

# THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

## SUMMARY REPORT ON THE 2016 U.S.-CHINA MUSEUM SUMMIT

September 25-28, 2016  
New York City



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## FOREWORD

In the fall of 2014, Nanjing Museum, in partnership with the American Federation of Arts, organized “Meeting the West: Exhibitions from American Museums” and a forum attended by more than fifty museum directors from China and the U.S. who conducted in-depth discussions on museum collaborations between the two countries. During my meeting with Ms. Pauline Willis after the forum, both of us expressed the intention to further promote such dialogues and exchanges and make it a regular practice. In the fall of 2016, I was thrilled to see that through the joint efforts by the AFA, Asia Society, and the Chinese Museums Association, another U.S.-China museum summit was held in New York. I would like to thank the AFA and Asia Society for their great efforts in organizing the 2016 Summit—your thoughtful and considerate arrangements are most appreciated. I am grateful for the directors and cultural representatives who found time in their busy schedule to come to New York for this Summit; thank you for your commitment to the exchanges and collaborations between museums. My special thanks go to staff members who have worked tirelessly organizing this Summit—it is your passion and dedication that turns the intention to strengthen museum dialogues and collaborations into reality.

I look forward to seeing the Summit’s efforts come to fruition, and to the brighter future of Chinese and American museum exchanges and collaborations.

**Gong Liang**, Vice President of the Board of Chinese Museums Association;  
Director of Nanjing Museum

The U.S.-China Museum Summit is an initiative that built on the work that the American Federation of Arts and Asia Society, New York have engaged in over the past five years to foster increased collaboration between museums and cultural organizations in China and the United States. The 2016 Summit was the largest gathering of its kind and brought together approximately twenty museum leaders from China and nearly forty from the United States. We were proud to join our colleagues in hosting the Summit in New York. The presentations, panel discussions, and more intimate personal gatherings were insightful, thought-provoking, and instrumental in building and securing a strong foundation for future successful collaborative exchanges, collection sharing, and traveling exhibitions.

Considering the extraordinary number of new museums and the rapidly expanding, vibrant art scene in China, the growing interest in Chinese art and culture in America and in western art in China, as well as increased attendance in museums in both countries, we feel strongly that this is a particularly propitious moment for both sides to explore new and promising areas of constructive interaction.

The 2016 Summit saw great participation from both sides of the Pacific, and everyone in attendance contributed to the lively discussions, which we have collected and organized in the following pages. This summary report on the proceedings of the two-day conference in New York outlines the current stage of museum collaboration and exchange between America and China and offers some possible solutions moving forward. We hope that through our findings, other museum professionals who were unable to join us in person can also benefit from the Summit’s results. We aim to foster better, more frequent projects with partners in America and China and strengthen our international community, starting from an understanding of each other’s arts and culture.

We would like to thank our partners in this endeavor, the Chinese Museums Association and the Nanjing Museum, whose commitment to international collaboration has been crucial to the success of this Summit. We also acknowledge the immense undertaking that the development and planning of this event meant, and we would like to thank key members of the AFA and Asia Society staff for their incredible work: Michelle Hargrave, Kelly Ma, Nick Pozek, Wu Heng, Shawn Yuan, as well as Catherine Hong, Lindsey O’Connor, and Kirstin Purtich, who have been an integral part of the success of this Summit.

We look forward to seeing the fruits of this wonderful collaboration!

**Boon Hui Tan**, Vice President of Global Arts & Cultural Programs and Director of Asia Society Museum

**Pauline Willis**, Director, American Federation of Arts

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Zoe Fan-En Chiu Wahba*

The 2016 U.S.-China Museum Summit was the latest installment in a series of cross-cultural dialogues focusing on international collaborations in exhibition exchange between museums in North America and China and the first hosted in the United States. Co-organized by the American Federation of Arts, Asia Society, the Chinese Museums Association, and the Nanjing Museum, the Summit convened at various institutions in New York City and hosted nearly sixty professionals from thirty-seven art institutions in China, the United States, and Canada.

During the course of the wide-ranging two-day program, a significantly increased alignment of perspectives was evident between the U.S. and Chinese delegations. The gatherings in 2012 and 2014 focused on assessing comparative needs, establishing protocols, and identifying tangible projects and initiatives. At the 2016 meeting, a new dynamic unfolded in which the U.S. and Chinese museum leaders examined various issues, previously explored and newly developed, on more of an equal footing.

Since “Meeting the West: Exhibitions from American Museums” and the U.S.-China Museum Leaders Forum in 2014, participating museums have collaborated on a number of successful international exhibitions, which provided the 2016 group with a wealth of case studies that highlighted challenges and concerns. Discussed at the 2016 Summit were the following aims:

- Strengthen relationships by sustaining dialogue and collaboration
- Examine challenges and opportunities presented by globalization
- Engage new audiences: notably younger and more diverse visitors, who represent a more inclusive perspective
- Increase accessibility for the general public
- Address divergent financial systems: investigate creative solutions for key disparities
- Envision a shared future

The conference ended on a high note, with energy and enthusiasm shared by all of the participants. Building upon the groundwork laid at the previous meetings, the 2016 U.S.-China Museum Summit presented a developing equilibrium between the museums of the two hemispheres. It is clear that the relationship among the museums has ascended to a new level, at which the counterparts show stronger confidence in working with each other and a commitment to sustaining an open dialogue. Ongoing initiatives will further strengthen understanding and enhance interactions between nations through collaborations in the arts.

## I. INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT AND HISTORY

The U.S.-China Museum Summit took place in New York City in September 2016 with North American and Chinese museum directors in attendance. The Summit opened with an invitation to reflect upon political situations occurring around the globe. During introductory remarks, Anthony Marx, president and chief executive officer of the New York Public Library, stated: “We live in a moment when people are fearful. Fear can be turned to anger, hatred—and walls build up. Those are very real possibilities in the twenty-first century.” Several speakers remarked that, a few months before the Summit, a majority of voters in the United Kingdom supported the “Brexit” referendum, favoring separation from the European Union. Following the Summit, in November 2016, the forty-fifth U.S. presidential election exposed political polarization of a degree not seen in the country since the civil rights era, which intensified the xenophobic public atmosphere as well as anti-China sentiments. At a moment in which ideological divisions seem to dominate the national discourse, the convening of this Summit—which called for good faith, mutual respect, tolerance, and empathy among high-level cultural leaders from the United States, Canada, and China, whose institutions are founded on the premises of understanding, knowledge-sharing, and scientific research—could be seen as an urgently needed response to polarizing intransigence.

At the Summit, delegations from North America and China expressed mutual appreciation for their vigorous and meaningful efforts to collaborate and reminded each other of the importance of dismantling barriers while establishing new relationships. As key players in the global economy, the United States and China both carry extraordinary responsibilities. One museum director noted, “While China and the U.S. may find their national interests don’t always align, the fact is we are economically, inextricably tied together.” Many economic challenges and reactions have implications that extend beyond national borders. Thus it is imperative that open channels of communication are both developed and sustained.

As one of the key sponsors of this Summit noted in its mission statement, “Art has the potential to both distinguish cultures as well as unite them.” By working together to produce and present art exhibitions, museum leaders from the U.S. and China not only open the minds of their audiences to previously unfamiliar cultures but also demonstrate the beneficial results of cross-cultural collaborations that become possible when differences are put aside. “One of the great aspects of global collaboration is spreading empathy around the world,” an attendee remarked. “There’s not enough empathy right now. I believe profoundly in the ability of works of art to

communicate across cultures and teach us so much about a world that is bigger than ourselves.” Evidence of this phenomenon can be seen in the increasing numbers of Chinese tourists visiting museums in larger U.S. cities.

In the spirit of the Summit’s theme, “The Power of Collaboration,” the American Federation of Arts (AFA) and Asia Society joined forces to co-organize, with the Chinese Museums Association and the Nanjing Museum, the U.S.-China Museum Summit in New York City, home to iconic art institutions and a vibrant cultural landscape. Both Asia Society and the American Federation of Arts are known for their deep commitments to the promotion of international art and cultural exchange. Over the past five years, these organizations have worked diligently to create pathways for successful interactions and collaborations between museums in the United States and China. The 2016 Summit built upon and extended dialogues on U.S.-China museum partnerships and exchanges that were initiated in “Meeting the West: Exhibitions from American Museums,” a 2014 program organized by the American Federation of Arts and the Nanjing Museum, and “Transfuzé: The Asia Arts & Museum Network,” programs founded by the Asia Society that included two U.S.-China Museum Leaders Forums (Shanghai and Hangzhou, 2014; Beijing, 2012).

