

TOWARD A NEW PHASE OF U.S.-CHINA MUSEUM COLLABORATIONS

SUMMARY REPORT ON THE U.S.-CHINA MUSEUM DIRECTORS FORUM
2012 U.S.-CHINA FORUM ON THE ARTS AND CULTURE



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ASIA SOCIETY

New York, 2013

**A REPORT PUBLISHED FOLLOWING
THE U.S.-CHINA MUSEUM DIRECTORS FORUM
2012 U.S.-CHINA FORUM ON THE ARTS AND CULTURE**

**Organized by Asia Society and the Chinese People's
Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries
Beijing, November 15–17, 2012**

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Published by Asia Society Museum and the Center on U.S.-China Relations at Asia Society.

725 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10021
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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
Melissa Chiu & Orville Schell	
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
TOWARD A NEW PHASE OF U.S.-CHINA MUSEUM COLLABORATIONS	4
András Szántó	
APPENDIXES:	
I. List of Forum Attendees	19
II. Program of the 2012 U.S.-China Forum on the Arts and Culture	21
III. Significant U.S.-China Museum-Exchange Projects	23

FOREWORD

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It has become something of a truism to say that today's relationship between China and the United States is the most important—not to say most volatile—geopolitical relationship between any two countries of consequence in the world. Representing the world's two largest economies, as well as one of the world's oldest cultures and one of the world's youngest, our two countries are converging in ways that present enormous possibilities for collaboration, and for misunderstanding.

Asia Society is that rare organization that has both an art museum and an international-relations focus. This unique position made it incumbent on us, we felt, to experiment with new kinds of U.S.-China exchanges that embrace both culture and bilateral diplomatic relations. After all, while diplomacy is usually left to negotiate the most difficult, often unresolvable, issues that divide nations, cultural exchange can occupy areas of overlapping common interest, through which representatives of each country can cooperate with, and even enjoy the offerings of, the other. And museums, which are among the few societal institutions that offer public access, are well situated to test new pathways of learning about different cultures and the world.

Building upon Asia Society Museum's long-standing commitment to and engagement with Chinese arts and culture, and the Center on U.S.-China Relations' ongoing U.S.-China Forum on the Arts and Culture, we saw a great opportunity to focus on museums as the starting place for a new kind of joint project, one with the potential to grow into a strong and lasting cultural partnership. And so on the eve of the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, in November 2012, we brought fifteen American museum directors to Beijing to meet with fifteen of their Chinese counterparts at the U.S.-China Museum Directors Forum.

Since China began to liberalize its economic and political system in the late 1970s, there have been a growing number of touring exhibitions among museums, but the opportunity for museum professionals to come together and discuss how they might work together on a longer-term basis has been rare. This report represents our first step in identifying such an ongoing opportunity, which would involve museum directors and other staff members in both countries. Our hope is that the recommendations in this summary report—which come out of the discussions and surveys held during our recent two-day Forum in Beijing—will help catalyze just such a concrete, ongoing exchange within this critical sector, and thereby perhaps have a salutary effect on U.S.-China relations.

We hope that you will find the report and its recommendations of interest. We hope also that you will let us know your own thoughts and suggestions about how we might now best proceed.

Museums, which are among the few societal institutions that offer public access, are well situated to test new pathways of learning about different cultures and the world.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2012 U.S.-China Museum Directors Forum, organized by Asia Society and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, brought together fifteen Chinese and fifteen American museum leaders for a two-day dialogue to assess common needs and develop new processes for museum exchanges.

The museum leaders identified various benefits of museum exchanges. Such programs provide information and experiences to museum audiences; foster tolerance and understanding between nations; and enhance cultural competence in a globalized world. The directors also identified obstacles impeding museum collaborations, including disparities in resources and practices; cumbersome bureaucratic, legal, and regulatory systems; a lack of familiarity between museum professionals; and the absence of institutional and funding mechanisms to facilitate exchanges.

Going forward, the museum leaders pinpointed three key areas of need and opportunity for the evolution of U.S.-China museum collaborations. Taken together, the suggestions offer a blueprint for improving institutional interactions (for details, see Section IV):

People-to-People Contacts: Sharing Information and Access

- Expand opportunities for directorial, educational, curatorial, and research travel.
- Expand opportunities for artist-to-artist collaborations.
- Take advantage of communications tools.
- Develop public and private support for professional exchange.

Institutional Relations: Fostering Long-Term Partnerships

- Broaden long-term loan agreements and work to overcome the constraints of exclusive object ownership.
- Agree on shared principles and mechanisms for exhibition collaborations.
- Undertake research and curatorial development of joint exhibition projects.
- Expand collaboration on preservation and archeological projects.
- Create mechanisms for large-scale personnel training.

Coordination Within the Museum Sector: Assessing Needs and Priorities in the Field

- Provide tools to aggregate resources and spur institutional interaction.
- Articulate and share experiences about common operating principles.
- Collaborate on improving museum policy and adopting best practices.
- Lobby private and public agencies to make cultural exchange a priority.

Finally, the directors suggested specific programs that their institutions, coupled with other museums, government agencies, and private funders, can pursue going forward (see Section V). The consensus view among them was that the expansion of museum collaborations will require new funding and organizational mechanisms to spur and conduct exchange activities. Some of the goals outlined by the Chinese and American museum directors will be pursued by the Asian Arts and Museum Network, established in 2012 by Asia Society Museum (see Section VI).

TOWARD A NEW PHASE OF U.S.-CHINA MUSEUM COLLABORATIONS

BY ANDRÁS SZÁNTÓ



¹ According to *The Economist*, by the end of 2011 China counted 3,451 museums, well on its way toward a goal of 3,500 museums by 2015. "Cultural Revolution: A Museum Building Boom in China," *The World in 2013*, p. 159.

I. INTRODUCTION

The U.S.-China Museum Directors Forum, organized by Asia Society and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, began and ended with expressions of enthusiasm for collaboration between Chinese and American museums. China is in the midst of the largest wave of museum building in history. The government's directive of building a thousand museums under the current Five Year Plan resulted in an average of one museum opening per day in 2011. New buildings and wings are being added around the country.¹ Meanwhile, Sino-American relations are, despite their ups and downs, deepening in every sector of society. As emblems of their communities and expressions of "soft power," museums play a unique role in nurturing empathy and understanding between these two highly influential nations.

The purpose of the two-day meeting in Beijing, which brought together fifteen Chinese and fifteen American museum leaders, as well as Michael Tilson Thomas and members of the San Francisco Symphony, who played a series of concerts in Beijing, was to develop new mechanisms for museum exchanges. The discussions crystallized a number of promising options for collaboration, which are gathered in this report, along with observations about the benefits and potential growth trajectories of museum exchanges. Expanding museum ties between the United States and China, however, must be seen in a wider context—as part of a cultural and political landscape ripe with opportunities, but also weighed down by stubborn and persistent challenges.

Evolving U.S.-China museum interactions are set against a backdrop of improving bilateral relations between two countries that now rank first and second in the global economy. However, with the recent leadership changes in both the United States and China and new declarations of Chinese sovereignty over islands in the South China and East China Seas, as well as the Obama administration's "pivot to Asia," new tensions are roiling both the Pacific region and U.S.-China relations. At the same time, this relationship has never been more important to any resolution of international disagreements over issues that bedevil the world, such as nuclear proliferation, climate change, world trade, and humanitarian aid and intervention. It is therefore critical that the United States and China find productive ways to work together.

