapter 3, these two chapters make up the theoretical frame about museums’ international collaboration. Based on the literature and the evolution of museums’ objectives and roles worldwide, this chapter examines the internationalisation trends and notable shifts in exhibitions, the global exchange of collections, and the influence on museums from the perspective of “soft power”. The idea of “soft power” was created by Harvard Professor Joseph S. Nye to explain the persuasive influence wielded by nations and international organisations in global politics.<sup>24</sup> Also, the large temporary exhibitions as a form of public attraction and marketing are challenging traditional exhibitions in museums, which shows that the role of the exhibition in museums is developing with social needs. Then, a brief history of museums’ evolution in China and Japan has been added, which introduces the background of their public museums and the changing process of exhibitions in these two countries, including their cultural policies and the political impact on museums.

First, based on the keywords in the research question, including museums and exhibitions, this research considers these changing definitions and analyses museums’ development in China and Japan. When these two countries adopted the concepts of museums and exhibitions in the past century, they developed different understandings of these Western cultural inventions. During the early period of museums, the Chinese and Japanese concepts still maintained the traditional emphasis on preservation and collection. Many new museums have been created in China and Japan in the past decades, from building a nation-state concept to boosting national recognition and collective memory. The debate between the quality and quantity of these newly established museums is growing, showing the challenges of collecting items to enrich them within a short time compared to their European peer museums. In recent years, temporary international exhibitions have become increasingly popular for museums to attract visitors to go back and see new narratives

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<sup>24</sup> Nye, Joseph S. “Soft power.” *Foreign policy* 80 (1990): 153-171.



and collections that differ from the permanent exhibits. In the article by Pierre Mayrand, "The New Museology Proclaimed", the author discussed the new museology with the concept of the "global museum" and the importance of increasing recourse to interdisciplinary, modern methods of communication used in all cultural activities and modern management methods which involve the visitors. "Eco-museology" has also been mentioned in that article, which paid attention to community development, caring about the driving forces in social progress and combining them to develop museums in the future.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, the discussion about the mission of museums and exhibitions is always continuing, which happens within the international museum network. Under the context of global collaboration and sustainable development, more cooperation with communication is replacing competition and solving the historical problems of collections, which pushes the boundary of exhibitions from displaying in a building of a particular country to more venues and international audiences. Collections and items in Chinese and Japanese museums are changing to adapt to the needs of countries and communities, with more and more international exhibitions cooperating with museums in other countries. To diverse audiences, reach younger generations and attract visitors to return, museums and exhibitions depend on professionals' programming to select, address and present narratives with collections. The relationship between society and museums impacts how different museums approach their role of disseminators and educators for everyone through their own collections or temporary exhibitions.

Finally, the background and development of Chinese and Japanese museums in the past decades have been analysed to show the path of their transformation and how these traditional rules affect today's museums' cooperation policies. A particular emphasis is made on the structure of museums' departments in these two countries, which are key reasons for the differences in setting exhibitions and cooperating with foreign organisations. The role of museums and exhibitions as educators and promoters of a national country in Chinese and Japanese museums is still profoundly coined in their appropriation of Western formats, which leads to different attitudes towards international cooperation in these case study museums. The motivations for hosting these cross-border exhibitions also depend on the quality of collections, the budget for lending items from foreign museums, narrative creation, museum policies, etc.

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<sup>25</sup> Mayrand, Pierre. "The new museology proclaimed." *Museum International* 66, no. 1-4 (2014): 115-118.



## 2.2 Museums and Exhibitions

As the keywords of this research, it is necessary to define the museums, exhibitions and the historical changes in cultural policy in East Asia, especially in China and Japan. Each of these definitions has a process of being updated with the changing reality from national and international points of view, and this research looks into an ongoing project with the latest movements related to the museums' exhibitions in both China and Japan. Also, cultural policy is essential in museums' collaboration with foreign partners. Cross-border exhibitions use different languages to introduce the same context. However, sometimes, certain concepts cannot find any direct translation, which creates difficulties for curators and visitors to understand the whole picture, which will be introduced in this chapter. On the one hand, the changing definition process of these concepts themselves is developing along with international organisations such as ICOM. On the other hand, different museums in varied countries have their understanding and focus on their museums. The universal understanding of these keywords does not exist, which is the tricky part of cooperating, but it also provides diversity for the museum industry.

### 2.2.1 The concept of the museum

Defining the museum is challenging for satisfying the different needs of diverse genres of museums operating under a variety of historical, economic, social, political, and cultural contexts. Societies and communities with incompatible ideals, values and principles also make a universal museum definition to take consideration of complex concepts. Such as, in recent years, the importance of “sustainability” has sparked intense debates among the museum community. Different definitions carry varying value judgements that point out what should the museum society achieve and work for; a museum could be a space of repression, depending on whose ideals and what values are being represented and promoted in the museum. At first, the International Council of Museums was using this definition of the museum since 2007:

“A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and

exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.”<sup>26</sup>.

Then, since the development of museums in hugely changing societies has shown different features, the original definition was not enough to cover the full meaning of museums, and identify new possibilities with global regulations anymore. As a result, in 2016, with the support of the International Council of Museums, a new committee on Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials decided to update the definition of museums with a two-year project. In 2019, at ICOM’s 139th session in Paris, the committee on Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials and the Executive Board of ICOM published an alternative museum definition:

“Museums are democratizing, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing.”<sup>27</sup>

The alternative museum definition mentioned the key word of “democratizing”, which was facing the challenge that museums had to deal with, especially national museums. Since in these national museums, historical collections had another important role to play, legitimizing state narratives and promoting social obedience. The mention of “inclusive” and “social justice” also pointed out the political responsibilities of museums in modern societies. For demanding the inclusivity and respect for different groups, such as the marginal and minority voices, by adding these words in the definition showed the museum network were making effort to live up ideals. Finally, on August 24, 2022 in Prague, the Extraordinary General Assembly of ICOM approved the proposal for the new museum definition with a majority of 92.41%. Following the adoption, the new ICOM museum definition is:

“A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and

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<sup>26</sup> Museum Definition - International Council of Museums -International Council of Museums <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/> (consultation: 22 March 2022).

<sup>27</sup> ICOM announces the alternative museum definition that will be subject to a vote - International Council of Museums -International Council of Museums <https://icom.museum/en/news/icom-announces-the-alternative-museum-definition-that-will-be-subject-to-a-vote/> (consultation: 05 September 2022).

communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.”<sup>28</sup>

The latest version of definition of museums in 2022 had removed several keywords related to “social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing” from the 2019 version, seemed like the ambition and optimistic atmosphere in museum network before the pandemic had suffered from the damage of declining visitors and limited open period. The original word “museum” came from a Greek word related to “muses”, who could use poetry, music and liberal arts to explain the mysteries.<sup>29</sup> These goddesses and protectresses of the Fine Arts became the incontestable source of the museum.<sup>30</sup> In early modern Europe and late Renaissance culture, museums were the bridges between social and intellectual life, also the “public” and “private” life which were defined at the same time, where people could think about a series of philosophical discussions and try to understand then interpret the humanistic traditions, with the collections during the sixteenth and next centuries.<sup>31</sup>

In Tony Bennett’s book *The Birth of the Museum*, a study of the creation and cultural function of modern museums, he pointed out that as more and more social members started to encounter innovative ideas, museums also provided these visitors with a sense of feeling as social progressives, to declare the visitors’ social existence in the changing society.<sup>32</sup> Through the display and explanation text of collections, the narratives in museums create an impression for the individual visitors about their relationship with the nation.<sup>33</sup>

In Asia, the museums weren’t invented under a similar cultural background to Europe, rather than an artistic use for reference from Europe. Modern museums originated in Western Europe and later expanded to other regions across the globe.<sup>34</sup> When Chinese and Japanese visitors to Europe were fascinated by the museums they saw there, they even couldn’t find a similar Chinese or Japanese term for them.<sup>35</sup> Chinese visitors during the early 19th century referred to

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<sup>28</sup> Museum Definition - International Council of Museums -International Council of Museums  
<https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/> (consultation: 02 January 2023).

<sup>29</sup> Findlen, Paula. "The museum: its classical etymology and Renaissance genealogy." *Journal of the History of Collections* 1, no. 1 (1989): 59-78.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Bennett, Tony. *The birth of the museum: History, theory, politics*. Routledge, 2013.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Wan-Chen, Chang. "A cross-cultural perspective on musealization: the museum’s reception by China and Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century." *Museum and Society* 10, no. 1 (2012): 15-27.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

these museums based on their contents, thus labelling them as "gardens of everything" or "halls of military feats", and so on.<sup>36</sup> That situation finally changed when Japan was invited to participate in Europe's World Fairs in the 1860s. From that time, a Japanese writer, Fukuzawa Yukichi, first used the term "Hakubutsukan-博物館" to describe a 'museum', which meant a house of extensive things. Japanese coined this word with Chinese characters, so it eventually became accepted as the equivalent word for 'museum' in Japan and China. In the Japanese language, thousands of Chinese characters were adopted by the Japanese writing system.<sup>37</sup> The term "kanji-漢字" in Japanese refers to Chinese characters and translates to "Han Chinese characters". These characters are written using the same characters as in Traditional Chinese.<sup>38</sup>

## 2.2.2 The evolution of museums in the twenty-first century

The status of museums in society has been based on their function in collecting, preserving and displaying items of art and artefacts from all over the world, in exploring and spreading scientific and historical knowledge for social members to understand the past better.<sup>39</sup> In recent years, the social requests for museums to be more inclusive and democratic are increasing and to be more interactive for young visitors and others who do not usually visit museums, to face the rapid development of new media technologies and mass media attractions.<sup>40</sup> In the twenty-first century, along with the breakdown of established ideological assumptions and social structure, a sense of crisis brought a state of confusion for people who work in cultural institutions, who recognised that they were in danger of being viewed as "travellers without a compass", who used to display historical objects and items based on the traditional method of narrative and chronological ordering.<sup>41</sup> However, another tendency, to put artefacts and historical collections together for the purpose of communicating and delivering information, is becoming a visible

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Taylor, M. Martin, and Insup Taylor. "Writing and literacy in Chinese, Korean and Japanese." *Writing and Literacy in Chinese, Korean and Japanese* (2014): 305.

<sup>38</sup> Joshi, R. Malatesha, and P. G. Aaron. *Handbook of orthography and literacy*. Routledge, 2005.

<sup>39</sup> Macdonald, Sharon, ed. *A companion to museum studies*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011: 81.

<sup>40</sup> Earle, Wendy. "Cultural education: redefining the role of museums in the twenty-first century." *Sociology Compass* 7, no. 7 (2013): 533.

<sup>41</sup> Macdonald, Sharon, ed. *A companion to museum studies*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011: 544.

manifestation of the philosophy that museums are tools for education, which might more appropriately be considered as learning resource centers.<sup>42</sup>

The slogan of ICOM (International Council of Museums) is “Museums have no borders. they have a network”.<sup>43</sup> In the contemporary global context, the cooperation concept is more and more important in Europe.<sup>44</sup> Museums in the world want to improve their international reputation and attraction by holding overseas exhibitions, especially in famous global venues, which could help these museums to show their collections on the world stage.<sup>45</sup> With the increasing number of overseas visitors who visited the museum in different countries, exhibitions became a collection of stories whose morals and even main characters varied according to one’s perspective. Such as, when museums in the UK accept almost half of their visitors who come from overseas, they have to rethink certain narratives in the exhibition. For example, in 2017/18, there were 47.3 million visits to DCMS (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, the UK)-sponsored museums and galleries in the UK, a similar number to the previous year and an increase of 40.6% since 2002/03.<sup>46</sup> The total self-generated income for DCMS-sponsored museums and galleries was £271 million in 2017/18, of which overseas visitors contributed 48%. When museums encounter such a large scale of visitors from overseas countries, some museums see their job as an important part of building social cohesion, bridge community divides, and face challenges of civil society together.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Smith, Charles Saumarez. "The future of the museum." *Macdonald, S., A Companion to Museum Studies* (2006): 543.

<sup>43</sup> International Council of Museums - The global museum network -International Council of Museums <https://icom.museum/en/> (consultation: 07 March 2023).

<sup>44</sup> McCall, Cathal. "European Union cross-border cooperation and conflict amelioration." *Space and Polity* 17, no. 2 (2013): 197.

<sup>45</sup> Passini, Michela. "Historical Narratives of the Nation and the Internationalization of Museums: Exhibiting National Art Histories in the Jeu de Paume Museum between the Wars." In *Great Narratives of the Past Traditions and Revisions in National Museums: Conference Proceedings from EuNaMus; European National Museums: Identity Politics; the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen; Paris 28 June–1 July & 25–26 November 2011*, no. 078, pp. 457-466. Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012.

<sup>46</sup> Sponsored museums and galleries annual performance indicators 2017/18 - GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sponsored-museums-and-galleries-annual-performance-indicators-201718> (consultation: 5 September 2022).

<sup>47</sup> Rosenberg, Tracy Jean. "History museums and social cohesion: Building identity, bridging communities, and addressing difficult issues." *Peabody Journal of Education* 86, no. 2 (2011): 115.

### 2.2.3 Museums and cultural policy

Cultural policy refers to a nation-state's actions, rules, visions, and goals that guide and position its national interests and principles about cultural sectors, such as libraries, museums, and cultural centres.<sup>48</sup> The development of museums highly depends on supporting the nation's cultural policies, from financing, training professional people, defining objectives clearly, planning advanced, and setting standards to providing integrated services.<sup>49</sup> However, some politicians and administrators of cultural affairs still have a gap in understanding museums and their demands, whose ideas about museums as storehouses for national treasures or tourist attractions for increasing ticket revenue.<sup>50</sup> Museums could be the container of multiple cultures, which is closely related to the community's memory and often depends on political decisions. Collections in museums are not objective results but social constructs effected by the nation's cultural policies.<sup>51</sup> Cultural policy could impact the creative industries when the government needs to boost sources of economic increase, along with the rise of innovation and culture-related activities.<sup>52</sup>

However, when items from different civilisations displayed together, visitors may experience the feeling of culture shock. The word "culture shock" was coined at the beginning of the development of anthropology; it was created under the context that all the cultures were separated islands, so they could only have the relationship as conquered or being conquered.<sup>53</sup> Museums are reaching out to each other under the open culture policies in different countries, which could create conversations. Both sides are questioners, observers, and thinkers during the communication process.<sup>54</sup> The fundamental concept of anthropology is culture, which could create

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<sup>48</sup> Mariano, Randolph, and Andreas Vårheim. "Libraries, Museums and Cultural Centers in Foreign Policy and Cultural Diplomacy: a Scoping Review." *Journal of documentation* 78, no. 3 (2022): 651.

<sup>49</sup> Arjona, Marta, Frances Kay Brinkley, Fernanda Camargo-Moro, Roderick C. Ebanks, Manuel Espinoza, Felipe Lacouture, Luis G. Lumbreras, Aloisio Magalhaes, and Grete Mostny. "Museum development and cultural policy: aims, prospects and challenges." *Museum International* 34, no. 2 (1982): 96.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Stylianou-Lambert, Theopisti, Nikolaos Boukas, and Marina Christodoulou-Yerali. "Museums and cultural sustainability: stakeholders, forces, and cultural policies." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 20, no. 5 (2014): 566.

<sup>52</sup> McShane, Ian. "Productive nation? Museums, cultural policy and Australia's productivity narrative." *Museums, Cultural Policy and Australia's Productivity Narrative June 9, 2014*: 131.

<sup>53</sup> Bochner, Stephen. "Culture shock due to contact with unfamiliar cultures." *Online readings in psychology and culture* 8, no. 1 (2003): 4.

<sup>54</sup> Hein, Hilde S. *The museum in transition: A philosophical perspective*. Smithsonian Institution, 2000: 120.

more and more conversations and help different cultures to understand and evolve.<sup>55</sup> As the national governments founded these museums of international exhibitions, the practice of nation-states plays an important part in museums' international policies. However, the idea of a global cultural arena has been deeply encoded into people's thoughts, museums' introductions, media messages and cultural activities, including international exhibitions hosted by multiple interest groups.<sup>56</sup>

Then, as more and more people could move through nations' borders, the increasing discussions about local and national heritage started to attract people's attention.<sup>57</sup> The concept of nation is creating a symbolic community for people to understand a cultural ideal, which is expressed with the motivation to unify social members of the political nation-state.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, city marketing and city icons such as the term "Londoner", in connection with urban design and branding. As an individual, the sense of belonging combines with the place he or she lives; nowadays, the possibility of changing cities every several years for no matter study or work reason are increasing, which makes these social members to develop local and international understanding through cultural activities encounter each other much often.<sup>59</sup>

In addition, a positive or causal association between museums and social changes needs government's social inclusion and productivity policies, which should consider museum sector's educational and international demands.<sup>60</sup> For example, the principles and analysis of UNESCO's publication in 1995, *Our Creative Diversity*, has inspired the creation of the Museum of World Culture in Sweden, on the basis of the existing national museum collections of non-European or non-Western origin.<sup>61</sup> In the case of the Swedish Parliament, who decided the objectives for cultural policy and the appropriation for specific purposes, following proposals from the governments, including basic objectives from creating genuine opportunities for everyone to make

<sup>55</sup> Falk, John H., and Lynn D. Dierking. *Learning from museums*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2018: 37.

<sup>56</sup> Ang, Ien, Yudhishtir Raj Isar, and Phillip Mar. "Cultural diplomacy: beyond the national interest?." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 21, no. 4 (2015): 372.

<sup>57</sup> Arjona, Marta, Frances Kay Brinkley, Fernanda Camargo-Moro, Roderick C. Ebanks, Manuel Espinoza, Felipe Lacouture, Luis G. Lumbreras, Aloisio Magalhaes, and Grete Mostny. "Museum development and cultural policy: aims, prospects and challenges." *Museum International* 34, no. 2 (1982): 72-82.

<sup>58</sup> Evans, Jessica, and David Boswell, eds. *Representing the nation: a reader: histories, heritage and museums*. Psychology Press, 1999: 48.

<sup>59</sup> Erickson, Bill, and Marion Roberts. "Marketing local identity." *Journal of Urban Design* 2, no. 1 (1997): 35-59.

<sup>60</sup> Message, Kylie. "Slipping through the cracks: museums and social inclusion in Australian cultural policy development 2007–2010." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 19, no. 2 (2013): 201.

<sup>61</sup> Sandhal, Jette. "The Interpretation of Cultural Policy, By and For Museums: a Museum as an Embodiment of Cultural Policies?" *Museum international* 58, no. 4 (2006): 29–36.

use of the freedom of expression, enabling everyone to participate in cultural life and to engage in creative activities of their own, promoting cultural diversity and quality, preserving and making use of cultural heritage, promoting cultural education and international cultural exchange.<sup>62</sup>

Lastly, museums as cultural organisations use cultural policy and strategy to describe their mission and vision, which focus on the requirements and needs of the target visitors.<sup>63</sup> The further management of the museum needs to explain the world and cross-reference information for visitors, which leads to the visitor orientation for cultural policies, from using academic or contemplative terms to covering teaching by entertainment.<sup>64</sup> Museums in Western countries have expanded their services and accessibility for different age audiences; for example, in the British Museum, 8 to 15-year-old children could apply for the sleep-over activity, and at the same time, an adult must accompany all children.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, museums are setting up digital expert teams to amplify visitor participation and engagement through digital transformation. The worldwide demand for museums to deliver online information and exhibitions is increasing with newly available technology and government policy.<sup>66</sup> When more and more museums start to change their presentation from a model of information-led to an approach of audience-focused, the experiences only museums could provide, which are different from books, documentaries, videos, and the internet, are such sites can connect these visitors with the past knowledge through historical items.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Gkougkoulitsas, Theocharis. "Cultural policy and management. The archaeological museum of the Acropolis." *Journal of Contemporary Education, Theory & Research* 1, no. 1 (2017): 18.

<sup>64</sup> Mencarelli, Rémi, Séverine Marteaux, and Mathilde Pulh. "Museums, consumers, and on-site experiences." *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* 28, no. 3 (2010): 330.

<sup>65</sup> Sleepovers policy of the British Museum

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/membership/sleepovers#:~:text=Sleepovers%20are%20for%208%E2%80%9315,are%20not%20permitted%20to%20attend> (consultation: 04 April 2023)..

<sup>66</sup> Agostino, Deborah, Michela Arnaboldi, and Melisa Diaz Lema. "New development: COVID-19 as an accelerator of digital transformation in public service delivery." *Public Money & Management* 41, no. 1 (2021): 69.

<sup>67</sup> Black, Graham. *The engaging museum: Developing museums for visitor involvement*. Psychology Press, 2005: 177.



## 2.3 The Modern Changes in Exhibitions

### 2.3.1 Types of Museums' Exhibitions

Visitors visit museums for various motivations, such as entertainment or education, while museums' exhibitions have different ways to display an unusual range of learning mechanisms and illustrate items through innovative practices to satisfy these orientations. As the museums' exhibitions could provide foundational narratives and a sense of continuity, the different historical contexts would contribute to further social understanding, comparing and reflecting on the present.<sup>68</sup> Experience of visiting a museum is an exclusively individual esthetic or intellectual activity and a shared social behaviour among museum visitors.<sup>69</sup> When visitors share the leisure activity of going to a museum with friends or family, museum exhibitions need to fulfil their high expectations of friendliness, which combines a cultural experience with social interaction.<sup>70</sup> Here are several types of museums' exhibitions:

#### *Permanent exhibitions vs. Temporary exhibitions*

Museums use permanent and temporary exhibitions to satisfy different needs of visitors, from vast collections of permanent exhibitions, which could attract repeat visits, to temporary exhibitions about themes of current issues. Permanent exhibitions are understood in the sense of displaying the collections together to show different representations of the main content of museums, which are the core of the museum's experience and remain relevant during the entire time when the museum is open to the public.<sup>71</sup> It demands an active unification of parts compared to an unconscious or mechanical repetition.<sup>72</sup> As museums' exhibitions have developed necessary paths of broader learning and knowledge institutions for society, creating extensive and highly

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<sup>68</sup> Diamond, Judy. "Ethology in museums: Understanding the learning process." *Roundtable Reports* 7, no. 4 (1982): 13-15.

<sup>69</sup> Mencarelli, Rémi, Séverine Marteaux, and Mathilde Pulh. "Museums, consumers, and on-site experiences." *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* 28, no. 3 (2010): 330-348.

<sup>70</sup> Debenedetti, Stéphane. "Investigating the role of companions in the art museum experience." *International Journal of Arts Management* (2003): 6.

<sup>71</sup> McLean, Kathleen. "Museum exhibitions and the dynamics of dialogue." *Daedalus* 128, no. 3 (1999): 103.

<sup>72</sup> Røssaak, Eivind, Trond Lundemo, and Ina Blom, eds. *Memory in Motion: Archives, Technology, and the Social*. Amsterdam University Press, 2017: 307.

developed exhibitions becomes the primary purpose for these permanent exhibitions. With the collection of historical culture to important government documents, permanent museum exhibitions want to create a place of “enlightenment and understanding of the society's shared knowledge”.<sup>73</sup>

In most Western countries, museum issues are being debated as the twenty-first century begins with the post-colonial and post-national museums. Several of the most prominent museums' exhibitions are closing to reappear in new forms with new features.<sup>74</sup> With the ongoing changes in some anthropological and ethnological museums' exhibitions, a distinction that is not clear in a country where social anthropology and European ethnology are but two faces of the same coin. The changing public taste and market mechanisms also create increasing pressure on the former colonial nations.<sup>75</sup> Essential and current changes in several European museums of ethnology and cultural history are the issues of pluralistic societies, homogenising and differentiating forces, the problem of identifying ‘national cultures’, supranational structures and the new European economic-cultural construction.<sup>76</sup>

In this respect, temporary perspective museum exhibitions observation offers a powerful tool to further visitors understanding of certain topics. The visitors to the museums' temporary exhibitions can learn through insight, association, reasoning, conditioning, empathy, and many other ways.<sup>77</sup> The temporary exhibitions provide a point of view that could help the visitors to discover and understand more topics, allowing the visitors to explore, anticipate, imitate, design and experiment.<sup>78</sup> The complexity and richness of these perspective museum exhibitions could elicit the full range of their visitor's learning mechanisms. At the same time, visitors could explore these exhibitions to find the diversity of displaying collections.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Alexander, Edward P., Mary Alexander, and Juilee Decker. *Museums in motion: An introduction to the history and functions of museums*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2017: 256.

<sup>74</sup> Rogan, Bjarne. "Towards a Post-colonial and a Post-national Museum." *Ethnologia Europaea* 33, no. 1 (2002): 51.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Diamond, Judy. "Ethology in museums: Understanding the learning process." *Roundtable Reports* 7, no. 4 (1982): 13.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

The diverse temporary exhibitions in British Museum welcomed millions of visitors come from all over the world every year.<sup>80</sup> In this Information Age, with the smartphone, more people could enjoy the BM in a totally different way. For example, historian Dan Snow gave the first live broadcast about the BM via Periscope in 2015, an application of Twitter, which allowed a presenter with a smartphone to broadcast anywhere. He gave a tour of the exhibition *Defining Beauty: The Body in Ancient Greek Art*. After 16 million online users watched the broadcast in one day, more reports about this digital temporary exhibition were published in press and social media later. Millions of viewers were tweeting, posing questions about the collections simultaneously. The technology allowed the BM to accept online users more than twice the annual visitors in the whole year in one day.<sup>81</sup>

### *Disciplinary vs. Interdisciplinary exhibitions*

Interdisciplinary exhibitions often mix artefacts, documents, historical items, labels, videos and interactive experiences for visitors, compared to disciplinary exhibitions.<sup>82</sup> The museum's interdisciplinary exhibitions of references with multiple backgrounds provide a relevance between the daily life items, affairs and the history of the collective community, which is that, as the exhibitions show the visitors the past as something to be felt or even experiences rather than just to be learned.<sup>83</sup> The rise of museum exhibitions with reference would allow the exhibitions to show their unique strengths and opportunities as social institutions in civil society. As several exhibitions of society are currently playing critical roles as civil society agents, their relationship with economic growth is essential to individual and societal well-being. The museum exhibitions of reference can test alternative means of achieving meaning and sustainability within their communities by exploiting these museums' uniqueness.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Report and Accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2019 of the The British Museum <https://www.britishmuseum.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/Report-and-accounts-2018-2019.pdf> (consultation: 17 September 2021).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Schneider-Bateman, Gregory J. "Why the Museum? The Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Value of Gross's Exhibit Analyses." *Poro* 10, no. 2 (2014): 1.

<sup>83</sup> Gordon, Tammy S. *Private history in public: Exhibition and the settings of everyday life*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2010: 77.

<sup>84</sup> Janes, Robert R. "Museums, corporatism and the civil society." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 50, no. 2 (2007): 219-237.

The vast collections in museums' exhibitions of Europe allow the development of European perspectives on interdisciplinary collaborations between cultural institutions. Several international researchers and professionals have the chance to build various interdisciplinary museum exhibitions. In interdisciplinary museum exhibitions, the historical collections and items provide opportunities for visitors to interpret cross-domain partnerships, cultural identity and cultural dialogue, heritage for the arts and sciences, and describe real-life case studies in museums. Interdisciplinary museum exhibitions aim to explore historical understanding, while also evoking emotional and active responses through the presentation of "difficult knowledge". These exhibitions seek to engage visitors in both memory and critical thinking, fostering empathy and encouraging a deeper connection with the subject matter.<sup>85</sup> This is a wide-ranging directive for any cultural institution; when you consider their emphasis on highly sensitive topics, museums become incredibly intricate organisations. Interdisciplinary museum exhibitions want to create an understanding about the past conflicts and the relativity of the future. It is crucial for new governments and nations that are attempting to differentiate themselves from what came before and promising their people a better future.<sup>86</sup>

### *Physical exhibitions vs. Online exhibitions*

Physical exhibitions in museums are limited in demographic reach to one extent or another, which open to the public for access only at certain times of the day, with a certain physical location from country, city, town, building then a specific room. Some of the historical documents or artefacts would be displayed only a short period of time during a year because of rarity values or their fragile physical conditions.<sup>87</sup> Online exhibitions are potentially cost-effective solution to the problems and limits often linked to physical exhibitions, which are not limited by distance, time and space and open to people who could get access through technology with remote terminals.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Simon, Roger I. "A shock to thought: Curatorial judgment and the public exhibition of 'difficult knowledge'." *Memory Studies* 4, no. 4 (2011): 432-449.

<sup>86</sup> Bickford, Louis, and Amy Sodaro. "Remembering yesterday to protect tomorrow: The internationalization of a new commemorative paradigm." *Memory and the future: Transnational politics, ethics and society* (2010): 66-86.

<sup>87</sup> Li Liew, Chern. "Online cultural heritage exhibitions: a survey of information retrieval features." *Program* 39, no. 1 (2005): 5.

<sup>88</sup> Leong, Chee Khoo, and K. Ramaiah Chennupati. "An Overview of Online Exhibitions." *DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology* 28, no. 4 (2008): 6.

### 2.3.2 Evolution of the museums' exhibitions

Museums' exhibitions have undergone very important changes in their objectives, missions and museology during recent decades.<sup>89</sup> As technology and international environment evolves, new stories about world history need to be told in museums. Also, exhibition contend the need to update their contents and offer new answers to social challenges. However, museums have obvious differences in the chosen countries, which have to do with political and cultural differences, museum tradition, and their roles with respect to national needs. Normally, museums with permanent exhibitions were built at a great cost and difficult to physically modify after completed. Rather than prohibitively costly renovation, updated content could be transferred into videos, detailed online archives and group visitor programs, such as lectures and documentary films related to the collections.<sup>90</sup>

Furthermore, the interpretation and narrative construction are two separate traditions of history-making, as the former might be considered museological while the second is primarily historiographic.<sup>91</sup> The narrative exhibition in museums' exhibitions would impact how individuals and communities remember and interpret the past, which depends on the historians deciding how and what specific memories are used to articulate a collective understanding for visitors.<sup>92</sup> Recently, exhibitions also extended outside the walls of traditional museums, such as cyber exhibitions in the public venues with mobile visitors, who could look at the narratives and stories provided by collections while waiting for buses, trains or aeroplanes. Physically attending museums' exhibitions takes time, energy, and money. When visitors go to a museum like the British Museum, an introductory tour would last around 70-90 minutes, which also includes several galleries on different floors and involves a considerable amount of walking.<sup>93</sup> After walking in the museum for hours, there are tired people in the cafeteria and rest area, especially for children's visitors. Museum exhibitions need to develop more modes for communicating with visitors, who either lack the chance to visit or choose not to go there.

<sup>89</sup> Ross, Max. "Interpreting the new museology." *Museum and society* 2, no. 2 (2004): 87.

<sup>90</sup> MacFadden, Bruce J. "Evolution, museums and society." *Trends in ecology & evolution* 23, no. 11 (2008): 589.

<sup>91</sup> Aronsson, Peter, and Gabriella Elgenius. "Introduction: making museums and nations." In *National Museums and Nation-Building in Europe 1750–2010*, pp. 1-9. Routledge, 2014.

<sup>92</sup> Rhodes, Carl, and Andrew D. Brown. "Narrative, organisations and research." *International journal of management reviews* 7, no. 3 (2005): 167.

<sup>93</sup> Tours and talks | British Museum <https://www.britishmuseum.org/visit/tours-and-talks> (consultation: 08 April 2023).

## 2.4 Museums' exhibitions and society

Museums' exhibitions play a particular role in society; they are spaces of education that produce and disseminate what Carol Duncan calls "secular knowledge," which "functions in our society as higher, authoritative truth".<sup>94</sup> Despite the postmodern skepticism of "truth" and "history," even today, visitors tend to go to museums expecting a degree of authenticity, objectivity, and truth.<sup>95</sup> Recent research on the creation and interpretation of meanings in museums suggests that certain institutions significantly impact shaping individual and collective understanding.<sup>96</sup> For the visitors, museums' exhibitions are the authoritative and trusted "voice" on matters of history and social concept. As the museums' exhibitions process the evidence of the past, even the minority groups could recognise and confirm the social group to which they belonged. The narratives displayed in the museums' exhibitions make visitors to see the connection between them and the past, as the items and collections represent the path of development of multiple societies.<sup>97</sup>

Nowadays, the new vision consists of an interdisciplinary view of societies in which the terms "societies" or "civilisations" set out a new discourse through which the museum seeks to reflect more on society than on traditions.<sup>98</sup> There are museums everywhere, offering just about everything. In conclusion, museums are facing the challenge of changing the way of telling stories, in order to keep a balance among narratives, and catch up the changes of the society.<sup>99</sup> It also means, they have had to reinvent themselves, and in so doing, to become different; and in becoming different, to each time rethink their relationship to knowledge, culture and the world; and hence, to invent other forms of dissemination in line with their modernity.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Duncan, Carol. "Art museums and the ritual of citizenship." In *Interpreting objects and collections*, pp. 291-298. Routledge, 2012.

<sup>95</sup> Sodaro, Amy. *Exhibiting atrocity: Memorial museums and the politics of past violence*. Rutgers University Press, 2017: 181.

<sup>96</sup> Mason, Rhiannon. "Museums, galleries and heritage Sites of meaning-making and communication Rhiannon Mason." *Heritage, museums and galleries: An introductory reader* (2005): 200.

<sup>97</sup> Aronsson, Peter, Simon Knell, Arne Bugge Amundsen, Bodil Axelsson, Felicity Bodenstein, Alexandra Bounia, Jocelyn Dodd et al. *National museums making history in a diverse Europe*. Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012: 47.

<sup>98</sup> Alcalde, Gabriel, Xavier Roigé, and Jusèp Boya. "Museums of today: the new museums of society." *Museums of today* (2011): 1-191.

<sup>99</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. "Changing values in the art museum: Rethinking communication and learning." *International journal of heritage studies* 6, no. 1 (2000): 29.

<sup>100</sup> Grossberg, Lawrence. "Identity and cultural studies: is that all there is?." *Questions of cultural identity* (1996): 87.

### 2.4.1 Strategies of Exhibitions

Strategies of exhibitions in museums differ from planning teams, while these three strategies have been adapted frequently. The first strategy focuses on the objects themselves and develops from the museological notion that knowledge can be delivered with the help of tangible items. The curators of the British Museum for permanent exhibitions often use the interpretive histories approach, such as in the Ancient Egypt sector. As the soft architectures of the museums, the curators' creativity shows in the way of selecting and placing an object in a space, the location between two related collections, etc. This representational strategy provides an open forum for the visitors to interpret the implicit information of the exhibition. The items' labels are not rationally articulated, so the visitors could develop personal interactions based on their life experiences. Historical items are the main characters in this kind of representational strategy.

The second strategy is about narrative exhibitions, which believe the past is real and needs to be illustrated with the connections and evidence of natural things: history needs stories.<sup>101</sup> Historian's desire to marshal evidence into a convincing explanatory form leads to this kind of narrative history, which have been introduced into museums from other media, such as books and podcast. All the collections become the players of a cultural show, in which the curators are also directors. By selecting specific items to gather together, background story and hidden connection could be illustrated through different chapters in the same exhibition. The difference between the first strategy and the second shows clearly in the majority of permanent exhibitions and temporary exhibitions, which focus on collection-oriented and theme-oriented displays. Last but not least, the third strategy explores embodied experience, inviting visitors to interact with collections with new ways of working: touch, sound, smell, and especially sight. When exhibitions have producers as curators, these visitors become consumers, such as in Ramen Museum of Yokohama, Japan, a museum about ramen's history, allowing visitors to eat ramen in the museums.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> EuNaMus Report no 7, 2012: 28 - EUNAMUS (European national museums: Identity politics, the uses of the past and the European citizen) | FP7 | CORDIS | European Commission <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/244305/reporting> (consultation: 08 May 2022).

<sup>102</sup> Fukutomi, Satomi. "CONSUMING NOSTALGIA IN A BOWL OF NOODLE SOUP AT THE SHIN YOKOHAMA RÅMEN MUSEUM." *Japan Studies Review*: 51.

### 2.4.2 Political uses of museums exhibitions

During the last two decades, multiple researchers have positioned that when museums perform stories, ideologies and cultural symbols, the production of museum content is interactive with their political environment.<sup>103</sup> When the museums were built, the way of establishing a new interpretation of not only the state but also people themselves was created within the narratives in exhibitions and introductions.<sup>104</sup> The museums' exhibitions are represented as instruments of ruling-class hegemony, so museums tend to be thought of as amenable to a general form of cultural politics in criticising those hegemonic ideological articulations governing the thematics of museum displays, seeking to forge new articulations capable of organising a counter-hegemony. The museums' specific institutional properties constitute a distinctive field of political relations.<sup>105</sup>

The daily contact between Western society and other cultures has changed the perspective of some great ethnological museums since the 1970s when their collections could not tell a new story in the context of a globalised society by presenting old objects.<sup>106</sup> A state of crisis is emerging for museums' exhibitions when they want to attract the attention of the public and become politically correct, such as the debate between former colonial nations and museums, where they display objects with a controversial history of the source. When museums are changing exhibitions among countries globally, they have to learn how to face the sour colonial feelings and resistance from other cultures, which has lasted for many decades and become a part of the education and narrative of their cooperating organisations.<sup>107</sup> The concept of multi-culture and inter-discipline are providing solutions to confront these challenges, which suggest the Western view of other cultures should change from the terms of exotic and curiosity to intercultural relationship in the twenty-first century.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Autry, Robyn. "The political economy of memory: The challenges of representing national conflict at 'identity-driven' museums." *Theory and society* 42 (2013): 60.

<sup>104</sup> Bennett, Tony. "The political rationality of the museum." *Continuum* 3, no. 1 (1990): 35.

<sup>105</sup> Gramsci, Antonio. "State and civil society." *The anthropology of the state: A reader* (2006): 71.

<sup>106</sup> Alcalde, Gabriel, Xavier Roigé, and Jusèp Boya. "Museums of today: the new museums of society." *Museums of today* (2011): 158.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.



## 2.5 The Museums in China

In China's two case studies, it is necessary to notice museums' development in China in recent years to understand the role of international exhibitions. The number of Chinese museums has not only increased considerably, but there is a reformulation of the museum concept and an essential role in the urban, tourist and cultural development in China, where the growth has been much faster.

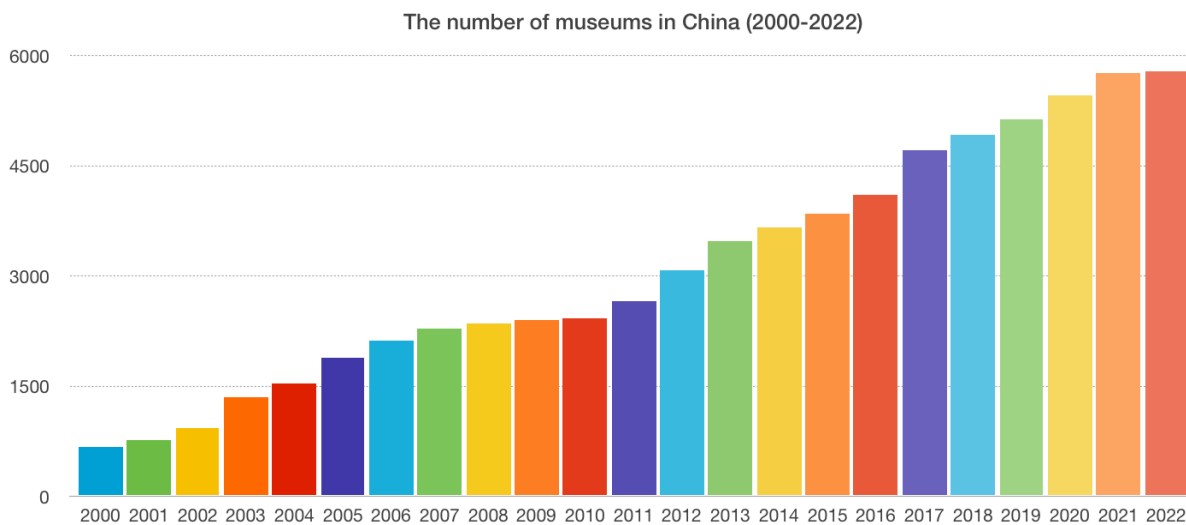


Figure 2-1: The number of museums in China (2000-2022).

Source: Own elaboration, data from the National Bureau of Statistics of China; Ministry of Culture and Tourism (China).<sup>109</sup>

As Figure 2-1 illustrates, Chinese museums have experienced a massive increase in numbers and exhibitions in the past 22 years, from fewer than 1,500 at the beginning of the twenty-first century to 5,788 in 2022.<sup>110</sup> Chinese museums are pivotal in their national strategy to preserve and build modern self-consciousness, with the vast number of historical relics made through multiple dynasties in many Chinese centuries of history. Its large population produced and consumed hugely in the past and generated cultural items for the world market for a long time. Almost all the international exhibitions from the UK to China included items made in China earlier than 1,000 years ago, which provided a Western perspective for Chinese people to review their

<sup>109</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of China; Ministry of Culture and Tourism (China) <https://www-statista-com.sire.ub.edu/statistics/226450/number-of-museums-in-china/> (consultation: 20 February 2023) .

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

history. The international collaborations which had travelled to China were a way to show Western culture and art and a chance for Chinese visitors to rethink what they already knew about themselves. With these international exhibitions, Chinese audiences could encounter a new narrative about global heritage identification beyond the national and patriotic horizon limit.

The impression of the growth of Chinese museums was the same as how people think of China: “fast” and “big” as a 10,000-square-meter facility for the museums were medium to small by Chinese standard, most of the new-built museums in China were more prominent than their international counterparts.<sup>111</sup> The rapid speed of building new museums in China shows a different items collection process and narrative building compared with Europe. The specific Chinese history also impacts the narratives in these Chinese museums. Almost all of them include sectors about the communist revolution, with the theme of The Road of Rejuvenation (figure 2-2).<sup>112</sup> Permanent exhibitions of Chinese museums in China could also be updated with domestic development. In 2021, to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party, many Chinese museums established new galleries to showcase exhibitions and narratives highlighting the party's 100 years of history, including significant historical milestones. For example, some museums may showcase the party's early days and its leaders, such as Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, while others may focus on the party's role in shaping modern China. It is worth noting that the financial system of Chinese museums depends heavily on government support, making them highly dependent but less likely to collaborate with overseas counterparts. However, this may change as China develops and opens up to the world. Moreover, the trend of building transnational, pan-European cultural museum exhibitions started in Europe.<sup>113</sup> This involves bringing together artefacts and exhibits from different European countries to showcase a shared cultural heritage. Such exhibitions promote cultural exchange and understanding and attract a diverse audience from around the world. In general, creating museums and exhibitions is a multifaceted and ever-changing process influenced by various political, cultural, and social factors. It is important to consider these factors when examining and interpreting the exhibits and artefacts on display.

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<sup>111</sup> Lord, G. D., Qiang, G., Laishun, A., & Jimenez, J. (Eds.). (2019). *Museum Development in China: Understanding the Building Boom*. Rowman & Littlefield: 119.

<sup>112</sup> Official website of the National Museum of China <https://www.chnmuseum.cn/portals/0/web/zt/fuxing/> (consultation: 10 September 2022) .

<sup>113</sup> Rogan, B., (2003) “The Emerging Museums of Europe”, *Ethnologia Europaea* 33(1), 51-60. doi: <https://doi.org/10.16995/ee.942>



Figure 2-2: The National Museum of China exhibition in 2023: The Road of Rejuvenation.  
| Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>114</sup>

Based on the data of EGMUS - The European Group on Museum Statistics - there were around 20,000 museums in Europe, most of which were built after WWII.<sup>115</sup> At that time, these Western countries needed to recover from the damage of WWII and rebuild their national coherence. The way of interpreting heritage and culture served the same purpose in Western and non-Western countries during different historical periods. For many years, colonialist conquests had been justified through well-conducted narratives in Western museums. As Marta Anico and Elsa Peralta mentioned in the book *Heritage and Identity*, in the nineteenth century, museums in non-Western countries didn't get enough attention from the west; the far-away cultures from non-Western countries were analysed with superficial imagination and reviewed with exotic perspectives by the West, who believed in the idea that Western civilisation contributed

<sup>114</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the National Museum of China fieldwork. (Photo date: 07 February 2023).

<sup>115</sup> EGMUS (2012). Museum Statistics.

the majority achievements for human society, which was a common illusion created through the narratives in the museums, under the agenda of national interest.<sup>116</sup>

Compared with the population of China is almost double that of the EU, as China has a 1.4 billion population, and the EU has 700 million.<sup>117</sup> The difference in museum numbers is quite apparent. Europe has set a benchmark for China to catch up, and the Chinese government has noticed the considerable gap in the number of museums between itself and the rest of the world. During decades of globalisation, China and Japan encounter each other much more than in any historical period. In recent years, international operation activities increased among museums and official organisations simultaneously between Europe and Asia, such as the British Museum inviting Japan to hold one of the largest Manga exhibitions ever to take place outside of Japan: The Citi Exhibition Manga マンガ in 2019.<sup>118</sup> ICOM (International Council of Museums) was founded in 1946 in Paris and held its first General Conference in Asia in 2004 in Seoul, Korea.<sup>119</sup> Also, as an essential organisation to represent the global museum community, ICOM held its 2019 General Conference in Kyoto, Japan, which continued to strengthen its presence in Asia.<sup>120</sup>

To compare the similarities and differences between these Chinese and Japanese museums' policies, the exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" will be analysed through their similar procedures within the context that China and Japan display the same exhibition. While the other international exhibition in China: "West Encounters East—A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics" in Shanghai Museum, was an initiative of the Shanghai Museum, different from these international exhibitions in Japan, Shanghai Museum seemed to have a strong interest to invite foreign museums to design exhibitions together with its own narrative: building confidence for Chinese visitors, rather than accepting the original international exhibition proposals from other foreign museums. For example, when the National Museum of Nature and Science in Japan became the first station of the Natural History Museum's five-year

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<sup>116</sup> Anico, M., & Peralta, E. (Eds.). (2008). *Heritage and identity: Engagement and demission in the contemporary world*. Routledge: 120.

<sup>117</sup> Unite Nations. (2020). Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Dynamics. from <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>.

<sup>118</sup> Christmas, S., (2019). The Citi Exhibition Manga マンガ (British Museum, 2019). *The Comics Grid: Journal of Comics Scholarship*, 9(1): 15.

<sup>119</sup> Official website of the ICOM <https://icom.museum/en/about-us/history-of-icom/> (consultation: 09 September 2022) .

<sup>120</sup> Official website of the ICOM <https://icom.museum/en/about-us/history-of-icom/> (consultation: 09 September 2022) .

global touring exhibition “Treasures of the Natural World” in 2017, Chinese museums didn’t display this exhibition until 2023. On the one hand, the costly international exhibition, which includes the hand script of Darwin, couldn’t meet Chinese museums’ motivation: showing the audiences Chinese own national treasures in order to boost the citizens’ national identity and pride; on the other hand, when Japanese museums get the financial support from the local newspaper as an important sponsor, Chinese museums are highly dependent on the support of their government, who has a very clear vision towards the mission of Chinese museums, spreading narratives and historical evidence which would benefit its interest: patriotism.

### 2.5.1 The Changing of the Narrative

Museums’ exhibitions hold the authority to explain the narratives. The museums of China are full of articles of luxury confiscated from the former “corrupted and fatuous feudal rulers and class enemies”, which remind the people never to forget the dark past. In China, museums are not developed from private contributions but from administrative collections. The National Museum of China in Beijing has a permanent exhibition full of “gifts” from other countries to communist party leaders. As the leaders didn’t or wouldn’t keep these exotic “presents” for themselves, they gave hand-making blankets from Africa or animal specimens from Southeast Asia to the National Museum of China to show “China’s Great friendship” with these countries.

In the sense of the collection of cultural items, the first history museum was built by a Babylonian princess 2,5000 years ago. Archaeologist Leonard Woolley founded that museum in 1925. When he was excavating a Babylonian palace.<sup>121</sup> The curious collection of artefacts came from many different times and places, just like a normal museum exhibition of today. However, they were neatly organised and even labelled. And it is also complicated to find a record of how many people had visited it. When the Babylonians who lived 2,500 years ago were looking back on millennia of previous human history, the princess’s collection of wonders and artefacts had a similar attraction to her as the fall of the Roman Empire was to the global visitors in modern society.

However, it was a long way of the development of the accessibility of these “public museums” for public audiences. When the British Museum first opened to the public in 1759, it

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<sup>121</sup> Sawe, Benjamin Elisha. (2018) "The World's Oldest Museums." WorldAtlas, Jan. 16, 2018: [worldatlas.com/articles/the-world-s-oldest-museums.html](https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-world-s-oldest-museums.html), (consultation: 05 October 2021).



was primarily accessible to the middle and upper classes. Admission was granted through a ticket system, and individuals interested in visiting the museum had to submit a written application, which sometimes posed challenges in gaining entry. One of the most eloquent speakers was William Cobbett who was told by another member that “any person decently attired” would be admitted to the British Museum, William Cobbett remarked that “those who had not decent dresses were required to pay for the maintenance of the Museum”.<sup>122</sup> In 1851, the British Museum initiated a guided tour of its non-public areas, coinciding with the Great Exhibition taking place at that time. It wasn't until 1857 that the British Museum opened its doors to all museum visitors, and from then on, it has been used to showcase various museum exhibitions.<sup>123</sup>

In the Chinese museums' exhibitions, it is very difficult to ignore the “national emotions” in the explanation of the collections, which would remind all the visitors that how many valuable collections of China have been stolen by “American and British Imperialism (英美帝国主义 ying mei di guo zhu yi)”. Not like the UK where treat the private property as individual's collection, in China, the heritage and collections are all the property of the country. Historical items of museums in China are “国宝 guobao”, which literally means “country treasure.” The different understanding of history collections determines the various models of museums' exhibitions in China. For example, the Natural History Museum in London is full of collections donated by individuals, who had adventure experiences overseas and collected items for years. While in China, individuals who decide to “take an adventure” aboard are traitors to their families and groups, because they can't look after the older members of the community, in East Asia, moral justification for bureaucracy is broadly understood.<sup>124</sup>

### 2.5.2 The opening-up policy

Until the late 70s of the twenty century, Chinese cultural institutions were not open to the outside world, which came with the reforms of economy and museums started to rebuild the

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<sup>122</sup> Goldgar, Anne. "The British Museum and the virtual representation of culture in the eighteenth century." *Albion* 32, no. 2 (2000): 195.

<sup>123</sup> Report and Accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2019 of the The British Museum <https://www.britishmuseum.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/Report-and-accounts-2018-2019.pdf> : 03. (consultation: 17 September 2021).

<sup>124</sup> Frederickson, H. George. "Confucius and the moral basis of bureaucracy." *Administration & Society* 33, no. 6 (2002): 610-628.

cultural essence with the modernization of science and technology.<sup>125</sup> The most significant result of this opening-up policy was the hugely increased number of museums, both in quality and number.<sup>126</sup> In 1982, China joined the International Committee of Museum, which was a valuable chance for China to gain a critical gaze with their national system by compared to international level, which meant China started to open to Western and international network of museums, with their increasing understanding of international museology standards.<sup>127</sup>

In the past, most of China's ancient artefacts were kept in the recesses of the residences of aristocratic families and the imperial clan; members of the public could not see them. Nowadays, many of China's cultural treasures are exhibited in Western museums. Some of these are exquisite works of art, but they are also fragments that have been removed from their original context.<sup>128</sup> The Chinese word for "museum" (博物馆) was coined by the Japanese in the 1860s when Japanese reporters described British Museum as "a house of extensive things" with Chinese characters. Chinese scholars accepted this new term and gradually started to learn Western culture.<sup>129</sup> The first public Chinese museum founded by the Chinese was Nantong Museum in Jiangsu province in 1905.<sup>130</sup> When the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, there were only 24 museums in the old China that were located in different places.<sup>131</sup> Under the guidance of the opening-up policy to the outside world, Chinese museums started to try to catch up the two- or three-decades gap compared to contemporary museums abroad which developed after World War II from the 1980s, with important document as the Five-year Plan for National Economic and Social Development.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Bollo, Sofia, and Yu Zhang. "Policy and impact of public museums in China: Exploring new trends and challenges." *Museum International* 69, no. 3-4 (2017): 26.

<sup>126</sup> Varutti, Marzia. *Museums in China: The politics of representation after Mao*. Vol. 13. Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2014: 85.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Donghai, Su. "Museums and museum philosophy in China." *Nordisk Museologi* 2 (1995): 61.

<sup>129</sup> Hall, David L., and Roger T. Ames. *Thinking from the Han: Self, truth, and transcendence in Chinese and Western culture*. State University of New York Press, 1997: 290.

<sup>130</sup> Shao, Qin. "Exhibiting the modern: the creation of the first Chinese museum, 1905–1930." *The China Quarterly* 179 (2004): 684-702.

<sup>131</sup> a Denton, Kirk. "Museums, memorial sites and exhibitionary culture in the People's Republic of China." *The China Quarterly* 183 (2005): 565.

<sup>132</sup> Donghai, Su. "Museums and museum philosophy in China." *Nordisk Museologi* 2 (1995): 67.



## 2.6 The Museums in Japan

### 2.6.1 The First Museum of Japan

The founding of the oldest Japanese national museum, Tokyo National Museum dates to 1872, when the Ministry of Education Museum held an exposition in Japan. The first government organised "exposition" in Japan, thus leading to the birth of the first "museum" - the first national museum - in Japan. The organiser of this exposition, the Monbusho Hakubutsukan (文部省 博物館), meant Ministry of Education Museum, was the first organisation formally known as a Museum (hakubutsukan). The word hakuhutsukan (博物館 museum), first appeared in a Japanese writer Fukuzawa Yukichi's book *Seiyo Jijo* (せいようじじょう Conditions in the West), published in 1866.<sup>133</sup> During the 19th century, Japan adopted the process of industrialisation and modernisation, with the acceptance of Western science and humanities, which also included the idea of museums.<sup>134</sup> The process of industrialising - also called “Westernisation” caused trouble for Japanese identity, which was connected with unique Japanese traditions already hugely changed by new lifestyle.<sup>135</sup> With the desire of expansion and failure, nowadays, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum is still struggling to explain the history of the atomic bombing during WWII.<sup>136</sup>

In Japan, the majority of explanation in exhibitions was displayed in Japanese, while these keywords in the modern exhibitions, such as “museum”, “science”, and “world”, couldn’t find exact local expression in a very long time until Japanese scholars translated these abstract words from 1866 with Chinese characters.<sup>137</sup> The word hakuhutsukan (博物館 museum), first appeared in a Japanese writer Fukuzawa Yukichi's book *Seiyo Jijo* (せいようじじょう Conditions in the West), published in 1866.<sup>138</sup> Chinese translation of the word “museum” is exactly the same with

<sup>133</sup> Yoshida, Kenji. ““Tōhaku” and “Minpaku” within the History of Modern Japanese Civilisation: Museum Collections in Modern Japan.” *Senri ethnological studies* 54 (2001): 77.

<sup>134</sup> Ölschleger, Hans Dieter. "Europe in Japan: A preliminary overview of the forms and social functions of ethnographical presentations." *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (1993): 31.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Giamo, Benedict. "The myth of the vanquished: the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum." (2003): 703.

<sup>137</sup> Yoshida, Kenji. ““Tōhaku” and “Minpaku” within the History of Modern Japanese Civilisation: Museum Collections in Modern Japan.” *Senri ethnological studies* 54 (2001): 77.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

the Japanese word “博物馆 museum”, which meant that Chinese scholars accepted this new term and started to learn Western culture little by little.<sup>139</sup>

## 2.6.2 Museums as cultural hubs

Japan has been at the forefront of promoting cultural heritage, sharing museum practices through exchange programs and providing direct foreign aid grants to support projects abroad. These efforts help Japan establish its presence on the global stage.<sup>140</sup> In today's diverse and complex society, museums are discovering the need to take on new social roles that extend beyond their traditional functions of preserving and displaying their collections. Kyoto has always been a place that respects history and tradition and adapts and integrates new technology and innovations to carry such traditions into the future, where ICC Kyoto (Kyoto International Conference Center) is the main venue for ICOM Kyoto 2019. It is becoming increasingly important for museums to move from promoting the traditions of the past to sharing new concepts for building a sustainable and inclusive future with their partner museums all over the world.<sup>141</sup>

One of the missions of the Japan Foundation for promoting its cultural programs to youth groups is using popular cultural products to improve Japan's international image.<sup>142</sup> Museums as sociocultural hubs are providing “third places”, which are neither homes nor working for people to gather frequently, where help visitors to create their social experiences.<sup>143</sup> The exhibitions could deliver a positive attitude towards cultures, introducing academic research results and transferring heritage knowledge through cultural language.<sup>144</sup> When museums design these exhibitions considering visitors' social experience, needs, and interests, the content and narratives would be more appealing to the target audiences.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Hall, David L., and Roger T. Ames. *Thinking from the Han: Self, truth, and transcendence in Chinese and Western culture*. State University of New York Press, 1997: 290.

<sup>140</sup> Akagawa, Natsuko. *Heritage Conservation and Japan's Cultural Diplomacy: Heritage, National Identity and National Interest*. Routledge, 2014: 84.

<sup>141</sup> ICOM official website, 2021. <https://icomjapan.org/icomkyoto2019/outline.html>, (consultation: 22 May 2021).

<sup>142</sup> Mariano, Randolph, and Andreas Vårheim. "Libraries, museums and cultural centers in foreign policy and cultural diplomacy: a scoping review." *Journal of Documentation* 78, no. 3 (2022): 651.

<sup>143</sup> Jafari, A., Taheri, B., & Vom Lehn, D. (2013). “Cultural consumption, interactive sociality, and the museum.” *Journal of Marketing Management*, 29(15-16), 1729-1752.