In these earlier meetings, museum leaders from both countries clarified their institutions’ needs and expectations when collaborating on international exhibitions. Action points were established to promote professional development and personnel exchange. Delegations from both sides identified the following hurdles to collaboration:

- Challenges in identifying programming of mutual interest
- Divergent ways of working
  - Approaches to planning and scheduling exhibitions
  - Expectations for exhibition content
  - Contractual styles (e.g., reliance on detailed contracts prior to starting work in the U.S. vs. preliminary agreements to launch projects in China, with details later confirmed)
- Different requirements of U.S. and Chinese bureaucracies
- Financial impediments and implementation challenges
  - Funding shortages
  - Funding sources (e.g., private funding in the U.S. vs. government funding in China)

- Exhibition fees (e.g., venues cover costs in the U.S. vs. cost-sharing with lending institutions in China)
- Compliance requirements by American Alliance of Museums (AAM) (e.g., some museums in China may not be compliant)
- Courier and insurance fees (e.g., the presence of a national indemnification program in the U.S. vs. the lack of a national or provincial indemnification program in China)
- Immunity from seizure (e.g., guaranteed by a program in the U.S. vs. no equivalent program in China)
- Governmental and policy challenges (e.g., decentralized control in the U.S. vs. State Administration of Cultural Heritage [SACH] and central government control in China)
- Technical and technological obstacles
  - Language barriers
  - Different registrarial practices
  - Different legal structures

During the 2016 Summit, approximately sixty directors and high-level staff members from twenty-seven distinguished museums and cultural organizations in the United States and Canada—including many former participants from the previous meetings convened by the American Federation of Arts and Asia Society—met with colleagues from fourteen Chinese institutions. With the stated aim of building a “platform for the future,” they participated in a series of meetings, panel discussions, and workshops for two days. On the third day, Chinese representatives toured three prominent institutions in New York City—the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art—where they spoke with staff in the museums’ galleries, conservation labs, and storage areas. These personal encounters enabled participants to deepen their understanding of each other’s practices and experience.

The 2016 Summit revealed that as a result of the meetings from 2012 to 2015, U.S. and Chinese museums have developed growing levels of familiarity and trust. There is now a greater degree of confidence in the prospect of mutually beneficial collaboration. Having learned from the differences in the philosophies, systems, and operations of U.S. and Chinese museums discussed in earlier meetings, delegations now share confidence in their counterparts’ abilities to work toward shared goals.

## II. EVOLVING CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### A. ENGAGING THE AUDIENCE

The success of any museum lies largely in how it defines and engages its audience. The 2016 Summit highlighted the emergence of a shared understanding between U.S. and Chinese museum professionals about the social roles of museums as well as the difficulties of meeting the expectations of target audiences and responding to changing demographics, such as a population’s age distribution (a concern in both countries) and ethnic composition (notable in the United States).

### SOCIAL ROLE OF A MUSEUM

Until recently, U.S. museums were focused on collections and curatorial and academic pursuits. As the 2014 Forum report noted:

By and large, [U.S.] museums, even though they have embraced a “new museology” that puts a premium on the community functions of the art museum, are still primarily governed by an ethos of curatorial responsibility toward their collections. This has tended to make the preservation, study, and display of objects paramount. When Chinese directors speak about their institutions, by contrast, they often start from the opposite end of the spectrum of concern. Their principal stated concern tends to be the contribution their museum can make to the welfare of overall society, as defined by official ideology.

At the 2016 Summit, a U.S. representative observed, “One of the biggest changes in U.S. museums over the past ten years has been this new shift of focus [that is now] completely on our audience, thinking about who is coming to our museums and the communities we serve.” Because the audience has become the top priority for U.S. museums, discussions about museum plans and practices adapting to demographic changes, increasing diversity, and expectations of evolving communities were at the center of the 2016 meeting.

In China, ideas about how museums contribute to society have also changed—now expressed as intending to serve “the welfare of society overall,” a phrase often used in Chinese state propaganda—and Chinese museums are paying increased attention to audiences and their needs. One of the Chinese panelists declared, “The key to a successful exhibition is to identify the right subject that can speak to the heart of our audiences.”



During the 2016 Summit, participants frequently mentioned creating shared experiences through exhibitions and programs as a means to enhance audiences' understanding about the deeper cultural and socioeconomic connotations of artworks. An American director stated, "[A] museum's responsibility is to be serious, to resist the fashion of the time, and therefore to allow people to reconsider objects and ideas for a longer period because, in an accelerated world, change comes too quickly." One American panelist noted that at his museum, staff members from different departments work together on ways to "create experiences" and "slow the audience down," particularly in relation to younger visitors. Another American director echoed this notion: "[A museum] is one institution [considered] fundamental to civic society that has value, that has currency as a place, where the public can [encounter] deep and profound ideas, and where common bonds can be created through shared, engaging experiences."

This perspective is conveyed through curators' and educators' choices in exhibition design and programming. According to one Chinese panelist, "We aim to create spaces for 'reading and thinking' in museums." Treating museums as dynamic and interactive spaces—as opposed to passive ones where information from written didactics or audio guides is transmitted toward visitors—newer museum practices encourage audience members to approach the exhibition with a close reading of the presented materials and respond accordingly. "It is a conceptual way to look at how we fulfill a museum's mission to preserve and distribute knowledge to our communities," said the panelist.

Clearly, audiences are increasingly viewed as being at the core of evolving museum practices in North America and China. Creating visitor experiences—the enhancement of interactions between viewers and works on display—is a necessary component of relatable, accessible exhibitions.

## **Responses to Rapidly Changing Demographics**

### **1. Challenges**

A recurring theme from remarks by U.S. museum directors was the response to demographic changes. Both U.S. and Chinese museums indicated the need to better engage younger people and cultivate a new generation of visitors.

#### **1.1 Diversity in Race and Ethnicity**

In 2010 the American Association of Museums (AAM, renamed

American Alliance of Museums in 2012) published a report on the demographic transformation in the U.S. and its effect on the future of museums. The statistics showed some striking facts about diversity in the United States: currently more than one-third of U.S. residents are classified as an ethnic minority, such as African American, Hispanic, or Asian and Pacific Islander. One U.S. director at the 2016 Summit stated, "As estimated, by around the year 2043, over 50 percent of America will be people who are [multiracial] or new immigrants." A participant in another panel noted this will make "everybody a minority."

The survey in the AAM report also indicated, however, that only 9 percent of museum visitors belong to minority groups. This alarming dissonance between the growing diversity of the country and minimal attendance by minorities at U.S. museums is critically important. As the definition of "American" is changing, the 2010 AAM report notes that immigration and geographic migration result in placing "a new mix of people and cultures in closer proximity." One U.S. museum director at the Summit noted, "The biggest challenge of a museum director today is balancing these new audiences [with] our loyal traditionalists—the audience that has supported the museum for so many years." Additionally, subgroups within minority communities, which are often overlooked, add another layer of complexity. In order to engage with and cultivate more diverse audiences, it has become imperative for museums to develop a highly nuanced understanding of their potential communities.

#### **1.2 Millennials and Teenagers as the Majority**

Although China is not undergoing the demographic shifts that are currently occurring in the U.S., Chinese museum directors did note a significant drop in the average age of museum visitors. Similarly, some U.S. directors stated that the majority of visitors to their museums were between nineteen and forty years of age. Museum leaders of both countries shared some of the ways they have approached the challenges of addressing this demographic change. For example, one museum leader from China stated, "Since 2013 the statistics have shown that 69 percent of our audience is between the ages of eighteen to thirty years old. To better serve this new segment of audience, we started conducting pre-exhibition surveys and research to adjust the content of our exhibitions."

### **2. Impacts on Museum Practices: Approaches and Recommendations**

An American museum director stated, "This is a pivotal moment

of change. While our mission might not change—we are still here to collect, preserve, and make accessible outstanding works of art for our community—the ways we serve our mission are changing.” Both the Chinese and U.S. delegations agreed that museums today must have the ability to adapt and respond to quickly changing demographics and to put forward exhibitions and programming that engage diverse audiences and address issues of our times.