Asia Society has had a long history of engagement with Chinese art and culture. As early as 1999 Asia Society Museum toured its famed John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection of traditional art to the Shanghai Museum, and it has had over fifty years of experience exhibiting Chinese art for an American audience at its New York headquarters. The Museum Directors Forum was the result of a collaboration between Asia Society Museum and the Center on U.S.-China Relations at Asia Society, drawing upon the museum's expertise to deepen the organization's relationships with Chinese institutions and promote greater collaboration and exchange between cultural institutions and professionals in China and the United States.

Better relations between countries are often achieved more readily through artistic and cultural interaction rather than policy issues dealt with by government. The U.S.-China Forum on the Arts and Culture was founded by Asia Society's Center on U.S.-China Relations in an effort to broaden its sphere of activity to include cultural projects in addition to policy research. The Center understood that cultural exposure enables both sides to interact in ways that deemphasize disagreement while highlighting common values and sources of enjoyment, which stands in stark contrast to official policy matters that are difficult to resolve and often come to grudging resolutions that leave a bad aftertaste. One director at the Forum summed up the value

Cultural exposure enables both sides to interact in ways that deemphasize disagreement while highlighting common values and sources of enjoyment.

of museum exchanges this way: “They are a window into the soul of a people, and better than formalized diplomacy.”

The first U.S.-China Forum on the Arts and Culture, in November 2011, was organized by the Center on U.S.-China Relations in collaboration with the Aspen Institute and brought fifteen American cultural icons—including veteran restaurateur and food industry revolutionary Alice Waters, authors Michael Pollan and Amy Tan, actress Meryl Streep, acclaimed filmmaker Joel Coen, and internationally renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma—to Beijing for three days of interactions with their Chinese cultural counterparts.

The second occasion of the U.S.-China Forum on the Arts and Culture included the U.S.-China Museum Directors Forum, and featured a similar set of bilateral discussions over two days that form the subject of this report.

II. CONTEXT: U.S.-CHINA MUSEUM EXCHANGES AT A TURNING POINT

There is reason for optimism when surveying the outlook for international cultural relations, particularly when it comes to U.S.-China ties. Economic globalization and enhanced digital communications have led to an unprecedented narrowing of the cultural distance between these formerly disconnected nations. Many countries—and none more than China—have emerged from a long period of introverted development with a pent-up demand for engagement with international culture. They are opening up to the world and the world is opening up to them.

Realignment in the global economy has, in turn, altered the dynamic of international cultural relations. Whereas cultural diplomacy during the Cold War was overshadowed by political maneuvering in the tense and distrustful atmosphere of U.S.-Soviet relations, cultural programs nowadays serve more benign purposes. “Soft power,” as it is fashionably called, remains an alluring policy goal, especially in China, where it is enshrined as a major foreign-policy platform. More important still, cultural programs now are seen to yield an array of practical benefits, from stimulating cultural tourism to stoking the development of cultural industries to preparing citizens for careers in the global economy.

The frame around cultural exchanges has shifted. Where once they were the remit of governments, cultural exchanges now rely more on public-private partnerships. Where they typically used to require funds from rich Western nations, more programs now can come about through cofinancing. Most vitally, what had been, in the main, a unilateral, hierarchical, asymmetrical pattern of exchange, with funding and influence flowing from “the West to the rest,” is giving way to more balanced and reciprocal interactions. The playing field, in short, has been leveled.² Understanding each other has become a cultural, political, and economic imperative.

Museum exchanges are a microcosm within this larger constellation of rebalanced cultural interaction. Moreover, when it comes to museums, the contacts are being fueled by two especially important, overarching trends. On the one hand, China’s economic surge and political opening have magnified public interest, on both sides of the Pacific, for contact with each other’s arts and culture. The United States Department of Commerce estimates that visits by Chinese tourists to the United States grew 53 percent in 2010.³ This growth is expected to continue, with cultural and educational tourism as a major driver. Between 2012 and 2016, arrivals from China are predicted to increase 276 percent, making China the most important contributor to incoming tourism.⁴ Chinese tourists already account for the fastest-growing segment of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s global audience, approaching

² For more on the evolving landscape of international cultural exchanges, see *Public and Private Cultural Exchange-Based Diplomacy: New Models for the 21st Century*, Salzburg Global Seminar & Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, 2013, and, in the context of Asia Society’s Wu Guanzhong exhibition, an article by Jane Perlez, “China Extends Reach into International Art,” *The New York Times*, Apr. 24, 2012.

³ U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, Office of Travel and Tourism Industries. *U.S. Travel and Tourism Industries: A Year in Review—2010*, p. 7.

⁴ U.S. Travel Association. *U.S. Travel Answer Sheet*. June 2012. Available: http://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/09/USTravelAnswerSheet_June2012.pdf.

Understanding each other has become a cultural, political, and economic imperative.

⁵ Sam Dillon. "Foreign Languages Fade in Class—Except Chinese." *The New York Times*, Jan. 20, 2010. See also the Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning report *Chinese Language Learning in the Early Grades: A Handbook of Resources and Best Practices for Mandarin Immersion*, Asia Society, 2012 (<http://asiasociety.org/files/chinese-earlylanguage.pdf>).

⁶ See, for example, Tidings Chan, *His Chinese Legacy: Robert Rauschenberg's Impact and Influence in Post-1985 Chinese Contemporary Art and Art Policy*. Masters of Arts thesis, Georgetown University, 2010.

⁷ For more details, see András Szántó, "China's New Age of Enlightenment," *The Art Newspaper*, April 4, 2011.

the volume of visits by tourists from France. Americans, too, are taking a deeper interest in China—a trend evidenced by expanding overseas travel and interest in learning Mandarin Chinese, the only language bucking the trend of declining second-language education in U.S. schools.⁵

Escalating audience interest provides a clear mandate for museums to meet the needs of their visitors—both the general public and art professionals—with a broader menu of exhibitions, educational programs, and scholarly exchanges that in unison provide broader access and exposure to each nation's culture. The Forum attendees in Beijing recalled that museum exhibitions have already played a pivotal role in shaping perceptions about the United States in China, and vice versa. The 1998 touring exhibition "China: 5,000 Years"—the presentation of some 500 cultural relics, organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the National Administration for Cultural Heritage of the People's Republic of China—opened the door to a period of enhanced curiosity about Chinese culture in America. The same year saw the opening of "Inside Out: New Chinese Art," an exhibition organized by Asia Society in collaboration with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, which presented U.S. audiences with the first major survey of the dynamic new art emerging from China at the time. Prior to these projects, Robert Rauschenberg's 1985 visit to China and the exhibition of his work at the China National Art Gallery—the first officially sanctioned exhibition in China by an American artist in a half-century—is widely considered a turning point, having left a deep impression on a then-nascent group of Chinese contemporary artists.⁶ American art exhibitions continue to be followed closely in Chinese artistic and intellectual circles. "The Whitney Biennial is very much noticed in China," observed one Chinese museum director during the Forum. "After the Venice Biennale and Documenta, the Whitney Biennial is the third," he noted, adding, "We hope there could be more exposure and response. Maybe it could come to China."

