Museums, Memorial Sites and Exhibitionary Culture in the People's Republic of China*

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ABSTRACT This article presents an overview of post-Mao museum representations of modern Chinese history. The focus is on changing exhibitionary practices and historical narratives in PRC history museums in the period of market reforms and globalization. It shows how new museum architecture, the place of museum buildings in the cityscape and new exhibitionary technologies (such as multimedia displays, dioramas, miniatures) are tied to new narratives of history that serve the interests of the ideology of market reform. Conventional socialist narratives of martyrdom and revolutionary liberation have not disappeared by any means, but they are being reshaped to downplay class issues and to legitimize commercial interests, a work ethic ideology and nationalism.

Overviews of contemporary Chinese culture, such as that envisaged for this volume, rarely consider museums and exhibitions as part of their purview. Yet, annually, 150 million visitors attend some 8,000 exhibitions held in China's 2,000 museums.[1] Museums and exhibitions constitute an important cultural form through which art, history and politics are presented to and experienced by many Chinese. Originating in Europe with the Enlightenment and its scientific project of categorizing knowledge and developing in service to the 19th-century nation state, the public pedagogical display of cultural and historical objects – what Tony Bennett has called an "exhibitionary complex"[2] – is a quintessentially modern phenomenon, and China is certainly not alone in placing a high priority on this practice.

In the past few decades museums have proliferated worldwide in unprecedented numbers. According to one account, three-quarters of all active museums in the world today were established after 1945,[3] and in China the percentage would be higher still. Among the reasons for this global flourishing of museums are the increase in consumer markets for culture, perhaps especially with the development of global tourism; the emergence of new forms of memory and memorialization that compete

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1. Jianzhu chuangzuo (ed.), *Zhongguo bowuguan jianzhu yu wenhua* (*The Architecture and Culture of Chinese Museums*) (Beijing: Jixie gongye, 2003), p. ii. The 2003 edition of the *Zhongguo tongji nianjian* (*China Statistics Yearbook*) (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji, 2003) gives the figure of 80 million visitors for the year 2002 (p. 787). To put this in some comparative perspective, about 100 feature films (officially-approved) were produced in 2002; and 170,000 books were published (with sales amounting to some 43 billion *yuan*). See *China Statistics Yearbook*, pp. 783–795.

2. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995).

3. See Stephen E. Weil, *Making Museums Matter* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 2002), p. 31.

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with those of older, more established national museums; and a nostalgic reaction to the sense of disconnect from the past that is the product of modernization and globalization.

This article focuses on the explosive rise in museums in China's post-Mao period and their changing exhibitionary practices and historical narratives.[4] Despite competition from new media such as the internet and the continuing popularity of television, museums continue to be built and exhibitions put on in record numbers in China, and established museums are undergoing expensive renovations, both to their buildings and to their exhibitions. During this period, Chinese society has experienced radical changes, including the emergence of a market economy, globalization, the rise of a vibrant commercial popular culture and unparalleled social mobility. Whereas urban popular culture tends to stress the importance of self, self-fulfilment and personal consumption,[5] museums of modern history – the focus of the present article – emphasize the centrality of self-sacrifice to the grand narratives of nation and the communist revolution. In contrast to China's vibrant popular culture, such museums and their exhibitions often appear staid and stodgy, as if defying the changing world beyond their walls. That museums have been slow to respond to this changing world is not surprising given the fact that they are primarily state funded and thus more closely associated with the state cultural bureaucracy than other cultural forms and institutions.[6]

The central issue addressed in this article is how museums have responded to these social, economic and cultural transformations. Is museum practice really changing from the norms of the 1980s and earlier, or is it merely repackaging old messages in fancy new buildings and through sophisticated display techniques? In what follows, I describe some recent trends in museum development in China and filter this description through the question of how museums are being made

4. To put museum growth in China in perspective, it should be pointed out that in 1949 China had around 20 museums. By the beginning of the Cultural Revolution there were 160. From 1980 to 1999, the number rose from 365 to 1,357. For figures, see Wang Hongjun (ed.), *Zhongguo bowuguanxue jichu* (*Foundation of Chinese Museum Studies*) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2001), p. 114. The PRC ranks seventh in the world in number of museums, well below the top three, the US (over 8,000), Germany (over 4,500) and Italy (just under 3,500). *Ibid.* pp. 129–130. Museum construction and renovation is continuing at a fast pace. In Beijing alone, in the next few years, the number of museums will increase from 118 to 130, through an investment of some RMB 7 billion. According to Su Donghai (in *ibid.*), China is entering a new "peak" in museum construction. Some project that by 2015, China will have half again as many museums as it does today.

5. I am thinking of such cultural forms as television soap operas centred around teenage love, pop music concerts, "campus fiction" about young love, internet novels (and, more recently, a text messaging novel), pornographic internet sites, fashion and design magazines.

6. There are an increasing number of privately-owned and funded museums in China, but the vast majority continue to be funded primarily by different levels of government. It is also true, however, that some state-run museums are able to rely increasingly on non-state funding (donations from outside sources and revenue from visitors). James Flath argues that this frees them from the imposition of official "stateist" narratives of history, but as I argue below I don't think this is necessarily the case. See James Flath, "Managing historical capital in Shandong: museum, monument, and memory in provincial China." *The Public Historian* Vol. 24, No. 2 (Spring 2002), p. 54. As it is for museums in the West, funding is clearly a concern for Chinese museologists today (see Wang Hongjun, *Foundation of Chinese Museum Studies*, pp. 398–414).

relevant to a radically changing society. My particular focus is museums and memorial sites related to the history of modern China: revolutionary history museums, military museums, memorial halls for martyrs, ethnographic museums, modern literature museums and the like. Since the founding of the PRC, such places have been used as tools by the state to propound officially sanctioned views of modern history. These kinds of museums have been – and many continue to be – pedagogical tools for the teaching of Party history to the masses. They embody state power, and this power is expressed at a variety of levels: the architectural style of museum buildings, the location of museums in the cityscape, the "authenticity" of concrete artifacts, and the display of those objects and their arrangement into narratives. Of course, "official" Party history has changed in substantial ways in state museums from the 1950s to the present,[7] but there have also been many constants, including the central role of the CCP, the grand narrative of historical development, the importance of martyrdom and the theme of national humiliation.

