

# THE RISE OF PRIVATE MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA, 8-9 Sept 2021

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## Workshop Schedule

### Day 1

<b>Weds 8 Sept 2021</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Keywords</b>
9.00 UK time	Graeme Were	Welcome, network aims and introductions	
9.30	Mike Rowlands	The intimacy of private museums	Private museum, intimacy, China
9.50	Esther Breithoff	Conflict landscapes as outdoor museums: the arts of living on a damaged planet in Laos and beyond	Laos, post-conflict heritage, outdoor museums
10.10-10.20	Break		
10.20	Pieter ter Keurs	Private museums, National Museums, Power Relations	Private museums, power
10.40	Jun Akamine	Private collections becomes public heritage: Whaling Museums in Japan	Japan, whaling museums, public to private
11.00	Nguyen Hai Ninh	The role of private museum with microhistory in Vietnam	Vietnam, policy, private museums
11.20-11.30	Break		
11.30-12.00	Discussion led by Knut Rio		

## Workshop Schedule

### Day 2

Thurs 9 Sept 2021	Presenter	Title	Keywords
9.00 UK time	Yu Luo	Locally Based “Private” Museums of Ethnic Minority Artefacts Amidst Southwest China’s “Museum Fever”	SW China, indigenous museums
9.20	Yunci Cai	Reclaiming Indigenous Identity through Private Heritage Enterprises: The Cultural Politics of Monsopiad Cultural Village in East Malaysia	Malaysia, indigenous museums, cultural politics
9.40	Kun-hui Ku	Preserving the Past v.s. Engaging the Present: Changing Relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Museums in Taiwan	Indigenous people, museums, Taiwan
10.00-10.10	Break		
10.10	Juan Zhang	Plagiarizing Heritage? Reflections on East Asian Popular Culture and Heritage Nationalism	Pop-culture, ICH, China/ Korea, transnational exchanges
10.30	Sidney Cheung	How Private Museum serves the Hong Kong Public: From Lineage Museum to Industrial Museum	Community and place museums, Hong Kong
10.50-11.00	Break		
11.00-12.00	Discussion led by Knut Rio		

## **Abstracts/Outlines**

### **Locally Based “Private” Museums of Ethnic Minority Artefacts Amidst Southwest China’s “Museum Fever”**

**Dr Yu Luo, University of Puget Sound, USA**

China’s “museum fever” (bowuguan re) characterises not only the fad of museum-going as a recreational activity among ordinary Chinese citizens, but also the booming business of museum development that appeared in the past couple of decades. Besides a growing number of nouveau riche possessing private museum collections, this presentation directs attention towards local minban (literally “run by the people,” a term that is often opposed to “official” [guanfang]) museums that have increasingly enriched the landscape of museums related to ethnic minorities. Focusing on Guizhou Province in southwest China that treasures minority culture as heritage, this presentation will consider two instances of locally based museums: one is a village museum that originated from a family collection of ethnic minority elite and the other is a non-profit museum that catalogued ethnic minority costumes across the province. I consider the various motivations in collecting and preserving ethnic minority artefacts in both cases that started off as one person’s effort. While encouraging participation from ethnic minority peoples more than objectifying them, these initiatives nonetheless posed intricate questions about ownership and representation. This study suggests the need to rethink the divide between the public and private sectors of cultural industries that have witnessed increasing affinity in the specific context of China and to critically engage whether and how such museums perpetuate the gaze of urban intellectuals, that is the antiquarian urge to salvage what is left of ethnic rural China into storehouses.