If public demand fuels interest in exchanges, the other impetus behind museum interactions is China's extraordinary museum construction boom. The recent proliferation of museums is a manifestation of the Communist Party's commitment to soft power. China intends to become a leading producer of culture on the global stage. Like other ascendant nations, it is pursuing an aggressive growth policy in its cultural sector and is building its arts infrastructure at a rapid pace. The investments are intended not only for domestic consumption, but also to burnish the country's reputation overseas.

The term "soft power," coined in 1988 by Harvard Kennedy School professor Joseph Nye to denote "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payment," resonates strongly with the party leadership. Unprecedented resources now are lavished on soft-power programs: the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo cost some \$80 billion. A vast number of officials are working on festivals and exchange programs worldwide. Confucius Institutes in almost a hundred countries are spreading interest in Chinese

culture.⁷ In terms of numbers, China is arguably the world's leading proponent of cultural diplomacy.

Museums are essential to this international outreach because, more than almost any other kind of institution, they give tangible expression to a country's aspirations and affinities. Approximately 1,800 Chinese museums are now open and free to the public. The largest museums attract enormous audiences—13 million for the Capital Museum in Beijing, and almost 8 million for the National Museum of China, as compared with the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 6.3 million. Still, wide disparities

No other government has come close to the Chinese plan of adding 1,000 institutions to the nation's fledgling museum network.

exist between Chinese and Western museums in attendance, resources, and professionalism. China's wave of museum construction has no true historical precedent. The nineteenth-century European museum boom created fewer institutions. The American museum boom of the twentieth century had less to do with government policy. Museum projects in the Persian Gulf are impressive, but they lack the sheer magnitude of China's investments. No other government has come close to the Chinese plan of adding 1,000 institutions to the nation's fledgling museum network.

China's vigor in museum construction gives rise, finally, to what may be seen as the most important mandate for bilateral exchanges. A mere handful of the new museums in China draw energy and direction from well-established museological norms or an informed homegrown demand for art. The projects typically come about as part of urban development schemes. Their implementation to date has, on the whole, underemphasized the "software"—collections, programming, research, expertise—that is supposed to animate the "hardware," or the new museum buildings themselves.

"Galleries and museums in China are still at a very early stage of development," noted a prominent Chinese museum leader at the Forum. "We have the buildings, but the professionalism and the intellectual level of the directors and staff are not there yet. So exchange programs need to be carried out at various levels, not just for directors but for different departments: storage, administration, support teams—they all lack experience." American museums, by contrast, have extensive reserves of exactly what new Chinese museums need—massive holdings of objects, many in storage due to a lack of exhibition space, along with academic, curatorial, and scientific know-how. U.S. museums and universities also can conduct professional training on the scale that China now requires.

The need to understand each other's traditions, institutions, and working methods, however, cuts both ways. American museum directors and curators, along with their audiences, have a significant deficit in both knowledge and experience when it comes to Chinese culture. "In the United States, there is not enough understanding about China's contemporary art developments," a Chinese museum director noted during the meetings, "which is something we need to discuss with our American colleagues." Another Chinese participant put it more bluntly: "Many U.S. directors don't know our museums. So please try to know more about our museums."

III. BENEFITS AND OBSTACLES

Mindful of this context, the museum leaders at the Forum pointed out various benefits of museum exchanges. Their comments on why exchanges matter to museums and their public converged on three broad themes:

- **Providing information and experience:** As several directors noted, museum exchanges are a means to provide audiences with new information and experiences. This is the primary objective of any museum. Bilateral exchanges allow the public and professionals alike to "complement, contrast, and compare" the art and culture of the two nations. In the words of directors, they lead to the "discovery of new, and surprising, shared histories," and provide "opportunities for American artists to have meaningful and culturally appropriate exposure in China, and vice versa."
- **Fostering tolerance and understanding:** Trust is indispensable to normalizing state relations. Fostering appreciation of shared values as well as differences is a key

"We have the buildings, but the professionalism and the intellectual level of the directors and staff are not there yet. So exchange programs need to be carried out at various levels."

A deeper appreciation of one's own culture can be gained by observing it through a different lens.

benefit of exchanges in the eyes of museum directors. "Exposing our audiences—most of whom will never visit China—to Chinese culture is absolutely crucial to helping Americans create a positive understanding of the powerful history and cul-

ture that have resulted in the greatest artistic achievement that we treasure and display," one American director said.

A deeper appreciation of one's own culture can be gained by observing it through a different lens. Thus, museums can "improve the quality of relations among people and nations,"

another director noted. By creating opportunities for closer understanding among academics, artists, institutions, and audiences, museums act as a gateway for sustained, peaceful state-to-state relations.

- **Enhancing cultural competence:** Museum exchanges can promote cultural fluency for individuals seeking to find their way in a world where international markets and networks are converging. In the words of a participating director, exchanges "prepare us for the twenty-first century, when global competence and awareness of the world is an imperative."

Despite a widely shared positive feeling about the value of museum exchanges, the Forum discussions circled back repeatedly to the obstacles that hobble such initiatives, particularly in the U.S.-China context. Museums must cope with all the endemic complications of international institutional partnerships. However, they also face unique challenges. The exhibitions and loans at the heart of most museum exchanges involve objects of great significance and value. Certain artists evoke political sensitivities. The American and the Chinese colleagues were quite candid in their assessment of the problems:

- **Disparities in resources and practices:** There is a profound mismatch between Western and Chinese museum resources. This creates an urgent need for "more knowledge and familiarization with how museums in respective countries work, from governance and decision-making to programming and collections management," one director said. "We are open-minded and want to learn," said a Chinese director. "In terms of operations and management, we are still lagging behind." The two systems are in different stages of development, with skills and infrastructure that are readily found in America still unevenly deployed in China. Museums in the two countries approach their tasks via different processes and operating norms. A frequently noted example: planning schedules—much shorter in China—lead to frustrations on both sides. Another point of friction is that some Chinese institutions expect to derive revenue from fees tied to visiting exhibitions—meaning that they intend to charge overseas museums to display their exhibitions in Chinese museums. Many expect the U.S. side to cover shipping, insurance, and customs surcharges. Much of the gap in practices and professionalism is due to the disparate level of maturity among institutions. Because museums in China are new, their professional capacity and organizational behaviors are still in flux.
- **Inconsistent bureaucratic, legal, and regulatory systems:** Museums on both sides find it difficult to master the complexities of each other's administrative mechanisms. "The structures of the institutions on both sides of the Pacific are fundamentally different; the cultures are profoundly different," observed an American director after the Forum. The regulatory and legal frameworks for museums are inconsistent, with different policies guiding questions of insurance and government guarantees, for example. Financing mechanisms are likewise incompatible, making it harder to leverage resources. American directors find it particularly challenging to navigate the Chinese cultural bureaucracy. They complain about

“the layers of approval required for projects.” “For most of us,” one of them noted, “the workings of Chinese official channels can be fairly opaque.” American contemporary art museums face special problems when attempting to secure visas for traveling artists. “If the artists are not sanctioned by government,” noted a director with experience in presenting contemporary artists and exhibitions, “travel proves to be much more challenging.” The Chinese directors, for their part, are often frustrated by Western approaches to museum management, including the arduous courting and coordination of public and private stakeholders that their American colleagues must reckon with.