With the post-Mao relaxation of control over the cultural sphere, and the orientation towards the cultural market in the past decade and a half, has the "official" representation of modern Chinese history undergone substantial changes? How have museums sought to make the message of revolutionary history relevant to an audience whose lives are so radically removed from that history? How have new aesthetics, new technologies and new forms of popular culture affected museums and their representations of the modern past? As China moved boldly into a market economy in the 1980s and 1990s, I argue, museums of modern history edged slowly away from standard narratives of class oppression and revolutionary struggle towards representations of the past that legitimize the contemporary ideology of commerce, entrepreneurship and market reform. This new ideology is brought out through new modes of representing the modern past (addressed at the end of the article) but it also gets expressed more obliquely through new architectural design and exhibitionary styles.

Museum Development in Post-Mao China

The post-Mao flourishing of museums occurred in two waves: in the early to mid 1980s and then from the 1990s into the present century. The first wave was clearly a response to the Cultural Revolution and its degradation of cultural institutions. Building new museums and memorial sites or reopening established museums and revising their exhibitions marked what could be called a "reinstitutionalization" of memory of the past after the uncertainty of the Cultural Revolution period. For Su Donghai, a curator at the former Museum of the Chinese Revolution and a leading figure in the Chinese museum world, among the important

7. See Kirk A. Denton, "Visual memory and the construction of a revolutionary past: paintings from the Museum of the Chinese Revolution," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Fall 2000), pp. 203–235.

values for museums in the post-Mao period are to "verify" history and to extol such moral virtues as patriotism and self-sacrifice.[8] Consistent with the ideological values of the Deng regime, museums sought to "seek truth through facts" and restore a "scientific" representation of the past, in contrast to the distortions and misrepresentations of the Cultural Revolution. Just as museums in the early post-revolutionary period of the 1950s were established to help legitimize the new regime, the restoration of old exhibitions and the establishment of new revolutionary history museums in the post-Mao period served to restore the Party's image in the wake of the Cultural Revolution and to legitimize the authority of the Deng regime.[9] Wang Hongjun writes that the state and the Party placed more importance on museums in the 1980s than ever before.[10] Museums were even mentioned in the 1982 constitution, where their service role was emphasized. The role of museums in fostering "spiritual civilization" was promoted, and laws were passed enhancing the protection of cultural artifacts and regulating museums.[11]

A second wave of new museum construction and revamping of old museums and their exhibits occurred in the wake of the Tian'anmen movement and the collapse of communist states in Eastern Europe.[12] Many new museums and memorials sites were built to restore waning socialist values and increase patriotism and nationalism. With a general loss of faith in socialism among the populace and the rise of competing forms of identity with the influx of foreign cultural products and the emergence of a thriving indigenous pop culture, the state was clearly concerned that Chinese "not forget" the humiliations and heroism of China's revolutionary past.[13] The CCP remains invested in a representation of the modern past that makes the rise of the Party "inevitable" and justifies its continued place in power. A 1991 circular issued by several state bureaus involved in propaganda work emphasizes the importance of cultural artifacts and museums and memorial sites in stimulating patriotism among the young and of using fresh techniques to increase the "attractiveness" (*xiyinli*) and "influence" (*ganranli*) of exhibits so that history can be perceived "directly through the senses" (*zhiguanxing*) and

8. Su Donghai, "Museums and museum philosophy in China," *Nordisk Museologi*, No. 2 (1995), pp. 61–80.

9. Lü Jimin (ed.), *Dangdai Zhongguo de bowuguan shiye 1998* (*The Enterprise of Contemporary Chinese Museums, 1998*) (Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo 1998), pp. 101–103.

10. Wang Hongjun, *Foundation of Chinese Museum Studies*, p. 109.

11. For a collection of state laws and official proclamations regarding cultural heritage, see *ibid.* pp. 493–559. For the reference to "spiritual civilization," see *ibid.* p. 511.

12. For a general discussion of the rise of patriotic education (*aiguo jiaoyu*) in the 1990s, see Baogang He and Yingjie Guo, *Nationalism, National Identity and Democratization in China* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2000).

13. As Paul Cohen has shown, nationalism and patriotism were not just a product of state intervention, they constituted a general ethos in the cultural field as a whole. The 1990s saw the appearance of numerous texts in the "national humiliation" (*guochi*) mode, works that sought to recall China's history of national humiliations at the hands of Western and Japanese imperialists, the *Zhongguo keyi shuo bu* (China can say no) books being only the most obvious examples. See Paul A. Cohen, "Remembering and forgetting: national humiliation in 20th-century China," *Twentieth-Century China*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (April 2002), pp. 1–39.

has a greater "sense of reality" (*zhenshigan*).[14] Despite a lot of rhetoric about "globalization" and "pluralism" from museum curators and museologists, museums in China, it seems, continue to be used by the state for legitimizing purposes or are at least closely aligned with state interests. This is not to suggest that Chinese museums are not changing – they clearly are – but I do want to emphasize that their propaganda role continues to be strong in the era of the market economy. The messages propagated by museums are certainly changing, but so too is the ideology of the state. Museums in China have not gone postmodern, in the sense of tackling the past from multiple perspectives and highlighting the very notion of representation.

Revolutionary history museums and memorial sites were an important part of this state-sponsored nationalism of the post-Mao era. Among the more significant museums constructed during these two waves of growth are the Longhua Martyrs Memorial Park, Yuhuatai Memorial Park, Memorial Museum of the People' Resistance to Japan, the Hongyan Memorial Hall, Museum of Modern Chinese Literature and the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall. In one of the more manifest indications of the importance the state places on the educational value of museums and memorial sites, in 1995 the Ministry of Propaganda approved the Hundred Patriotic Model Sites to promote patriotism and knowledge of China's past.[15] Although sites of ancient culture and premodern history – such as the Yellow Emperor's tomb, the Great Wall and the Dunhuang caves – are on the list, the large majority are revolutionary history sites. In the present century, the state continues to envisage a nationalist and ideological role for museums. Museums and new exhibits are given lots of coverage in the mass media. For example, when the special exhibits on Xibaipo (National Museum of China), the Yan'an Spirit (Military History Museum) and Deng Xiaoping (National Museum of China) were put on in the summer of 2004, the print and television media lavished attention on them, so as both to increase attendance and help propagandize the official interpretation of the exhibits.