### **How Private Museum serves the Hong Kong Public: From Lineage Museum to Industrial Museum**

**Prof Sidney Cheung, The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

In this paper, I would like to explain the historical backgrounds of two kinds of private museum in Hong Kong in order to show how they were developed because of the socio-cultural changes in the society, especially the growing interest in local traditions and heritage since the 1997 handover. Furthermore, I aim to discern how the curation and interactive designs reflect the orientation of the private museum and what the public expects from the visit as well as knowledge gained through the embodiment in exhibitions of two museum chosen here. The first one is Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery which was the former Ping Shan Police Station, originally built in 1900 and was converted into a local community museum being part of the Ping Shan Heritage Trail, established in 1993. And the other one is The Mills which witnessed the garment manufacturing heyday in the 1960s, and now carries on that legacy with a future of applied creativity and innovation in Hong Kong; together with the Centre for Heritage Arts & Textile, The Mills combines local history, community arts and creative entrepreneurship for the new trend of private museum in Hong Kong.

## **Conflict Landscapes as Outdoor Museums: the Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet in Laos and Beyond**

**Dr Esther Breithoff, Birkbeck, University of London**

From 1964-1973, during an event known as the "Secret War", the USA dropped 2.1 million tons of bombs on Laos, turning the latter into the most heavily bombed country (per capita) and one of the most UXO-contaminated places on earth. Following the conflict, war debris has been recycled in a range of different ways to create what have become locally known as 'bomb villages', where bomb casings have replaced wooden house stilts and metal debris from the war is turned into tourist paraphernalia. Rather than thinking of such places as simply tragic witnesses to past conflicts, I argue that we might instead conceptualise these villages as an expansive network of distributed "outdoor museums" in which local responses tell a global story of conflict as a 20th century Anthropocene hyperobject (Morton 2013; Breithoff 2020), and as creative spaces in and through which to learn what Anna Tsing and co-authors refer to as the "arts of living on a damaged planet" (Tsing et al. 2017).

## **Plagiarizing Heritage? Reflections on East Asian Popular Culture and Heritage Nationalism**

**Dr Juan Zhang, University of Bristol**

Since the early 2000s, China and South Korea have engaged in a series of heated disputes on claims over intangible cultural heritage (ICH), from the Duanwu Festival (popularly known as the Dragon Boat Festival in China, and the Gangneung Danoje in Korea) to the origins of Kimchi (or paocai in Chinese) and hanbok (or hanfu in Chinese). Such contested heritage claims fuelled growing antagonism between these two nations in recent years, when both Chinese and Korean nationalists boycotted commodities, events, and cultural campaigns that might be subjected to controversial interpretations. Anti-China sentiments have been rising rapidly in Korea alongside strong concerns over Chinese "cultural colonialism" (wenhua zhiming) manifested through "wolf-warrior diplomacy" and regional geo-political aggressions in recent decades. At the same time, Chinese citizens also actively resisted Korean popular cultural products and called Korea "a country of thieves" (touguo) with a habit of indulging in "cultural plagiarism" (wenhua piaojie) and performing "plastic surgery" on its national history.

Reflecting on these ongoing disputes and mutual accusations, I engage with popular imaginations on competing claims of history and entitlement over shared East Asian ICH, especially through the mass consumption of pop culture products such as Chinese and Korean television series (i.e. K-dramas and Chinese period dramas) widely circulated in the intra-Asia cultural and media spheres. Looking beyond museums and heritage sites, I argue that transnational entertainment media platforms should be taken seriously as a productive site of "heritage technologies", where ICH is branded, packaged, authored into history and consumed by millions across linguistic, social and political boundaries. The controversies around heritage content in K- or M- dramas demonstrate power politics in privatisation, appropriation, and heritage nationalism in transnational contexts.

## **Private Collections become Public Heritage: Whaling Museums in Japan**

**Prof Jun Akamine, Hitotsubashi University, Japan**

Most of whaling museums in Japan focus local history of whaling in the 17th to 19th and many are run or financially supported by local municipality offices. However, there are two famous private collections which has valuable materials including printed materials on whaling, both early-modern and modern whaling as well. Both of them lend their collections to other museums where a special exhibition on whaling is prepared. One is Kujira Bunko (whale library) in Tokyo and another is Shokuno Siryositsu (Food Library) in Osaka. Without their support, no public exhibition on whaling is possible. The presentation will investigate their objectives and motivation to run high-quality research orientated private collections.