- **Lack of confidence and familiarity:** Meager contacts, here as elsewhere, lead to a deficit of trust. Directors bemoan the “limited personal relationships,” the “lack of a shared language,” and the “vastly different museum cultures” that stand in the way of interaction. “We need to share our experiences,” said a Chinese Forum participant. “We need to know each other better and trust each other.” Collaboration presumes a certain level of comfort, but confidence is still in short supply, on both sides. Americans seek reassurance about whether immunity from seizure for art objects will be upheld, for instance, and are also concerned about the curtailed personal freedoms for some artists in China. Chinese directors, for their part, are concerned that American colleagues underestimate their ability to function as professional partners: “We run into a lot of problems—which insurance to use, which shipping firm to use, et cetera,” noted one Chinese director. “But these can be solved. If you trust us, it can be solved. We do things in a very reliable way.” Some American directors concurred: “In order to arrive at a true dialogue, there has to be trust and acceptance that there are many perspectives and that building a common agenda might take time,” said a member of the U.S. delegation. “The good news,” another American colleague allowed, “is that trust develops very quickly when people spend time together.”
- **Missing institutional mechanisms:** The absence of a cultural ministry in the United States makes it difficult to gain access to high-level Chinese governmental officials. There is currently no intermediary organization that connects institutions interested in exchanges, helps provide information about potential partner institutions, or deals with practical matters such as obtaining visas. The role of the diplomatic services in this regard remains relatively limited. Most important, there is a lack of joint support mechanisms to provide resources for exchange initiatives. In the United States, “funding to support these expensive and labor-intensive endeavors” is a major hurdle, noted one director, echoing the opinion of many. Lack of travel opportunities is related to the funding squeeze. “Language differences can be overcome,” said one director. But the “primary hindrance is the paucity of funding inside China to co-support long-term joint research and exhibition project costs.”

While the solutions to some of these problems will always lie beyond the reach of museum directors, many of the aforementioned challenges also translate into opportunities for expanding bilateral museum relations. These are outlined in the following section.

IV. A BLUEPRINT FOR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS: AREAS OF NEED AND OPPORTUNITY

Most of the two-day Forum in Beijing was devoted to structured discussions on museum management and operating protocols. “The question,” one director asked, “is how we can work together.”

“Trust develops very quickly when people spend time together.”

⁸ Following to the two-day Forum, the participating directors were asked to share their views on museum collaborations through a questionnaire. Recommendations from this feedback are included in this summary.

Three broad areas of need and opportunity were crystallized through the discussion and in follow-up comments from the delegates:

- *People-to-People Contacts*: Sharing Information and Access
- *Institutional Relations*: Fostering Long-Term Partnerships
- *Coordination Within the Museum Sector*: Assessing Needs and Priorities in the Field

These areas of potential development encompass the full spectrum of museum interactions—from contact between individual museum professionals, to cooperation between institutions, to coordination across the sector. Each dimension is examined in detail below, followed in the next section by specific recommendations from directors for each realm of exchange activity.⁸

A. People-to-People Contacts: Sharing Information and Access

At their heart, institutional interactions are about relationships between museum professionals—not just directors, but also curators and staff members involved in the myriad tasks required to operate a museum. Here is where the assembled directors in Beijing saw the most pressing needs and the best opportunities for collaborative action. This dimension of museum exchange is about direct dialogue and informa-

“We can’t forget the artists: This is the primary DNA of what all of you do.”

tion sharing—a process that already has begun, with experts and delegations visiting the United States and China with increasing regularity. These contacts can expand in the future through online channels. People-

to-people contacts will lead to the emergence of professional networks, intensified research and preservation efforts, and increasing agreement on shared academic and administrative standards.

Needs and Opportunities Identified by Museum Directors:

- **Expand travel opportunities for directorial, educational, curatorial, and research travel.** “Most of the differences stem from different ways of working together,” noted an official from a leading American museum. Closer interaction is needed, she added, “for us to learn their habits and for them to learn our habits.” But considering the number of museums in both countries, the number of museum personnel traveling remains very low. “We need to provide opportunities for curators and staff to work together,” noted one director, summarizing a widely held view.
- **Expand opportunities for artist-to-artist collaborations.** At various points during the Forum, directors noted that direct artist-to-artist collaboration must remain a key priority for cultural exchange. “We can’t forget the artists: This is the primary DNA of what all of you do,” noted one director. It is vital that contemporary museums make room for projects that bring together living artists, but such projects also can expand the scope of programming in historic museums, the assembled directors noted.
- **Take advantage of communications tools.** Lack of information about what is going on in the field is a major hindrance. Online dissemination of texts, coupled with translation tools, could be beneficial. By far the greatest opportunity lies in joint investment in digital databases and networks. Several directors called for the creation of social networks that can aggregate information about partnership opportunities and facilitate museum exchanges.
- **Develop public and private support for professional exchange.** The greatest obstacle to peer-to-peer interaction is not institutional or political. It is securing funding when other priorities are competing for support. “We need to develop a

new financial model to support cultural exchanges,” one director said. Corporate support for exchanges is also lacking. “Virtually no Chinese companies are interested,” one Chinese participant noted. “Chinese companies are not very familiar with the art community.”

B. Institutional Relations: Fostering Long-Term Partnerships

The most consequential museum collaborations link institutional resources to deliver on museums’ core functions—collecting, exhibiting, preserving, and interpreting objects. Much discussion at the Forum was devoted to ways of encouraging, facilitating, managing, and stimulating such partnerships, especially in the form of long-term object loans, traveling exhibitions, and training. Such relationships work well only when based on mutual interest and reciprocal involvement, including shared financial commitments. The directors identified several growth opportunities in this respect, all contingent on new norms and working mechanisms. In addition, several participants urged U.S. museums to seek out partnerships beyond the largest “usual suspect” Chinese institutions, expanding their relationships to regional centers around China.

Needs and Opportunities Identified by Museum Directors:

- **Broaden long-term loan agreements and work to overcome the constraints of exclusive object ownership.** Expanding long-term loan agreements is the most obvious step toward meaningful museum partnerships. Chinese museums, most of which focus solely on Chinese heritage, would stand to gain the most from access to the holdings of U.S. museums. “Consider the possibility of long-term loans to sustain the exposure of people in China to art that is not Chinese,” suggested a director with experience in both countries. However, while calling for more object loans, the directors also encouraged their colleagues to look beyond traditional ownership models. “Instead of collecting alone, our responsibility is to bring together objects without necessarily owning them,” noted an American director. “Ownership may be an outdated model in the twenty-first century,” he added, “for a lot of categories, including archaeological objects.” One Chinese participant saw opportunity in the sharing of objects in storage in American museums. “The warehouses of developed countries’ museums should be the exhibition rooms of the museums of developing countries,” he said. Keeping art in storage is not “socially responsible,” he added. “Bring it here.”
- **Agree on shared principles and mechanisms for exhibition collaborations.** Working out the complexities of mounting exhibitions and, in particular, ironing out the imbalances in exhibition financing are among the key tasks standing in the way of expanded museum exchanges. “Exhibitions are financed in different ways” in China and the United States, noted one American director, highlighting a topic that elicited many comments during the Forum. “We need to talk about how better to share finances.” In the absence of clear operating protocols and financing channels, institutions are negotiating partnerships on a case-by-case basis. Common understanding and more flexibility are needed in areas such as exhibition insurance. Institutions’ hands often are tied with respect to the use of American or Chinese insurance. Formal coordination between the American Association of Museum Directors and the Chinese museum authorities could help resolve some of these bottlenecks, Forum participants suggested.
- **Undertake research and curatorial development of joint exhibition projects.** Rather than simply touring exhibitions developed in one country, directors sug-

