

International Traveling Exhibitions: Comparison of Two Case Studies
from China

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Abstract

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This study examined two international exhibitions that were imported into The People's Republic of China: *Masterpieces of Early Chinese Painting and Calligraphy in American Collections* and *LIGHT, FIRE, LIFE-Swedish Glass of 20th and 21st Centuries*. The goal of this research was to describe the process of developing and traveling international exhibitions in collaboration with Chinese museums and to hear the museum professionals' voice. International collaboration with Chinese museums seems to be a trend due to globalization. Chinese museums have worked with foreign museums on exhibitions for more than four decades; however, there has been very little documentation in the literature about it. Interview was the method used to gather data on this topic from five museum professionals in China, the US and Sweden involved in the two exhibitions studied for this research. The results of this thesis suggested that both the origin and host sites experienced some rewarding and challenging aspects when collaborating with Chinese museums. By working internationally, involved museums achieved much more worldwide impacts and improved their institutions. There were two limitations to this study, including the limited number of case studies and the limited number of individuals participating in the interviews.

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I also would like to express my gratitude to my parents and many of my friends. Thanks for the love and support that you gave me.

Introduction

This study examined two international exhibitions that were imported into China: *Masterpieces of Early Chinese Painting and Calligraphy in American Collections* and *LIGHT, FIRE, LIFE: Swedish Glass of 20th and 21st Centuries*. The goal of this research was to describe the process of developing and traveling international exhibitions between the People's Republic of China (China) and foreign museums and to hear museum professional's voice on this topic. Museums around the world are collaborating with Chinese museums to import or export exhibits to or from China. Since China's Reform and Opening Up (the year of 1978),¹ there have been more than 500 exhibitions that have been exported from China to countries around the world like the United States of America, United Kingdom, France, Canada, etc.² Meanwhile, a large number of exhibitions have also been imported to China from other countries in the past two decades.³

However, research specifically about this whole collaboration process is quite rare in the

¹ The Chinese economic reform (simplified Chinese: 改革开放; traditional Chinese: 改革開放; pinyin: Gǎigé kāifàng; literally: "Reform & Opening up") refers to the program of economic reforms called "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" in the People's Republic of China (PRC) that was started in December 1978 by reformists within the Communist Party of China (CPC) led by Deng Xiaoping. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_economic_reform

² Zhang Wenbin, "Zhongguo bo wu guan guo ji hua de jin cheng hui gu yu zhan wang." *Zhongguo Bo Wu Guan* 3 (2007): 4, <http://wenku.baidu.com/link?url=3K9X3ZbEujg7mv-yGi27oXkSRh7UzHBaMkzaVmxcV5Tr7pDNQfK20nk7TKF1PJAP9VSA bUVSNoPWsRntOadO-NZgiXDhSAfQVog-S-sNMsm>

³ Zhang Wenbin, "Zhongguo bo wu guan guo ji hua de jin cheng hui gu yu zhan wang." *Zhongguo Bo Wu Guan* 3 (2007): 5, <http://wenku.baidu.com/link?url=3K9X3ZbEujg7mv-yGi27oXkSRh7UzHBaMkzaVmxcV5Tr7pDNQfK20nk7TKF1PJAP9VSA bUVSNoPWsRntOadO-NZgiXDhSAfQVog-S-sNMsm>

literature. Most of the literature on this topic only addressed some aspects of the process, either the collaboration process, the exhibition design principles, or the shipment of the exhibits. A complete picture of this topic is still vague. Questions such as why foreign museums choose to collaborate with Chinese museums, what the process of working with Chinese museums looks like, how museums take care of exhibits during the long transit, or what foreign and Chinese museums do to adjust exhibits when implemented within a different physical and cultural context to be adequately explained and described are still unanswered.

The two case studies selected were based in part on the high accountability and reliability of the information about the exhibitions. The first case study, *Masterpieces of Early Chinese Painting and Calligraphy in American Collections* was exhibited at the Shanghai Museum, Shanghai, China between November 2, 2012 and January 3, 2013. This collaboration included the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland; and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, all located in the US. The second case study, *LIGHT, FIRE, LIFE: Swedish Glass of 20th and 21st Centuries*, was exhibited at the Suzhou Museum, Suzhou, China from May 18 to August 24, 2014. This collaboration included The Swedish Glass Museum from Soora Smaland, Sweden. Museum professionals from four of the involved museums were invited to participate in interviews to discuss their experience and offer their professional opinions about collaborative exhibitions. In

addition, documents required for importing and exporting exhibitions by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China and the international customs form - ATA Carnet were listed and analyzed.

Literature Review

Introductory

This literature review sought to explore the existing resources that were available concerning the process of developing and traveling exhibitions between Chinese and western museums. The first section of this literature review briefly summarizes the background and context in this field. The second section synthesizes the knowledge about development and design of international exhibitions, for example, exhibition design theories, packing, shipping, and insurance. and the in China. The third section looks at the involved legal and practical documents, including Chinese Exhibition Application forms and customs forms.

International Exhibitions in Modern China

Beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, a new, accelerated phase of globalization signaled by “the corporatization of all forms of global exchange (material, political, symbolic) appeared.”⁴ International exhibitions seemed like a good way for museums around the world to keep pace with this globalization trend, disseminate culture, and serve the public better. By doing so,

⁴ Sharon MacDonald, *A companion to museum studies* (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 383.

museums shared resources, empowered others, collaborated with like - minded allies and managed to achieve more impact worldwide.⁵

Chinese museums started participating in this globalization movement during the period of Chinese Reform and Opening Up, and gained a great achievement in this field.⁶ The first major international exhibition that traveled outside of China since the end of World War II happened in June 1973 when the Chinese government developed the exhibit, *The Exhibition of Archaeological Finds of the People's Republic of China*.⁷ This exhibition included 493 pieces of original objects, 27 pieces of replicas, and 135 pieces of supporting objects.⁸ It traveled to fifteen counties including France, Japan, Netherlands, Australia, United Kingdom, Romania, United States, Philippines, Sweden, Austria, Canada, Mexico, Yugoslavia, Belgium, and Hong Kong (which was still a country back then).⁹ It drew 800,000 visitors in an eight-week period when hosted at the San Francisco Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, CA in 1975.¹⁰ According to the statistics of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China in 2007, China exported

⁵ Leslie R. Crutchfield and Heather McLeod Grant, *Forces for good: the six practices of high-impact nonprofits* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 148.