### **2.1 Collections and Display**

To stay relevant in the twenty-first century, museums must consider the content of their collections and the manner in which they are displayed. Speaking about the necessity to adapt to change, a U.S. museum director stated, “We will [need to] organize our collections and information differently.” For example, an encyclopedic museum with collections of traditional or modern paintings might expand its collection to include contemporary art, or its curators might introduce installation or new media art in order to initiate a dialogue with a younger, more diverse crowd.

While discussing the fact that Chinese tourists compose the fastest-growing sector of the museum audience in the U.S., one director observed, “We do not have large holdings of Chinese art in the museum. But it’s the driving force of our collection.” A member of the Chinese delegation advocated a similar notion, stating, “The collections we acquire today are for our sustainable responsibility as a museum, to pass it along to our audience tomorrow.”

### **2.2 Programming**

Exhibitions are the primary way by which museums reach different audiences and communities, and they can expand visitors’ understanding of cultural, racial, and ethnic values. One Chinese director stated, “Bearing our audience in mind is the top priority. [Given] the museums’ educational role, we want to make sure the exhibition is presented in the way our audience can relate to and comprehend.” She went on to highlight the significant function of wall labels and texts in the galleries, especially when an exhibition is imported to China. “Sometimes the need arises to negotiate with our museum collaborator to adjust the exhibition content, displays, or didactics for our target audiences.” She concluded that, to better serve the majority of the audience, and specifically to serve the needs of teenagers and young adults in most Chinese museums, “our narrative is set to make it comprehensible for someone with a high-school-level education.” Museums from both delegations have also been

seeking ways to engage younger audiences with participatory and social activities, for which they have received positive feedback.

During the Summit, several U.S. museum directors presented examples of programs specifically designed to cultivate bonds with local communities. For instance, the Denver Museum has an annual “Powwow Day” that celebrates American Indian culture and is intended to introduce new audiences to this cultural subgroup.

## **B. ACCESSIBILITY TO THE INQUISITIVE PUBLIC**

### **Creating Access Points through Education**

One U.S. director stated, “Art is universal. Art is present, but art always needs access points; I think there are some basic explanations [one has] to deliver to make art accessible to everyone.” For decades, efforts to democratize arts and cultural institutions have been made by visionaries and educators like John Cotton Dana, the founding director of the Newark Museum. Museums today are no longer solely the domain of intellectuals and the affluent but rather bear the responsibility of preserving and imparting cultural knowledge, values, and heritage to everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status. This evolution has transformed museums into cultural entities that must be capable of adapting to the changing needs of our world, including those of museum audiences.

Accessibility is a significant aspect of museum planning. Because of the funding provided to museums by the Chinese government, most public museums in China offer free admission to all, which plays a large role in the substantial attendance numbers of Chinese museums. The social function of a museum has been emphasized as paramount in China since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. Some publicly financed museums in the U.S. similarly provide free admission or free museum membership to local residents. One U.S. director noted, “We are embracing all of the changes in our community now—economic, educational—and we are not only reaching out to [more diverse ethnic and racial] audiences but also focusing on millennials and young professionals.”

#### **1. Underprivileged and Remote Communities**

Waiving admission fees is not the only way for museums to open their doors to a wider public. Museum leaders from both delegations are also looking into creative programming, such as age- or community-specific educational programs, to broaden their museums’ appeal.

For instance, a member from the Chinese delegation advocated a “No-Boundary Museum” as a way to bring exhibitions and education programs to hospitals, the military, and rural villages, ensuring accessibility for those who would not otherwise have the opportunity to visit museums regularly, if at all. Similarly, the AFA was founded in 1909 to bring art “to the hinterlands,” a mission that continues to be developed and expanded in response to contemporary needs.

## **2. Senior Citizens and Audiences with Special Needs**

While the elderly tend to be regular visitors of museums, a U.S. director spoke about the concept of “creative aging” in the context of a museum and extended it to those with special needs, such as patients suffering from Alzheimer’s disease. The director suggested that museums could provide an environment in which an artwork “triggers memory, ideas, and [the feeling of] being alive.”

## **The Museum as a Catalyst of the Community**

In addition to discussing strategies to improve inclusivity and accessibility, some directors shed light on the benefits of pushing museum activities out of traditional settings and into civic spaces. When the Guggenheim Museum built its branch in Bilbao, Spain, the building’s ambitious architecture put the city in the global spotlight. A U.S. director commented, “Sometimes it’s called the Bilbao Effect, which I don’t find helpful because I think it’s kind of shallow,” but acknowledged that outstanding museum architecture “really helps the community to define itself. . . often the architecture helps make that statement.” Furthering this notion, a Chinese director spoke about a recent museum expansion and vision of making museums “the center of civic activities”; coupled with art festivals and other outdoor programs, “we hope to transform our museum into a space where people don’t just walk in to see the exhibition but also enjoy all kinds of programs and events we provide in the museum’s outdoor space.”

## **C. ENVISIONING A SHARED FUTURE**

The 2015 UNESCO “Recommendation for Museums” stated that globalization “has led to an unprecedented increase in the international movement of museum professionals, visitors, collection pieces, and sources of funding.” These movements have led to numerous opportunities for Sino-U.S. collaboration while they have revealed new challenges, including how best to engage Chinese audiences and how to make Chinese art more

relevant and better represented in U.S. museum collections. In addition, through partnerships for traveling exhibitions and social media and digital content, globalization has presented both challenges and opportunities for smaller and newer museums in their quests to compete internationally. Along these lines, the delegations at the 2016 Summit stressed the importance of sustaining dialogue among institutions.

## **Globalization**

### **1. Engaging the Chinese Audience**

U.S. museums are receiving ever-greater numbers of Chinese tourists. To best engage these Chinese audiences, museums are adjusting the presentation of their collections. One director commented, “Our audience is increasingly Chinese. I think, in twenty-five years, if you walk into our galleries, there will be a noticeable presence of Chinese tourists. And that [presents] for us many different questions that are crucial for the future.” The need to address Chinese audiences will affect how museums think about their acquisition policies and the shaping of their collections. From a curatorial perspective, museums should “[ensure] that those new audiences can engage in the same conversations that all other audiences engage in.” It is, therefore, vital that representatives of U.S. museums nurture relationships with their Chinese colleagues in order to be informed about the Chinese art context and to better understand the Chinese audience.

### **2. Chinese Art: Relevance and Underrepresentation**

China has a population of 1.38 billion people, which constitutes nearly 20 percent of the world’s population. Therefore, as one U.S. participant noted, it should be deemed essential for museums in China and the U.S. to incorporate Chinese art into their collections. The same director stressed, “Asian art is still, in many ways, underappreciated in the U.S.” This observation highlights the obligation to change this situation through exhibition collaborations between the two countries. A U.S. attendee asserted her commitment to collaborating with Chinese colleagues and bringing Chinese art to U.S. museums: “As our world becomes [more globally oriented], we’re even more interested in working with and promoting these Chinese collections. We would like to globalize the local [and] localize the global.” Participating U.S. directors largely agreed with this sentiment.

### **3. Reciprocal Exchange**

China is experiencing the fastest and largest museum boom in the

world. One of the organizers of the 2016 Summit stated, “Currently, China has over 4,500 museums. As the State Administration of Cultural Heritage estimates, by 2020 the number would grow to 6,000. . . . In 2015 over 600 million people visited Chinese museums.” Chinese audiences are eager to experience the world, which creates unique opportunities for American museums to work with their Chinese counterparts. An American delegate commented on the potential to loan works from permanent collections in order to reach “a larger audience, a larger community out there, in the world. We hope very much that China could be a partner in this endeavor.”

#### **4. Limited Resources for Smaller and Newer Museums**

The Summit participants included representatives from museums of different sizes, focuses, and locations. Some of their discussions explored globalization’s effects not only on larger, more established museums but also on smaller and newer museums.

Museums with large collections and long histories, and thus strong international reputations, benefit from the trend of overseas travel that is one result of globalization. For instance, the annual number of visitors to the Palace Museum in Beijing is increasing every year and recently exceeded an average of fifteen million, more than any other museum in the world. To manage the overwhelming number of visitors, the museum has initiated a pilot strategy, especially during special exhibitions: setting a daily limit of eighty thousand visitors in order to ensure the safety of the relics and the public.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to the largest and most renowned museums, smaller and newer museums and those in more remote cities face different obstacles. These museums may intentionally be kept “underfunded to fulfill [their] basic missions” and therefore face the challenge of marginalization due to their less-popular locations and smaller or lesser-known collections. With fewer resources, such museums are not able to invest in marketing campaigns and education or outreach programs to cultivate and expand their audiences. This issue is shared by museums in both the United States and China.