<sup>144</sup> Vicente, E., Camarero, C., & Garrido, M. J. (2012). “Insights into Innovation in European Museums: The impact of cultural policy and museum characteristics.” *Public Management Review*, 14(5), 649-679.

<sup>145</sup> Sparacino, Flavia. "The Museum Wearable: Real-Time Sensor-Driven Understanding of Visitors' Interests for Personalized Visually-Augmented Museum Experiences." (2002).

## 2.7 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to provide a conceptual framework for the thesis. To achieve this goal, it explores the fundamental concepts and categories of museums and exhibitions in detail in this first part of the state of the art. This chapter serves as a foundation for the next chapter, which will delve into cultural diplomacy and cross-border exhibitions. The key finding of this part is the strong correlation between the growth of international museums and the development of Chinese and Japanese museums over the past few decades. Many changes in these cultural institutions have come about as a result of cultural interaction and government intervention, which have created a fertile ground for the emergence of new ideas and approaches to museum management. This trend also applies to the evolution of museum definitions, as the rise of globalisation has impacted both the missions and challenges of cultural institutions.

It is worth noting that the process of redefining museums is a response to a growing societal need for museums and heritage organisations to tackle international issues through innovative cultural activities. This is particularly evident in the use of historical collections to facilitate conversations across cultures, often in multiple languages. By understanding the background and historical development of the Chinese and Japanese museum industries, it is easier to gain a deeper appreciation of international exhibitions. These exhibitions can shed light on the underlying motivations and principles of cooperation among museums, as well as the cultural, social, and political contexts that have shaped their evolution over time. Therefore, the history of museums and exhibitions is essential to fully comprehend the significance of these institutions in an international society.

Moreover, another focus of this chapter is how museums in different countries can adopt effective cooperation models that promote sustainable development and reconciliation, including global touring exhibitions and mainland exchanging exhibitions. The concern is how these changes can be combined to create collaboration opportunities for further reconciliation. In addition, it aims to disseminate cultural improvements from museums to their respective societies. Achieving this goal requires research that takes into account the evolution of museums and exhibitions, as well as political, cultural, and social factors. This chapter intends to offer a detailed examination of the cultural heritage management practices used by Chinese societies, especially following significant historical shifts. It explores how the opening-up policy of 1978 affected the cultural landscape of

Chinese museums and how this, in turn, led to official collaboration between China and ICOM in 1985. A comparison is drawn between this collaboration and Japan's partnership with ICOM in hosting the 25th general conference in Kyoto.<sup>146</sup> This comparison highlights these two countries' similar yet different attitudes toward international cooperation in museums. Moreover, this chapter delves into the development of museums in China and Japan from a linguistic perspective. In comparison, the term “museum” in Chinese has been borrowed from Japanese, which has been influenced by Western social and scientific perspectives that have also impacted China. This linguistic analysis will provide a detailed understanding of the differing approaches to museum development in these two countries while also shedding light on the similarities that underpin them.

To this end, this chapter provides a dual perspective that includes global museum development and historical changes in Chinese and Japanese museums. By examining the evolution of museums in these countries, insights on how to improve international collaboration among museums could arise from former practices. This involves a critical reexamination of the purpose of museums and a debate on post-colonialism and imperialism. This study of cross-border exhibitions in Chinese and Japanese museums from Western museums is of international significance, given the diversity of civilisation and the large populations of these countries. Furthermore, there has been a significant increase in the demand for cultural activities among visitors in recent decades. Cross-border exhibitions have been particularly successful in these two countries, setting visitation records and spurring various cultural activities. The upcoming chapter of this thesis will further explore the existing research on cultural diplomacy in relation to these exhibitions, offering a more thorough analysis of the topic concerning international collaborations among museums.

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<sup>146</sup> ICOM Kyoto 2019 | The 25th ICOM General Conference booklet - International Council of Museums - International Council of Museums <https://icom.museum/en/news/icom-kyoto-2019-the-25th-icom-general-conference-booklet-is-out/> (consultation: 07 March 2022).







## CHAPTER 3

# STATE OF ARTS ABOUT CROSS-BORDER EXHIBITIONS





### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter is the second part of the state of the art, which includes two components: the theory of cultural diplomacy and its impact on cross-border exhibitions. The former chapter has provided a theoretical framework from the perspective of museology and the background of the development of Chinese and Japanese museums in the past several centuries. Chapter 3 focuses on more recent decades when more international communications became possible, especially after China embarked on its open policy in 1978 and the European Union evolved into a significant economic and political force in Europe.<sup>147</sup> The Trade and Co-operation Agreement of 1985 allowed China and the EU to work together in many areas, such as industry, mining, farming, energy, transportation, communication, science, and technology; later communications from the EU in 1995, 1998, and 2001 strengthened economic connections, but also put political restrictions and aimed to make better use of European resources when dealing with China.<sup>148</sup>

With this background, concepts related to cultural diplomacy, such as cultural capital and soft power, would be analysed based on the former research. Then, the development of the cross-border exhibition and its background in China and Japan will be investigated to show the influence of international collaboration. The evolution of museum exhibitions provides this research with a unique cultural experience: international cooperation in the sector of museums, which is becoming an essential part of cultural diplomacy in China and Japan. As the second part of the State of Art, this chapter moves forward to a more specific perspective to analyse the influence of cultural diplomacy on international exhibitions. Lending museum's collections builds a shared understanding of the past, in which cross-border exhibitions are emerging that are mutually beneficial for the cooperating museums involved and display cultural items as resources for social cohesion and dialogue. To address the issue of the construction process of the collaboration about cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan, this research has used an interdisciplinary perspective theory to compare the differences between museums.

In the past two decades, the changes in museum exhibitions have inspired museum professionals to create diverse narratives through collections, attracting national and international visitors. More and more museums are lending and borrowing supplies based on the exhibition's

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<sup>147</sup> Edmonds, Richard Louis. "China and Europe since 1978: an introduction." *The China Quarterly* 169 (2002): 1.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

theme and trying to connect items from different categories to provide broader and more detailed exhibitions. The thesis compares the museums' international collaboration from Western countries to East Asia. Specifically speaking in this project are these case studies of cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan, both from the institutional point of view and the narratives related to collections displayed. One of the axes of this project would be related to the interrelation between West and East and the presence of Western museums' exhibitions in East Asia from the perspective of cultural policies and reasons for limits in the application process.

The current museum research is divided into Europe-Centre in English and Asia-Centre in Mandarin and Japanese. Only a few of the former research studies have mentioned the comparison of cross-border exhibitions in museums' international collaboration. With the limits of languages, most research didn't compare and contrast cross-border exhibitions, which simultaneously includes the collections' explanations in English, Mandarin and Japanese. The further development of museums' international collaboration depends on a broader understanding of the human heritage, which this research would focus on as an international research project with a cosmopolitan perspective.

Although these four museums' international collaboration case studies of cross-border exhibitions were all hosted in East Asia, each met different initiatives for China and Japan. Museums' cultural policies and curators' collections choices reflected the compromise between national motivations and international interests. , the French Guimet Museum displayed collections from China and Japan together in the Asia context, since for European visitors, the similar style of Chinese and Japanese ceramics was one of the highlights of the far-east civilisations. As a result, the perspective of the Guimet Museum gave the Shanghai Museum a new narrative, which also borrowed Japanese items from multiple European museums and conducted the exhibition "West Encounters East——A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics". Even though the Shanghai Museum didn't mention Japan in the title of this international exhibition, more interestingly, the differences between Japan and China became vague in front of a whole different culture: Western society. In the traditional galleries in Chinese and Japanese museums, there was no chance for China and Japan to display under the same category. Thanks to the perspective of "others outside of East Asia", China and Japan became "East" in the comparison exhibition about ceramics.

## 3.2. Cultural Diplomacy

### 3.2.1 The concept of cultural diplomacy

The importance of the research is determined by the increasing use of cultural diplomacy as a means to share information on a global scale between countries. In this context, international exhibitions have emerged as a primary outcome and focus of evolving foreign policies and economic considerations. To comprehend the role of international exhibitions in the collaborative efforts of museums, it is intriguing to begin with an exploration of the concept of cultural diplomacy. The word “cultural diplomacy” was clarified by the U.S. State Department in 1959 as a way to build a better international atmosphere among different nations to establish official relations.<sup>149</sup> It can exchange ideas among multiple countries and influence the understanding of other cultures by forging “soft power”, a word invented and explained by Joseph Nye in 2004, which showed the difference with “hard power”: by forcing the other to get the outcome, but “cooperating with the others to get the outcome”.<sup>150</sup> Nye emphasised the importance of encouraging civil society to generate soft power rather than relying too much on government official actions.<sup>151</sup> Cultural diplomacy fosters connections between countries by engaging with foreign audiences, aiming to enhance the host country's international reputation and create more opportunities for the future.<sup>152</sup> It aims to introduce other cultures and traditions to multiple countries' visitors so they can learn from each other and generate positive awareness of each other's cultural background.<sup>153</sup>

Cultural diplomacy promotes the appreciation and understanding of diverse cultures within one's own country through various cultural activities like language programs, cultural collections, and showcasing national icons.<sup>154</sup> Together with political and economic diplomacy, cultural diplomacy serves as a form of "soft power" and is one of the three sectors of foreign policy. It is

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<sup>149</sup> Grincheva, Natalia. "Democracy for export: museums connect program as a vehicle of American cultural diplomacy." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 58, no. 2 (2015): 138.

<sup>150</sup> Nye, Joseph S. "Soft power." *Foreign policy* 80 (1990): 153.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Grincheva, Natalia. "Cultural diplomacy 2.0: challenges and opportunities in Museum International Practices." *Museum and society* 11, no. 1 (2013): 39.

<sup>154</sup> Hurn, Brian J. "The role of cultural diplomacy in nation branding." *Industrial and commercial training* 48, no. 2 (2016): 81.

vital in promoting and displaying a country's cultural heritage and value system. In other words, cultural diplomacy aligns with both economic and political agendas.<sup>155</sup> One of the primary objectives of cultural diplomacy is to establish a favourable atmosphere for upcoming economic endeavours. Countries can enhance cooperation in both commercial and cultural sectors by promoting mutual understanding and appreciation of different cultures. This cooperation serves the interests of these countries in the long run.<sup>156</sup> The precise definition of cultural diplomacy is closely linked to the practical role of governments, serving as a means of public diplomacy that seeks to connect different civil societies.<sup>157</sup>

In some cases, ambassadors play an essential role in the practices of cultural diplomacies, such as ambassador Felix Rohatyn in France set up a program of French-American museum exchanges about seldom seen and little-known art to regional French museums for the French public outside Paris, which not only displayed exhibitions with works of art, but also organised exchanges of museum professionals to create opportunities for them to learn from each other.<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, museums' collaboration also had been criticised as an instrument for governments to achieve their political or economic goals, such as the U.S. Department of State and the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) sponsored Museums Connect program with the exercise of community development and public inclusion, from the perspective of cultural diplomacy to achieve American foreign-policy objectives.<sup>159</sup>

However, some programs that proved problematic in the past, such as the topic of looting created a disconnect between the curators of the exhibition and foreign audiences.<sup>160</sup> There is a challenge for the museums of the world to support and enrich each other's claims, which is difficult when museums with different themes and collections try to answer the same and fundamental question: What does it mean to be a human being?<sup>161</sup> Since within different contexts and societies,

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Mark, Simon. *A greater role for cultural diplomacy*. Vol. 1. Clingendael: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2009: 5.

<sup>157</sup> Jora, Lucian. "New practices and trends in cultural diplomacy." *Romanian review of political sciences and international relations* 10, no. 1 (2013): 44.

<sup>158</sup> Schneider, Cynthia P. *Diplomacy that works: 'Best practices' in cultural diplomacy*. Washington, DC: Center for arts and culture, 2003: 5.

<sup>159</sup> Grincheva, Natalia. "Democracy for export: museums connect program as a vehicle of American cultural diplomacy." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 58, no. 2 (2015): 137.

<sup>160</sup> Luke, Christina, and Morag Kersel. *US cultural diplomacy and archaeology: soft power, hard heritage*. Routledge, 2013: 142.

<sup>161</sup> Svanberg, Fredrik, ed. *The museum as forum and actor*. Museum of National Antiquities, 2010: 134.

the answer could be diverse from a family member, worker, soldier to sailor, based on the value and theme the museum wants to promote. A hero in a national museum could be a murderer and war criminal for another nation or country. For example, when the international exchange exhibition between the UK and China was displayed in Beijing and Shanghai in 2017, one collection was suggested to be replaced based on the National Cultural Heritage Administration of China: The No.86 collection “Jade Bi”.<sup>162</sup> In the book “A History of the World in 100 Objects” published by Neil MacGregor, the No.86 collection “Jade Bi” only noted that a ring of jade came from Beijing. At the same time, the National Cultural Heritage Administration of China pointed it out that this item had been stolen by an Anglo-French expeditionary force in 1860 from Beijing.<sup>163</sup> These two interpretations of the same item show there is a long way to go to develop a new diplomatic relationship with history in the twenty-first century, which also challenges museum professionals from different countries to create collective projects.

Additionally, cultural diplomacy enables museums to reach new audiences in other countries. Museums with foreign social media accounts could deliver information with cross-culture content. A world-class reputation of museums also helps these metropolitan museums to reach more visitors who have not or could not visit the museum personally and physically. During international collaboration, museums must consider how to attract the younger generation. While students have educational links at the school level to sensitise them to other cultures and experiences, this may not be enough to encourage interaction with the collections and items. Moreover, to attract people who have bypassed museums entirely and embraced the new way of observing information, museums use “hot topics” to build relationships among collections and visitors.<sup>164</sup> In a positive way, museums have the potential to provide a new philosophy of life under the conditions of globalisation, virtualisation and digitalisation of society by displaying all the other societies than the one the visitors are living in right now, which could help these local audiences to criticise the established order.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Appendix 1, Dr Yan Zhi 闫志, interview with the author, Beijing, 04 April 2023.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Tøndborg, Britta. "The Dangerous Museum." *Journal Nordic Museology/Nordisk Museologi* 2 (2013): 3.

<sup>165</sup> Poplavska, Myroslava. "Main Directions of Cultural Diplomacy of the USA and Japan." *Socio-Cultural Management Journal* 5, no. 2 (2022): 68.

### 3.2.2 Beyond the National Interest

Cultural diplomacy within the context of an increasingly interdependent and interconnected world, where people, resources, goods, and capital flow across borders, shows that the connection among nations' interests is growing in this globalising world.<sup>166</sup> When global exchange and networking become increasingly ubiquitous, multiple cultural diplomacies beyond governmental policies and national interests are being created.<sup>167</sup> Museums can display objects beyond the borders and encourage people to develop conversations with different communities, which would help build togetherness for the future.<sup>168</sup> Different nations choose to present themselves with diverse cultural activities to show their wishes to build a more harmonious international order in which system all could benefit through cooperation.<sup>169</sup> Cultural diplomacy is a critical component of this process, as it facilitates the exchange of ideas, promotes understanding, and builds bridges between different nations and cultures.

In this transnational process, governments, private stakeholders, and civil organisations could join in to provide information for these multiple national and global visitors simultaneously.<sup>170</sup> Cultural diplomacy involves a two-way process where visitors observe national narratives and symbolic collections that have been explained in cognitive forms. Visitors can also observe already existing social forms in different societies.<sup>171</sup> Cross-border exhibitions as part of cultural diplomacy also bring cross-national communication. During this interaction with culture, visitors can learn about other people's life choices under political and economic spheres through cultural differences.<sup>172</sup> Understanding these differences can lead to greater appreciation and respect for other cultures. By promoting cultural exchanges, countries can display their art, music, history, and other cultural aspects to the world.

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<sup>166</sup> Ang, Ien, Yudhishtir Raj Isar, and Phillip Mar. "Cultural diplomacy: beyond the national interest?." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 21, no. 4 (2015): 371.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 372.

<sup>168</sup> Dickey, Jennifer, Samir El Azhar, and Catherine Lewis, eds. *Museums in a global context: National identity, international understanding*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2013: 8.

<sup>169</sup> Ang, Ien, Yudhishtir Raj Isar, and Phillip Mar. "Cultural diplomacy: beyond the national interest?." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 21, no. 4 (2015): 370.

<sup>170</sup> Cull, Nicholas John. *Public diplomacy: Lessons from the past*. Vol. 12. Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa Press, 2009: 30.

<sup>171</sup> Ciocea, Mălina, and Alexandru Cărlan. "Prosthetic memory and post-memory: cultural encounters with the past in designing a museum." *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations* 17, no. 2 (2015): 10.

<sup>172</sup> Goode, Luke. "Cultural citizenship online: the Internet and digital culture." *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 5 (2010): 527.

However, when Japan started its “pop-culture diplomacy” in the postwar era in Asia to soften anti-Japan perceptions, especially in Southeast Asia, the “Cool Japan” policy was criticised as a one-way projection and did not effectively communicate with the local audiences with cross-border conversation.<sup>173</sup> Since cultural diplomacy practices are more or less mediated by the state as an “overplayed hand,” generating complex and sometimes contradictory statements.<sup>174</sup> In fact, the practices of cultural diplomacy are complex and sometimes contradictory; mixed messages could be a part of the side effect of the results, which had been mediated by the state. Despite these challenges, Japan has continued to promote its culture and soft power in its neighbourhood regions; efforts have been made to engage with local audiences through cross-border conversations<sup>175</sup>.

When it comes to creating quality exhibitions in museums, there are a variety of factors to consider. One of the most important considerations is ensuring that the exhibition's content is engaging and informative. This requires carefully curating objects, artefacts, and information that will captivate visitors and appeal to their interests and curiosity. Museums, as part of the national education system, the relationship between the knowledge and the public could drive museum projects in totally different directions. In the UK, there are some of the best-developed museums in the world and their benefits to the UK economy in general are reckoned to be about 1.5 billion pounds a year.<sup>176</sup> The UK attracts an overall 42 million visits each year to major museums.<sup>177</sup> At the same time, the competition for museums is seen elsewhere, too, in tune with economic growth, as is the present case in China.<sup>178</sup> Moreover, drawing on the fieldwork in Japan and an analysis of how a museum in two countries challenges their traditional institutions, this research aims to broaden the understanding of the connections among different cultures. By doing so, international exhibitions could be reviewed as a powerful tool for building a more dialogical conceptualisation of the shared heritage of mankind.

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<sup>173</sup> Iwabuchi, Koichi. "Pop-culture diplomacy in Japan: Soft power, nation branding and the question of 'international cultural exchange'." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 21, no. 4 (2015): 419.

<sup>174</sup> Ang, Ien, Yudhishtir Raj Isar, and Phillip Mar. "Cultural diplomacy: beyond the national interest?." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 21, no. 4 (2015): 371.

<sup>175</sup> Iwabuchi, Koichi. "Cultural policy, cross-border dialogue and cultural diversity." In *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Media*, Routledge, 2018: 365.

<sup>176</sup> Janes, Robert R. "Museums, corporatism and the civil society." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 50, no. 2 (2007): 219.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Xiangguang, Song. "The development of private museums in China." *Museum International* 60, no. 1-2 (2008): 40.



### 3.2.3 A form of international communication

Cultural Diplomacy is a term used increasingly often by political scientists and communication experts of many countries' promotional efforts in foreign regions.<sup>179</sup> At first, the internationalist museum would like to use the collections of European or global material culture to show the desire to be a central or dominant culture controlling knowledge about the world.<sup>180</sup> Secondly, the nationalistic paradigm is still very strong today and continues to serve nation-building agendas.<sup>181</sup> Nevertheless, the political changing background needed a new narrative to unite Western Europe and Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In this case, cultural diplomacy builds international communication for multiple countries.<sup>182</sup> Thirdly, the collections as diplomacy medium create a public ceremony for the symbolic mastery of the more incredible world.<sup>183</sup> For example, Japan's desire to expand its influence beyond its borders is linked to the advantages of cultural diplomacy in international communication. By promoting Japanese culture and soft power in neighbouring regions, Japan can transfer these countries into its potential art and cultural products market.

In addition to the economic benefits, cultural diplomacy can promote mutual understanding and positive relationships between nations. The UK started to try to develop partnerships internationally and achieve its foreign policy objectives through exhibitions a long time ago. For example, Neil MacGregor as the ex-director of the British Museum from 2002 to 2015, based on the introduction of his book, in which he wishes his story could lead all the visitors to "travel back in time and across the global to see we humans over 2 million years have shaped our world and been shaped by it".<sup>184</sup> The book introduction highlights the British Museum's aim to go beyond its reputation as "a museum with collections from other countries" and transform into "a one-of-a-kind museum that unites cultures from around the world, spanning continents and oceans".<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Ryniejska-Kiędanowicz, Marta. "Cultural diplomacy as a form of international communication." *Institute for Public Relations*. [http://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/Ryniejska\\_Kiędanowicz.pdf](http://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/Ryniejska_Kiędanowicz.pdf), 2009: 2, (consultation: 08 April 2023).

<sup>180</sup> Flynn, Tom. *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*. Routledge, 2012: 21.

<sup>181</sup> Smith, Anthony D. "State-making and nation-building." *States in history* 15, 1986: 228.

<sup>182</sup> Dinan, Desmond. *Europe recast: a history of European Union*. Vol. 373. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004: 63.

<sup>183</sup> Macdonald, Sharon, ed. *A companion to museum studies*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011: 123.

<sup>184</sup> MacGregor, N. *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. Penguin UK, 2011: 12.

<sup>185</sup> British Museum's introduction website, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/about-us>, (consultation: 18 April 2023).

However, in the touring exhibition as case study in this thesis, 9 items of the 100 collections came from China, in which one collection still had the unclear resource issue, which provided a mixed love-hate feeling for the Chinese visitors to interpret the exhibition host in Beijing and Shanghai cooperated with the British Museum in 2017. Not surprisingly, when these eight Chinese cultural collections went back to China as a part of a world history exhibition, one journalist from a Chinese newspaper asked the curator whether the National Museum of China could keep these collections after displaying, “We could not and should not”, answered by Dr. Yan, the curator of the exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects”.<sup>186</sup> An international exhibition like this created an opportunity for visitors to review their own culture within the global diversity of human society. Although some Chinese visitors are still hostile towards the UK, since these two Opium Wars in history (1839-1842 and 1856-1860) between Britain and Qing dynasty China.<sup>187</sup> During those wars, Britain had a strong dependence on tea, which was primarily cultivated in China and funded by profits from the opium trade; when China tried to prohibit opium use and restrict Western smugglers from entering its borders, England intervened to maintain access to China’s ports for importing the drug, which led to a long-lasting detrimental impact on the Chinese population due to opium addiction.<sup>188</sup> At the same time, an increasing number of regional visitors have come to recognise the strong interconnection between them, as evidenced by the diverse forms and expressions that human beings have employed to encompass every facet of life.

On the one hand, the historical period of the two Opium Wars between Victorian England and the Qing Dynasty China led to the acquisition of Chinese cultural items, which are now part of the collections in the British Museum; on the other hand, the “Golden Diplomatic Era” between the UK and China under the background of Brexit made two touring exhibitions possible in 2017 in Beijing and Shanghai.<sup>189</sup> Two hundred years ago, when England wanted tea from China, as a dominant world power at that time, it succeeded through two wars. However, in the twenty-first century, when museums in the UK want millions of visitors from China, although these museums have covered the majority of the exhibition fee, they still could feel an invisible wall. Cultural diplomacy has been an international conversation for hundreds of years.

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<sup>186</sup> Appendix 1, Dr Yan Zhi 闫志, interview with the author, Beijing, 04 April 2023.

<sup>187</sup> Hanes, William Travis, and Frank Sanello. *The opium wars: the addiction of one empire and the corruption of another*. Sourcebooks, Inc., 2002: 3.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Yang, Shuo. "The Impact of the Brexit Process on the "Golden Era" of UK-China Relations." 2019: 53.

### 3.3 Cross-border exhibitions

#### 3.3.1 The meaning of cross-border exhibitions

In the later part of the 1800s, large cross-border exhibitions became massive opportunities for education and refinement, attracting millions of visitors; these exhibitions were used to communicate contemporary ideas through visual means, often using symbolic representation.<sup>190</sup> A symbolic realm such as flag, anthem, national map, and sacred texts became the checklist for an “international cultural grammar of nationhood”.<sup>191</sup> Gradually, cross-border exhibitions have become the catalysts and links for narratives between different institutions, in which the cultural context will be transparent and affect the international understanding of people globally.<sup>192</sup> By exchanging exhibitions, museum collections would become the future catalogues in which the best techniques and new standards would cross national borders and legislation.<sup>193</sup> This is an area full of possibilities for managing new social behaviours. Cross-border exhibitions could become platforms of wonder, sites of cultural meaning and contribute insights for progressive societal actions.<sup>194</sup>

Cross-border exhibitions have the potential to attract massive audiences to rethinking their national belonging by displaying items from different countries and public consumption flows among local communities.<sup>195</sup> In the twenty-first century, museums produce many activities for cultural exchange including information and values, which provide inclusion and representation of diverse cultures and expose tension between the values of host and local societies.<sup>196</sup> In international exhibitions, technologies empower museums to become optical instrument for the refracting of society, through embracing advancing techniques, these exhibitions are displaying

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<sup>190</sup> Stoklund, Bjarne. "The Role of the International Exhibitions." *Ethnologia Europaea Vol. 24: 1: Ethnization of Culture* 24, no. 1 (1994): 35.

<sup>191</sup> Löfgren, Orvar. "Modernizing the Nation-Nationalizing Modernity." *Etnološka tribina: Godišnjak Hrvatskog etnološkog društva* 22, no. 15 (1992): 91.

<sup>192</sup> Lawn, Martin, ed. "Modelling the future: exhibitions and the materiality of education." Symposium Books Ltd, 2009: 8.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Sutherland, Claire. "Borders of belonging: the UK Border Agency museum as a nation-building site." *Challenging history in the museum: International perspectives* (2014): 175.

<sup>196</sup> Sweet, Jonathan. "New museums across cultures: introduction", in *Crossing cultures : conflict, migration and convergence : the proceedings of the 32nd International Congress of the History of Art*, Miegunyah Press, Carlton, Vic.2009: 1028.

collections beyond the limit of traditional environments.<sup>197</sup> This not only provides inclusion and representation of diverse cultures but also exposes tensions between the values of host and local societies.

The narratives presented in the museums' exhibitions play a crucial role in putting an end to cycles of impunity and fostering peace.<sup>198</sup> Any society endeavoring to shift from a past marked by violence to a future characterized by peace faces the challenge of reconciling the divisive impact of its violent history with the indispensable unity and inclusivity required to construct a peaceful future.<sup>199</sup> In this regard, museums' international exhibitions could display a relevant broader context in that visitors could look at things from a different viewpoint; with educational activities, audiences could try to understand multiple cultural behaviours with interactive display tools in those exhibitions.<sup>200</sup> Cross-border exhibitions prompt academic exchange and tourism promotion; this shift of attention from conflicts to cooperation offers a new perspective on expanding the understanding of this era by providing different ways to analyse power in international relations.<sup>201</sup>

For example, leaders in different countries are developing more sophisticated use of the instruments of power to reach both political goals and national purposes through the combination of hard, soft and smart power.<sup>202</sup> Since hard power has been proved not that smart, which provokes unprecedented resentment around the world.<sup>203</sup> When diplomacy, defense and development go together, smart power could be used for creating new international strategies to deal with challenges for diplomatic activities, such as building commercial and cultural networks.<sup>204</sup> By utilizing these various tools of influence in a synchronized manner, international exhibitions can be beneficial in developing more refined and impactful strategies to address the complexities of a rapidly evolving global environment.

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<sup>197</sup> Dressler, Virginia A., and Koon-Hwee Kan. "Mediating museum display and technology: A case study of an international exhibition incorporating QR codes." *Journal of Museum Education* 43, no. 2 (2018): 161.

<sup>198</sup> MacDonald, Ross B., and Monica C. Bernardo. "The politics of victimhood: historical memory and peace in Spain and the Basque region." *Journal of International Affairs* (2006): 173.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Friedberg, Daniel, and Diana Alderoqui-Pinus. "The peace labyrinth: An interactive exhibition on conflict resolution." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 55, no. 3 (2012): 341.

<sup>201</sup> Martin, Benjamin G., and Elisabeth Marie Pillar. "Cultural Diplomacy and Europe's Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: Introduction." *Contemporary European History* 30, no. 2 (2021): 158.

<sup>202</sup> Nye, Joseph S. "Hard, soft, and smart power." (2013): 111.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Nye, Joseph S. "Get smart: Combining hard and soft power." In *Soft Power and Great-Power Competition: Shifting Sands in the Balance of Power Between the United States and China*, pp. 63–66. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2023: 22.

### 3.3.2 Museums' cooperation policies

Museums' cooperation policies are part of the national cultural policies of countries, which are affected by the central government's policy in public sector management.<sup>205</sup> Museums have been encouraged to develop opportunities to cooperate with different organisations to increase incomes by sharing operation experiences for improving management efficiency and, most importantly, to invent social services that could meet the needs of a bigger visitor market.<sup>206</sup> Customer orientation is not only the strategic plan for generating income but also the motivation for museums to hire professionals to develop international cooperation with projects, such as the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which is building the network for museums and serving the interests of the international museum community.<sup>207</sup> By collaborating with ICOM, museums can expand their reach and impact while gaining access to valuable resources and expertise, in which cooperation and collaboration are essential in ensuring museums thrive and fulfil their important societal role.

In addition, items and collections in exhibitions not only show objects but also provide subjective explanations to visitors. Cross-border exhibitions differ from universal exhibitions, in which the narratives are still exotic in visitors' eyes. In these cross-border exhibitions, curators from both countries would like to explain collections with the perspectives of local communities so the information could be decoded easily.<sup>208</sup> This allows for a deeper understanding of the objects on display and helps contextualise them within the exhibit. Some of the museums take cooperation with international partners as a method to improve their budget and get more acquisitions through favourable marketing policies, which also depends on multiple factors of the museums themselves, such as their available management and financial resources, the legal and social environments in which these museums operate have an impact on international cooperation, such as security check and international transport.<sup>209</sup> The benefits and challenges of establishing global partnerships for museums are essential. By doing so, museums can expand their collections

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<sup>205</sup> Kawashima, Nobuko. "Museum management in a Time of Change." *Coventry: Centre for the Study of Cultural Policy, University of Warwick* (1997): 3.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Lawn, Martin, ed. "Modelling the future: exhibitions and the materiality of education." Symposium Books Ltd, 2009: 31.

<sup>209</sup> Vicente, Eva, Carmen Camarero, and María José Garrido. "Insights into Innovation in European Museums: The impact of cultural policy and museum characteristics." *Public Management Review* 14, no. 5 (2012): 649.

and reach a wider audience, while also improving the visitor experience for people from different parts of the world.

Since cooperated exhibitions have to deal with specific purposes from two or multiple sides, museological approaches and collaborative practices would lead to different display strategies, which create intercultural narrative with communication between these museums or institutions.<sup>210</sup> By expanding collections through their international network, museums can tell more diverse stories. Including historical collections and artefacts from different regions and nations allows museums to give visitors a richer and more nuanced understanding of history and culture. This also helps attract new audiences interested in seeing their cultural heritage represented in museum collections. Additionally, museums can improve the visitor experience for people worldwide by offering multilingual audio tours, interactive exhibits, and programming tailored to specific cultures. By appealing to a diverse range of visitors, museums can become more inclusive and cosmopolitan spaces.<sup>211</sup>

At the international level, significant resources come from the government to connect present society to its past by building museums and developing cultural nationalism at home, such as China.<sup>212</sup> Museums' cooperation policies nowadays have been deeply influenced by history, from the government to the organisation level. For example, many experts have emphasised the significance of China's "Century of Humiliation" - a period from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century when the country was subjected to a string of defeats and humiliations by foreign powers; this history has profoundly influenced China's worldview, especially its officials' thoughts and approaches to international and cultural practices, shaping its aspiration for a powerful and prosperous China that can withstand external threats.<sup>213</sup> To effectively engage with China in the twenty-first century and beyond, it is essential to comprehend this pivotal chapter of Chinese history.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Davidson, Lee, and Leticia Pérez-Castellanos. *Cosmopolitan Ambassadors: International exhibitions, cultural diplomacy and the polycentric museum*. Vernon Press, 2019: 7.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Winter, Tim. "One belt, one road, one heritage: Cultural diplomacy and the Silk Road." *The Diplomat* 29 (2016): 1.

<sup>213</sup> Murray, Charles Monahan. "From 'Lying Low' to 'Harmonious World': Changes in Chinese Foreign Policy from the 1970s to the 2000s." 2014: 25.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

### 3.3.3 Cooperation among Museums

Firstly, cooperation among museums has been powered by multiple stakeholders with diverse motivations, from the political promotion of nations to economic interests.<sup>215</sup> As institutions like museums contribute to lifelong learning, enabling more visitors to access human memory and understand heritage materials is an integral part of museum management, which means cooperation among museums is becoming a trend for developing more comprehensive visitors' enjoyment and inspiration.<sup>216</sup> Through cooperation, museums could strengthen their international reputation, reach more diverse and multiple-national visitors, provide interactive programs, etc.<sup>217</sup> The governmental cooperation is shaping up to organise the Cultural Olympiad, in which museums from different countries could contribute to the global cultural life and prosperity, not only sharing information in a digital age but also enabling international communication through cultural collections.<sup>218</sup>

In the past, objects were displayed within limited historical context in the museums, while in the future, as part of "memory institutions"<sup>219</sup> and "knowledge organisations"<sup>220</sup>, cooperation among museums could help these materials to be displayed with a wider concrete context.<sup>221</sup> In the representation of history and cultural memory, there are fundamental differences exist in explanations of museums about memory production, which have an impact on the sharpening of narrative and memory for the community.<sup>222</sup> Through international collaborations and partnerships

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<sup>215</sup> Stylianou-Lambert, Theopisti, Nikolaos Boukas, and Marina Christodoulou-Yerali. "Museums and cultural sustainability: stakeholders, forces, and cultural policies." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 20, no. 5 (2014): 567.

<sup>216</sup> Yarrow, Alexandra, Barbara Clubb, and Jennifer-Lynn Draper. *Public libraries, archives and museums: Trends in collaboration and cooperation*. International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2008: 06.

<sup>217</sup> Carlson, N. "Charting the landscape, mapping new paths: Museums, libraries, and K-12 learning." In *meeting of the Institute of Museum and Library Services in Washington, DC* Retrieved from [http://www.ims.gov/assets/l/AssetManager/Charting\\_the\\_Landscape.pdf](http://www.ims.gov/assets/l/AssetManager/Charting_the_Landscape.pdf). 2004: 09.

<sup>218</sup> Yarrow, Alexandra, Barbara Clubb, and Jennifer-Lynn Draper. *Public libraries, archives and museums: Trends in collaboration and cooperation*. International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), 2008: 18.

<sup>219</sup> Reading, Anna. "Digital interactivity in public memory institutions: the uses of new technologies in Holocaust museums." *Media, Culture & Society* 25, no. 1 (2003): 67.

<sup>220</sup> Given, Lisa M., and Lianne McTavish. "What's old is new again: The reconvergence of libraries, archives, and museums in the digital age." *The library quarterly* 80, no. 1 (2010): 7.

<sup>221</sup> Dilevko, Juris, and Lisa Gottlieb. *The evolution of library and museum partnerships: Historical antecedents, contemporary manifestations, and future directions*. Libraries Unlimited, 2004: 187.

<sup>222</sup> Robinson, Helena. "Remembering things differently: Museums, libraries and archives as memory institutions and the implications for convergence." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 27, no. 4 (2012): 413.

with other museums, the museums could redefine the public image and expand income. At the same time, overseas exhibitions could help these museums to design more visitor-oriented services and products, such as family activities and themed lectures organised by museum professionals.<sup>223</sup>

As museums' exhibitions are cultural products, comparing the differences between cultures in China and Japan will provide a cultural perspective for analysing the distinctions between museums' exhibitions. Intercultural exhibitions face abstract gaps when the concept of items needs to be translated into different languages. For example, Spanish has two verbs to describe the meaning of "be" with two verbs: "estar" and "ser". The difference between the short-term and long-term status will take non-Spanish speakers a pretty long time to understand. This is similar to the Japanese language, which has two different subjects for the exact meaning of "I": "僕-bogu" for male and "私-watashi" for female. When translating content from these languages, it is essential to verify the linguistic details. One more case in the Chinese language, the English word "ambition" is translated into "野心-wild heart", which doesn't encourage individuals to try anything new in society, as Confucianism's central ideology: "harmony".<sup>224</sup> One of the most famous quotes of Confucius is, "Let the lord be a lord; the subject a subject; the father a father; the son a son".<sup>225</sup> That is why the National Museum of China did not cooperate with the British Museum for any cultural merchandise of the exhibition during displaying in Beijing.

Overall, translated museum texts as interlingual representations face cultural differences in understanding culture-specific intertextuality and referencing in a global context when the audiences of museums become international and cultural products are analysed under global dissemination.<sup>226</sup> When the second language encounters the original explanation, it will bring everything to its own culture, to its imagination and priorities of social value, which create differences in the translation process.<sup>227</sup> The "cultural translation" is not only the individual project of transferring the source text into a different language but also a common understanding from and shaped by the institutional organisations in another society.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Kotler, Neil, and Philip Kotler. "Can museums be all things to all people?: Missions, goals, and marketing's role." *Museum management and curatorship* 18, no. 3 (2000): 271.

<sup>224</sup> Frederickson, H. George. "Confucius and the moral basis of bureaucracy." *Administration & Society* 33, no. 6 (2002): 610.

<sup>225</sup> Leys, Simon, ed. *The analects of Confucius*. WW Norton & Company, 1997: 57.

<sup>226</sup> Guillot, Marie-Noëlle. "Cross-cultural pragmatics and translation: The case of museum texts as interlingual representation." *Translation: A multidisciplinary approach* (2014): 73.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Sturge, Kate. *Representing others: Translation, ethnography and museum*. Routledge, 2014: 13.



## 3.4 Cross-border Exhibitions in China

### 3.4.1 The narrative of global history exhibition

In 2017, the cross-border exhibition "Invention of Louvre" from Paris, France to the National Museum of China, Beijing was a milestone after China founded the Chinese National Committee of ICOM in 1983, which was one of the first international cultural non-governmental organisations that China joined in the cultural sector with the support of the Chinese government.<sup>229</sup> In a rapidly commercialising and modernising China, promoting a state-centred patriotism has become an essential tool for the government in maintaining its legitimacy, and museums play a vital role in this strategy.<sup>230</sup> For instance, up until the 1980s, China had significant gaps in its involvement in the developing global economy, reflected in its number of museums. The first museum in China was established in the early twentieth century. Over 100 years later, as of 2012, the number of museums in China had increased to approximately 3,000.<sup>231</sup> In the past decade, Chinese museums doubled to 5,788 in 2022.<sup>232</sup>

Nowadays, only 16 states have more than 1,000 museums, and 35% have fewer than ten museums.<sup>233</sup> Although the development of Chinese in the past several decades has been speedy, the average museum per million inhabitants still needs to be higher than in North America and Western Europe.<sup>234</sup> For example, in the UK alone, there are more than 2,500 museums of interest to international and home audiences.<sup>235</sup> Although China has a population (of 1.4 billion<sup>236</sup>), more than 20 times that the UK (68 million<sup>237</sup>), the number of museums in China is only twice that of

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<sup>229</sup> Lord, Gail Dexter, Guan Qiang, An Laishun, and Javier Jimenez, eds. *Museum Development in China: Understanding the Building Boom*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2019: 60.

<sup>230</sup> Vickers, Edward. "Museums and nationalism in contemporary China." *Compare* 37, no. 3, 2007: 382.

<sup>231</sup> Wenchang, Li. "Developments in China's digitalized museums." *Museum International* 60, no. 1-2 (2008): 59.

<sup>232</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of China; Ministry of Culture and Tourism (China) <https://www-statista-com.sire.ub.edu/statistics/226450/number-of-museums-in-china/> (consultation: 20 February 2023) .

<sup>233</sup> Museums around the world in the face of COVID-19 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373530> (consultation: 23 February 2023) .

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Geoghegan, Hilary. "Museum geography: Exploring museums, collections and museum practice in the UK." *Geography Compass* 4, no. 10 (2010): 1462.

<sup>236</sup> China Population (2023) - Worldometer <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/china-population/> (consultation: 22 February 2023) .

<sup>237</sup> U.K. Population (2023) - Worldometer <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/uk-population/> (consultation: 22 February 2023) .

the UK: 5000 in 2019.<sup>238</sup> The UK has a solid museological culture, and the British Museum sets the benchmark for global museums. The collections and museums in the UK attract millions of visitors to enjoy the temporary and permanent exhibitions there every year. Moreover, the collecting philosophy, the recording and conservation practices of the museums in the UK inspire other countries to maintain and improve their skills and endeavours for public education purposes.<sup>239</sup>

Usually, Chinese museums are proud of their 5,000 years of history. With the official year of 2023 provided by Common Era, a widely adapted Western calendar era, it is straightforward to see the gap between Chinese national pride and the contemporary standard on the international stage.<sup>240</sup> Traditionally, no museum exhibitions could give each audience full attention all the time. Hence, management decisions have to be made to prioritise one group and the necessary resources to support that group. The exhibitions' content, interpretation, and supporting public programmes can demonstrate to new and diverse communities that museums and their collections are relevant to a broader public than previously considered. Except for all the different kinds of activities, evaluation, networks, and partnerships are crucial at all the process stages to improve practice and ensure that the visitors' needs and expectations are met. New technologies, particularly the Web and Applications, offer opportunities for museums' exhibitions from the UK to look afresh at how they could provide information and background narratives to engage and include audiences in researching and investigating the collections.<sup>241</sup> More specifically, the digital development of the UK museums' exhibitions allows the curators to quickly acquire, model, store, manipulate and create new exhibitions from 3D museum artefacts. The significance of metadata in museums' exhibitions also could support and enable academic researchers to author, maintain, and manage the information they need. With diverse exhibitions, the museum's exhibitions are improving the experiences for the visitors with their practice and feedback.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of China; Ministry of Culture and Tourism (China) <https://www-statista-com.sire.ub.edu/statistics/226450/number-of-museums-in-china/> (consultation: 20 February 2023).

<sup>239</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. *Museum and gallery education*. Leicester University Press, 1991: 86.

<sup>240</sup> Nyíri, Pál. *Mobility and cultural authority in contemporary China*. University of Washington Press, 2011: 72.

<sup>241</sup> Lang, Caroline, John Reeve, and Vicky Woollard, eds. *The responsive museum: working with audiences in the twenty-first century*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2006: 59.

<sup>242</sup> Patel, Manjula, Martin White, Nicholaos Mourkoussis, Krzysztof Walczak, Rafal Wojciechowski, and Jacek Chmielewski. "Metadata requirements for digital museum environments." *International Journal on Digital Libraries* 5 (2005): 192.

### 3.4.2 New Goal: Museum Society

Museum development as part of building an international reputation and attractions for overseas visitors has attracted much attention from China in recent years. In the discourse in Strengthening the Nation Forum [Qiangguo Luntan] of China, building a “Museum Society” became the goal for the regional governments.<sup>243</sup> This new goal was inspired by China's experience with international practices, which showed cultural activities had been adapted as a tool to improve its global image. For example, the 2008 Beijing Olympics were a subject of much debate, with contrasting views on its impact. Some argue that the games symbolised China's growing global power and economic progress and received colossal success from branding this ancient civilisation to international audiences. However, it also showed the gap between economic development and cultural promotion.<sup>244</sup> While others criticise that China, as the host, was at a disadvantage in the competition for meaning-making, Western media had a clear advantage.<sup>245</sup> In summary, the second opinion maintains a critical attitude towards the public diplomacy effects of the Beijing Olympics, emphasising the limited influence of sports events on improving a country's image and suggesting that China faced challenges in shaping the narrative.<sup>246</sup>

After the 2008 Beijing Olympics, China started to focus more on cultural events; gradually, the situation changed: in 2018, there were more than 30,000 exhibitions in Chinese museums, and around 1 billion visitors visited museums in China.<sup>247</sup> The disparity in the number of museums between China and Western countries is quite evident. Currently, 65% of museum institutions worldwide are in North America and Western Europe, while 33% are in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>248</sup> Overall, approximately 95,000 museum institutions are worldwide, with over 60% constructed in the past decade. While only 27 states could provide more

<sup>243</sup> Yang, Guobin. "The co-evolution of the Internet and civil society in China." *Asian Survey* 43, no. 3 (2003): 407.

<sup>244</sup> Panagiotopoulou, Roy. "Nation branding and the Olympic games: New media images for Greece and China." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 29, no. 16 (2012): 2337.

<sup>245</sup> Manzenreiter, Wolfram. "The Beijing games in the Western imagination of China: The weak power of soft power." *Journal of Sport and Social issues* 34, no. 1 (2010): 29.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Bollo, Sofia, and Yu Zhang. "Policy and impact of public museums in China: Exploring new trends and challenges." *Museum International* 69, no. 3-4 (2017): 26.

<sup>248</sup> Museums around the world in the face of COVID-19: p.5 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373530> (consultation: 23 February 2023) .

than 50 museums for a million inhabitants, the remaining 113 states have even less than six museums for a million inhabitants.<sup>249</sup>

International partners have been instrumental in shaping the development of museum society in China, along with local initiatives. The United Kingdom and the European Union have significantly impacted these partners. For instance, after decades of support of cultural sectors, the UK has accumulated an impressive number of museums, which currently stands at over 2,500. In contrast, China has only around 4,000 museums as of 2020, despite having a population 20 times larger than the UK. This means that while there is one museum for every 26,000 people in the UK, China only has one museum for every 280,000. Such a disparity underscores the immense potential for growth and development in the Chinese museum industry.<sup>250</sup> The international collaboration between European museums and the European Union has also inspired China to use museums as cultural tools to build national solidarity. This is particularly important given that the concept of museums as cultural institutions in China is still relatively new, and there is much to be learned from the experience of more established museum societies. International partners such as the UK and the EU inspire efforts to create a more dynamic and vibrant museum culture in China. These efforts also promote cultural exchange and understanding between different nations and regions.

The historical context of European regional integration influenced the development of museums' exhibitions in East Asia, as the broader global context of regional increased the vital part in the cultural events and results of the twenty-first century. As an important part, the European Union is responsible for changing the priority of interpreting the history of its diverse nations and countries. In the areas of practising being a European in the museums' exhibitions and, at the same time, defining its uniqueness with the tend to differ between the other European countries is becoming the background of the museums' collections from the EU to East Asia.<sup>251</sup> As China and Japan have increasingly close ties with European countries, they have begun to learn from each other; the exchange of ideas and cultural experiences has also led to greater cooperation in the museum industry.

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<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Kuutma, Kristin, and Paavo Kroon. "Museum policy in transition from post-Soviet conditions to reconfigurations in the European Union." *Museum Policies in Europe 1990–2010: Negotiating Professional and Political Utopia* (2012): 69.

<sup>251</sup> Dent, Christopher M., and David WF Huang, eds. *Northeast Asian regionalism: Learning from the European experience*. Psychology Press, 2002: 28.

## 3.5 Cross-border Exhibitions in Japan

### 3.5.1 Transformation of memory

The international exhibitions hosted by museums play an essential role in addressing the gap in the expanding area of cultural diplomacy. Cross-border exhibitions in Japan have highlighted the differing approaches to museum principles between the Western and the Eastern worlds. They have also showcased Japan's willingness to embrace Western culture by featuring exhibitions that transform the memory of its imperialist and colonialist past. For example, Japan has a deep political and financial connection with the UK since the Natural History Museum in London chose Japan as the first station for its five-year global touring exhibition.<sup>252</sup> Conversely, the exhibition "Treasures of the Natural World" from the Natural History Museum in London has never been accepted by any Chinese museums. This is because the rental fee for the exhibition is higher than the Chinese museums' budget. In contrast, the exhibition from the British Museum was offered for free to Beijing and Shanghai.

In addition, Japanese museum exhibited with financial support from the government and sponsors from newspaper organisations and commercial partners, such as Kao Corporation, Canon Marketing Japan Inc, Daiwa House Industry Co., Ltd, Mitsubishi Corporation, Aioi Nissay Dowa Insurance Co., Ltd<sup>253</sup>, since based on the Nonprofit Law in Japan, if a part of income of companies is used for the advancement of not-for-profit activities, which related to the development of the museum and related studies, this part of income is not subject to income tax and may be exempt from local taxes.<sup>254</sup> Chinese museums, contrary to Japan, sometimes they need to generate extra revenue through commercial activities, such as renting out space to brands like LV for their historical exhibitions, or in other words, promotional exhibitions held at the National Museum of China.<sup>255</sup> The differences between Japanese and Chinese museum structures have determined that

<sup>252</sup> "Natural History Museum to send its treasures around the world" <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/press-office/press-releases/natural-history-museum-to-send-its-treasures-around-the-world.html> (consultation: 04 September 2022).

<sup>253</sup> "The British Museum Exhibiton: A History of the World in 100 Objects" [https://www.tobikan.jp/en/exhibition/h27\\_history100.html](https://www.tobikan.jp/en/exhibition/h27_history100.html) (consultation: 05 September 2022).

<sup>254</sup> Nonprofit Law in Japan | Council on Foundations <https://cof.org/country-notes/nonprofit-law-japan> (consultation: 23 Apr 2022).

<sup>255</sup> "LV exhibition in the National Museum of China <https://news.artron.net/20201222/n169875.html> (consultation: 23 Apr 2022).

Japanese museums are more capable of diverse exhibition planning. In contrast, Chinese museums heavily depend on support from its government with a limited financial budget.

Japanese museums care about national pride and even separate the galleries into the Japan Gallery and Global Gallery in the National Museum of Nature and Science in Ueno Park in central Tokyo (as Figures 3-1 and 3-2 show). Compared with China, Japan has a similar museum structure to the Western system, which had been driven by the national political policy “Escape from Asia” created by Fukuzawa Yukichi in 1885 in Japan, who indicated that the cultures of Asians were exotic to Japanese.<sup>256</sup> He accepted what he had learned in Europe and America in Japan, had a significant influence on the imperialist and colonialist policy in Japan, then he became an author, writer, teacher, translator, entrepreneur, journalist, and the founder of Keio University; Fukuzawa Yukichi also translated the word “museum” from English to Japanese in 1866 with Chinese characters.<sup>257</sup> Since, at that time, there was no word in Japanese to express the exact meaning of the museum. Chinese scholars accepted his translation since those new concepts made by Japanese scholars were written in traditional Chinese characters, which was not difficult for Chinese who could read and write classic characters to understand.



Figure 3-1: The National Museum of Nature and Science Galleries in Ueno Park in central Tokyo.

Source: Screenshot of the National Museum of Nature and Science of Japan.<sup>258</sup>

<sup>256</sup> Kunihiro, Uemura. "Fukuzawa Yukichi and Eurocentrism in modern Japan." (2012): 2.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Official English website of The National Museum of Nature and Science, Japan  
<https://www.kahaku.go.jp/english/> (consultation: 05 September 2022).



The similarity of the writing system between Japan and China is a fascinating topic that goes beyond language connection. The two countries' cultural and historical connections have significantly impacted their writing systems' development. Interestingly, the Japanese found it practical to use Chinese kanji to adopt and translate new foreign terms and modern concepts from English to their language. As a result, Japan eventually became the bridge between China and the Western world during the Meiji Period (1868-1912). Moreover, museums play a crucial role in reflecting the social history of a nation and how it affects the representation of national values.<sup>259</sup> The exhibitions selected by museums provide an excellent insight into a country's history and culture. It is fascinating to see how museum exhibitions have evolved and continue to shape understanding of a nation's past and present. The exhibitions selected for this research showcase the Japanese museum curatorial institutions and their historical relationship with China and the Western world.



Figure 3-2: Official English Poster Foldout of The National Museum of Nature and Science in Tokyo, Japan

Source: Photos by Jinghao Tong in the National Museum of Nature and Science of Japan<sup>260</sup>.

<sup>259</sup> Leffler, Phyllis. "Peopling the portholes: National identity and maritime museums in the US and UK." *The Public Historian* 26, no. 4 (2004): 23.

<sup>260</sup> Jinghao Tong's photo in the fieldwork at the National Museum of Nature and Science of Japan. (Photo date: 09 January 2023).



### 3.5.2 The Future of Tradition

International collaboration could become an effective means of advancing the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage. Since cross-border exhibitions involve different nations with varying advantages. Co-hosting can increase benefits for all parties involved. For example, European institutions have rich knowledge and a workforce of taxonomists but not enough collections. Meanwhile, other countries lack curatorial management experience and scientific references for their collections. With international collaboration, all parties can benefit from sharing their expertise and resources.<sup>261</sup> Through cross-border exhibitions, these networks among professionals and curators could combine wider visitors' experiences to create narratives under not only historical but also cultural and linguistic perspectives.<sup>262</sup> To share the knowledge and research results of cultural heritage, international collaboration is attracting more and more attention from both governments and private organisations.<sup>263</sup>

The museums' international exhibitions were not only possessing treasures of nations and contributing to knowledge but also making concrete the social understanding for the nations.<sup>264</sup> The mobility of people and historical collections creates the competition between nations to be "contemporary", which means the museums' exhibitions elevate the presence of the nation. At the same time, these cross-border exhibitions are providing different ideas of understanding cultures to a changing, modern concept for increasing social members living in the communities.<sup>265</sup> The uses of the past is a common choice in China and Japan, who are both exploring the creation and power of the heritage created and presented to the world. Museums' exhibitions are defined and explored as processes of institutionalised negotiations with material collections and exhibitions make claims, which are recognised as articulating and representing human being society values and realities. The differences of museums' exhibitions in China and Japan hold the answers for international museums' collaboration in China and Japan.

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<sup>261</sup> Alberch, P. (1993). "Museums, collections and biodiversity inventories." *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, 8(10): 374.

<sup>262</sup> Braden, L. E. A., and Thomas Teekens. "Historic networks and commemoration: Connections created through museum exhibitions." *Poetics* 81 (2020): 101446.

<sup>263</sup> Scrofani, Luigi, and Luca Ruggiero. "Museum networks in the Mediterranean area: Real and virtual opportunities." *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 14, no. 3 (2013): S75-S79.

<sup>264</sup> Aronsson, Peter, Simon Knell, Arne Bugge Amundsen, Bodil Axelsson, Felicity Bodenstein, Alexandra Bounia, Jocelyn Dodd et al. *National museums making history in a diverse Europe*. Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012.

<sup>265</sup> Kreps, Christina. *Museums and Anthropology in the Age of Engagement*. Routledge, 2019.

As Figure 3-3 shows, the introduction of collections are as important as the items themselves in attracting visitors' attention. Therefore, the curatorial method plays an important role in delivering information effectively. The similarity of the writing system between Japan and China was not only language connection but also cultural and historical connection. Although kanji have originated in China, when the Japanese translated the modern concepts with kanji it also provided the educated Chinese an easy way to understand new concepts such as *tetsugaku* (哲学-philosophy, literally “wise learning”) or *shūkyō* (宗教-religion, literally “honour teaching”). The term *wasei-kango* (和製漢語-Japanese made Chinese words) is used to describe such borrowings which new coined concepts by Japanese with Chinese characters.<sup>266</sup> When the Japanese writer Fukuzawa Yukichi translated a various of Western concept of “society”, “science”, “democracy”, “museum” and so on into Japanese with Chinese characters in 1866, these concepts inevitably brought the imprints of their ideological contingencies and circumstances into Japanese.<sup>267</sup>



Figure 3-3: Japan Gallery and the Global Gallery in The National Museum of Nature and Science.

Source: Photos by Jinghao Tong in the National Museum of Nature and Science of Japan<sup>268</sup>.

<sup>266</sup> Stanlaw, James. *Japanese English: Language and culture contact*. Vol. 1. Hong Kong University Press, 2004: 83.

<sup>267</sup> Wan-Chen, Chang. "A cross-cultural perspective on musealization: the museum's reception by China and Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century." *Museum and Society* 10, no. 1 (2012): 15.

<sup>268</sup> Jinghao Tong's photo in the fieldwork at the National Museum of Nature and Science of Japan. (Photo date: 09 January 2023).

### 3.6 Conclusion

This chapter is the second part of the state of the art, allowing this research to look closer at the impact of cultural diplomacy on cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan. Together with the historical development of the museum industry internationally and in these two countries, presented in the previous chapter, these two parts constitute the entire theoretical framework for this research about museums' international collaboration. In summary, there has been a growing interest in sharing cultural heritage knowledge and research results among governments and cultural organisations. This has increased international collaboration, particularly in cross-border museum exhibitions, resulting in record-breaking visitor numbers. By working together, countries and organisations can pool their resources and expertise and create new initiatives that can have a more significant impact than those undertaken independently. Furthermore, international collaboration can help foster a greater understanding and appreciation of different cultures, promoting opportunities and connections for cultural heritage management in a globalised world.

Overall, this chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the impact of cultural heritage management on Chinese and Japanese museums in light of historical changes. Specifically, it examines how the opening-up policy of China in 1978 influenced Chinese museums and their further cooperation relationship with foreign institutions. This chapter also compares the collaboration between China and Japan with the International Council of Museums (ICOM). The two countries separately hosted the 22nd and 25th ICOM General Conference in Shanghai in 2010 and Kyoto in 2019, respectively, marking essential milestones for joining the global network of heritage management. Furthermore, this chapter explores the related development of museums in China and Japan from a linguistic perspective. In doing so, this sheds light on the crucial role of Western influences in modern concepts and ideas related to social changes and scientific progress, such as the United Kingdom and the European Union both have played in shaping the museum standards and gallery arrangements of these countries. Additionally, this chapter highlights the significance of international exhibitions in promoting cultural exchange and understanding between nations and regions.