⁶ Zhang Wenbin, "Zhongguo bo wu guan guo ji hua de jin cheng hui gu yu zhan wang", *Zhongguo Bo Wu Guan* 3 (2007): 4, <http://wenku.baidu.com/link?url=3K9X3ZbEujg7mv-yGi27oXkSRh7UzHBaMkzaVmxcV5Tr7pDNQfK20nk7TKF1PJAP9VSA bUVSNoPWsRntOadO-NZgiXDhSAfQVog-S-sNMsm>

⁷ Art Exhibitions China website. http://www.aec1971.org.cn/art/2012/8/11/art_427_2586.html

⁸ Art Exhibitions China website. http://www.aec1971.org.cn/art/2012/8/11/art_427_2587.html

⁹ Art Exhibitions China website. http://www.aec1971.org.cn/art/2012/8/11/art_427_2585.html

¹⁰ San Francisco Asian Art Museum website. <http://www.asianart.org/about/history>

more than 500 exhibitions to foreign countries including the US, Britain, France, Canada, Spain, Germany, Denmark, Australia, Mexico, Japan, etc.¹¹

Meanwhile, a large number of exhibitions were also imported to China from other countries in the past two decades.¹² Although the first importing exhibition cannot be identified at this time, many famous ones can be searched now. For example, the Shanghai Museum collaborated with the Museum of Tuscany in Italy and hosted the *Men and Gods in the Rome of the Caesars* exhibition between June 12 and September 5, 2006.¹³ The National Palace Museum also imported and hosted the *Treasures of the World's Cultures Form the British Museum Collection* exhibition from the British Museum from February 4 to May 27 in 2007.¹⁴

International Exhibition Development & Design

Exhibit Design under a Different Context

¹¹ Zhang Wenbin, “Zhongguo bo wu guan guo ji hua de jin cheng hui gu yu zhan wang”, *Zhongguo Bo Wu Guan* 3 (2007): 4, <http://wenku.baidu.com/link?url=3K9X3ZbEujg7mv-yGi27oXkSRh7UzHBaMkzaVmxcV5Tr7pDNQfK20nk7TKF1PJAP9VSA bUVSNoPWsRntOadO-NZgiXDhSAfQVog-S-sNMsm>

¹² Zhang Wenbin, “Zhongguo bo wu guan guo ji hua de jin cheng hui gu yu zhan wang”, *Zhongguo Bo Wu Guan* 3 (2007): 5, <http://wenku.baidu.com/link?url=3K9X3ZbEujg7mv-yGi27oXkSRh7UzHBaMkzaVmxcV5Tr7pDNQfK20nk7TKF1PJAP9VSA bUVSNoPWsRntOadO-NZgiXDhSAfQVog-S-sNMsm>

¹³ Shanghai Museum website: http://www.shanghaimuseum.net/en/special/special_readmore.jsp?id=197

¹⁴ National Palace Museum website: <http://www.npm.gov.tw/exh96/britishmuseum250/>

When developing an international exhibition, there are three problems that exhibit designers need to consider: ambiance (both physical and sensory), cultures and labeling. According to Elizabeth Bogle in *Museum Exhibition Planning and Design*, the ambiance of an exhibition includes “colors, forms, lighting, textures, and spaces that will promote the exhibit’s aim and mission and create an environment that is appropriate to the theme of the exhibition.”¹⁵ Bogle notes that ambiance informs the audience about the exhibition’s theme, time, and place even before they actually view the images and text.¹⁶ Ambiance is described by Bogle as “the invisible fog that envelops an exhibition and magically affects the visitor both intellectually and emotionally.”¹⁷ Since the cultures of two countries are different, international exhibition designers need to consider the combination of factors from both cultures to make a special exhibition ambiance, to make the exhibit more understandable, acceptable and enjoyable to the host country audience.

As a critical component of exhibition development, labels and text in international exhibitions need to be carefully considered.¹⁸ “Bilingual interpretive labels help a museum to be

¹⁵ Elizabeth Bogle, *Museum exhibition planning and design* (Plymouth, United Kingdom: Alta Mira Press, 2013), 26.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Elizabeth Bogle, *Museum exhibition planning and design* (Plymouth, United Kingdom: Alta Mira Press, 2013), 25.

¹⁸ Beverly Serrell, *Exhibit labels: an interpretive approach* (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 1996), 101.

politically correct, but they are not easy, quick, or cheap to produce,”¹⁹ according to Beverly Serrell in her book, *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*. First, they require staff or professional translators who are fluent in both languages. Second, it takes lots of time to create bilingual interpretive labels because not every museum has an existing system or guidelines for developing them. Third, bilingual labeling means there will be twice the number of words to an exhibition, which could prove frustrating to the audience. Fourth, it is hard for the label writers and designers to create a balance between the two languages. Thus, museums often choose alternative ways to provide bilingual or even multilingual interpretation.²⁰ For example, laminated, portable, reusable labels, as well as free handouts, brochures, and audio tours.²¹

Packing and Crating

The packing and crating of international traveling exhibits was extremely important because of the long distance between exhibition sites and the unexpected situations that could arise. In order to protect the objects from the rigors of handling and transit, two processes should be completed by museum staff: a risk assessment and the design and construction of packing and

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Beverly Serrell, *Exhibit labels: an interpretive approach* (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 1996), 101-102.

²¹ Beverly Serrell, *Exhibit labels: an interpretive approach* (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 1996), 101.

crates.²²

As Rebecca A. Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore noted in their book *MRM5: museum registration methods*, risk assessment should be done cooperatively among registrars, curators and conservators before arrangements are made for packing and shipping.²³ The risk assessment entails “a complete examination of the object, knowledge of the environmental conditions during transit, review of the facility report to evaluate when and where the object will be displayed, and consideration of how the object will be mounted or installed at the final destination.”²⁴ The purpose of this step is to determine the needs of the objects, and therefore, to determine the design of the internal packing and the construction of the crates.²⁵

When designing and constructing packing and crates, museum staff need to make sure the object itself is structurally stable, and to keep the risk assessment in mind. The packing and crates must be “sealed, waterproofed, and insulated”²⁶ and must be designed for the specific object in question. The size and material must be chosen carefully to support the object and

²² Rebecca A. Buck, and Jean Allman Gilmore, ed., *MRM5: museum registration methods* (Washington, DC: AAM Press, American Association of Museums, 2010), 322.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Rebecca A. Buck, and Jean Allman Gilmore, ed., *MRM5: museum registration methods* (Washington, DC: AAM Press, American Association of Museums, 2010), 322.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Rebecca A. Buck, and Jean Allman Gilmore, ed., *MRM5: museum registration methods* (Washington, DC: AAM Press, American Association of Museums, 2010), 323.

protect it against movement, shock, vibration, and abrasion.²⁷ A document describing the packing method and photos of the process should be placed inside the lid of the crate or packing manuals.²⁸

Shipping

There are three ways of traveling exhibits: by land, by air, or by sea. Transporting by sea is “not recommended for most museum objects due to the lack of control in scheduling and handling.”²⁹ The method of transportation depends on the condition of the exhibits, the quantity of the objects, the size of the crates, the distance of the two or more destinations, the budget, etc. Sometimes museums send a courier to provide a chain of custody during the whole process of travel.³⁰ When shipping by land, the size and equipment condition (air suspension system and climate control) of the truck need to be taken into consideration.³¹ Shipping by air is the most rapid yet expensive way to transport objects either domestically or internationally. However, museum staff may need to choose a particular type of aircraft, depending on the dimensions of

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Rebecca A. Buck, and Jean Allman Gilmore, ed., *MRM5: museum registration methods* (Washington, DC: AAM Press, American Association of Museums, 2010), 335.

³⁰ Rebecca A. Buck, and Jean Allman Gilmore, ed., *MRM5: museum registration methods* (Washington, DC: AAM Press, American Association of Museums, 2010), 342.