Keeping art in storage is not “socially responsible,” said one Chinese participant. “Bring it here.”

gested that museums should work together more closely on scholarship and exhibition planning. “Engaging in a research project together when you do not know the outcome is a good model,” noted one delegate. “The exhibition is the outcome. We end up with a deep knowledge of what binds us rather than what separates us.” Other directors stressed, however, that exhibition collaborations demand a willingness to compromise on content and interpretive approaches. “Is it possible to build partnerships where you have to give up some level of control and specificity?” one delegate asked. A good place to start, another director suggested, would be to “work together on some smaller projects—two or three exhibitions on a small scale on a given topic.” Participants asked for collaborations on exhibitions that contextualize art and the wider culture behind it. “An ideal project would make the audience feel that they are transported to Asia by making an exhibition not just about objects, but enveloping the visitors into the entire context,” noted an American director.

- **Expand collaboration on preservation and archeological projects.** “We hope for more cooperation on the preservation of cultural relics in U.S. museums,” said a Chinese museum director, voicing an interest shared by several of his colleagues. American museums have a strong scientific capacity in preservation and conservation. They can assist their Chinese counterparts in establishing their own conservation infrastructure. Preservation and exhibition collaborations are closely linked. Collaboration on the preservation of Chinese relics can open the door to long-term loans and exchanges, participants noted. The same is true when it comes to sharing curatorial expertise and dispatching research personnel to

archeological sites. Precedents exist (including a project implemented in Atlanta in the 1980s) for exchanges involving the conservation of works in return for long-term loans of the same objects. However, when it comes to Chinese art, there is a skill gap on the American side.

There is an acute need in particular, one American director reminded, “for the training of conservators, particularly of Chinese traditional paintings.”

- **Create mechanisms for large-scale personnel training.** “We need to train a large number of people to manage these museums,” observed one participant, echoing many other similar comments. “One of our challenges,” said an American director, is “to drive down the changes into our staffs, so they, too, have the opportunities for exchange.” Chinese directors reminded the Forum that the training needs are pressing and specialized: “We should include specific training for exhibition management, including storage, and the conservation department,” one Chinese director said, adding the questions: “How to make a catalog? How to make storage effective? We have very limited qualified staff.” High-volume training exchanges for museum personnel in various career stages can be managed in consortia between museums, foundations, and academic institutions. “If this is going to work, it is going to involve training a whole new generation,” observed an American director whose institution is linked to a university. “They have to spend time together. It needs to happen not just on a museum level, but on an academic level.”

C. Coordination Within the Museum Sector: Assessing Needs and Priorities in the Field

Contacts among museum staffs and institutions only can flourish if the entire museum field is equipped with mechanisms to support exchanges; this was the third area of need and opportunity identified by the participating museum directors.

“Is it possible to build partnerships where you have to give up some level of control and specificity?”

It should be noted that various kinds of museums each have their own particular needs, especially in China, where contemporary and encyclopedic museums function in distinct administrative envelopes. There is a “gulf between museums of antiquities and contemporary art,” one director noted, the most “acute manifestation” of which is found in the training of curators. American museum directors find it difficult to navigate between these jurisdictions. The implementation of a collaborative support mechanism for American and Chinese museum exchanges would need to take into account these separate museum networks.

Whatever the case, more sharing of resources and more joint action are necessary across the board to usher in a new era of exchange, according to the Forum participants. All museums have in common the need for sustainable, secure, and scalable mechanisms, not just for facilitating loans of objects and the exchange of expertise but also for their long-term survival. Museums everywhere are engaged in an ongoing process of self-reflective redefinition that requires them to talk to one another. The directors pointed to a range of issues demanding joint attention, from how to better communicate the value of museums to understanding how museums should operate in a digital world. “We cannot lose sight of the larger mission: We serve the public,” one American director reminded the group. “We need to think of the types of expertise that museums can bring to bear” on this mission, he added. The “bottom line,” another participant offered, “is reducing the distance between the museum and the public. Ultimately that is the core of what we are about.” Opportunities to discuss such matters are still rare.

Because many goals and challenges are common to U.S. and Chinese museums, much discussion in Beijing focused on the need to establish organizations and forums that support the whole field, not just individual projects. Indeed, the splintering of resources and initiative was seen as a major obstacle to systemic improvement in museum-to-museum contacts. There is a common need for better communication platforms, particularly in light of the absence of a centralized American ministry of culture, one that could liaise with the Chinese cultural bureaucracy. Forum participants identified a number of missing mechanisms that, when implemented, could help foster institutional collaborations.

Needs and Opportunities Identified by Museum Directors:

- **Provide tools to aggregate resources and spur institutional interaction.** Exchanges today occur haphazardly, lacking scale, coordination, and impact. Several directors lamented that the unconnected projects fail to “create a sense of critical mass.” Aggregating these efforts, however, requires dedicated capacity, attention, and information. “Exchange would really benefit from organized outreach,” noted one American director.⁹ “Some of us can do it on our own, but it would be more powerful if we could collaborate on a larger private partnership,” suggested another American director. Small and mid-level institutions cannot manage exchanges without such enabling mechanisms. One problem is that no intermediary group or foundation currently is focused on facilitating exchanges. Also needed are online mechanisms to find and determine “which are the willing institutions, what are they seeking in exchange for significant loans, and who is in charge of making decisions.” The directors suggested that membership organizations, such as the American Alliance of Museums and the American Association of Museum Directors, could assume some of these new functions. In light of the administrative separation of Chinese museums, specialized mechanisms will be needed for interactions between historic and contemporary art museums.

⁹ As a model, this director pointed out that several U.S. institutions partnered eight years ago to understand what was happening on the African continent, with support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

- **Articulate and share experiences about common operating principles.** Understanding shared goals and measures of success is a prerequisite for institutional collaborations. A lively debate exists in the United States and in China about how institutions should define their purposes. Directors from both sides acknowledged difficulties in moving beyond simple audience metrics, toward more qualitative definitions of mission and success. “I urge us to understand the impact of museums on people’s lives,” one participant implored. “What are visitors learning? How does it change their behavior in society?” Likewise, demonstrating the value of cultural exchange is a shared concern and a prerequisite for unlocking support. When it comes to joint principles, museums devoted to contemporary art have a particular need to articulate clear principles of engagement with the art market: “The museum is lagging behind the market,” noted a Chinese expert. “That is something we need to pay attention to.” Finding common ground on all such matters requires more communication across the museum field.
- **Collaborate on improving museum policy and adopting best practices.** Shared principles are tied to common ways of working on practical challenges. Museums in China, for example, have scant experience with American-style endowments and the diversification of support to include private stakeholders. This “is something learned from international counterparts,” a Chinese director noted. Furthermore, Chinese and American museums alike need to improve their relationships with their audience. They need to “move from interpretation to conversation,” a U.S. director suggested. “In the twenty-first century, with a mass audience of millions traveling to museums, it seems to me conversation is a more powerful idiom.” Developing new digital tools and communication channels is another priority. “Layering the points of access to a museum is a way of addressing different generations,” one director noted. “It’s a way of going from a teaching institution to a learning platform.” Providing the means to share expertise and experience in museum leadership presents yet another collaborative learning opportunity.
- **Lobby private and public agencies to make cultural exchange a priority.** Directors in both countries agreed that they should act jointly to seek support for cultural exchange from professional organizations, foundations, and government agencies.