Subsequently, this part of the state of art provides a detailed analysis of the museum curatorial principles of China and Japan, highlighting both the similarities and differences between them, with the information gathered through fieldwork in these two countries of 2023. Through

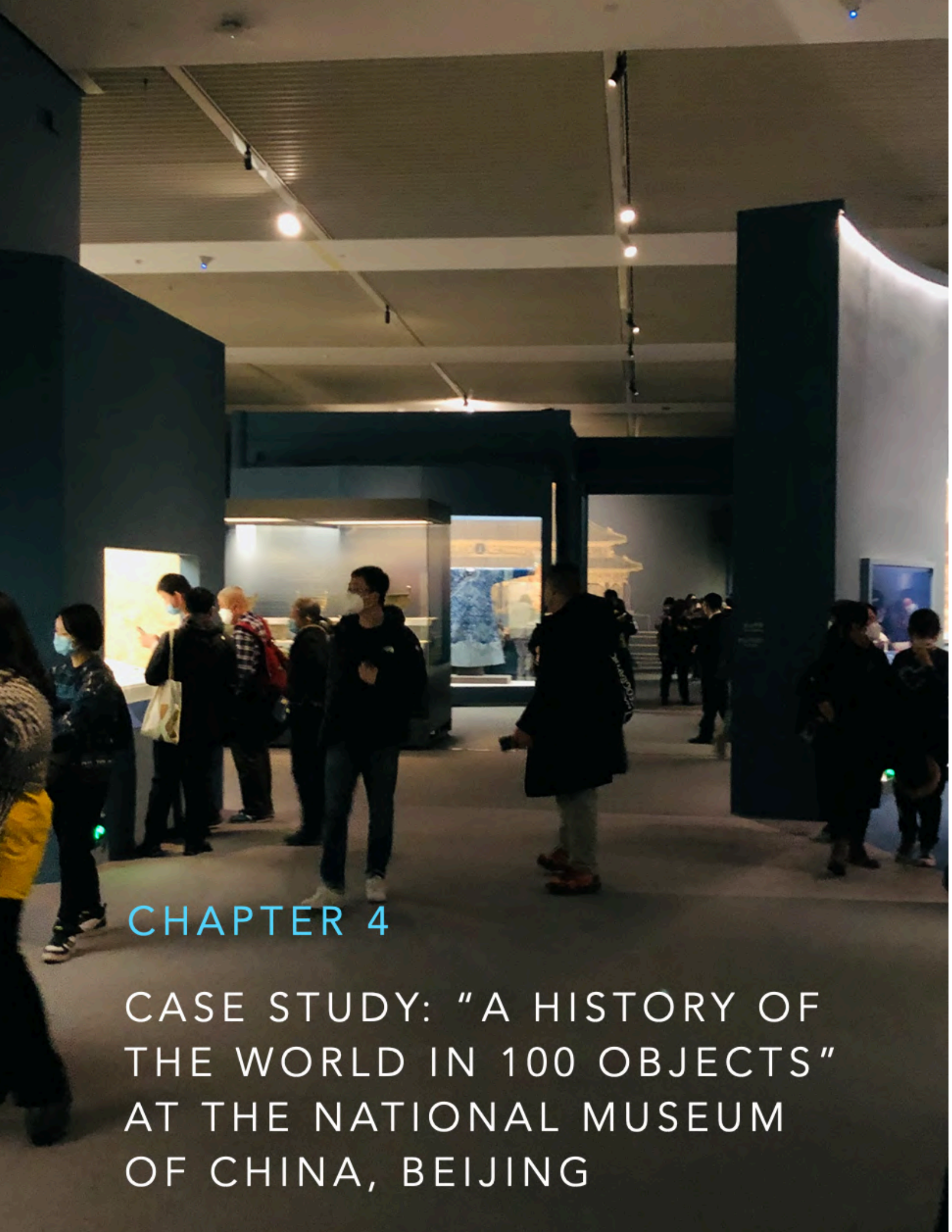
this exploration, a deeper understanding of the cultural values and aesthetic traditions that inform the curation of museum exhibitions in these two countries has been established. Additionally, this chapter draws attention to the increasing trend of cross-border exhibitions and international collaborations within the museum industry. By facilitating the exchange of ideas, resources, and expertise across national and cultural boundaries, these initiatives can enrich the quality and diversity of museum offerings and foster greater mutual understanding and respect between different societies.

The cultural connections between China and Japan are more substantial than many realise. At the start of the twenty-first century, while some of Europe's museums addressed how to represent their former colonial nations during exhibit renovations, museums in China and Japan also faced challenges. To be reviewed within a globalised community, the narratives of their historical collections needed updating. This required both countries to reconsider their connections with neighbouring countries and foreign states. International exhibitions by museums are developing alongside the motivation of "understanding how others interpret our culture," reshaping the reality for local visitors in China and Japan. A better understanding of museums' cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan can lay the groundwork for new cooperative relationships to develop cultural heritage in East Asia.

In conclusion, this chapter argues that international collaboration in the museum industry is crucial for promoting cultural exchange, understanding, and cooperation between nations and regions. As such, it is an essential element of developing museum societies worldwide. This would lead to preserving cultural heritage and enriching the community as a whole. With access to a broader range of ideas and perspectives, people would be better equipped to understand and appreciate different cultures. This could also increase cooperation and collaboration between nations as people develop a greater understanding and appreciation for one another. Furthermore, exchanging cultural collections could foster creativity and innovation, as people are exposed to new and different ideas that inspire new ways of thinking and problem-solving. In short, promoting the exchange of cultural collections can have a wide range of positive impacts on individuals and society.





A photograph of a museum gallery. The space is dimly lit with track lighting on the ceiling. Dark blue walls and display cases are visible. Several people, mostly wearing face masks, are walking through the gallery and looking at the exhibits. The floor is a light-colored carpet.

## CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY: "A HISTORY OF  
THE WORLD IN 100 OBJECTS"  
AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM  
OF CHINA, BEIJING





## 4.1 Introduction

“The Qianlong emperor in China, an almost exact contemporary of George III, in the middle of the eighteenth century, was also engaged in gathering, collecting, classifying, categorising, exploring the past, making dictionaries, compiling encyclopaedias and writing about what he had discovered, on the surface just like an eighteenth-century European gentleman scholar. All humanity is in some ways connected and some ways similar.”<sup>269</sup>

MacGregor, Neil

Ex-Director of the British Museum (2002–2015)

The first case study is about the international exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects," held at the National Museum of China in Beijing from March 2 to May 31, 2017 (Figure 4-1). This chapter begins by examining the policies of museums in the British system, focusing on the touring exhibitions department of the British Museum as the first case study. Then, the policy of Chinese museums regarding international exhibitions is introduced, along with the gallery design and administration system of the National Museum of China. These systemic differences between the UK and China are essential to understanding the next sector, which impacts the exhibition's progress. Cooperation details include communication between these two museums and related reports from media and public reactions towards the exhibition. An online interview with the Chinese curator Dr. Yan Zhi provides valuable first-hand information about this case study. After six years of the exhibition, the curator shares his reflections with the researcher regarding feedbacks of the cooperation. The final section of this chapter provides a conclusion that provides an overview of this case study in China, which contributes to understanding the first kind of international collaboration model. When the motivation and financial support come from governments, short-term cooperation relationships can be built, but they may not last. The strict control and strong guidance of the curators' exhibition creations can lead to a tendency of focusing on domestic museum exchange activities.

As the quote at the beginning of this chapter shows, MacGregor's idea of “connection” made it possible for this international exhibition between the UK and China to occur in 2017, which provided the first case study for this research. After analyzing the concept of museums and

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<sup>269</sup> MacGregor, Neil. *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. Penguin Group 2010, p. 24.

exhibitions, as well as the impact of cultural diplomacy, this chapter focuses on understanding the motivations behind international collaboration among museums, with a particular analysis of the cross-border exhibition held in Beijing. This study includes two separate case studies in China and Japan, respectively. This chapter and the next explore the cooperation between Chinese museums and foreign museums. Over 90 days, more than 340,000 visitors attended the temporary exhibition. Luckily, I lived in Beijing then and had the opportunity to visit the exhibition twice. Additionally, as my master's dissertation focused on museums in the UK, I visited the British Museum more than 20 times between March and July 2019.

This research focuses on a specific type of exhibition that involves international cooperation between museums: cross-border exhibitions. These exhibitions start from a host museum and travel to multiple museums worldwide. This chapter examines the perspectives of the host museum and international venue museums and curators' interpretations regarding their collections. Additionally, it investigates the negotiation of replacing sensitive objects for specific historical concerns based on suggestions from the Chinese government. As the British Museum had set the goal of taking the collections and introducing the knowledge and memory of items to global audiences, “A History of the World in 100 Objects” started its international tour from America, Australia and East Asia from the British Museum.



Figure 4-1: The centre of the National Museum of China. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> The official Website of National Museum of China. (2022). <http://en.chnmuseum.cn/>. (consultation: 22 Mar 2022)

## 4.2 The British Museum

### 4.2.1 The policy of international exhibition in the British system

The British Museum proposed the international exhibition to the National Museum of China; it is essential to understand the role of its international exhibition policy and museum system. The United Kingdom has a vibrant museum culture, with the British Museum serving as a global standard. The collections and museums in the UK draw millions of visitors each year, who come to experience both the temporary and permanent exhibitions. Furthermore, the collecting techniques, recording methods, and conservation practices of UK museums inspire other countries to enhance their own skills and efforts in museum management.<sup>271</sup> The measurement system for the museum has changed from a collection organisation to achieving goals on the economic-financial and the social-environment performance.<sup>272</sup> Based on these various motivations of visitors who went to the British Museum, there are three clusters of cultural visitors: “community-oriented”, “information-driven” and the third group “specialised or core cultural users”, which encourages the British Museum to set goals with a prospective managerial policy making principle.<sup>273</sup> The user-focused approach is the core of the British Museum when it plans related activities to attract more visitors from both the national and international markets, which indicates two important features closely related to the cultural value of the BM: promotion and conservation.<sup>274</sup>

Nowadays, these museums need to provide multiple values, such as aesthetic and emotional, celebratory and educational, recreational and social interaction<sup>275</sup>. According to the BM’s strategy document—*Towards 2020*:

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<sup>271</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. *Museum and gallery education*. Leicester University Press, 1991: 86.

<sup>272</sup> Manes-Rossi, Francesca, Alessandra Allini, Rosanna Spanò, and Francesco Dainelli. "Changing performance measurement towards enhanced accountability: insights from the British museum." *International Journal of Public Sector Performance Management* 2, no. 4 (2016): 331-347.

<sup>273</sup> Apostolakis, Alexandros, and Shabbar Jaffry. "Evaluation of individual preferences for the British Museum, England—a latent class approach." *Cultural Management: Science & Education* 2, no. 2 (2018): 23.

<sup>274</sup> Rossi, Francesca Manes, Alessandra Allini, and Francesco Dainelli. "Innovations in the Measurement of Cultural Value: The British Museum." In *Innovation in the Public and Nonprofit Sectors*, Routledge, (2015): 49.

<sup>275</sup> Jafari, Aliakbar, Babak Taheri, and Dirk Vom Lehn. "Cultural consumption, interactive sociality and the museum." In *New Directions in Consumer Research*. SAGE Publications Ltd, (2015): 129.

“The familiar architecture of knowledge has dissolved. The Museum needs to rethink completely how it transmits information about the collection, and how it engages its visitors with the objects. New technology allows new ways of visiting the galleries: stories and images, enquiries and interactions, individual and group explorations all need to be crafted and promoted. And those who can never visit may now be enabled to experience, learn and enjoy.”

British Museum, 2015<sup>276</sup>

The international exhibition policy did not exist at the very beginning in the British Museum as it was built to restore huge donated collections from a donator. The British Museum was founded in 1753. When Sir Hans Sloane generously donated over 71,000 objects, which included his library and herbarium, to the nation, it was in response to the British Museum Act. The Act was enacted to ensure the preservation and maintenance of these valuable collections, not only for the enjoyment and education of scholars and enthusiasts but also for the overall benefit of the public.<sup>277</sup> The British Museum is also an executive Non-Departmental Public Body. It is funded through a combination of grant-in-aid from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and income generated from commercial, fundraising, sponsored, and charging activities. The Board of the British Museum consists of up to 25 members, following the British Museum Act 1963. All members are non-executive and do not receive payment for their services. The Prime Minister could appoint 15 members, the Sovereign would get one place to fill, and four members would be nominated from the Royal Academy, the British Academy, the Society of Antiquaries of London and the Royal Society by the Secretary of State respectively, and the Board of the British Museum would select another five members.<sup>278</sup>

However, the modern shareholder system involves multiple interest groups, which has helped the British Museum to notice a much wider overseas market gradually. The structure of the Trustees also ensures that the BM maintains its cosmopolitan perspective. Although the BM is getting its support from the government, it still uses the diverse Board team to make sure the BM

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<sup>276</sup> Fait, Monica, Paola Scorrano, Amedeo Maizza, and Alkis Thrassou. "A framework for analysing convergence between online brand identity and online brand image. The case of the British Museum." *Sinergie Italian Journal of Management* 35, no. Sep-Dec (2017). p. 185.

<sup>277</sup> The British Museum Report. p. 19. (2015-2016). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-museum-annual-report-and-accounts-2015-to-2016>. (consultation: 22 Feb 2022)

<sup>278</sup> Ibid, p4.

is not a propaganda machine for the country or the royal privilege for a small group of people.<sup>279</sup> As one of the venue of the Enlightenment, the BM welcomed a few thousand visitors in the 18th century, when visiting museum was once the preserve of the privilege people. In the middle of 1830, there were almost 300,000 visitors per year, then from 2017 to 2018, there were 5.8 million visitors went to the BM.<sup>280</sup> The BM is famous for its world collection, it has national lending collection system which allowed 9 million people in the other cities of the UK to have the chance to visit these exhibitions outside of London. Its online program have uploaded more than 4 million objects, millions of visitors could access to the pictures and information freely at any time.<sup>281</sup>

In addition, in order to attract more visitors and build connections with the young generation visitors, the British Museum joined twitter on January 2009 and the account owned 2 million followers globally until the May, 2022 after 13 years online operation.<sup>282</sup> From 2018, the British Museum also opened its Weibo account in Chinese online, which was as famous as Chinese twitter, with two concerns: at first, since the Chinese firewall had blocked the majority general internet platforms such Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Youtube, secondly, the language barrier of English-Dominated content environment had created difficulties for Chinese online users. This account was sharing the latest information about exhibitions and merchandises with the design of famous collections, links towards to the British Museum's online shop in Alibaba, which was the Chinese Amazon like platform. The international cooperation helped the British Museum to develop a relationship with the Chinese producer for cultural and creative items as well. In the last thirty years, museums in the UK have encountered various challenges, stemming from both internal and external factors. These challenges have led to an identity crisis for museums in the post-colonial and post-modern era. The new audiences and new intellectual regimes had been questioning these British museums' exhibitions through multidiscipline perspective.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> The British Museum Report. p. 32. (2015-2016). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-museum-annual-report-and-accounts-2015-to-2016>. (consultation: 22 Feb 2022)

<sup>282</sup> The British Museum official twitter account. (2022).

[https://twitter.com/britishmuseum?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor](https://twitter.com/britishmuseum?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor). (consultation: 20 April 2022).

<sup>283</sup> Harris, Clare, and Michael O'Hanlon. "The future of the ethnographic museum (Respond to this article at <http://www.therai.org.uk/at/debate>).\" *Anthropology Today* 29, no. 1 (2013): 8.

## 4.2.2 The international exhibitions in the British Museum

The global social media network has built connections among people and information worldwide in recent years. It is also much easier for the British Museum to reach its potential audiences and enrich the relationship with visitors, increasing the audiences' engagement with the help of the social network.<sup>284</sup> At the same time, the policy of international collaboration could be very different from the director's vision of the museum. For example, the project "A History of the World in 100 Objects" started in 2010 as a broadcast program between the BBC and the British Museum with the lead of ex-director Neil MacGregor. Gradually, this project has been transformed into a series of global touring exhibitions in more than ten museums since 2015. Working with other international museums and lending collections to multiple countries has created both a positive political reputation and financial benefits for the UK. As a result, a team started researching for the broadcast program "A History of the World in 100 Objects" turned into a professional sector in the British Museum with the growth of these international exhibitions.

As international exhibitions involve two or more museums simultaneously, this task is based on a formal agreement with details and regulations to produce an exhibition. Partnership has been built among influential groups, generally with the support of governments.<sup>285</sup> Most of the well-organised global touring exhibitions of the British Museum started in 2010. On the official website of the British Museum, there is a selection of the historic international exhibition:

- Name of exhibition: "A History of the World in 100 Objects"
  - Toured to UAE, Taiwan, Japan, Australia, China and Hong Kong
- Name of exhibition: "Body Beautiful: ancient Greeks"
  - Toured to Hong Kong, China, Spain, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Mexico, Japan, USA, Switzerland and Australia
- Name of exhibition: "Book of the Dead: Journey through the Afterlife"
  - Toured to Japan and Australia

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<sup>284</sup> Mahony, S., A. Spiliopoulou, Vassilis Routsis, and Christina Kamposiori. "Cultural institutions in the digital age: British Museum's use of Facebook Insights." *Participations: Journal of Audience & Reception Studies* 11, no. 1 (2017): 287.

<sup>285</sup> Amsellem, Rebecca. "International touring exhibitions: Toward a profitable business model for exhibitions?." *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 43, no. 1 (2013): 38.

- Name of exhibition: “Mummy: the inside story”
  - Toured to USA, Spain, Japan, India, Australia and Singapore
- Name of exhibition: “Treasures of the world's cultures”
  - Toured to Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Canada, Spain, Germany, UAE and Singapore
- Name of exhibition: “Wonders of Mesopotamia”
  - Toured to China, Spain, USA, UAE, Hong Kong, Australia and Canada<sup>286</sup>

After years of collecting and accepting donations from individuals and groups, there are 8 million collections in the British Museum now, at the same time, there are about a thousand employees working in there.<sup>287</sup> Consequently, in order to keep staff informed about key activities via updates from the director, a real-time news and information page has been created. Staff could visit the other departments from time to time, when there are key projects, workshops and focus groups are used to make sure the related staff could take part in the engagement. The BM has been followed by more than 3.8 million people from 89 countries on the social media in 2022, such as Twitter<sup>288</sup> and Facebook.<sup>289</sup> The online content has the support of curators who would respond the questions of followers in real time. Moreover, the BM had created a blog named “Curator’s Corner”, a monthly membership podcast where historians and conservators had been interviewed. To attract the growing Chinese audience, the BM had created new accounts on Chinese social media platforms from Weibo to WeChat. The voice guide program in Chinese language had been

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<sup>286</sup> The official website of the British Museum about touring exhibitions. (consultation: 22 Apr 2022) .

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/our-work/international/international-touring-exhibitions/past-international-touring-exhibitions>. (consultation: 22 Apr 2022) .

<sup>287</sup> Zan, Luca. "Management and the British museum." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 18, no. 3 (2000): 221.

<sup>288</sup> The British Museum Twitter official website. (consultation: 22 Apr 2022) .

[https://twitter.com/britishmuseum?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor](https://twitter.com/britishmuseum?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor). (consultation: 22 Feb 2022) .

<sup>289</sup> The British Museum Facebook official website. <https://www.facebook.com/britishmuseum/>. (consultation: 22 Feb 2022) .



uploaded on Apple Music from 2018.<sup>290</sup> The BM has multiple online programs cooperated with the partner like Google or Digital Humanities research,<sup>291</sup> such as:

- Knowledge Search ( <http://search.britishmuseum.org> )
- Google Cultural Institute <https://britishmuseum.withgoogle.com/>
- Ur Online <http://www.ur-online.org/> (Leon Levy Foundation)

Also, technology plays a vital role for the BM in attracting young visitors; with a series of programmes sponsored by Samsung—Samsung Digital Discovery Centre (SDDC)—the BM got the 2017 Leading Cultural Destinations Award for Best Digital Museum Experience. More than 115,000 teenagers have experienced the service there since 2009, when the centre opened to the public. Museum trips from school also have more interest in SDDC technology, with 14,000 visits booked from 2017 to 2018. Books published by the BM with the latest research reached the bestsellers chart. For example, almost 20,000 copies of the book *Hokusai: Beyond the Great Wave* had been sold in the UK alone; overseas markets also contributed to additional US, Italy and China sales. Also, the BM uses programs like Skills for the Future and Knowledge Share to improve museum professionals' digital data management skills from different backgrounds. Moreover, with the support from the Vivmar Foundation, the BM provided free talks and workshops at its annual conference for its national partners.<sup>292</sup>

At the same time, the debates about colonialism among heritage organisations are driving world-leading museums like the British Museum to find a balance between giving back these collections to the original countries and finding international solutions based on collective research. Although more and more public groups find the under-represent situation of minority nations and females in these narratives of global touring exhibitions, millions of visitors in different countries have been attracted by these valuable collections, with more critical thoughts and international conversations. It is not easy to see an exhibition with an universal perspective to show the connections among people and collections. After all, it was the first time the rich global

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<sup>290</sup> The British Museum Report. p. 9. (2015-2016). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-museum-annual-report-and-accounts-2015-to-2016>. (consultation: 22 Feb 2022)

<sup>291</sup> Daniel Pett, Wexler Jennifer. “A plan for taking Digital Humanities from start-up to Museum core activity.” [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327020108\\_A\\_plan\\_for\\_taking\\_Digital\\_Humanities\\_from\\_start-up\\_to\\_Museum\\_core\\_activity](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327020108_A_plan_for_taking_Digital_Humanities_from_start-up_to_Museum_core_activity). p. 7. (consultation: 22 Feb 2022)

<sup>292</sup> The British Museum Report. p. 10. (2015-2016). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-museum-annual-report-and-accounts-2015-to-2016>. (consultation: 22 Feb 2022)

collections with a time span of the past 2 million years had been put into one exhibition, from the 2,000 years old Egyptian mummies to the 1,000 years old Japanese bronze mirror.

On one hand, the British Museum has a colonial past, as these collections are historical items and also valuable souvenirs for the victors to show off its power and superior. After the Second World War, almost 100 former colonies and dependencies have gotten political independence from the principal colonial powers as Britain and France. The British Museum had settled and developed an organised structure of administering collections from all the colonies virtually.<sup>293</sup> These international exhibitions had been criticised as “the propaganda for empire” for a long time; when dealing with a time of economic depression, the British government wished to build new connections for investment and treated the exhibitions as a means to develop cooperation relationships for the future opportunities.<sup>294</sup> The British Museum used the concept of “world history” to convince the other peoples and cultures of nations that they were parts of a global community. The popular metaphors in these international exhibitions included “family”, “nature mother”, “community”, “humanity”, “world cultures”, and “the widest possible public”, and the familiar storyline emphasised the progress of more remarkable social, economic and cultural improvement, of course, with the effort the host museum, which was a spiritual symbol and created by the host country.

On the other hand, the long-term exhibition supporters of the British Museum also showed the importance of the UK’s economic concern. Such as the series of “Citi exhibitions” has been supported by a global bank “Citibank” since 2011. Moreover, the original Department of Coins and Medals in the British Museum had changed the sponsor and entered into a five-year contract with Citi Bank, with the name of the gallery displayed in gold lettering as “The Citi Money Gallery”, after the agreement with the HSBC Money Gallery.<sup>295</sup> A part of the international touring exhibition in the British Museum had been named “the Citi Exhibition” in 2011. For example, on the official website of the British Museum, a new global touring exhibition, “Feminine Power” started at the National Museum of Australia, Canberra, from the 8th of December, 2022 to the 27th August 2023, then would be displayed in Spain from the 5th October, 2023 to the 17th

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<sup>293</sup> Benedict, Burton. "International exhibitions and national identity." *Anthropology Today* 7, no. 3 (1991): 7.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid: 8.

<sup>295</sup> Savoy, Giancarlo, A. Venkatesh, L. Walker, and E. Wolfgang. "Exploring new methods in understanding visitor experience: Evaluations of the Citi Money Gallery at the British Museum." Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 2014: 15.

August, 2025 separately in La Caixa Forum Barcelona, Madrid, Sevilla, Zaragoza and Palma.<sup>296</sup> There is an introduction for the exhibition supporter to identify the joint mission of the museum and the global bank Citi: “to foster a culture of equality and inclusion that enables and encourages diversity of thinking”<sup>297</sup> through collections of the past and impact the future decisions of these exhibitions visitors or put it in a more obvious way: prospective customers.

Since the UK has a population of around 68 million in 2022, which only counts 0.87% of the people on Earth<sup>298</sup>, it is difficult to resist the desire to display its rich and diverse 8 million collections in the British Museum internationally. Since there is another 99% potential visitor market in the rest of the world, more than 1,700 objects from the British Museum had been borrowed by the other museums beyond its border in 2016.<sup>299</sup> The exhibitions curated by the British Museum reached Saudi Arabia, Spain, France, Netherlands, Austria, Korea and Japan in 2011.<sup>300</sup> These international cooperations started with world-class curators, conservation experts, scientists, project managers and other museum professionals at different stages of development. The team international exhibition was created with the development of technology and the public’s increasing need for cultural products. For example, from July 2008 to September 2010, Rosalind Winton worked at the British Museum as a researcher for the BBC broadcast program: “A History of the World in 100 objects”. In 2012, she was promoted at the British Museum as a project manager for International Engagement, and she worked as a part of the project team comprised of British Museum Director Neil MacGregor, British Museum project curators and the R4 production team. The British Museum has a new goal, and its international exhibition team has launched a "Touring Exhibition" webpage to establish official cooperative relationships with museums worldwide.

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<sup>296</sup> “Feminine power: the divine to the demonic”-The British Museum official website. (consultation: 17 March 2022).

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/feminine-power>. (consultation: 17 March 2022).

<sup>297</sup> The Citi exhibition Feminine power. The British Museum official website.

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/feminine-power-divine-demonic>. (consultation: 17 March 2022).

<sup>298</sup> The UK population and the World population in 2022. [https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/uk-population/#:~:text=the%20United%20Kingdom%202020%20population,\(and%20dependencies\)%20by%20population](https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/uk-population/#:~:text=the%20United%20Kingdom%202020%20population,(and%20dependencies)%20by%20population). (consultation: 17 March 2022).

<sup>299</sup> The British Museum Report. p. 10. (2015-2016). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-museum-annual-report-and-accounts-2015-to-2016>. (consultation: 22 Feb 2022)

<sup>300</sup> CORBOS, Razvan-Andrei, and Ruxandra Irina POPESCU. "Museums, Marketing, Tourism And Urban Development. The British Museum—A Successful Model For Romanian Museums." *Management and Marketing Journal* 9, no. 2 (2011): 306.

## 4.3 The National Museum of China

### 4.3.1 Chinese Museum Policy

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) plays a crucial role in implementing China's cultural policies; the MCT's plans provide essential guidance for developing museums, which are critical to the country's cultural landscape. This guidance includes specific goals related to museum growth, exhibit development, and visitor numbers, all of which are essential to the success of China's cultural sector.<sup>301</sup> However, the implementation of cultural actions by museums is not solely the responsibility of the MCT. Instead, these actions are carried out by four administrative levels of government - national, provincial, municipal, and county - all of which have overlapping development plans.<sup>302</sup> This complex web of programs generates diverse responses to the central government's policy guidelines, which can lead to challenges and opportunities for the country's cultural sector. Despite this complexity, the MCT continues to work tirelessly to ensure that China's museums remain a vital part of the country's cultural heritage.

One of the most significant results of China's museum policy has been the rapid increase in museums throughout the country. This policy reflects the Chinese government's commitment to meeting the international average level within the cultural sector while preserving and showcasing the country's rich cultural heritage to a broader audience. Although sceptics have criticised the process as an aggressive museum supply policy, it is undeniable that China's museums have undergone significant changes in recent years.<sup>303</sup> Not only have they expanded their collections, but they have also become more accessible to the general public. This, in turn, has contributed to a growing interest in cultural products and services, which the growth of Chinese cities has further fueled, the steady increase in income and improved education.<sup>304</sup> Moreover, the expansion of museums in China has played a role in promoting cultural tourism, which has become an essential factor in the country's economy. The establishment of museums has also provided a platform for

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<sup>301</sup> Zhang, Fenghua, and Pascal Courty. "The China Museum Boom: soft power and cultural nationalism." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 27, no. 1 (2021): 30-49.

<sup>302</sup> Varutti, Marzia. *Museums in China: The politics of representation after Mao*. Vol. 13. Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2014: 22.

<sup>303</sup> "Mad about museums" *The Economist*. (2018). <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2018/08/14/mad-about-museums> (consultation: 2 June 2023).

<sup>304</sup> Zhang, Fenghua, and Pascal Courty. "The China museum visit boom: Government or demand driven?." *Journal of Cultural Economics* (2021): 1-29.

the public to learn about and engage with different aspects of Chinese history and culture, further enhancing the country's soft power.

For example, when China published the *Mid to Long-Term Museum Development Plan* (2011-2020), there was a goal to achieve one museum for 250,000 residents to meet the cultural demand of the population, at the same time, 30,000 temporary exhibitions and one billion visitors annually was planned to be reached until 2020.<sup>305</sup> Unlike the museum policy in the UK, which prioritises economic sustainability, Chinese museums have various missions, including establishing Chinese cultural diplomacy, which involves using historical items to address sensitive topics.<sup>306</sup> There are two primary political directives in Chinese museums: *The Internet + Chinese Civilisation* and *Let Cultural relics tell their stories*, with a worldwide trend among museums to digitise and archive heritage in electronic databases.<sup>307</sup>

Chinese museums are pivotal elements in its national strategy to preserve and build modern self-consciousness; with the massive amount of historical relics made through multiple dynasties in China, many centuries of history, let alone its large population, not only produce and consume hugely the history but also generate cultural items for the world market for a long time.<sup>308</sup> Some international exhibitions from the UK and the USA included items made in China older than 1,000, allowing Chinese audiences to review their history with a Western perspective. The international collaborations which had travelled to China are not only a way to show Western cultural and art but also a chance for Chinese visitors to encounter a new narrative about the global heritage arrangement beyond the limit of the national and patriotic horizon, with the help of certain long-travelled historical made-in-China items.

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<sup>305</sup> Bollo, Sofia, and Yu Zhang. "Policy and impact of public museums in China: exploring new trends and challenges." *Museum International* 69, no. 3-4 (2017): 29.

<sup>306</sup> "Let the Cultural Relics Talk. Zhongguowang Guoqing." Available at: [http://guoqing.china.com.cn/2017-02/09/content\\_40253388.htm](http://guoqing.china.com.cn/2017-02/09/content_40253388.htm) (consultation: 28 Feb 2022).

<sup>307</sup> Lien, Yao-Nan, Hung-Chin Jang, Tzu-Chieh Tsai, Pei-Jeng Kuo, and Chih-Lin Hu. "Mobilizing digital museum with Chinese digital archive." In *2015 8th International Conference on Ubi-Media Computing (UMEDIA)*. IEEE, 2015: 134.

<sup>308</sup> Yu, Peter K. "Cultural relics, intellectual property, and intangible heritage." *Temp. L. Rev.* 81 (2008): 500.

### 4.3.2 Introduction of the National Museum of China



Figure 4-2: The entrance of the National Museum of China. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>309</sup>

The National Museum of China is situated on the Eastern side of Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China (Figure 4-2).<sup>310</sup> As evident from its name, the National Museum of China is closely associated with the founding of the Republic of China. In 1912, influenced by Western ideas of modern museums and nation-states, Cai Yuanpei, a prominent figure in the 20th century, served as the first Minister of Education of the Republic of China<sup>311</sup>, proposed to build a National History Museum to spread the new ideas of nation-state to gain further political recognition and force.<sup>312</sup> Nowadays, the National Museum of China is considered one of the most significant museums in the People's Republic of China. It serves as a space for preserving memory, history, and identity, while providing a cultural platform for developing new narratives. With its extensive collections, the museum welcomes visitors from both within the country and abroad.<sup>313</sup> Since 1949, the National Museum of China has been the official and authoritative institution for Chinese history.

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<sup>309</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the National Museum of China fieldwork. (Photo date: 07 February 2023).

<sup>310</sup> Shouyi, Li. "A Brief History of the Locations of National Museum of China." *Journal of National Museum of China* (2012).

<sup>311</sup> Ning, L. U. O. "Cai Yuanpei's Vision of Aesthetic Education and His Legacy in Modern China." *Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education (NJCIE)* 5, no. 2 (2021): 51.

<sup>312</sup> Liu, Xiaoyuan. *Reins of liberation: an entangled history of Mongolian independence, Chinese territoriality, and great power hegemony, 1911-1950*. Stanford University Press, 2006, p. 121.

<sup>313</sup> Morishita, Masaaki. "New Museum Practice in Asia." *Museum worlds* 6, no. 1 (2018): 175.



In 2011, it merged with the Museum of Chinese History and the Museum of Chinese Revolution, intending to become the world's largest museum of art and history.<sup>314</sup>

In 2011, after three and a half years of refurbishment, the new National Museum of China reopened on the first day of April and almost tripled its size from 65,000 square meters to almost 200,000 square meters. The number of exhibition rooms increased to 49, including an Asia room, an Africa room, a Europe room and American rooms for international exhibitions. The renovation to the museum cost RMB 2.5 billion (US\$379 million), with two permanent exhibitions - Ancient China and The Road to Rejuvenation, which exhibitions present China's ancient, pre-modern and contemporary history.<sup>315</sup> Lv Zhang, the director of the National Museum at that time, said the new National Museum could welcome 8 million to 10 million visitors every year, about three times the amount it could allow in the past. The collections at the National Museum of China encompass a wide range of items, including ancient and modern artefacts, rare and antiquarian books, works of art, Chinese antique bronze ware, Buddhist statues, jade ware, porcelain, national gifts, modern classical works of fine arts, African wood carving, and more. Over 1.4 million objects span modern fine arts masterpieces to cultural artefacts representing specific regions and international communication. According to the official website of the National Museum of China, the collection includes 815,000 pieces/sets of ancient cultural heritage, 340,000 pieces/sets of modern cultural heritage, and over 240,000 rare and antiquarian books.<sup>316</sup> In 2018, the NMC had been visited by more than 8.61 million people, which made it rank among the most famous museums in the world, with a daily average of 30,860 visitors; the total number of visitors in 2018 increased by 6.8 per cent compared with the previous year.<sup>317</sup> Since 2015, the annual total of visitors rose steadily, from 7.29 million in 2015 to 8.61 million in 2018. Complimentary primary exhibitions are available to the public at the museum, while specific special exhibitions may require a nominal fee for admission to cover preparation costs.

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<sup>314</sup> Yin, Tongyun. "From context to subject: The poetics and politics of creating and exhibiting artworks in the National Museum of China." *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art* 4, no. 1 (2017): 101.

<sup>315</sup> National Museum gets major makeover | CER  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20170816191351/http://www.chinaeconomicreview.com/node/51309>. (consultation: 2 May 2022).

<sup>316</sup> The official website of the National Museum of China.  
[http://en.chnmuseum.cn/about\\_the\\_nmc\\_593/about\\_the\\_nmc\\_594/201911/t20191122\\_173221.html](http://en.chnmuseum.cn/about_the_nmc_593/about_the_nmc_594/201911/t20191122_173221.html). (consultation: 22 Apr 2022).

<sup>317</sup> China's National Museum receives more than 8M visitors in 2018 | english.scio.gov.cn  
[http://english.scio.gov.cn/chinavoices/2019-03/06/content\\_74537473.htm](http://english.scio.gov.cn/chinavoices/2019-03/06/content_74537473.htm). (consultation: 2 May 2022).



### 4.3.3 Exhibitions and Galleries at the National Museum of China

As the number of Chinese museums grows, the implications for the country's cultural and economic landscapes are significant. With more museums comes increased access to Chinese cultural heritage, which can enrich the understanding of both locals and tourists alike. Additionally, expanding museums provides opportunities for economic growth through cultural tourism, which can generate revenue and create new jobs. Overall, expanding Chinese museums represents a positive development for the country's cultural and economic spheres. There are permanent exhibitions and special exhibitions at the National Museum of China nowadays. However, the political promotion purpose heavily influences the structure of exhibitions. The diversity of content is increasing from the classical art exhibitions, regional culture exhibitions, historical exhibitions, major thematic exhibitions and archaeological discovery exhibitions, etc.<sup>318</sup> Using historical items to build the national proud and boost its own citizens' confidence is still one of the missions of this leading national museum in the world. For example, two permanent exhibitions about the theme of "The Road of Rejuvenation" display objects related to the central committee of the communist party with the newly coined word "Chinese Dream" based on the national narrative.<sup>319</sup>

Further, with the expectation of creating a space for historical and cultural collections from all over the country and generating a new solid identity to connect history well, the National Museum of China had paid attention to telling its 5,000 years of history through objects.<sup>320</sup> Moreover, the objective of the National Museum of China was stated in the newspaper Education Weekly: "The historical artefacts will enlighten the dull, and calm the agitated; it will serve to impress the civilised countries in the world, as well as support the public education inside China."<sup>321</sup> For example, the Buddhist culture deeply influenced the Chinese culture as the Buddhist creations had become an important part of the fine art of Chinese tradition. An exhibition called

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<sup>318</sup> Current Exhibitions of the NMC. <http://en.chnmuseum.cn/exhibition/>. (consultation: 6 May 2022).

<sup>319</sup> The Road of Rejuvenation: New Era | National Museum of China [http://en.chnmuseum.cn/exhibition/current\\_exhibitions\\_648/201911/t20191128\\_175384.html](http://en.chnmuseum.cn/exhibition/current_exhibitions_648/201911/t20191128_175384.html) (consultation: 6 May 2022).

<sup>320</sup> Varutti, Marzia. "The Aesthetics and Narratives of National Museums in China." In *National Museums*, Routledge, 2014: pp. 302-312.

<sup>321</sup> Zhao, Fengting. "Rethinking the Early Modern Museum in China in the Context of the Contemporary Chinese Museum Boom." (2016).

“Ancient Chinese Buddhist Sculpture” is on regular display at Gallery N19, with 265 exquisite Buddhist statues from its collection, displaying the historical spread path through Buddhist sculptures to show its impact on ancient Chinese society, including figures with Buddhist features from various regions of China.<sup>322</sup> On one hand, the National Museum of China has these collections from various areas of China, on the other hand, it provides travelling exhibitions to such as Hunan Museum, Nanshan Museum and Guangdong Museum based on its academic and archaeology results with topics from the Chinese Ancient Bronze ware, analyse of the famous literature “The Story of the Stone” and “Ideals, Life and Aesthetics of Ancient Chinese Scholar-Officials”(Figure 4-3).<sup>323</sup>



Figure 4-3: Screenshot of the travelling Exhibition from the National Museum of China. | Source: Screenshot of the National Museum of China.<sup>324</sup>

<sup>322</sup> Ancient Chinese Buddhist Sculpture | National Museum of China  
[http://en.chnmuseum.cn/exhibition/exhibition\\_series/special\\_exhibitions/201911/t20191120\\_171609.html](http://en.chnmuseum.cn/exhibition/exhibition_series/special_exhibitions/201911/t20191120_171609.html)  
 (consultation: 10 May 2022).

<sup>323</sup> Set Your Heart on Truth and Seek Enjoyment in Arts: Ideals, Life and Aesthetics of Ancient Chinese Scholar-Officials | National Museum of China  
[http://en.chnmuseum.cn/exhibition/travelling\\_exhibitions/202112/t20211207\\_252732.html](http://en.chnmuseum.cn/exhibition/travelling_exhibitions/202112/t20211207_252732.html) (consultation: 26 Mar 2022).

<sup>324</sup> Travelling Exhibitions from the National Museum of China.  
[http://en.chnmuseum.cn/exhibition/?#exhibition\\_series](http://en.chnmuseum.cn/exhibition/?#exhibition_series) (consultation: 22 Mar 2022).

#### 4.3.4 National Museum of China’s administration system for international cooperation

The administration system at the National Museum of China used to focus on its national audiences, collections were separated into Ancient China and Modern China. However, with the development of globalisation, international exhibitions are getting more attention from the National Museum of China. To deal with the increasing cooperation projects, the international sector at the National Museum of China has been established in the past decade. In August 2019, Nan Li became the manager for International Affairs at the National Museum of China, who was responsible for developing new partnerships and planning the strategic and execution aspects of international exhibitions.<sup>325</sup> During the international exhibition period in 2017 of “A History of the World in 100 Objects”, Chen Chengjun, deputy director of the National Museum of China, shared there was a catalog of Chinese artefacts in the British Museum was being compiled, both of Chinese and British experts had the chance to co-work together and arrange the images and explanation of collections (Figure 4-4).<sup>326</sup> Without the support of Chinese experts, some of the confusing Chinese religious collections had been put upside down, and the introduction were not quite accurate as well.<sup>327</sup> The exhibition about scholar-officials, who were unique group of intellectual individuals in ancient China, was co-host by the National Museum of China and the Culture, Radio, TV, Tourism and Sports Bureau of Nanshan District in Shenzhen, in order to spread traditional culture of these outstanding figures.<sup>328</sup>

International publishing projects were examples that the National Museum of China reached out to leading museums worldwide proactively, not only to borrow famous collections from overseas museums to exhibitions in China, but also to promote Chinese culture through foreign publishers. Such as, the National Museum of China launched the first book on cultural relics in London's Victoria and Albert Museum in 2014, and a second one about the Chinese collection at Japan's Sen-oku Hakuko Kan Museum in 2016.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Nan Li Manager for International Affairs at National Museum of China | LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nan-li-aa167691/> (consultation: 12 May 2022)

<sup>326</sup> Historic visit for museum <https://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/article/47ONljA6lGA>, (consultation: 17 Feb 2022).

<sup>327</sup> Hobson 1934 / A Catalogue of Chinese Pottery and Porcelain in the Collection of Sir Percival David Bt., F.S.A. | British Museum <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIB8383>, (consultation: 17 Feb 2022).

<sup>328</sup> Exhibition on Ancient Chinese Scholar-Officials Opens in Nanshan Museum <http://www.musesilkroad.com/en/?c=news&a=view&id=319> (consultation: 9 May 2022).

<sup>329</sup> Historic visit for museum <https://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/article/47ONljA6lGA>, (consultation: 19 Apr 2022).

Also, the National Museum of China was inspired by witnessing the massive success of other international exhibitions. Dr Yan Zhi, the exhibition's co-curator from the National Museum of China, said Chinese museum curators started to think about how to make the most use of their collections like the British Museum, cooperating with the radio firstly and creating 100 episodes about 100 collections. Translating this program into different languages could also be very attractive for the National Museum of China.<sup>330</sup> Digital technology could achieve more audiences through these online exhibitions or articles through social media. On the other hand, most visitors to the National Museum of China are still Chinese. Before the pandemic, foreigners had to bring a passport to claim their tickets in 2022 due to an oversight with the reservation systems that only allowed Chinese nationals to make reservations.<sup>331</sup>



Figure 4-4: The Ancient China Gallery of the National Museum of China. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>332</sup>

<sup>330</sup> Appendix 1, Dr Yan Zhi 闫志, interview with the author, Beijing, 04 April 2023.

<sup>331</sup> National Art Museum of China Reopens Today, Allows Foreigners <https://www.thebeijinger.com/blog/2020/05/13/national-art-museum-china-reopens-today-allows-foreigners>, (consultation: 19 Apr 2022).

<sup>332</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the National Museum of China. (Photo date: 07 February 2023).

## 4.4 The exhibition in the National Museum of China

### 4.4.1 The idea of the exhibition

The British Museum’s global touring exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects”, began as a radio series on 18 January 2010 and was broadcast over 20 weeks.<sup>333</sup> It was a joint project with BBC Radio 4, comprising 100 short presentations of objects from the British Museum’s collection. British Museum director Neil MacGregor and his colleagues wrote and delivered all presentations.<sup>334</sup> A book was published in 2010 to go along with the radio series *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, written by Neil MacGregor, the director of the British Museum from 2002 to 2015. In this book, the author presents a captivating narrative that showcases the history of humanity from ancient times, around 2 million years ago, to 2010. The author carefully selected 100 items from the vast collection of 8 million objects in the British Museum to tell this world-class story.<sup>335</sup> In discussing the volume, the previous director of the British Museum noted, “It is not a chronicle of a specific group or country, but rather a narrative of countless interconnections”.

Starting in 2014, the exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects” has started its global touring journey through Japan, Australia, the United Arab Emirates and two museums in China. One was the National Museum of China from the 2nd, March to the 31st, May 2017, another one was the Shanghai Museum. Highlights of this exhibition included the Flood Tablet from the ancient Middle East from 1500-700BC that displayed a story similar to the biblical flood story; the inner coffin of Egyptian priest Hornedjitef from 240BC, which had been kept in the British Museum from 1835, while the latest technology, in the last 20 years, there had been huge steps forward in ways of gathering information with new technology, such as, the chemical make-ups with substances found in different parts of the Mediterranean, the black tarry substance came from the Dead Sea: the objects are releasing new information as scholars find new ways of examining them. The other famous collection was the Hoxne Pepper Pot, a pepper pot in the shape of a noble

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<sup>333</sup> The British Museum Website: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/our-work/international/touring-exhibitions/past-international-touring-exhibitions>, (consultation: 22 June 2021).

<sup>334</sup> MacGregor, N. (2011). *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. Penguin UK: 12.

<sup>335</sup> Lambourn, Elizabeth. “A history of the world in 100 objects.” *Journal of Global History* 6, no. 3 (2011): 529-533.



Roman woman from Ancient Rome when only very wealthy families could have owned such treasures. Based on an online interview video published on the official website of the National Museum of China featuring Belinda Crerar, the exhibition curator from the British Museum, the curatorial perspective of this exhibition can be summarised as follows:

"The exhibition is centred on 100 objects to suggest pieces from their collections and specialist areas that would work within the exhibition context. First, we are looking for objects that would represent a very long history going back right to the very earliest tools made by humans up to the modern day, as well as providing a really broad geographic scope of objects from all over the world. But on top of that, we were also looking for objects that told us something specific about history through their manufacture or use. So what each of these 100 objects represents is a snapshot of the history when it was made or possibly when later cultures reused it. The exhibition is structured chronologically. The first section covers an extremely long period of history over a million years, while the final section covers about 200 years. Geographically, there are a lot of Chinese objects in the exhibition, possibly more than anywhere else in the world. It not only reflects the very long and complex history of China itself, but also China's importance on the world stage."<sup>336</sup>

The touring exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" included several items featured on the radio program of the same name. It traveled to various museums worldwide, including Manarat Al Saadiyat art and culture centre in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; National Palace Museum in Taipei, Taiwan; Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and Kyushu National Museum in Japan; Kobe City Museum in Kobe, Japan; Western Australian Museum in Perth and National Museum of Australia in Canberra, Australia; and National Museum of China in Beijing and Shanghai Museum in Shanghai, China.<sup>337</sup> Each of these countries could add one item as "the 101st object" to show its local history, which allowed the British Museum to create an even stronger narrative in collaboration with the host country.<sup>338</sup>

An universal narrative, such as the international exhibition discussed in this chapter, can reach much more audiences through multiple-national cooperation. The collections at home had helped the British Museum to enjoy not only 6.4 million visitors at home in 2016, but also another

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<sup>336</sup> The British Museum's 'A History of the World in 100 Objects' at National Museum Until May 31 | the Beijinger <https://www.thebeijinger.com/blog/2017/02/27/british-museum-brings-history-world-100-objects-national-museum-until-may-31>. (consultation: 22 Sep 2021).

<sup>337</sup> The British Museum Report. (2017). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-museum-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>. (consultation: 22 June 2021).

<sup>338</sup> Casey, Angela. "A history of the world in 100 objects from the British Museum." *Teaching History* 50, no. 3 (2016): 34-35.

one million visitors worldwide through the diverse touring exhibitions.<sup>339</sup> This number also saw a significant increase. For instance, between 2018 and 2019, over 10.5 million people had the opportunity to view objects from the collection outside of London. This impressive figure was divided among 2,800 objects that were loaned to 147 different venues.<sup>340</sup> International exhibition from the British Museum to China and Japan has easily attracted millions of people’s attention nowadays since the international trip is still too expensive for the majority of people, so comparing flying more than ten hours from China and Japan to London, visitors were waiting in the queue for one and two hours typically.

The British Museum has a very influential international reputation and world-class museum status as one of the most famous tourist attractions. Around 7 million visitors to the British Museum in 2016, and about 5 per cent were Chinese. Belinda Crerar, the British Museum's exhibition curator, called it “a significant proportion”.<sup>341</sup> The researcher visited this international exhibition twice in Beijing in 2017, and there were always full of visitors. These 100 objects were very well-organised, and while even one item only took one or two minutes for the visitor to look at, it still meant that within two and three hours, nobody could drink, eat or even rest since there was no rest area. Unlike the Shanghai Museum’s free entrance policy, the National Museum of China charged 50 yuan (7 euros) for one ticket for this exhibition gallery. If visitors wanted to rest outside the gallery, they could not re-enter without paying again. However, it was still very popular in Beijing, with the support from the government, which had created numerous conveniences for museums’ curators to cooperate with foreign museums. More than 340,000 visitors went to the exhibition of “A History of the World in 100 Objects” from the British Museum (London) to the National Museum of China in 2017.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> The British Museum Report. (2017). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-museum-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018> (consultation: 22 June 2021).

<sup>340</sup> UK touring exhibitions and loans <https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions-and-loans#:~:text=Between%202018%20and%202019%2C%20more,objects%20loaned%20to%20147%20venues> (consultation: 22 Feb 2022).

<sup>341</sup> Historic visit for museum <https://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/article/47ONljA6lGA> (consultation: 22 Feb 2022).

<sup>342</sup> The British Museum’s official Facebook website. <https://www.facebook.com/britishmuseum/photos/a.418481824722/10155481166554723/?type=3> (consultation: 22 June 2021).



#### 4.4.2 The description of the exhibition



Figure 4-5: Poster of “A History of the World in 100 Objects”. | Source: Screenshot of Beijing Tourism Website<sup>343</sup>.

There were two keywords of the exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects”: connection and globalisation, which included connections from the perspective of time, trade, goods, game, sculpture, ceramic, religion, empire, coins and so on (Figure 4-5). In total, the exhibition had been separated into eight units as: Unit 1: making us human to after the Ice Age (2,000,000-2,500BC); Unit 2: the first cities and states (3,000-700BC); Unit 3: powers and philosophy (700BC-100AD); Unit 4: world faith and ritual (1-800AD); Unit 5: traders and raiders (300-1,100AD); Unit 6: changes (900-1,550AD); Unit 7: exploration and exploitation (1,500-1,800AD); Unit 8: the world of our making (1800AD-present). It was a challenge to introduce world history through 100 objects, this exhibition chose Mummy of Hornedjitef to show that without the material made in the Mediterranean area, the Egyptian priest believed he was going to start a new journey after his death. The coffin was decorated with the same images of various gods and information extracted from the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Such as, the sky goddess Nut had been painted on the inside part of the coffin, with a metaphor that the owner of this coffin was in

<sup>343</sup> “History of the world in 100 objects’ opens in Beijing” <https://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/article/47ONIQFEEvX> (consultation: 11 May 2022).

the womb of the goddess and ready to welcome his rebirth.<sup>344</sup> With the technology nowadays, his body could be examined by CAT scans and X-rays. Scientists recently revealed that he suffered from arthritis and osteoporosis suggesting he was a mature man when he died. However, the medical doctors in medieval Europe did not know that valuable Egyptian mummies had been ground into powder for desperate patients who wanted to try any possible method. The same thing happened in China as the rural area; medicine was so challenging to get, the superstition that dinosaurs' bones could cure the body's pain used to be very famous, and tons of valuable fossils had encountered the same fate as these mummies. The pursuit of health and life was one of the universal wish in the world history.



Figure 4-6: left -missing objects in the exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects” in China: No.90 Jade Bi; right - No.7 “Ain Sakhri Lovers Figurine”. | Source: © The Trustees of the British Museum.<sup>345</sup>

“A History of the World in 100 Objects” started its three months display in Beijing March in 2017, co-hosted by the National Museum of China and the British Museum. As figure 7 illustrates, among the 100 worldwide exhibits provided by the British Museum, nine pieces were relate to China, but only eight of them could be displayed in China, since the No.90 collection “Jade Bi” was related with the Qianlong emperor (Figure 4-6: left), who carved his poem on the Jade Bi to show his thoughts about Chinese history, as “a deft act of political integration”.<sup>346</sup> The Qing dynasty emperors did not have good reputation in the modern Chinese society, cause they

<sup>344</sup> BBC - A History of the World - Object : Mummy of Hornedjitef

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/sogITE3FSKStlk12qd2W3w>, (consultation: 13 May 2022).

<sup>345</sup> Collections List <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00nrtd2/episodes/player> , (consultation: 15 May 2022).

<sup>346</sup> Ibid: 958.

were not native Han Chinese but were Manchus from beyond the northern Chinese border, as the ruler of a vast empire at that time, Qianlong Emperor knew how to use traditional collections to show his dominance skilfully. Since the population in China in the 1700s almost doubled and the economy also increased, Qing China had a much better reputation by the intellectuals of the European Enlightenment, who had the idea that the “Qianlong Emperor was the greatest empire the world had ever seen”, so the introduction of the Jade Bi was too sensitive for the curators in China now. The censorship in Chinese museums was sensitive to politics and sex. For example, No.7 collection “Ain Sakhri Lovers Figurine” (Figure 4-6: right) has been replaced with other collection and the sex-related chapter 2 of this exhibition “After the Ice Age: Food and Sex” has been changed into “The First Cities and States.”<sup>347</sup>

The other eight items were as follows: 1) the jade of the Liangzhu Culture; 2) the Kanghou Gui of the early Western Zhou Dynasty; 3) the pewter of the Shang and Zhou dynasties; 4) the six glazed pottery figurines of the Eastern Han Dynasty; 5) the three-colour civil servant figurines from the tomb of Liu Tingxun of the Tang Dynasty; 6) the double ear vase of the dragon head of the Tang Dynasty; 7) the blue and white porcelain plate of the Yuan Dynasty; and 8) the solar lamps and chargers made by China and sold in Africa in the twenty-first century.<sup>348</sup> Including Chinese objects in the exhibition demonstrates a change in the British Museum's attitude and an updated strategy for promoting its collections, aims to build cooperative relationships with other countries.

An universal exhibition like “A History of the World in 100 Objects” could avoid interpreting the cultural history from a stereotypical narrative: your history and my history. It's difficult to display one nations' culture history objectively, let alone the whole world history. The majority of history has been narrated with the perspective of political intention with the authors' interpretation. Even nowadays, the majority national supported education is still focusing on their own history, which creates a bias that these differences among cultures are more than the similarities. The unfamiliar creates misunderstandings and becomes a lack of interest to the other culture. In this context, the exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects” is a significant achievement. At first, it creates a narrative that not only who have made these items, but also how do these material connect each other through culture, entertainment, trade, fashion, technology and

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<sup>347</sup> Varutti, Marzia. *Museums in China: The politics of representation after Mao*. Vol. 13. Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2014: 22.

<sup>348</sup> MacGregor, Neil. *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. Penguin UK, 2011: 1053.

politics. It’s a history of all human beings through all over the world. By compiling manmade objects spanning most of the continents and a period from 2 million years ago to the present day, the exhibition also breaks through the conventional barrier between subjects of archaeology, history, and art history.

Most importantly, it shows how different cultures share similar processes of development in early human history, and how they react to each other after making contact, which challenges the view of “globalisation”. For example, the 8th collection from China in the exhibition was the solar lamps and chargers (Figure 4-7: left) made by China and sold in Africa in the twenty-first century, which were donated by MacGregor, the former director of the British Museum<sup>349</sup>. This object was a reflection the ingenuity of manufacture industry and the challenges that the twenty-first century are facing. These lamps were mainly exported to poverty-stricken areas in Africa, powered by the small solar panel connected to it. Although it was not a work of art, it owned a special place in the exhibition as the last collection out of the 100 objects, it showed that new materials and technologies could mix together and provide power to millions of the mobile users, including silicon-chip technology, which can also be found in computers and mobile phones. Based on the introduction website of the British Museum, the lamp could transfer sunlight into electricity, by putting the cell under the sunshine for eight hours, it could light up to 100 hours.



Figure 4-7: left – Collection No.100 “Solar-powered Lamp and Charger”; right - No.61 “The Lewis Chessmen” |

Source: Source: © The Trustees of the British Museum.<sup>350</sup>

<sup>349</sup> “Unveiled | Can the 8 Chinese cultural relics “go home” at the Great Britain Exhibition? Hear what the experts say”-Jie mi, da ying bai wu zhan 8 jian zhong guo wen wu shi fou neng hui jia <https://www.shobserver.com/ydzh/html/57324.html> (consultation: 11 May 2022).

<sup>350</sup> Collections List <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00nrt2/episodes/player> , (consultation: 15 May 2022).