³¹ Rebecca A. Buck, and Jean Allman Gilmore, ed., *MRM5: museum registration methods* (Washington, DC: AAM Press, American Association of Museums, 2010), 333.

the crates and the equipment necessary for the safety of the objects inside. According to *MRM5: Museum Registration Methods*, “For international shipments, museums generally engage customs brokers, freight forwarders, and cargo agents who are specially trained and licensed in importing and exporting” and familiar with the arrangement, regulations and documents of customs.³²

Insurance

Insurance specialists have listed the following most common risks that a museum may encounter: record keeping; security; valuation; hazards; storage; and transportation.³³ Among these potential risks, security, storage, and transportation seem to be especially vulnerable when transporting international exhibitions. Therefore, proper risk management practices become very important in this field. By purchasing insurance for the traveling exhibits, the insurance company assumes the risk and monetary loss resulting from incidents during the transportation of the exhibition.³⁴

When setting the insurance and indemnity, lender and borrower museums need to get a

³² Rebecca A. Buck, and Jean Allman Gilmore, ed., *MRM5: museum registration methods* (Washington, DC: AAM Press, American Association of Museums, 2010), 335.

³³ Marie C. Malaro, and Ildiko Pogány DeAngelis, *A legal primer on managing museum collections* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2012), 461.

³⁴ Rebecca A. Buck, and Jean Allman Gilmore, ed., *MRM5: museum registration methods* (Washington, DC: AAM Press, American Association of Museums, 2010), 353.

written agreement done on this topic, figure out “the point of liability at leaving lender’s custody or elsewhere, and who insures.”³⁵ To be more specific, lending and borrowing museums need to take several liability issues into consideration such as the lender’s insurance policy, the borrower’s insurance policy, coverage expectations, federal indemnity, property and collection valuations, deductibles, exclusions, etc.³⁶ In a model insurance policy, the following points need to be considered: what the agreement covers; who is legally liable; who is protected under the agreement; what the extents of the coverage are; what the exclusions are; establishing a value on property; who the insurer pays; if or what the deductible might be; other insurance; and other rules for the agreement.³⁷

Legal & Practical Documents

Application Forms

Chinese museums need to apply for permission from the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) of China to import or export exhibitions.

For importing international exhibitions, the following documents are needed: Application

³⁵ Marie C. Malaro, and Ildiko Pogány DeAngelis, *A legal primer on managing museum collections* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2012), 376.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Marie C. Malaro, and Ildiko Pogány DeAngelis, *A legal primer on managing museum collections* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2012), 467-470.

Form for Importing Exhibition, List of Objects, and Exhibit Inventory. Museums must provide the following information to the SACH in their local government, their provincial government , and the national government of China.³⁸

Based on the Application Form for Importing Exhibition, the following information is required: the name of the exhibition, the time period of the exhibition, the host site, the name and seal of applicant institution, the signature of the person in charge, the application date, the country/area of origin, the size of the exhibition area in terms of square meter, the number of objects, the budget, the source of the budget, the total insurance cost, the name of the insurance company, the name of all collaborating institutions (origin site, host site, support site), the customs gate, and the import and export verification organization.³⁹

For the List of Objects, the following information must be included: serial number; name of the object; quantity; owner/collector institution; appraisal price; and notes.⁴⁰

The Exhibit Inventory must include the name of the object; material; date; dimensions; quantity; condition; owner/collector institution; description; and photo.⁴¹

Application for exporting an exhibition from China to other countries requires four forms:

³⁸ Wang Hongjun, *Zhongguo bo wu guan xue ji chu* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2006), 508.

³⁹ Details see Appendix B: Importing Exhibition Application Form.

⁴⁰ Details see Appendix C: Exhibit Catalog for Importing Exhibition.

⁴¹ Details see Appendix D: Exhibit Inventory for Importing Exhibition.

the Application Form for Exporting Exhibition, the Exhibit Catalog, the Insurance Assessment and the Post-Project Records.⁴²

The Application Form for Exporting Exhibition requires applicant institutions to provide information including the name of the exhibition; estimated time period of the exhibition; exporting country/area; name and stamp of the applicant institution; signature of the person in charge; and the date.⁴³

Different from the Application Form for Importing Exhibition, an Exhibit Inventory should be attached after the Importing Exhibition Application Form. In this inventory, information including the name of the object; location and date of discovery; date of creation; dimensions; class of object; material; quantity; publishing history (in which book/magazine and when); collector/owner institution; accession number; display history (when and where has this object been displayed); and description and photo are required.⁴⁴

The Exhibit Catalog form asks for the following information: serial number; name of the object; quantity; accession number; year of creation; dimensions; provenance (time and location of discovery); and collector/owner institution.⁴⁵

⁴² The original exporting exhibition *Pan Gongkai: Withered Lotus Cast in Iron* did not get studied as expected, so there is no exporting case in this thesis, however, the exporting forms are still included here to be compared with the importing ones.

⁴³ Details see Appendix E: Exporting Exhibition Application Form.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Details see Appendix F: Exhibit Catalog for Exporting Exhibition.

The Insurance Assessment form requires information including serial number; name of the object; quantity; class of the object; assessment price and unit. Noteworthy is that the quantity and percentage of First Class objects⁴⁶ should be marked in this form.⁴⁷

The Post-Project Records is a form that requires a combination of important information. The information includes the name of the exhibition; name and stamp of the applying institution; signature of the person in charge; date; application confirmation institution, date and confirmation number; exporting country/area; exhibition size and location; number of the objects, and how many of them are First Class objects; host institution; origin institution; supporting institution; insurance situation (insurer, type of insurance, price); person and company in charge of crating and transportation; customs gate and the date of exporting and importing and finishing; customs recording number; exhibition situation (number of audience and the VIP attended); condition of objects and the reason of damage; and compensation situation of damaged objects.⁴⁸

Customs form

A Carnet or ATA Carnet is an international customs and temporary export-import

⁴⁶ National First Class Object refers to the portable Chinese cultural heritage which has extremely high historical, artistic or scientific value. This is the highest level of cultural heritage in China.

⁴⁷ Details see Appendix G: Insurance Assessment.

⁴⁸ Details see Appendix H: Post-Project Records.

document.⁴⁹ It is used to clear customs in 85 countries and territories without paying duties and import taxes on merchandise that will be re-exported within 12 months.⁵⁰ For Exhibitions and Fairs, a Carnet would only be valid for six months from the date of issue.⁵¹ Noteworthy is that China only belongs to the Exhibitions & Fairs convention and therefore, all carnets into China are limited to six months.⁵² The carnet can be used multiple times and in multiple countries during the period of validity.⁵³ Split shipments are allowed; however, items cannot be added to the General List⁵⁴ once the carnet is issued.⁵⁵

The carnet form consists of three parts: the front green cover (holder/user & country information), where information such as “holder and address; represented by; intended use of goods; ATA Carnet No.; issued by; valid until”⁵⁶ are required; the back green cover (carnet General List of merchandise & equipment), where applicant needs to list detailed information about the objects, including “item No.; trade description of goods and marks and numbers, if any;

⁴⁹ TECRO/AIT carnets is a special type of the carnet forms that are used for temporary imports in Taiwan, which only accepts the TECRO/AIT carnet. ATA Carnets are used for the 85 other countries and territories that are members of the carnet system. <http://www.atacarnet.com/what-carnet>

⁵⁰ Details see Carnet homepage: <http://www.atacarnet.com/carnet-countries>

⁵¹ Carnet homepage: <http://www.atacarnet.com/what-carnet>

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Details see below and Carnet website: http://www.atacarnet.com/sites/default/files/green_front_countries.jpg