In China, the government is the primary funding source for public museums. However, many of these publicly endowed museums must differentiate themselves and form independent identities. One director from a relatively new museum in Beijing noted, “How do we compete with and stand apart from seven other museums on the same street in Beijing?” A director of a regional museum, located less than two hundred

miles from the metropolitan center of Beijing, echoed this sentiment, stating, “Our township, let alone our museum, is not even on the radar of our U.S. colleagues. But I hope, after my presentation at this Summit, more [of you] will come to us when passing through Beijing.” A number of U.S. directors acknowledged that their museums, due to location or scale, face similar challenges.

### **Creative Solutions**

#### **4.1. Partnerships for Traveling Exhibitions**

The need to collaborate to realize traveling or exchange exhibitions was a recurring topic of conversation at the Summit. As a director from a mid-size U.S. museum stated, special exhibitions have always been an “economic driver” to increase admissions and cultivate audiences. Through the ample presentations given and personal contacts developed at the Summit, U.S. and Chinese museum representatives gained a broader sense of the spectrum of museums as well as a more thorough understanding of each participating museum’s holdings.

The 2016 Summit allowed participating museums to share knowledge about their resources, familiarize themselves with each other’s collections, and identify viable exhibition themes that might be of interest and value to the audiences they serve. At the Summit’s closing event, one of the organizers commented, “We tend to first [think of] museums in the major metropolitan centers. What has been learned here is that the range of collections both in the United States and China is wide enough for wonderful and meaningful collaborations to take place [anywhere].”

#### **4.2. Digital Content and Social Media**

The role of digital media, particularly social media, was discussed as an efficient channel through which museums can engage younger generations. Digital technology allows museums to reach audiences in many new ways that were not possible through traditional media. One museum director noted, “[Our museum] has switched to digital [media] for most of our marketing campaigns.”

For museums that are less widely known, digital communications can reach broader audiences, both at home and abroad. Many museums in the United States have begun to establish their virtual, online presences via platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat, and have hired staff dedicated to building digital content. Within online social-media environments, a snapshot of a gallery or

<sup>1</sup> “Palace Museum to limit daily visitor number by 80,000,” China Daily USA, May 17, 2015, <https://goo.gl/aNKtQZ>

<sup>2</sup> “Draft Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums, their Diversity and their Role in Society,” UNESCO, January 22, 2015, <https://goo.gl/gF4HVz>

an artwork accompanied by a witty caption or catchy hashtag has the potential to rapidly reach a large audience and revitalize a museum's image—bringing it, as one director remarked, “front and center for a new generation.” Some posts by museums attract millions of viewers, more than sixty times the number of physical visitors to museums each year.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, social media allows museums to create traction by connecting with a larger, newer audience in a globalized world, which leads to future growth of in-person visits.

Though U.S. social-media platforms are officially blocked in China, Chinese tech companies have developed analogous versions—such as WeChat and Weibo, two microblogging platforms—and Chinese museums actively use social media. At the Summit, several Chinese museum directors emphasized the significance of making digitized images and information from museum collections and exhibitions accessible to the public and the efforts they have made in building this digital content.

Representatives from museums in the United States and China observed that the target audience for digital content is “millennials” and teenagers, whom one U.S. director referred to as digital natives. For this audience, social media plays an important role in daily interactions and can be a significant tool for museums of all sizes to reach a younger demographic and to expand the global presence of the museum.

### **Demand for Sustained Dialogue**

Throughout the 2016 Summit, museum leaders from both the U.S. and China repeatedly expressed their commitment to sustaining dialogue and establishing collaborative relationships. One renowned contemporary art collector, who was invited to share his experience, touched upon the intricate system of *guanxi* (English: personal networks and connections), noting the important part it has played in building relationships with Chinese artists and in shaping the pioneering collection of Chinese contemporary art that he and his wife have amassed. The *guanxi* approach suggests that, through person-to-person contact and the ongoing exchange of ideas and information, mutual trust and respect are nurtured and can bloom into strong friendship. Such personal relationships are especially valued in China, a fact that has become increasingly apparent to U.S. museum professionals who participated in past Forums or have previously collaborated with Chinese institutions. During the Summit, suggestions for facilitating a sustained dialogue

<sup>3</sup> Kerry Hannon, “Museums, the New Social Media Darlings,” *New York Times*, October 28, 2016, <https://goo.gl/SBk6b5>

between U.S. and Chinese museums were made, including introducing new programs for professional development and training and for exhibition exchange.

### **1. Specialized Staff**

As in the previous Forums, professional development and training programs were highlighted as key to successful and sustained collaborations among American and Chinese museums. Several U.S. museum directors spoke about the shortage of staff specializing in Chinese art. One pointed out, “[Often] there’s only one or two Asian art curators [in an institution], who [are responsible for presenting] the entire span of Asia’s thousands of years of history. I think it’s very important that each museum focuses on more specialized positions—in this case, Chinese art curatorship.”

Increasing numbers of North American museums have expressed a greater commitment to fostering long-term collaborations with their counterparts in China. Many have recently hired Chinese art curators and staffers at junior and senior levels to research and expand knowledge of Chinese art, develop targeted programs, and, most importantly, build closer relationships with Chinese museums. At the same time, staff members who are knowledgeable about Western art history and culture and international standards are in high demand in Chinese museums; a younger generation of Chinese with international degrees and professional experience is returning to China to work in Chinese museums. This situation allows for improved communication and information exchange through international collaborations.

One U.S. director stated, “We need to have a sustained dialogue with our curatorial colleagues in China.” Since the 2012 and 2014 Forums, arts institutions have partnered with each other and with universities to experiment with developing a variety of programs for visiting scholars and curators of both countries. In these programs, participants work in immersive environments where they gain hands-on experience through direct participation in project development.<sup>4</sup>

While these pilot programs initially focused on management training for Chinese colleagues who could benefit from the experience of North American museums, the programs have gradually become bilateral exchanges as Sino-American museum relationships have evolved. Today the programs are meeting the professional-development needs that had been identified by museum directors at the previous meetings

<sup>4</sup> A select list of recent exchange projects is available under Appendix III.

in Beijing, Hangzhou, Nanjing, and Shanghai. Attendees at the 2016 Summit agreed that it was mutually beneficial to continue to develop staff-exchange and training programs, with the intention of facilitating future collaborations.

## 2. Exhibition Exchange

The international exchange of exhibitions helps museum partners expand their institutional presence beyond national borders and create shared experiences that bring people closer together. With the growth of exhibition exchanges between North American and Chinese museums, trust has increased dramatically between institutions. However, as one delegate commented, “Any international partnership is a challenge, [involving] logistical issues, ranging from [acquiring] visas and [adhering to] government restrictions to navigating time differences (which makes scheduling phone calls more difficult) and disparate rhythms of museum work in [each] country.” Other factors, such as language barriers or divergent perceptions and modes of operation, can also cause friction, mistrust, and misunderstanding during the collaboration process.

At the 2016 Summit, the most commonly cited areas of disagreement during past collaborations included such fundamental issues as: determination of exhibition subject, curatorial selection, financial decisions, conservation standards, materials for exhibition interpretation, and display methods. For instance, a Chinese director spoke about a conflict encountered while importing an exhibition from a European museum to China. The European museum was adamant about retaining the original interpretive text used in its presentation. However, the Chinese curator saw the need to add historical context in order to help the Chinese audience bridge the cultural and art-historical gap. After some debate and negotiation, the parties came to a mutually acceptable solution that respected the original curatorial premise and addressed the needs of the Chinese audience.

Describing the collaboration process, one U.S. director stated: “[There are] many points of view. It’s a real challenge to [balance] consensus building with adherence to the checklist and to budgets. . . these aspects of collaboration transcend languages, continents, and barriers. After all, we’re just human.” The significance of building up a reservoir of experience and goodwill becomes more apparent with subsequent collaborations, as each museum gains familiarity with the other’s protocols and standards and the process becomes smoother and more successful. Through effective communication, negotiation, and leveraging of respective strengths, museums can overcome barriers and differences and create

positive outcomes for all parties. Relationships between museums that are developed and maintained over time, through sustained dialogue, yield greater progress toward collaborative exhibition programming.