“We simply need resources; first for research and development, and then implementation funds for individual programs.”

Convincing these bodies of the value of cultural exchange is a challenging remit, best undertaken through collective advocacy—especially in the United States. “Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has emphasized people-to-people diplomacy,” noted one participant, and “we need to be a river flowing into this idea. There is commitment, and there are resources, but we have to figure out a way for the two sides to connect.” Another U.S. director agreed: “They do have some funds for training. Part of what we need to do is organize ourselves to funnel our request into the State Department.” Yet another director suggested that museums must step up and act jointly to access public resources: “By working together—and I believe there are resources that could be brought to bear—I believe out of that, we would be able to build a tremendous amount of on-the-ground advancement among us.” Irrespective of the source of funding, the problem, another American director noted, can be boiled down to this: “We simply need resources; first for research and development, and then implementation funds for individual programs.”

V. NEXT STEPS: SPECIFIC PROPOSED ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

Going forward, Asia Society seeks to be a constructive partner in U.S.-China museum

exchanges. Asia Society has a natural role to play in these relationships, by building a network of museums and continuing to foster dialogue, particularly regarding museum management and technology in the Asia-Pacific region, both through face-to-face meetings of museum professionals and online. This work will be a focus area for the Society over the next five years. The 2011 and 2012 meetings in Beijing, along with this report, constitute the first steps in this initiative.

During the conference and in follow-up interviews, the participating directors expressed strong enthusiasm for continuing the work begun with the Forum. Asia Society can be a catalyst for expanded bilateral relations by organizing “a series of forums of this type to outline a shared way forward,” as one director put it.

However, the directors also seek more practical emphasis on new projects and solving problems. They should not allow the gatherings to turn into “just another forum,” as one implored.

The directors proposed a number of specific options for Asia Society or other organizations seeking to partner on expanding ties between U.S. and Chinese museums, corresponding with the areas of need and opportunity outlined in Section IV:

A. *People-to-People Contacts: Sharing Information and Access*

- Implement a systematic **training initiative for young art professionals**, possibly tied to major university-museum principles and methods of museum work, to train a future generation of Chinese museum personnel. The Getty Leadership Institute and the Center for Curatorial Leadership are examples of such programs already in play.
- Offer opportunities for **young people from museums from both nations** to participate in **three-month museum residencies**, to build contacts and networks that remain in touch as past participants scale the ranks.
- Implement and **expand a system of curatorial fellowships and travel grants**, allowing curators to plan new projects and meet fellow curators and artists,¹⁰ and enabling museum directors to build contacts and trust through visits to their institutional counterparts.
- **Leverage existing international training programs**, such as those managed by the British Council and German museums, by extending them to U.S. museums. Study and consider adopting the model of successful bilateral exchange initiatives.¹¹

B. *Institutional Relations: Fostering Long-Term Partnerships*

- Host annual U.S.-China forums focusing on the **joint development of new museum-exchange projects**; invite a wider range of stakeholders, and disseminate the results widely.
- Expand opportunities to collaborate on **joint archeological exhibitions** in China and the United States by securing funding opportunities and connecting institutions.
- Help train and designate specialized staff members at individual museums to **circulate relevant information and assist with the management of partnerships and projects**.
- Consider **triangular partnerships between museums and art schools and universities** in the United States and China for training, research, and exhibitions.
- Organize **small, collaborative “focus” exhibitions** that are relatively easy to fund—for example, a series of one-room exhibitions of Chinese artists circulating around U.S. museums—to test ideas and function as a laboratory for larger projects.

¹⁰ The curatorial travel grants of the Terra Foundation for American of Art, a U.S.-China Forum co-sponsor, can serve as a model.

¹¹ One example mentioned during the Forum is the decade-old FRAME consortium of regional French and U.S. museums.

The directors seek more practical emphasis on new projects and solving problems.

C. *Coordination Within the Museum Sector: Assessing Needs and Priorities in the Field*

- **Assemble a consortium of museums to raise funds from the private sector** to promote exchanges, possibly through an endowed foundation—with support from both China and the United States—dedicated to research and exhibitions over extended periods of time.
- Establish an intermediary organization with a presence in China to act as a **resource for answering questions about exchange projects** and share information on existing and new tools and resources.
- **Create task forces among contemporary museums and encyclopedic museums** to work through specific issues germane to each type of institution; begin by convening groups of six to seven museums in each field.
- Convene a group of U.S. museum directors to **make a case for expanded government support for museum exchanges** to the U.S. Department of State; **include diplomatic and government representatives** in follow-up meetings.
- **Develop online tools** to facilitate information sharing and interactions. For example, develop an **online network of institutions** posting potential loans, reading lists, and helpful up-to-date information, or a **forum to exchange ideas and promote loans, training opportunities, and sponsorships**.
- Establish a **registry of the contact information of Chinese museum and archeology professionals** and their areas of expertise and current projects.
- Undertake joint **advocacy and development through outreach to professional associations** (AAM, AAMD, ACAD, AFA, etc.), foundations, the U.S. State Department, and other relevant public and private organizations.

VI. THE ASIAN ARTS AND MUSEUM NETWORK

As the list makes clear, a great deal of work remains to be done to prepare the ground for expanded for U.S.-China museum collaborations. A first step, which occurred in conjunction with the November 2012 U.S.-China Forum on the Arts and Culture, was the formal launch of a new five-year initiative, Asia Society's Asian Arts and Museum Network. The program aims to strengthen arts communities in Asia and will work to encourage collaborations between individuals and experts in Asia and the United States. As the first effort of its kind, it will lead up to an international summit in November 2013, at the recently opened Asia Society Hong Kong Center.

Among the myriad tasks suggested by the directors present in Beijing, the Asian Arts and Museum Network will focus initially on three initiatives designed to strengthen museum collaborations between the two countries. The Network will:

- Organize the Asian Arts and Museum Network Summit to provide a platform for face-to-face interaction and exchange between museum professionals from China and other Asian countries, and the United States.
- Assemble a virtual network of museum and arts professionals in China and the United States through an interactive, digital platform with tools for resource sharing, professional development, and institutional capacity building—with support from both countries.
- Encourage a greater understanding of and visibility for Chinese art worldwide through the development of a coordinated and consolidated website that offers free and open access to a database of Chinese and Asian art from multiple collections.

In pursuing these objectives, and in the spirit of the task at hand, the Asian Arts and Museum Network will seek to work in collaboration with a wide range of museums, government agencies, and private funding bodies in the United States and China.