In modern society, electricity is taken for granted, while over 1.6 billion people still live without a stable electrical supply. In these places of Africa, objects like this lamp could provide a cheap, practical and sustainable solution for people to continue their studies, work inside the house and socialise after sunset, increasing their possibilities and life quality hugely. Moreover, the traditional light provided by fire or candles could cause accidents or health problems in a long-term household process. Technology allows people to create more products, but energy-saving items like these lamps made in China only cost a little to run. With the solar resources in Africa, the efficient and cheap solution has been adapted to change lives quickly in the world’s poorest countries.<sup>351</sup>

The Lewis chessmen (Figure 4-7: right) were another fantastic example to show the connection of the global world, which was named after the location of a beach on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland in 1831. The chess game reflected the global exchange of culture since chess was created in India after 500 BC and had been introduced to Christian Europe through the Islamic world by at least the AD 990s. In the original Indian and Islamic games, a mighty “war elephant” had been changed into the figure of the bishop cause at that time. However, elephants were still not common in medieval European society. The chessboard also changed a lot with the influence of Viking berserkers of Norse myth, which provided the Queen power to move in any direction since in Viking society, queens were consultants for the king, and they could lead military power as well. However, when curators and scholars saw queens who rested their chins in their hands, some of them introduced as the queen was holding huge power in the Viking society, which they need to think carefully and use their power wisely.<sup>352</sup> For instance, in the well-known movie adaptation of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, titled 2001 film, it depicted the queen's immense strength as she effortlessly crushed a knight with her throne.<sup>353</sup>

However, Chinese curators interpreted the queen’s figure as a “sadness”, since in Chinese history, women could not participant in politics and had no power for joining into the chess game, in one of the media reports of this exhibition, the queen’s figure had been made fun as a women

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<sup>351</sup> BBC - A History of the World - Object : Solar-powered lamp and charger <https://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/lvsof-uPTpeh-VRmmywHIw> (consultation: 10 May 2022).

<sup>352</sup> Brown, Nancy Marie. *Ivory Vikings: The mystery of the most famous chessmen in the world and the woman who made them*. St. Martin's Press, 2015: 26.

<sup>353</sup> Lewis chess pieces <https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/stories/scottish-history-and-archaeology/lewis-chess-pieces/#:~:text=Lewis%20in%20the%2012th%20and,mix%20of%20Gaelic%20and%20Scandinavian> (consultation: 12 May 2022).

who encountered domestic violence from her husband.<sup>354</sup> On the other side, the British curator James Robinson introduced the figure of queen was derived from contemporary depictions of the Virgin Mary in contemplation of the crucified Christ, so her hand holding her face showed the solace she could provide.<sup>355</sup> Although the illustrations of the queens were so different from different museums, these pawns had not been decorated with any human features. It existed as a pure power to sacrifice in all the games, showing the similar vision of multiple societies in the past.

This exhibition showcased items from various worlds, highlighting how the characteristics of these objects had evolved from their original purposes. Surprisingly, the tradition of people throwing objects into bodies of water has persisted from Rome to Kyoto. It is remarkable to think that people believe their wishes will be granted by pleasing the gods through these offerings. For instance, a donated mirror discovered in a Japanese temple pool and later became part of the British Museum's historical collection took on a new significance when it travelled to China in 2017. This journey exemplifies these objects' rich history and interconnectedness, far beyond what their owners could have ever imagined. Many type of items in Japanese culture came from China, such as this bronze mirror (Figure 4-8-left), which was a part of the trading system of goods, ideas and beliefs. Although the item had been collected by the British Museum in 1927, until 2009, a Japanese scholar researching in the British Museum was – for the first time – able to tell the curators that the meaning of the back image on the mirror was love and loyalty. This mirror was made in Kyoto almost 1,000 years ago, at the very beginning, it was used as an indispensable tool for people who lived in the palace. Then, it was carried by a priest who threw this mirror to the sacred pond to deliver a message to another world. The mirror became a witness of an old Japan society, in which information was unlocked through international cooperation under the collaboration of Japanese and British scholars. This Japanese bronze mirror also showed life in the aristocratic Japanese societies in the Heian period, which was the same period as one of the first great novels of the world – The Tale of Genji written by Lady Murasaki Shikibu, as Jane Austen who wrote the life of her time.

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<sup>354</sup> “Buy for £5 and sell for £730,000 What is the British treasure-level cultural relic "Lewis Chess Piece"?”-Da ying guo bao ji wen wu liu yi si qi zi | THE VALUE | <https://cn.thevalue.com/articles/lewis-chessman-piece-sothebys> (consultation: 16 May 2022).

<sup>355</sup> BBC - A History of the World - Object : Lewis Chessmen [https://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/LcdERPxmQ\\_a2npYstOwVka](https://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/LcdERPxmQ_a2npYstOwVka) (consultation: 17 May 2022).



As Figure 4-8-right shows, Dürer’s Rhinoceros was another example of the encounter of an Eastern animal and a Western painter. However, in 1515, when this painting was created, the German painter Dürer had never seen a real rhinoceros.<sup>356</sup> The painting itself was based on the description and sketch from the other people who saw it in Lisbon, Portugal, with several mistakes. At that time, with the technology in ships and sails, the Portuguese went to India. They brought a rhinoceros as a gift for the Pope in the future since support from Italy would be necessary for Portugal to negotiate with the empire in the East. Unfortunately, a storm hit the ship with rhinos. The creature could not reach Italy. However, people who had seen it started to imagine all the possibilities in the East, and paintings with the image of rhinos became more and more popular with the help of the earliest printing shops and publishers in Nuremberg, where Dürer lived. The painting of rhinos had become a symbol of India, which was sold to people in Europe who wanted to know more about the new world: Asia.

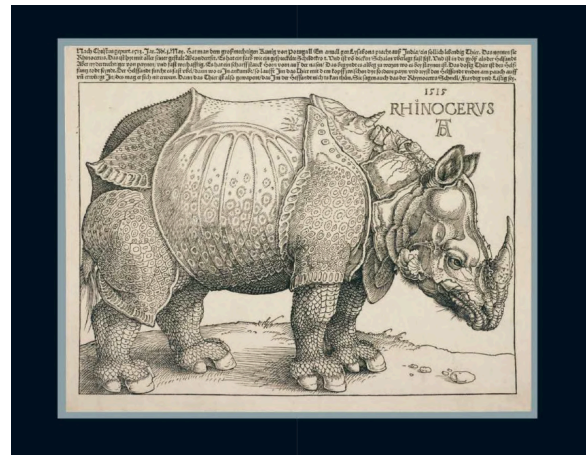


Figure 4-8: left - The collections in the exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects” No.58 “Japanese Bronze Mirror”; right - No.75 “Dürer’s Rhinoceros” | Source: © The Trustees of the British Museum.<sup>357</sup>

Collections in the international exhibitions covered items from millions of years ago to modern products made in the twenty-first century. Each collection reminded people that there were signals from the past and that history was deeply connected with the present. History continues with the development and decisions of policy-makers in the present. At the same time, items with longer life expectations than human beings could show a variety of paths to the past and the future.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

<sup>357</sup> Collections List <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00nrttd2/episodes/player>, (consultation: 15 May 2022).



These collections not only exist after the global touring exhibition but also with the future technology. Each would have the chance to tell a new story when scholars and curators decode new information from them. Each collection has made up the milestones of human history, which impacted all societies nowadays.

The exhibition presented a unique opportunity for visitors to gain insight into different civilisations by exploring historical objects. Each displayed item offered a glimpse into a specific period of history and a different culture, encouraging visitors to contemplate what it meant to be human on Earth. It was particularly valuable when collections from diverse cultures and nations were brought together, as this allowed visitors to understand their roles in global development and to see the world from different perspectives. In addition to the value of the objects themselves, the exhibition also offered an opportunity for visitors to learn about the history of the collections and the people who worked to preserve and protect them over time. By understanding the context in which these objects were created and the challenges they encountered, visitors can develop a greater appreciation for the importance of their presence in the exhibition.

Furthermore, the exhibition provided a space for scholars and researchers to come together and discuss the objects and their significance within a particular period of history. Through these conversations, new knowledge and understanding can be created, adding to the richness of our understanding of the past. While exhibitions like “A History of the World in 100 Objects” cannot fully capture the rich diversity of history and culture, they offer a starting point for people to learn about and appreciate the past from different angles. The historical artefacts showcased in the exhibition served as evidence that cultures have been interacting with each other much more often than traditional historical accounts imply. By examining the objects, visitors could better understand the global narrative and appreciate the historical collections of different languages and cultures. Objects can speak volumes about the past and serve as a bridge between different communities in the present day. Overall, the exhibition provided a valuable experience emphasising the significance of comprehending and valuing the wide range of cultures and histories that contribute to the world.

## 4.5 The cooperation process

### 4.5.1 The cooperation process of the exhibition

All international collaborations are required to obtain permission from the State Administration of Cultural Heritage. As a result, the process between a Chinese museum and a foreign museum can be complex and time-consuming.<sup>358</sup> Nevertheless, the Chinese government pays attention to international cooperation since the collections could be controversial or illegal because of the complex history. Millions of valuable cultural items had been "stolen" or "robbed" by multiple groups or individuals during the first two civil wars (1924-1927 and 1927-1937), the resistance war against Japanese aggression (1937-1945) and the liberation war (1945-1949).<sup>359</sup> A mature supervisory system for developing international exhibitions at the National Museum of China is undergoing, with professional support from a third-party transportation company or customs broker.<sup>360</sup> Normally, the international exhibitions at the National Museum of China are very attractive since waiting for one or two hours in the long queue is still much cheaper than buying the air-tickets to London, Paris or New York personally (Figure 4-9).



Figure 4-9: The Ancient China Gallery at the National Museum of China in 2023, amidst the pandemic. | Source:

Source: Jinghao Tong<sup>361</sup>

<sup>358</sup> Shen, Chen, Hong Chen, P. M. Messenger, and G. S. Smith. "Cultural Heritage Management in China." *Cult. Herit. Manag* 5 (2010): 70.

<sup>359</sup> The National Museum of China.

[https://web.archive.org/web/20140527232757/http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en\\_museum/2003-09/24/content\\_29769.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20140527232757/http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_museum/2003-09/24/content_29769.htm) (consultation: 11 May 2022).

<sup>360</sup> Ye, Zhongming. "International Travelling Exhibitions: Comparison of Two Case Studies from China." (2015): 78.

<sup>361</sup> Historic visit for museum <https://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/article/47ONljA6lGA> (consultation: 14 May 2022).

There were five main steps for cooperation: 1) agreement in details about collections; 2) official permission from each government agency; 3) packing and transport; 4) displaying and promoting; 5) repacking after exhibition to the next venue or the lending museums. Transiting cultural heritage and passing the customs of different countries also depend on the number of collections and documents. Typically, one or two exhibits would travel with the exhibits by air. Sometimes, it would take days to pass all the checks and regulations of customs. The support of a third and good quality transportation and customs broker would send the necessary documents to the customs and report appropriately, which could significantly decrease the chance of customs troubles.

The rental fees of the exhibition included the complete narrative package, images and AV content, object loans, expert science advice, and technical support, which got support from both the British and Chinese governments. The exact price had yet to be published, which would be added based on the interviews with the curators after confirmation. Additional costs included such as 1) site inspections in Beijing from the British Museum, with flights, accommodation, incidentals and per diem for staff members; 2) depended on the quality of the showcase, rental fees for showcases may added to the costs; 3) the installation/de-installation in Beijing, which included 9 British Museum’s staff members for ten days (installing) and ten days (de-installing); 4) transport had been split between the two venues, such as from the last station of the National Museum of Australia in Canberra to Beijing, then from Beijing to Shanghai; 5) Insurance during transit and presentation based on the exact collections in the venue, in Beijing’s case, some collections had been replaced by other collection from Britain, Beijing had paid the additional transport fee from London to Beijing. There were other possible and additional responsibilities and costs like:

- Any costs for temporary import/export of shipment
- Display cases & set workload
- Elements of 2D & 3D design
- AV equipment
- Translation if required of text panels and any printing of new labels – since the exhibition text was in British English
- Hanging apparatus and any power adapters

- Qualified members of staff and equipment to assist the British team in delivering and unloading the exhibits, installing and de-installing the exhibition
- Publishing products, licensed products and wholesale of merchandise, available as additional items for a local shop
- Local marketing

The British Museum started to develop a system for touring exhibitions with the exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects”. For example, one of the team members Rosalind Winton had worked for the British Museum for more than ten years from 2008 as a researcher of “A History of the World in 100 Objects”, then she became the senior project manager of international touring exhibitions from 2015. In 2018, she became the head of international touring exhibitions at the British Museum and started being responsible for creating and delivering a dynamic exhibition portfolio. At the same time, she led the team responsible for portfolio development and oversaw the partnerships with the international hosts globally.<sup>362</sup>

Different working standards in the UK and China were challenging for both sides. The British Museum staff had a very clear schedule for specific steps. When customs delayed or other emergencies happened, it would involve an update for workload while Chinese workers thought it was unnecessary to be so accurate. The language difference was another barrier for workers and curators. The specific system of temperatures and environment details also needed to be translated into the Chinese system. An international exhibition like this provided valuable chances for scholars and researchers to carefully discuss the explanation and introduction and correct the former mistakes. Some Chinese Jade had its way to display, while when a British curator misunderstood the pattern, it was easy to put it upside down as a mistake. The exhibition design plan needed the British Museum to be double-confirmed. The confirmation process also needed these curators to make an agreement based on the schedule, workload expenses, etc. All the collections had different display requirements. Some fragile items needed particular temperature control and humidity setting in the show cases. Experiences of curators could be very important for the smooth development of international exhibition, such as, in the contract and preparation list of items, hanging apparatus and power adapters needed to be prepared ahead based on the workload and team members.

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<sup>362</sup> Rosalind Winton Website <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rosalind-winton-705b5313/?originalSubdomain=uk>, (consultation: 22 June 2021).

### 4.5.2 Communication and media reports

From March 2017, the exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects” was displayed in the National Museum of China until the end of May. The media had talked about it as a “must-see exhibition” “treasures from the British Museum” “the famous global touring exhibition which 1 million visitors had seen in Abu Dhabi, Tokyo and Canberra, now its first station in China” “Chinese curators added the 101st treasure” “the exhibition shows globalisation, which is a powerful development” and “a process that cannot be turned back or halted”.<sup>363</sup> While the 100 objects from the British Museum were quite attractive, journalists and visitors who had paid attention to the international news quickly noticed that some collections that arrived in China differed from the same exhibition already displayed in other former countries. For example, one of the famous collections missing in Beijing was *The Great Wave* for the fragile reason, an iconic work by Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) known for his ukiyo-e style of paintings and woodblock prints.<sup>364</sup>

Since curators had to negotiate with the preservation sector about the display period, some fragile collections could only be displayed for two years every decade. Another example of these replacing items in the broadcast program was the *Admonitions Scroll*, made in silk and the paint on it had already cracked. Even though the researcher had visited the British Museum more than 20 times, she could see the *Admonitions Scroll* in a dark display room only once since the display time of this specific collection was extremely limited. On the one hand, Chinese curators and media journalists would argue that some valuable collections displayed in other countries should also come to China. However, designing an exhibition with 100 collections and lending them outside of the UK for more than two years faced many challenges, including the safety of the collections.

In order to keep the narrative of the touring exhibition to focus on the theme “connection” and “globalisation”, there were 35 more collections joined in the program in total. These alternative collections in the British Museum had replaced the collections which were displayed for two years publicly and went back to the UK for a preservation check.<sup>365</sup> Sometimes, certain collections could not qualify the displaying principle of the Chinese museums, such as sculpture related to sex had

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<sup>363</sup> Historic visit for museum <https://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/article/47ONljA6lGA> (consultation: 21 May 2022).

<sup>364</sup> A History of the World in 100 Objects panel discussion | National Museum of Australia <https://www.nma.gov.au/audio/a-history-of-the-world-in-100-objects-from-the-british-museum-lectures/transcripts/a-history-of-the-world-in-100> (consultation: 21 May 2022).

<sup>365</sup> MacGregor 2010 / A History of the World in 100 Objects | British Museum <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIB9448> (consultation: 18 May 2022).

been replaced by other collections. For these eight Chinese collections that went to China from the British Museum, local media raised the question “whether these eight collections could stay in China”. The national perspective suggested that “local objects should stay locally” had ignored the influence that cultural, economic and social impact on each other. Museums were facing an increasingly multicultural and globalised public, and the colonialist and post-colonialist historical perspective was one of the ways to analyse the narrative. The contemporary socio-political and economic factors have been considered to reach more visitors in more countries.



Figure 4-10: 101st collection in the exhibition: the wooden hammer and pen, added by Chinese curator. | Source: The National Museum of China.

In the final section of the exhibition, the British Museum had invited the host institution to choose an object to add to the exhibition as the “101st object”. The National Museum of China chose to exhibit the wooden hammer and pen used to commemorate China's accession to the World Trade Organisation in 2001 (Figure 4-10). This display symbolises contemporary China's commitment to embracing economic globalisation, its openness to the world, and its contribution to the stability and growth of the global economy.<sup>366</sup> In the report of the local newspaper, the

<sup>366</sup> The British Museum's ‘A History of The World in 100 Objects’, Beijing Guide | Maxview Realty <https://beijing.maxviewrealty.com/beijingguide/explore/the-british-museum%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%99a-history-of-the-world-in-100-objects%E2%80%99/117/> (consultation: 21 May 2022).

journalists were quite surprised that all the five colleges came from London to China were younger than 40 years old, since in China, the majority of exhibition curators needed to work as junior assistants for quite a few years to become the experienced curators, who could lead the important exhibitions.<sup>367</sup>



Figure 4-11: Collections with humidifier in the display cabinet at the National Museum of China. | Source: Jinghao Tong<sup>368</sup>

Also, the different displaying requirements added challenges for the Chinese museum, such as specific collections being made of metal, which required a humidity rate under 35%. In contrast, in the summer of Beijing, the humidity rate was 55%. There was a humidifier in the display cabinet. Still, it took two days to reach a 35% humidity rate, and then the collection, a bronze hand with Arabic inscriptions from the 2nd to 3rd centuries AD, was put into the display showcase.<sup>369</sup> The British Museum had a high standard for temperature and humidity rate for the showcased. The

<sup>367</sup> “The British Museum's Hundred Objects Exhibition will be unveiled at Shanghai Museum”-Da ying bo wu guan bai wu zhan jiang liang xiang shang bo [http://www.dfxb.com/html/2017-06/23/content\\_13\\_1.htm](http://www.dfxb.com/html/2017-06/23/content_13_1.htm) (consultation: 22 May 2022).

<sup>368</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the National Museum of China. (Photo date: 07 February 2023).

<sup>369</sup> “9 of the 100 exhibits are from China”-Wo zai xianchang 100 zu zhan pin zhong 9 jian laizi zhongguo <https://wap.xinmin.cn/content/31104322.html> (consultation: 22 May 2022).



National Museum of China needed to report the data to the British Museum once every day at the very beginning of the exhibition (Figure 4-11).

The British Museum sent a five-colleague team to Beijing in order to check all the collections delivered to the National Museum of China, such as Lindsey Youell, the British Museum project co-ordinator of international travelling exhibitions was co-working with the curators in China to set collections. All the collections had dozens of pictures from different angles, the British Museum colleagues had checked one by one with the data and pictures in order to make sure all the collections were safe and in good condition after the journey from the last venue. For example, the first collection in the exhibition was Mummy of Hornedjitef, which took four hours for the British colleagues to check, the local Chinese media were emphasising their hard working and carefulness.<sup>370</sup> In some countries, certain collections were exhibited without showcases. However, at the National Museum of China, the exhibition team took into consideration the impact of a large number of visitors on the humidity level. As a precautionary measure, all the collections were meticulously covered by showcases (Figure 4-12).



Figure 4-12: Special exhibition with collections covered by showcases. | Source: Jinghao Tong<sup>371</sup>

<sup>370</sup> “British Museum brings ‘condensed world history’”-Da ying bo wu guan dai lai nong suo de shi jie shi <https://dbsqp.com/article/44375> (consultation: 23 May 2022).

<sup>371</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the National Museum of China. (Photo date: 07 February 2023).

The setting of the collections’ location depended on the route of the exhibition design, in order to make sure these visitors could have a look at the collections from different angles, the British Museum’s co-ordinator, Lindsey Youell and her colleague rearranged the collections based on the actual distribution of these showcases. The majority of time for collaboration was spending on negotiating the contract and confirming details about insurance, crating, shipment, exhibition design and security standard. Specifically, for those eight item which were originally from China, permission from the State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China was needed three months before the importing. In contrast, for the exporting, at least six months were needed.<sup>372</sup>

Based on the researcher’s interview with Dr Yan Zhi, the curator of the National Museum of China, to cooperate with the British Museum in organising the “A History of the World in 100 Objects” exhibition, the first thing for the National Museum of China to improve is the hardware facilities of the exhibition hall, such as the temperature control equipment and attemperator in the exhibition hall and cabinet. The National Museum of China had to purchase a new attemperator from Shenzhen for five special exhibits. From the brand of wood boards and glue the National Museum of China would use in the exhibition, the National Museum of China had to send the material sample to the UK. After passing the test, the National Museum of China could use that material. When the British Museum asked the National Museum of China to provide the "museum standard of silver paper for packing", the curator said: “We realised we did not have such standard. Ultimately, we used the food lever standard of silver paper for packing, which was higher than the museum standard should be.”<sup>373</sup> He thought this was the limit of the development of Chinese museums, especially in terms of exhibition and construction materials. Such standards had not yet been established, including the building of the Chinese Museum. Such as the chemical brand or formaldehyde level for the building was not suitable for collections, which could cause various problems later if the museum did not set the standard.

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<sup>372</sup> State Administration of Culture Heritage.  
[http://english.www.gov.cn/services/201706/21/content\\_WS5c04749bc6d0554996894a1a.html](http://english.www.gov.cn/services/201706/21/content_WS5c04749bc6d0554996894a1a.html) (consultation: 23 May 2022).

<sup>373</sup> Appendix 1, Dr Yan Zhi 闫志, interview with the author, Beijing, 04 April 2023.

### 4.5.3 Public reaction



Figure 4-13: The National Museum of China exhibition entrance. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>374</sup>

Chinese visitors to the "A History of the World in 100 Objects" exhibition had mixed reactions, with some excited to see famous collections and others suspicious that the British Museum did not share the best collections with China (Figure 4-13). The exhibition aimed to emphasise the connection of global cultures and how the exchange of goods and ideas made societies develop with similarities and differences. The last unit of the exhibition was controversial, including discussions on topics such as war, violence, and political transactions. The historical relationship between countries impacts future cultural connections and controversial items like the No.86 collection trigger bitter memories for the Chinese government and executive leaders.

Many Chinese visitors have been taught that the British Empire took numerous Chinese treasures during the First Opium War (1839-1842) and the Second Opium War (1856-1860), which was seen as humiliating for China. During these wars, Hong Kong was ceded as a British colony, and five Chinese ports were opened to British trade. As a result, the Chinese public reaction went in two directions: one of the mainstream opinions led by the young visitors who were very excited to see these famous collections without travelling outside China; some of them had to wait in the queue for one or two hours, the other opinion led by traditional intellectuals who believed the British Museum did not share the best collections with China. One of the newspapers, the report shared these suspicious thoughts: “the British Museum only share the second or third class

<sup>374</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the National Museum of China. (Photo date: 07 February 2023).

collections with China, the best historical item were kept in Britain, they would never give them back to China.”<sup>375</sup>

Differences in cultures allow the visitors to rethink the connection and influence of other societies, all the collections are time capsules which contain a specific period of time in history, in the end of the exhibition, visitors could get a new understanding and find the value of co-existence. The whole exhibition wanted to emphasise the connection of global cultures was deeper and older than the stereotypes, also, the exchange of goods and ideas made a variety of societies develop with similarities and differences at the same time. Such as, blue and white porcelain was one of the Chinese national symbols, in the 2008 Olympics, it had also been shown as an indispensable part of Chinese civilisation, which exported to many foreign countries in the history. While, in the exhibition, with the latest research findings, it turned out that the invention of the blue and white porcelain was a product for satisfying the Middle East market. First of all, the specific colour for blue needed to be imported from Iran. Secondly, a powerful political entity created by Yuan Empire across Europe and Asia at that time made it possible for China to purchase raw material from Iran, and then sell such a type of porcelain to the Middle East, where the Islamic civilisation would like to collect the blue and white porcelain for the decoration purpose. Therefore, the famous made in China products started from a strong need by Islamic societies, where the porcelain patterns influenced the design of Chinese porcelain in the end.

The Yuan Empire established a large market across Europe and Asia, providing a large political unification environment that enabled communication between the east and west markets. This historical background facilitated the introduction of blue and white porcelain to the Chinese market, becoming a significant part of Chinese porcelain culture. The diversity of the world began to grow as different societies encountered each other throughout history. The exchange of knowledge and products could not have happened so frequently without the differences between civilisations. Civilisation exists through human activities, which gradually form through the interaction among various communities. Throughout history, changes and adaptations occur constantly, and in most cases, international communication serves as a two-way road for people, resources, goods, services, and more. Today's students could be tomorrow's teachers.

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<sup>375</sup> “Gallery 95 of the British Museum, an exhibition hall based on the Royal Collection of the Forbidden City”-Da ying bo wu guan 95 hao ting <https://www.163.com/dy/article/EF09M0HR05338UMA.html> (consultation: 24 May 2022).

Chinese visitors went to see the exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects” to understand the role of traditional Chinese cultures in the context of globalisation, with the narrative made up of historical collections, which all had an impact from multiple cultural factors. Another typical example of the mix of Chinese culture was the usage of the symbol of the lion. There were no lions in ancient China, but the lion became a common mascot in ancient China. In fact, it showed a very close relationship with the spread of Buddhism from India to the Eastern Asian countries. If these audiences reminisce about this exhibit, they will rethink China's ancient civilisation and reflect on the relationship between China and the world.

The last unit of the exhibition was “The World We Create”, a profoundly reflective unit. However, at the same time, the last unit was also one of the most controversial exhibition halls. When the British Exhibition was exhibited at the National Museum of China, some audiences complained: “Why should I pay 50 yuan to come in and see a knockoff jersey?” The football jersey on display imitated the jersey of the famous Ivorian football star Didier Drogba, who was born in Africa and became famous in France. The owner of the football club was Russian, which held the sponsorship from a South Korean company, Samsung. The fake jersey was produced in Indonesia and sold to South America, connecting almost all continents. It was a microcosm of today's trade globalisation. The exhibition hall included global trade and discussions on topics such as war, violence and political transactions.

The historical relationship has an impact on the future cultural connection between countries. These controversial items, similar to the No.86 collection, trigger the bitter memory of the Chinese government and these executive leaders in the National Museum of China, which could be one of the reasons why the British Museum and China do not have further collaboration projects later. Since the No.86 collection in the British Museum has been interpreted as a symbol of the Chinese own Enlightenment under the rule of the Qing Dynasty,<sup>376</sup> while on the Chinese side, the fact that this item has been stolen with force could not be ignored, which makes the object becomes the evidence of the weakness of Qing Dynasty. Even during the exhibition's opening period, the National Museum of China curator, Dr.Yan Zhi said he had been criticised by a freelancer with an article, who accused Dr.Yan Zhi had been used by the British Museum.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> MacGregor, Neil. *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. Penguin UK, 2011: 972.

<sup>377</sup> Appendix 1, Dr Yan Zhi 闫志, interview with the author, Beijing, 04 April 2023.

## 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presents the first case study on museums' international collaboration between China and the UK. The cross-border exhibition was held at the National Museum of China in 2017, providing an opportunity for the Chinese museum to display a narrative written by the British Museum with the theme of "connection." As the museum policies in the British and Chinese systems are heavily influenced by the structure of their organisations, analyzing the collaboration and communication process between museums can provide insights into their respective cultural policies and the exhibition results. These cultural exhibition cooperations resulted from economic developments and motivations for local visitors to explore the lending museum personally in the future. The National Museum of China is one of the largest museums in China. In collaboration with the United Kingdom, this international exhibition has established a model for future cross-border exhibitions in China. The institutional structure of the National Museum of China showed the importance of the Party Committee in China, which meant all the narratives in this national museum would be under the control of the Communist Party as well. The exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" in China was a part of its global touring series. The changes in narrative, such as removing the items related to politics and sex, showed the different principles and considerations between Chinese and British organisations.

A cross-border exhibition like this has the potential not only to display cultural memory within different countries but also to provide a chance to make these invisible cultural policies be seen through international cooperation. The international touring exhibition team at the British Museum presents its extensive and varied collection of over 8 million objects to visitors around the globe. During the post-pandemic period, international exhibitions have the opportunity to reach a wider audience by sharing collections with visitors in different countries. Cross-border exhibitions also allow for comparisons of slight differences in narratives between museums in multiple countries, reflecting local curatorial strategies. Chinese museum directors and curators have cooperatively selected past international exhibitions. Exhibition designs have been confirmed by both British and Chinese curators, providing valuable opportunities for museum professionals to learn different systems of curating and the copyright of pictures and videos, which is crucial for developing international collaborations.

Some exhibitions failed to pass China's regulations and censorship, which suggests that the attitudes and cultural preferences of Chinese cultural institutions are still conservative compared to international exhibitions. For example, the National Museum of China declined two global touring exhibitions about Egyptian culture proposed by the British Museum due to high budget and insurance costs. The British Museum required the next hosting museum to pay half of the transportation fee, while the former hosting museum paid the other half. Due to the government-supported financial system, Chinese museums have limited choices for hosting international exhibitions. Additionally, curators' choices are heavily influenced by audience preferences. With a strong influence of Buddhism, Chinese audiences have shown negative reactions toward collections about the Mummy and Book of the Dead, which caused these two Egyptian exhibitions to go to Australia, Canada, Singapore, and Japan instead of China. The first collection in "A History of the World in 100 Objects" was a mummy coffin displayed at the exhibition entrance to show that the coffin itself was evidence of globalisation, as the wood, metal, pigment, and paper came from multiple cities at that time. However, some Chinese audiences who brought children to see this exhibition complained that it was "scary," "bad luck," and "not child-friendly." These different cultural preferences can influence Chinese curators' future cooperation concerns.

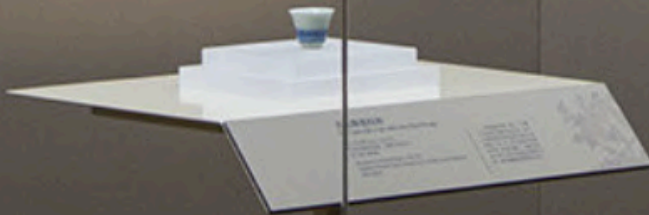
The National Museum of China was the eighth stop for this international exhibition, it gave thousands of Chinese visitors a chance to look at these global collections without going abroad. This cross-border exhibition enabled more visitors to access collective human memory and understand historical heritage in a well-prepared narrative created by the British Museum. The related reports of the National Museum of China in 2017 showed that cooperation among museums was becoming a trend for attracting more visitors and reaching younger audiences through educational lectures and public activities. Cross-border exhibitions nowadays could increase the diversity of collections and generate a universal narrative that includes multiple nations' heritage, which could strengthen the international reputation of the participating museums at the same time. More and more museums are becoming popular tourist attractions in cities' tourism promotions. This is because museums' collections and well-organised temporary exhibitions can provide a tangible and historical perspective through objects, which benefits both citizens and visitors. International exhibitions usually have a limited duration, as museums, governments, and sponsors pay for the rental fee. This brief window of opening time makes the exhibition more attractive and affordable, or even free, which attracts more media coverage and visitors.



This international exhibition resulted from the development of the British Museum collections. It began with a broadcast cooperation with the BBC, and the famous series eventually became a global bestseller book translated into multiple languages, including French, Spanish, Japanese, German, and Chinese. In 2010, the idea of global touring exhibitions was born. The exhibitions first went to Australia and Japan. In 2015, during a visit by the British Finance Minister to China, the proposal to host the exhibition in both Beijing and Shanghai in 2017 was accepted by the Chinese government with the support of the British government. Since more and more Chinese visitors were travelling to the UK and becoming significant buying power globally, it was viewed as a way to promote tourism in the UK. This was especially important from 2016 to 2018 when the UK economy suffered from the backfire of Brexit. Every year, the British Museum attracts millions of visitors to its historical buildings, and visitors can enjoy free cultural products. Additionally, the museum creates business opportunities for accommodations, transportation, restaurants, guided tours, tax-free goods, and international flights.

The British Museum has been accused of "plundering" cultural collections from modern state nations that gained independence less than a century ago. Despite this, the museum has claimed that returning historical collections is essential to building new national pride and identity. While the British Museum is not an innocent owner of collections, it serves as a temporary keeper of human beings' stories. Global temporary exhibitions allow the museum to share these collections. Cross-border exhibitions have received government support as a cultural olympiad, in which all museums can join and contribute to global cultural prosperity. Showing exhibitions through real and historical objects is meaningful and convincing, allowing more people to see the common heritage of human beings. Museums are responsible for preserving the memory of local communities, and through bilingual introduction boards of international collaborations, foreign visitors can learn about other cultures more easily. Cross-border exhibitions unite human beings' experiences through the stories of objects, helping different nations understand each other and deal with global crises as a global community.





## CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY: "WEST ENCOUNTERS EAST—A CULTURAL CONVERSATION BETWEEN CHINESE AND EUROPEAN CERAMICS" AT THE SHANGHAI MUSEUM, SHANGHAI



## 5.1 Introduction

An increasingly numerous public interest in Asian civilisations along with the acquisition funds from French museums made the exhibition "West Encounters East——A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics" in the Shanghai Museum in 2021 possible. The Guimet Museum was the main co-host for this international exhibition, in which exhibition, there were 206 pieces/groups of cultural relics from more than ten world-renowned museums and collection institutions in seven countries, including France, Portugal, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the United States, Switzerland and China, presenting a special exhibition of trade ceramics and cross-cultural exchanges from a new perspective to the audiences.<sup>378</sup> Based on the introduction of this exhibition from the Shanghai Museum, that was an exhibition project with the largest participation in the international museum community held in China since the outbreak of the epidemic. In this chapter, the cross-border exhibition would be analysed as a cooperation between the Shanghai Museum and the Guimet Museum, collaboration and negotiation process with the French and Chinese museum institution would be compared and contrasted.

At first, this chapter investigated the structure and historical evolution of the Guimet Museum in French, which host vast Asian cultural collections and it has specific collaboration policies with Asian organisations and private sectors. Secondly, the institutional system in the Shanghai Museum would be analysed through its policy for the international exhibition and its administration system for international cooperation. Thirdly, the idea of the exhibition from the selection of collections, introduction of content, expectation, and shipping would be assessed, including the description of the exhibition with text and images published officially by the Shanghai Museum. Fourthly, the cooperation process of the exhibition had been summarised through the system of international exhibitions, management, support, agreements, and personnel communication of the two museums. In the end, this exhibition was not only a proposal from one museum to another, but a collaboration among multiple museums with more than 200 collections, which showed the potential for the cross-border exhibitions in the future, by building a wide cultural network to exchange collections and cultures in large scale globally.

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<sup>378</sup> "Opening of new exhibition at Shanghai Museum|Convergence of East and West——Special Exhibition of Sino-European Ceramics and Cultural Exchanges"-Shang bo xin zhan kai mu, dong xi hui rong <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpoyG7LUAipgGLkJfDGOvA> (consultation: 27 May 2022).

The Guimet Museum was born from a personal collection of a Lyonnais industrialist, Émile Guimet (1836-1918), his vision was to create a museum of the classical antiquity of Asian countries<sup>379</sup>. His journey started with a world tour in 1876, with exotic collections from Japan, China and India, which he presented in Lyon in 1879. At that time, China and Japan were called "the Far East", and the collections in the museum of Paris provided valuable chances for local people to imagine another civilisation with sophisticated ceramics, which was so different from the Western culture. After an extensive renovation program from 1993 to 1996, the Guimet Museum reopened with the aim of becoming a significant hub of knowledge on Asian civilisations in Europe. This goal is in line with its existing collections, while also considering advancements in museology and addressing the evolving requirements for the presentation and preservation of Asian artworks.

Since this collaboration case study was with multiple Western countries, the West/East interrelation and the presence of Western art in Asia was one of the highlights of this international exhibition. Especially during the last decades, the study period of this thesis, technology and transport improvements are enabling museums and curators to design exhibitions with items that have rarely been reviewed by this world. Since the middle of the 15th century, the traditional trade routes connecting East and West through the Middle East had been hindered. European fleets had continued to expand at sea, exploring new territories and trade routes. The Portuguese came first, followed by Spain and the Netherlands. Porcelain, being a vital commodity, played a significant role in the growth of Sino-Western trade during the 16th century. The evolving appearance of these artefacts also mirrored the shift in dominance of Central European trade from Portugal to a different situation, when the Netherlands and the British East India Company played significant roles during the 17th and 18th centuries. This international exhibition displayed representative trade porcelains and shipwrecks, and reflected the historical development of Sino-Western trade, with the extension and changes of the trade network from the two dimensions of time and space. In 1498, the European fleet bypassed the Cape of Good Hope and reached Calicut, India, opening up a new route for the traffic between Europe and Asia. After that, it continued eastward and reached the coast of China, starting a new chapter in the exchanges between the East and the West, which profoundly changed the relationship between Europe and Asia.

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<sup>379</sup> History of the Guimet Museum – Guimet <https://www.guimet.fr/musee-guimet/histoire-du-musee-guimet-2/> (consultation: 27 May 2022).

## 5.2 The policy of international exhibition in the Guimet Museum

### 5.2.1 The policy of museum in the French system

Nowadays, these French museums were facing increasing critics with the concept of “post-colonial”, the Guimet Museum also wanted to decrease the negative voices about its hegemony of Western forms, which was founded by Emile Guimet (1836–1918), declared itself as the “world’s biggest Asian art museum outside of Asia”.<sup>380</sup> The museum started from personal collections and with an increasing public interest in Asian civilisation, in the late 1990s it had been through a renovation under the policy of transforming the museum with internationalism in the global age.<sup>381</sup> The museum itself was the medium and the message at the same time, these Asian collections in the Guimet Museum were not only providing French people authentic items to learn about other cultures, but also keeping valuable historical collections with a high international level. The international collaboration between the Guimet Museum with Shanghai Museum was part of its de-coloniality methods, in which lending collections temporarily to these Asian countries could find a middle ground for the debate over repatriation between universal museums and the countries of origin.

The Guimet Museum’s scholarly director used to describe these collections were means of images and art, by displaying objects from the oriental civilisations to support the study about religious, artistic and historic studies, the museum also present a collection of ideas and cultural traits, forms and attitudes in these remarkable cultures.<sup>382</sup> When the collectors bought these pieces boldly, they even did not have a method to date the age of these ceramics, these sensitive collectors were attracted by the originality and the quality of these Chinese objects during the last quarter of the 19th century<sup>383</sup>. With the modern technology, curators could exchange thoughts beyond the limits of languages and nationalities, however, two countries ago, purchasing expensive foreign ceramics could be a huge financial risk for the budget of museums. The novel, collaborative international exhibition could build framework for repairing collections, restructuring galleries,

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<sup>380</sup> Schuster, P.-K.-K. 2004. “Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums.” ICOM News 57 (1).

<sup>381</sup> Wang, Shuchen. "Museum coloniality: displaying Asian art in the whitened context." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 27, no. 6 (2021): 724.

<sup>382</sup> Kadi, H., and J. P. Perrin. "Knowledge-based Virtual Reconstruction of Museum Artefacts." (2013): 54.

<sup>383</sup> LION-GOLDSCHMIDT, D. A. I. S. Y. "A few rare Yuan Ceramics in French Museums." (1987): 33.



and sharing knowledge with global visitors. The Guimet Museum was the leading partner for the Shanghai Museum with the exhibition "West Encounters East——A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics".

Under the global context, cultural diplomacy is a method for exchanging ideas, information, art and culture-related activities among countries to build new understandings and a strategic instrument for countries to reach their international purposes.<sup>384</sup> Natalia Grincheva explained that museums are "networked civil society institutions with soft power", in which the international collaborations were mainly from the political endeavours to museums' autonomous pursuit of institutional missions.<sup>385</sup> The museums' exhibitions are represented as instruments of ruling-class hegemony, so museums tend to be thought of as amenable to a general form of cultural politics in criticising those hegemonic ideological articulations governing the thematics of museum displays, seeking to forge new articulations capable of organising a counter-hegemony. The museums' specific properties constitute a distinctive field of political relations.<sup>386</sup>

The Guimet Museum's collections focused on Afghanistan, central Asia, southeast Asia, China, Korea, India, Japan and Nepal, etc. It hosted temporary exhibitions based on its collection and international collaboration with foreign organisations or artists.<sup>387</sup> When the museums were built, the way of establishing new interpretations of the state and the people themselves was created within the narratives in exhibitions and introductions.<sup>388</sup> In the former exhibition between the Guimet Museum and the Bangladesh National Museum, the Guimet president Jean-Francois Jarrige sent the official proposal for the museum. Then the French Ambassador mentioned the cooperation idea to the State Minister of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the details of the proposed exhibition had been reported to the Trustee Board, which would set the insurance value and security of the artefacts, also the interest of the nation would be safeguarded.<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> Grincheva, Natalia. *Global Trends in Museum Diplomacy: Post-Guggenheim Developments*. Routledge, 2019: 114.

<sup>385</sup> Hamvai, Kinga. "Global Trends in Museum Diplomacy. Post-Guggenheim Developments: By Natalia Grincheva, Routledge, 2019/2020?, ISBN: 978-0-8153-7094-9 (Hbk), ISBN: 978-1-351-19027-5 (Ebk)." *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, 2020: 4.

<sup>386</sup> Gramsci, A. (2006). *State and civil society*. *The anthropology of the state: A reader*: 71.

<sup>387</sup> The Guimet Museum official website. <https://www.guimet.fr/publications/autour-des-collections/> (consultation: 25 May 2022).

<sup>388</sup> Bennett, T. (1990). *The political rationality of the museum*. *Continuum*, 3(1), 35-55.

<sup>389</sup> SELIM, LALA RUKH. "On the Possibility of Cultural Property: The Musée Guimet Controversy and Case Study of Events in Bangladesh." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 17, no. s1 (2011): S184.

## 5.2.2 International Exhibitions in the Guimet Museum

Before the pandemic, the Guimet Museum hosted eight to ten temporary exhibitions annually, including Japanese simplicity and Chinese ceramic masterpieces from private collectors.<sup>390</sup> For example, from June 21 to September 4, 2017, Chinese ceramic masterpieces from the Ise collection were exhibited for the first time in France.<sup>391</sup> The exhibition focused on introducing Chinese-specific techniques such as monochromes, celadons, "three colours", blue and white porcelain, etc. The owner of these collections Hikonobu Ise had almost thirty years of experience in collecting ceramics. He cooperated with the Guimet Museum to present them to the public worldwide since he believed these masterpieces reflected the exquisite Chinese civilisation. The exhibition covered productions from the 5th century BC to the 19th century, from the ancient periods to the Qing (1644-1911), which had acquired significant influence over time, and also provided an overview of the evolution of techniques and decorations in Chinese ceramic art. It was also an opportunity to grasp the remarkable phenomenon of the Japanese taste for Chinese ceramics, which was not easy to host in China. Since the time of Kamakura (1185-1333), Chinese ceramics had been imported by the archipelago for the tea ceremony, which the Japanese had transformed into an art of living with a strong religious dimension.

The Guimet Museum in Paris, France, has promoted Asian culture internationally. Not only has it served as a meeting point for Chinese and Japanese ceramics, but it has also provided a platform for collectors to share their collections and tell the stories of their countries. This has offered a fresh and unique experience for visitors from China and Japan, who can see their cultural similarities and differences in a new light. Interestingly, European audiences unfamiliar with the intricacies of Chinese and Japanese art and historical items also found the museum to be a fascinating space to explore the nuances of Asian culture. However, it is essential to note that the segregation of cultures and political struggles in Asia made it even more challenging for Asians themselves to see the connections and cultural exchanges of the past.

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<sup>390</sup> Porcelaine, chefs-d'œuvre de la collection Ise – Guimet <https://www.guimet.fr/event/porcelaine-chefs-doeuv-re-de-la-collection-ise/> (consultation: 25 May 2022).

<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

Despite this, the Guimet Museum has always been interested in introducing Asian culture through international collaboration and invitations to foreign owners and artists. This has generated a unique space where sensitive collections could be displayed together, resulting in unexpected outcomes. For instance, the museum has facilitated the merging of different Asian cultures under the perspective of European curators, which has led to the creation of new art forms and cultural exchanges. In conclusion, the Guimet Museum has been pivotal in promoting Asian culture and facilitating cultural exchanges between different parts of Asia. It has established a space where visitors can deeply engage with the vibrant and varied cultures of Asia while also fostering mutual understanding between different cultures.

The pandemic significantly impacted the cultural activities of the Guimet Museum and other cultural institutions worldwide. As people were forced to stay home and practice social distancing, many museums closed their doors and cancelled events, decreasing visitor numbers and revenue. However, despite the challenging circumstances, the Guimet Museum has continued to offer engaging online exhibitions and events for audiences to enjoy from their homes. Additionally, the museum has taken steps to ensure visitors can safely return to the physical museum, implementing strict health and safety measures to protect visitors and staff. Although the pandemic has brought many challenges to the cultural sector, institutions like the Guimet Museum have adapted and persevered, demonstrating the resilience and importance of cultural institutions. In 2021, there were four temporary exhibitions in the Guimet Museum as below:

1. *"The Art of Nepa"l*: which until the middle of the 18th century designated the Kathmandu valley alone, occupies a significant place within the arts of the Himalayan world despite the modest surface area of the country;
2. *"ASIA NOW"*: which was about the contemporary of Vietnam;
3. *"Carte Blanche"*: A French-Vietnamese artist makes nature the matrix of his works;
4. *"And if it were Asia? "*: The photographs presented the winning images of the jury in the competition for the Guimet Museum;

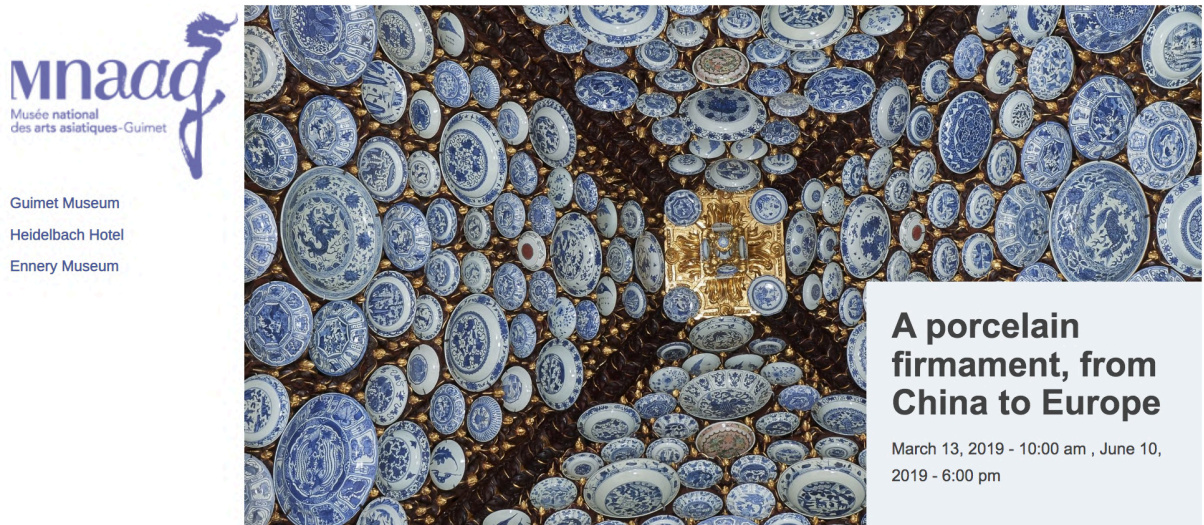


Figure 5-1:Exhibition in the Guimet Museum in 2019 , the same collections went to China in 2021.| Source: Screenshot of the Guimet Museum<sup>392</sup>

Before the international exhibition "West Encounters East——A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics" host in the Shanghai Museum in 2021, it had been displayed in Paris, France from the 13th of March to the 10th of June in 2019 (Figure 5-1).<sup>393</sup> There were around 300 Chinese porcelains from the 16th and 17th centuries that decorated the ceiling of the current French Embassy in Lisbon, a former royal residence, were made visible through a 3D rendering in the rotunda on the fourth floor of the museum, which had combined imaging techniques (3D modelling) and digital sculpture. Like a celestial vault on a background of gilded and lacquered wood, these porcelains beard witness to the boldness of Portuguese baroque art and the intensity of maritime trade between China and Europe from the 16th century. The Guimet Museum displayed this exhibition with the patronage of the Michelin Foundation, in which the scientific approach where Chinese, Portuguese and French researchers contributed to discover the unique architectural testimony with new technology.<sup>394</sup>

<sup>392</sup> A porcelain firmament, from China to Europe – Guimet <https://www.guimet.fr/event/un-firmament-de-porcelaines-de-la-chine-a-leurope/> (consultation: 23 May 2022).

<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid.

## 5.3 The policy of the international exhibition in the Shanghai Museum

### 5.3.1 Introduction of the Shanghai Museum

The Shanghai Museum is a museum showcasing ancient Chinese art. It is located on the People's Square in the Huangpu District of Shanghai, China. The museum was reconstructed at its present site in 1996 and is widely regarded as one of China's premier modern museums. The museum was established in 1952, but its operations were mostly interrupted due to the Cultural Revolution. Following the conclusion of the revolution, as a significant museum in China, the collections have been consistently expanded through donations, government acquisitions, and notable discoveries from archaeological excavations. The museum has a collection of over 1,020,000 items, 140,000 of which are graded national treasures.<sup>395</sup> The Shanghai Museum contains several items of national significance, including one of only three remaining specimens of a transparent bronze mirror from the Han Dynasty.<sup>396</sup>

“The collection in the Shanghai Museum covers thirty-one categories, including bronze, ceramics, calligraphy, painting, sculpture, oracle bone, seals, coins, jade, furniture, embroidery, lacquer ware, bamboo and wood carving, arts and crafts of Chinese ethnic minorities, etc., among which the collection of bronze, ceramics, calligraphy and painting are especially celebrated. Nowadays, the Shanghai Museum has ten permanent galleries, four special donation showrooms and three temporary exhibition halls, providing visitors a panoramic view of the Chinese art history.”

——The official website of the Shanghai Museum<sup>397</sup>

There was a key figure in the establishment of Shanghai Museum – Ma Chengyuan, who worked there as director from 1985 to 1999. During the Cultural Revolution, he had kept the Red Guards out by transforming his staff into fake Red Guards and protecting the relics by daubing Maoist slogans over all the exhibit cases. In 1972, as China wanted to organise an exhibition of

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<sup>395</sup> Shanghai Museum Official Website <https://www.shanghaimuseum.net/mu/frontend/pg/en/information/history>, (consultation: 22 June 2021).

<sup>396</sup> China Shanghai Museum – Classical Antiquity <http://ancientworld.hansotten.com/china/shanghai-museum/> (consultation: 16 March 2022).

<sup>397</sup> Shanghai Museum Official Website <https://www.shanghaimuseum.net/mu/frontend/pg/en/information/history>, (consultation: 22 June 2021).

archaeological treasures to exhibit in America after President Nixon's visit, Ma was brought back to Shanghai from his 5-years labour reform camp for Shanghai cadres in Hubbei province to help organise this exhibition. While recalling what the authorities expected him to show in this exhibition, he mentioned: "We were supposed to illustrate class struggle, to condemn the life of the rulers, but I thought we can do it differently, to show the creativity of the masses because the people created all these works".<sup>398</sup> In the end, he was allowed to organise four exhibitions devoted to bronzes, pottery, sculpture, and painting. These exhibitions aimed at demonstrating the craftsmanship of Chinese people and then became the permanent exhibition in Shanghai Museum. The museum building was under construction from 1993 to 1996, while it was almost halted by Beijing when Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji ordered a freeze on all new projects in a bid to cool the overheated economy. Ma had to surround the site and tell no one what they were doing in order to continue rebuilding the Shanghai Museum. In the end, a new building, 29.5 meters high, with five floors, and covering a total area of 39,200 m<sup>2</sup>, opened to the public as Shanghai Museum in 1996.<sup>399</sup>

Since the Shanghai Museum displays mainly Chinese-related collections, the translation is essential in its research. Exhibitions in the Shanghai Museum have been translated into English gradually with the support of researchers and scholars from universities around Shanghai. For example, there was an exhibition about the ancient Chinese bamboo writing material, one of the most expensive purchases of the Shanghai Museum, which had been displayed for nine years without annotated English translation.<sup>400</sup> The narratives kept in the collections showed ritual details, which reflected an ancient society in China with texts. The chronological research about ancient collections helped Chinese scholars to develop narratives related to the evolution of the Chinese writing system. By systematically comparing the textual variants among these collections, the Shanghai Museum kept the physical and codicological evidence related to the understanding of Chinese people and their history.

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<sup>398</sup> Ho, Denise Y. "Museums and Exhibitionary Culture in Twentieth-Century China." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*. 2021: 32.

<sup>399</sup> Jasper Becker. "Ma Chengyuan and the creation of Shanghai Museum". *South China Morning Post*. (consultation: 22 June 2021).

<sup>400</sup> Zhou, Boqun. "A Translation and Analysis of the Shanghai Museum Manuscript" Wu Wang Jian Zuo." *Monumenta Serica* 66, no. 1 (2018): 1.



### 5.3.2 Exhibitions and galleries in the Shanghai Museum

In 2021, Shanghai Museum planned to organise seven special exhibitions with content involving bronze implements, brocade, painting and calligraphy, trade porcelain, and lacquerware, among others.<sup>401</sup> One of the exhibitions, which opened from 8 June to 12 September 2021, combined items from the collections of world-class museums and well-known institutions. These partners include the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Arts, Rijksmuseum, Portugal's Ancient Art Museum (MCA), the Louvre Museum, and the Seiffre National Ceramic Museum.<sup>402</sup> The exhibition jointly presented the idea of cultural exchanges through Chinese and Western ceramics, enabling this international exhibition with global museums.<sup>403</sup>

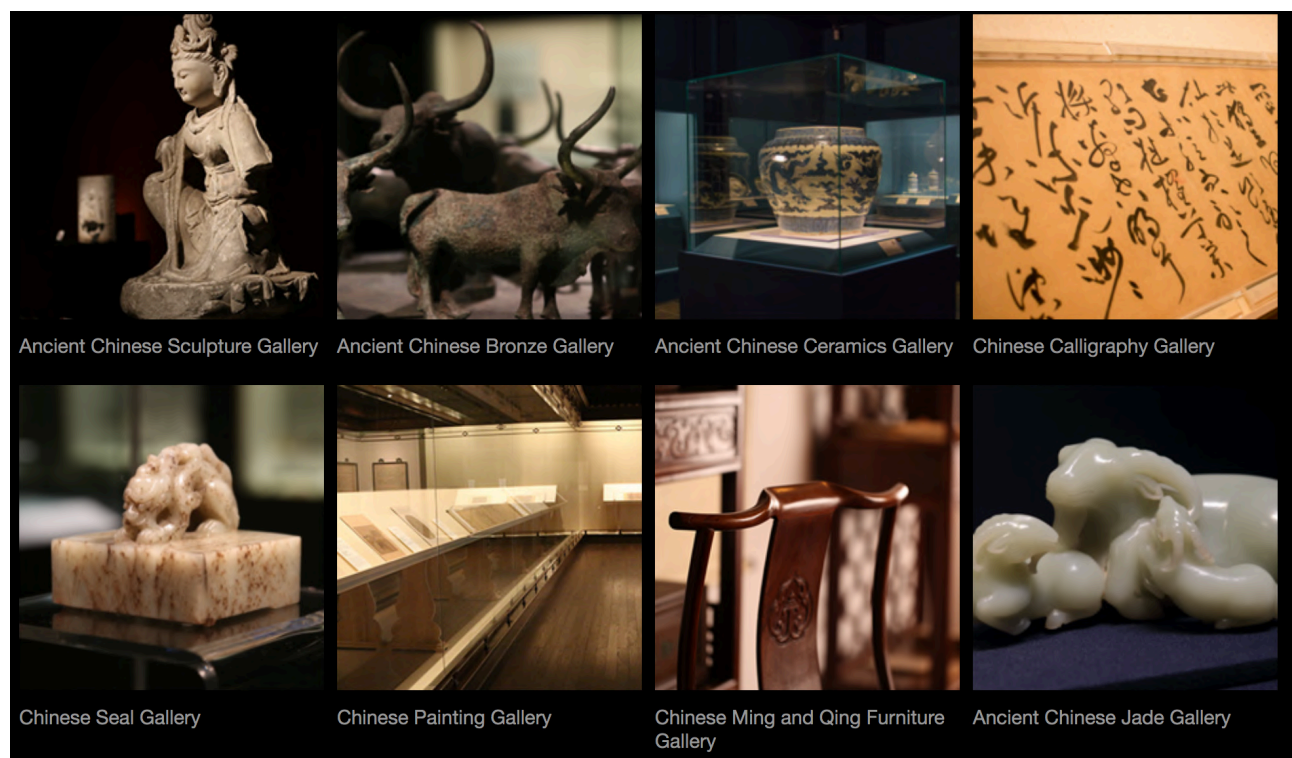


Figure 5-2: Galleries in the Shanghai Museum in 2022. | Source: Screenshot of the Shanghai Museum<sup>404</sup>

<sup>401</sup> Shanghai Museum Official Website <https://www.shanghaimuseum.net/mu/frontend/pg/en/display/offline-exhibit>, (consultation: 22 June 2021).

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid.

<sup>404</sup> Galleries <https://www.shanghaimuseum.net/mu/frontend/pg/en/display/gallery> (consultation: 23 May 2022).