While professional development and international exhibition exchanges are essential, such projects involve complexities of planning and logistics that are often time-consuming and costly. One director stated, “There are comparatively few U.S. art museums that can afford to present major Chinese exhibitions. That pushes museums to present ‘treasure’ shows—big surveys of Chinese art. [Our concern] is that the different financial structures of U.S. and Chinese museums may impede the continued development of cultural exchange through exhibitions.” This comment gave rise to one of the most significant and enthusiastic discussions, which called for a deeper consideration of differences in the financial systems undergirding museums in the U.S. and China.

## D. FUNDING AND LEADERSHIP

### Identifying the Fundamental Disparities

While the majority of museums in the United States are publicly accessible, privately owned, nonprofit institutions that derive much of their income from private donations, public museums in China receive substantial fiscal support and administrative oversight from the Chinese government. The contrasting funding systems of museums in the two countries often present the central obstacle to the continued development of exhibition exchange. As a U.S. museum director commented, “The governance and financial issues have a direct bearing on our capability to collaboratively work together. This dissonance between the two systems is very real.” Further exploring this issue, the two delegations examined existing financial models in U.S. museums as well as the recent development of boards of trustees and foundations at Chinese museums.

In the United States, there is a long history of museums working with boards of trustees, which serve as models for their publicly funded Chinese counterparts. The introduction of trustee boards and foundations to government-owned Chinese museums marks the beginning of the democratization of their operating model. While great strides have been made, Chinese museums continue to work toward expanding the role of trustee boards within the constraints of the Chinese political and legal frameworks, from basic fundraising functions to the multifaceted roles typically seen in trustee boards of U.S. museums and other nonprofits.

## Recent Developments in China

Prior to moving toward a more autonomous museum system, the Chinese government conducted a thorough review of successful privately owned museums, to formulate a set of requirements for public museums to follow. In 2008 the State Administration of Cultural Heritage in China began asking top-level public museums to submit mission statements and encouraging, but not yet requiring, boards of trustees to run their organizations. In 2015 the State Council of the People's Republic of China released a decree called "Regulation on Museums" (Bowuguan Tiaoli), in which Article 17 states that museums "shall improve the corporate governance structure and establish and perfect institutional management systems. With a tentative timetable, the government officials have been actively promoting the establishment of boards of trustees in museums since 2016.

Given the political and legal structures in China, the primary function of these trustees is to raise and manage funds beyond those received from the government, whereas U.S. boards serve fiduciary, consultative, and strategic purposes. Since the 2008 announcement, the Palace Museum in Beijing, the Shanxi Museum, the Guangdong Museum, and the Suzhou Museum have established foundations and boards of trustees. The Palace Museum, on its eighty-fifth anniversary, formed the Beijing Palace Museum Cultural Relics Protection Foundation to facilitate the addition of private, nongovernmental resources and funding for the museum. Since then, the foundation has utilized the monies donated by private corporations and individuals to support previously underfunded initiatives, including museum education, international exchange exhibitions, academic conferences, and architectural conservation.

## Challenges and Limitations

Although such initiatives are promising, the roles of Chinese museum foundations remain limited. As one Chinese panelist emphasized, "A museum foundation functions mainly as a means [for the museum] to be more financially autonomous and to lessen the financial burden of the government," which is very different from the fiduciary role of boards of trustees in the United States. One Chinese museum has the liberty to conduct a vote to select a board of trustees, of which less than half of the members are government and museum representatives, but the Chinese government retains the right to appoint the museum's director.

Besides their limited definitions and functions, boards of trustees at Chinese museums are challenged when attempting to raise funds without the presence of a government tax benefit to motivate corporate and individual donations. Currently, Chinese philanthropy to museums is based on goodwill. When a Chinese museum director applauded donors for their compassion and love for traditional arts and culture, she also pointed out the crucial role of government tax incentives for the long-term sustainability of museums, "to make the donation not just a one-off event." As evidenced in the United States and many countries around the world, tax benefits are powerful stimuli for philanthropists to channel their support toward museums, which can fulfill various needs, such as exhibition development and presentation, conservation, educational programs, academic research, and international exchange and outreach.

One U.S. museum director remarked that the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. has an administrative structure similar to that of Chinese-government-owned museums: while National Gallery trustees oversee the direction and operation of the institution, the U.S. government is the museum's primary funder and holds governing powers, such as appointing executive staff members. In most museums in China, as one Chinese director stated, where the government funds a substantial portion of a museum's operations, it can be deemed to have "the biggest share of trusteeship," with "absolute power" over the board of trustees, and it can direct the strategic decisions of the museum, including making directorial appointments.

## Terminology

At the Summit, the discussion on boards of trustees and foundations included clarifying the definitions and the optimal English translations for the Chinese terms *lishihui* and *dongshihui*. The conversation regarded which term—"board of trustees," "board of directors," or "board of commissioners"—would be the most appropriate interpretation of the board system that Chinese museums intend to develop. One museum director, with experience working in government-run museums in Asia, encouraged colleagues to see beyond the confusion caused by the terminology and any loss in translation. The director also stressed that the discussion prompts the question: "Who approves the collaboration and final decision-making, which may include fund dispersal, in the context of collaboration?" In addition, this director observed that, based on experience, an annual approval of funding dispersal is common for state-owned museums across

Asia, not just in China. For example, while U.S. museum professionals are accustomed to securing a board's approval after presenting a five-year exhibition plan, their Chinese colleagues often execute an exhibition project in less than six months. Most notably, the director mentioned, "The funds go back to the state if you don't spend them within that financial year. We have to take such things into account because they affect the cycle of collaboration."

### **Recommendations and Opportunities**

As a U.S. museum director commented, due to differing government and legal systems, the U.S. board-of-trustees model should not be viewed with a "one size fits all" perspective. In searching for the best solution for a trustee system in China, it is critical that Chinese museum leaders consider the trustees' roles, their pragmatic views of governing and functionality, and the goals that museum boards are expected to achieve within the Chinese political and legal frameworks.

Several U.S. museum directors encouraged their Chinese counterparts to extend their research to other areas, such as the United Kingdom, Latin America, and Europe, where they might find models more fitting to China's systems. As one of these directors described, certain European models are managed by the government and private groups, which provide funds and resources and "act and function as the board of trustees, with certain specific functions."

One Summit attendee, with extensive experience working with Chinese museums, suggested another solution to some of the challenges to successful Sino-North American collaboration: "A collaborative effort by representatives of U.S. and Chinese museums, joined by the Ministry of Culture in China and a select number of major U.S. foundations, to look at ways to smooth some of the present financial impediments to continued cultural exchange and collaboration."

### **Moving Forward**

A number of Chinese museum leaders mentioned that at this early stage of transition—from a system of fully funded government institutions to a potentially more self-sustaining one through the establishment of boards of trustees—they will stay open-minded while absorbing and learning from models in the United States and elsewhere.

The Chinese delegation noted that, although this process is in a nascent stage, they hope through the establishment of a more democratic and autonomous system to strike a balance between the government and the general public: their museums could meet governmental requirements while negotiating increased autonomy in order to make strategic decisions regarding appointments, budgeting, and programming. Their stated goal is to better serve their audiences and fulfill the expectations of their communities.

The roundtable on funding models was the last session of the Summit, but participants and panelists continued to explore questions and exchange information afterward. Many directors agreed that this topic alone was worthy of an entire conference. Nonetheless, this Summit provided solid footing for U.S. and Chinese museum professionals to gain further knowledge of how deeply complex and dissonant the two systems are and to successfully continue their conversations and find ways to work together.



### III. CONCLUSION

If the word “optimism” summed up the tone of the 2012 and 2014 meetings, “enthusiasm” would best describe the atmosphere at the 2016 U.S.-China Museum Summit. The Summit played a pivotal role in fostering a sustained dialogue between the U.S. and Chinese delegations. It provided a platform grounded in good faith and mutual respect that actively promoted a collaborative mindset, crucial for museums in today’s interconnected world. It was broadly agreed that such focus-driven platforms are important for facilitating people-to-people contacts and effective communication, enabling members from both delegations to review advantages and disadvantages of the status quo, implement feasible solutions, and evaluate the results of exchange and collaborative projects.