⁵⁵ Carnet homepage: <http://www.atacarnet.com/what-carnet>

⁵⁶ http://www.atacarnet.com/sites/default/files/green_front_countries.jpg

number of pieces; weight or volume; value; and country of origin.”⁵⁷; and the yellow, white & blue certificate sets (counterfoils & vouchers) that serve as the receipt.⁵⁸

In summary, there are three main issues that museum professionals may want to pay attention to when developing and traveling exhibitions between Chinese and foreign museums: documents required by the governments of the involved countries, collection management during long distant travel, and the exhibition design. In order to create and host a successful international collaborative exhibition, “the sensible approach is to start early, listing all anticipated steps, and sketching out a program of action. Where possible, the plans and schedules should allow leeway for ongoing revision as well as for the inevitable emergencies.”⁵⁹

On the side of the museum field in China, the complex application documents and regulations reflected the Law of the Protection of People’s Republic of China’s Cultural Relics section 1. The purpose of launching this law was to strengthen the protection of cultural relics, to help the related scientific research, to promote and develop the rich historical and cultural heritage, to support patriotism education, and to accelerate the construction of spiritual civilization.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ http://www.atacarnet.com/sites/default/files/carnet/green_back_general_list.jpg

⁵⁸ <http://www.atacarnet.com/carnet-document>

⁵⁹ Marie C. Malero, and Ildiko Pogány DeAngelis, *A legal primer on managing museum collections* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2012), 372.

⁶⁰ Wang Hongjun, *Zhongguo bo wu guan xue ji chu* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2006), 493.

Methodology

This study examined two international exhibitions that were imported into China: *Masterpieces of Early Chinese Painting and Calligraphy in American Collections* and *LIGHT, FIRE, LIFE: Swedish Glass of 20th and 21st Centuries*. The goal of this paper was to describe the process of developing and traveling collaborative exhibitions between the People's Republic of China (China) and museums abroad and to hear the museum professionals' opinions about this topic. The exhibition case studies chosen were selected because they met the topic of this thesis: international traveling exhibitions with Chinese museums. Other than this, the two exhibitions were well-organized, successful, and the interviewees shown great enthusiasm to participate in this research. The research method employed was semi-structured interviews.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Instrument

A semi-structured (standardized open-ended) interview instrument was designed and used for the four interviews with five interviewees. (See Appendix A for the interview instrument.) For this interview instrument, the exact wording and sequence of questions were determined in

advance.⁶¹ All five interviewees were asked the same questions,⁶² and were expected to elicit specific answers to them.⁶³ Respondents answering the same questions thus increased the comparability of responses. All the interviews were audiotaped and were designed to be no longer than 40 minutes. There were three main categories of questions in the interviews: *What is the process of developing international collaborative exhibitions? What is the process of traveling international collaborative exhibitions? What is your professional opinion about such a collaboration?*⁶⁴ The sequence of questions under each category was adjusted slightly during the interviews according to what the interviewees said. For instance, some questions were combined or skipped depending on the responses given. Probe questions also were raised to clarify the questions or to ask further, and therefore, to get more information.

Subjects

Two exhibitions were selected to be case studies. The first one was the *Masterpieces of Early Chinese Painting and Calligraphy in American Collections*, which was shown at the

⁶¹ Jack R. Fraenkel, Norman E. Wallen, and Helen H. Hyun, *How to design and evaluate research in education*. (New York: McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages, 2012), 452.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Jack R. Fraenkel, Norman E. Wallen, and Helen H. Hyun, *How to design and evaluate research in education*. (New York: McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages, 2012), 451.

⁶⁴ See Appendix A.

Shanghai Museum, Shanghai, China, from November 2, 2012 to January 3, 2013. The exhibition was imported from the US through a collaboration of four museums: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland; and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City. This exhibition was chosen because of its importance - it was the first time that so many masterpieces of Chinese painting and calligraphy were loaned from America to China. According to one of the interviewees, Colin Mackenzie, this exhibit was a great success, and revived a large amount of positive publicity in China.⁶⁵

The second case was the *LIGHT, FIRE, LIFE-Swedish Glass of 20th and 21st Centuries*, which was shown at the Suzhou Museum, Suzhou, China, from May 18 to August 24, 2014. The exhibition was imported from The Swedish Glass Museum, Soora Smaland, Sweden. This case was chosen based on personal involvement in the exhibition and the contacts that were built within the museum staff from both museums, which led to more accessibility and richer information. Museum professionals selected for interviews were involved in one of the two case study exhibitions, and had expertise with collaborative exhibitions between China and museums abroad. Five museum professionals were interviewed according to this criteria.

For the *LIGHT, FIRE, LIFE - Swedish Glass of 20th and 21st Centuries* exhibit, Fan Zhang, the Curator of Foreign Affairs at the Suzhou Museum, and Gunnel Holmer, the Senior Curator at

⁶⁵ Details see Chapter Four: Findings & Analysis.

the Swedish Glass Museum were interviewed. For the *Masterpieces of Early Chinese Painting and Calligraphy in American Collections* exhibit, Colin Mackenzie, the Senior Curator of Chinese Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and Ling-en Lu, the Associate Curator of Early Chinese Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art were interviewed. All the interviews were done by phone calls.

Analysis Process

All four interviews were audiotaped over the phone and later transcribed into Microsoft Word documents. The transcriptions were sent back to the interviewees for their reviews before publication, and comments were added or deleted based on the interviewees' willingness. Then, two types of documents, customs forms and exhibition application forms, were analyzed. The conclusion of this paper is based on the findings from both document analysis and interviews. The results that emerged from the document analysis were compared against the results of the interviews.⁶⁶

Findings and Analysis

Exhibition Case Study 1: *Light, Fire, Life – Swedish Glass of the 20th and 21st Centuries*

This exhibition was a collaboration between the Suzhou Museum in China (the only host site) and the Swedish Glass Museum (the origin site). There were 135 pieces of glass objects involved in this exhibition, but only 84 pieces of them belonged to the Swedish Glass Museum. The rest of the glass objects were loaned from other famous museums and glass factories and studios in Sweden. All of the objects were traveled from Sweden to Suzhou Museum, China. The exhibition opened on May 18 and closed on August 24, 2014. The exhibition room was 301 m² (≈ 3239 feet²).⁶⁶

Interviewee A: Gunnel Holmer (GH)

- Senior curator of the Swedish Glass Museum (Kulturparken Smaland, Sweden)

Interviewee B: Fan Zhang (FZ)

- Curator of Foreign Affairs of Suzhou Museum, Suzhou, China

Exhibition Case Study 2: *Masterpieces of Early Chinese Painting and Calligraphy in American*

Collections

⁶⁶ The basic information about the *Light, Fire, Life – Swedish Glass of the 20th and 21st Centuries* exhibition was asked in the interviews with museum professionals from the Suzhou Museum and the Swedish Glass Museum.