To conclude this overview of museum development in post-Mao China, I look briefly at the exhibition associated with the 28th Session of the World Heritage Committee, convened in Suzhou in June 2004. The exhibition demonstrates perfectly the value the state continues to place on cultural heritage and its primary role in regulating and shaping it. Discussion about the meeting and its accompanying exhibition was all over the Chinese media throughout the summer of 2004, revealing a clear collusion between the state and the media in this discourse of "cultural

14. See Wang Hongjun, *Foundation of Chinese Museum Studies*, pp. 522–25. The language of this state document reveals, to my mind, a strong self-consciousness in officialdom about the appeal of popular culture forms.

15. For a complete listing of the sites, as well as a detailed description of each, see *Aiguozhuyi jiaoyu shifan jidi da bolan* (*Great Overview of Patriotic Model Sites*) (Beijing: Hongqi and Guangdong renmin, 1998).

heritage."[16] Cultural heritage, and the museums and exhibitions that preserve and interpret it, represent many things in China today, but national pride, tourism profits and ideological legitimacy are among the more prominent. It is one way for China both to "enter into the world" (to become global) and to express nationalism. It should be remembered that world heritage sites are of two kinds – cultural and natural – so world heritage serves to invest Chinese citizens more deeply in the history (cultural) and territory (natural) that makes China a powerfully-imagined community.

The first part of the exhibit was devoted to world heritage sites (apart from those in China). Organized by continent and nation, it presented small displays consisting of photographs, maps and textual explanations in Chinese and English. The second part was devoted to the roles of various state ministries and bureaus in the PRC – the Ministry of Construction, the National Commission on Cultural Heritage and the Cultural Relics Bureau – in promoting the preservation of cultural heritage sites. The third and final part offered displays of all 29 of China's world heritage sites. The exhibition proceeds from the global to the local, but it does so only through the filter of the state. The middle exhibit on the state cultural heritage agencies, which visitors see before the final exhibit of China's world heritage sites, suggests the state's primary role in defining China's history and its territory, in controlling China's time and space, so to speak. As a whole, the world heritage exhibition reveals the importance the state places on cultural heritage as a way of fostering national pride and as means for China to assert itself in the world arena. Of course, this is not just about political power and cultural prestige. Clearly, tourism and the money it generates are key factors in world heritage designation, as well as in the cultural heritage field more generally, but the ideological and political are never far removed. In some cases, as discussed below, this rise of commercialism in museum practice and exhibitions works to undermine more conventional narratives of modern Chinese history. But this commercialism also bears the imprints of ideology, an ideology that is often consistent with the market reforms and entrepreneurship favoured by the present Party leadership.

Museum Design and Exhibition Aesthetics

I begin my examination of contemporary museum practice with architecture and urban design because changes in museum design and the symbolic meaning of museum buildings in the cityscape are ultimately tied to new forms of exhibitionary practice and new historical narratives. Not surprisingly, the past two decades have seen dramatic changes in museum architecture. There has been a gradual shift away from the socialist realist aesthetic of museum buildings constructed in the 1950s

16. When I visited the exhibition, the hall was packed with visitors. Though the free admission and the fact that it was a Saturday no doubt accounted for the large turnout, the national media attention contributed to it.

and 1960s towards a more modernist or even postmodern aesthetic that is at once global and draws from local inspiration.[17] Chinese cities are increasingly using powerful and arresting design in museum buildings to forge modern and sophisticated self-images as they seek to "join the world" economically and culturally.

As elsewhere, museums in China have important symbolic roles in the larger context of the urban environments in which they are located.[18] The Shanghai Museum, for instance, has emerged as something of a visual symbol of the new Shanghai.[19] Completed in 1996, the museum is a centrepiece in the newly-fashioned People's Square, which like Tiananmen Square for Beijing is the political, cultural and symbolic heart of Shanghai. People's Square, radically transformed from its socialist legacy (which was itself a radical transformation of the site during its colonial days), is also framed by the Grand Theatre, the headquarters of the Shanghai city government and the Shanghai Municipal Urban Planning Exhibition Centre. Taken together these represent the official face of Shanghai: the government headquarters is the political and economic present; the Urban Planning Exhibition Centre embodies, both in its exterior and in its exhibitions, a progressive commercial future; and the Shanghai Museum conveys a glorious past. The museum and the Grand Theatre present to the world a cultured image of the city that is crucial to its larger image as a global economic powerhouse.

Smaller cities and regions have paid just as much attention to the design of their key museums, also using them as cultural capital for the larger municipal economy. Shenyang's September 18 History Museum (Figure 1), the new Lu Xun Memorial Hall in Shaoxing and Fushun's Lei Feng Memorial Hall are all excellent examples. That Fushun, a depressed city about an hour east of Shenyang and renowned as a coal-producing area with high unemployment rates, would invest so much money in building (and revamping many times) a memorial hall, suggests how important bureaucrats consider these sites to be, to tourism and the local economy, as well as to civic pride and municipal self image.[20] Ever competitive with Shanghai, Beijing has built or is building

17. Typical of the socialist aesthetic is the National Museum of China (formerly the Chinese History Museum and the Museum of the Chinese Revolution), designed by Zhang Kaiji in the late 1950s. There are plans to renovate the museum, including building an addition, before it reopens in 2007, just in time for the Olympic Games. The exterior of the museum will, museum directors have assured the museum community, remain intact.

18. For an excellent collection of essays on this topic, see Michaela Giebelhaus (ed.), *The Architecture of the Museum: Symbolic Structures, Urban Contexts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

19. The architect, Xing Tonghe, was highly conscious of striking a balance between a foreign and a traditional Chinese aesthetic. Although it perhaps cannot compete with the Bund in terms of being a visual icon of Shanghai, images of the museum appear regularly in Shanghai and internationally. The museum appears as the centrepiece of Global Museum's internet banner: http://www.globalmuseum.org/.

20. The Fushun Lei Feng Memorial Hall has competition from Lei Feng's native Wangchang, in Hunan, which also has a memorial hall for their native son. The Fushun hall was built in 1964, and then added on to or renovated in 1969, 1992 and 2002. In its 40-year history, some 47 million people have visited it.