One participant noted, “For a project to be realized, there has to be real desire on both [sides]. Getting to know each other and each other’s museums—their physical [facilities], the staff, and collections—creates familiarity and more comfort in moving forward.” Throughout the two days of panels and presentations, the Chinese delegation demonstrated their growing confidence and more nuanced understanding of the international standards for museum practices. U.S. museum directors listened closely to their Chinese colleagues’ thorough introductions to their premises and holdings, as well as their recent initiatives and endeavors. With ample opportunity for personal interaction during each panel and talk, the delegations gained a deeper level of comprehension to enable planning and action.

During the 2016 Summit, U.S. directors expressed their institutions’ reaffirmed commitment to closer partnerships with their Chinese colleagues in order to better serve their rapidly growing numbers of Chinese visitors and to strategically bring more art exhibitions from Chinese museums to the United States. One director noted, “If we succeed in building a deep relationship with our colleagues in China, it would allow us to better understand the Chinese art scene and artists. We need to know each other in a much more profound and sustained way than we currently do.”

In addition, it was largely agreed that future exhibitions should reflect the rich cultural and historical value of many eras of Chinese art rather than solely present selected treasures in blockbuster shows. At the same time, several directors from U.S. museums also showed an interest in bringing their collections to a new, larger audience in China; in exploring ways to engage

local communities; and in reinvigorating existing holdings within a broadened, intercultural context.

Through post-Summit interviews and correspondence, attendees reported that many exciting intercultural projects are already underway. Some museums took the opportunity of the conference to finalize and sign previously discussed exhibition contracts while others made new contacts with the intent of pursuing collaborative projects. As one U.S. museum director noted, “The value of the Summit [goes beyond] the transactional.” This is an exhilarating beginning for museums to build links between people and collections.

One U.S. delegate noted that the wide range of issues presented at the 2016 Summit informed the U.S. and Chinese delegations of each other’s recent activities and encouraged some delegates to formulate potential opportunities for exhibition collaboration. Others proposed expanding the organizing partnerships and seeking more funding to increase the frequency and scale of such conferences.

The Summit ended on a high note, with enthusiastic participants continuing their animated conversations at the roundtable, long after its official end. One of the most frequently quoted questions was posed by a U.S. director and discussed throughout the Summit: “What would be different here in twenty-five years?” This question, lingering and provoking thoughts in each participant’s mind, may be raised and explored when the delegations convene again, to continue laying the groundwork for an ever more connected future from which both U.S. and Chinese museums can benefit.

# APPENDIX I

## SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS

### AMERICAN MUSEUM REPRESENTATIVES

**RICHARD ARMSTRONG**

Director, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, New York

**SHARON MATT ATKINS**

Vice director, exhibitions and collections management, Brooklyn Museum, New York

**JOSH BASSECHES**

Director and chief executive officer, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario

**ROD BIGELOW**

Executive director, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas

**KAYWIN FELDMAN**

Duncan and Nivin MacMillan director and president, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota

**BRIAN FERRISO**

The Marilyn H. and Dr. Robert B. Pamplin Jr. director and chief curator, Portland Art Museum, Oregon

**ZORA HUTLOVÁ FOY**

Deputy director for art administration, Seattle Art Museum, Washington

**CATHERINE L. FUTTER**

Director of curatorial affairs, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri

**WILLIAM M. GRISWOLD**

Director and president, Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio

**CHRISTOPH HEINRICH**

Frederick and Jan Mayer director, Denver Art Museum, Colorado

**JAAP HOOGSTRATEN**

Director, exhibitions, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois

**EUGENE A. JENNEMAN**

Executive director, Dennon Museum Center, Traverse City, Michigan

**STEVEN KERN**

Director & chief executive officer, Newark Museum, New Jersey

**DOROTHY KOSINSKI**

Director, The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

**TOM J. LOUGHMAN**

Director & chief executive officer, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut

**GLENN D. LOWRY**

Director, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

**DAN L. MONROE**

The Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo director and CEO, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

**ROBIN NICHOLSON**

Director, Frick Art & Historical Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

**ALEX NYERGES**

Director, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond

**TIMOTHY RUB**

The George D. Widener director and chief executive officer, Philadelphia Museum of Art,

**EMILY J. SANO**

The Coates-Cowden-Brown senior advisor for Asian Art, San Antonio Museum of Art, Texas

**CHEN SHEN**

Vice president, world cultures, and Bishop White chair and senior curator of East Asian art and archaeology, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario

**BOON HUI TAN**

Vice president for global arts & cultural programs and director of Asia Society Museum, New York

**ROXANA VELÁSQUEZ**

Maruja Baldwin executive director, The San Diego Museum of Art, California

**E. MICHAEL WHITTINGTON**

President and CEO, Oklahoma City Museum of Art, Oklahoma

**PAULINE WILLIS**

Director, American Federation of Arts, New York

**JAY XU**

Director, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, California

**SHENGTIAN ZHENG**

Adjunct director, Institute for Asian Art, Vancouver Art Gallery, British Columbia

**JULIÁN ZUGAZAGOITIA**

Menefee D. and Mary Louise Blackwell director & CEO, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri

### CHINESE MUSEUM REPRESENTATIVES

**CHEN TONGLE**

Deputy director, Jiangsu Art Museum, Nanjing, Jiangsu

**CHEN YONGYUN**

Deputy director and curator, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region Museum, Yinchuan, Ningxia

**CHENG YI**

Deputy director, Suzhou Museum, Jiangsu

**GONG LIANG**

Vice president of the board, Chinese Museums Association, and director, Nanjing Museum, Jiangsu

**HUANG XUEYIN**

Deputy director, Capital Museum, Beijing

**LI SHENGNENG**

Deputy director and senior curator, Shenyang Imperial Palace Museum, Liaoning

**LIU WENTAO**

Deputy director Nanjing Museum, Jiangsu

**LUO HUAQING**

Deputy director and curator, Dunhuang Research Academy, Gansu

**LUO XIANGJUN**

Director, Hebei Provincial Museum, Shijiazhuang, Hebei

**REN WANPING**

Deputy director and curator, Palace Museum, Beijing

**WANG QIZHI**

Deputy director, Nanjing Museum, Jiangsu

**WANG ZHENFEN**

Director and curator, Lushun Museum, Dalian, Liaoning

**WEI JUN**

Director, Guangdong Museum, Guangzhou, Guangdong

**ZHANG HUIGUO**

Deputy director, Shanxi Museum, Taiyuan, Shanxi

**ZHANG WEI**

Deputy director and curator, the Museum of the Imperial Palace of Manchukuo, Changchun, Jilin

**ZHANG ZIKANG**

Deputy director, National Art Museum of China, Beijing

**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS****MARTIN ROTH**

Former director, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

**HSUEH-MAN SHEN**

Associate professor: Ehrenkranz chair in world art, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

**SPEAKERS****TOM FINKELPEARL**

Commissioner, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

**ELIZABETH GLASSMAN**

President and CEO, Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago, Illinois

**FRITZ HUANG**

Assistant general manager, K11 Art Foundation, Shanghai

**DOUGLAS KOTWALL**

K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong

**SYLVAIN LEVY**

Co-founder, DSL Collection

**YANSONG MA**

Founder and principal partner, MAD Architects, New York

**ANTHONY MARX**

President and CEO, New York Public Library

**CHARLES RENFRO**

Partner, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, New York

**RICHARD OLCOTT**

Design partner, Ennead Architects, New York

**DON WEINREICH**

Managing partner, Ennead Architects, New York

**THOMAS WONG**

Design partner, Ennead Architects, New York

**NOELLE XIE**

Art advisor

**ATTENDEES****SUSAN L. BENINGSON**

Assistant curator of Asian art, Brooklyn Museum, New York

**DIANA Y. CHOU**

Associate curator of East Asian art, The San Diego Museum of Art, California

**MICHELLE HARGRAVE**

Curator, American Federation of Arts, New York

**TIANLONG JIAO**

Joseph de Heer curator of Asian art, Denver Art Museum, Colorado

**JIAN LI**

E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter curator of East Asian art, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond

**ROBERT MINTZ**

Deputy director, art &amp; programs, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, California

**KATHERINE ANNE PAUL**

Curator of the arts of Asia, Newark Museum, New Jersey

**DAISY YIYOU WANG**

Curator of Chinese and East Asian art, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

**MATTHEW WELCH**

Deputy director &amp; chief curator, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota

**WU HENG**

Deputy director, International Cultural Exchange Centre, Nanjing Museum, Jiangsu

**SHAWN YUAN**

China Initiative Consultant, American Federation of Arts, Oklahoma City

**FAN JEREMY ZHANG**

Senior associate curator, Chinese art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, California

**ZHENG JING**

Deputy director, Education Department, Nanjing Museum, Jiangsu

## APPENDIX II

### 2016 U.S.-CHINA MUSEUM SUMMIT PROGRAM SCHEDULE

#### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

##### Asia Society

##### Cocktail Reception and Exhibition Tour

A reception followed guided tours of the exhibitions *No Limits: Zao Wou-Ki, Zhang Peili: Continuous Reproduction and In and Out of Context: Asia Society Celebrates the Collections at 60* led by **Michelle Yun**, senior curator of modern and contemporary art, and **Adriana Proser**, John H. Foster curator of traditional Asian art.