This exhibition was a collaboration among five world famous museums. The only host site for this exhibition was the Shanghai Museum, Shanghai, China. The origin sites were the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland; the Museum of Fine Art, Boston; and the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City. There were 52 examples of Chinese paintings and calligraphy in this exhibition. All of them were transited from US to China. The exhibition was held between November 2, 2012 and January 3, 2013 in the Chinese Painting Gallery at the Shanghai Museum. The Chinese Painting Gallery was 1200 m² (≈ 12916 feet²).⁶⁷

Interviewee C, D: Colin Mackenzie (CM)

- Senior Curator of Chinese Art of Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City

Ling-en Lu (LL)

- Associate curator of Early Chinese Art of Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City

Interviewee E: Yanqun Zhou (YZ)

- Chief of the Cultural Exchange Office, Shanghai Museum, Shanghai

⁶⁷ The basic information about the *Masterpieces of Early Chinese Painting and Calligraphy in American Collections* exhibition was asked in the interviews with museum professionals from the Shanghai Museum and Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

I. Introduction Questions: The following set of questions relate to the “*LIGHT, FIRE, LIFE - Swedish Glass of 20th and 21st Centuries*” and “*Masterpieces of Early Chinese Painting and Calligraphy in American Collections*” international exhibitions.⁶⁸

Question B. In terms of scale, based on the number of artifacts, exhibit space used and costs associated, would this exhibit be considered a small/medium/large international exhibit?

GH: Something in between medium and large. I’d rather say large.

FZ: I would say it was a medium sized exhibition, comparing to other international exhibitions that we have done. For example, we are currently collaborating with a museum from Denmark. This exhibition takes two exhibition rooms, which is twice the size of this glass exhibition.

Analysis: These two museum professionals in this case study had different perspectives of scale in regards to the size of the exhibit.

CM, LL: In terms of the number of exhibits, I would say it was a medium exhibition. However, according to the importance, it was of international importance, because it was the first time that so many important paintings in American collections have been loaned to China.

⁶⁸ The answers to Question A (The basic information of this exhibition) and C (Was Suzhou Museum/Shanghai Museum the only site of this exhibition?) of this part are written in the former paragraph and therefore are neglected here.

YZ: I would say it was a large exhibition, especially if you consider its importance. It was the first time that a Chinese museum loaned so many world famous Chinese paintings and calligraphy in American collections to China.

Analysis: The three interviewees had different opinions about the scale of the exhibition, but all of them agreed that this exhibition had special importance.

Question D. How much did *Kulturparken Småland/Suzhou Museum*; *Nelson Atkins Museum of Art/ Shanghai Museum* spend on the exhibit? On which part did the museum spend the largest amount of money? For example, the exhibit design, the transportation of artifacts, the insurance cost, the salary of employees, etc.

GH: I do not remember the exact amount right now, but I know we got the money mainly from The Regional Council of Southern Småland, The County Administrative Board and Växjö Municipality. The Swedish Glass Museum spent money on salaries and costs of labor for its staff working with the project. Suzhou museum paid a big part of the exhibition project.

It was very expensive though. We need to ask for funds for this project because our museum doesn't have any budget for such a big project. I think the transportation, which included transport insurance, crates with inner packing, transport of glass from lenders within Sweden, and Customs (ATA Carnet etc.) costed the most of the budget. It cost

approximately 550,000 Swedish Krona ($\approx 63,734$ US Dollar), but our museum didn't pay for that.

FZ: Suzhou Museum spent 400,000 RMB ($\approx 64,510$ US Dollar) for this exhibition. We did not define how much did we want to specifically spend on each part. We sent Swedish Glass Museum the whole amount of money at the very beginning of the preparation process, and let them decide what to pay for. My guess would be we spent most of the money on the transportation fee and the decoration of the exhibition room. I would say we spent an average amount of money on this exhibition, the cost was reasonable.

Analysis: Interviewees have similar idea regarding budget. They agreed that the cost was high, but since each museum covered a part of the whole expense, it was still affordable.

CM, LL: I don't know the budget, and I don't think the museum would want this information to be exposed. However, I know none of the four involved American museums charged for the lending these masterpieces. Shanghai Museum covered all the cost such as crating, shipment and insurance as well as local costs such as installation and marketing.

YZ: I am not allowed to tell you the exact expense, but it was very expensive, we got fund from the Shanghai Municipal Government. Most of the budget was spent on transportation and insurance, the production of catalog, copyright fee, and marketing also cost us some money,

but not very much was spent on the exhibition design. Usually, when loaning exhibits from other museums, there should be a large amount of loan fee. However, in this exhibition, none of the four American museums charged us for that. It saved us a lot of money, we really appreciated their generosity.

Analysis: None of the three interviewees revealed the cost of this exhibition, but they said that Shanghai Museum paid for all of the cost. YZ specifically said that the transportation and producing the catalog cost most of the budget. All of the three museum professionals mentioned the waived loan fee and indicated that it was unusual.

Question E. How much time did you invest in *developing/acquiring* the exhibition from first contact to the opening date?

GH: I personally spent around 4 months on this exhibition. Some of my colleagues also spent at least one month together to work on it. So I would say 6 months in total. We didn't have a lot of time to prepare for it because we got the information a bit late. However, we saw it as a nice challenge because we have done other international exhibitions before and we knew exactly the way to do it.

FZ: The preparation took about 1 year. The two museums contacted each other for the first time in May 2013. However, we did not start applying for permit of this exhibition until November 2013. So I would say we actually spent 7-8 months on it.

Analysis: The Swedish Glass Museum spent less time on preparation mainly because they could not start working due to the delay that happened on the Chinese end. Experience helped save time.

CM, LL: Shanghai Museum contacted us for the first time in early 2009, so maybe around 2 and a half years. But it is hard to say how much time we spent specifically since different museums spent different amounts of time on it, but I would say we spent most of the time on reviewing the contract and doing the research, and we spent more time on it when the exhibition opening date was coming closer. I personally started working on it since the beginning of 2010, but that was not a full time work. Other colleagues also spent much time on documenting and researching the paintings.

YZ: The idea of hosting such an exhibition was brought up very early, perhaps 6 or even 7 years before the opening, but we did not actually work on it until 2009. So I would say we spent 2 years on it.

Analysis: Since this exhibition was a collaboration among five museums, each museum spent

different amount of time on it, but basically around 2 years. The idea of developing such an exhibition was raised earlier though.

II. Collaboration Questions: The following set of questions relate to the collaborative process

Question A. The collaboration

a. Which museum proposed this exhibit?

GH: Suzhou Museum proposed for this exhibition. A delegation from the city and museum of Suzhou came to our museum in November 2012. I gave them a tour around our museum, they were very impressed by the glass objects here, so they came up with the idea to show them in Suzhou Museum.

FZ: Suzhou and Växjö are sister cities, so some city officers recommended the two museums to be sister museums, and develop an exhibition together.

Analysis: Fan Zhang did not specifically say Suzhou Museum proposed the exhibition, while Gunnel Holmer thought so. However, they both agreed that the collaboration was achieved because of the political relationship between the two cities.

CM, LL: Shanghai Museum proposed.

YZ: Shanghai Museum proposed.

Analysis: The three interviewees gave the same answer.

Question B. How did the museums find each other?

GH: The cities of Suzhou and Växjö have become sister cities and that built a bridge for the economic and cultural exchanges between the two areas. So the two museums were chosen to collaborate. The starting point for this relation between Suzhou and Växjö was in 2010, when the director of The Regional Council of Southern Småland and some of his colleagues went to the Shanghai Expo in China in 2010.

FZ: Like I said, it was mainly because of the political relation between the two cities.

Analysis: The contact between Suzhou Museum and Swedish Glass Museum was built on the relationship between the two cities, and the officers of both City Council played an important role there.

CM, LL: This question is not totally applicable in our case because all the involved museums are very famous. I would say Shanghai Museum found us because they knew that we have the best collections of Chinese paintings in America and more importantly, we are able to lend

them and we are willing to collaborate. Like the other museums, we have collaborated with them in the past.