### **Private Museums, National Museums, Power Relations**

#### **Prof Pieter ter Keurs, University of Leiden**

Particularly since Tony Bennett's *Birth of the Museum* (1995) more attention is given to the relationship between museums and politics. Historical studies have shown that the ways museums exercise influence over the visitor vary greatly and is also often unconscious. Bennett's approach (mainly based on the work of Michel Foucault) suggests a clear one-way policy from powerful subsidizing institutions (such as Ministries) directed to museums and ultimately to the visitors. Does this reflect reality? I will give some examples to show that the situation is actually much more complicated.

Some founders of private museums mention their wish to escape government control as one of the reasons to start their own museum. How realistic is this? And, more general, how do private museums relate to power structures?

### **Reclaiming Indigenous Identity through Private Heritage Enterprises: The Cultural Politics of Monsopiad Cultural Village in East Malaysia**

#### **Dr Yunci Cai, University of Leicester**

The Monsopiad Cultural Village is the oldest Indigenous cultural village in Malaysia. The private heritage enterprise, which was established in 1996, presents the history of Monsopiad, a Kadazan warrior that lived in the area some 300 years ago, as well as the 42 human skulls captured by Monsopiad during his headhunting raids and handed down to his descendants as heirlooms. Drawing on long term ethnographic fieldwork at the Monsopiad Cultural Village as a case study, I examine the emergence and proliferation of Indigenous heritage enterprises as well as their complex cultural politics. Rather than rejecting the headhunting heritage as a symbol of their backwardness and barbarism, I demonstrate how Indigenous Kadazan people are re-appropriating their headhunting heritage to assert their Indigenous identity and resistance against assimilation into the dominant Malay-Muslim society of contemporary Malaysia, and how this entrenches the historical imagination of the Indigenous people as 'exotic savages' and 'primitive peoples'. By critically unpacking the power dynamics in the Monsopiad Cultural Village, I show these Indigenous cultural villages are sites of contestations and negotiation, where incompatible motivations and interests, as well as unequal power dynamics, are played out among different stakeholders who seek to advance their own agendas and objectives.

## **The Intimacy of Private Museums**

### **Prof Michael Rowlands**

My starting point is to question whether the 'private museum' takes us on a wrong track with the implication that it is somehow an act of personalizing the public museum or emulating the museum in an abstract sense. The intimacy of the personal seems to be the more motivating force.

## **Preserving the Past v.s. Engaging the Present: Changing Relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Museums in Taiwan**

### **Dr. Kun-hui Ku National Tsing Hua University Taiwan**

Prior to the lifting of Martial Law in 1987, there was next to no private ethnic museum in Taiwan. The National Taiwan Museum as guardian of ethnological treasure was first established in 1908 during Japanese colonial rule and still has one of the largest indigenous collections on the island. Yet the collection was often difficult for the source communities to access or was not known to them. The proliferation of Museums happened after democratization movements in the 80s and the burgeoning of indigenous cultural heritage halls also indicated the rising cultural awareness among the indigenous groups. The passing of Indigenous Basic Law in 2005 has furthered this trend and helped to transform the relationships between the museums and indigenous peoples in general, such as the “artifacts coming home” traveling exhibition collaboration between national museums and local indigenous heritage halls. since 2009. This talk will present a few prominent cases (Tafalong house post, Kaviyangan Muakai Zingerur ancestral post, Vungalid double faces ancestral post) to show the creative ways of dealing with the relationship between the museum and the source communities in regards to the concerned collection.

“Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines” as the first private (corporate funded) museum devoted to indigenous cultures was founded in 1994, the year the term “indigenous peoples” was officially adopted in ROC constitution. Along with the permanent exhibition on various topics, the collaboration with indigenous communities on exhibition of their concerns has also been a norm. To rebuild the connection between the collection and the source communities is irreversible and to engage with the living communities make museums relevant to the wider world and the collection a second life.