Figure 1: **September 18 History Museum (Shenyang)**

many new museums with interesting and innovative designs, including the remarkable Beijing Capital Museum.[21]

The museum community in China has a new awareness of the importance of unique design in museum buildings and exhibition construction. This is part of a larger wave of interest – one might even called it a fever (*re*) – in design and architecture. Whereas ten years ago you would be hard pressed to find a book on these topics in Chinese bookstores, architecture and design now have special sections with row upon row of books. The Chinese Museum Association (Zhongguo bowuguan xiehui) has a special committee devoted to the "art of exhibition" (*chenlie yishu*) and books are published on the topic of museum architecture and exhibition design.[22] One of these volumes suggests that good design, which is defined primarily as design that is innovative and yet appropriate to the topic, will help save museums from the threat of the market economy.[23] Good design also participates in the market economy by contributing to the cultural life of cities, making them more attractive to tourism, commercial investment and global trade.

21. There is clearly a wealth gap in museum construction. Wealthy cities like Qingdao can afford to build fancy new museums, while smaller towns such as Qingzhou, in the Shandong interior, struggle just to keep their collections intact.

22. Zhao Chungui, "Xu – er" ("Preface, two"), in Jianzhu chuangzuo, *The Architecture and Culture of Chinese Museums*. Zhao's preface to the volume serves as a kind of manifesto for good museum design, which should be "pluralistic," "individualistic," "humanistic," "holistic" and "standardized."

23. Several essays in *ibid.* mention this.

Figure 2: **Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall (Nanjing)**

The modernist aesthetic in museum design emerged in the early 1980s and is best exemplified by the work of Qi Kang, a Nanjing-based architect who has specialized in museums and memorial sites. Qi's work includes the Yuhuatai Martyrs Memorial Park, the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall and the Zhou Enlai Memorial Hall in Huai'an. Qi has a consistent style, but he is also known for thinking hard, sometimes quite philosophically, about designs that are appropriate to the particular mandate of the memorial or museum. Tragedy and horror, in a spirit of humanist sympathy, are beautifully conveyed, for example, in the stark and lifeless, vaguely minimalist, aesthetic of Qi's Nanjing Massacre Memorial (Figure 2).

But most new design is not so intentionally lacking in grandeur. A rather different example of the new aesthetic of modern history museums is the Longhua Martyrs Memorial Park in Shanghai (Figure 3). Like many new museums in China, the aesthetic is a strange brew of modernist grandiosity with the socialist realist heroic. The exhibition hall, which is the centrepiece of a large park filled with artwork and other forms of memorial, is a large glass pyramid in a modernist mode. Its glass and stone style is radically different from the heavy and ponderous style of, say, the classic socialist realist Military Museum in Beijing. Yet, though the style of the building speaks of the modern and the global, the exhibitions inside are devoted to martyrs, the vast majority of whom died fighting for the revolution or leftist revolutionary causes. The principal message is a highly conventional one in Chinese modern history museums: martyrs, those who sacrificed themselves for the collective,

Figure 3: **Longhua Martyrs Memorial Park (Nanjing)**

are the heart and soul of the revolution; commemorating them is to commemorate the revolution itself.

What then is the relationship between the aesthetics of the museum building and the exhibition it houses? Regardless of the content or narrative structure of the exhibition, the modernist aesthetic of the building speaks volumes. First, it marks an explicit rejection of the socialist aesthetic and suggests that the meaning of the exhibition within its walls moves away from standard socialist narratives. The modernist aesthetic also explicitly marks a joining with the world and an implicit rejection of Chinese cultural essentialism. Architectural style can influence museum spectators' experience by changing their framework for appreciating the exhibitions themselves.

More often than not, museums with innovative architectural designs also make use of new exhibitionary techniques. Museums generally are embracing new forms and styles of display, and Chinese museum curators are very much in tune with trends in global museology. There is, to a certain extent, a discernible pattern of "institutional isomorphism," a convergence in behaviour among museum curators and how they shape their exhibitions.[24] Yet Chinese curators must work within a political

24. Sociologists Paul Dimaggio and Walter Powell have argued that increased global interaction in "organizational fields" can lead to a homogenization of behaviour, patterns and tastes, what he calls "institutional isomorphorism." See "The iron cage revisited: institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields," in Michael J. Handel (ed.), *The Sociology of Organizations: Classic, Contemporary, and Critical Readings* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003), pp. 243–253. Chinese museums have begun to use Western

system that does not allow them free rein; the design and content of exhibitions in Chinese museums, especially modern history museums, is always a process of negotiation between curators and Party officials. New developments in Chinese exhibitionary practice might converge to a degree with global trends – for example, the style of the Shanghai Municipal History Museum closely resembles that of the Edo-Tokyo Museum in Japan – but local political constraints, cultural traditions and social considerations preclude homogenization.

A typical display in an old-style modern history museum is organized in chronological order, with rooms devoted to moments in a chronological narrative. Though they are not necessarily required to, spectators are generally expected to pass through the rooms in a prescribed order. The rooms are brightly lit, and the visitor can see other visitors as well as the objects on display. Each individual display has small photographs and texts at eye level on the walls, large oil paintings higher up, and artifacts and documents in glass-enclosed cases below. The new aesthetic prefers dimmed rooms with subtle and sophisticated lighting that focuses attention on the objects displayed and makes the viewing experience more personal, akin to the sense of personal connection one gets in viewing a film in a dark theatre (Figure 4).[25] It draws attention to the displays as aesthetic objects and relies less on textual explanations to bring meaning to them. By highlighting the object and enhancing the one-to-one relationship between spectator and object, the new design seems to fetishize artifacts in ways similar to the fetishization of commodities in commercial culture and market economies.

Not surprisingly, the past decade has seen a sharp increase in the use of multimedia and new forms of display technology, especially in new or renovated musuems. Perhaps most obvious is the use of video monitors to show documentary film footage or portions of feature films. Film is often projected on to large screens, as in both the Shanghai and Shaoxing Lu Xun memorial halls which feature footage from Lu Xun's funeral. Some museums have special exhibition rooms for film viewing. The New Culture Movement Museum (Beijing), the Lei Feng Memorial Hall (Fushun) and the Unit 731 Crimes Museum (Pingfang, Heilongjiang) are three examples. The Shanghai Municipal History Museum makes copious use of film and video, including vintage film of scenes from the Shanghai racetrack and a video of the 1981 film version of Mao Dun's *Midnight* (*Ziye*) next to a large model of the Republican-era Shanghai stock exchange.