VII. CONCLUSION: TOWARD A NEW ERA OF U.S.-CHINA MUSEUM EXCHANGES

Drawing on two intense days of discussions in Beijing among some thirty Chinese and American museum leaders and other invited experts, this report has outlined the benefits, challenges, and potentially fruitful areas of development for U.S.-China museum exchanges. The directors welcomed the opportunity for face-to-face dialogue. “In the past, our two sides were separated by a wall,” concluded one prominent Chinese museum executive. “Now we can see each other clearly and have better understandings.”

All agreed that the moment is ripe for expanding ties between Chinese and American institutions. The mandate for investing in these relationships lies in growing audience interest in both countries, as expressed in a rise in museum-going and tourism; the current museum construction boom in China, which has given rise to a burgeoning museum sector that forms a counterpart to museums in the United States; and, especially, the vastly divergent stages of collection development and professional preparedness in museums in China and the United States.

Simply stated, museums in these two countries have more and more to offer to each other and, by extension, to their respective audiences. “Listening to my American colleagues,” noted an American director after the Forum, “it is clear that all museums, whether large or small, no matter how specific the cases, are confronting the same challenges, sharing the same aspirations, and oftentimes coming up with similar solutions.”

A mutually shared need and interest now set the stage for an invigorated era of U.S.-China museum interactions. Moreover, the proliferation of bilateral relationships is intertwined with the complex narrative of the evolution of the museum field at large. As one Chinese director observed, “The museum in the twenty-first century is at the crossroads of change. How can we make full use of resources? How to strengthen our operations? How to strengthen our services so museums can do a better job to service the society?” Such questions transcend differences between Chinese and American institutions. They speak to concerns that must be addressed by the entire global museum community, which today is both larger and more interconnected than ever, and in which American and Chinese museums are destined to play a vital role in years to come.

When it comes to the United States and China, the need for intensified contacts is a result, above all, of their prior absence—of the vacuum left behind by decades of isolation and antagonism. Admittedly, the obstacles standing in the way of more open exchange remain real and profound. It will take years of meetings such as the U.S.-China Forum to lay a durable foundation of trust for the institutional interactions. And it will take persistent effort on the part of museums to neutralize negative perceptions and catalyze affinities between two nations that all too often fail to understand each other. The museum directors in Beijing were optimistic, however, about the impact of their evolving relationships. “It’s like acupuncture,” observed a Chinese participant. “We can use a small point, but we can spread infinity through this point.”

It will take persistent effort on the part of museums to neutralize negative perceptions and catalyze affinities between two nations that all too often fail to understand each other.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF FORUM ATTENDEES

American Museum Leaders

Stephen D. Allee	Associate Curator for Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.
Maxwell L. Anderson	Eugene McDermott Director, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas
Neal Benezra	Director, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California
Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker	Director, Frye Art Museum, Seattle, Washington
Melissa Chiu	Museum Director and Senior Vice President, Global Arts and Cultural Programs, Asia Society Museum, New York, New York
Derek Gillman	Executive Director and President, The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Dorothy Kosinski	Director, The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.
Dan L. Monroe	Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo Director and CEO, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts
Jock Reynolds	Henry J. Heinz II Director, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut
Jennifer Russell	Associate Director for Exhibitions, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York
Roxana Velásquez Martínez del Campo	Maruja Baldwin Executive Director, San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, California
Olga Viso	Executive Director, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Adam D. Weinberg	Alice Pratt Brown Director, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York
Jay Xu	Director, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, San Francisco, California
Julián Zugazagoitia	Menefee D. and Mary Louise Blackwell Director and CEO, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri

Chinese Museum Leaders

Bai Ming	Director, Visual Art Center of the Academy of Arts & Design, Tsinghua University, Beijing
Bao Dongbo	Director, Hubei Provincial Museum, Wuhan, Hubei
Bao Zewei	Director, Guyuan Museum of Art, Zhuhai, Guangdong
Chen Jianning	Deputy Director, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, Guangdong
Chen Xiejun	Director, Shanghai Museum, Shanghai
Cheng Jianzheng	Director, Shaanxi History Museum, Xi'an, Shaanxi
Fan Di'an	Director, National Art Museum of China, Beijing
Fan Feng	Director, Wuhan Art Museum, Wuhan, Hubei
Guo Xiaoling	Director, Capital Museum, Beijing
Lü Zhangshen	Director, National Museum of China, Beijing
Samuel Kung	Chairman and Director, Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai
Shao Shan	Deputy Director, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, Guangdong
Shi Jinming	Director, Shanxi Museum, Taiyuan, Shanxi
Wang Huangsheng	Director, Art Museum of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing
Xie Suzhen	Director, Today Art Museum, Beijing
Yang Chao	Director, Xi'an Art Museum, Xi'an, Shaanxi
Zhang Wenjun	Director, Henan Museum, Zhengzhou, Henan

LIST OF FORUM ATTENDEES

Advisers to the Museum-Directors Dialogue

Elizabeth Glassman	CEO, Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago, Illinois; Member of the Board of Directors, Giverny Museum of Impressionisms, Vernon, France
András Szántó	Writer, Researcher, and Cultural Consultant, New York, New York
Philip Tinari	Director, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing
Pauline Willis	Director, American Federation of Arts, New York, New York

Performing Artists in “A Musical Dialogue II”

Andrew Andersen	Executive Director, Stanford Center at Peking University, Beijing
Chen Leiji	Guqin Player, Beijing
Clifford Ross	Photographer, New York, New York
Amy Tan	Writer, Sausalito, California
Michael Tilson Thomas	Musical Director, San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco, California
Yuja Wang	Pianist, New York, New York
Abigail Washburn	Banjo Player, Vocalist, Nashville, Tennessee
Wu Fei	Guzheng Player, Vocalist, Beijing
Wu Tong	Sheng Player, Vocalist, Beijing

APPENDIX II

PROGRAM OF THE 2012 U.S.-CHINA FORUM ON THE ARTS AND CULTURE

Thursday, November 15, 2012
U.S. Embassy in Beijing

Dinner hosted by U.S. Ambassador to China Gary Locke

Friday, November 16, 2012
National Museum of China

Welcome remarks

Orville Schell and Melissa Chiu, Asia Society; Li Jianping, Vice President, Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries; Lü Zhangshen, Director, National Museum of China

Session 1: Museum Management and Operations

Modern museums have become increasingly larger and more complex social organisms, with an ever-expanding appetite for resources. What are the most constructive ways to organize, manage, and support such institutions, and how do unique local situations define what can be done?

Session 2: Museums and Our Communities

Throughout the world, museums have historically played civic-community roles—educating audiences, sharing collections, and providing forums for the discussion of history, art, and ideas. What are some of the successful ways in which museums have engaged audiences? What are your experiences as museum professionals, and what are the experiences of others you know, in making museums more integrally connected to the communities they serve? What kinds of educational outreach to schools, organizations and businesses, and the general public have worked best? What role can technology play in reaching these communities? What are the best practices in both the United States and China?

Session 3: What Can International Cultural Exchange Accomplish?