YZ: Mr Wang, the then Vice Director of Shanghai Museum talked with James Walt, the then Chief of Asian Culture Department of Met, about the idea of collaborating with American museums. James liked this idea and offered to help us with networking. The four American museums that we collaborated with are all very world famous, and we had known their curators for years. All of the curators agreed with and supported this idea, so we started working with each other.

Analysis: All of the three museum professionals mentioned the facts that the five involved museums, especially the four in America are world famous, and the museums had collaborated before this exhibition.

Question C. Why do you think western museums want to collaborate with Chinese museums?

GH: Mostly, the museums would choose to collaborate with the museums that they have direct connection with. Our case is not very usual. In our case, the officers supported this glass exhibition because they want to make contacts through it, the businessmen and artists want to show and sell the glass objects in China since China is a huge market.

FZ: Firstly, I think it is a good way for museum professionals to learn from each other. For instance, western museums have different exhibit design ideas from Chinese ones, and it was nice to share ideas with them.

Secondly, it is beneficial for spreading cultures. For example, in our case, not everyone in Suzhou or China is familiar with Swedish glass industry, so such a topic could be very attractive to the public. By visiting this exhibition, people got the opportunity to know such an industry in the far away country in North Europe, saw the video of making glass products, and saw many beautiful and representative glass products in the 20th Century Sweden.

Analysis: Gunnel Holmer focused more on this specific exhibition, and emphasized that this exhibition was unusual because it involved many political and business factors. Both of the two museum professionals mentioned that international collaborative exhibition promotes culture exchange and helps to build connections in the museum field.

CM, LL: Specifically to this exhibition, I would like to quote my former director Marc Wilson here, he said the Chinese people deserve to see these fabulous collections of Chinese painting. Generally speaking, I think it is due to the culture exchange. It is beneficial to our future collaboration with Chinese museums. Today we are lending things to China,

tomorrow we might borrow things from China. This kind of culture exchange is also very beneficial to the public. By doing so, people get the opportunity to see the collections of other countries and other cultures without traveling far from home.

YZ: Specifically to us, Shanghai Museum had done many international exhibitions before, and we gained experience from hosting these exhibitions and got many positive comments from both the public and the museum field. So we came up with the idea of collaborating with American museums. We were pretty sure that this exhibition would be a great success based on our past experience, and it would be a nice challenge for us. We talked to all the involved curators, they were very interested in the topic of this exhibition, and they all thought it was practical to collaborate, so we decided to do it.

Generally speaking, Chinese museums want to work internationally because of the public's growing desire of seeing masterpieces of other cultures and other countries. As a public service institution, museum has the duty to show the public the best exhibition it can provide and to serve the public better. In addition, international exhibition is also a good chance to promote great foreign museums to the local people, it is beneficial to the globalization of museums.

Analysis: Both CM and YZ said that the biggest reason of collaborating between Chinese and western museums is the cultural exchange. Also, attracting more audience and serving the

public better are also two important motivations for the museums. Specific to this exhibition, CM said that they did it because they thought Chinese people deserve to see the glorious masterpieces of Chinese painting and calligraphy in American collections. YZ thought international exhibition is a good way to promote museums.

Question D. How does this exhibit support your mission/vision?

- How important was the topic of this exhibition to your decision?

- How important was the fact that this exhibition was international?

GH: The topic of this exhibition supports our museum's mission for sure, because our museum is famous for its Swedish glass.

Our museum see international exhibition as an important way to show the world our exhibits, and to support the development of Swedish glass, in terms of its design and sales volume. Through this exhibition, we wanted other kind of Swedish and Chinese companies to find each other for doing business. The exhibition should be like an "eyecatcher" or "dooropener" for Sweden.

FZ: The vision of Suzhou Museum is to become one of the top museums in China, and one of the best museums around the world. There is a long way in front of us. In order to reach our vision, the first thing we need to do is to let people know us. International exhibitions help a

lot here. For example, in this case, this exhibition strengthened the relation between the Suzhou Museum and Swedish Glass Museum. We are planning to export an exhibition to Swedish Glass Museum in 2017, and hopefully, this would gain us some popularity in North Europe.

Analysis: This exhibition promoted the featured collections of Swedish Glass Museum, meanwhile, it helped Suzhou Museum to move forward on its way to become a world-famous museum.

CM, LL: Institutionally, we were trying to show our collections to the widest possible audience, especially to show Chinese people the Chinese painting in American collections. We think it is also a way to respect Chinese. Many Chinese may not have the chance to fly to America to see these wonderful paintings, but people heard of them, and they are part of Chinese culture, so people deserve to see the real objects.

YZ: Yes it did support our mission and vision from both of the two aspects.

Regarding the topic, the topic of this exhibition was the masterpieces of Chinese painting and calligraphy, this is an important focus of Shanghai Museum. We did this exhibition to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Shanghai Museum. A large audience came to the exhibition,

so we successfully promoted our museum, and also increased the public's awareness of these fabulous masterpieces in American collections.

As for the fact that it was international, like I said before, international exhibitions are a good way to promote museums to foreign countries.

Analysis: All of the three interviewees believed that this exhibition supported their institution's development not only due to the topic of the exhibition but also the fact that it was international. To Shanghai Museum, this exhibition was part of the celebration of the museum's 60th anniversary; this fact added even more significance to this exhibition.

Question E. Did the museums have legal contracts or agreed upon guidelines with each other? If so, what were the most important aspects that you addressed in the contracts/guidelines?

GH: Yes, we did have a legal contract. Our museum has a standard contract for international exhibitions. It is very detailed, and it covers almost every aspect. For example, how to deal with the copyright issues, who should pay for the insurance, who should pay for the damage if that happen, etc. Generally speaking, it told who should take the responsibilities, and who should write the checks.

FZ: Yes we did. It was simple, clear and comprehensive. We had one English version and one Chinese version of it. We addressed things like transportation, insurance, staff salary,

collection management, etc. in the contract. This contract was reviewed by the *State Administration of Cultural Heritage* (SACH) of China when applying for permission of doing the exhibition. They need to make sure that this contract is fair, clear, and covers all the aspects to give us the permission to work further.

Analysis: The two museum professionals agreed that they had a legal contract for this exhibition, which was very clear, comprehensive, and fair. The contract addressed responsibility and budget, and covered all the aspects of collaborating with an exhibition.

CM, LL: We did have a contract, which was developed mainly by the Met and Cleveland, with input from us and MFA, but it is confidential. However, I know we were concerned a lot about one point when developing the contract. Since it was the first time that so many Chinese masterpieces were loaned from America to China, some people questioned whether or not these masterpieces would be returned after the exhibition. They thought the public or the Chinese government might claim that these masterpieces are Chinese cultural patrimony and try to keep them. So we had to make sure that there is no loophole or misunderstanding on this point in the contract. We had collaborated with Shanghai Museum before, and certainly we trust them, but contract is contract, it has to be very clear.

YZ: We did have a contract, but it is confidential. There was one thing that is very special in the contract. Because of the particularity of this exhibition (it was the first time that so many Chinese masterpieces were loaned from America to China), the American museums had a specific concern - whether or not these masterpieces would be returned smoothly after the exhibition. So they asked us to apply for a guarantee from the State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China (SACH) to make sure that these exhibits will be returned without any trouble. We also provided them a facility report of our exhibition room before signing the contract to ensure the American museums that we are qualified for hosting the exhibition and conserving the artworks.