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design firms in their planning and exhibition design. For example, Gallagher & Associates, a Maryland-based design firm, has been involved in the planning and design of the new Shanghai Science and Technology Museum; Jack Rouse Associates, of Cincinnati, has been involved in designing the new Three Gorges Museum in Chongqing; and BRC Imagination Arts, a multinational design firm, is doing the design of the Great Wall World Cultural Heritage Park.

25. For award winning exhibition designs, see *Zhongguo bowuguan chenlie jingpin tujie* (*Excellent Exhibitions in Chinese Museums: Illustrations and Text*), 3 vols. (Beijing: Wenwu).

Figure 4: **Display from CCP First Congress Meeting Hall**

Dioramas, models and scenes with wax figures are commonly used in Chinese museums today. The Shanghai Municipal History Museum, for example, is almost entirely organized around models. It completely eschews "authentic" artifacts and embraces the patented inauthenticity of recreated scenes. Even museums that treat the most serious of topics now frequently make use of dioramas. For instance, the 731 Unit Crimes Museum has a near life-size scene of Japanese atrocities in a Heilongjiang village, and the Mao Memorial Hall (Shaoshan) has a large bronze diorama of Mao listening attentively to mine workers at Anyuan. Film and video are often incorporated into models and dioramas. For instance, at the Lei Feng Memorial Hall there is a "multimedia scene box" (*duomeiti jingxiang*) entitled "A day in the life of Lei Feng" (*Lei Feng de yi tian*). Before the spectator there is a model of a building with two windows containing monitors with videos showing characters moving from one screen to the other and a voiceover narrating events. At the Shanghai Municipal History Museum, video images projected into a miniature model of a Shanghai slum show the lives of the impoverished slum dwellers. At the Mao Zedong Memorial Hall in Shaoshan an exhibit contains a miniature diorama into which are projected video scenes that recount the story of Mao's efforts to instigate a peasant movement in Shaoshan; the soundtrack includes characters' voices (Mao speaks perfect

Mandarin), a voiceover narrating Mao's efforts and dramatic music. Large dioramas in theatres with accompanying light shows and voiceover narration are also common.

With increased use of film and video, dioramas, scenes, and miniature models, Chinese museums seem to be moving away from the traditional mandate of the museum, which emphasizes the powerful experience of being transported to the past by being in the presence of authentic objects from that past. Authenticity has been replaced by images, models and miniatures – imitations of the real, not the thing itself. One might argue that this marks a move into the postmodern world of the simulacrum and a self-conscious recognition of the essential inauthenticity of all forms of representation, but Chinese museum curators would not see these new forms of exhibition in this way. Rather, they are used to "attract" spectators and lead them to a more "lively," and thus authentic, representation of the past. Yet, in drawing attention away from the authenticity of historical artifacts to the "mediated" nature of representation, these new forms of exhibition contribute to the undermining of established revolutionary history, which is predicated on notions of truth and objectivity.

Popular Culture, Theme Parks and History

The influence of popular culture is felt strongly in exhibitions throughout China, and not just in terms of the use of multimedia and dioramas; it extends deeper into the very essence of how the material is organized and presented. Some museums – such as the Shanghai Lu Xun Museum – have rejected the still nearly universal practice of structuring their subject chronologically. Whereas the Beijing Lu Xun Memorial Hall and the Shaoxing Lu Xun Memorial Hall make use of the standard chronological approach to Lu Xun's intellectual and literary development, the Shanghai museum takes a more thematic and impressionistic approach. The curators of the exhibit have said they are intentionally using an "expressive" (*biaoxian*), as opposed to "representational" (*zaixian*), technique, and indeed much in this museum strikes one as self-consciously different from standard display practices in PRC museums. For example, one of the display spaces in the main exhibition recreates Lu Xun's "iron house" with rusty-looking iron; the observer is made to feel as if living within the tradition that Lu Xun denounced so vociferously in his fiction and essays. Another example is the "True story of Ah Q" display, a white clay diorama of Lu Town, with scenes from Lu Xun's famous novella. There is also a life-size wax figure diorama based on the famous photograph of Lu Xun meeting members of a woodblock artists group. The museum devotes a room to showing a video called *Yecao* (*Wild Grass*), which uses imagery from the "Preface" to Lu Xun's collection of prose poems to create a highly abstract visualization meant to capture a feeling of the poem. The film clearly rejects the general tendency in Lu Xun studies to tie the *Wild Grass* poems explicitly into specific historical moments. Although its style is more serious, the "expressive" mode of exhibition in this museum shows clear traits of popular culture, and these

traits help to undermine the standard representation of Lu Xun's life and intellectual development as a from-idealist-to-revolutionary chronology, a narrative that is shaped to a large degree by standard socialist narratives of modern Chinese historical development.

In Shaoxing, there is a very conventional representation of Lu Xun's life in the Lu Xun Memorial Hall, one of the oldest memorial halls devoted to an individual in the PRC. Yet Shaoxing also offers Luzhen, a semi-private, semi-state enterprise 15 miles outside the city at the Keyan Scenic Tourism Area. Luzhen is a life-size re-creation of Lu Xun's fictional town. As you arrive at the main gate, you are presented with five plastic *tongqian* (copper coins). You then pass by a bronze statue of a seated Lu Xun, next to a stone on which are carved the characters *minzu hun* (soul of the people). To the left of the statue is a wall with a citation from "Guxiang" ("Hometown") in which the first-person narrator describes the difference between the hometown he has returned to and the hometown of his memory.[26] To me, this citation sets a nostalgic tone for one's experience in Luzhen. Luzhen is as much about retrieving the past in a rapidly modernizing and commodified society as it is about Lu Xun and his place in modern history.

With your *tongqian* in hand, you then pass through a *pailou* memorial arch into the main commercial thoroughfare of Luzhen. This "commercial street" is lined with shops selling all manner of touristy stuff, only some of which could be said to relate to local Shaoxing culture. You can sip tea in a teahouse or gamble with your *tongqian*. Up and down the street and throughout the town are bronzes statues of scenes from Lu Xun's stories, mostly taken from "The true story of Ah Q." Live characters from his stories also make periodic appearances (Figure 5). As you stroll through the rest of the town, you can visit the Zhao residence, the canal where Xianglin Sao was kidnapped, the Luzhen docks, the Tutelary God temple and the monastery where Ah Q stole turnips.