Up until 2021, there were seven permanent exhibitions in Shanghai Museum (Figure 5-2):

- Ancient Chinese Bronze Gallery, first floor;
- Ancient Chinese Ceramics Gallery, second floor;
- Chinese Painting Gallery, third floor;
- Chinese Calligraphy Gallery, third floor
- Chinese Seal Gallery, third floor;
- Ancient Chinese Jade Gallery, fourth floor;
- Coins of Chinese Dynasties Gallery, fourth floor.<sup>405</sup>

The Ancient Chinese Sculpture Gallery, in a space of 640 square meters, has more than 120 exhibits dating from the Warring States Period to the Ming Dynasty with four sections. There are 80% of the sculptures are Buddhist statues, which is the special feature of the gallery. The Ancient Chinese Bronze Gallery exhibits more than 400 pieces of exquisite bronzes in a space of 1,200 square meters, which gives an overall introduction of the development of ancient Chinese bronze art from the 3rd century BCE to the twenty-first century with seven sections. The Ancient Chinese Ceramics Gallery, in a space of 1,300 square meters, provides a general view of the development of ceramic art in ancient China, with more than 500 masterpieces of pottery and porcelain dating from the Neolithic Period to the late Qing Dynasty in seven sections. The Chinese Calligraphy Gallery, in a space of 600 square meters, displays about 60 masterpieces of Chinese calligraphy in five sections, which tracks chronologically the development of Chinese calligraphy art. The Chinese Seal Gallery, focusing on the origin and development of Chinese seal art, exhibits nearly 500 collections of seals dating from the Zhou Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty in a space of 380 square meters. The gallery is divided into five sections, illustrates a long history of Chinese seals and its diversified styles and deep artistic connotations in different periods of times. There are more than 120 masterpieces of Chinese painting dating from the Tang Dynasty (618-907) to the Modern Times shown in the 1,200 m<sup>2</sup> Chinese Painting Gallery. The seven sections of the exhibition reveal chronologically the tradition and profound foundation of Chinese painting.

The Chinese Ming and Qing Furniture Gallery is set with more than 100 collections of Ming and Qing furniture in a space of 700 square meters, which shows the artistic style and heyday of Chinese furniture-making during Ming (1368 – 1644) and Qing (1644 – 1911) dynasties.

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<sup>405</sup> Shanghai Museum Official Website <https://www.shanghaimuseum.net/mu/frontend/pg/article/id/RI00004007> (consultation: 27 May 2022).

Meanwhile, two scenarios of a reception room and a study room of the Ming-Qing period reconstructed in the gallery demonstrate how the traditional furniture was used and arranged. The Ancient Chinese Jade Gallery is located in a space of 500 square meters. It provides a comprehensive overview of the development of Chinese jade culture over 8000 years. The gallery showcases nearly 300 masterpieces of jade.<sup>406</sup>



Figure 5-3: Chinese Calligraphy Gallery in the Shanghai Museum of China | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>407</sup>

The design of the gallery at the Shanghai Museum follows the same principles as the National Museum of China, which focuses on Chinese ancient and modern cultural collections. The Shanghai Museum intends to showcase cultural heritage of China, with an emphasis on traditional Chinese art and artefacts (Figure 5-3). The museum's domestic visitor-oriented policy is driven by the fact that the majority of visitors are Chinese, and the gallery is designed to cater to their interests and preferences. In addition to its focus on traditional Chinese culture, the Shanghai Museum also builds close cooperative relationship with world-leading museums. The development of the Shanghai museum is influenced by the system of government support. The narratives and settings of galleries are often determined by government policies and priorities, which can change over time.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.

<sup>407</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the Shanghai Museum of China. (Photo date: 09 February 2023).

### 5.3.3 Shanghai Museum's administration system for international cooperation

Chinese museums have experienced a boom in the past forty years, benefiting from China's rapid economic and social development, which has also led to increased international cooperation. Through cross-border cooperation, Chinese visitors can gain a better understanding of the rapid development of other nations, and new generations of museum professionals can travel abroad to learn and engage in frequent collaborations with world-leading museums. This has helped facilitate the exchange of collections and hosting museum conferences to create more opportunities for cross-border exhibitions.<sup>408</sup> The Shanghai Museum belongs to the Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism.<sup>409</sup> It includes several research departments devoted to bronzes, ceramics, painting and calligraphy, crafts, archaeology, cultural relic protection technology, information, library, cultural exchange and more than 20 other smaller departments. The museum also has a group of senior research experts in cultural relic identification, research, protection, display and exhibition, among others. There are two main offices in Shanghai Museum the Director's Office and Party Committee, along with eighth management offices, eighth research centres and eighth specific departments including copyright authorisation and international exhibition cooperation.

The official report "Shanghai Museum Budget in 2017 for special exhibitions" showed that from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017, the budget was 11,030,500 yuan (1,408,909 euros) for six special exhibitions. These funds came from the municipal financial body and included in the budget of the Shanghai Museum. The budget arrangement for the "2017 Temporary Exhibition Funds" included seven sub-projects: 1) Ming Dynasty Women Booklet Exhibition, with a budget of 697,000 yuan; 2) Museum 100 cultural relics exhibition, with 3,194,500 yuan; 3) The era of Princess Sissi, with 4,601,000 yuan ; 4) China-Egypt Civilisation Exhibition, with 1,950,000 yuan; 5) Sun Yufeng family donated calligraphy and painting exhibition, with 100,000 yuan; 6) exhibition work with 238,000 yuan; 7) exhibition design with 250,000 yuan. The actual cost of implementing the projects was 8,761,553 yuan (1,119,100 euros), leaving a balance of 2,268,947 yuan (289,809 euros). The budget implementation rate was 79.4%. Only six projects were completed in the end, given that then exhibition China-Egypt Civilisation Exhibition was

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<sup>408</sup> Lord, Gail Dexter, Guan Qiang, An Laishun, and Javier Jimenez, eds. *Museum Development in China: Understanding the Building Boom*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2019: 8.

<sup>409</sup> Lee, Say Wah, and Ke Xue. "A model of destination loyalty: Integrating destination image and sustainable tourism." *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 25, no. 4 (2020): 151.

cancelled. The exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" had a total cost of 2,697,588 yuan (341,488 euros), which was divided into nine parts based on the work timeline.<sup>410</sup>

ICOM also helped China to adapt international network in the past 36 years, with the ICOM Code of Ethics, China had accepted professional standard within the museums in order to contribute actively to the collaboration among world museums and adding important heritage collections in the international narratives.<sup>411</sup> ICOM's 22nd General Conference was host in Shanghai, in which had attracted around 3,500 museum delegates, it was a signal of China's willingness to become an essential partner in the museums' international community. Moreover, the only ICOM training centre in the world had been built as the ICOM International Training Centre for Museum Studies by ICOM, ICOM China and the Palace Museum in 2013, which had host related conferences and networking chances to 375 young museum professionals from 242 museums in 72 countries on all continents. The Shanghai Museum was a part of the education system. When international exhibitions became considerable attractions to the public, cross-cultural dialogues were created as well, leading to deeper understanding among visitors in and outside of China.

In 2004, on the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and France, President Hu Jintao visited Paris to celebrate the establishment of diplomatic relations. At that time, the Guimet Museum hosted an exhibition about Confucius. Ten years later, to celebrate the 50th anniversary between these two countries, another exhibition with the theme "Splendours of The Han Dynasty" was inaugurated by Chinese president Xi Jinping and French president Francois Hollande, also in the Guimet Museum.<sup>412</sup> Museum professionals nowadays already realise that cultural exhibitions could be more effective than standard government activities. Public feedback is also positive towards historical collections which could meet these visitors' cultural consumption demand. For the Shanghai Museum, there is still a huge gap between its international colleagues, from the regulation of exhibition, legal system, official application process for export and import, bilingual introduction for collections, academic research and so on.

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<sup>410</sup> Shanghai Museum Financial Report 2017

<https://www.shanghai.gov.cn/cmsres/80/808ac40e4ce941eb881519fb82073f5a/b3c28c459e4da4b4d9a8ee2cf2e361e1.pdf>seum.net/mu/frontend/pg/en/display/offline-exhibit, (consultation: 22 June 2021).

<sup>411</sup> Lord, Gail Dexter, Guan Qiang, An Laishun, and Javier Jimenez, eds. *Museum Development in China: Understanding the Building Boom*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2019: 61.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid: 66.

## 5.4 The exhibition in the Shanghai Museum

### 5.4.1 The idea of the exhibition

The exhibition "West Encounters East——A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics" in Shanghai Museum was the second case study in this research, which started from the 29th of October 2021 to the 16th of January 2022. This international exhibition cooperated with the National Museum of Asian Art of Guimet, also known as the Guimet Museum. It focused on the exhibition theme of Chinese and European porcelain and their cultural exchanges. The Shanghai Museum invited more than ten museums from seven countries, such as France, Portugal, the UK, the Netherlands, the US, and Switzerland to lend collections to the Shanghai Museum to display not only the valuable porcelains themselves but also borrowed these oil paintings related to these porcelains to show how did people in the past used these items. This exhibition was delayed for almost four months since the pandemic was ongoing, while 206 collections were displayed in total.<sup>413</sup> 500 years ago, the first contact between China and Europe occurred due to the new sea route, which led to the initiation of commercial and cultural communication between them.<sup>414</sup>

The global integration provided a valuable chance for the Shanghai Museum to develop an international exhibition like "West Encounters East", which could reflect the past of China and Europe's business cooperation and display collections that mixed the techniques, materials and designs in the age of exploration. Many goods had been traded to Europe to fulfil the increasing needs for Chinese ceramics. The Ming and Qing dynasties witnessed the exchange of ideas through objects among people from different parts of Earth. These porcelains were mediums for imagination, technology, the skill of design, and religious features between East and West, it started conversations and dialogues, which inspired millions of people to purchase and use them in their daily lives. Shreds of evidence of cross-cultural exchanges of these days had been left on these items at that time, which became the precious collections in museums globally nowadays, each of them contained a small part of the puzzle of human heritage, by putting these collections

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<sup>413</sup> Shanghai Museum dong xi jiao rong, zhong ou tao ci yu wen hua jiao liu te zhan kai mu <https://sh.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202111/02/WS6180f5a0a3107be4979f6230.html> (consultation: 24 May 2022).

<sup>414</sup> Official website of Shanghai Museum <https://www.shanghaimuseum.net/mu/frontend/pg/article/id/E00004133> (consultation: 25 May 2022).

together, the narrative showed how deeply the world trade had shaped our modern life through daily objects.

The theme of the exhibition "West Encounters East——A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics" in the Shanghai Museum was the integration of East and West in an early phase of globalisation. The exhibition itself was also the result of the integration of efforts made by museums around the globe. During the pandemic, to host an exhibition like this, which involved more than five international museums, all the institutions and authorities joined and supported the process based on understanding and collaboration. Nowadays, museums collect and display valuable items, and cultural diplomacy empowers organisations with more opportunities for building deep connections among the human race beyond the limit of nationality. Every item in this exhibition demonstrates that global cultural contact not only fosters exchanges and inspiration between civilisations but also contributes to the creation of a community with a shared future for humanity. Artificial barriers result from human imagination based on misunderstandings and ignorance caused by limited technology and contact. This exhibition in the Shanghai Museum was a conversation that started in the 15th century when the German handicraftsmen tried to copy the mark "made by Ming dynasty" of these valuable porcelains that came from China to sell the locally made porcelains at a higher price. Five centuries later, handicraftsmen's products came to China, displayed with the original porcelain. The pursuit for valuable goods of different nations created historical items and stories.

The exhibition not only brought together the famous porcelain products of the Ming and Qing dynasties, but also revealed the exchange and mutual learning between Chinese and European designs, images, technologies and concepts. The exhibition had two attractive highlights. Firstly, it presented the journey of Chinese porcelain and showed the trajectory and trade of selected objects from the East to the West. Through original oil paintings, court furnishings and European inlaid and coloured porcelain, it demonstrated the collision and integration between China and Europe, from both an aesthetic and artistic perspective. Secondly, for the first time, the exhibition systematically showed the communication and interaction between Chinese artefacts and European ceramics. With the products which have been selected from Italian, Portuguese,



Dutch, French, German, British and other European countries, this exhibition aims to reveal the contribution of Chinese skills to world material civilisation (Figure 5-4).<sup>415</sup>

The exhibition consisted of three chapters. In the first part of "The Transportation between China and the West," the exported porcelain outlined, temporally, the trade and exchanges between China and Europe from the 16th to the 18th century and spatially, the development of the sea routes and traffic networks. The second part was the "fusion between China and the West" which showed in detail how Chinese porcelain integrated into and helped to shape European daily life, aesthetics and taste, decoration and design, and fashion trends through paintings and porcelain that was painted, mounted, modified, or intended as furnishings in Europe. With these historical collections, the contact and combination between China and the West in terms of pragmatic needs, aesthetics, and design had been reflected. The third part was about "the encounter between China and the West", which showed the integration of art and craft brought about by the trade and exchanges. It was an exhibition about Chinese craftsmanship and beyond itself since these porcelains' function had changed from case to case<sup>416</sup>. For example, in Germany, some rice bowls made in China for food became the religious items for the ceremony. Also in France, the blue Buddhist sculptures had been modified into candlesticks with added gold stands.



Figure 5-4: The "West Encounters East" poster in the Shanghai Museum in 2022. | Source: the Shanghai Museum<sup>417</sup>

<sup>415</sup> Shanghai Museum Official Website <https://www.shanghaimuseum.net/mu/frontend/pg/en/display/offline-exhibit>, (consultation: 22 June 2021).

<sup>416</sup> "Opening of new exhibition at Shanghai Museum|Convergence of East and West——Special Exhibition of Sino-European Ceramics and Cultural Exchanges"-Shang bo xin zhan kai mu, dong xi hui rong <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpoyG7LUAipgGLkJfDGOvA> (consultation: 27 May 2022).

<sup>417</sup> Poster of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum in 2022. <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpoyG7LUAipgGLkJfDGOvA>(consultation: 23 May 2022).



## 5.4.2 The description of the exhibition



Figure 5-5: The entrance of “West Encounters East” in the Shanghai Museum in 2022. | Source: the Shanghai Museum<sup>418</sup>

In an interview with China Daily, Yang Zhigang, the director of the Shanghai Museum, described the exhibition's theme as a blending of Eastern and Western influences during the early stages of globalisation.<sup>419</sup> This exhibition had rent collections from more than ten museums globally, include the National Museum of Asian Art of Guimet, France, the Valenciennes Museum, the Guangdong Provincial Museum, the Rijksmuseum of the Netherlands, the Cartier Collection, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the United States, the Museum Medeiros e Almeida in Portugal, the British David Chinese Art Foundation, the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum (Figure 5-5).<sup>420</sup> The Shanghai Museum also showed a stronger motivation to host international exhibitions than the National Museum of China, since Shanghai enjoyed a connivence location in China, which was also one of the earliest ports for overseas connection

<sup>418</sup> Introduction of “West Encounters East” in the Shanghai Museum in 2022.  
<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpoyG7LUAipgGLkJfDGOvA>(consultation: 23 May 2022).

<sup>419</sup> Shanghai Museum's "East and West Fusion - China-Europe Ceramics and Cultural Exchange Special Exhibition" opens - China Daily <https://sh.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202111/02/WS6180f5a0a3107be4979f6230.html> (consultation: 25 May 2022).

<sup>420</sup> Shanghai Museum official website <https://www.shanghaimuseum.net/mu/frontend/pg/m/article/id/100004484> (consultation: 25 May 2022).

with foreign countries in the past. In recent years, the Shanghai Museum started to set the goal of becoming the forefront of cultural exchanges and promoting Chinese culture globally.

The theme of this international exhibition was "the Integration of China and the West" presented a new perspective that had not been addressed in previous trade porcelain exhibitions: how did the overseas consumers view and use oriental utensils that had crossed the ocean? How did Chinese porcelain fit into the European lifestyle, interior design and fashion trends? What kind of changes had been added on these Eastern items when they arrive Europe? The exhibition included some ancient oil paintings which were created at the same period of time of these porcelain, with the vividly description, these visitors could quickly tell that the same porcelain was also displayed in the exhibition. Also, the highly creative European colouring skill impacted Chinese design as well, when Chinese craftsmanship changed the patterns on the porcelain based on the taste of the European market (Figure 5-6). In order to show the impact of Chinese culture on the other Asian countries, collections made in Japan, Vietnam had been borrowed to compare the different design in these countries under similar commercial order from the European countries.



Figure 5-6: The original Buddhist religious sculpture with German craftsman's modification into candlesticks. |

Source: the Shanghai Museum<sup>421</sup>

<sup>421</sup> Pictures of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum in 2022.  
<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/8D4yBbVYDE019ruQ7BrP7A> (consultation: 23 May 2022).

The Shanghai Museum created an online website in WeChat (Figure 5-7) about several highlight collections. For example, the Guangcai Thirteen Rows Picture Bowl was made in the late Qing Emperor period (1770-1795). It included the decoration of the trade scene of Guangdong, with six national flags on it, namely the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden, France, Austria and Denmark. At that time, only specific ports in China could undertake foreign affairs; "thirteen rows" was the commercial area where the Chinese and foreign businessmen were busy shipping goods with boats. In the late 18th and 19th centuries, foreign companies had no regulation to develop the land legally. As a result, the building spacing went too close to each other, which was also captured by the bowl designer.

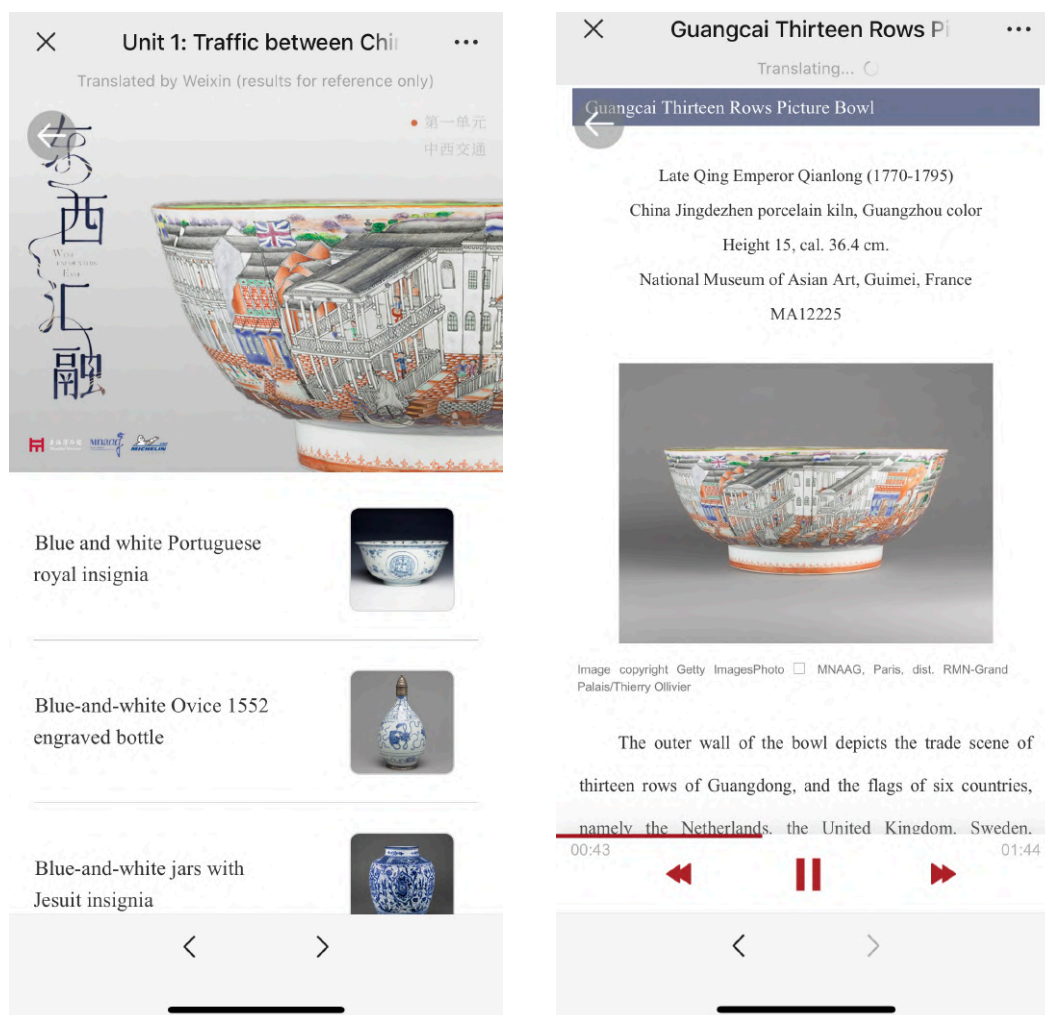


Figure 5-7: The online wechat page of "West Encounters East". | Source: Screenshot of the Shanghai Museum<sup>422</sup>

<sup>422</sup> Website of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum in 2022.  
<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpoyG7LUAipgGLkJfDGOvA> (consultation: 23 May 2022).

The international exhibition "West Encounters East" showed another perspective to use collections in foreign museums to tell a story about Chinese culture towards these national visitors. Meanwhile, the concepts and ideas behind the collections were explored by tracing the historical journey of the displayed porcelains. From 1757, the Qing government made Guangzhou the only port for official trade with Europe, the "thirteen rows" had the official and commercial purposes with a specific location, which could accept the application from foreign residents and trade in goods. Before the Opium War between the British and Qing government, this area had monopolised the trade between China and foreign companies for 85 years<sup>423</sup>.

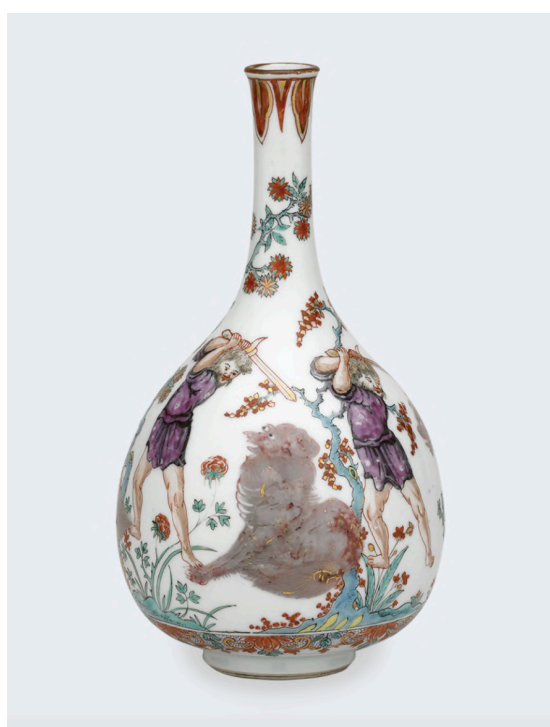


Figure 5-8: Flask of Swordsman and Lion with Red Underglaze in the Shanghai Museum.| Source: The Trustees of the British Museum<sup>424</sup>

As Figure 5-8 shows, the flask of swordsman and lion with red underglaze was made and painted in Jingdezhen, China's most famous porcelain town, with three lions in red glaze, blue and white dotting the eyes, and the rest were left blank. However, such decoration may be slightly

<sup>423</sup> The online introduction of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum. <http://shangbo-audio.yit.com/sb-tctz/index.php> (consultation: 25 May 2022).

<sup>424</sup> Introduction of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum in 2022. <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpoyG7LUAipgGLkJfDGOvA>(consultation: 23 May 2022).

plain. The Dutch porcelain dealer then asked the painter to add decoration to the bottle to meet the European aesthetic requirements. As a result, three men dressed in pink and purple short robes were added between the lions to make the original lions look like they were fighting with swordsmen. The colours, themes, composition and painting style were all modelled after the Japanese style of Kakiemon. Based on the introduction of this collection, the painted overglaze was added by Delft craftsmen in Holland. The painting theme, style and colour matching of these three swordsmen were Japanese, and the auxiliary border pattern was made in China. The techniques and inspirations of three countries and cultures in the East and the West merged on the same porcelain bottle. These swordsmen and the lions generated a story together vividly. The background flowers and leaves were also added based on the requirements of the Dutch porcelain dealer<sup>425</sup>. In addition to the patterns, it was interesting that foreign craftsmen also tried to imitate the insignia of Chinese porcelain on the bottom of the item. But the craftsmen could not write Chinese characters, so they only made some horizontal and vertical drawings to pretend it was coming from China (Figure 5-9), to make the local porcelain could be sold as an import expensive collections.



Figure 5-9: The online introduction of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum. | Source: Screenshot of the website of the Shanghai Museum.<sup>426</sup>

<sup>425</sup> The online introduction of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum. <http://shangbo-audio.yit.com/sb-tctz/index.php> (consultation: 25 May 2022).

<sup>426</sup> Introduction of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum in 2022. <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpoyG7LUAipgGLkJfDGOvA> (consultation: 23 May 2022).



This mixed cultural heritage showed that the exchange process of goods and items helped different civilisations to merge and observe each other. This became a challenge for traditional museology in modern museums, where objects were displayed based on their original areas, such as in Europe or Asia. These collections with Chinese material, German or Dutch design, Middle Eastern gold and ruby were changed based on the different tastes of owners or dealers. Sometimes, these porcelains had been used as gifts from the emperors or local governments; specific changes or signatures had been added to show their wishes to build connections with each other.



Figure 5-10: Colourful dark flower bowl inlaid with gold and ruby in the Shanghai Museum. | Source: The Trustees of the British Museum<sup>427</sup>

A typical Chinese daily item could become a diplomatic gift. For example, Figure 5-10 shows that a regular Chinese-made bowl had been traded to the Ottoman court in the late 16th century. The Middle East had a decorative tradition of inlaying precious objects with gold and precious stones. There were many objects inlaid with various kinds of gems, pearls and metal in the collection of Topkapi Palace Museum, which used to be a palace of the Ottoman Empire; now, it is a museum and world heritage<sup>428</sup>. On the surface of these Chinese original and plain porcelain,

<sup>427</sup> Introduction of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum in 2022.  
<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpoyG7LUAipgGLKJfDGOvA>(consultation: 23 May 2022).

<sup>428</sup> Aydın, Hilmi, Talha Uğurluel, and Ahmet Doğru. The Sacred Trusts: Pavilion of the Sacred Relics, Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul. Tughra Books, 2004: 3.

there were also decoration made by court craftsmen with metal, jade, crystal and other materials. The practice of adding gems on porcelain was unique to the Middle East and belonged exclusively to the court. Base on the introduction of this exhibition, in 1877, Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1876 to 1909, gave the bowl to the British ambassador to Constantinople<sup>429</sup>. On the surface, seven rubies were added with gold torus and petal-shaped gold pieces, and the branches and leaves of gold pieces were connected between the gems. The middle of the decoration was decorated with another two rubies, the same collocation of gold petals and leaves, which showed the taste of the Middle East and increased the value of the bowl hugely, changing it from a normal Chinese day to day item into an international gift.



Figure 5-11: Blue and white porcelain pen holder refitted lid cup. | Source: Victoria and Albert Museum, London.<sup>430</sup>

Chinese porcelain also could be changed into a personal gift with the name and date to celebrate friendship or love. Such as the figure 5-11 showed, it was originally used as a pen holder

<sup>429</sup> The online introduction of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum. <http://shangbo-audio.yit.com/sb-tctz/index.php> (consultation: 25 May 2022).

<sup>430</sup> Introduction page of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum in 2022. <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpoyG7LUAipgGLkJfDGOvA> (consultation: 23 May 2022).



and was popular in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. The outer wall was painted blue and white, depicting a few Chinese daily furniture, potted flowers, a tripod, etc. The pen holder was inlaid with gold-plated silver accessories, including a flip cover, a pair of handles and a base, making the original simple and elegant transition blue and white pen holder into a magnificent style cup. The flip surface of the bas-relief pattern replicates the porcelain itself decoration; the top of the round cap has a sitting dog image. The handle and the base are decorated with round carving and bas-relief scroll grass patterns, respectively. And a greyhound on each hold, as the greyhound was a special kind of dog originally from the British Isles and on the continent of Europe, for the coursing of deer for meat and sport; this specific information had been reviewed as a mark of owner's identity. The Bequest of Claude D. Roach donated this collection to the National Victoria and Albert Museum. It is an exciting reflection on the European journey of a 400-year-old Chinese item; after a global trip, it was displayed in the Shanghai Museum (Figure 5-12).



Figure 5-12: The main entrance of the Shanghai Museum of China. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>431</sup>

<sup>431</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the Shanghai Museum of China. (Photo date: 09 February 2023).

## 5.5 The cooperation process

### 5.5.1 The cooperation process of the exhibition

There were three key processes in this cultural exhibition. First, in 2019, when the Guimet Museum displayed the exhibition about a porcelain firmament of the current French Embassy in Lisbon from Santos Palace, which caught the attention of a Chinese curator, Chen Jie, deputy researcher of the Ceramics Research Department of Shanghai Museum. When Chen Jie shared in an online interview, after she noticed the exhibition in the Guimet Museum, she started to prepare a porcelain related exhibition, since in recent years, the study of trade porcelain had become a prominent direction in the study of East-West exchanges.<sup>432</sup> The Porcelain Hall of the Santos Palace in Portugal was a world-famous ceramic cultural building, and the ceiling of the Porcelain Hall was inlaid with 272 Chinese porcelain plates, most of them were blue and white porcelain produced in Jingdezhen in the Ming Dynasty. More over, in the May of 2022, the Guimet Museum of France and the Jingdezhen Museum held an online donation ceremony, in which the "Santos Palace Porcelain Hall Dome" was permanently settled in the Jingdezhen Museum with a 3D-rendering, as a virtual reproduction installation (Figure 5-13).

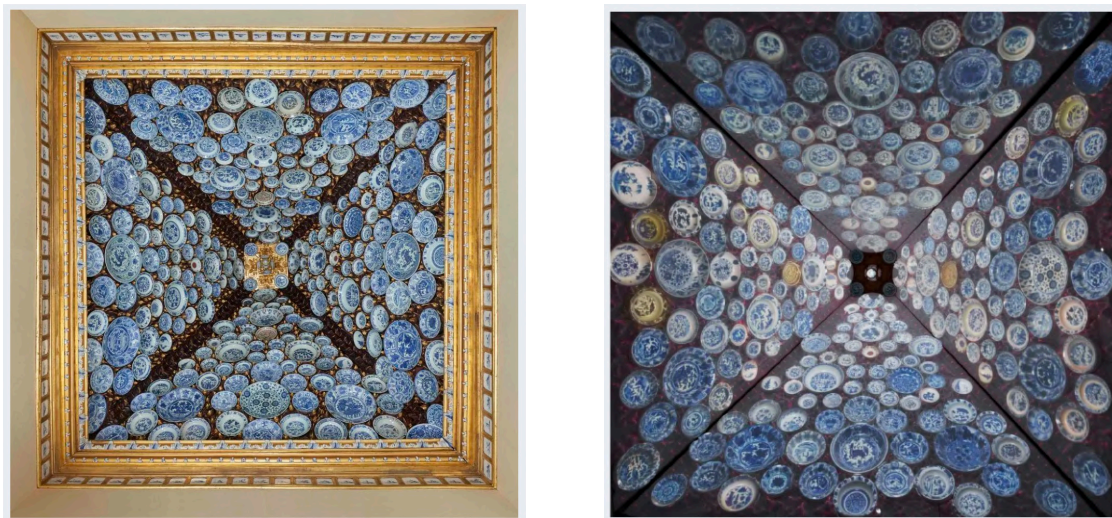


Figure 5-13: left - the original "Santos Palace Porcelain Hall Dome" in Lisbon, right - 3D-rendering installation in the Jingdezhen Museum. | Source: Screenshot of the website of the Shanghai Museum.<sup>433</sup>

<sup>432</sup> Chen Jie, deputy researcher of the Ceramics Research Department of Shanghai Museum online interview <https://j.eastday.com/p/1638029616034563> (consultation: 23 May 2022).

<sup>433</sup> Introduction website of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum in 2022. <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpoyG7LUAipgGLkJfDGOvA>(consultation: 23 May 2022).

Secondly, Chen Jie, a Chinese curator and deputy researcher of the Ceramics Research Department at Shanghai Museum, began compiling a list of collections to borrow from twelve museums around the world. These include the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in the United Kingdom, the Rijksmuseum in the Netherlands, the Metropolitan Museum in the United States, the Guimet Museum in France, and others.<sup>434</sup> This exhibition was the first time the Shanghai Museum had cooperated with Portugal. In total, three Portuguese museums participated in the exhibition: "West Encounters East——A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics" in Shanghai Museum, including the Portuguese Museum of Ancient Art, Almeida and Goncalves.<sup>435</sup> There were many important overseas museum exhibits gathered in this exhibition. The majority collections were based on the academic research programs in the Shanghai Museum, such as Chinese porcelain in Western oil paintings, the 15th-19th overseas trade between the Middle East, China and Europe, Zheng He's voyages (1371–1433), which explored Ming China's maritime on Indian Ocean diplomacy, trade, and cross-cultural interactions.<sup>436</sup> During that time, a large number of Chinese porcelains flooded into Europe and became luxury goods, which attracted both of royal families and upper class citizens, who changed the Chinese porcelains based on their taste or diplomatic purpose.

Thirdly, the majority curation communication with museums were conducted online during the pandemic, which was facing a lot of new problems, such as a shortage of airlines, the close of the museum for quarantine, work from home, temporary lockdown for certain area, etc. The original plan was displaying the exhibition from the October of 2020, while in the end, it opened one year later, from the October of 2021 to the January of 2022. However, before the pandemic, the British museums used to send their project co-ordinators to these Chinese Museum, who would set the valuable items personally, Chinese curators were not allowed to touch the majority of these "international treasures". During the pandemic, these project co-ordinators couldn't come, so the British museums provided a detailed introduction for setting items, which allowed the Shanghai Museum could decide the display method independently. These curators in Metropolitan Museum in the United States prepared a list of the packing order to explain the method to unpack for curators

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<sup>434</sup> Chen Jie, deputy researcher of the Ceramics Research Department of Shanghai Museum online interview <https://j.eastday.com/p/1638029616034563> (consultation: 23 May 2022).

<sup>435</sup> Sen, Tansen. "The impact of Zheng He's expeditions on Indian Ocean interactions." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 79, no. 3 (2016): 609.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid.



in the Shanghai Museum. The working process in the USA and China was different; for example, the curators in the USA said normally it would take them three days for setting up a group of collections, while since the Shanghai Museum had prepared carefully before the collections arrive to China, in the end, the Shanghai Museum could display much quicker than usual.

One of the highlights of this exhibition was the combination of the academic research with the real collections. Such as, there was a sector displaying the original Chinese porcelain with the Western oil painting together like the figure 5-14 showed a large Chinese ceramic plate, which was very expensive at the time, appeared in a Dutch oil painting by Willem Kalf in the 17th century, together with gold and silverware, glassware, as well as rich seafood, fruits and vegetables, presenting the scene of a wealthy European family. These oil paintings were another version of history books showing the use of Chinese porcelain in Europe. Porcelain like this, with blue and white tangled branches and peony pattern, was a Chinese trade item that came from the Middle East and arrived in Europe through the transit of Venetian merchants at that time. It also appeared in the oil paintings of the Venetian School.



Figure 5-14: The oil painting by Willem Kalf and Chinese porcelain .| Source: Screenshot of the website of the Shanghai Museum.<sup>437</sup>

This international exhibition started from a porcelain exhibition in the Guimet Museum, which displayed the gorgeous baroque-style hall through 3D technology. Usually, in these porcelain rooms, many porcelain were placed in cabinets or hung on the walls, but it was rare that

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<sup>437</sup> Introduction website of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum in 2022.  
<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpoyG7LUAipgGLkJfDGOvA>(consultation: 23 May 2022).

the whole ceiling was filled within the Santos Palace. Nowadays the Santos Palace had been bought by the French government as an embassy location, which made the exhibition in Paris possible. When the Chinese curator, Chen Jie got inspiration from Paris, the Shanghai Museum decided to create an exhibition about the journey of Chinese porcelains in the past five hundred years globally. It was an initiative proposed by the Shanghai Museum which cooperated with multiple museums together.

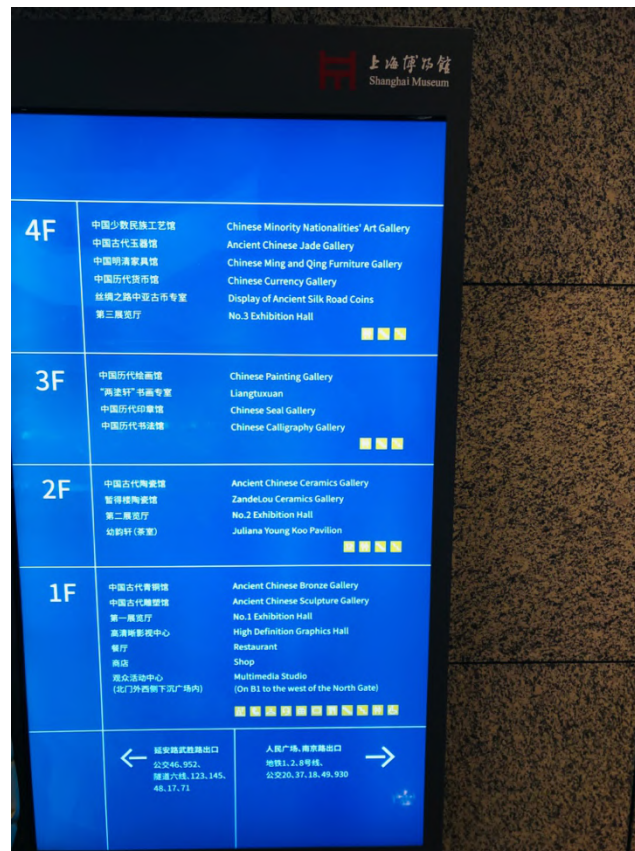


Figure 5-15: The floor guide of the Shanghai Museum of China. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>438</sup>

As shows in Figure 5-15, the floor plan of the Shanghai Museum of China includes three temporary exhibition halls, each on a separate floor. The design of the galleries still focuses on displaying Chinese collections. The international exhibition was split into two galleries during a fieldwork visit to the Shanghai Museum of China in 2023. Visitors who bought tickets had to use the same ticket twice to see the entire exhibition. Cross-border exhibitions, as international cultural collaboration projects, challenge the capacity of Chinese museums to meet display standards.

<sup>438</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the Shanghai Museum of China. (Photo date: 09 February 2023).

## 5.5.2 Communication and Media Report

Chinese porcelain was a common topic in the Shanghai Museum, while the majority of collections in this exhibition had their global trips with the help of time and technology. The traditional blue and white porcelains used to be very expensive in the global trading system during the Ming Dynasty. When the trade started, the Chinese porcelain supplement could not meet European demands; foreign craftsmen started to “pain Chinese characters”. At the same, the foreign trade dealers wanted to order porcelains with patterns related to their religion and words in foreign languages, which was difficult for Chinese craftsmen to copy correctly. For example, a blue-and-white Portuguese royal emblem-patterned bowl had a circle of Western letter inscriptions on the mouth of the bowl. However, some letters were wrongly written, and researchers speculated that it should be a religious slogan based on the other patterns on the same bowl. According to the related reports of the collection, these letters were likely to be "painted" by Chinese craftsmen who did not know Western languages according to customised requirements.



Figure 5-16: Left - a Chinese porcelain with the image of Christ; Right - Chinese porcelain with oil paintings. |

Source: Screenshot of the website of the Shanghai Museum.<sup>439</sup>

Moreover, there was a Chinese porcelain with the image of Christ was baptised by John, which was made by a Chinese craftsman who had no idea about Christianity, as an commercial order by Portugal traders (Figure 5-16-left). Since some of the original European oil paintings had

<sup>439</sup> Introduction website of “West Encounters East” in the Shanghai Museum in 2022.  
<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpoyG7LUAipgGLkJfDGOvA> (consultation: 23 May 2022).

very strict requirements about the transportation by air, or too big to join this exhibition, copies of certain related paintings had been displayed with a proper size (Figure 5-16-right).

In the exhibition, many Chinese and foreign porcelains from the same period were viewed correspondingly, giving a glimpse of how China and the West imagined each other on both sides of the ocean at that time. The special perspective of this exhibition was welcomed by Chinese visitors, who went to the exhibition for two hours and checked the collections and introduction carefully. These 260 collections also had been published as a book with detailed introduction and pictures, including more background information and stories. Because Chinese porcelain was popular in the West, it had also driven and influenced the European exploration of porcelain in neighbouring countries such as Japan and Vietnam. These collections of porcelain from various countries demonstrated the relation between Chinese craftsmanship and European art, in which, beauty from the other side of the ocean became a part of inspiration. The images drawn on the ceramics also showed the imagination of various countries using the porcelain as a medium to promote religion or bond private friendship.

The media report emphasised that all the collections were culturally mixed, which was rare compared to porcelain sold and used in China as standard daily consumption goods. Such as a Dutch figure of white porcelain produced around the year 1700, with a high nose and deep eyes, long curly hair, and a long row of buttons in the middle of the clothes, but the figure's round face was painted as a Chinese person, since at that time, Chinese craftsmen had never seen any foreigners in the life, they only could draw figures based on the limit description through trade orders and their imaginations. There was another pair of portraits of Chinese musicians produced by Meissen, based on these German craftsmen's imagination, as male and female musicians wore trumpet-style hats and held musical instruments like guitars and drums, which had not been exported to China yet. The exposed dress and deep facial features were very different from the Chinese; it was a time with limited contact between Europe and Asia, but the effort of these craftsmen had been left on these collections. A section displayed collections from seven shipwrecks that had been salvaged in recent years, which were like "capsules of time" that kept thousands of Chinese porcelains under the sea for more than hundreds of years. As the curator of the Shanghai Museum introduced, porcelain itself was the commercial goods and also medium of information.



### 5.5.3 Public reaction

Under the pandemic, most museums globally closed for several months, while the Shanghai Museum was able to host an international exhibition with the support of the French government and the commercial brand Michelin Foundation.<sup>440</sup> These famous collaboration museums' reputations also attracted visitors who could not travel internationally for quite a long time: the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum in the United Kingdom, the Rijksmuseum in the Netherlands, the Metropolitan Museum in the United States, the Guimet Museum in France. This exhibition also emphasised solid academic research about the details of collections; for example, the third sector of this exhibition connected European oil paintings with Chinese goods. These paintings included Chinese porcelains as containers for sugar or fruit, which introduced the former academic research results about Western oil paintings with Chinese goods to visitors in a friendly and understandable way (Figure 5-17).



Figure 5-17: Visitors in the Shanghai Museum. | Source: Jinghao Tong<sup>441</sup>

<sup>440</sup> Introduction page of "West Encounters East" <https://reurl.cc/DAAMOd> (consultation: 23 May 2022).

<sup>441</sup> Photos by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the Shanghai Museum of China. (Photo date: 09 February 2023).

There were 260 collections in the exhibition, separated into three sectors from the first encounter of Western and Eastern through sea route trade, then the learning process and imaging each other's culture to the last part, Chinese and Western interaction. Although there were exhibitions about porcelain in China quite often, the collections found from these several salvaged shipwrecks in recent years were displayed in the exhibition for the first time, which combined with the introduction of the information of these shipwrecks, from their location, age, purpose, size and porcelains. There was an audio introduction through the software WeChat, so these visitors could bring their earphones and mobiles to connect to free Wi-Fi in the Shanghai Museum without borrowing equipment, which was a much hygiene way to transfer the audio guide service by uploading voice and image information online through social platform, people who finished the exhibition could review the online content long-distance and free. The size of the exhibition was suitable for visitors to finish within two hours, which provided a straightforward narrative to show the transport technology allowed communication possible in the first place. The understanding and interaction could develop between China and the West (Figure 5-18).

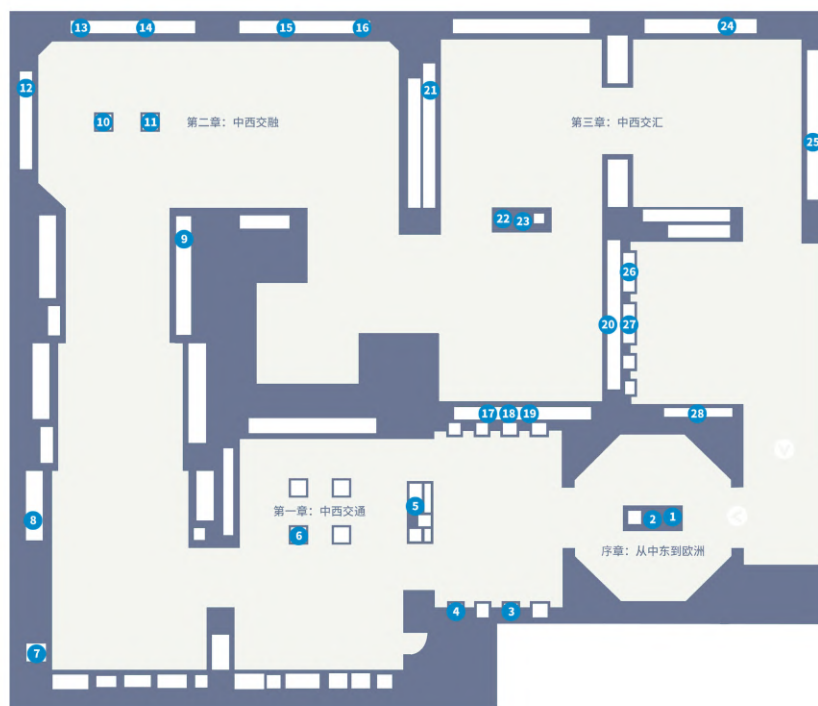


Figure 5-18: The map of the exhibition of "West Encounters East". | Source: Screenshot of the Shanghai Museum<sup>442</sup>

<sup>442</sup> Introduction website of "West Encounters East" in the Shanghai Museum in 2022.  
<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpoyG7LUAipgGLkJfDGOvA> (consultation: 23 May 2022).

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter analyses the case study of a cross-border exhibition hosted at the Shanghai Museum, which mainly cooperates with the Guimet Museum in France. This is the second example of international exhibitions in China as a social experiment dealing with controversial issues related to cultural heritage. In contrast to the first case study, which was proposed by the British Museum and the British government, the Shanghai Museum led this cross-border exhibition during the pandemic. Since curators from other countries could not travel to China and coordinate tasks such as unpacking and checking collections after international transport, the Shanghai Museum completed these tasks with the help of a handbook written by the curators in other countries. The pandemic from 2020 to 2023 created difficulties for hosting exhibitions across borders. However, progress has been made in using technology and communication to open exhibitions to the public with some delay, even when dealing with time differences. Cultural diplomacy in exhibitions allows museums to display narratives from the lending organisation and creates storylines that can benefit the host museum, showcasing its cultural influence by selecting collections from global museums.

Cross-border exhibitions offer opportunities for museum professionals to exchange knowledge and challenge stereotypes in their exhibitions. Bilingual introduction boards are becoming more common, providing more detailed information for foreign visitors and reminding Chinese visitors of other cultures and languages. Typically taking two to five years to prepare, cross-border exhibitions like "West Encounters East: A Cultural Conversation between Chinese and European Ceramics" at the Shanghai Museum are mentioned in this research as an example of a new generation of exhibition hybrids in non-Western countries. These exhibitions have demonstrated audiences' potential for cultural consumption and are driving museums to become more inclusive institutions. The Shanghai Museum aims to become an educational institution powered by academic research. "West Encounters East" combines academic results and international items related to the same theme, which could inspire future cooperation between universities and museums.

These discussions and debates surrounding "giving back these collections to where they come from" have garnered significant attention due to its perceived convenience and justice. In the context of this international exhibition, efforts were made to create cultural exchange activities

centred around the theme of "connection and influence". This allowed visitors and curators to reflect on the past and present and find a middle ground between them. It is important to note that these collections are a part of history, and the societies that created them have long since faded. Over time, both the collections and societies have changed. For example, an item from the Qing dynasty cannot be "returned" to a specific owner or a particular time in Chinese history since the society it came from has already evolved. However, by fostering new relationships with each other through international collaborations, visitors from different countries can inherit these cultures and stories as global citizens in the twenty-first century. As is true throughout history, every culture will continue to impact humanity's shared history significantly. The connections between different nations are more prevalent than people often realise.

Despite the challenges in international collaborations, such as high insurance fees, long-distance communication, legal processes for confirming agreements, and language differences, cross-border exhibitions still provide valuable opportunities for local visitors to view foreign items firsthand. This provides unique information to break misunderstandings and stereotypes. Compared to the potential benefits of these international exhibitions - sharing working standards among museum institutions, exchanging understanding and explanations for collections, co-hosting the same themed displays, lending essential items to each other, and training new generation professionals through new organisations like ICOM China - the limited technology and costly international transportation costs of the past made it difficult for museums on opposite sides of the world to create exhibitions together. This meant that most societies only had access to and enjoyed a small part of global history and knowledge.

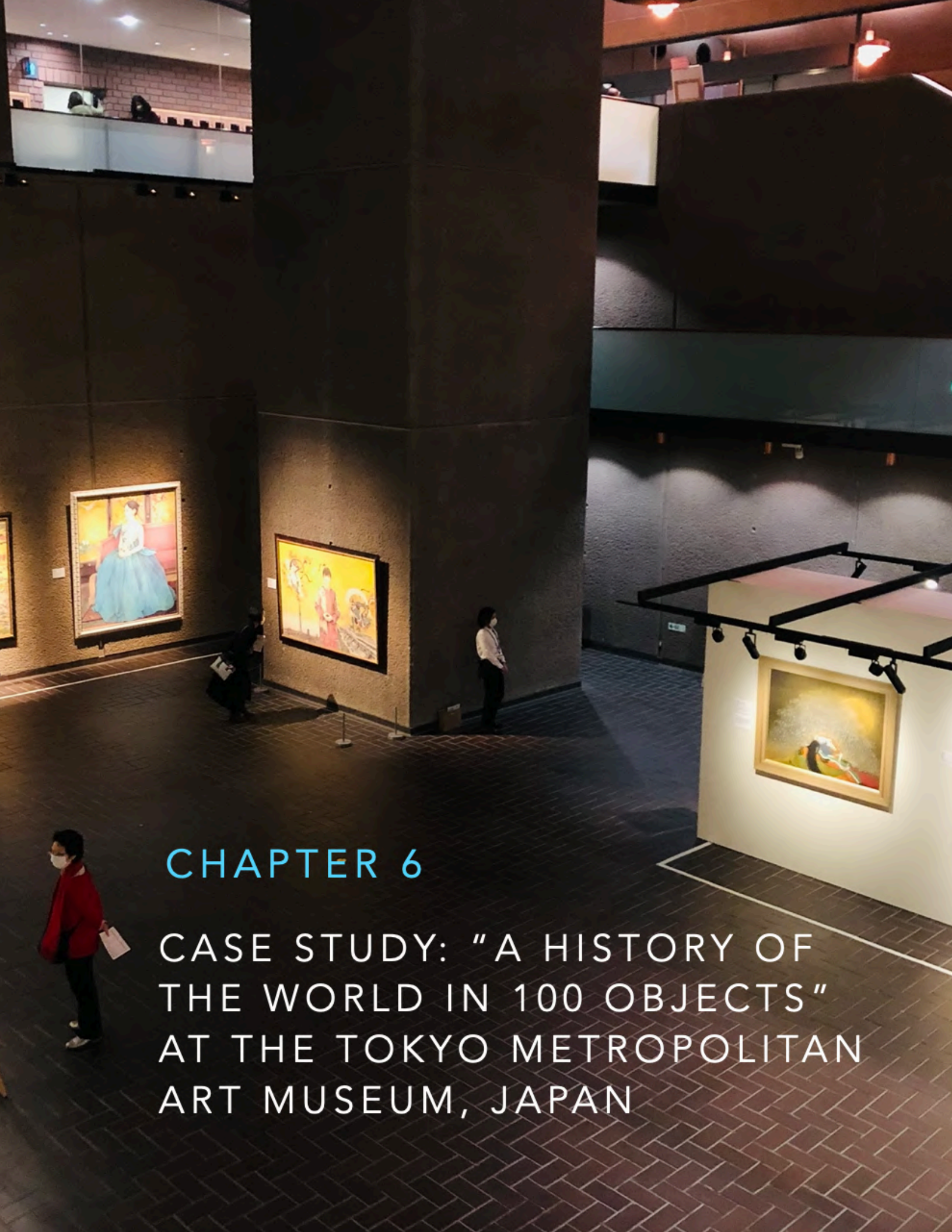
As museums shift both inside and outside of cultural institutions, driven by cultural diplomacy, activities hosted by museums are gaining more credibility than government-dominated movements. These museums enjoy a reputation as non-state actors. At the same time, the definition of the museum is changing to match the mission of heritage organisations in the twenty-first century. This includes consideration of the impact from governments, such as content censorship and financial support. Potential global audiences have the power to free museums that previously served primarily as tools for local governments' cultural expansion agendas. This can also provide international exhibitions with more profits and influence. With visitors becoming more diverse and international, professional collaborations can build narratives that involve more interest groups and become more universal in representing the shared experiences of global society.

Most introduction boards in museums have been created with a local background, making it difficult for overseas audiences to understand. When collections travel to foreign countries, the introduction information for audiences also has a chance to review the hidden meaning between the lines. The content needs to be updated with a more cosmopolitan perspective to include visitors with different cultural backgrounds. Curators in these museums play essential roles in proposing new exhibitions, selecting collections, building connections, and designing visiting routes. With international collaborations, curators and professionals in different countries can exchange working methodologies based on case-to-case analysis. International organisations like ICOM are creating networks within institutions and private sectors. The creation of ICOM China also speeds up the development of Chinese museums. The flow of historical collections globally caters to the interests of multiple groups, such as international cultural management organisations. Cross-border exhibitions result from cultural diplomacy between countries to promote their historical narratives to wider audiences. In this process, national narratives are also updated to meet the expectations of global visitors.

This chapter analyses the curatorial practices of international exhibitions in the Shanghai Museum cooperated with the Guimet Museum under cultural diplomacy. It identifies that the global mobility of collections improves knowledge exchange among museum professionals and creates international narratives for local audiences through global collections. The collaboration for this international exhibition satisfies particular motivations for the Shanghai Museum and the Guimet Museum. For instance, it can promote the influence of the Chinese porcelain commercial network and display items from a French museum to Chinese audiences. Data on increasing visitors to museums' exhibitions, from national and international perspectives, and decreasing the age of visitors globally indicate that cross-border museums' exhibitions have attracted more and more diverse visitors globally in the past twenty years. In this collaboration case, the Shanghai Museum invited multiple museums overseas to borrow collections related to the exhibition's theme. It was a cross-border exhibition created by the host museum. With specific consideration to promote China's international influence through the medium of porcelain, the Shanghai Museum used cultural diplomacy to expand its temporary collections rather than simply being a display venue for foreign museums.







## CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDY: "A HISTORY OF  
THE WORLD IN 100 OBJECTS"  
AT THE TOKYO METROPOLITAN  
ART MUSEUM, JAPAN





## 6.1 Introduction

“Research is formalised curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.”<sup>443</sup>

Zora Neale Hurston  
American writer and anthropologist

As Zora Neale Hurston stated, choosing a cross-border exhibition in two countries is related to the researcher's curiosity regarding the relationship between research and the researcher. The exhibition in a Japanese museum allows the researcher to review the case study of international cooperation from an outsider's perspective. This research compares the cultural diplomacy practices of Chinese and Japanese museums to provide insights into museums' international cooperation in these two countries. It is interesting to note that although these two countries are geographically close, their approaches to cultural diplomacy related to museum exhibitions are pretty different. This chapter focuses on the first case study of a Japanese museum, which shares the same exhibition as discussed in Chapter 4. However, the Japanese case study has many more details to explore. For example, after delving into the history of the relationship between the British and Japanese museums, their missions and goals, it is easy to see how this cross-border exhibition fits into Japan's broader cultural landscape.

This chapter includes an examination of the specific strategies employed by the museum to promote cultural diplomacy, such as its partnerships with local media companies like the Asahi Shimbun. By taking a closer look at these aspects, this chapter is trying to build a more nuanced understanding of the Japanese approach to cultural diplomacy and how it differs from that of China. The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum was the first station for the cross-border exhibition: “A History of the World in 100 Objects” from the 18<sup>th</sup> of April to the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2015. Then, the exhibition had a two-week break for packing and transferring to the Kyushu National Museum and displayed there from the 14<sup>th</sup> of July to the 6<sup>th</sup> of September of the same year. The third station in Japan was the Kobe City Museum; the exhibition was open to the public from the 20<sup>th</sup> of September until the 11<sup>th</sup> of January in 2016. NHK, Nippon Hoso Kyokai (Japan Broadcasting Corporation),

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<sup>443</sup> Hemenway, Robert E. *Zora Neale Hurston: a literary biography*. University of Illinois Press, 1977, p 212.

is Japan's only public broadcaster, which sponsored all these exhibitions in Japan with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the British Council.<sup>444</sup>

The Eurocentric approach adopted by Oriental case studies has been criticised for decades due to its limited perspective. It is undeniable that the researcher's background unavoidably has an impact on the discourse. However, having received her bachelor's education in China and master's degree in the UK, the researcher's varied academic experiences can foster fresh dialogues and provide an inside-outside view of these museums. Distance and time create misunderstandings and prejudices, and international cooperation among these museums represents an important social experiment for the management of cultural heritage globally. By creating a worldview perspective and involving more museums from different countries to participate in one international exhibition, these curators have endeavoured to generate a new way of spreading memory and information about humanity. As shown in Figure 6-1, collections from all over the world make up the narrative of this case study, which puts together the past two million years and emphasises the critical word: connection.



Figure 6-1: The Exhibition Flyer from the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. | Source: Screenshot of the website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.<sup>445</sup>

<sup>444</sup> “The British Museum Exhibiton: A History of the World in 100 Objects” [https://www.tobikan.jp/exhibition/h27\\_history100.html](https://www.tobikan.jp/exhibition/h27_history100.html) (consultation: 23 May 2022).