##### Welcome Dinner, sponsored by K11 Art Foundation

#### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

##### New York Public Library

##### Breakfast

##### Welcome and Inaugural Remarks

**Anthony Marx**, president & chief executive officer, New York Public Library; **Pauline Willis**, director, American Federation of Arts; **Boon Hui Tan**, vice president of global arts & cultural programs and director of Asia Society Museum; **Gong Liang**, vice president of the board, Chinese Museums Association, and director, Nanjing Museum; and **Tom Finkelpearl**, commissioner, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs

##### Keynote Presentation and Moderated Discussion

Moderator: **Gong Liang**, director, Nanjing Museum

- **Martin Roth**, director, Victoria and Albert Museum
- **Hsueh-man Shen**, associate professor, Ehrenkranz chair in world art, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

##### Panel Discussion I: Successful Collaborations

Participants talked about the motivations, challenges, and benefits of institutional partnerships. The panel provided attendees with a comprehensive foundation to understand an array of significant issues involved in collaborations between the U.S. and China. Open discussion followed.

Moderators: **Tom Loughman**, director and CEO, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art; and **Ren Wanping**, deputy director, Palace Museum

- **Alex Nyerges**, director, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
- **Chen Shen**, vice president and senior curator, Royal Ontario Museum
- **Luo Huaqing**, deputy director, Dunhuang Research Academy
- **Wang Qizhi**, deputy director, Nanjing Museum

##### Presentation and Lunch, sponsored by MAD Architects

##### Celeste Bartos Theater, The Museum of Modern Art

##### Chinese Museum Presentations I

Chinese museum directors presented overviews of their institutions, prospective goals, and plans for international collaboration and exchange.

Moderator: **Zhang Wei**, deputy director, Museum of the Imperial Palace of Manchukuo

- **Ren Wanping**, deputy director, Palace Museum
- **Liu Wentao**, deputy director, Nanjing Museum
- **Li Shengneng**, deputy director, Shenyang Palace Museum
- **Chen Yongyun**, deputy director, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region Museum

##### Panel Discussion II: Philosophies and Missions

Panelists explored essential differences and increasing similarities in U.S. and China museological philosophies and ideologies in the context of a globalized world. Discussions also shed light on the benefits of U.S.-Sino partnerships for museums to fulfill their missions and to serve their evolving communities.

Moderators: **William Griswold**, director and president, Cleveland Museum of Art; and **Zhang Huiguo**, deputy director, Shanxi Museum

- **Kaywin Feldman**, Duncan and Nivin MacMillan director and president, Minneapolis Institute of Art
- **Glenn Lowry**, director, The Museum of Modern Art
- **Wei Jun**, director, Guangdong Museum
- **Huang Xueyin**, deputy director, Capital Museum

##### Warwick Hotel

##### Understanding the System: The Life of an Exhibition Project in a U.S. Museum

In this short session, four U.S. museum directors shed light on the process of developing and realizing exhibitions at their institutions.

Moderator: **Dorothy Kosinski**, director, The Phillips Collection

- **Roxana Velásquez**, director, The San Diego Museum of Art
- **Timothy Rub**, The George D. Widener director and CEO, Philadelphia Museum of Art
- **E. Michael Whittington**, president and CEO, Oklahoma City Museum of Art
- **Rod Bigelow**, director, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

##### Chinese Museum Presentations II

Moderator: **Li Shengneng**, deputy director, Shenyang Palace Museum

- **Zhang Wei**, deputy director, Museum of the Imperial Palace of Manchukuo
- **Cheng Yi**, deputy director, Suzhou Museum
- **Wang Zhenfen**, director, Lushun Museum
- **Chen Tongle**, deputy director, Jiangsu Art Museum

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**James Cohan Gallery**

Viewing of Xu Zhen exhibition  
Dinner, sponsored by James Cohan Gallery

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27**  
**Sotheby's**

**Breakfast and Conversation: Collector's Perspectives**

- **Sylvain Levy**, co-founder, DSL Collection
- **Noelle Xie**, art advisor
- **Richard Armstrong**, director, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation

**Panel Discussion III: Priorities and Challenges**

Panelists spoke about the significance of prioritizing education and accessibility and the associated challenges encountered by museums in the U.S. and China. Examples of specific initiatives were presented to demonstrate how museums tackled these issues and engaged younger and more diverse groups in their communities.

Moderators: **Jay Xu**, director, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco; and **Wang Qizhi**, deputy director, Nanjing Museum

- **Steven Kern**, director and CEO, Newark Museum
- **Christoph Heinrich**, director, Denver Art Museum
- **Zhang Zikang**, deputy director, National Art Museum of China
- **Luo Xiangjun**, director, Hebei Provincial Museum

**Chinese Museum Presentations III**

Moderator: **Liu Wentao**, deputy director, Nanjing Museum

- **Huang Xueyin**, deputy director, Capital Museum
- **Luo Xiangjun**, director, Hebei Provincial Museum
- **Zhang Huiguo**, deputy director, Shanxi Museum
- **Wei Jun**, director, Guangdong Museum
- **Luo Huaqing**, deputy director, Dunhuang Research Academy

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**Asia Society**

**Presentation and Lunch, sponsored by Diller Scofidio + Renfro**

**Panel Discussion IV: Leadership and Funding**

This roundtable panel explored in detail the fundamentally different financial models of U.S. and Chinese museums. Senior executives of arts foundations and museums were invited to speak. Amid energized discussions with participants, panelists offered advice concerning recent developments at some Chinese institutions: implementing trustee boards and foundations into the museums' financial structures.

Moderators: **Brian Ferriso**, The Marilyn H. and Dr. Robert B. Pamplin Jr. director, Portland Art Museum; and **Wang Zhenfen**, director, Lushun Museum

- **Dan L. Monroe**, The Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo director and CEO, Peabody Essex Museum

- **Fritz Huang**, assistant general manager, K11 Art Foundation, Shanghai
- **Elizabeth Glassman**, president and CEO, Terra Foundation for American Art
- **Ren Wanping**, deputy director, Palace Museum
- **Cheng Yi**, deputy director, Suzhou Museum

**Closing Remarks and Next Steps**

**Closing Reception**

**Public Program: U.S. and Chinese Museums and Their Communities**

In this public discussion, leaders from U.S. and Chinese museums discussed the role that museums play within their respective communities, addressing some fundamental and important questions: What do museum leaders in both countries feel a museum's mission should be? What are a museum's civic and social responsibilities? How do U.S. and Chinese museums aim to serve their public? Do these communities have different expectations for their museums? Do these expectations affect the way artwork is presented and interpreted? What are the methods used by museums in both countries to effectively engage their audiences? In the twenty-first century, how do museums make historical materials relevant to visitors?