By far the most interesting part of Luzhen, to my mind at least, is the Madman Memorial Hall (*Kuangren jinianguan*). This is a kind of "house of horrors" that attempts, we are told in the prefatory remarks, to make the spectator feel what it would have been like to live in a "cannibalistic society" (*chiren de shehui*).[27] The preface reads:

> How did the feudal ethics eat people? … Here we use modern technological methods, as well as a variety of artistic expressive methods, to display in a real and lively manner the eaters and the eaten. The exhibit will cause you to feel for yourself – through the sensations of sight, sound, and touch – the true meaning of "Diary of a madman." And in personally partaking in the ten grotesque and bizarre and soul-stirring scenes, you will get an imagistic and entertaining education.

26. It is telling in this regard that the most famous passage from "Hometown," about many men making a path, is not quoted here.

27. James Flath notes that the Liaozhai Hall at the Pu Songling Memorial Garden has a "version of the classic amusement park haunted house with themes drawn from Pu's famous work." See "Managing historical capital in Shandong," p. 56.

Figure 5: **"Ah Q" in Luzhen**

Among the displays in the "memorial hall" are the Worm Cave – where you enter the maw of a great beast until you reach its intestines to "experience for yourself the bloody situation of a man being swallowed and eaten by the old feudal ethics and its dehumanization"; and the Tilted Room – meant to "lead the spectator to experience Lu Xun's upturned, abnormal and distorted psychological world." You can also talk to a

model of the madman, who is programmed to respond to set questions. There are grotesque displays of fierce figures eating human hearts, a "special effects garden" that recreates a storm, and a display in which the beams of a room collapse on a madman figure. The final display shows children playing, as a voice recites the famous final line of "Diary of a madman": "save the children."

With Luzhen, especially its Madman Memorial Hall, we see the place of popular culture in new representations of the past. Luzhen is in line with new museums such as the Shanghai Municipal History Museum and to a lesser extent the Shanghai Lu Xun Memorial Hall. Like theme parks around the world, the emphasis is on sensations, feelings of nostalgia and thrills. Luzhen looks authentic on the surface, but it clearly comes across as a theme park – indeed, the term theme park (*zhuti gongyuan*) is frequently used in published discussions about the town. In an interview, Zhou Haiying, Lu Xun's son, recognizes the "disneyification" at work in Luzhen's representation, but he justifies it as an alternative form of representation to that of conventional museums.[28] Indeed, others see Luzhen as a superior form of representation to the "dead" (*siban*) exhibitions found in museums.[29] Although Luzhen has received a lot of attention in the local press – especially when Zhou Haiying was made honorary mayor – the day I was there, there were very few visitors, and the town had an empty and wholly artificial feel. Luzhen evokes a nostalgia for Zhejiang village life that certainly lacks the ambiguity and paradoxical nature of Lu Xun's own relationship with his hometown of Shaoxing, although it should be pointed out that this ambiguity is also lacking in the more conventional and mainstream representations such as that found in the Lu Xun Memorial Hall in Shaoxing proper.

Theme park popular culture competes with museums, and museums have responded by incorporating elements of that culture into their exhibits. But conventional museums, especially well-established ones, are also concerned to uphold their integrity as cultural and educational institutions, and some have chosen to maintain instead a more conventional and academic approach to their topics. This opposition between popular representations and more conventional museums is exemplified perfectly in Humen (Guangdong) and Weihai (Shandong), each with two very different museums devoted to the same topic. In Humen, there are two Opium War museums. The older more established one, in the city centre, presents a rather conventional history of the war, with an emphasis on Lin Zexu's role, and using artifacts, photographs and paintings. The other museum, called the Naval War Museum (*Haizhan bowuguan*), is brand new, next to the Weiyuan Fort and in the shadow of the magnificent Humen Suspension Bridge. Its exhibitionary style leans

28. Zhang Guobin and Zhi Yuanyuan, "Zai Luzhen yu Lu Xun zhi zi mian dui mian: 'Ba Lu Xun huan gei shijie' " ("Lu Xun's son and Luzhen meet face to face: giving Lu Xun back to the world"), *Dujia luyou*, No. 4 (2004), p. 38.

29. Da Hai, "Luzhen: Shi Lu Xun guxiang de zaixian, haishi liti xiaoshuo de changshi" ("Luzhen: is it a representation of Lu Xun's hometown or an experiment in three-dimensional fiction?"), *Dujia luyou*, No. 4 (2004), p. 36.

strongly towards models, dioramas and life-size scenes. In Weihai, two museums present the history of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, with, again, the more established museum offering a more conservative and academic approach, and the newer one showing the pronounced effects of popular culture with massive dioramas of battle scenes and extensive use of multimedia, as well as the relative absence of text.[30] These two examples of parallel museums exemplify the tension between popular and conventional representations of modern history that continues to characterize the Chinese museum world.

Revolutionary History and the Market Economy

The central message of most revolutionary history museums and memorial sites has been the primacy of the communist revolution to modern Chinese history and the centrality to that revolution of those who sacrificed their lives – martyrs. The Chinese revolution, it should not be forgotten, was motivated by communist ideals of class struggle, collectivism, socialization of the economy and the forging of a new mass culture. Since the post-Mao economic reforms have undermined much of what that revolution originally stood for, the Party and its Ministry of Culture and the Cultural Relics Bureau, which oversees museums, is faced with a dilemma: how to make the history of the revolution appear relevant to people who live in a world that is far removed from the ideals of that revolution without stirring in them revolutionary thoughts that might be turned against the present regime. The essential issue curators faces is, how can revolutionary history, grounded in martyrdom and self-sacrifice, be made to relate to a globalizing market economy that has self-interest as its primary motivating force. In this section, I look at some of the ways (apart from new architectural designs and exhibitionary technologies) museum exhibits attempt to make the leap between the revolutionary past and the decidedly unrevolutionary present.