<sup>445</sup> Screenshot of the website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. [https://www.tobikan.jp/media/pdf/20150205\\_history100\\_2.pdf](https://www.tobikan.jp/media/pdf/20150205_history100_2.pdf). (Date: 6 January 2023).

## 6.2 The Cultural Cooperation between the UK and Japan

### 6.2.1 The Historical Connection

Cultural cooperation between the UK and Japan has a long history that dates back to the 19th century. During that time, Fukuzawa Yukichi, a Japanese writer and educator, introduced the idea of "leaving Asia" to emphasise the importance of Japan engaging with the rest of the world.<sup>446</sup> The Japanese intellectual groups had widely adopted his idea then and even played an important role in today's Japanese society. The portrait of Fukuzawa Yukichi is still used on the cover of the ¥ 10,000 Japanese currency, which has the highest value in the paper currency system. In addition to his influence on Japanese intellectual circles, his idea also attracted the international community's attention. Many foreign scholars have studied his works and incorporated his ideas into their research related to Japan. His influence can be seen in various fields, such as philosophy, economics, and politics. Furthermore, his portrait on the Japanese currency constantly reminds him of his importance to Japanese society. His ideas have influenced the country's economic and political systems and cultural policy since he visited the International Exhibition of 1862 in London and was amazed by the number of visitors.<sup>447</sup>

With the idea of “leaving Asia”, cooperating with other countries about cultural activities is a part of building a new Japan. Establishing strong cultural ties with other nations is a fundamental aspect of building a contemporary Japan and expanding its influence beyond Asia. This involves not only promoting Japanese culture abroad but also participating in the cultural practices of other countries, such as the International Exhibition of 1862 in London.<sup>448</sup> By collaborating with foreign partners on cultural activities, Japan can better understand different perspectives and build stronger, more meaningful relationships with other countries. The exhibition can also result in more trade and cooperation opportunities while fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for diversity and cultural exchange. Even today, Fukuzawa Yukichi’s “leaving Asia” philosophy continues to guide the way Japanese people think and act, shaping the country's future as well as its past. This philosophy of openness and cultural exchange eventually led to the establishment of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902, a significant milestone

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<sup>446</sup> Checkland, Olive. *Japan and Britain after 1859: creating cultural bridges*. Routledge, 2003: 27.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid: 22.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid: 20.

in the two countries' relationship history.<sup>449</sup> In the years that followed, cultural cooperation between the UK and Japan continued to grow, with numerous exchange programs, joint exhibitions, and collaborations between artists and scholars from both countries. Today, the history of cultural cooperation serves as a foundation for the solid and enduring relationship between the UK and Japan.

For example, the Asahi Shimbun Company of Japan has long supported the British Museum, making it possible for the museum to display magnificent exhibits in and outside of Japan.<sup>450</sup> The Asahi Shimbun is not just a leading Japanese newspaper but also provides an extensive information service through the internet. Their commitment to philanthropy is noteworthy, with a century-long tradition of supporting key exhibitions in Japan that showcase art, culture, and history worldwide. “The Asahi Shimbun Displays” is a program about the world's cultural heritage in the British Museum, located in Room 3, displaying a series of free temporary exhibitions.<sup>451</sup> Beyond the Asahi Shimbun Displays, the company supports the British Museum's touring exhibition programme in Japan and generously funds the Asahi Shimbun Gallery of Amaravati sculpture in Room 33a.<sup>452</sup>

In sum, the Asahi Shimbun Company's collaboration with the British Museum started in 2005; this constant cooperation relationship helps the cultural sectors in the UK and Japan to adapt to each other and develop work experiences together. The British Museum's Display Room 3 could serve as a venue for historical collections. With the introduction of the official website and the design, the Japanese company, Asahi Shimbun, could gain international promotion through this cultural project, with the support of the British Museum and its reputation. By partnering with the Japanese company Asahi Shimbun, the museum uses the space as an experimental space for exhibition design interaction with visitors to reach a broader, international audience through this cultural project. Asahi Shimbun's extensive networks and resources could help promote the museum's collections and reputation on a global scale.

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<sup>449</sup> O'Brien, Phillips. *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-1922*. Vol. 17. Routledge, 2003: 26.

<sup>450</sup> Website of the British Museum <https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/japans-festival-floats> (consultation: 27th April, 2023).

<sup>451</sup> Ibid.

<sup>452</sup> India: Amaravati | British Museum <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/galleries/india-amaravati> (consultation: 28th April, 2023).

## 6.2.2 International Exhibitions between the UK and Japan

In recent years, there has been an increasing trend of museums from different countries collaborating. One such example is the collaboration between museums in the UK and Japan. In 2019, the British Museum invited Japan to hold one of the most significant Manga exhibitions ever held outside of Japan.<sup>453</sup> This not only showcased the manga's influence on Japanese culture, but it also provided an opportunity for UK audiences to review the history of Manga and its cultural significance. Another notable collaboration was the International Council of Museums (ICOM) 2019 General Conference in Kyoto, Japan.<sup>454</sup> This conference served as a platform for museum professionals from different countries to share their experiences and knowledge and to explore ways to strengthen the museum industry in Asia. Japanese museums and their professionals also show more interest and motivation than Chinese museums in cooperating with cultural organisations from the UK. This is because Japan does not have the same troubled past as China, particularly regarding the two opium wars that took place in China during the 19th century.

As the world continues to globalise and become more diverse, museums in the UK and Japan are collaborating and promoting cultural exchange through exhibitions. By working together, these museums generate exhibitions that reflect the histories and cultures of different communities. For example, the Manga exhibition that was held in the British Museum sparked a debate among readers of *The Guardian*, with some criticizing the exhibit for being too new to be displayed in a museum.<sup>455</sup> Although manga have been bought by huge amounts of people across the globe, based on the worldwide statistics.<sup>456</sup> However, such collaborations are not limited to just exhibitions. Museums are also collaborating with scholars and community leaders to develop exhibitions that more accurately reflect the histories and cultures of the communities they serve. This approach has the potential to incorporate the perspectives of different communities and interest groups into exhibitions, making them more inclusive and reflective of the diverse communities they serve.

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<sup>453</sup> Christmas, Salina. "The Citi Exhibition Manga マンガ (British Museum, 2019)." *The Comics Grid: Journal of Comics Scholarship* 9, no. 1, 2019: 15.

<sup>454</sup> History of ICOM - International Council of Museums -International Council of Museums <https://icom.museum/en/about-us/history-of-icom/> (consultation: 05th March, 2023).

<sup>455</sup> “Manga belongs in the British Museum as much as the Elgin marbles” | David Barnett | *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/23/manga-british-museum-elgin-marbles> (consultation: 05th March, 2023).

<sup>456</sup> Ito, Kinko. "Manga in Japanese history." *Japanese visual culture: Explorations in the world of manga and anime* (2008): 39.

Moreover, technology is being used to enhance the visitor experience, providing more in-depth information and context for the collections on display. This approach has its own challenges and limitations, but it can be a valuable tool for museums to engage visitors and promote cultural understanding. At the same time, by working collaboratively and creatively, museums can navigate these challenges and continue to serve as vital institutions for education, research, and cultural exchange. This is especially important as societies worldwide become more diverse, and museums must find ways to incorporate different communities' perspectives and interest groups' perspectives into their exhibitions. For example, from 30<sup>th</sup>, September 2021 to the 30<sup>th</sup>, January 2022, an exhibition about drawings of Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) hosted in the British Museum, who created *Under the Wave off Kanagawa*, which was known as *The Great Wave*.<sup>457</sup> A video about this exhibition was published two weeks before the opening day, in which the curator Alfred Haft introduced the background story in 15 minutes.<sup>458</sup> This video was about “The Great Picture Book of Everything”, illustrated by the great Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai, which reached more than 170,000 views online.<sup>459</sup>

These international exhibitions between the UK and Japan offer museums a chance to learn from one another and cultivate a greater understanding and appreciation of global cultural heritage for visitors. By promoting cultural exchange, museums can play an essential role in preserving and promoting cultural diversity for future generations, allowing young social members to access rich collections of the human community rather than only local historical items. As globalisation continues and society becomes more diverse, museums in the UK and Japan seek ways to collaborate and promote cultural exchange. Exhibitions featuring Japanese artists are typically displayed for three to four months. During this period, school teachers can arrange activities based on the information provided by the British Museum website. By collaborating, museums can develop exhibitions that showcase the histories and cultures of diverse communities, promoting a greater understanding and appreciation of the world's cultural heritage.

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<sup>457</sup> “Past Exhibition: Hokusai: The Great Picture Book of Everything” | British Museum <https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/hokusai-great-picture-book-everything> (consultation: 05th March, 2023).

<sup>458</sup> “The Great Picture Book of Everything; Hokusai's Unpublished Illustrations” | #CuratorsCorner S6 Ep8 - YouTube [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8vEgqRWGMA&ab\\_channel=TheBritishMuseum](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8vEgqRWGMA&ab_channel=TheBritishMuseum) (consultation: 07th March, 2023).

<sup>459</sup> Ibid.



## 6.3 The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

### 6.3.1 Introduction of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum



Figure 6-2: The main entrance of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>460</sup>

The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (as Figure 6-2) was established initially as the "Tokyo Prefectural Art Museum" in 1926; later in 1943 its name changed to the present one and it started to host touring exhibitions of art masterpieces from Japan and abroad.<sup>461</sup> The year of 1926 marked a significant turning point in Japan's history, from the Taisho era (1912-26) to the Showa era (1926-89). Before the establishment of the museum, major art exhibitions were held annually in Ueno Park, such as the September Inten (Japan Art Institute Exhibition) and Nikaten (Nika Association), as well as the October Bunten (Ministry of Education Exhibition).<sup>462</sup> Subsequently,

<sup>460</sup> Photo by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. (Date: 6 January 2023).

<sup>461</sup> "Tokyo Prefectural Art Museum Opens—Japan's First Public Museum of Art  
"https://www.tobikan.jp/en/outline/history.html (consultation: 07th March, 2023).

<sup>462</sup> Ibid.

the Tokyo Prefectural Art Museum became the primary venue for these significant annual exhibitions. These art exhibitions, held in the autumn, gave rise to the popular notion in Japan of "autumn, the season of the arts." It is interesting to note that Japan, prior to the establishment of the Tokyo Prefectural Art Museum, did not have any public museums of art. From the Japanese perspective, art museums in Europe are often viewed as visible symbols of a city's cultural image, which is related to the reputation of cities. As a result, there was a growing opinion in Japanese society that the country required an art museum or else it would fall behind the West.

The Tokyo Prefectural Art Museum, later the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, had a fascinating beginning. It all started with a single entrepreneur - Sato Keitaro, who was instrumental in its founding in 1926.<sup>463</sup> His passion for art and culture led him to donate a staggering one million Japanese yen, equivalent to about 4 billion Japanese yen today, to Tokyo Prefecture to fund the museum's construction.<sup>464</sup> This act of generosity allowed the museum to come to fruition and become the cultural hub that it is today. Interestingly, the museum's fundamental method of operation differed significantly from that of Chinese museums. While the latter received government financial support, they also faced numerous limitations.

With the establishment of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Japan could showcase its cultural projects and artistic heritage to a broader audience. Establishing the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum was a significant milestone for Japan's cultural scene. It provided a venue for displaying the country's rich artistic heritage and a platform for promoting contemporary art and cultural projects. The museum's collections include diverse artworks, from traditional Japanese paintings and sculptures to modern installations and multimedia exhibits. By showcasing these works to a wider audience, the museum helps to foster a greater appreciation of Japan's cultural achievements and artistic innovations. In addition, the museum organizes various events and educational programs that involve visitors of different ages and backgrounds, offering an interactive and engaging experience that fosters a greater appreciation of Japanese art and culture. Through its commitment to preserving and promoting Japan's cultural heritage, the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum has become an invaluable resource for scholars, artists, and enthusiasts alike, and continues to play a vital role in shaping the country's artistic and cultural landscape.

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<sup>463</sup> Ibid.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid.

### 6.3.2 Exhibitions and Galleries at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

Due to Ueno Park's scenic zone law limiting building height to 15m, the museum placed 60% of its exhibition space underground.<sup>465</sup> The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum has a long history dating to its inception in the 1920s when it first opened as the Tokyo Prefectural Art Museum. Over the years, the museum has undergone several transformations, and its current building was completed in September 1975.<sup>466</sup> The museum's design was created by Mayekawa Kunio Associates, who greatly emphasised creating open spaces, lobbies, and restaurants when designing public buildings.<sup>467</sup> In doing so, he aimed to provide visitors with a sense of urban enjoyment while also using architecture to engender comfortable urban spaces. Visitors to the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum can, therefore, look forward to viewing spectacular artwork and experiencing the architecture that has been thoughtfully designed to enhance their overall experience. Furthermore, the museum offers diverse temporary exhibitions throughout the year, presenting various art from various periods and cultures.

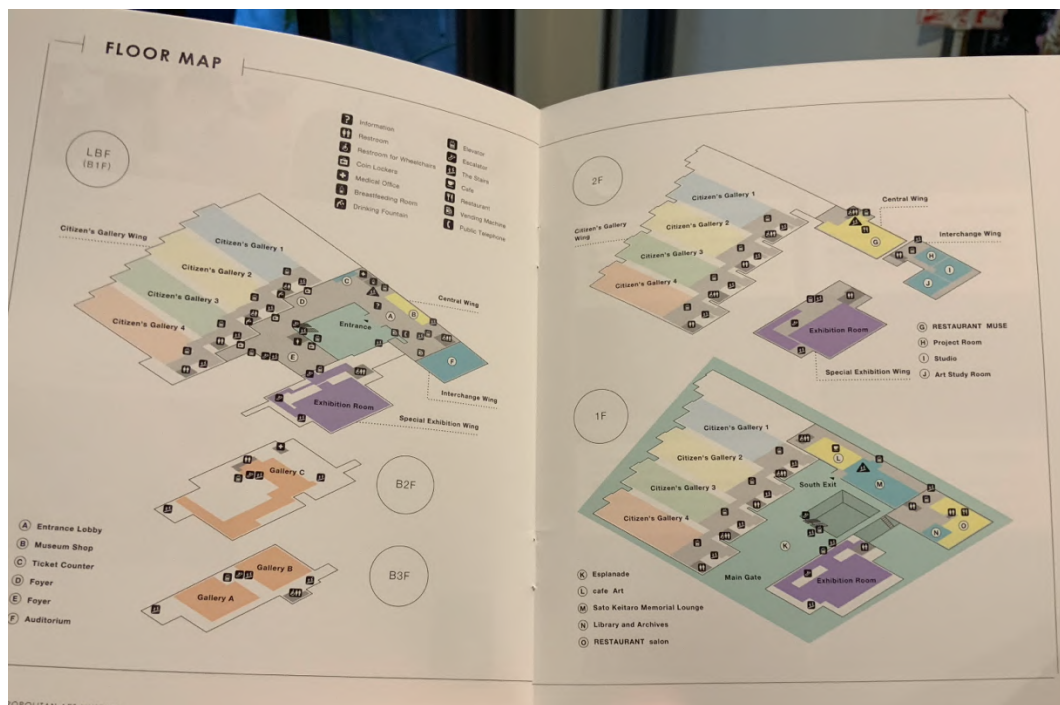


Figure 6-3: The floor map of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>468</sup>

<sup>465</sup> “New Museum Building by MAYEKAWA Kunio | TOKYO METROPOLITAN ART MUSEUM <https://www.tobikan.jp/en/outline/architecture2.html> (consultation: 07th March, 2023).

<sup>466</sup> Ibid.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> Photo by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. (Date: 6 January 2023).



Figure 6-3 shows that the museum's main floor and entrance hall are situated on the B1 level, where the design concept originates. There are four Citizen's Exhibition rooms and one special exhibition wing. From the esplanades surrounding the different function blocks, such as the public entry exhibition block, thematic exhibition block, and cultural activities block, the design develops inward towards the open space of the B1 floor. This arrangement connects the museum's interior to the exterior spaces of the park but also provides visitors with a clear path of movement through the museum, ensuring these audiences won't miss any exhibits. Additionally, the interior is designed so visitors can enjoy the surrounding park scenery from various vantage points, creating a more immersive and enjoyable experience. Figure 6-4 displays a selection of Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum exhibition posters. The fourth poster on the second row depicts the case study examined in this chapter: "A History of the World in 100 Objects".

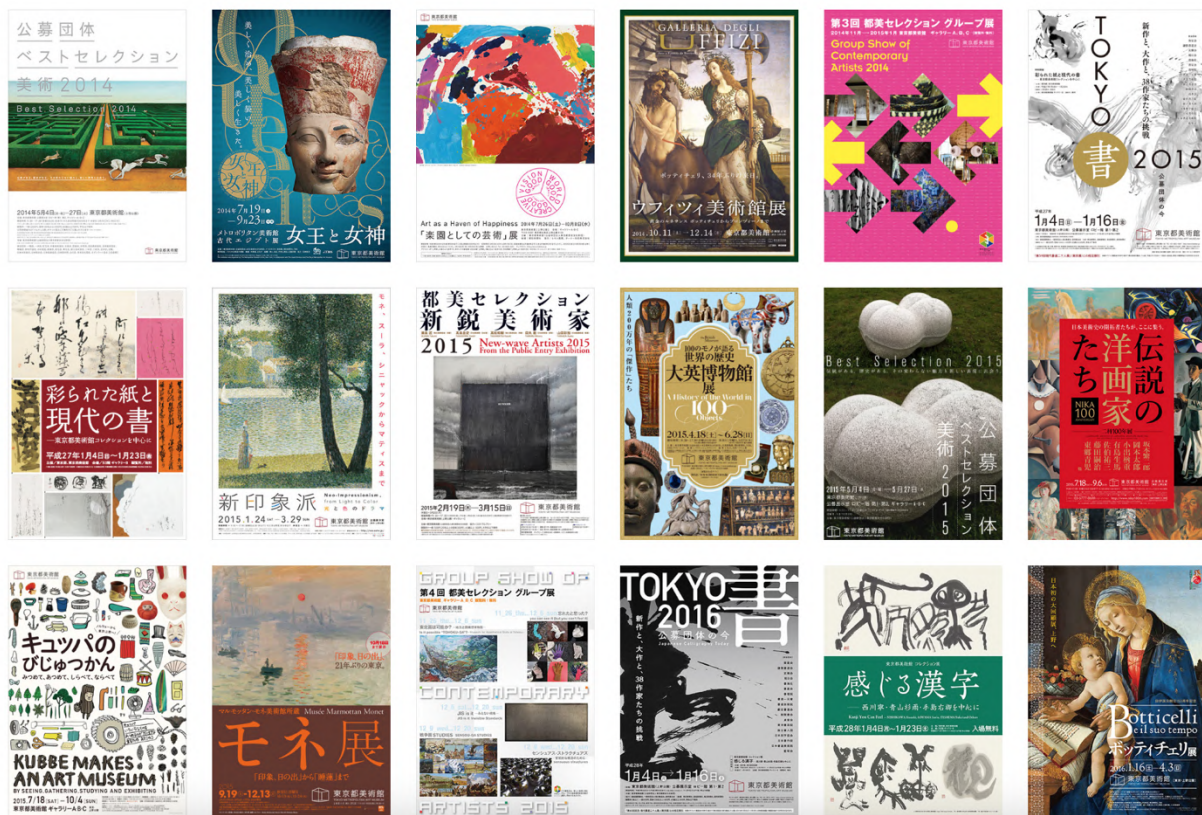


Figure 6-4: Some of Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum's exhibition posters. | Source: Screenshot of the website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.<sup>469</sup>

<sup>469</sup> Screenshot of the website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.  
<https://www.tobikan.jp/en/archives/poster.html> (consultation: 09th March, 2023).

### 6.3.3 The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum’s administration system

After reviewing the research questionnaire sent by the researcher through email, Mr. Hitoshi Yamamura, the chief curator who has worked for the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum for more than 15 years, prepared several related documents before the face-to-face interview on January 10th, 2023. The interview took place in the office of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Tokyo. One of the documents shows that the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, along with ten other art organisations, operates under the Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture. The Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture is a crucial organisation dedicated to preserving the heritage and cultural history of Japan.<sup>470</sup> It is a public interest incorporated foundation located in Sumida Ward, Tokyo, which was established in 1995 by merging the Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for the Promotion of Culture (established in 1982) and the Edo-Tokyo Historical Foundation (established in 1990). These ten art organisations are:

- Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum (Shirokanedai, Minato-ku)
- Edo Tokyo Museum (Yokoami, Sumida Ward)
- Edo-Tokyo Open Air Architectural Museum (Koganei City)
- Tokyo Photographic Art Museum (Mita, Meguro-ku)
- Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo (Miyoshi, Koto-ku)
- Tokyo Koen-dori Gallery (Jinnan, Shibuya Ward, Shibuya Ward Labor Welfare Hall 1F)
- **Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (Uno Park, Taito City)**
- Tokyo Arts and Space (TOKAS Hongo, TOKAS Residency (in Sumida Ward)
- Tokyo Bunka Kaikan (Ueno Park, Taito City)
- Tokyo Metropolitan Theater (Nishiikebukuro, Toshima Ward)

The Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation's primary objective is to promote cultural exchange, enhance the public's appreciation of history, and encourage community involvement in the arts.<sup>471</sup> Over the years, the Foundation has expanded its operations and now manages and operates several key facilities that attract visitors from across Japan and around the world. These facilities include the Edo Tokyo Museum, which showcases the cultural heritage of Edo-Tokyo; the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, which features an extensive collection of art and artefacts from various

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<sup>470</sup> “These Facilities of the Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture”  
<https://www.rekibun.or.jp/en/museum/> (consultation: 16th March, 2023).

<sup>471</sup> Ibid.

periods; the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, which is dedicated to photography and contemporary art; and the Edo-Tokyo Open Air Architectural Museum, which offers visitors a glimpse into the lifestyle and building of the Edo period. The Foundation also sponsors a range of exhibitions, performances, and events throughout the year, designed to promote cultural exchange and appreciation. Some of the events include traditional Japanese dance performances, tea ceremonies, and festivals celebrating local customs and traditions. By managing and operating these facilities and events, the Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture has become a vital force in promoting cultural exchange and preserving Japan's cultural heritage.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, since its inception, has been committed to promoting the advancement of art for the benefit of the city's residents.<sup>472</sup> In order to accomplish this fundamental mission and to fulfill the founding aim of the museum, the institution has undertaken a number of initiatives and programs over the years. These efforts have included organizing and hosting exhibitions, providing educational opportunities for the public, and collaborating with other cultural institutions to foster a vibrant and diverse arts community in Tokyo. By continuing to pursue these goals and by exploring new avenues for engagement and outreach, the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum remains firmly dedicated to its mission of promoting and supporting the arts in the city and beyond. The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum is playing four key roles that contribute to the enrichment of people's lives. Firstly, it fosters a sense of community and provides an opportunity for people to generate new values. Secondly, it encourages and supports the development of art activities, ensuring that visitors deepen their appreciation of art. Thirdly, it respects traditional art forms while simultaneously giving new life to them, creating exciting new fusions. Lastly, the museum offers visitors the chance to experience art masterpieces from around the world. To achieve these goals, the museum has developed four unique programs. The "Exhibition Program" features both special exhibitions and thematic exhibitions. The "Art Communication Program" seeks to explore new possibilities through exchange between people, fostering "art communicators" in collaboration with Tokyo University of the Arts, and holding workshops. The "Public Entry Exhibition Program" collaborates with art groups. Finally, the "Amenity Program" provides additional functions such as the "Sato Keitaro Memorial Lounge," which includes a library, a museum shop, restaurants, and more.

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<sup>472</sup> “Museum History | TOKYO METROPOLITAN ART MUSEUM”  
<https://www.tobikan.jp/en/outline/history.html> (consultation: 16th March, 2023).



## 6.4 The International Exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

### 6.4.1 The idea of the exhibition

The exhibition of "A History of the World in 100 Objects" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Kyoto in 2015, was a collaborative effort initiated by the British Museum and extended to multiple countries. The British Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan offered their support from the start for the exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. The exhibition was open to the public from April 18th to June 28th, 2015, for a total of 71 days.<sup>473</sup> This exhibition resulted from international cooperation between museums, in the context of cultural diplomacy proposed by the British Museum. In total, 300,436 visitors attended the exhibition.<sup>474</sup> In Japan, the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, along with the British Museum, the Asahi Shimbun, NHK, and NHK Promotions Inc, organised the exhibition with a team dedicated to the international exhibition. The team in Japan the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum were working with coordinators from the British Museum. The sponsors partners who contributed to the exhibition included Kao Corporation, Canon Marketing Japan Inc, Daiwa House Industry Co.,Ltd, Mitsubishi Corporation, Aioi Nissay Dowa Insurance Co., Ltd, and several others.<sup>475</sup> Furthermore, the National Museum of Ethology, Japan, JAPAN AIRLINES, Cathay Pacific Airways, Nippon Cargo Airlines, and IDEAL BRAIN Co.,Ltd., provided the necessary transfer services for the exhibition.

The exhibition presented a captivating journey through the history of human creativity. Starting from the theme of the “Cradle of Humanity”, where the world's oldest stone tools were created, the exhibition showcased 101 pieces/groups carefully selected objects from all eight departments of the British Museum's vast collection.<sup>476</sup> In addition to the impressive selection of artefacts from various cultures and time periods, the exhibition also featured several legendary pieces from Japan, including the “Kakiemon elephants” made in Japan and exported to Europe in

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<sup>473</sup> “The British Museum Exhibiton: A History of the World in 100 Objects” | TOKYO METROPOLITAN ART MUSEUM [https://www.tobikan.jp/en/exhibition/h27\\_history100.html](https://www.tobikan.jp/en/exhibition/h27_history100.html) (consultation: 16th March, 2023).

<sup>474</sup> “Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum Annual Report 2015” <https://www.tobikan.jp/en/archives/publication.html> (consultation: 16th March, 2023).

<sup>475</sup> “The British Museum Exhibiton: A History of the World in 100 Objects” | TOKYO METROPOLITAN ART MUSEUM [https://www.tobikan.jp/en/exhibition/h27\\_history100.html](https://www.tobikan.jp/en/exhibition/h27_history100.html) (consultation: 16th March, 2023).

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

the seventeenth century.<sup>477</sup> It was worth noting that elephants were not indigenous to Japan and that the two examples mentioned were likely based on depictions in imported prints.<sup>478</sup> Although it was uncertain whether the makers of the Kakiemon elephants had ever seen a live elephant, it was possible that they had access to drawings and descriptions from those who had. This was because a number of elephants had arrived in Japan by boat prior to the creation of the Kakiemon elephants. Interestingly, the theme of "connection" was a central focus of the exhibition featuring the Kakiemon elephants. This idea of the exhibition not only highlighted the fact that the knowledge of porcelain-making spread from China to Korea and Japan, but also that exotic animals from other countries made their way to Japan during the seventeenth century. It was fascinating to consider how these connections between different cultures and regions had such a profound impact on the historical items and objects produced during this time period.

Another world-renowned object also attracted thousands of visitors to visit this exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum: "Lewis Chessmen." In recent years, the Lewis chessmen have become more popular again, with their appearance in the 2001 movie of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* adaptation. In the film, Harry and Ron engaged in a game of wizard's chess using replicas of the Lewis chessmen. When victory was within reach, the queen became enraged and rised from her throne, which she then picked up and smashed across her opponent. These iconic chess pieces had garnered worldwide fame, especially in Japan, which attracted the amount of young visitors to see this group of collections. The collection of famous chess pieces also had gained worldwide recognition due to its historical significance and remarkable craftsmanship. This recognition had attracted the attention of many young people, who were curious to see the pieces up close and learn more about their origins. The exhibition has become a popular destination for school field trips and family outings, offering visitors of all ages the chance to appreciate collections from multiple countries. Furthermore, the 12th collection of the "Standard of Ur" was another notable artifact that had been featured in Japanese school textbooks due to its historical significance, thus making it an attraction for Japanese visitors. In summary, the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum curators decided to collaborate with the British Museum due to the high quality of the collections of exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects”.

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<sup>477</sup> “Kakiemon elephants, part of The First Global Economy (1450 - 1600 AD)”  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/h9wKOjMNRZqJGcTfTngFLA> (consultation: 16th March, 2023).

<sup>478</sup> Ibid.

### 6.4.2 The description of the exhibition

The exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum was designed to take visitors on a captivating journey through 2,000,000 years of human history, from prehistory to modern times. The exhibition featured 100 carefully selected items from the British Museum's extensive collection of 8 million objects. These items provided a narrative highlighting the fascinating connections and influences between cultures and countries. In addition, one collection from each museum was also featured. This exhibition, inspired by a popular BBC radio program and featuring commentary by Neil McGregor, the ex-director of the British Museum (2002 to 2015), showcased a history of human creation through 100 collections representing all eight departments of the British Museum. The exhibition was organised into eight chapters, each representing a different era and displaying a variety of historical collections.

For example, each chapter in the exhibition featured a chronological table displaying the location of the exhibited collection and the historical period it represented. This table was a valuable tool for visitors to better understand the history and context of each collection. The chronological table provided a detailed view of the collection's journey through time, with each period illustrated by the relevant artefacts and their place of origin. Visitors could see how different cultures and regions influenced each other over time, and how the collection developed and evolved as a result. In addition to the chronological table, the exhibition included a world map that emphasized the connections and influences between cultures. This map was especially important because it helped visitors visualize how different cultures interacted and influenced each other throughout history, making geographic distance seem smaller in the context of a global map. The world map also provided a visual representation of the collection's global reach, highlighting the diverse origins of the artefacts on display and how they came together to form a cohesive history. By using both a chronological table and a world map, the exhibition provided visitors with a more complete understanding of these collections and their places in the history of the global community, allowing them to appreciate the collection from a broader perspective and gain a deeper appreciation for the rich tapestry of global culture and history.

Moreover, the collections on display were ranging from highlights from the British Museum, such as the “Standard of Ur” and the “Lewis Chessmen” to modern items as credit cards and a Mozambique "Mother" statue made from firearms after the civil war. The exhibition was an exceptional opportunity that allowed visitors to delve into the historical development of the global

world, with a focus on the stories behind 100 unique collections. Through a thorough analysis, the exhibition demonstrated how the world has changed over time and how these collections have played an important role in shaping visitors' understanding of the world. The exhibition also provided a platform for visitors to engage with experts through public lectures, and learn more about the significance of each collection, creating an interactive and immersive experience that was both educational and enlightening. Also, the exhibition was a remarkable journey that offered visitors a glimpse into the past and the present, while highlighting the importance of preserving the cultural heritage from a global perspective.

In the epilogue, the 101st piece was selected to symbolise the present age at each venue, which joined in the original narrative of the British Museum, to display one item of Japanese society, from the perspective of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. The selection process for the 101st piece involved a rigorous evaluation of various works of collections that were created in Japan during the contemporary era. The aim was to choose an artwork that would reflect the current trends and issues in Japanese society, while also being historically significant. In this section, the exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum introduced the "paper architecture" developed by architect Shigeru Ban for disaster areas. A partition system for an evacuation shelter using paper tube was among the works exhibited. On March 11th, 2011 at 2:46PM Japan Standard Time (JST), a massive earthquake struck the Pacific, near the coast of Tohoku, Japan. It triggered a destructive tsunami that inflicted significant damage in the Eastern region of the country.<sup>479</sup> After the Great East Japan Earthquake, buildings collapsed and everything was washed away by the tsunami. What was needed was a private space at the evacuation center, a space for individuals and families. Architect Shigeru Ban created paper housing and schools by using the material of “paper tube”, which was light and easy for anyone to assemble. Even after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995, paper tubes were used to create churches and private residences as spaces for people to gather and pray. The exhibition created a space with a partition system for an evacuation shelter using paper tube, serving as a poignant reminder of the incredible resilience and boundless ingenuity of humanity, especially during times of adversity (figure 6-5).

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<sup>479</sup> Mimura, Nobuo, Kazuya Yasuhara, Seiki Kawagoe, Hiromune Yokoki, and So Kazama. "Damage from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami-a quick report." *Mitigation and adaptation strategies for global change* 16 (2011): 803-818.



Figure 6-5: Display of exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum | Source: Screenshot of the Annual Report 2015 of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.<sup>480</sup>

The exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum provided a unique and thought-provoking opportunity to explore not just the history of the world, but also the current issues and solutions facing Japanese society. One of the concerns was the impact of the Great East Japan Earthquake, which happened on the 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2011, resulted in numerous individuals being displaced from their residences, educational institutions, and other crucial structures. In response, architect Shigeru Ban and his team developed an innovative solution using paper tubes to construct temporary housing, schools, shelters, halls, and churches. This not only provided immediate relief to those impacted by the disaster, but also created a sustainable and easy-to-build alternative to traditional materials. In addition, Ban's work and the exhibition as a whole highlight the power of creativity and innovation in addressing societal challenges and promoting positive change. The 101st piece of this exhibition served as a reminder of the resilience and ingenuity of humanity in the face of adversity.

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<sup>480</sup> Screenshot of the Annual Report 2015 of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum  
[https://www.tobikan.jp/media/pdf/h27/archives\\_report\\_h27.pdf](https://www.tobikan.jp/media/pdf/h27/archives_report_h27.pdf) (consultation: 09th March, 2023).

Although the Rosetta Stone, one of the museum's most famous works could not travel to Japan in this exhibition, to ensure that visitors have an authentic experience, an actual-size replica had been specially created for this exhibition, allowing everyone to appreciate the intricate details of the remarkable artifact (the 27<sup>th</sup> collection of figure 6-6). The exhibition was trying to include collections from the perspective of history, art and human creativity, to attract more visitors who were interested in these topics. This replica of Rosetta Stone, which was a basalt slab inscribed with a decree issued at Memphis in 196 BC on behalf of King Ptolemy V<sup>481</sup>, provided a significant opportunity for Japanese visitors to delve into the history of Egypt through the perspective of language translation. As a result of this replica, Japanese visitors who could not travel to London personally were able to review and study the stone's carving, which served as a critical tool for unlocking the mysteries of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs.

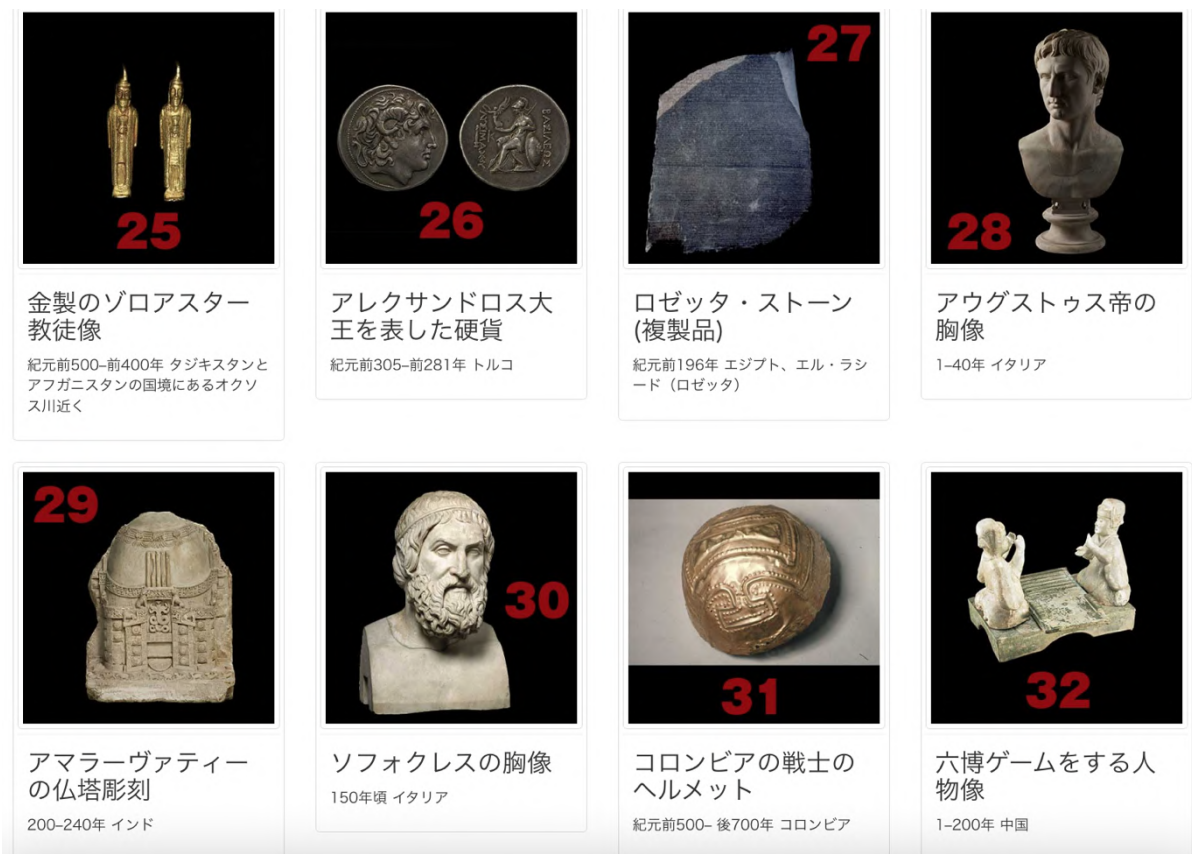


Figure 6-6: List of collections No.25-32 of exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum | Source: Screenshot of the website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.<sup>482</sup>

<sup>481</sup> Budge, EA Wallis. *The Rosetta Stone*. Courier Corporation, 2012: 28.

<sup>482</sup> Screenshot of the website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum [https://www.tobikan.jp/media/pdf/h27/archives\\_report\\_h27.pdf](https://www.tobikan.jp/media/pdf/h27/archives_report_h27.pdf) (consultation: 09th March, 2023).



In addition to the replica of the Rosetta Stone, the exhibition committee showcased a diverse collection of artefacts that reflect multi-cultural items among the exchange of human knowledge. By presenting these collections, the committee hoped to attract more visitors interested in these topics and provide them with a comprehensive experience. From ancient sculptures to modern paintings, the exhibition featured a wide range of works that offered a global and historical narrative to emphasize the connections among countries. Throughout history, the names of monarchs, queens, and dynasties had changed, but one thing had remained constant. The exchange of ideas and culture had persisted across generations and beyond the borders of countries. These 100 items were a testament to that enduring exchange, each one representing a unique contribution to the collective human experience. From the earliest civilisations to the present day, the evolution of art, science, and technology had been shaped by the sharing of knowledge and ideas.

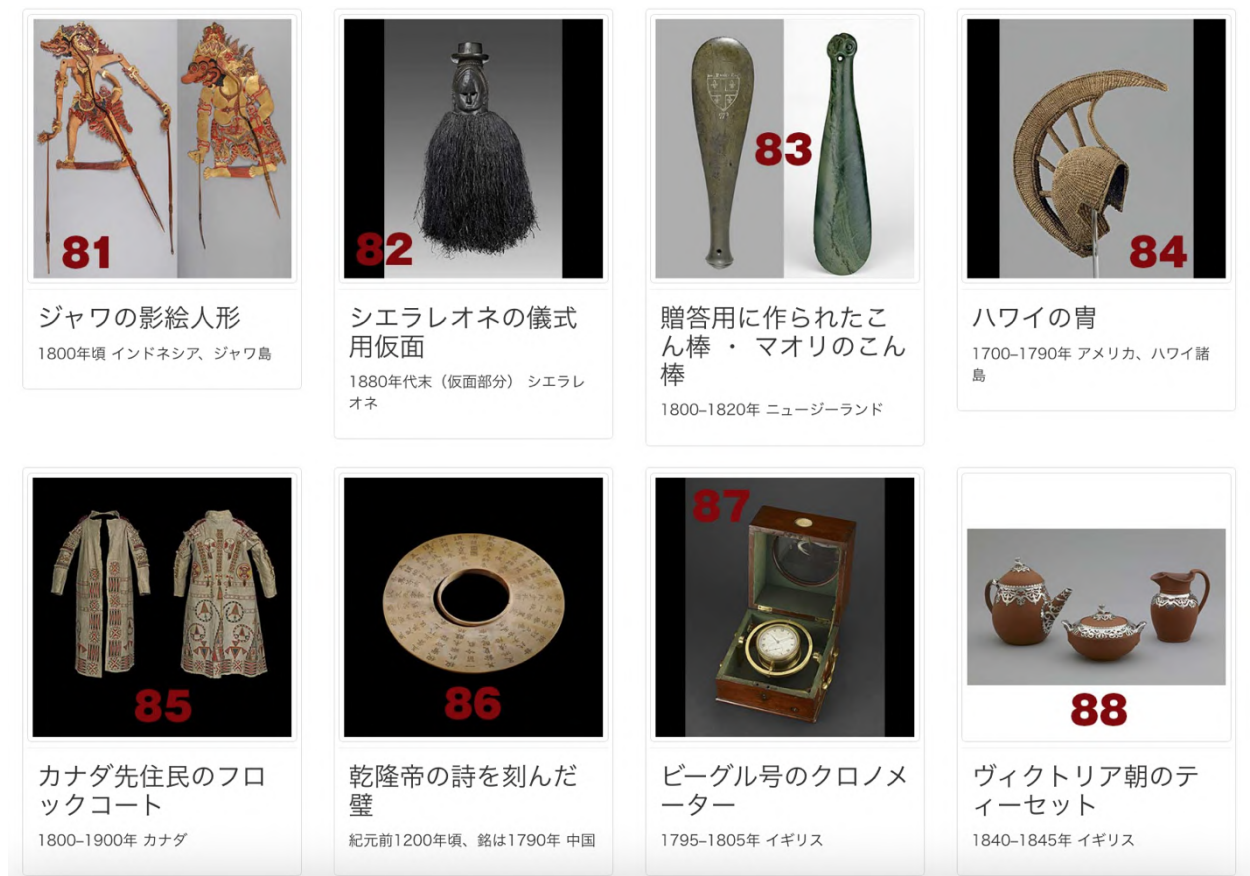


Figure 6-7: List of collections No.81-88 of exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum | Source: Screenshot of the website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.<sup>483</sup>

<sup>483</sup> Screenshot of the website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum  
[https://www.tobikan.jp/media/pdf/h27/archives\\_report\\_h27.pdf](https://www.tobikan.jp/media/pdf/h27/archives_report_h27.pdf) (consultation: 09th March, 2023).

The 86th item in this exhibition was a Neolithic-age jade bi [an ornamental disc] inscribed with a poem written by the Qing emperor Qianlong, an artifact suspected to have been stolen from Beijing’s Old Summer Palace (the 86<sup>th</sup> item of Figure 6-7). It was a subject of controversy as it was displayed in the "A History of the World in 100 Objects" exhibition at Japanese museums but not in China. This was because its sourcing was related to the infamous looting of Beijing's Old Summer Palace by French and British troops in 1860. While the exhibition included this collection in its original narrative to highlight the connection between Qing Emperor Qianlong and former Chinese dynasties. The absence of this item in Chinese museums raised questions about the sensitive nature of looted artefacts and the ethical considerations of their display in foreign countries. There were two arguments regarding the display of the collection. One argument was that it should be displayed in both Japan and China as it was a part of the shared cultural heritage of all nations involved. Another argument was that the figure should not be displayed at all until it can be returned to its rightful place in China. These debates brought attention to the intricate and sometimes controversial matters regarding exhibiting cultural artefacts and utilizing history items to serve political agendas.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, as its name suggests, has been committed to promoting the advancement of art for the benefit of the city's residents since its inception.<sup>484</sup> This museum has a more independent operational system compared to Chinese museums, allowing for deeper collaborative relationships with foreign museums. Additionally, the museum has a more open attitude towards Western history and heritage, which leads a different cooperation process with other museum. During the exhibition at Japanese museums, the 44th item on display was a piece of textile from Dunhuang (the 44<sup>th</sup> item of Figure 6-8). It was believed to date back to the Tang Dynasty, making it over a thousand years old. This item, which was taken by the Hungarian-British archaeologist Aurel Stein, holds immense historical significance. In an interview with the Chinese curator Dr. Yan, it was revealed that the British Museum had originally prepared two exhibits for China especially, but at the recommendation of the Chinese government, they were replaced to avoid potentially provoking a negative public reaction.<sup>485</sup> While these two historical sensitive items did not encounter difficulties in Japan, this particular item held a different meaning

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<sup>484</sup> “Museum History” | TOKYO METROPOLITAN ART MUSEUM  
<https://www.tobikan.jp/en/outline/history.html> (consultation: 16th March, 2023).

<sup>485</sup> Appendix 1, Dr Yan Zhi 闫志, interview with the author, Beijing, 04 April 2023.

for Japanese visitors, as it represented a part of Buddhist history in Dunhuang, which had a significant cultural significance in Japan. However, for the Chinese government, this item represented a historical period in which they were unable to preserve their own historical items. This highlighted the importance of preserving cultural heritage and the different perspectives that could arise between different countries and cultures when it came to historical items. It also raised important questions about the role of museums in preserving and displaying artefacts from other cultures, and whether there should be greater collaboration between countries to ensure that artefacts are displayed in a way that is respectful and acknowledges their cultural significance.

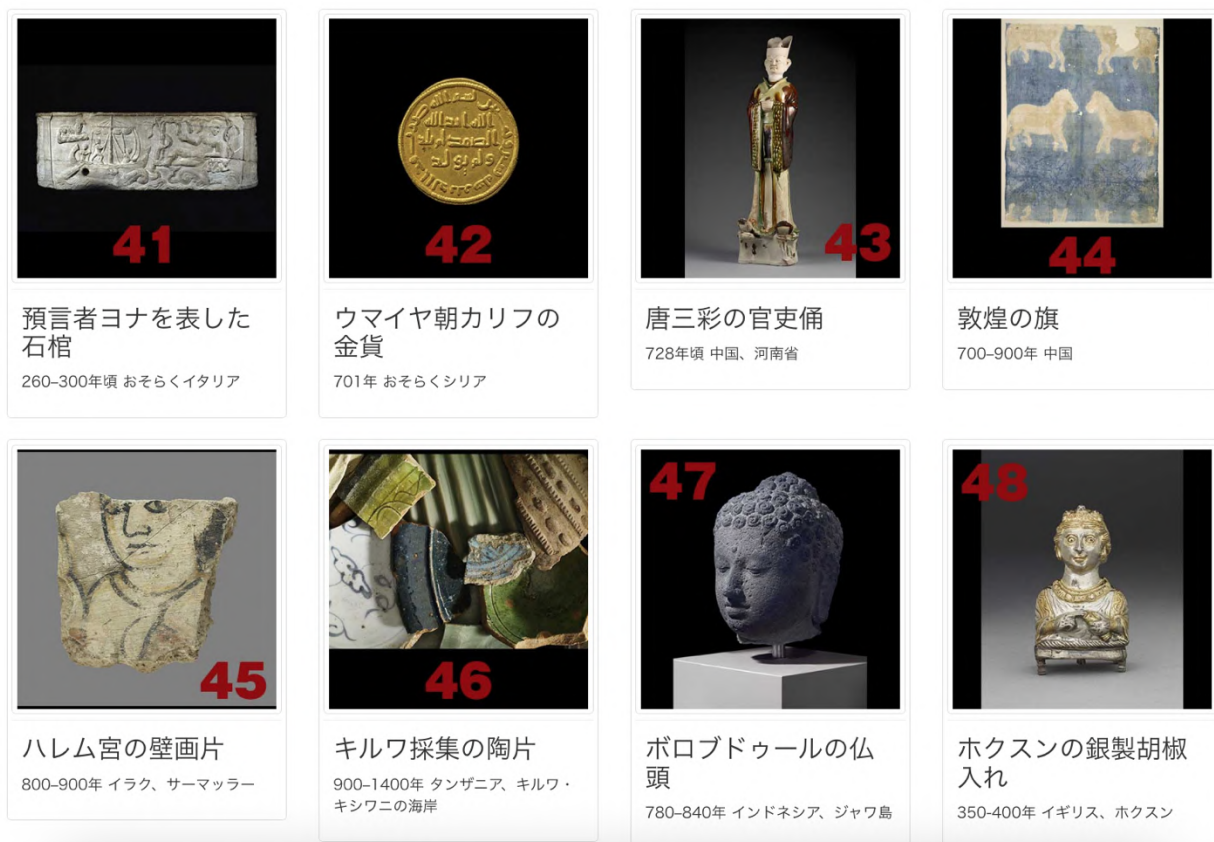


Figure 6-8: List of collections No.41-48 of exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum | Source: Screenshot of the website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.<sup>486</sup>

<sup>486</sup> Screenshot of the website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum  
[https://www.tobikan.jp/media/pdf/h27/archives\\_report\\_h27.pdf](https://www.tobikan.jp/media/pdf/h27/archives_report_h27.pdf) (consultation: 09th March, 2023).

## 6.5 The cooperation process

### 6.5.1 The cooperation process of the exhibition

This section highlights the systems of cooperation, management, support, agreements, and collaboration between the international exhibition personnel of the two museums in the UK and Japan. It is crucial that these agreements are in place to ensure the successful execution of collaborative efforts between museums. With effective communication and collaboration among museum staff, the museums and mess media company could work together to achieve their goals, share resources, and bring unique exhibitions and cultural experiences to audiences in Japan. The implementation of such collaborations serve as evidence of the museums' dedication to preserving cultural heritage and promoting cultural exchange, fostering international relationships, and promoting cross-cultural understanding. Furthermore, collaboration problems arise from language and geographic distance, creating difficulties for holding exhibitions involving hundreds of collections.

In general, Japanese museums have shown great enthusiasm in hosting exhibitions from Western countries. They have had a longstanding interest in learning about and building a good relationship with Western museums, and these exhibitions have been instrumental in helping them achieve this goal. The collaboration between the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and the British Museum is a great example of this. Moreover, the Asahi Shinbun news company played a crucial role in providing financial support and promotion for the collaboration, which allowed it to overcome language and geographic barriers. The result was a unique and diverse collection of historical heiritage that was able to reach audiences in Japan. However, while Japanese museums are willing to host exhibitions from Western countries, the different systems of museum operation can create difficulties in holding exhibitions involving a large number of collections. Even with strong interest and enthusiasm, there are practical challenges to overcome. These challenges can include issues related to transportation, security, and insurance, among others. Nevertheless, the potential benefits of such collaborations make them well worth pursuing. By working together, museums from different parts of the world can share their collections and knowledge, and help to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of different cultures.

In Japan, there were three museums held this touring exhibition: the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, the Kyushu National Museum and the Kobe City Museum. This exhibition was

included in the British Museum's global touring plan for "A History of the World in 100 Objects". It was firstly held in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) in 2014 and received an enthusiastic response from visitors. Following its successful run in Abu Dhabi, the exhibition embarked on a tour of several cities overseas, including Taipei (Taiwan), Tokyo, Fukuoka, Kobe, Perth in Australia, Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong.<sup>487</sup> The exhibition made stops at several prominent museums in these cities, allowing visitors from different countries to experience the collections first-hand. The Tokyo venue (Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum) proved to be one of the most popular venues for the exhibition, with a staggering 300,000 visitors viewing the collections during the exhibition. The exhibition was also held at the Fukuoka venue (Kyushu National Museum), drawing a large number of visitors who were keen to experience the diverse collection on display. The third stop in Japan, the exhibition made its way to the Kobe City Museum on September 20th, 2015, where it was met with great enthusiasm from the local community.

According to an interview with Mr. Hitoshi Yamamura, who was the chief curator at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, the exhibition was a collaboration between three partners: the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, the British Museum, and the Asahi Shinbun news company. The idea for the project was proposed by the Asahi Shinbun news company to the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum almost three to four years prior to the exhibition's opening. After agreeing to cover all expenses, representatives from the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and Asahi Shinbun news company began discussions on the exhibition's details. Eventually, both teams visited the British Museum to collaborate on the project's finalization. The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum has limited financial resources and typically collaborates with mass media news companies for most exhibitions. Due to this financial restriction, the museum collaborated with the Asahi Shinbun news company for this exhibition. Asahi Shinbun not only provided financial support but also helped with further reports and promotion. When the news company agreed to cover all expenses for the exhibition, it was easier for the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum to agree to the collaboration.

Furthermore, major Japanese companies have dedicated departments for cultural initiatives. These departments are responsible for establishing collaborations with significant cultural institutions. Examples of such departments include Asahi Shimbun's "Department of Culture",

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<sup>487</sup> “International touring exhibitions” | British Museum <https://www.britishmuseum.org/our-work/international/international-touring-exhibitions> (consultation: 09th March, 2023).



which developed a long-term relationship with museums.<sup>488</sup> Employees in these departments usually hold academic degrees in fine art, history, or related fields if they work for news agencies, while those in other large enterprises are generally science or technology majors who meet specific research and development requirements. Through collaborations with museums, large news enterprises have been able to cultivate employees with commercial backgrounds who also understand the culture and working practices of museums. These employees of news companies have a significant advantage over museum professionals in the area of commercialization, and they have an important role in marketing cross-border exhibitions.

The Asahi Shimbun, one of Japan's leading newspapers, was deeply involved in the project of cross-border exhibition in Japanese museums with the British Museum. For example, during the exhibition's opening, Japanese TV programs went the extra mile by arranging for famous celebrities to host interviews with the museum staff and provide tours of the exhibition gallery. These interviews provided insight into the exhibition's collections and the stories behind the exhibits, which helped to create a more engaging experience for visitors. Also, the Asahi Shimbun handled a variety of tasks, including but not limited to raising funds, managing the exhibition with museum staff, and promoting it to relevant audiences. Additionally, their extensive experience and connections in the media industry provided invaluable insights and support throughout the exhibition development. It was clear that their involvement played a pivotal role in making this exhibition displayed in three Japanese museums. Furthermore, the TV programs frequently published reports on the exhibition, highlighting its unique features and attractions, in an effort to attract more visitors. The reports were accompanied by stunning visuals of the exhibition, which showcased the importance and intricacy of the collections on display. The TV programs' efforts were integral in making the exhibition a huge success and enhancing the visitor experience.

The Nonprofit Law in Japan has been instrumental in supporting various not-for-profit activities related to the development of museums and related studies. The law stipulates that income from companies may be used for the advancement of such activities, and that income tax and local taxes may be exempted for such purposes.<sup>489</sup> This has enabled the growth of a vibrant museum and cultural sector in Japan, which has been able to host cross-border exhibition with the

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<sup>488</sup> Wang, Ying. "The role of large enterprises in museum digitization." *Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage* 14, no. 2 (2014): 67-72.

<sup>489</sup> Nonprofit Law in Japan | Council on Foundations <https://cof.org/country-notes/nonprofit-law-japan> (consultation: 23 Apr 2022).



support of mass news companies. Additionally, the law has encouraged the development of various philanthropic initiatives that have contributed to the overall growth and development of the country. As such, the Nonprofit Law in Japan remains an important legal instrument for the promotion of not-for-profit activities in the country, and its impact on the cultural and social fabric of the nation cannot be understated.

During this cross-border exhibition, Asahi Shimbun had an exclusive depth of access to the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum's collection so that it could play a crucial role in the joint management of this exhibition from the very beginning. This collaboration was not only limited to the exhibition in the museum space but also to the reports and promotions about the collections outside the museum. The official websites and social media platforms were flooded with information provided by Asahi Shimbun, which gave the museum unprecedented exposure and helped it reach new audiences. Furthermore, Asahi Shimbun's involvement allowed the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum to tap into a more comprehensive network of resources and expertise, which was instrumental in ensuring the exhibition's success. In summary, the partnership between Asahi Shimbun and the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum was a mutually beneficial collaboration. It used international exhibitions to attract more audiences to the museum and decreased the local tax for the news company through cultural activities.

Since the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum was established, it has been dedicated to promoting and advancing art, not only for the sake of the art itself but also for the benefit of the city's residents.<sup>490</sup> The museum's focus on the local community it serves sets it apart from galleries in China, which are often tasked with promoting national recognition. The museum's independence allows it to take a more individualised approach to promotion, including international collaborations, and working cooperatively with curators and other organisations to create unique and meaningful exhibitions. Through its efforts, the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum aims to provide a space for the public to engage with art and foster community creativity and innovation. From a cultural expression perspective, while the news company can provide financial and management support, it also challenges the museum's independence concerning its original institution's standpoint. This issue will be discussed further in the next section, which covers communication and media.

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<sup>490</sup> “Museum History” | TOKYO METROPOLITAN ART MUSEUM  
<https://www.tobikan.jp/en/outline/history.html> (consultation: 16th March 2023).

## 6.5.2 Communication and Media

As the former section mentions, the Nonprofit Law in Japan established a collaboration system between museums and large enterprises, allowing museums to cover the expenses of hosting exhibitions, utilising new technologies, and introducing innovative cultural products without requesting additional funding. In other words, Japanese museums have a unique approach to international exhibitions, which differs from Chinese museums. One of their strategies is close collaboration with major media companies from the beginning. By doing so, Japanese museums can avoid the hassle of negotiating with media companies for further reports and promotions about the international exhibition. This was demonstrated when the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum staff visited the British Museum to discuss the international exhibition of “A History of the World in 100 Objects”, and they were accompanied by Asahi Shimbun staff to London.<sup>491</sup> The news company would like to use the international exhibition to expand its social reputation; by increasing the audiences for the museum through its own media platform, it also could gain financial benefits. There are many benefits to this type of collaboration, particularly from a professional standpoint. By working together from the start, Japanese museums and major media companies can ensure effective communication and cooperation among all parties involved, including museum staff, media companies, and curators in the British Museum. This can lead to a more comprehensive and well-rounded exhibition that successfully transmits its intended message to the audience.