Relations between the United States and China are increasingly important. What role can international cultural exchange play in helping to create an environment in which shared concerns are more readily appreciated, and in which perceived conflicts are more easily resolved? How can culture play a role between the United States and China when the former has no ministry of culture and the latter does? Given this unique situation, what can we realistically expect from cultural exchange? How can the world of art and museums facilitate new approaches and pathways to cultural exchange that are worth exploring? What are the best ways to facilitate such explorations?

Walk-through of National Museum of China

Saturday, November 17, 2012
Central Academy of Fine Art (CAFA)

Session 4: Looking Ahead

What kind of support would museums from both countries appreciate most? What are your next steps in furthering cultural exchange?

“A Work in Process”

A Chinese Artist and an American Photographer Engage in a Collaboration
Presented by Pan GongKai and Clifford Ross

Site Visits: Guided Walk-through of Galleries 798 Gallery District

Guided by Philip Tinari, Director of the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art

Evening Concert
Concert Hall of the Central Conservatory of Music

A MUSICAL DIALOGUE II

Directed by Michael Tilson Thomas, Musical Director of the San Francisco Symphony

Program

Giovanni Gabrieli: Canzon septimi toni No. 2

Guy Piddington, trumpet *

Justin Emerich, trumpet *

Musicians from the **Central Conservatory of Music**

Coached by Guy Piddington and Justin Emerich, trumpet

Felix Mendelssohn: Finale (Presto) from Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20

Musicians from the **Central Conservatory of Music** and the **EOS Orchestra**

Coached by Jay Liu, viola *

Steve Reich: Music for Pieces of Wood

Victor Avdienko, Raymond Froehlich, Tom Hemphill, David Herbert,

James Lee Wyatt III, percussion *

Variations: Qin / Clavichord

Michael Tilson Thomas, clavichord

Chen Leiji, qin

Eugène Ysaÿe: Finale. Allegro vivo e con fuoco from Sonata for Two Violins

Chen Zhao and **Florin Parvulescu**, violins *

Banjo and Guzheng selections

Abigail Washburn, banjo

Wu Fei, guzheng

Francis Poulenc: Sonata for Piano Four-Hands

Michael Tilson Thomas, piano

Yuja Wang, piano

Improvisations: Poetry, Piano, and Percussion

Wang Wei: "Autumn Evening in a Mountain Retreat"

Andrew Andreasen, recitation

John Cage: Lecture on Nothing (1959)

Amy Tan, recitation

Michael Tilson Thomas, piano improvisation

Victor Avdienko, Raymond Froehlich, Tom Hemphill, David Herbert,

James Lee Wyatt III, percussion *

Harmonium Mountain Collaboration

Wu Tong, sheng

Clifford Ross, visual artist

Jazz Set: Joe Henderson: Record Me

Mark Inouye, trumpet *

Scott Pingel, bass *

Jeff Massanari, guitar *

Raymond Froehlich, drums *

* Members of the San Francisco Symphony

APPENDIX III

SIGNIFICANT U.S.-CHINA MUSEUM-EXCHANGE PROJECTS

SELECT PROJECTS CO-ORGANIZED BY U.S. AND CHINESE INSTITUTIONS

Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

“China’s Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor’s Legacy”

February–May 2013

Organized by the Asian Art Museum in partnership with the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the Shaanxi Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau, and Shaanxi Cultural Heritage Promotion Centre, People’s Republic of China.

Asia Society, New York

“Revolutionary Ink: The Paintings of Wu Guanzhong”

April–August 2012

Co-organized by the Shanghai Art Museum and Asia Society Museum.

Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

“Asian Art Forum for Museum Directors”

October 2011

The Asian Art Museum hosted the first San Francisco Asian Art Forum for Museum Directors, which included ten museum directors from the United States and ten from Asia (including a museum director from mainland China).

Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

“The Emperor’s Private Paradise: Treasures from the Forbidden City”

September 2010–January 2011

Co-organized by the Peabody Essex Museum with the Palace Museum, Beijing, and the New York–based World Monuments Fund. The exhibition traveled to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Milwaukee Art Museum.

Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

“Shanghai”

February–September 2010

Co-organized by the Shanghai Museum and the Asian Art Museum with assistance from the Shanghai International Culture Association.

High Museum, Atlanta

“The First Emperor: China’s Terracotta Army”

November 2008–April 2009

Organized by the High Museum, the Museum of the Terracotta Army, and the Cultural Relics Bureau of Shaanxi Province in Xian, China.

Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

“Power and Glory: Court Arts of China’s Ming Dynasty”

June–September 2008

Co-organized by the Asian Art Museum; the Palace Museum, Beijing; the Nanjing Municipal Museum; and the Shanghai Museum.

Asia Society, New York

“Gilded Splendor: Treasures of China’s Liao Empire (907–1125)”

August–December 2006

Co-organized by Asia Society and the Inner Mongolia Historic Relics Archaeological Studies Research Institute.

SELECT PROJECTS CO-ORGANIZED BY U.S. AND CHINESE INSTITUTIONS

The Field Museum, Chicago

“Splendors of China’s Forbidden City: The Glorious Reign of Emperor Qianlong”

May–September 2004

Co-organized by The Field Museum, Chicago, and the Forbidden City Palace Museum, Beijing. The exhibition traveled to the Dallas Museum.

Asia Society, New York

“Monks and Merchants: Silk Road Treasures from Northwest China”

November 2001–January 2002

Organized by Asia Society in cooperation with the province of Gansu and the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington

“Treasures from a Lost Civilization: Ancient Chinese Art from Sichuan”

May–August 2001

Organized by the Seattle Art Museum in collaboration with The Bureau of Cultural Relics, Sichuan Province, the People’s Republic of China.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

“The Golden Age of Chinese Archeology: Celebrated Discoveries from the People’s Republic of China”

September 1999–January 2000

Co-organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, in cooperation with the State Administration of Cultural Heritage and Art Exhibitions, the People’s Republic of China.

Guggenheim Museum, New York

“China: 5,000 Years”

February–June 1988

Organized by the Guggenheim in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and National Administration Cultural Heritage, the People’s Republic of China.

SELECT TOURING EXHIBITIONS AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Cultural Exchange Program: Offers Chinese professionals the opportunity to travel to the United States to study the structure, administration, and programs of American museums, 2001–present.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: “Earth, Sea, and Sky: Nature in Western Art—Masterpieces from the Metropolitan Museum of Art,” traveling exhibition to the National Museum of China, Beijing, February–May 2013.

Guggenheim Museum, New York: “Cai Guo-Qiang: I Want to Believe,” traveling exhibition to the National Museum of China, Beijing, 2008.

Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio: “From Monet to Picasso: Masterworks from the Cleveland Museum of Art,” traveling exhibition to Beijing World Art Museum, 2006.

Asia Society, New York: “Treasures of Asian Art: Selections from the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection of the Asia Society,” traveling exhibition to the Shanghai Museum, September 1999–January 2000.

Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange (ROCI): traveling exhibition to the China Art Gallery (now the National Art Museum of China), 1985.

SPONSORS

The 2012 U.S.-China Forum on the Arts and Culture was organized by Asia Society and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, in collaboration with:

U.S. Embassy in Beijing

National Museum of China

The Central Academy of Fine Arts

The Central Conservatory of Music

The first U.S.-China Forum on the Arts and Culture was held in 2011 by Asia Society and the Aspen Institute, with the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

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