Analysis: There was a confidential legal contract among the five involved museums. Met and Cleveland developed it, and all the other museums made inputs and signed. Both CM and YZ talked about one specific concern when developing the contract - whether these painting and calligraphy would be returned after the exhibition or not because of the special nature of the exhibits. According to James Cuno, China's 2005 request of the U.S. Government for import restrictions on objects "was really an attempt to retain its cultural property: what the modern nation-state of China claims its cultural property,"⁶⁹ so this concern was

⁶⁹ James B Cuno, *Who owns antiquity?: museums and the battle over our ancient heritage*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), 40-41.

understandable. The solution was that the Shanghai Museum provided the American museums with a guarantee from SACH to prove that they will be returned.

B. The Design of the exhibit

Question A. Which museum *selected/decided* the objects? How were the objects chosen?

GH: I (the curator) selected all the objects. I chose the representatives of Swedish glass from the end of the 19th Century to the modern time. The Swedish glass industry had a significant improvement at the beginning of 20th Century, since artists started to participate in it, and that is what I want to emphasize in this exhibition.

FZ: Gunnel Holmer did the selection, we agreed upon the checklist.

Analysis: The Swedish curator was responsible for the selection of exhibits because she is more familiar with the history of Swedish glass products.

CM, LL: The Curator of Shanghai Museum flew to America to choose the objects because he knew the collections of the four American museums very well. They made the checklist, but we also had inputs here. Specifically in my case, I suggested deleting two paintings from the checklist, one because of the quality of the painting and the other because it duplicated

the theme of the Nine Dragon painting from the MFA and the fact that our museum also needs some paintings in our galleries.

YZ: Guoling Shan, the then Chief of the Painting and Calligraphy Department of Shanghai Museum chose these exhibits, and I was responsible for contacting the American curators. These exhibits were chosen because they are so famous and of high significance in the Chinese history of painting and calligraphy, and we were sure that the public would love to see them. All of these masterpieces could be classified as the First Class in China, in terms of the quality, the fame of the artist, and the contents of the exhibits themselves. We browsed the catalogs of exhibits of the four museums, chose the pieces that we would like to show in the exhibition, and made a pre-checklist. We actually flew to America in the year of 2011 to talk with the curators there. They gave their suggestions, either agreed or suggested substitutions based on our pre-checklist, and eventually we reached agreement on the checklist of the exhibits.

Analysis: The scholar of Shanghai Museum made the pre-checklist of exhibits, then all the four American museums gave their opinions and suggestions. So the final checklist was the product of collaboration.

Question B. (*For the origin site*) How were you involved in the design of the exhibition for the host site?

GH: Suzhou Museum did the design of the exhibition. Weida Jiang (the exhibition designer of Suzhou Museum) suggested the design, and we (a team of three, including me the curator, a glass designer, and the project leader from The Council of Southern Småland) agreed with most of it. For example, we agreed that all the objects have to be in locked show cases to ensure their security, we decided to arrange objects in a chronological order, and I really like Jiang's idea of giving the exhibition some Swedish touch (put artificial Swedish flowers in the exhibition room).

We also encountered problems when designing the exhibition. One thing was we had to exclude some of the objects from the exhibition to make it look nicer because there were not enough space for all of them. Luckily, it was easily solved. As far as I remember, approximately 115 objects were shown in our exhibition eventually. Some more items for sale were displayed in a small room beside the main exhibition room, which was very unusual for exhibitions. I don't remember exactly how many objects were placed there, because many of them came from one specific small glass factory in Sweden. But I would guess there were about 30-40 pieces.

Question B. (*For the host site*) How did you design the exhibit to adjust it to a different context?

FZ: We did not localize this exhibition a lot because we wanted to show the glass in the natural way they are. We chose to design the whole exhibition room in the traditional Swedish simple style. For example, the dominant color of the exhibition was gray, white, and navy blue. We even put the special Swedish flower - lily of the valley-- in the exhibit room to make it more Swedish. However, we designed the traffic flow as the traditional Chinese way - from right to left. We also put bilingual (Chinese and English) videos and graphics in the exhibition room to show the audience the process of making glass products.

Analysis: According to the two museum professionals, the main exhibition designer was from Suzhou Museum, but the Swedish representatives also participated in the process. When facing problems, the two parties discussed, shared ideas, and got agreement quickly. As for the fact that the exhibition was imported, the designer and curator agreed to make the room in a Swedish environment while arrange the objects with more Chinese logic.

Question B. (*For the origin site*) How were you involved in the design of the exhibition for the host site?

CM, LL: We did not participate in the exhibit design at all, but they did tell us the theme and sections of the exhibition, and in which section would the paintings go. I would say usually the lender does not take part in the design. In our case, we did not even expect to be

consulted on the design, because this exhibition was for Chinese. I believe professionals in Shanghai Museum know the audience and the exhibits better than us.

Question B. (*For the host site*) How did you design the exhibit to adjust it to a different context?

YZ: We did not decorate our exhibit room a lot for this exhibition actually. Because it was hosted at our well-decorated Chinese painting gallery, and the exhibits are actually about Chinese culture, they fit the environment very well.

Analysis: This exhibition did not require much re-decoration of the exhibition room because Shanghai Museum already has a good Chinese painting gallery, and the origin sites trusted the Chinese museum professionals' expertise. But the origin sites did get informed of the whole design in advance. CM also mentioned that usually origin sites do not participate in the exhibition design.

III. The process of traveling international collaborative exhibits

Question A. What were the specific steps of the travel process?

GH: The first thing needed to be done was the selection of the objects. I made a list of objects, and sent the list to Chinese colleagues for their agreement. This was done in November 2013, because we knew it would take a long time to get the permission of hosting an international exhibition from the SACH in China.

In Sweden, we need to get permission from the *Swedish National Heritage Board* if we want to transit cultural heritage that has a history of more than 100 years to other countries.

In our case, there are some glasses older than 100 years old, so I applied for this permission.

Then we hired professionals from outside to evaluate the objects. These prices were later shown on the insurance contract.

Afterwards, we started packing the objects. We ordered specific wooden crates and foam for each piece of the objects from a professional company. This also took some time because we need to show them all the objects in order to make specific spots for each of them.

Then we started traveling the objects. The transportation company did all the paper works for us to help us pass the Swedish Customs and the security of the airport. We passed the Swedish Customs within 2-3 hours, which was very fast. I supervised most of the loading process at the airport. There were two couriers who traveled all the way to Shanghai, China with these objects, including a glass artist and myself.

When we entered China, there was another transportation company to pick me and the crates up, and they helped us to pass the Chinese Customs and security. This company took care of all the documents as well, so there was nothing for me to worry about at all. The

only thing is it took 2-3 days to pass the customs, and one of our nine crates was opened by antique checking officers to ensure that the objects inside matched the list we offered.

After passing the Customs in Shanghai, we delivered the objects by truck to Suzhou Museum.

FZ: First of all, we had meetings for the representatives of the two museums to decide some important information such as the topic of the exhibition, the checklist of the exhibits, the date of the opening, etc. This information was required when applying for the permission from SACH.