In addition, it's worth mentioning that cultural activities have a better reputation in the media than other events. Cultural activities are often seen as positive societal contributions, promoting education, artistic expression, and cross-cultural understanding. These events have the potential to bring people from different backgrounds together and create a sense of connection with each other. For instance, the Japanese news company Asahi Shimbun played a significant role in promoting the exhibitions held in Japan and boosted their popularity. However, museums in China had to develop cooperation with these media companies by themselves, which did not receive as much positive media attention as these venues in Japan. The majority of Chinese media reports were based on the information from the National Museum of China on the opening

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<sup>491</sup> Appendix 2, Interview with Mr Hitoshi Yamamura, Chief Curator of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum in Tokyo, 10th January 2023.

ceremony day and the following media briefing conferences, which showed similarities structure of content compared to the various Japanese reports hosted from different perspectives.

For instance, in Japan, Nihon Kimono's official channel, Kosode TV, which offered free kimono dressing classes, published a video showcasing the exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects."<sup>492</sup> The video aimed to convey the experience of visiting the museum while wearing a kimono, which combined the Japanese traditional culture with this international exhibition. The video served as an excellent guide for those who want to enjoy the cultural activity while wearing a kimono. It provided an introduction of the exhibition gallery with information of collections, and in the end, the host recommended one collection, which created more motivation for visitors to choose their favorite item on display by themselves. This type of media coverage not only promoted the exhibition to a diverse group of audiences but also helped in creating awareness about the traditional Japanese culture. These reports about the international exhibition from different perspectives were used to showcase the uniqueness and diversity of Japanese art, culture, and heritage to a broader audience. It helped in generating interest and enthusiasm among Japanese visitors who may not have been aware of the exhibition otherwise, allowing them to notice and appreciate the international exhibition through the introduction of TV programs. Furthermore, these media coverage also aided in establishing the exhibition as a significant event, one that was worthy of attention and appreciation, which attracted more than 300,000 visitors to experience it in Tokyo.

Moreover, in the case of the international exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" held both in Japan and China, the differing levels of media coverage resulted in different public discussions. Some opinion leaders criticised Chinese curator Dr Yan Zhi for allegedly being taken advantage of by the British Museum in holding the exhibition, which created pressure for the exhibition team during the opening of this cross-border exhibition. The controversy led to a heated debate in the media and among experts. Some argued that the exhibition was an excellent opportunity for cultural exchange. In contrast, others believed it was an example of cultural exploitation when most Chinese treasures lost during the war had been kept in London. When the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum received support from the media company, it benefited

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<sup>492</sup> “Nihon Kimono online report about the exhibition of ‘A History of the World in 100 Objects’” 小袖 ONLINE 100 のモノが語る世界の歴史 大英博物館展 報道内覧会 - YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHoWT4Ft7mc> (consultation: 16th March, 2023).

financially and gained access to professional reports. This type of collaboration between cultural activities and media innovations could generate fresh programs together.

The Japanese museums’ strategy of collaboration between cultural activities and media innovations has the potential to create exciting new programs, in which the government’s guidance is indirect, but through the Nonprofit Law to encourage media companies to support museums’ international collaboration. By working together, museums and media companies can develop innovative ideas that could have a lasting relationship to host cross-border exhibitions jointly. For instance, the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum provided rich content with the exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects” cooperated with the British Museum. The Asahi Shimbun media company then adapted and distributed to a broader audience. The Asahi Shimbun offered creative solutions and technologies that could enhance how the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum interacts with its visitors. This collaboration also fostered a greater appreciation for cultural diversity and provided opportunities for small groups, who could use the content they like to appreciate the cross-border exhibition.

The Japanese news company that sponsored the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum aimed to leverage the international exhibition with the British Museum to enhance its social reputation and increase the museum's audiences through media coverage. Additionally, it hoped to generate financial benefits from the exhibition. The news company prioritised establishing solid partnerships with the museum and other key stakeholders involved in the exhibition to achieve these goals. This collaboration strategy requires effective communication and coordination among all parties to ensure the exhibition runs smoothly and achieves its intended objectives. Furthermore, the news company was trying to maintain a professional and unbiased approach to its media coverage of the exhibition. Also, this collaboration opens up opportunities for further partnerships and alliances in the future. As it built trust and credibility between the involved parties, it could lead to more successful international exhibitions. Additionally, this approach helped create and maintain a positive relationship between Japanese museums and media companies, which can benefit both parties in the long run. Unlike Chinese museums, Japanese museums have developed partnerships with large media companies to create a friendly environment for international collaborations on exhibitions. These media companies have been involved in project planning from the beginning, as with the British Museum and the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.

### 6.5.3 Public reaction

The exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects” in Tokyo, Japan, was met with great enthusiasm from visitors. With over 300,000 visitors attending the event, it was clear that the effort of transporting the collections from London to Japan was well worth it. Many visitors used keywords like “unforgettable”, “exciting”, and “real” to describe their experience. These original collections helped visitors better understand the history of different continents and eras by explaining the connections among the displayed items. They were captivated by the unique and informative approach taken by the curators to showcase world history, with several world-famous collections which also appeared in Japanese textbooks. The exhibition was highly praised for its ability to bring history of over two million years with 100 objects, and visitors expressed their appreciation for the curators' efforts. It was evident that cultural activities could enrich society by educating people and generating engaging media coverage and public support.

The exhibition's popularity in Ueno Park, Tokyo, demonstrated its success as a cultural activity for visitors to relax amidst the busy city life. International exhibitions like the one discussed in this chapter were a great way to take a break from the hustle and bustle of city life in Tokyo and a valuable learning experience that could broaden visitors' knowledge on various subjects. For visitors who wanted to learn about history, culture, and heritage, this cross-border exhibition offered a unique opportunity to engage with the world from the past to the present. It allowed them to learn new things that they may not have known before. By providing educational and entertaining experiences, this exhibition encouraged visitors to ask questions and seek out further information, which helped to broaden their horizons and inspire them to learn more.

Moreover, this exhibition attracted many students, who visited in groups led by their teachers or parents. The exhibition was taking into consideration catering to the interests of young learners and inspiring them to develop a passion for world history. To achieve this, all the collections on display were arranged to tell a story based on items from all continents. Visitors can explore and discover diverse cultures and civilisations throughout history and develop a greater appreciation for their interconnectedness. Additionally, the exhibition included interactive displays and activities specially designed to engage the students and make their learning experience more enjoyable and memorable.

Furthermore, the exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects” provided a platform for researchers and creators to present their research results and share their vision with a broader

audience. This exhibition featured various collections from the British Museum's eight million holdings, including historical paintings, sculptures, religious items, etc. The narrative of this cross-border exhibition was divided into eight chapters to demonstrate the connections among the historical backgrounds represented by these objects. Through these objects, curators in the British Museum created a new narrative, and visitors from different countries could connect with others based on the content of the entities. Each chapter in the development of world history was not isolated but was deeply connected to the influence and exchange of ideas among other people.

Once visitors entered the exhibition, they were greeted by a massive global map showcasing each collection's various locations. The map also displayed the majority of objects on the exhibit, providing a visual representation of the diverse range of cultures and histories represented in the exhibition. Visitors were encouraged to take pictures before the map, creating a memorable experience that allowed them to interact with the show uniquely. This interactive element helped to make the exhibition more engaging and accessible to visitors of all ages and backgrounds. It also allowed visitors to share their experiences with others, potentially attracting even more people to the exhibition. Although these 100 objects come from different geographical locations and times, the keyword of this exhibition, "connection," was demonstrated to the audience when viewed from a global perspective.

In summary, to create an exhibition that would be both engaging and thought-provoking for global audiences, curators and researchers from different backgrounds collaborated to highlight the interconnections among various collections. These collections were carefully selected and presented to allow visitors to engage with them more profoundly, gaining new insights and perspectives on the pieces on display. This global touring exhibition had the opportunity to visit multiple venues in different cities, providing an even wider audience with the chance to experience the exhibition. The various visitors who attended each exhibition, coming from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds, provided valuable feedback to the exhibition's creators. The exhibition in Japan demonstrated the impact of cultural activities in uniting people and fostering understanding and appreciation for diverse cultures.



## 6.6 Conclusion

This chapter introduces the first case study of the cross-border exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" in Japan. The exhibition was held at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum in 2015. Unlike the collaboration model in China, where the governments of each side mainly led the international exhibition, the Japanese news company, Asahi Shimbun, joined the project quite early as a leading partner for the international collaboration. The chapter starts with exploring the historical connection between the UK and Japan, highlighting significant events that shaped the relationship between both countries. Following this, an introduction to the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and its administration system is provided, providing a better understanding of the venue and its role in hosting the exhibition. The chapter then describes the exhibition, from the idea of this exhibition to the description, with a detailed account of what visitors experienced in the museum. It also presents the cooperation and communication process between the three main partners involved in the exhibition, highlighting the importance of effective collaboration in such a massive undertaking.

This chapter primarily focuses on the collaboration process to specify the different models in Japan, such as this cross-border exhibition involving three principal partners: the British Museum, the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, and the Asahi Shimbun. Together, they created a unique international cooperation model that offers long-term motivation and a balanced partnership between academic research and commercial promotion for the exhibition. This model was inspired by the Nonprofit Law in Japan, which encourages media companies to support cultural activities to gain more tax-free income. The law was enacted to promote the growth of cultural industries in Japan and to provide a way for media companies to give back to society. As part of this initiative, the Japanese news company, Asahi Shimbun, covered the cost of the international exhibition. In China, however, the fee was covered by the British government. The National Museum of China and the Shanghai Museum did not have such a close relationship with their local media companies.

In the long run, the Nonprofit Law in Japan not only allows Japanese news companies to train staff with cultural industry education backgrounds in museum management, but it also helps to address the issue of shortages of professional employees in Japanese museums. By partnering with media companies, the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum can access a pool of talented and

skilled staff who can contribute to the growth and development of cultural institutions. From the outset, the Japanese news company Asahi Shimbun staff reached out to the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum to hold this cross-border exhibition together with the British Museum. This structure between media companies and museums made the cooperation of the same exhibition, “A History of the World in 100 Objects”, between Japan and the UK not only ahead of China for two years but also displayed one more venue than China.

Japanese media companies' support for museums has evolved into creating TV series about museum exhibitions and related article reports. These media products generate more clicks and revenue for the companies. This symbiotic relationship between the two entities, media companies and museums, is further strengthened by the Nonprofit Law in Japan. This law encourages culture-related activities, which include cross-border exhibitions and helps these organisations work together in a stable and continuous collaboration model. By leveraging each other's strengths, media companies and museums can benefit from this partnership in Japan. In turn, the related reports and reviews of these exhibitions in Japan receive more positive feedback. This cycle of collaboration and success highlights the influence of the government, which set the law to increase the motivation of cooperation between different entities in the art and media industries. Additionally, this policy helps to overcome financial budget constraints faced by museums, providing them with the necessary resources to deliver high-quality exhibitions and events.

Finally, the Nonprofit Law in Japan provides museums with opportunities to engage in promotional initiatives, allowing these museums to reach out to foreign organisations without a budget burden. Another initiative in Japan was the cross-border exhibition "Treasures of the World" between the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science and the Natural History Museum, London, in 2017. According to an interview with Ms Mai Koguchi, the Public Relations Strategy Officer, and answers from the Director and Chief Curators of the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science, the cooperation between these two museums began with an officer of a Japanese newspaper company: the Yomiuri Shimbun. In the next chapter, the fourth case study of the international exhibition “Treasures of the World” will be analysed, displayed only in Japan but not China, to showcase the difference between Chinese and Japanese museums’ international cooperation models.





## CHAPTER 7

# CASE STUDY: "TREASURES OF THE NATURAL WORLD" AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE, TOKYO





## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter is the final chapter discussing the case study of Japan, which conducts a thorough analysis of the fourth case study titled "Treasures of the Natural World". This cross-border exhibition was held at the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science in 2017, from March 16 to June 11 for 85 days. The touring exhibition "Treasures of the Natural World" began its journey in Japan and later visited venues in Singapore, Taiwan, and Canada. With the cooperation of Japanese and UK curators, the exhibition showcased several specimens that belonged to Charles Darwin, which were the show's highlights. These specimens and other significant artefacts drew the attention of over 300,000 Japanese visitors during the display period.<sup>493</sup> As an exhibition only displayed in Japan but not China, this case study could help to understand the difference in museum policy between these two countries.

For instance, Chinese museums have previously accepted to display exhibitions from the British Museum in their galleries. This was achieved through an agreement with the British government, which covered the renting fee associated with the exhibition. On the other hand, it is interesting that local media companies financed most international exhibitions held in Japan as part of their cultural activities expenses. This shows a different approach towards promoting cultural activities across countries, with some relying on government funding and others on media company support. The Japanese process fostered teamwork between museums and media organisations. This collaboration enabled museums to host international exhibitions with the assistance of professional staff from media companies; in this case, a study between the museums in the UK and Japan, which had three key partners, played a significant role in international collaboration. Together with the Natural History Museum in London and the National Museum of Nature and Science in Tokyo, they worked with a Japanese national newspaper company, the Yomiuri Shimbun, to make this exhibition attractive.

The primary assertion of this chapter is that the cross-border exhibition achieved success in Japan due to the well-balanced cooperation system which the three partners had developed. These institutions include two museums and one media company, who worked tirelessly together to create the exhibition based on the collections in London and display in Tokyo, ensuring that

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<sup>493</sup> Natural History Museum to send its treasures around the world | Natural History Museum <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/press-office/press-releases/natural-history-museum-to-send-its-treasures-around-the-world.html> (consultation: 17th March, 2023).



Japanese visitors are in their city. This international partnership was forged partly due to the NonProfit Law in Japan, which encourages media companies to support museum and exhibition-related activities to generate income with tax-free status. The exhibition's theme centred on art and science to create a more inclusive and accessible experience for a wider audience, encompassing different countries and age groups. In addition, the partnership between these institutions would no doubt have laid the foundation for future collaborations, which could benefit the museum and the industry.

Both of these museums, one located in the UK and the other in Japan, have a common goal of showcasing collections that focus on nature from a scientific perspective. Not only do they serve as museums, but they also function as research centres that aim to solve social problems, such as climate change and protecting the deep sea. The museum in the UK, for example, has a vast collection of specimens from various parts of the world, including rare and endangered species. Visitors have the chance to learn about the importance of preserving these species and find out how they can contribute to conservation efforts. Additionally, the museum researches topics such as the effects of climate change on wildlife and how to mitigate those effects. Science is a truly global and collaborative effort driven by a sense of wonder and curiosity that has captivated generations. The Natural History Museum of London believes everyone should have the opportunity to experience the beauty and excitement of scientific discovery.

Similarly, the museum in Japan has a collection of specimens that are unique to the region, providing valuable information for the protection of a diverse environment. The museum researches deep-sea habitats and the impact of human activity on those habitats. In addition, the museum also has programs to educate the public on the importance of protecting the marine ecosystem. Both museums serve as educational institutions and research centres that contribute to the sustainable development of society. Their collections and research provide valuable insights into the natural world, which can be used to address pressing social issues. With the Japanese newspaper company Yomiuri Shimbun's participation, this cross-border exhibition debuted in Tokyo. The exhibition's popularity at the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science helped initiate its global tour. The following sections will analyse the idea and cooperation process between Japan and the UK.

## 7.2 The Natural History Museum, London

### 7.2.1 The museum policy of the Natural History Museum, London

The Natural History Museum, one of London's most famous cultural institutions, opened on 18 April 1881.<sup>494</sup> The museum aimed to preserve and display the natural history specimens previously kept in the British Museum, which had been rapidly expanding over the years. The museum's founders recognised the importance of having a permanent home for these specimens, where they could be adequately cared for and studied by future generations. The Natural History Museum is dedicated to preserving and researching collections related to the natural world. It has recognised the urgent issues facing the planet and acknowledges the global responsibility in addressing them. To shape a better future by learning from the past, analysing current challenges, and seeking innovative solutions, the Natural History Museum would like to build collaborative relationships to share their research findings with more organisations. The Natural History Museum has a team of 900 individuals in various roles, from research and development to marketing and outreach. This diverse group allows the museum to showcase its vast collection and exhibit its professional management skills in developing international touring exhibitions.

The Natural History Museum is also renowned for being one of the largest and most diverse collections of natural history specimens worldwide. With an impressive collection of over 80 million objects spanning billions of years, the museum is a valuable source of scientific knowledge and historical insights.<sup>495</sup> Visitors could discover a wide range of exhibits, from ancient fossils to contemporary specimens, while gaining knowledge about the remarkable variety of life on our planet. Moreover, the museum provides various educational programs and events, such as lectures, workshops, and interactive exhibits, catering to families, students, and individuals interested in the natural world. Each year, the museum welcomes over five million visitors, providing a unique opportunity to discover the wonders of the planet and the science behind them. The Natural History Museum's policy is driven by a deep sense of global responsibility that stems from their recognition of their crucial role in addressing the world's most pressing challenges. To achieve this, the museum has developed a comprehensive strategy that utilises its unique collections and extensive

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<sup>494</sup> "A history of the Museum grounds and Wildlife Garden" | Natural History Museum <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/a-history-of-the-museum-grounds-and-wildlife-garden.html> (consultation: 17th March, 2023).

<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

expertise to create meaningful and impactful initiatives that have the power to effect real change. By leveraging its vast resources and knowledge, the museum can engage with various stakeholders, including researchers, policymakers, and the general public, to create a collaborative and inclusive approach to tackling complex global issues. Through this commitment to excellence, innovation, and collaboration, the Natural History Museum is on the way to creating a more sustainable and equitable future.

The Natural History Museum has identified five key areas that are strategically important to guide its activities until 2031.<sup>496</sup> Although these priorities are already well-established, the Natural History Museum acknowledges the need to continuously revisit and revise them to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. These five strategic priorities of the Natural History Museum are: 1) Ensuring the preservation and growth of the collection, which is at the heart of the Museum's mission. This includes not only expanding the collection but also implementing best practices in preservation and curation to ensure that it remains accessible to researchers and the public for generations to come; 2) Transforming the study of natural history by investing in research and innovative technologies that enable scientists to understand the natural world better. This involves creating new tools and techniques for gathering, analysing, and presenting data and establishing new collaborative research initiatives that bring together experts from various disciplines; 3) Improving the visitor experience by enhancing the gardens and galleries to highlight the beauty and variety of the natural world. 4) Developing a resilient and sustainable organisation that can adapt to changing circumstances and thrive long-term. This includes not only developing a robust financial strategy but also implementing best practices in governance, risk management, and staff development to ensure that the Natural History Museum remains a world-class institution; 5) Engaging and involving a diverse audience, including underrepresented groups, in the activities of the Natural History Museum. This includes developing new outreach programs and educational resources and creating a welcoming and inclusive environment that fosters dialogue and collaboration among visitors, researchers, and staff. The following section will analyse the museum's strategy for touring exhibitions, which enables it to reach a wider audience.

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<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

## 7.2.2 International exhibitions at the Natural History Museum

Today, the Natural History Museum remains a hub of scientific research and education, attracting visitors from around the world who are eager to learn about the wonders of the natural world. The Museum has been dedicated to showcasing a wide range of groundbreaking exhibitions that have captivated audiences since 1990, which allows the collections to be seen by a much wider global audiences without the limit of the space caused by the historical building in London.<sup>497</sup> The museum's collections, which are world-renowned, contain significant cultural artefacts, works of art, and scientific discoveries that are of great importance to humanity. As the former section mentions, the museum's mission is to make these collections accessible to a much wider global audience without the limited space caused by the historical building in London. To achieve this, the museum has embraced the use of technology and digital platforms to showcase the collections and exhibitions online, making them available to people worldwide. Furthermore, the museum has also established partnerships with other museums and institutions worldwide, allowing for travelling exhibitions and international collaborations, further expanding the museum's reach and collections. The Natural History Museum serves as a hub for intellectual and cultural exchange. It is committed to sharing knowledge and fostering creativity, making it an invaluable resource for people of all backgrounds and interests.

These world-renowned exhibitions have been viewed by millions of visitors from all over the globe, leaving them with a sense of awe and wonder. For example, among these touring exhibitions has been the prestigious Wildlife Photographer of the Year, which showcases some of the most stunning and captivating wildlife photographs from around the world.<sup>498</sup> Another fascinating exhibition was Jurassic Oceans: Monsters of the Deep, which took visitors on an incredible journey through the prehistoric oceans, introducing them to the fantastical creatures that once roamed the seas.<sup>499</sup> Additionally, the famous Fantastic Beast: The Wonder of Nature exhibition showcased the incredible diversity of the world's ecosystems, revealing the beauty and complexity of the natural world.<sup>500</sup> These exhibitions reflect the Natural History Museum's

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<sup>497</sup> Touring exhibitions | Natural History Museum <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/business-services/touring-exhibitions.html> (consultation: 17th March, 2023).

<sup>498</sup> Ibid.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid.

<sup>500</sup> "Fantastic Beasts™: The Wonder of Nature" | Natural History Museum <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/business-services/touring-exhibitions/fantastic-beasts.html> (consultation: 17th March, 2023).

ongoing commitment to promoting education, exploration, and wonder through the power of art and science.

The Natural History Museum welcomes venues interested in hosting a touring exhibition. This provides an opportunity to showcase the museum's highlight collection to a broader audience and allows for the development of new narratives based on its collections at the new site. The museum's Exhibition Partnership Managers work closely with interested parties to ensure successful exhibitions. These managers can be contacted directly by interested venues. To provide all the necessary information, the Natural History Museum updates its official website with a comprehensive marketing brochure. The brochure includes essential details such as the size of the display space, recommended materials for display, exhibition schedule, copyrights, and other relevant information that venues may require.<sup>501</sup> The museum carefully provides interested venues with all the necessary information to make informed decisions about hosting one of the museum's touring exhibitions. In addition, the museum provides a promotional brochure and merchandise catalogue on the official website as guidance on promoting the exhibition and making it a successful event. The museum's experts ensure the exhibition is a memorable experience for every visitor.

This study focuses on a case where the Natural History Museum collaborated with the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo for an international exhibition. After years of development, the Natural History Museum has successfully showcased its exhibitions in various countries across the globe, including the USA, Italy, Germany, China, Canada, Australia, and Japan. To ensure that the exhibition fits well in different museum systems and diverse environments, the museum has expanded its exhibition requirements and guidance for indoor and outdoor spaces. This includes suggestions for displaying materials and detailed specifications to ensure that the exhibitions are safe and enjoyable for visitors. For example, the museum requires a minimum of 11.5mm glass thickness to prevent breakage and a sealed environment with less than 0.1 air changes per day to maintain air tightness. In addition, it maintains a stable environmental condition within a minimum of 16 degrees and a maximum of 21 degrees to regulate the relative humidity and temperature. The museum has also implemented fire stability measures, lighting requirements, and physical stability guidelines to maintain its exhibitions well.

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<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

## 7.3 The National Museum of Nature and Science in Tokyo

### 7.3.1 Introduction of the National Museum of Nature and Science

The National Museum of Nature and Science in Tokyo is a museum that has been established since 1877, making it one of Japan's oldest museums.<sup>502</sup> It has a unique distinction as the only national museum that offers a comprehensive exhibition of natural history and the history of science and technology in the country. The National Museum of Nature and Science is an essential organisation in the science museum scene in Japan and the Asian region, with its three core activities: conducting research studies, collecting and preserving specimens and materials, and organising exhibitions and educational programs. The museum is organised into three districts to pursue these core activities. The first district is in Ueno and includes the Japan Gallery, recognised as an important cultural asset of Japan and the neighbouring Global Gallery. The second district in Tsukuba consists of the Tsukuba Botanical Garden and the Research and Natural History Collection Wings. Lastly, the third district is located in Shirokanedai and is the Institute for Nature Study site, designated as a Natural Monument and Historic site.<sup>503</sup>

The National Museum of Nature and Science is pivotal in promoting research studies, collecting and preserving specimens and materials, and organising exhibitions and educational programs. Collecting samples and materials is crucial to the museum's mission, enabling scientists and researchers to study and understand the natural world. With its extensive collection, the National Museum of Nature and Science has become a hub for scholars and scientists, providing unparalleled resources to undertake their work. In addition to its research mission, the National Museum of Nature and Science also serves as a valuable educational resource. Its exhibitions and educational programs offer visitors a deeper understanding of natural history, science, and technology. The museum's three districts offer a unique experience, catering to visitors with different interests and needs. The research and exhibition areas are carefully planned to provide an immersive and captivating experience, featuring interactive displays and hands-on activities that enable visitors to explore and learn at their speed.

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<sup>502</sup> "Profile of the National Museum of Nature and Science 2023"

[https://www.kahaku.go.jp/about/summary/imgs/kahaku\\_outline2023.pdf](https://www.kahaku.go.jp/about/summary/imgs/kahaku_outline2023.pdf) (consultation: 18th March, 2023).

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.



Moreover, the museum offers diverse exhibitions and educational activities that aim to deepen people's knowledge and appreciation of the earth, life, science, technology, and the various global issues related to them. It conducts extensive research and investigative work, collecting, preserving, and utilising specimens and materials to further our understanding of the world around us. These exhibitions and activities aim to encourage visitors to reflect on the ideal connection between the earth and humanity and to motivate them to take practical actions towards a more sustainable future. Through its various outreach programs, the museum can engage with a wide range of audiences, including students, teachers, and researchers. Also, the Museum collaborates with overseas museums and research institutes on joint research projects and welcomes researchers and observation teams from these organisations to enrich the Museum's activities further. To promote partnerships and cooperation with overseas museums and research institutes, the Museum invites domestic and international researchers to its international symposiums.

The National Museum of Nature and Science is a highly esteemed museum recognized for its significant contributions to natural history and the history of science and technology. The team of competent researchers is composed of individuals specialising in various fields such as zoology, botany, petrology, mineralogy, palaeontology, anthropology, the history of science and technology, physics and chemistry. The National Museum of Nature and Science strives to undertake innovative and comprehensive research in collaboration with various institutions. The museum's research work is divided into two broad categories: basic research and integrated research. Primary research involves continuous empirical research guided by themes determined by each research group and department. This type of research is based on the Museum's vast collections and is designed to be ongoing. On the other hand, integrated study is conducted with set deadlines and interdisciplinary themes, focusing on vital issues relevant to the latest trends in research. The curators in the museum have integrated all of the research findings into these introductions and interactive programs. This enables visitors of diverse backgrounds and ages to learn about these collections with the assistance of the researchers from the museum. As one of the museum's primary goals is to hold exhibitions, the following section will introduce the exhibitions at the museum.

### 7.3.2 Exhibitions and galleries at the National Museum of Nature and Science

The National Museum of Nature and Science in Tokyo, Japan, houses many artefacts and exhibits highlighting the marvels of nature and science. The Global Gallery (Figure 7-1) and the Japan Gallery (Figure 7-2) are among the museum's permanent galleries. The Japan Gallery is dedicated to exploring the natural history of Japan, from ancient times to the present day. Visitors can learn about the country's diverse flora and fauna, as well as its geology and palaeontology. The exhibits feature a range of specimens, including fossils, minerals, and preserved animals. Meanwhile, the Global Gallery offers a more international perspective, highlighting the biodiversity and ecological diversity of the world. Visitors can explore different ecosystems, from the Arctic tundra to the African savannah, and learn about the animals and plants that inhabit them. The gallery also includes interactive exhibits that enable visitors to understand the scientific principles that govern our planet's natural systems.



Figure 7-1: The Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science: Global Gallery. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>504</sup>

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<sup>504</sup> Photo by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science. (Date: 8 January 2023).



Figure 7-2: The Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science: Japan Gallery. | Source: Jinghao Tong.<sup>505</sup>

Also, the National Museum of Nature and Science is an exceptional institution that houses a vast collection of original specimens and materials. Each floor of the museum offers a unique theme based on either a Japanese or international perspective, carefully curated to convey a message that relates to the overarching message of the permanent exhibitions. One of the exhibitions is "Human Beings in Coexistence with Nature." The exhibitions on different floors work together harmoniously to deliver a compelling and informative experience that encourages visitors to think about the environment in which all living things exist. By presenting the themes clearly and systematically, the museum aims to inspire visitors to take action and work towards protecting the environment and building a future of harmonious coexistence between people and the natural world. Through its engaging and interactive exhibits, the National Museum of Nature and Science provides a platform for people to learn about the natural world and appreciate the shared planet in it.

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<sup>505</sup> Photo by Jinghao Tong in the fieldwork at the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science. (Date: 8 January 2023).

### 7.3.3 National Museum of Nature and Science's administration system

The National Museum of Nature and Science's administration system results from over a hundred years of change. In October 1871, an exhibition hall in Yushima Seido was established as part of the observational facilities of the Museum Division, Ministry of Education—this initiative aimed to promote science education and increase public awareness of scientific advancements. Over the years, the exhibition hall has undergone several changes. Even its name was changed from "Tokyo Museum" to "Museum of Education" and "Tokyo Science Museum" in 1875, 1881, and 1931, respectively. In 1972, new facilities were completed in the Shinjuku District, and the natural history research departments were moved there. New research divisions, including the Anthropological Research Division, were established as part of the development process in the same year. Several notable changes have been made with the partial reform of the Ministry of Education Establishment Act. One of the significant updates includes strengthening the research organisation by adding the function of the Science of Natural History Research Center. This improvement will allow for more comprehensive research within the organisation and ultimately lead to more accurate findings.

In addition to the changes as mentioned above, it should be noted that the reorganisation of the Arts & Sciences Department has been a significant undertaking, with the department being split into two separate research branches. The first of these branches has been established to conduct research on a carefully defined set of objectives. In contrast, the second branch has set its sights on museum-related goals, such as creating and curating exhibitions and developing educational programs. This restructuring has been a complex and multi-faceted process, with a great deal of effort to ensure each department has the resources and support it needs to carry out its objectives effectively. Moreover, the museum itself has undergone a period of significant growth and evolution, gradually developing a system that is tailored to its unique needs and objectives. These changes have had a substantial impact on the operations of the Arts & Sciences Department and have helped to position the National Museum of Nature and Science for continued success and growth in the years to come.

Additionally, the Polar Science Division has been introduced to this organisation, which will be responsible for researching various scientific phenomena in the polar regions. Lastly, there has been an annexation of the National Nature Education Garden in Shirokane to the museum,



which has led to the establishment of the Institute for Nature Study. This new institute will provide opportunities for researchers to conduct in-depth studies on the natural world and share their insights with the general public. From April 2001, it became an Independent Administrative Institution known as the National Museum of Nature and Science, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.<sup>506</sup> The museum has continued to thrive and has become a center for scientific research and education, with numerous exhibits, educational programs, and outreach initiatives designed to engage the public and foster a love of science. Through its various activities, the National Museum of Nature and Science continues to play a significant role in advancing scientific knowledge and promoting science education in the country.

Overall, the Independent Administrative Institution National Museum of Nature and Science, established under the Law on the National Museum of Nature and Science and the Act on General Rules for Incorporated Administrative Agencies, plays an essential role in conducting investigative work and research activities, in the field of natural history and other domains of natural sciences, including their applications.<sup>507</sup> The Museum's objective also includes the collection and preservation of scientific specimens, as well as the care and management of living collections. Furthermore, the National Museum of Nature and Science aims to share the results of its research and collection efforts with the general public, thereby promoting natural sciences and science education in society. Through exhibitions, educational programs, and outreach initiatives, the National Museum of Nature and Science aims to involve people of all ages and backgrounds in the marvels of the natural world. This helps cultivate a greater appreciation and understanding of the planet's diverse ecosystems, as well as the significance of safeguarding them for future generations. The National Museum of Nature and Science is dedicated to providing visitors with a wide range of engaging and captivating exhibitions. To accomplish this goal and attract more visitors to the museum, the institution offers a variety of permanent, special, and temporary exhibitions across three districts: Ueno, Tsukuba and Shirokanedai.<sup>508</sup> The cross-border exhibition was held in the Ueno Park district, which was a convenient location and contributed to its success.

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<sup>506</sup> "History of NMNS-National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo"

<https://www.kahaku.go.jp/english/about/summary/history/index.html> (consultation: 18th March, 2023).

<sup>507</sup> "Profile of the National Museum of Nature and Science 2023"

[https://www.kahaku.go.jp/about/summary/imgs/kahaku\\_outline2023.pdf](https://www.kahaku.go.jp/about/summary/imgs/kahaku_outline2023.pdf) (consultation: 24th March, 2023).

<sup>508</sup> Ibid.

## 7.4 The Cross-border Exhibition at the National Museum of Nature and Science

### 7.4.1 The idea of the exhibition

The exhibition "Treasures of the Natural World" was hosted at the National Museum of Nature and Science, Japan for 85 days, from March 19th to June 11th, 2017. During this time, it garnered an impressive 300,000 visitors.<sup>509</sup> This exhibition was an cooperation with the Natural History Museum of London, which had a staggering number of collections: 80 million.<sup>510</sup> However, due to the limit of space, the majority of specimens could not be displayed in London. To make these collections accessible to the public in other countries, the exhibition "Treasures of the Natural World" was launched in 2017 and featured around 200 star objects from the Museum's vast collections that tell stories of great scientific discoveries past and present. The exhibition chose Japan as its first station, then the exhibition went to Singapore and other countries in the South Asia. This exhibition provided a rare opportunity for people to see some of the world's most precious natural history collections up close. The hand-picking process of the around 200 specimens for their scientific, historic, and cultural importance was a fascinating journey that revealed epic tales of adventure, as well as insights into the minds of some of the greatest scientific thinkers.

These specimens of this cross-border exhibition, carefully curated over centuries, trace the quest of humanity to understand the natural world, from the Enlightenment era to the present day. The exhibition of this collection was a significant milestone, marking the first time it was brought to Southeast Asia. For some of the collections, it was also their first time leaving the museum. This exhibition was a testament to the continued allure of natural history collections for those who seek to understand life on the planet, the impact of future changes, and the actions that people can take to build a sustainable future. The exhibition "Treasures of the Natural World" was a fascinating display of items that had been collected from various parts of the world, dating back many centuries. Visitors were able to see firsthand the incredible diversity of life on this planet, and to

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<sup>509</sup> Natural History Museum Annual Report and Accounts 2015-2016  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/628577/60213\\_HC\\_266\\_NHM\\_Print.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/628577/60213_HC_266_NHM_Print.pdf) (consultation: 18th March, 2023).

<sup>510</sup> Miller, C. Giles, Philippa Brewer, Mark Carine, Gill Comerford, Helen Hardy, Andrea Hart, Sarah Long et al. "Join the Dots: assessing a collection of 80 million items at The Natural History Museum, London." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 37, no. 3 (2022): 287-306.



learn about the many challenges that it faces, including climate change, habitat destruction, and pollution. The exhibition served as a strong reminder of the pressing need to take action towards a more sustainable future. It inspired many visitors to reflect more deeply on these issues and consider the role they can play in bringing about positive change.

During an interview with Ms. Mai Koguchi, the Public Relations Strategy Officer, it was revealed that the cooperation between the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science and their London counterparts began with a staff of a Japanese newspaper company, specifically the Yomiuri Shimbun.<sup>511</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, major Japanese media companies' cultural departments have made significant progress by creating a team of talented professionals with academic backgrounds in art or history and practical experience in the business field. This team aims to enhance collaboration with international museums. By doing so, these companies aim to expand Japan's cultural footprint in the global arena while simultaneously promoting cultural exchange and mutual understanding between different countries. This approach also has the potential to generate substantial revenue for newspaper companies, thereby contributing to their overall growth and development.

After the Japanese staff, who worked for the newspaper company Yomiuri Shimbun, presented the project proposal to the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science, discussions began on how to fund and organize the exhibition.<sup>512</sup> Later, the Yomiuri Shimbun and BS Nippon Television came together to jointly cover the expenses of the exhibition, in which the Yomiuri Shimbun took on the responsibility of handling transportation and paperwork for the borrowing procedures, while BS Nippon TV worked on promoting the exhibition and generating interest among the public.<sup>513</sup> This collaboration between the newspaper company and the Natural Science Museum in London held a great significance in a number of ways. Firstly, it made the exhibition possible by covering the expensive borrowing fee for the Japanese museum. Secondly, it provided a collective case to show the cooperation model between Japanese and foreign museums. By adopting this model, museums in Japan could receive sufficient support from both financial and promotional perspectives, allowing curators in the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science to focus on displaying of collections and related research. Furthermore, this model could generate

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<sup>511</sup> Appendix 3, Ms Mai Koguchi, interview with the author, Tokyo, 2nd February 2023.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

motivation for different partners to engage in cross-border exhibitions, which have the potential to attract more visitors. Such collaborations can help in fostering cultural exchange and mutual understanding between different countries and their people.

Some of the collections that were displayed in the exhibition were truly remarkable. For example, the original manuscript of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* included his writing notes process where he scratched out some words and chose other words to express himself (Figure 7-3). This manuscript was an evidence to the painstaking effort that Darwin put into his work and provides a glimpse into his thought process. Also, these natural history collections were an invaluable resource for scientists and the public alike. During the exhibition opening, researchers at the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science had the opportunity to closely study these items. These collections conveyed stories of remarkable scientific discoveries, offering valuable understanding of the mechanisms of the natural world, and serving as inspiration for further explorations and realizations. The curators of these museums could craft new stories using these collections while ensuring that they remained accessible to more visitors in Japan.

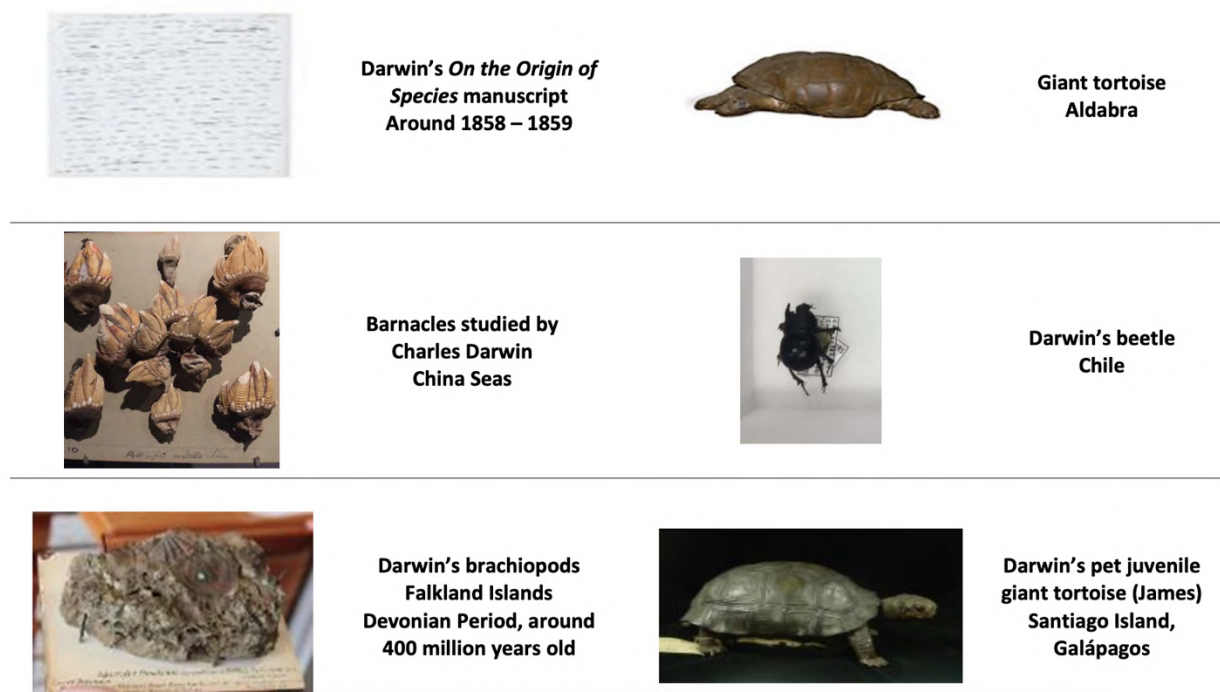


Figure 7-3: List of Objects of “Treasures of the Natural World” at the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo. | Source: © The Trustees of The Natural History Museum, London.

## 7.4.2 The description of the exhibition



Figure 7-4: Exhibition “Treasures of the Natural World” at the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo. |

Source: © The Trustees of The Natural History Museum, London.

From 2017, beyond showcasing the collections in the science arena, the Natural History Museum, London had embarked on a new endeavor to share the treasures with a global audience. A suite of touring exhibitions had been developed, which allowed the museum to reach out to visitors all over the world, and give them a chance to experience the magnificence of the collections firsthand. The case study exhibition in this chapter was “Treasures of the Natural World” (Figure 7-4), which was also the biggest exhibition of the Natural History Museum, London until the date.<sup>514</sup> This grand display featured over 200 hand-picked specimens, each of which traced a centuries-long quest to understand the natural world. Starting from the Enlightenment era, the

<sup>514</sup> Natural History Museum Annual Report and Accounts 2015-2016  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/628577/60213\\_HC\\_266\\_NHM\\_Print.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/628577/60213_HC_266_NHM_Print.pdf) (consultation: 14th March, 2023).

exhibition took visitors on a journey through time, right up to the Museum's current research. This international exhibition was a result collaborated with the Yomiuri Shimbun, a leading Japanese media group, to debut this tour at the National Museum of Nature and Science in Tokyo. The exhibition was warmly received by visitors, with over 6,000 people attending the opening weekend.<sup>515</sup>



Figure 7-5: Fragile collection in the exhibition “Treasures of the Natural World” at the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo. | Source: © The Trustees of The Natural History Museum, London.

The exhibition had been meticulously designed to last for a period of three years, owing to the need to properly preserve certain fragile collections. This was a common practice in museums around the world to ensure that valuable and delicate collections were not damaged or degraded from prolonged exposure to light, humidity, or other environmental factors. For example, one of the notable artefacts in the exhibition was the Iguanodon lower leg bone from the Cretaceous Period, which was approximately 130 million years old (Figure 7-5, top-left item). This fossilized bone was an important piece of evidence in the study of dinosaur evolution and helped provide insight into the anatomy and behaviour of these prehistoric creatures. Another significant artifact on display is the Gomphothere upper molar from the Pleistocene Period, estimated to be between

<sup>515</sup> Ibid.



2.5 - 2 million years old (Figure 7-5, top-right item). This ancient tooth belonged to a now-extinct elephant-like animal that once roamed the grasslands of Eurasia and North America.



Figure 7-6: CGI (computer-generated imagery) videos of the exhibition at the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo. | Source: © The Trustees of The Natural History Museum, London.

The exhibition offered a unique and engaging experience with a variety of multimedia, interactive displays, films, and cutting-edge CGI (computer-generated imagery). Several videos showed the fossils of extinct animals coming to life and walking in the museum (Figure 7-6). It was designed for all audiences, regardless of age, background, or expertise, showcasing world-renowned science that emphasized the role in addressing the planet's most pressing environmental challenges, including climate change, deforestation, and species extinction. The exhibition also provided a comprehensive understanding of how human activities impact the environment and how residents on the earth can reduce risks and work towards a sustainable future. It also highlighted pioneering research and innovation in environmental science, which was guaranteed to inspire and motivate visitors to take action and positively impact the planet.

## 7.5 The cooperation process

### 7.5.1 The cooperation process of the exhibition

This cross-border exhibition “Treasures of the Natural World” marks the first stop of a three-year global tour, and it was made possible by the collaborative efforts of three key stakeholders: the Natural History Museum of London, the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science, and the Yomiuri Shimbun, a Japanese newspaper company. The director of the Natural History Museum and an officer of the Yomiuri Shimbun had the opportunity to meet each other during a former special exhibition, which sparked a conversation about a potential collaboration.<sup>516</sup> This conversation eventually led to the creation of this cross-border exhibition. One of the highlights of this collaboration was the exchange of knowledge and skills between the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science, and the Natural History Museum of London. Both museums have similar structures for researching and holding exhibition sectors, which allowed for a fruitful exchange of ideas and practices. For the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science, this cross-border exhibition was a great opportunity to accumulate knowledge and skills related to special exhibitions, which will undoubtedly benefit the museum's future endeavours.<sup>517</sup>

As international exhibitions can be a great success for museums to display their collections to a wider audience, professional teams with expertise in museum planning and cooperation have been growing to enable more effective collaboration with well-planned strategies. Such as, in recent years, the Natural History Museum of London had announced the availability of a job opening for the position of Exhibition Partnerships Manager.<sup>518</sup> The main responsibility of the chosen candidate was to promote and sell the Museum's portfolio of International Touring Exhibitions. This position was instrumental in ensuring that the Museum had a fully booked schedule of exhibitions throughout the year. The potential cooperators for this role include Museums, Galleries, Science Centres, Zoos, Promoters and a variety of other exhibition spaces. The department in the Natural History Museum of London responsible for this job opening was the Head of Touring Exhibitions. The Exhibition Partnerships Manager should be willing to travel

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<sup>516</sup> Appendix 3, Ms Mai Koguchi, interview with the author, Tokyo, 2nd February 2023.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid.

<sup>518</sup> “Exhibition Partnerships Manager” | Natural History Museum | [artsjobsonline](https://www.artsjobsonline.com/jobs/natural-history-museum-exhibition-partnerships-manager/)  
<https://www.artsjobsonline.com/jobs/natural-history-museum-exhibition-partnerships-manager/> (consultation: 18th March, 2023).



internationally and possess excellent skills in negotiations, business planning, and market analysis. Also, the Exhibition Partnerships Manager will be tasked with thinking of creative ideas and solutions and selling to customers with a wide range of exhibition configurations and audiences. The creation of this job position by the Natural History Museum of London underscored the Museum's commitment to promoting its collections with a professional team and a clear guidance for future cooperation. Moreover, the Exhibition Partnerships Manager will conduct customer research to identify new clients and gather/analyses statistics to monitor results and benchmark in specific regions that they will manage. For instance, the Exhibition Partnerships Manager will be responsible for the Asia, Europe, Africa, Oceania, and America regions.

With the support of a professional Exhibition Partnerships Manager at the Natural History Museum of London, "Treasures of the Natural World" was able to develop a new and exciting narrative, with highlights collections of the museum. The liaison with other internal departments, such as researchers and curators, allowed for a more comprehensive and detailed approach to the exhibits. The Natural History Museum of London was able to maintain a delicate balance between research and display, ensuring that the exhibits were both informative and visually stunning. Furthermore, the museum was able to collaborate with other institutions on cross-border exhibitions, expanding the reach and impact of the exhibit. Through an extensive and meticulous process, the exhibition was able to showcase the wonders of the natural world in a new and engaging way, capturing the essence of each collection in the Natural History Museum of London. By carefully selecting each piece and curating them in a thoughtful manner, visitors were able to fully immerse themselves in the awe-inspiring beauty of the natural world. The exhibition also featured interactive displays and informative panels that provide a deeper understanding of the specimens on display.

The process of cooperation for the exhibition involved negotiations about required collections among curators in Tokyo and London. At the start of the process, the Natural History Museum of London provided a list of collections for the exhibition, two specimens of the early bird *Archaeopteryx lithographica* were not included on the list. While the curator of the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science, believed that these two collections could be the highlight of the exhibition, as these items showed a unique combination of dinosaur and bird characters. Not only that, but they were also some of the few fossils that actually showed evolution in action and the transition between two major groups of animals. In order to borrow these collections, the

curators at the Natural History Museum of London needed to assess their condition for international transport and display in a different environment, as well as decide on the time period for which they could be displayed. After careful consideration, the Natural History Museum of London agreed to lend these two collections to the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science. However, in exchange for this, the Yomiuri Shimbun paid an additional fee to cover the “special collections renting fee”. It was important to ensure that the collections were in good condition during the exhibition in Tokyo, and once the exhibition was over, the two collections of *Archaeopteryx lithographica* were sent back to London for maintenance. In the end, these two collections attracted huge attention from the Japanese society, making the exhibition a huge success with over 300,000 visitors during the displaying period. The Natural History Museum of London provided an initial timetable for the exhibition, which could be negotiated depending on the venue, designers, and showcase manufacturers.



Figure 7-7: Collections of *Archaeopteryx lithographica* in the exhibition “Treasures of the Natural World” at the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo. | Source: © The Trustees of The Natural History Museum, London.

## 7.5.2 Communication and media

In order to ensure that the exhibition was well organised and met the requirements of the Natural History Museum, the National Museum of Nature and Science engaged in two years of communication with the Natural History Museum. During this time, the two museums exchanged ideas on how to best display the exhibits, discussed the technical specifications necessary to properly preserve and showcase the specimens, and collaborated on the logistics of transporting the items from one museum to the other. Additionally, the museums held regular meetings with their respective curators and scientific experts to exchange knowledge and best practices on the care and display of the specimens. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the scientific significance of the items on display, and also ensured that the exhibits were properly labeled and presented with relevant contextual information. In order to further engage visitors, the museums also developed interactive displays and multimedia content to complement the physical exhibits. This included touch screens, audio guides, and video presentations that allowed visitors to learn more about the specimens and their historical and cultural contexts.

The exhibition "Treasures of the Natural World" was a collaborative effort between three stakeholders in Japan: the National Museum of Nature and Science, the Japanese news company: Yomiuri Shimbun, and BS Nippon Television. The Yomiuri Shimbun was responsible for the transportation and paperwork involved in the borrowing procedures, while BS NTV promoted the exhibition through media reports, including TV programs about the open ceremony activity and interviews with the director of the Natural History Museum of London. As an example of the exhibition's publicity, the NHK morning show broadcasted the event on March 18, 2017, when it opened to the public (Figure 7-8). The collaboration among three stakeholders resulted in a comprehensive and engaging exhibition. Firstly, the curators of the National Museum of Nature and Science provided their professional opinions and carefully researched the collections of the Natural History Museum of London. Secondly, with the help of the Yomiuri Shimbun, the collections were borrowed and the extra fee was covered to make this exhibition possible. Thirdly, the BS Nippon Television arranged a series of TV programs that included interviews, lectures, and audience voting to introduce the idea of the exhibition and the background story of its preparation. The BS Nippon Television also constantly reported news to attract more visitors to the National Museum of Nature and Science in Tokyo to see this exhibition.

To enhance the appeal of the exhibition, a promotional campaign was launched on the official website and TV program, branding it as "Best of London's Natural History Museum".<sup>519</sup> As noted in the preceding section, the curators of the National Museum of Nature and Science opted to secure two additional collections of *Archaeopteryx lithographica* for the exhibition, albeit at an extra borrowing fee. The inclusion of these two collections proved to be a major draw for visitors, and they were prominently featured in the TV program, ultimately earning the popular vote from audiences. Furthermore, to provide a more immersive experience for visitors, the exhibition was designed with interactive displays that allowed them to engage with the specimens and learn more about the natural world. The exhibition also featured guided tours by expert curators, providing visitors with in-depth insights into the significance of each specimen and its place in the larger context of natural history.



Figure 7-8: Media report about the exhibition “Treasures of the Natural World” at the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo. | Source: © The Trustees of The Natural History Museum, London.

<sup>519</sup> “Treasures of the Natural World - Best of London's Natural History Museum” National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo <https://www.kahaku.go.jp/english/exhibitions/old/temporary/index.php> (consultation: 19th March, 2023).

### 7.5.3 Public reaction

The cross-border exhibition "Treasures of the Natural World" in Tokyo was a massive hit among the locals and tourists alike. It ran for a relatively short duration of 85 days and had limited gallery space, but the number of visitors it attracted was nothing short of phenomenal. People queued up in large numbers to view the exhibits, and the organizers had to extend the opening hours to accommodate the enthusiastic crowds. The exhibition had a fascinating topic, showcasing some of the rarest and most magnificent natural wonders from the 80 million collections of the Natural History Museum of London. It was a testament to the enduring popularity of natural history and the curiosity it inspires in people of all ages. Visitors from different parts of Japan came to marvel at the collection of rare specimens, including fossils, minerals, and preserved animals. The exhibition provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for people to witness these important collections, not only for the development of human beings but also for the history of this planet. The exhibition also featured interactive displays and educational materials designed to engage and inform visitors about the natural world and its wonders. The organisers had gone to great lengths to ensure that visitors had an immersive and enjoyable experience. The interactive displays allowed visitors to learn about various aspects of natural history, including the evolution of species and the different ecosystems of the world. The educational materials provided insights into the history of the specimens on display and their significance.

The National Museum of Nature and Science has taken several measures to cater to a wide range of audiences and ensure their exhibitions are accessible to all. To make the content more engaging and understandable for children, the museum incorporated simple language and Japanese phonetic symbols on top of the characters, enabling even those who struggle with reading Japanese characters to enjoy the exhibits. This not only helped children but also visitors who are not proficient in Japanese. In addition, the exhibition was displayed at a height that can be comfortably viewed from a wheelchair, making it accessible to elderly visitors, children, and visitors with disabilities. The museum believed that by making the exhibition more inclusive, they could provide an enriching experience for all visitors and educate and entertain a more comprehensive range of audiences. The exhibition's theme was thoughtfully designed to capture the attention of various visitors, including students, scholars, artists, and enthusiasts alike, thus making it a highly successful and well-received event.



The exhibition was planned in a way that provided visitors with a comprehensive understanding of the historical and cultural significance of the pieces on display. In addition to the curatorial work mentioned above, the exhibition also involved thorough research and documentation. The goal was to provide visitors with a deeper understanding of the socio-historical background of the pieces and to put the collections into context. The exhibition team worked closely with experts in the field, including historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists, to ensure that the information provided was accurate and insightful. Visitors to the exhibition were also treated to various interactive displays and multimedia installations designed to engage and educate them on the significance of the pieces on display. Moreover, the effort that went into creating the exhibition was remarkable, with the curators carefully selecting the works to be displayed and how they were to be presented.



Figure 7-7: Display of the exhibition "Treasures of the Natural World" at the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo. | Source: © The Trustees of The Natural History Museum, London.



## 7.6 Conclusion

The cross-border exhibition "Treasures of the Natural World" made its first stop in Japan as part of a three-year global tour by the Natural History Museum London. This exhibition resulted from a successful partnership between the London and National Museum of Nature and Science in Japan. The Japanese museum had two media partners, namely the Yomiuri Shimbun and BS Nippon Television, consisting of newspapers and a television company. The exhibition was not just about displaying fascinating collections for visitors but was also a platform for research exchange and education. The Yomiuri Shimbun and BS Nippon Television played a crucial role in making this expensive international exhibition a reality. They provided financial support during the early stages of exhibition preparation, which allowed the National Museum of Nature and Science in Tokyo to borrow rare and valuable specimens from the Natural History Museum in London. During the display, these two media partners of the National Museum of Nature and Science also promoted the exhibition through professional TV programs and other reports, which helped to attract more visitors and make the exhibition widely known.

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the museum structures of the Natural History Museum in London and the National Museum of Nature and Science in Tokyo, which is the foundation for collaboration. The research-exhibition feature of these museums is quite similar, as it helps achieve this exhibition's two main goals. Firstly, it enables researchers from each museum to communicate with each other based on the collections available. Secondly, it allows the accumulating of knowledge and skills related to special exhibitions for the National Museum of Nature and Science in Tokyo. During this analysis, an interview with a museum officer from the National Museum of Nature and Science in Tokyo revealed their attitude towards Yomiuri Shimbun and BS Nippon Television, considered the museum's "media partners" in the international museum collaboration process. Interestingly, the museum's partnership with these media outlets helps promote its exhibitions and research work to a broader audience, both in Japan and globally. Additionally, this partnership has also helped establish the museum's reputation as a leading institution in natural history and science.

In addition, the success of cross-border exhibitions like this one could generate new positions in museums specially designed for international collaboration. The exhibition management team cooperated with museum curators to select collections, create new stories, and

rent exhibitions to different venues. By showcasing collections to other countries and curating stories that resonate with diverse audiences, museums can establish a global presence and foster cultural exchange. International exhibitions like "Treasures of the Natural World" can lead to fruitful research collaborations between scientists from Japan and the UK. For example, Japanese and UK scientists who worked on developing the collections for this exhibition had the opportunity to collaborate and produce new stories for Japanese visitors. The possibilities of this collaboration are endless, and it is exciting to think about what discoveries and insights may arise from these collections. For instance, Japanese and UK scientists could work together to study the specimens collected from different parts of the world and gain a better understanding of the evolution of other species.

In addition to the above, the chapter also analyses the public reaction to the exhibition from different perspectives. It provides a detailed look at how Japanese visitors reacted to the exhibition. For example, the exhibition was successful in its own right and garnered the attention of professional TV programs, which helped increase public awareness and interest in cultural activities. Viewers were able to develop a better understanding of the exhibition's significance and influence on the cultural landscape, which in turn inspired them to explore similar events and activities. This resulted in a surge of interest in the museum exhibitions, leading to a more engaged and informed public. Furthermore, the exposure the exhibition received through these professional TV programs helped establish it as a key cultural event, solidifying its place in the canon of essential museum exhibitions.

In summary, this partnership was established to exchange knowledge and expertise in the field and promote cultural exchange between Japan and the UK. The successful collaboration between these two museums has the potential to lead to numerous international exhibitions showcasing unique specimens and collections of museums from the UK to Japan. The exhibition "Treasures of the World" featured rare and historical collections from the vast array of the Nature History Museum of London to Tokyo. After this exhibition, the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science and their London counterparts continue collaborating on future exhibitions and initiatives, ensuring that their partnership will enrich the cultural landscape of Japan and the UK for years to come. Furthermore, such culture-related initiatives could help these Japanese newspaper companies enjoy certain tax-free status under the Nonprofit Law of Japan, making them more financially viable in the long run.





CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION





## 8.1 Introduction

“The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.”<sup>520</sup>

——L. P. Hartley.