The Shanghai Municipal History Museum, for example, presents modern history in a way radically different from the temporal narrative that has dominated and continues to dominate Chinese modern history museums. The exhibitions in this museum, which is housed at the base of the Oriental Pearl Tower in Pudong, offers an imitation of the past rather than an "authentic" account of the past through concrete artifacts. It eschews entirely the grand temporal narratives that have generally structured Chinese revolutionary history museums in favour of a spatial mapping of old Shanghai. This emphasis is influenced by the nostalgia for Republican-era Shanghai that raged in popular culture through the 1990s. Its exhibitionary style, dominated by miniatures and models, also demon-

30. The two museums are both located on Liugong Island within a few hundred yards of each other. Established in 1985, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 Museum (*Jiawu zhanzhen bowuguan*) is located in former headquarters of the Qing Beiyang Navy. The newer museum is called the Sino-Japanese Naval Battle Exhibition Hall (*Jiawu haizhan guan*); it was established in 1995 as a joint venture of the Liugong Island Administration and a Guangdong corporation.

strates the influence of forms of popular culture such as the theme park. The miniature, as Susan Stewart argues, is commonly found in capitalist economies and represents a longing to own and possess.[31] The Shanghai Municipal History Museum ends with an exhibition of miniature mansions, famous homes formerly owned by Shanghai's capitalist class. Whereas in earlier forms of exhibition this kind of display would have been presented as a tale of class privilege and oppression, now the miniature homes are like rewards offered to those who work hard in the new economy. In the same way that more conventional history museums have used the past to legitimize the present, the Shanghai Municipal History Museum supports an ideology of entrepreneurship by depicting the Shanghai past as a heyday of commerce and economic development that makes possible a glorious economic future. By glorying nostalgically in the commercial and cultural life of Republican Shanghai, the museum establishes a historical foundation for the ideology of the present market economy.

Now, is this mode of exhibition a trend that will manifest itself nationally or merely the product of a Shanghai local reaction to a nationalist paradigm? Perhaps both. Because it is a local history museum, the Shanghai Municipal History Museum is freer than a national museum to present alternative history.[32] Yet, the Shanghai Municipal History Museum also buys into another paradigm that is consistent with the new state ideology of market reform China: hard work, entrepreneurship and commerce are good and lead to a robust and flourishing society. In looking at the new modes of exhibiting modern history that have emerged in museums in the past decade, we should not assume that their representations are necessarily alternative to official ones.

Yuhuatai Martyrs Park is an example of how a rather conventional exhibition devoted to revolutionary martyrs gets framed in a discourse of economic modernization. The entry hall has an inscription written by Jiang Zemin, which reads: "Keep alive the spirit of the former martyrs, devote yourself to the four modernizations enterprise" (*hongyang xianlie jingshen, xianshen sihua shiye*), which links the sacrifices of the past to those that need to be done in the present and future. At the end of the exhibit, after numerous displays eulogizing martyrs who died at Yuhuatai (among the most famous being Deng Zhongxia and Yun Daiying), the spectator is presented with a display called "Construction" (*jianshe*) about present-day Nanjing and its modernization and development projects. The display has nothing explicitly to do with the rest of the

31. Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

32. James A. Flath has argued that "local" museums in Shandong are moving away from national paradigms. See Flath, "Managing historical capital in Shandong," pp. 41–59. I take issue with Flath's contention that "although the stateist narratives are still promoted in some contexts, that interpretation is now divided by subnarratives that promote a localized and increasingly commercialized interpretation of the past that has a problematic relationship with the nation" (p. 53) or that "increasingly obsolete state narratives based on patriotism, historical materialism, and revolution" (p. 54). What Flath fails to account for, it seems to me, is that the "commercialized interpretation of the past" has national or stateist implications.

exhibit: on the walls are photos of fancy skyscrapers, highway projects and the like; in the middle of the display hall is a miniature model of a developing Nanjing cityscape. With Jiang Zemin's exhortation at the beginning and the modernizing Nanjing display at the end, the Yuhuatai martyrs exhibit is framed by the discourse of modernization and economic development. In this way an exhibit on revolutionary martyrdom of the 1920s and 1930s is made to relate to contemporary society. A spirit of revolutionary self-sacrifice can help build a modern, technologically sophisticated and commercial China. Revolutionary martyrdom is grafted on to the discourse of a market economy.

The Presidential Palace (*zongtong fu*) in Nanjing and its accompanying exhibit on modern history is another case in point. The Presidential Palace is a huge complex of buildings with an interesting history. The site was at various times the palace of a Ming prince, the Liangjiang governor general's residence (taken over by Hong Xiuquan during the Taiping Rebellion), a Republican era presidential palace occupied by Sun Yatsen, later taken over by various warlords and finally the Communists. Opened to the public only in 2003, the compound has several history exhibits: a general modern history exhibit, a Taiping Rebellion exhibit with a focus on Hong Xiuquan, a Liangjiang governor general exhibit, a Presidential Palace exhibit (about the history of the palace), and an Executive Yuan exhibit. Here I focus on the modern history exhibit, which serves as a kind of general introduction for appreciating the entire complex.

The opening display is a general historical overview, offering a standard Chinese Marxist view of the development of modern history from late Qing imperialism and Manchu weakness and ineptitude to the rise and eventual success of the Communist revolution. The exhibition then presents thematic sections, and this is where things get more interesting and less conventional. There are three such exhibits: education, science and technology, and culture; economics; and social classes. These emphasize the great advances made during the Republican period in each area. In a clear shift from earlier representations, the economics exhibit represents the late Qing and Republican periods as a period of incipient capitalism and the burgeoning of national (*guoying*) and private industry (*minying*). There is nothing here about the exploitation of factory workers. We are also presented with a rather positive representation of the rise of the modern banking industry and Nationalist monetary policy. Near the end of the exhibit, there is an inscription by Mao Zedong that reads: "If you work hard, you will not want for food or clothing" (*ziji dongshou, fengyi zushi*). Although it is still common practice in modern Chinese museums to end with a quotation from the Chairman, we can see how Mao's words are being made to fit the free enterprise ethos of contemporary society, where the emphasis is on hard work and self-reliance. At the very end of the exhibit, there is a long citation from Mao's 1945 speech to the Second Plenum of the seventh Central Committee, a text that offers a policy of appeasement to the "national bourgeoisie" and recognizes the necessity of developing capitalism and national industry in

China.[33] Looked at in the context of the exhibit, Mao's rhetoric justifies the rise of private enterprise, which implicitly becomes a historical foundation for the market economy of the present.