Moderator: **Boon Hui Tan**, vice president for global arts & cultural programs and director of Asia Society Museum

- **Sharon Matt Atkins**, vice director, exhibitions and collections management, Brooklyn Museum
- **Catherine L. Futter**, director of curatorial affairs, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art
- **Katherine Anne Paul**, curator of the arts of Asia, Newark Museum
- **Wang Qizhi**, deputy director, Nanjing Museum
- **Wu Heng**, deputy director of cultural exchange center, Nanjing Museum

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28**

**Visits to museums for Chinese museum representatives**

**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**

A guided tour of the Chinese art galleries was led by **Mike Hearn**, Douglas Dillon chairman, Asian art; **Joseph Scheier-Dolberg**, assistant curator, Asian art; and **Pengliang Lu**, Henry A. Kissinger curatorial fellow, Asian art; followed by a tour of the museum's conservation labs, led by **Lisa Pilosi**, Sherman Fairchild conservator in charge, objects conservation; **Janina Poskrobko**, conservator, textile conservation; and **Marjorie Shelley**, Sherman Fairchild conservator in charge, paper conservation.

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**Brooklyn Museum**

**Presentation and Lunch, sponsored by Ennead Architects**

A guided tour of the American and Egyptian art galleries was provided by **Kimberly Orcutt**, Andrew W. Mellon curator of American art and **Edward Bleiberg**, curator, Egyptian, classical, and ancient Near Eastern art and managing curator, ancient Egyptian, African, and Asian art. The group was also accompanied by **Sharon Matt**

**Atkins**, vice director, exhibitions and collections management; and **Susan L. Beningson**, assistant curator of Asian art.

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**Whitney Museum of American Art**

A guided tour of the special exhibition *Human Interest: Portraits from the Whitney's Collection* featured two highlights: Robert Henri's 1916 painting of the museum's founder and namesake, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, and Urs Fischer's 2016 portrait of the artist Julian Schnabel, a candle-wax sculpture that melts over time. Museum docents also led a tour of the museum's notable exterior stairs and terraces and introduced Richard Artschwager's permanent installation, *Six in Four* (2013).

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**High Line**

Architects from Diller Scofidio + Renfro led a guided tour of the High Line.

## APPENDIX III

### SELECTED U.S.-CHINA EXCHANGE PROJECTS

#### I. Exhibitions

***The Pulse: Selected Paintings from The San Diego Museum of Art, U.S.***  
**Suzhou Museum**  
November 7, 2010–February 9, 2011

***Xu Beihong: Pioneer of Modern Chinese Painting***  
**Denver Art Museum**  
October 30, 2011–January 29, 2012  
Organized by Denver Art Museum in collaboration with the **Xu Beihong Memorial Museum**, this was the first exhibition in North America to consider the broad spectrum of work by this critically acclaimed modern Chinese painter.

***Exhibition of Selected Collections from Suzhou Museum***  
**The San Diego Museum of Art**  
December 15, 2012–March 17, 2013

***Forbidden City: Imperial Treasures from the Palace Museum, Beijing***  
**Virginia Museum of Fine Arts**  
October 18, 2014–January 19, 2015  
Co-organized with the **Palace Museum, Beijing**

***Fabergé Revealed***  
**Palace Museum, Beijing**  
April 15–July 17, 2016  
Co-organized with **Virginia Museum of Fine Arts** to show its Fabergé collection in China.

***Wu School Painting Series: The Art of Qiu Ying***  
**Suzhou Museum**  
November 10–December 20, 2015  
A collaboration on international loan and exchange with the **Honolulu Museum of Art** and **Cleveland Museum of Art**.

***Cave Temples of Dunhuang: Buddhist Art on China's Silk Road***  
**J. Paul Getty Museum**  
May 7–September 4, 2016  
Organized in collaboration with the **Dunhuang Academy**, the exhibition explored the Mogao Caves and highlighted the quarter century of collaborative endeavors between the Getty Conservation Institute and the Dunhuang Academy.

***Pharaohs and Kings: Treasures of Ancient Egypt and China's Han Dynasty***  
**Nanjing Museum**  
August 9, 2016–January 7, 2017  
Co-organized with **Royal Ontario Museum**

***Art in a Time of Chaos: Masterworks from Six Dynasties China, 3rd–6th Centuries***  
**China Institute Gallery**  
September 30, 2016–March 19, 2017  
Organized in collaboration with **Nanjing Municipal Museum, Nanjing Museum**, and **Shanxi Museum**, the exhibition provided the first major survey of Chinese culture and its international influences during the Six Dynasties period.

***Tomb Treasures: New Discoveries from China's Han Dynasty***  
**Asian Art Museum, San Francisco**  
February 17–May 28, 2017  
Co-organized with **Nanjing Museum**

***Age of Empires: Chinese Art of the Qin and Han Dynasties (221 B.C.–A.D. 220)***  
**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**  
April 3–July 16, 2017  
Featuring more than 160 objects of ancient Chinese art, this major international loan exhibition explores the unprecedented role of art in creating a new and lasting Chinese cultural identity. The works in the exhibition are drawn from 32 museums and archaeological institutions in the People's Republic of China, including **Hebei Provincial Museum**, Shijiazhuang; **Hunan Provincial Museum**, Changsha; **Nanjing Museum**; **Qin Shihuangdi Mausoleum Site Museum**, Lintong; **Shandong Provincial Museum**, Jinan; **Xi'an Museum**; **Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Museum**, Urumqi; **Xuzhou City Museum**; and **Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Museum**, Nanning.

***Empresses of China's Last Dynasty***  
**Peabody Essex Museum**  
(forthcoming) 2018–2019  
Organized in collaboration with the **Arthur M. Sackler and Freer Gallery of Art** and the **Palace Museum, Beijing**, this major exhibition will travel to Washington, D.C. to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the normalization of U.S.-China diplomatic relations.

## II. Exchange Programs

### **Official Memorandum of Understanding**

#### **Palace Museum, Beijing, and the Peabody Essex Museum**

November 2012

This document was signed to advance partnerships regarding exhibition, conservation, and professional exchanges between the two institutions.

#### **American Alliance of Museums China Program at the Annual Meetings American Federation of Arts, Arthur M. Sackler and Freer Gallery of Art, Oklahoma State University Museum of Art, Peabody Essex Museum,**

co-organizers and participants

Baltimore, Maryland

May 19–May 22, 2013

Seattle, Washington

May 18–May 21, 2014

Atlanta, Georgia

April 26–April 29, 2015

The China Program at AAM brought 80–100 museum professionals from China together with colleagues from all over the world to discuss the opportunities and challenges of Sino–Western museum collaborations.

### **China Day Forum**

#### **American Federation of Arts**

May 24, 2013

Organized with the support of the Terra Foundation for American Art, this initiative focused on clarifying needs and expectations for organizing traveling exhibitions in the U.S. and China.

### **Meeting the West: Exhibitions from American Museums Nanjing Museum**

November 17–26, 2014

A conference co-organized with the **American Federation of Arts** on creating a marketplace for exhibitions available to travel from the U.S. to China. Support for the AFA's China Initiative provided by **E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation**, Mrs. Donald M. Cox, and the **Terra Foundation for American Art**.

### **U.S.-China Museum Leaders Forum**

Shanghai and Hangzhou

November 19–21, 2014

The second U.S.-China Museum Leaders Forum was organized by **Asia Society** and the **Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries**, in collaboration with **Aurora Museum, China Academy of Art, Long Museum, Power Station of Art, Rockbund Art Museum, Yuz Museum, and Zhejiang Art Museum**. The three-day Forum gathered museum leaders from China and the United States to develop tangible and actionable projects that museums in each country could execute to promote better collaboration and exchange. Major support for the Forum was provided by The Julis Family Art Initiative, the **Terra Foundation for American Art**, Amy Luan, and Club Magazine.

### **Cultural Exchange Fellowship**

#### **Clark Art Institute, Shanghai Museum, and Chinese Museums Association (CMA)**

2015

The three institutions partnered with the **Henry Luce Foundation** to bring six emerging Chinese museum curators to the Clark Art Institute for training in professional museum practices over a fifteen month period.

### **Seventh Annual U.S.-China Consultation on People-to-People Exchange (CPE)**

June 6–7, 2016

During this event, co-chaired by U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry, and the Chinese Vice Premier, Liu Yandong, a project by the **Peabody Essex Museum** was highlighted as a key example in the cultural sector for demonstrating the value of continuous endeavors in collaborating with Chinese museums.

### **J. S. Lee Memorial Fellowship**

July–December 2016

With sponsorship by the Hong Kong-based **Bei Shan Tang Foundation**, the **Peabody Essex Museum** hosted Zhu Ying, the director of education at **Suzhou Museum**, as part of an initiative to enhance exchanges of museum professionals who specialize in Chinese art.