In *The go-between*, L. P. Hartley explored the themes of memory, the passage of time, and how events from the past could have a lasting impact on an individual's life. Through the story, Hartley poignantly illustrates how past experiences can shape the present and the future. He famously wrote, "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there." Since all of the case study exhibitions took place in the past, displaying them at four international locations allowed for the emergence of new collaboration models between Chinese and Japanese museums and their Western partners. This conclusion includes two different models of museums' international collaboration, which could be seen as a sign of the changing nature of global cultural exchange, and the increasing recognition of the importance of cross-cultural partnership in the heritage. Indeed, the success of these collaborative endeavours has sparked greater interest in comparable initiatives and showcases worldwide. Moreover, the impact of these exhibitions extends beyond just the museum world. The cross-cultural understanding and exchange fostered by these collaborations can ripple effect throughout society, promoting greater mutual understanding, appreciation, and respect for different cultures. As such, it is clear that these exhibitions have had a lasting impact on the cultural landscape, both locally and globally.

This research explores the impact of four international exhibitions held in China and Japan between 2015 and 2021 on their respective museum policies and museology. The exhibitions have contributed to developing museum cooperation models and created new narratives that go beyond the traditional "us vs. them" dichotomies and strict museum/media company divisions. The collaborative projects have brought together museums, newspaper companies, and TV networks, forming what museum staff call "our media partners." The involvement of these media partners has fostered more substantial cooperation between Japanese and foreign museums, resulting in new cultural programs indirectly supported by the Japanese government through the Non-Profit Law for cultural activities. This research would like to understand better the various museum cooperation models in China and Japan. Additionally, it has examined the influence of

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<sup>520</sup> Hartley, Leslie Poles. *The go-between*. Penguin UK, 2015: 5.



international initiatives on the international policies of museums. Here is a table to display a general comparison of these four case studies based on the location of the display, involvement of media partners, number of visitors, and their further motivation for international collaboration:

**Table 8.1: Comparison of four case studies:**

Cross-border Exhibition Title	Location	Displayed in China	Displayed in Japan	Media Partner	More than 300,000 visitors	Long-term cooperation motivation
"A History of the World in 100 Objects"	Beijing	✓	✓	×	✓	×
"West Encounters East—— A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics"	Shanghai	✓	×	×	×	✓
"A History of the World in 100 Objects"	Tokyo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
"Treasures of the Natural World"	Tokyo	×	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Own elaboration

Based on the information in Table 8.1, the exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" was displayed in China and Japan. However, not all of the museums that hosted the exhibition could establish a long-term relationship with their foreign partners. The motivations for hosting the exhibition varied between these museums. For instance, the British government covered the expenses for the exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" in China, while in Japan, the fee for the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum was paid by the Japanese newspaper company, the Asahi Shinbun company. Government-led cultural cooperation could not ensure the continued success of this exhibition, although it could involve collaborating with multiple venues to display the exhibition in a short period of time. These two Japanese case studies show that a successful cooperation relationship may require more continuous financial and promotional support from professional media companies.

For example, the cultural departments of these Japanese media companies could help curators of museums to focus on exhibition, and design media programs to promote the exhibition at the same time. It is important for media companies to work with museums to promote art and culture, as this can help generate tax-free income for media companies and increase public interest

in museums related cultural events. By collaborating with museums, Japanese media companies can also gain access to unique content that they can use to create engaging media programs. This can help increase the visibility and reach of both the museums and the media companies, as their audiences are likely to overlap. Also, media companies can provide valuable resources to museums, such as technology and marketing expertise, which can help museums stay relevant and innovative in an increasingly digital world. In summary, collaboration between media companies and museums can be a mutually beneficial partnership that help Japanese museums to build long-term relationship with foreign partners.

Additionally, this research provides insight into the collaborative processes of exhibitions, which vary from case to case, and analyses their long-term effects on the museums involved. Continuing from the previous paragraph, it is important to note that the involvement of media partners in collaborative projects has been essential in creating a more holistic approach to museum cooperation. In these two case studies in Japan, newspaper companies and TV networks have been involved from the outset, and museum staff have referred to them as "our media partners." This level of collaboration has not only fostered connections between Japanese and foreign museums, resulting in new exhibitions that meet the needs of both museum partners but has also promoted the exhibitions through the lens of the media companies.

The impact of the four international exhibitions on museums' international policies is still ongoing. The collaborative efforts have created new narratives that go beyond traditional museum practices. For example, it has made a sense of community and cooperation between museums, media companies, and governments, resulting in the development of new cultural programs. This research aims to provide a better understanding of the long-term effects of these exhibitions on museums' international policies and to analyse the collaborative processes involved. By doing so, we can gain insight into the different museum cooperation models in China and Japan, and apply this knowledge to other regions worldwide. This research highlights the importance of museum collaboration, not only between museums but also with media companies and governments. The collaborative efforts have led to new cultural programmes and deeper cooperation between museums. This research provides valuable insight into the long-term effects of collaborative exhibitions on museums' international policies, and can help to inform future museum practices.

## 8.2 Conclusions of the Thesis

This chapter discusses the conclusions drawn from the following three sections regarding museums' international collaboration. The conclusions highlight the motivations behind collaboration, different collaboration models, and the resulting short-term and long-term cooperation relationships. The motivations include resource sharing and global influence, while the collaborative models focus on Chinese and Japanese museums. The chapter also examines the benefits and drawbacks of cooperation relationships and provides recommendations for navigating them effectively. The findings of this study are in line with the primary goals outlined in chapter 1: to evaluate the outcome of international collaboration in cultural diplomacy, analyse challenges in museum cooperation, investigate the historical process of cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan, compare their collaborative construction, assess the impact on museum narratives and curatorial practices, and summarise the effects on long-term museum policies in both countries.

In this thesis, three main conclusions can be drawn from the discussions in sections 8.2.1, 8.2.2, and 8.2.3. These conclusions shed light on the motivations behind museums' international collaboration, the different collaborative models between museums, and the short-term and long-term cooperation relationships that result from such collaborations. Section 8.2.1 delves into the motivations that drive museums to collaborate internationally. It explores the factors that lead to such collaborations, such as the need to share resources, knowledge, and expertise and the desire to expand the museum's reach and influence in the global heritage and culture scene. In section 8.2.2, the focus shifts to the two main collaboration models commonly observed among museums. These models are compared and contrasted, with their advantages and disadvantages discussed at length. The first model focuses on Chinese museums and relies heavily on government involvement and curator-centered collaboration. On the other hand, the second model centres on Japanese museums and benefits from financial and promotional support from media companies. Finally, section 8.2.3 examines the short-term and long-term cooperative relationships resulting from museums' international collaborations. The benefits and drawbacks of each type of relationship are discussed, and recommendations are made on how museums can best navigate these relationships to achieve their goals.

### 8.2.1 Motivations for museums' international collaboration

One primary motivation for lending museums to engage in international collaborations is to take advantage of their vast collections. By participating in cross-border exhibitions in other countries, museums can reach broader audiences and generate additional revenue through lending fees. This helps museums showcase their collections to a global audience and contributes to their financial sustainability. Another important motivation for museums to engage in international collaborations is to enhance their international reputation. By participating in cultural activities and exhibitions abroad, museums can increase their recognition as famous tourist destinations and attract more visitors. This can have a beneficial effect on the local economy and encourage cultural exchange.

Governments may also play a role in supporting international collaborations between museums. When governments aim to strengthen international relations through cultural activities, they may cover borrowing fees, allowing hosting museums to collaborate with foreign museums without financial concerns. This enables museums to foster stronger relationships and share cultural knowledge. When analyzing two Japanese case studies of cross-border exhibitions, it becomes evident that the involvement of media companies offers significant advantages. In these cases, two different newspaper companies proposed to cover exhibition fees, providing financial support for the museums to gain access to high-quality content and increase income. Through these collaborations, curators of Japanese museums had the opportunity to learn new practices, innovations, and experiences that can be applied to enhance their special exhibitions further. This exchange of knowledge and expertise can lead to the development of new techniques, technologies, and methodologies in preserving, studying, and exhibiting cultural and historical collections.

Cross-border exhibitions are not just standalone events but rather complex cultural projects that require close collaboration between lending and hosting museums. The success of these exhibitions relies on careful planning and execution, drawing on a range of skills and resources. Museums need to negotiate loan agreements, arrange transportation for collections, design exhibit layouts, and create interpretive materials to provide a meaningful experience for visitors. Cross-border exhibitions promote cultural exchange and advance scholarship in specific fields. As a result, they attract a large number of visitors, thereby attracting different stakeholders.

## 8.2.2 Two collaboration models among museums in China and Japan

The collaboration models between Chinese and Japanese museums present differences in the degree of government and media company involvement. In the Chinese model, the government has a more active role in initiating and overseeing collaborations between museums, while the media company does not participate in exhibition preparation from the beginning. In contrast to the Chinese model, the Japanese government adopts an indirect approach. They leverage the Non-profit Law to incentivise newspaper and TV companies to back cultural-related activities and generate tax-free income. This, in turn, enables Japanese museums to establish mutually beneficial partnerships with their media counterparts. This difference in government and media company involvement can impact the further cooperation relationship between museums. In the Chinese model, the government may have a stronger influence on the direction and scope of collaborations, potentially leading to a more centralised approach. Meanwhile, in the Japanese model, collaborations may be more diverse and decentralised, with each museum pursuing its own interests and goals. Also, the Japanese model could take advantage of professional media companies to support the exhibition through promotional programs and TV shows; the financial support from these media partners also could cover the high expense for international exhibitions, which allow the Japanese museums to borrow valuable collections from foreign museums with bigger budgets.

Hosting exhibitions with foreign museums is a common way to celebrate cultural and anniversary years in China. This practice not only showcases cultural exchanges but also promotes national interests for both China and the lending institutions in the West. The cross-border exhibitions at the National Museum of China and the Shanghai Museum all got direct support from the government. In fact, the Chinese government has been investing more and more in cultural exchanges with foreign countries over the past few years, recognising the importance of cultural diplomacy in today's world. For example, the chosen collection “101 Object” for the exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects” at the National Museum of China was the wooden hammer and pen, which had been used to mark China’s entry into the World Trade Organisation in 2001. This was a pivotal moment in Chinese history, and the choice of these objects symbolised the country's determination to become a significant player on the world stage. Compared with the political significance of China's museum's will, the same exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art

Museum chose their “101 Object” as a “paper architecture” developed by architect Shigeru Ban for disaster areas in memory of the Great East Japan Earthquake. While this choice was also significant, it indicated that the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum curators aim to use the opportunity to reflect on natural disasters and the relationship between materials and human life.

At the same time, it is worth noting that museums have the potential to be essential tools of cultural diplomacy. This is not limited to lending museums but also to hosting museums. By leveraging the power of cultural diplomacy, hosting museums can establish themselves as important players on the international stage, promoting their cultural heritage and fostering cross-cultural understanding. A great example of this can be seen in the Shanghai Museum's exhibition titled “West Encounters East——A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics”. To showcase the specific theme of the exhibition, the Shanghai Museum borrowed 206 pieces/group items from more than ten museums across seven different countries. This helped to enhance the cultural exchange between China and Europe and strengthened the relationships between the Shanghai Museum and other museums worldwide. The success of this exhibition was mainly due to the tireless efforts and expertise of the academic research team at the Shanghai Museum. The team's unwavering dedication and attention to detail ensured that the exhibition represented the rich commercial history of porcelain between China and Europe. The curators of the Shanghai Museum, drawing on the team's research, designed the exhibition to showcase the intricate and fascinating history of the porcelain trade between the two regions, highlighting the unique cultural exchange that took place over centuries. The exhibition was a testament to the hard work and expertise of the Shanghai Museum's academic research team and the curators who brought their findings to life for the public to enjoy and learn.

The media company's involvement in collaborating with Japanese museums for exhibitions is a promising development that could potentially motivate more foreign museums to cooperate. The newspaper company's interest in using the exhibition to reach a wider audience can benefit both themselves and the Japanese museums by providing them with more exposure and opportunities to participate in cross-border exhibitions. This could lead to greater cultural exchange and mutual learning between museums from different countries and promote further collaborations in the future. Furthermore, this increased exposure could also attract more visitors to the museums, both domestic and foreign, which could, in turn, generate more revenue and resources for the museums to improve their exhibitions and facilities further.



For instance, the "A History of the World in 100 Objects" exhibition was held in three Japanese museums in Tokyo, Kyushu and Kobe. In comparison, the touring exhibition was only displayed in two Chinese museums in Beijing and Shanghai. Despite the exhibition being a blockbuster success, drawing thousands of visitors to queue up for a chance to view it, the Chinese museums lacked the necessary support from their media companies, who could not cover the expenses alone. This is in contrast to Japanese museums since these three venues all received approval from the same newspaper company, the Asahi Shimbun, and were better equipped to handle the costs of hosting the exhibition. Regarding international collaboration involving Japanese museums, the involvement of media companies was not just a sporadic occurrence but a consistent and integral part of the exhibition planning process right from the start. These media companies played a significant role in various aspects of the collaboration, including but not limited to financial support for borrowing collections, publicity, promotion, and the overall enhancement of the exhibition experience. Their expertise and contributions helped to attract a wider audience, generate buzz, and create a more immersive and engaging atmosphere within the museum. By collaborating with media companies, Japanese museums could leverage their networks, resources, and creative skills to ensure the success and impact of the exhibition. This collaborative approach allowed for comprehensive and dynamic storytelling and the opportunity to reach diverse audiences through different mediums such as print, broadcast, and digital platforms.

In summary, the involvement of media companies in the international collaboration efforts of Japanese museums was not an isolated occurrence but rather a strategic and essential component that enriched the exhibition and its overall impact. However, direct government support for international exhibitions was mainly given to prominent museums in China. Since newspaper companies in China have not built partnerships through the indirect government encouragement with Non-Profit Law. The collaboration between newspaper companies and museum institutions has the potential to not only support more museums in displaying cross-border exhibitions but also generate more motivation for further cooperation. The contrasting reception of these exhibitions in China and Japan presents a valuable opportunity for delving deeper into the nuances of cultural diplomacy and the functionality of exhibition displays. This will be explained in the next section.

### 8.2.3 The short-term and long-term cooperation relationship

This section focuses on the partnership between Chinese and Japanese museums and Western museums, which is crucial for shaping the dynamics of cross-border collaborations in the short-term and long-term. The collaboration models adopted by these museums have distinct characteristics that greatly influence the overall outcomes of their joint efforts. In the case of Chinese museums, they operate with independent research and display sectors within the museums, which means that curators face the challenge of working within limited budgets and negotiating with media companies separately for further promotion and reports. However, the absence of media companies from the initial stages of exhibition preparation poses a significant limitation, as their valuable input regarding collection suggestions and promotional strategies needs to be included. For example, media companies could provide practical suggestions on collections, subsequently serving as promotional material to generate interest and attract visitors. As a result, this lack of partnership between Chinese museums and newspaper companies hinders their ability to cooperate with foreign museums and display exhibitions with financial support. This is concerning as it may result in a lack of diversity in the exhibitions available to the public.

While the level of government participation may vary between the two models, Chinese and Japanese curators, who have agreed to be interviewed by the author, have a shared objective of promoting cultural exchange and fostering mutual understanding between their countries. In the context of Chinese museums, from the viewpoint of the executive group, these international exhibitions were regarded as special exhibits that were displayed for a limited duration. For example, two Chinese museums as case studies of this research, the National Museum of China and the Shanghai Museum, both large-scale museums in China, have the opportunity to collaborate with other Chinese museums across the entire Chinese mainland. This collaboration within China allows them to share their vast collections with other museums under the same concept of culture, further promoting cultural exchange within China. As a result, cooperating with foreign museums can be a complex and resource-intensive process. It involves not only the borrowing of collections but also the negotiation of borrowing fees and the coordination of international delivery. These logistical challenges can add to such collaborations' overall expenses and time. When Japanese museums receive support from national media companies to handle the paperwork involved in borrowing collections from Western museums, the fees associated with air transport companies

are also covered. Japanese museums are eager to establish long-term cooperative relationships with Western museums, which is mutually beneficial.

The short-term relationship about international cooperation can also lead to the loss of museum professionals. This is because curators in this group may need more support from the executive team due to the high expenses and time-consuming nature of organising cross-border exhibitions. As a result, these curators may feel discouraged and seek opportunities elsewhere, which could result in a brain drain in the museum industry. Therefore, organisations must consider the long-term implications of international cooperation and ensure adequate resources and support are provided to museum professionals involved in such initiatives. However, the National Museum of China initially considered allowing commercial activities, such as partnering with the brand LV, to take place within the museum premises to generate additional income and secure a certain level of financial independence. However, this method, which was implemented on a case-by-case basis, not only received strong criticism from the public, resulting in significant damage to the reputation of the National Museum of China but also proved to be ineffective in generating a reliable source of income for the museum in the long term. As a result, it became evident that this strategy yielded different outcomes and raised concerns about the museum's ability to maintain its financial stability and operational independence.

Establishing long-term relationships with foreign museums can provide numerous benefits in the Japanese context. Firstly, it ensures the museums have a stable group of professionals, allowing senior curators to pass on their valuable experience to junior curators. This transfer of knowledge and expertise strengthens the museum's curatorial team and guarantees the preservation and continuation of cultural heritage for public audiences. Additionally, media companies play an integral role in international exhibitions hosted by Japanese museums. Media companies can produce high-quality reports and TV programs through long-term cooperation with foreign museums. These collaborations allow them to showcase the exhibitions to a broader audience and provide in-depth coverage of the historical collections and cultural significance. By gaining access to the museum's collections and galleries, media companies can create more engaging and captivating promotional content, capturing the essence of the exhibition and attracting more visitors.

To illustrate the significance of this long-term cooperation, the earliest cross-border exhibition example took place seven years ago at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. The chief

curator at that time, Mr. Hitoshi Yamamura, who kindly accepted the interview request from the author, had been working at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum for over fifteen years. His extensive experience and vivid recollection of that exhibition provided valuable insights for this research. He highlighted the collaborative efforts between media companies and museum curators, emphasising how both parties visited the British Museum together for the first time to negotiate the details of the cross-border exhibition of “A History of the World in 100 Objects”. This collaborative approach ensured the exhibition's success and fostered a strong bond between the institutions involved. Establishing long-term relationships with foreign museums benefits curators and media companies, enriches the cultural landscape, and promotes cross-cultural understanding. Through these partnerships, museums can continue to provide exceptional exhibitions and preserve the shared heritage, while media companies can create compelling content that educates and engages more audiences.

For instance, a case study exhibition from the British Museum, titled "A History of the World in 100 Objects," was effectively showcased in China and Japan. Although collaboration and financial backing for these exhibitions varied, exhibition-related merchandise was not permitted at the National Museum of China. In contrast, the Shanghai Museum achieved several million yuan in merchandise sales. In contrast, the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science exclusively accepted another captivating exhibition titled "Treasures of the Natural World" from the Natural History Museum in London as its first stop in global touring for five years. This exhibition, which featured an extraordinary array of natural treasures, including rare specimens and breathtaking displays, captivated the imagination of visitors and offered a profound insight into the wonders of the natural world. However, the borrowing fee for this exhibition was 2 million pounds, and with the backing of the government and other sponsors, Chinese museums could showcase this exhibition. In conclusion, the long-term collaboration between Japanese and Western museums enables them to create new narratives with the support of media companies, both financially and promotionally. By collaborating, these museums can use their strengths and expertise to develop innovative projects and initiatives through cross-border exhibitions.

### 8.3 Implications for Further Research

This thesis has presented the findings on investigating the motivations and approaches behind international collaborations among museums, focusing on four international exhibitions held in China and Japan. From these case studies, several new inquiries emerge that were beyond the scope of this study but may be worth exploring in future research. While most of these inquiries pertain to international collaborations among museums and cross-border exhibitions, with slight adjustments, they can be applied to other forms of heritage management and cultural exchange programs. The following sections outline these potential avenues for further research:

1. Investigate the role of technology in facilitating museums' international collaborations;
2. Examine the influence of funding and financial resources on cross-border exhibitions;
3. Analyses the challenges and opportunities of cultural differences in global heritage management;
4. Investigate the importance of audience engagement and participation in museums' display strategy;
5. Explore the potential of virtual exhibitions and online galleries for museums as a way to adapt to digitalisation;
6. Analyse the influence of political factors on how local museums adjust to meet the needs of international visitors.

These are just a few potential research directions that can further enhance the understanding of museums' international collaborations and their implications for heritage management and cultural exchange. Exploring the role of audience engagement and participation in museums' display strategy can provide insights into how museums can create meaningful and interactive visitor experiences. Additionally, investigating the potential of virtual exhibitions and digital galleries can shed light on how museums can adapt to digitalisation and reach wider audiences. Finally, analysing the impact of political factors on museums' adaptation to global visitors can help understand the challenges and opportunities museums face in an increasingly interconnected world. In addition to these research directions, it would also be worthwhile to investigate the influence of international organisations on global cooperation in the museum industry.

### 8.3.1 On the methodology

The research methodology for the selected case studies includes qualitative analysis such as bibliographic surveys, interviews, field visits, and consideration of existing research and reports. The research examines recent cross-border exhibitions and the development history of Chinese and Japanese museums to understand their museum policies and principles for international cooperation. The study combines primary and secondary data to gain insights into motivations and outcomes, including interviews with curators and professionals and analysis of official publications and museum websites. Two case studies from China and Japan were chosen for comparison. Further research can explore the implications of different methodologies in studying international collaborations among museums. For instance, a comparative case study can provide a deeper understanding of the factors influencing successful partnerships. Additionally, adopting a multi-language perspective can shed light on the communication challenges and strategies employed by museums from different countries.

First, comparative studies can be conducted to analyse and evaluate the similarities and differences of museums' international strategies. These studies may involve examining the approaches and tactics employed by various museums, both within a single country and across different countries. By looking at a diverse range of museums, researchers can understand the other strategies employed to engage with international audiences and promote cultural exchange. This analysis can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different approaches and inform the development of best practices for museums seeking to enhance their global presence and impact.

Then, when further research extensively explores and meticulously analyses the profound impact of multiple languages in the research process, the researcher can gain valuable and deep insights into the fascinating complexities, intricate details, and subtle nuances of conducting cross-cultural research. By thoroughly examining and comprehensively understanding the various challenges and exciting opportunities that arise from utilising diverse languages, further analysis can significantly enhance and broaden the comprehensive understanding of how cultural diversity remarkably influences and profoundly impacts research outcomes, thus greatly enriching and elevating the overall research experience to unprecedented levels of depth and significance.



### 8.3.2 On the geographic scale of the research

In the four case studies of this research, three international exhibitions formed a significant component of two global touring exhibitions. These exhibitions embarked on an extensive five-year journey, traversing various countries across the globe. They visited Singapore, Italy, Germany, China, Japan, Canada, Australia, and the USA, showcasing their captivating displays and thought-provoking content to diverse audiences. For this research, China and Japan, two prominent countries in Asia, were carefully selected for a comprehensive comparison of their respective museums' administration systems and cultural backgrounds. These factors played a substantial role in shaping and influencing the dynamics and reception of the exhibitions in these countries. By exploring the unique characteristics and distinctive features of the museums in China and Japan, this research has the chance to provide insights into the varying experiences and perspectives encountered by these international exhibitions.

When conducting further research on international collaborations among museums, there are several avenues to explore that can provide valuable input into this dynamic field. One such area of investigation is the exploration of different venues under diverse cultural contexts. By examining exhibitions held in various countries, researchers can understand how cultural differences and cooperation strategies impact the presentation and interpretation of artworks and artefacts. For example, conducting additional research to compare the cultural context and collaboration strategies between the UK and Australia with those of Asian countries would provide valuable insights into the influence of historical connections on the exhibitions and narratives of museums in the present day. This comparative analysis can uncover the unique approaches taken by different regions in showcasing and interpreting their cultural heritage.

Lastly, it is crucial to thoroughly investigate and delve into the long-term sustainability of international collaborations among museums and their significant contribution to preserving and promoting cultural heritage. By conducting in-depth analyses of the various impacts and outcomes of these long-term partnerships, researchers can effectively identify and develop strategies that will guarantee the long-term success of such initiatives and enhance their overall impact. Moreover, this extensive research can provide valuable insights into museums' pivotal role in safeguarding and protecting our rich cultural heritage and fostering and promoting meaningful intercultural dialogue, which is essential for global understanding.

### 8.3.3 On other international exhibitions' processes

The research project delves deep into the comprehensive analysis of various international exhibitions held between 2015 and 2021 in China and Japan. These exhibitions serve as four critical case studies that provide valuable insights into the developments and trends that have emerged in the twenty-first century. It is essential to highlight that these four exhibitions share a similar background and are characterised by the remarkable technological advancements accompanying them. These advancements were pivotal in fostering and enhancing global cooperation between museums in Europe and Asia. Furthermore, these exhibitions also substantially reduced cross-border transportation costs, making them more accessible and affordable for a broader range of visitors.

However, there has been a growing trend of displaying Eastern collections and narratives in Western museums recently. For example, from the 23rd of May to the 26th of August of 2019, the British Museum hosted a manga exhibition, the largest manga-themed exhibition ever held outside of Japan.<sup>521</sup> Additionally, the Acropolis Museum in Athens featured an exhibition titled "From the Forbidden City: Imperial Apartments of Qianlong" in 2019, which explored the life of China's Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799).<sup>522</sup> In this exhibition, significant collections showcasing more than a century of Chinese culture from the 18th century were unveiled to the public for the very first time. When conducting further research, exploring cross-border exhibitions held in European countries that showcase collections from China and Japan may be beneficial. By doing so, researchers can gain valuable insights into the complex dynamics of international cultural exchanges and the strategies employed by Western museums.

Since all international exchange activities involve multiple partners, it is vital to understand each other's motivations to establish a mutually beneficial relationship. Furthermore, different museums have their unique advantages. In terms of exhibitions, museums can create new narratives catering to visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds. For instance, the British Museum successfully attracted a younger generation to visit by showcasing an exhibition on manga. This exhibition employed two perspectives to present manga, thus expanding the possibilities for the future.

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<sup>521</sup> Manga | British Museum <https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/manga> (consultation: 22 June 2023).

<sup>522</sup> Acropolis Museum - From the Forbidden City Exhibition | Emperor Qianlong <https://whyathens.com/events/acropolis-museum-forbidden-city-qianlong/> (consultation: 26 June 2023).

## 8.4 Limits of the Work

### 8.4.1 The case studies chosen in China and Japan are limited

The case studies chosen in China and Japan are limited in number, but they provide valuable insights into cross-border exhibitions. When considering the geographical scope of this research, it focused on four specific case studies of cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan. These collaborations involved showcasing Western collections in these two Asian countries, thereby bridging cultural gaps and fostering international exchanges. This thesis examines these case studies and offers a more comprehensive insight into the difficulties and possibilities that emerge while coordinating international exhibitions. It also highlights practical approaches for fostering successful partnerships across diverse countries and cultures. Additionally, these case studies allow the researcher to examine the impact of cross-border exhibitions from the lens of cultural diplomacy, the cultural exchange between the participating countries, and the overall promotion of intercultural dialogue. Therefore, while the number of case studies may be limited, they offer a rich and comprehensive perspective on the subject matter.

Although this research could not cover more cross-border exhibitions displayed in other countries, it is essential to note that one of the case studies of such exhibitions has demonstrated the museum's ability to leverage the power of cultural diplomacy. For instance, the second case study of this thesis is an international exhibition that took place at the Shanghai Museum from October 2021 to January 2022: “West Encounters East—A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics”. In collaboration with the Guimet Museum in France, this exhibition focused on showcasing porcelain from the 16th to the 18th century, which displayed the journey of porcelain and the exchange of skills in several countries. Unlike the first case study held at the National Museum of China, with the collaboration of the British Museum, which received significant support from both governments, the Shanghai Museum presented an impressive example of how curators can create an international exhibition that highlights Western porcelain collections through the lens of Chinese history and culture. This case serves as a compelling demonstration that the host museum, alongside government entities, can exercise cultural diplomacy effectively. While this case study provides valuable insights, it is worth exploring additional examples to understand further the impact and potential of cross-border exhibitions in promoting cultural diplomacy.

Moreover, the curators at the Shanghai Museum skillfully used the exhibited pieces to create an engaging narrative emphasising the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures. Ultimately, this narrative highlighted the profound impact of Chinese porcelain on the Western world. The motivation behind this exhibition can be traced back to the Shanghai Museum's research department, which dedicated several years to conducting extensive research on porcelain. Their objective was twofold: to share their findings with a broader audience and to provide a fresh perspective in telling the story of the development of Chinese porcelain. With this in mind, the exhibition was thoughtfully designed to showcase the commercial relationship between China and Europe and explore how both regions communicated through porcelain. To achieve this, the exhibition featured diverse artefacts that exemplified the intricate designs and techniques used in porcelain production. Moreover, these historical items shed light on the cultural influences that shaped them, further enriching the visitor's understanding and appreciation of this remarkable art form.

The case studies in this selection focus on cooperation partners from Western museums to Chinese and Japanese museums. They comprehensively analyse the international exhibition process and offer insights into the cultural policies of both the lending and the host venue. Moreover, they explore the role of these exhibitions in shaping a new and innovative model of global heritage management in the twenty-first century. Moreover, when these host museums in China and Japan borrow collections from these Western museums, their perspectives and selection principles become visible. This enhances the cultural exchange between the two regions and provides a valuable opportunity for local visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the outside world through the lens of Western museums. Cross-border exhibitions demonstrate a diverse understanding of the global world by explaining collections, which offer an item-based method to engage with a broader audience. By showcasing these borrowed collections, the host museums allow the local visitors to explore more historical heritage from another perspective and cultural interpretations that may differ from their own. This exposure to diverse perspectives broadens the visitors' horizons and enriches their cultural experiences. It also fosters a greater appreciation for the global significance of international exhibitions and museums, promoting cross-cultural dialogue and fostering mutual understanding between different regions of the world. This presents a unique opportunity to observe the impact of national diplomacy on these exhibitions and make it evident to all stakeholders involved.

### 8.4.2 The Exhibition displayed in the past

To gain a comprehensive understanding of these cross-border exhibitions and thoroughly analyse their motivation, public response, and long-term influence on museum policies in the twenty-first century, it is essential to establish a relevant connection with recent trends in cultural diplomacy. By doing so, this thesis can provide valuable insights into international collaboration among museums. Four case studies have been carefully selected for this research between 2015 and 2021. However, conducting this study posed particular challenges because some museum professionals who participated in international collaborations had changed their positions for various reasons. For instance, Dr. Yan Zhi, one of the interviewees for this research, resigned from his curator position at the National Museum of China after a decade of service. The exhibition of the case study happened in 2017, while this interview took place in 2023. The time gap of six years between the past exhibition and the interview made it challenging for the interviewee to recall specific details of the exhibition.

However, this time gap also provided an opportunity for reflection on the impact of cultural diplomacy and the shortcomings of museum practices, such as exhibition standards and attitudes towards different Western countries. When the relationship between German museums and the National Museum of China received financial support from the Goethe Institute, it lasted for ten years. This decade-long collaboration provided a unique opportunity for curators from these two countries to engage in a cultural exchange, allowing them to visit different museums and share their invaluable experiences hosting exhibitions. This initiative fostered a deep sense of collaboration and mutual learning among curators, enriching the global museum community and paving the way for future collaborations in the field of museum curation.

In the interview, the National Museum of China curator provided insightful examples to demonstrate how the historical relationship between countries like Germany and the UK can significantly influence the collaborative partnerships between museums today. For example, when the relationship between German museums and the National Museum of China received financial support from the Goethe-Institut, it lasted for ten years. This decade-long collaboration provided a unique opportunity for curators from these two countries to engage in a cultural exchange, allowing them to visit different museums and share their invaluable experiences hosting exhibitions. This initiative fostered a deep sense of collaboration and mutual learning among

curators, enriching the global museum community and paving the way for future collaborations in the field of museum curation.

Although these historical connections continue to shape the current landscape of museum collaborations, fostering a sense of shared heritage and promoting cultural exchange internationally, it is essential to acknowledge the impact of the two opium wars between the UK and China. These wars, which occurred in the near past, have had a lasting effect on the ability of museums to build long-term relationships. The public feedback in China on exhibitions co-operated with the British Museum may have a more negative reaction compared to collaborations with German museums. It has been observed that when the British Museum wanted to display a collection from the Qing dynasty of China, sourcing this item became controversial. Eventually, this item could be displayed in Japanese venues but not in China. One of the unexpected advantages of choosing past exhibitions was the media reports providing more opinions about the exhibitions. For example, during the touring exhibition of the British Museum that included eight Chinese collections, journalists asked the curator whether the National Museum of China could keep these collections after they were displayed. This highlights the need for museums to navigate the complexities of historical conflicts and build trust and understanding to establish fruitful and sustainable partnerships.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic certainly created numerous challenges and obstacles for museums worldwide, which covered most of the research period. However, despite the inability of coordinators from lending museums to travel to host museums physically, they were able to devise and implement an innovative long-distance cooperating system. For example, the exhibition "West Encounters East——A cultural conversation between Chinese and European ceramics" provided two contributors to this research about museum's international collaboration: 1) it was an exhibition held during the pandemic, which needed these museums to apply for special permission from their national cultural department, allowing these historical collections to travel across borders without workers from the lending country; then the curators in the Shanghai Museum had to unpack the collections based on their former online communications without coordinators from the lending museum. 2) These porcelain collections showcased in this exhibition underwent a centuries-long global transformation, leading to a new perspective on historical heritage. The item's longevity and worldwide travels have made it a heritage of the planet, transcending borders.



## 8.5 Conclusion

In this final chapter, the research delves into the conclusions derived from the extensive research on museums' international collaboration. These conclusions shed light on the motivations that drive museums to engage in cross-border collaborations and the different collaboration models among museums in China and Japan. Additionally, it explores the implications of this research for future studies, particularly in terms of methodology and geographic scale. Furthermore, the limitations of this work have been acknowledged, including the selection of specific case studies and the time gap between the exhibition and the research period. The main objective of this thesis is to examine comprehensively and thoroughly analyse the pivotal and essential role played by international exhibitions and cultural diplomacy in fostering and promoting collaboration, interaction, and exchange among museums, thereby facilitating the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and resources for mutual growth and development. Here is a table that provides a comprehensive overview of the leading research objective, question, hypothesis, and conclusion, allowing for a more in-depth analysis and understanding of the study findings:

**Table 8.2:** Main research objective/question/hypothesis and conclusion:

<b>Main Objective</b>	To examine the role of international exhibitions and cultural diplomacy in global museums' collaboration, the motivations and benefits of museums which hold cross-border exhibitions in these countries, and how these international collaborations challenge the traditional curatorial institutions in China and Japan.
<b>Main Research Question</b>	What was the role of the international exhibition and cultural diplomacy in global museums' collaboration?
<b>Main Hypothesis</b>	International exhibitions are not only a system of knowledge exchange of different museums, which allows benefiting the cultural curatorial practices of the museums involved. Above all, they are elements of cultural diplomacy in socio-political terms and of projection of museums in the context of the globalisation of museum actions, implying a system to increase the cultural influence of the museum it provides in the host country.
<b>Main Conclusion</b>	International exhibitions play a crucial role in the cultural diplomacy, and the projection of museums' cultural influence. They provide a platform for museums to enhance their curatorial practices, promote intercultural understanding, and contribute to the globalisation of museum actions. Through international collaborations, museums can strengthen their position in the global museum landscape and foster cultural exchange and cooperation on a global scale. The level of government involvement and the extent of partnership with media companies are the two main distinguishing factors between cooperation models in China and Japan.

Source: Own elaboration

As Table 8.2 shows, in line with the primary objective, it can be concluded that international exhibitions provide a valuable platform for museums to exchange knowledge and ideas. Cultural curatorial practices from various museums can be shared and enhanced through these exhibitions. However, it is essential to recognise that international exhibitions not only contribute to cultural diplomacy and socio-political contexts, but they also have the potential to foster cross-cultural understanding and promote dialogue among nations. The level of government involvement and the extent of partnership with media companies are the main distinguishing factors between cooperation models in China and Japan. These exhibitions provide museum curators a unique opportunity to curate new narratives influenced by the host museum and aligned with the nation's interests. By showcasing collections from different cultures, international exhibitions can spark discussions on diversity, identity, and global interconnectedness. Moreover, they can serve as platforms for forging international collaborations, fostering cultural exchange, and promoting mutual respect and appreciation. By showcasing their collections in different countries, museums can project their influence and contribute to the globalisation of museum actions. In doing so, they increase their cultural influence and promote cultural understanding and dialogue between nations. Therefore, international exhibitions can be seen as a multifaceted system that not only benefits museums but also fosters cultural exchange and cooperation on a global scale.

As a qualitative research study, the measurement results rely on substantial evidence. The primary aim of this thesis is to thoroughly investigate the role of international exhibitions and cultural diplomacy in fostering collaboration among museums in China and Japan. In particular, it examines the motivations and benefits museums derive from organising cross-border exhibitions in various countries and how these international collaborations challenge the conventional curatorial practices in China and Japan. Given the intricate nature and multifaceted aspects of the research subject, which encompasses heritage management and cultural diplomacy, it is essential to establish multiple objectives to guide the subsequent research questions and hypotheses. Moreover, considering the underlying threefold motivations - political, scientific, and applied - that drive this thesis, these objectives have been categorised into these three main categories. Therefore, the previous section of this chapter has presented three conclusions that are in line with the objectives, specifically as Table 8.3 shows:

**Table 8.3:** Three conclusions that are in line with the objectives:

Number	Secondary objectives	Character	Conclusions
1	To evaluate the outcome of international collaboration from the perspective of cultural diplomacy;	scientific/applied	Cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan can serve as valuable tools for cultural diplomacy. In China, hosting exhibitions with foreign museums is a common practice to commemorate cultural and anniversary years. On the other hand, in Japan, building long-term relationships with foreign museums can bring about various advantages.
2	To analyse the challenges of cooperation between museums (e.g. technical questions, expense, huge insurance, shipping of museums' items, transportation of valuable collections)	applied	
3	To investigate the historical and evolutionary process of selected cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan in the 21st century;	scientific/applied	Governments can support international collaborations between museums by covering borrowing fees, which allows hosting museums to collaborate with foreign museums without financial concerns. Successful exhibitions rely on careful planning and execution, including negotiating loan agreements, arranging transportation, designing exhibits, and creating interpretive materials for visitors.
4	To compare and contrast the construction of the collaboration on cross-border exhibitions in China and Japan;	political/scientific/applied	
5	To assess the impact on museum narratives and curatorial practices in China and Japan with globally touring collections;	political/scientific	The lack of partnerships between Chinese museums and media companies limits their collaboration with foreign museums and exhibition showcasing, which generate a short-term cooperation model. In contrast, long-term partnerships between Japanese museums and Western museums allow them to create new narratives with the support of media companies, both financially and in terms of promotion.
6	To summarise the effects of international collaboration on long-term museum policies in China and Japan;	political/scientific	

Source: Own elaboration

One of the key findings of this study is the diverse range of motivations that prompt museums to engage in international collaborations. These motivations include resource sharing,

the desire to expand global influence, and the opportunity to foster cultural exchange and mutual understanding among nations. For Japanese media companies, partnering with museums by covering the expenses and promoting exhibitions could generate income. This collaboration also provides certain tax advantages under the Non-Profit Law of Japan, which incentivize media companies to contribute to cultural-related activities. By exploring these motivations, the research can gain valuable insights into the factors that encourage museums to establish international collaborative relationships. This understanding can inform future research and guide museum professionals in developing effective strategies for cross-border collaborations.

Also, international exhibitions allow museums to share and enhance their curatorial practices. Through exchanging knowledge and ideas, museums can learn from each other's expertise and improve their cultural offerings. This collaboration enriches the participating museums and contributes to the overall development and advancement of the museum field. Moreover, international exhibitions have a profound impact on cultural diplomacy. By showcasing their collections in different countries, museums can facilitate intercultural understanding and promote dialogue between nations. These exhibitions serve as a platform for cultural exchange, allowing people from different backgrounds to appreciate and learn from each other's cultural heritage. In this way, international exhibitions promote understanding, mutual respect, and cooperation among nations.

In conclusion, hosting international exhibitions allows the host country to enhance its cultural influence and attract more visitors. These exhibitions can generate economic benefits and contribute to the tourism growth in the host country. By hosting international exhibitions, museums can also showcase their cultural collections and strengthen their position in the global museum landscape. At the same time, international exhibitions play a crucial role in exchanging knowledge, cultural diplomacy, and projecting museums' cultural influence. They provide a platform for museums to improve their curatorial practices, promote intercultural understanding, and contribute to the globalisation of museum activities. Through international collaborations, museums can enhance their position in the global museum landscape, facilitating cultural exchange and global cooperation. The approach employed in this study and the findings obtained aim to provide valuable resources for future research about museums' international collaboration.





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## Appendix

### Appendix 1

Interview questions and abstract of answers			
<b>Name of the museum:</b>	the National Museum of China	<b>Relation with the case study:</b>	Curator
<b>Name of the cross-border exhibition:</b>	A History of the World in 100 Objects	<b>Method of the interview:</b>	Online
<b>Name of the interviewee:</b>	Dr. Yan Zhi	<b>Date:</b>	04.04.2023
<b>Name of researcher:</b>	Jinghao Tong	<b>Name of institution:</b>	University of Barcelona
Question and summary of answers			
<p><b>Question 1 How important are international exhibitions for the museum?</b></p> <p>From the merger in 2003, the National Museum of China combined the Chinese History Museum and the History of the Chinese Revolution. At that time, the storage department and the exhibition department of the original museums had been kept as department 1 and 2. After the mergers, the main domestic and foreign exhibitions basically started to mix together, from planning to final landing construction.</p> <p>To put it bluntly, the two departments did not cooperate too well at the beginning. At that time, there were very few exhibitions related to the foreign countries. So exhibitions would be separated to different departments to manage. For example, in 2015, the National Museum of China and National Museum of Italy were looking forward to cooperate for five years, such as an Italian exhibition will visit the National Museum of China every year, which was charged by department 2, while the exhibition "A History of the World in 100 Objects" was under the charge of department 1, where I was working for.</p> <p>Later, exhibition department 1 started to cooperate with more foreign art-related exhibitions. Well, as a large organisation, the adjustment was established, and the International Connection Department was established on the basis of the original department 1 office from 2018. I was transferred to the International Connection Department as the deputy director, so I was in charge. So there was a special department for the international exhibition.</p>			
<p><b>Question 2 Why did the National Museum of China start to collaborate with the British Museum from London?</b></p> <p>The year of 2017 is the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the UK. So on the meeting of two governments officers, this exhibition had been mentioned to display in China after Australia, Japan, United Arab Emirates and other countries and regions, and each country and region may add one more collection to this exhibition as the 101 collection. Such an exhibition is also a major event of cultural exchanges between China</p>			

and the UK. All the insurance and delivery fee had been covered by the UK government, the National Museum of China was in charge of the furnishing and setting in the venue.

We know that before the world tour, this exhibition has already been exhibited in various parts in the UK, and it is also a domestic success of the BBC radio program. So we also want to display this exhibition in Beijing.

**Question 3 How does the national cultural diplomacy influence the museum nowadays?**

After the new director Wang Chunfa of the National Museum of China started to lead from 2018, there were three departments in charge of exhibitions, one for domestic exhibition and mainland exchange exhibition, and the other was International Connection Department, the third one is the collection department which only responsible for the exhibition in the National Museum of China. Although this idea was clear, while in the real exhibition preparation process, which needed the cooperation among departments. There were not enough curators who had the experiences for international curation as well. So the National Museum of China was focusing inviting foreign exhibitions, such as National Art Museums from Germany. Although I was in charge an exhibition with a French museum to introduce Chinese cooking culture, that exhibition mainly depended on the curator from the Guimet Museum, Mr Dai Haoshi, since we don't know how to design an exhibition to attract Western visitors.

**Question 4 What was the role of the international exhibition A History of the World in 100 Objects in the short-term and long-term strategy of the museum?**

In a short-term, it helped the National Museum of China to learn how to set standards for displaying, such as the quality of material, from the lining cloth to thermostat, which we had to purchase from Shenzhen, just for this exhibition. The curator team of the British Museum was very strict, all the introduction description on the wall could not be changed at all, not even a word. We also wanted to invite a group of Chinese scholars related to the collections to add articles to the catalog but had been refused, which showed the confidence of the British Museum also they were concerned to be misunderstood.

We had almost one and half years to prepare the exhibition, which helped us a lot. While unfortunately, the executive level team in the National Museum of China did not show a huge interest for the long term cooperation with the British Museum through this exhibition.

**Question 5 What was the aim of this exhibition and the concept behind it?**

This exhibition originated from a cooperation project between the British Museum and the BBC in 2010, which was selecting 100 items from the collection of the British Museum to tell the history of the world. The radio program reached a record of 28 million people listened to it. Since it was very popular as a radio program, the content turned into a book later. While in the exhibition in China, there were 43 items were same with the original book, and around 10 collections were replaced to items from the same background and the rest were different. For example, the first collection in the book was the mummy of priest of Egypt, while in China, it had been replaced to a female nobility mummy. Although it was called "A History of the World in 100 Objects", since sometimes one collection could be a group of items, in total, there were 232 items in the exhibition. For example, the "Lewis Chess" included 4 exhibits.



**Question 6 Why did you consider this exhibition important enough for an investment?**

This exhibition was a major event in the cultural exchanges between China and the UK. It was basically a commemorative year for the diplomatic relationship of these two countries. It was quite common for China and other countries to host cultural activities together as part of the celebration. The same cooperation happened between China and France as well.

We know that regardless of this exhibition, there are many aspects of cultural relics collection design involved in the process, so the management system of the British Museum was very skilled and efficient. This exhibition involved so many different civilisations, such cooperation and communication was the result of almost all departments of the British Museum. The British Museum changed the curator once for this exhibition, the curator we were cooperation was Dr. Belinda Crerar, who presided over this exhibition in China and she was a very excellent female scholar.

**Question 7 How would you characterise the cooperation between the two museums in organising the “A History of the World in 100 Objects” exhibition?**

In the Chinese team, we have several main workers such as exhibition curators, designers, investigators, transport managers, construction leaders and international coordinators. When the collections arrived to the National Museum of China, we also got the support from other parts of the museum to complete the transportation and unpack with the transportation company and the insurance workers. There are more than 1,000 official workers in the National Museum of China now, which is a very large working team, more than all the visitors of some small museums per day in the USA.

To cooperate with the British Museum in organising the “A History of the World in 100 Objects” exhibition, the first thing for us to improve is the hardware facilities of the exhibition hall. Such as, the temperature control equipment and attemperatur in the exhibition hall and cabinet, for five special exhibits, we had to purchase new attemperators from Shenzhen. From the brand of wood boards and glue we were going to use in the exhibition, we had to send the sample of material to the UK and after passing the test, we could use that material. When the British Museum asked us to provide the "museum standard of silver paper for packing", we realized we did not have one. In the end, we use the food lever standard of silver paper for packing, which was definitely higher than the museum standard should be. This was the limits of the development of Chinese museums, especially in terms of exhibition materials and construction materials, such standards had not yet been established, including the building of the Chinese Museum. Such as, chemical brand or formaldehyde level for building was not suitable for collections, which could cause various problems later if we did not set the standard soon.

The second part was about our research communication and translation, the British Museum did not have enough information about certain details of the Chinese collections. Such as mistakes on these Chinese names, although the pinyin was correct, but these Chinese characters were wrong. After we prove one of the collection from Tang dynasty was wrong, the British Museum changed it immediately. This kind of exchange was not a meaningless debate, but it would promote the understanding of these scenes on both sides.

**Question 8** How did the museum decide which objects will be included in this exhibition?

There are nine objects in the exhibition related to China, including the WTO gavel and pen. The British Museum specially prepared two exhibits for China, but they were replaced at the recommendation of the Chinese government to avoid unduly provoking a public reaction.

One was a piece of textile from Dunhuang, which was taken by [Hungarian-British archaeologist] Aurel Stein. The other was a Neolithic-age jade bi [an ornamental disc] inscribed with a poem written by the Qing emperor Qianlong, an artifact suspected to have been stolen from Beijing's Old Summer Palace [by French and British troops in 1860].

**Question 9** How were the exhibition's different narratives negotiated between these two museums?

We had one and half year to plan this exhibition, which was a huge advantage for us. Normally, we only had 3-4 months to prepare one exhibition, after 2018, we only had one month for some exhibitions. Each exhibition had one main curator, I was in charge of this exhibition from 2015 to 2017. The British Museum did not allow us to change the narratives. When I went to Australia and asked the curator who worked there, they told me their cooperation process was similar to us. This exhibition was the creation based on the radio program, then the book, it had a clear narrative so we just adapt to it. We communicated through emails, negotiating the details we want to change, the cooperation process was also an academic exchange for both of us.

We also had enough time to arrange a lot of media interview at that time, from social media to official TV programs, for the unpacking process, we invited the journalists and TV shooting team to record and public the steps to unpack, which was quite popular in the audiences, who had never seen these cultural relic boxes opened before with all these equipments of museums. Normally, we will set a media briefing meeting one week ago before the exhibition. Then on the first day the exhibition opened, we also host the opening ceremony and invited main officers from both sides, information of the exhibition would be published by these media and also on our official social media account such as Weibo and Wechat. During the exhibition, we were answering the media's interview as much as possible.

**Question 10** Is the National Museum of China interested in developing more similar international exhibition in the future? And why?

It was a pity that we did not continue to cooperate with the British Museum furthermore, there was no such follow-up cooperation. We used to have several cooperation models with museums, such as with three German Museums, with the sponsor of the Goethe-Institute, who was invited to make the financial support, including organizing study tours for museum worker to exchange for one month to Germany. The management team in China paid great attention to it from the curators to workers at that time, and the scale was indeed very large. That project last for 10 years until the sponsor budget had been run out.

Also we had a five-year cooperation contract with Italy, which sent one exhibition to China every year. First of all, I did not know why the leadership of the National Museum of China didn't pay much attention to the exhibition with the British Museum at that time. The attitude

towarded to Germany and Italy was better than the UK. It needed foresight to develop museum and the cooperation with the British Museum. In 2017, it was the first time collaboration between these two museums officially. Before that, there were other exhibitions cooperated with the British museums, such as V&A was leading an exhibition with the National Museum of China in 2012.

Afterwards, it seemed that there was no more in-depth cooperation with them. I think this is a problem that leader team of the National Museum of China has no vision. They preferred the cooperation with domestic museums and exchanging exhibitions with regional museums. There were a lot of collections in the National Museum of China, so even they did not cooperate with the international museums, there were still millions of visitors to go there. Such as, the 5-year planning exhibition model with Italy could be applied to the British Museum as well, furthermore, with the Louvre Museum, however, there was no such follow-up cooperation. The concept of long-term planning for international exhibitions still needs time to become one of the priorities of the National Museum of China, compared with its national agenda.

## Appendix 2

Interview questions and abstract of answers			
<b>Name of the museum:</b>	the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum	<b>Relation with the case study:</b>	Chief Curator
<b>Name of the cross-border exhibition:</b>	A History of the World in 100 Objects	<b>Method of the interview:</b>	Face-to-face interview in the office in the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum
<b>Name of the interviewee:</b>	Mr. Hitoshi Yamamura	<b>Date:</b>	10th, January 2023
<b>Name of researcher:</b>	Jinghao Tong	<b>Name of institution:</b>	University of Barcelona
Question and abstract of answers			
<b>Question 1 How important are international exhibitions for the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum?</b>  The international exhibitions are hugely popular among visitors, and we take pride in our department that consists of a team of three to four highly skilled and dedicated individuals who are responsible for organizing and managing the international exhibitions in collaboration with foreign museums. We strive to host at least three to four international exhibitions every year, showcasing the best of global art and culture to our visitors. Even though the international exhibitions are a big attraction, we do not neglect our local artists and their works.			
<b>Question 2 Why did the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum start to collaborate with the British Museum in London?</b>  Since we (the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum) don't have a lot of budget, so we always cooperate with mass media news companies for most of the international exhibitions. At the very beginning, a staff from the Asahi Shinbun news company told us about the exhibition of the British Museum. The Asahi Shinbun also promised us to provide the financial support and the further reports and promotion, so we cooperated this exhibition together with the British Museum.			
<b>Question 3 What was the role of the international exhibition for the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum in the short-term and long-term strategy?</b>  To accommodate additional international exhibitions, we are currently constrained by space limitations. Specifically, we are only able to host up to four exhibitions per year, each lasting a maximum of three months. This is due to the need to allow for one month between exhibitions to facilitate the transfer of collections and prepare for the installation of the next exhibition.			
<b>Question 4 What are the decision-making principles for cooperating with foreign museums on special exhibitions? For example, the museum's reputation, the quality of exhibits, the cost of curation, and so on.</b>			

Normally, we discussed the detail and plan about the exhibition with the newspaper company together, then the museum staff and the newspaper company would travel together to foreign museums to discuss the details. Occasionally, the curators and director of other countries would also visit our museums in Japan to view the galleries and facilities.

**Question 5 How long did the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum prepare for this exhibition with London?**

Since we have a small department in the museum for special exhibition, it takes three to four years to prepare a cross-border exhibition.

**Question 6: Did the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum pay for this exhibition, or did the sponsors cover the fee?**

The Asahi Shinbun news company agreed to cover all expenses for this exhibition, it was easier for the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum to agree on the collaboration.

**Question 7 What unexpected challenges and difficulties did the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum encounter in organising the international exhibition “A History of the World in 100 Objects”?**

The British Museum has strict requirements for displaying collections. They sent their own coordinators to our museum to unpack and set up the exhibit. We must fulfill their requirements, such as ensuring that the material of the introduction board is tested and meets their quality standards.

**Question 8 How did the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum adapt the exhibition to different public categories (e.g. children, elderly) and different personal necessities (e.g. disabled people).?**

The museum had taken a number of steps to make the exhibition more accessible, including providing audio guides and large print labels for those with visual impairments, as well as wheelchair access and elevators for those with mobility issues. Additionally, the museum had worked to create interactive exhibits and activities that are engaging for children, such as art workshops and educational programs.

**Question 9 Is the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum interested in developing more similar international exhibitions in the future?**

It's very important that we are open to international audiences, as the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum. However, our staff here are still not very proficient in English, Chinese, or other foreign languages. I feel like in this moment, we are may not sufficient in hosting international exhibitions and welcoming audiences from overseas.

## Appendix 3

Interview questions and abstract of answers			
<b>Name of the museum:</b>	the Tokyo National Museum of Nature and Science	<b>Relation with the case study:</b>	Public Relations Strategy Officer with answers from Director, Chief Curators
<b>Name of the cross-border exhibition:</b>	Treasure in the World	<b>Method of the interview:</b>	Email
<b>Name of the interviewee:</b>	Ms Mai Koguchi	<b>Date:</b>	01.08.2023-02.02.2023
<b>Name of researcher:</b>	Jinghao Tong	<b>Name of institution:</b>	University of Barcelona
Question and abstract of answers			
<b>Question 1 How important are international exhibitions for the National Museum of Nature and Science?</b>  We believed that was a significant opportunity for many people in Japan to see precious specimens from the world, which could only be seen by going there. It was also a valuable opportunity for our researchers, as they could have the opportunity to research and study the specimens by holding them when that exhibition visited Japan.			
<b>Question 2 Why did the National Museum of Nature and Science start to collaborate with the Natural History Museum in London?</b>  The National Museum of Nature and Science planned and held this special exhibition jointly with media partners such as newspapers and television companies. In a former special exhibition, the director of the Natural History Museum and an officer of the Yomiuri Shimbun (读卖新闻) had the opportunity to get to know each other.			
<b>Question 3 What was the role of the international exhibition for the National Museum of Nature and Science in the short-term and long-term strategy?</b>  In the short term, researchers in each museum could communicate with each other. In the long term, that collaboration with overseas museums helped us accumulate knowledge and skills related to special exhibitions.			
<b>Question 4 What are the decision-making principles for cooperating with foreign museums on special exhibitions? For example, the museum's reputation, the quality of exhibits, the cost of curation, and so on.</b>  When we find that a foreign museum owns certain specimens that we would like to exhibit in our special exhibition related to the theme, we will research whether we can borrow them, and			



consult with the foreign museum about the terms of the loan, such as the rental fee, transportation method, and exhibition period, etc.

**Question 5 How long did the National Museum of Nature and Science prepare for this exhibition with London?**

About two years.

**Question 6: Did the National Museum of Nature and Science pay for this exhibition, or did the sponsors cover the fee?**

This exhibition was organised in three parts on the Japanese side: the National Museum of Nature and Science, the Yomiuri Shimbun, and BS Nippon Television together. The Yomiuri Shimbun was responsible for the transportation and paperwork of borrowing procedures, while BS NTV promoted the exhibition.

**Question 7 What unexpected challenges and difficulties did the National Museum of Nature and Science encounter in organising the international exhibition “Treasure in the World”?**

There was a gap between the way of thinking about exhibition preparation between the UK and Japan. For example, regarding these display cases, the Natural History Museum asked us to use glass cases with a specified thickness for the exhibition. We had to make adjustments to meet their standards.

**Question 8 How did the National Museum of Nature and Science adapt the exhibition to different public categories (e.g. children, elderly) and different personal necessities (e.g. disabled people).?**

Apart from using simple expressions as much as possible so that children can understand the contents, we also added Japanese phonetic symbols on the top of characters to make it easier to read. In addition, it was displayed at a height that can be read from the height of sitting in the wheelchair.

**Question 9 Is the National Museum of Nature and Science interested in developing more similar international exhibitions in the future?**

We’re interested in developing more similar international exhibitions in the future, but we also have to consider the influence caused by the coronavirus and the changes in international relations.

The End, in total 303 pages, 101,281 words.  
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