In a similar vein, the social classes exhibit is remarkable for the absence of the term *jieji* (class). Instead, the curators opt for *jieceng*, a term that does not recall the Maoist history of class struggle in the same way *jieji* does.[34] Also remarkable is the broadening of what constitutes classes; there are exhibits on "foreigners in China," "rise of the middle class," "intellectuals," and "Qing bureaucrats." There are displays on *xiaceng minzhong* (lower level people), which show the travails of poverty, but the emphasis is on poor people struggling with dignity to work hard under difficult circumstances, something many Chinese today are forced to do.

As a whole, the modern history exhibit at the Presidential Palace gives a far more positive representation of the Republican period than that found in more conventional revolutionary history museums. This may have something to do with what could be called the local effect; Nanjing was, after all, capital of China during a good portion of the Republican period and a more positive portrayal of this period reflects well on Nanjing today. But the positive representation of a capitalist and commercial Republican period is similar in effect (though not in mode of display) to that found in the Shanghai Municipal History Museum. A vibrant commercial past is made to become a foundation for economic development in the present and future.

Sometimes modern history museums stress their relevance to the present in more explicit and specific ways. The Huangpu Military Academy Memorial Hall, for example, presents the military school's history as one marked by a cosy relationship between Nationalists and Communists, and ends its main exhibit with an appeal for Taiwan reunification with the mainland. The Naval Battle Museum in Humen, which recounts the history of the Opium Wars from a naval perspective, also has a large, multipart anti-drug exhibit on the negative effects of drug use in contemporary Chinese society and the state's glorious efforts to eliminate it. Although it does not state so explicitly, the 2004 Red Flag Canal Spirit Exhibit – an exhibition commemorating the 40th anniversary of an earlier

33. One passage reads: "China's private capitalist industry, which occupies second place in her modern industry, is a force which must not be ignored. Because they have been oppressed or hemmed in by imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic-capitalism, the national bourgeoisie of China and its representatives have often taken part in the people's democratic revolutionary struggles or maintained a neutral stand. For this reason and because China's economy is still backward, there will be need for a fairly long period after the victory of the revolution, to make use of the positive qualities of urban and rural private capitalism as far as possible, in the interest of developing the national economy." See *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, 5 vols. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1975), Vol. 4, p. 367.

34. Dai Jinhua has described how the cultural and intellectual discourse in China of the 1990s veered strongly away from terms such as "class" and "revolution." This was a result, of course, of the historical memory of these terms, but it also marks an ideological position that is consistent with the state's emphasis on entrepreneurship. See "Invisible writing: the politics of Chinese mass culture in the 1990s," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 1999), p. 51.

Figure 6: **Xintiandi Development in the Heart of Shanghai**

exhibition about the famed Red Flag Canal and celebrating the economic and social benefits of this canal constructed during the Great Leap Forward period at the place where Henan, Hubei and Shanxi meet – seems a rather patent propaganda ploy to push for the Chang (Yangtze) River water diversion project.[35]

Sometimes the framing of revolutionary history museums with new commercial and market reform messages is not intentional but implicitly suggested by the context in which the museum is situated. I am thinking of the First CCP Party Congress Meeting Hall. Formerly run down and threatened with demolition, the area around the museum was renovated and redeveloped by the Shui On Group (a Hong Kong developer led by Vincent Hong Sui Lo) into a trendy, upscale shopping district called Xintiandi (New Universe) (Figure 6).[36] The museum itself also got a facelift.[37] The area now consists of a whole array of boutiques, restaurants, pubs, galleries and clubs, including the inevitable Starbucks, a nightclub called Ye Shanghai and the Che Guevara tapas restaurant. The district even has its own shop, which sells Xintiandi brands of French wine and other products, and runs a *shikumen* museum, which consists of a renovated *shikumen* residence and displays on the history of *shikumen* and on the redevelopment of Xintiandi. This "tourist destination" clearly

35. I saw the touring exhibit at the Guangzhou Museum in early December 2004.
36. For more information on this firm, see its website, http://www.shuion.com.
37. The museum was reopened after a renovation in May 1999. This included a new building, which was done in a style to match the existing building. For information on the museum, see Ni Xingxiang (ed.), *Zhongguo gongchandang diyici quanguo daibiao dahui huizhi* (*The Site of the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China*) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu, 2001).

plays on the nostalgia for old Shanghai that has been such an important part of popular culture in this city since the 1990s, but it is also motivated by a sense of global commercial modernity. This duality between nostalgia and global commercial culture seems to have been part of the developer's conceptual design for the area: the northern half preserves the original buildings while the southern half has new buildings in modern architecture and is dominated by a huge shopping plaza. The museum, which sits in the northern half but is right across the street from the southern half, is thus sandwiched between architectural nostalgia for the Republican past and contemporary commercial modernity.

The urban context in which the museum is situated affects the meaning of the museum and its exhibits, which recount the history of the formation of the CCP. The museum and its revolutionary message become part of a larger nostalgia for old Shanghai, filtered through a modern, cosmopolitan consciousness. A visitor who emerges from the exhibition and then strolls around the very attractive surroundings of the Xintiandi district might well think about the CCP's role in making this urban transformation possible. The curators of the museum clearly want the exhibition to be viewed in the context of a historical trajectory. In the hallway before entering the exhibitions proper, one is presented with a series of photographs relating key moments in the history of the CCP/China, beginning with a photo of the present site and ending with a photo of Tiananmen Square during a recent national day celebration. When I visited the museum in July 2004, there was also a special Deng Xiaoping exhibition. Viewing the museum in the prescribed order, the Deng exhibit was the final thing to see before leaving. The museum as a whole reinforces this idea of a lineage from Shanghai 1921 to the present economic reforms instituted by Deng, the results of which can be witnessed beyond the museum walls in the supremely bourgeois surroundings of Xintiandi.

This raises larger questions. How does the commercialized society in which many urban Chinese live today affect the ways in which they might view and interpret revolutionary history museums? Do Chinese history museums necessarily teach the lessons their curators and/or their Party bosses intend? No doubt individuals' own experience with the modernizing project implemented by Deng Xiaoping and his successors will be the determining factor. A laid-off factory worker or a migrant worker from the impoverished interior might well be cynical and think about how the Party has abandoned its original ideals, whereas a successful entrepreneur might look on the Party's past as necessary stages in its "inevitable" development toward its current economic policies. This is the fine line the Party must navigate in promoting revolutionary history in the market economy. As class divisions remerge, the state whitewashes the very discourse of class struggle that was central to its legitimizing narrative.

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