Applying for permission of hosting an international exhibition from SACH. It is required to apply for the permission of importing exhibitions three months in advance, as for exporting one, six months is required. However, I would always recommend starting applying as early as possible since a lot of things could happen during this process. The application process is quite complex in China, but I think it indicates that we have a whole supervisory system and strong regulations to control such an action. For example, there is a list of culture heritage that is forbidden from exporting and another list of culture heritage that can only be exported under certain circumstances. These regulations protect the culture heritages in China, so I would say it is a positive thing. Specifically to this exhibition, we turned in all the application forms and documents at the end of November 2013, but I did not get the

permission until mid-April in 2014. It took much longer than it should because there are three levels of administrations (the city's, the province's, and the country's) that we need to pass, and it took for a while to pass the province's one.

After getting the permission, we reported this import to the customs. The work regarding the Customs was completely taken charge of by the transportation company. For the museum, we only needed to provide the company with the permission from SACH in advance, so that they could have time to report this import to the Customs. I handed over all the documents to the transportation company by April 20th to make sure that we could pass the Customs smoothly when the objects arrive.

Meanwhile, we had a conversation with the representatives of the Swedish Glass Museum regarding the transportation of the objects. We reached agreement upon how much time we wanted to save for the Customs and installation. Usually it takes 1-2 days to pass the Chinese Customs. In this case, the objects arrived in Shanghai Customs gate on May 5th, then it took 2 days to pass the Customs. Then the objects were driven by truck from Shanghai to Suzhou, and eventually got to our museum at May 7th.

Although it sounds like a step-by-step process, we actually needed to work on multiple things simultaneously at some point. For example, during March and April, 2014, I was

working on the application of permission, Weida Jiang (exhibit designer) was decorating the exhibition room, and Gunnel was packing the objects.

Analysis: Both of the interviewees mentioned that there were certain permissions that they need to get from local governments. However, the application process in Sweden sounds easier than it is in China.

CM, LL: It was somewhat different to each museum. To our institution, the director made the decision to do such an exhibition after consulting with the other museums' legal departments. There was no permission from governmental agencies that we need to get to do an international exhibition because Nelson-Atkins is a private museum. This is kind of good because it saved us some time.

After the decision was made, we started working on the contract. It went back and forth for a long time before the contract was agreed upon and signed by each museum.

Then we worked on the collections. We had our paintings conserved, photographed, and researched. The Shanghai Museum asked us to provide a transcription of the paintings for the catalog. That took a lot of time because it was a very specialized work.

Then we assessed the paintings for the insurance.

Afterwards, we started transiting the objects to China in different shipments. Each museum shipped its own collections by different transportation companies. Nelson-Atkins sent two couriers to fly to Shanghai with the objects. One of them was Dr Lu, another one was a conservator. We wanted to make sure that some representatives of our museum were there when they installed the exhibition.

YZ: First of all, we contacted the curator of each museum, settled the checklist of exhibits.

Then we reported this exhibition to the Shanghai Administration of Cultural Heritage, and applied for the permission of hosting an importing exhibition from SACH of China. We had to clarify the necessity and significance of this exhibition, and wait for a long time, perhaps a couple months, to get the permission. Specifically to this exhibition, we also applied for a guarantee from SACH, saying that the exhibits will be returned to America after the exhibition.

Then we applied for fund from the local government.

After things were settled in China, the American museums started transiting the artworks to Shanghai. They were actually transported here separately in four planes in order to disperse risks. Each museum took care of their own collections (both packing and transport), used their appointed transportation companies and sent their own couriers to escort the exhibits.

Finally, the exhibits arrived in Shanghai, passed the security and the Customs, and arrived at Shanghai Museum.

Analysis: The general traveling process of this exhibition was almost the same as the first case.

However, according to CM and LL, the four involved American museums did not apply for any permission from governmental agencies because they are all private museums. In contrast, Shanghai Museum passed two levels of SACH to get the permission to host an international exhibition. CM emphasized that research and signing the contract took a lot of time.

Question B. What were the impacts of Customs regulations/guidelines on this process?

GH: It differs from Customs to Customs. It sometimes took a lot of time to pass the Customs not because of the checking of the object but because of all documents they have to write, so make sure you have enough time for it. But it is not difficult at all since the transportation company takes charge of this part.

FZ: Because this part of work was covered by the transportation company, the quality of the company became a key factor here. If the company is very experienced with working with Customs, and even better, if they have a good relationship with the staff of the Customs gate,

the process is usually very smooth. Sometimes museums even have appointed transportation company because they believe in its quality.

Analysis: In both countries, transportation companies, rather than museums, took charge of the work relating to the Customs.

CM, LL: It was not hard to pass the Customs. There were special agencies and Customs brokers to help with all the Customs formalities. These agencies were different from the transportation companies.

YZ: The Customs could be a problem but usually it depends on the transportation company that museums choose to work with. For us, Shanghai Museum had done many international exhibitions before, we had a good relationship with the Customs, and we knew which transportation company is reliable, so it should not be problematic for us. However, if the partner museum chose their appointed transportation company, which we are not familiar with at all, then a longer inspection might happen when passing the Customs. Also, the arrival time is tricky. Usually, things arrive during work days, and if they arrive before lunch time, they can get passed faster and avoid staying at the Customs overnight.

Analysis: Museum professionals from both sites agreed that museums were not the ones that took care of the customs work. CM mentioned that they used special agencies and customs

brokers to deal with it, however, YZ said the transportation company did this job. YZ also emphasized that the relationship among the transportation company, museum, and the Customs are very essential when passing the Chinese Customs.

Question C. Which governmental agencies and departments were involved in this process?

GH: For me, the only governmental agency I need to worry about is the *Swedish National Heritage Board*, and it was easy to deal with.

FZ: State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China, Jiangsu Province Bureau of Cultural Relics, and Suzhou Culture Radio & TV News Publication Bureau, which is the direct supervisory agency of our museum.

Analysis: Both of the museums needed to deal with certain governmental agencies, only the Chinese museums needed to deal with more.

CM, LL: Like I said before, there was no governmental agencies involved in this case because all of the four American museums are private museums. However, it would be different if you are working in a state museum. There should be some local or federal governmental agencies for them to work with to get the permission to develop an international exhibition. On the Chinese side, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage were closely involved.

YZ: State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China, Shanghai Administration of Cultural Heritage, and Shanghai Municipal Government.

Analysis: According to CM and LL, they did not work with any governmental agency for this exhibition, so did the other three American museums, because all of them are private institutions. On the other hand, three Chinese governmental agencies were involved in the process.

Question D. How many museum staff were involved in this process and what were their job titles?

GH: Many museum staff were involved. There was a collection handler; a lady who designed the poster for the exhibition and informed the Swedish press, TV etc; a photographer took photos for the catalog; a technician assisted me with packing; a project leader hired from *The Council of Southern Småland* who was responsible for the budget; and I (the curator) selected the exhibits. Of course, our director was very important in keeping the contact with Suzhou Museum, and a Chinese lady working for The Council of Southern Småland was a very important link in our contacts with Suzhou.

FZ: Fan Zhang - Curator of Foreign Affairs, Xiaoting Xie - Head of Director's Office, Yi Yang - Head of Exhibition Design Department, Weida Jiang - Exhibition designer, Staff of the Collection Management Department, Vice Director, and Director of Suzhou Museum, etc.

Analysis: Both interviewees said many museum staff and departments were involved in this exhibition. For example, Exhibition Design Department, Collection Management Department, Foreign Affairs Department, Development Department, and of course the Director of the museum.

CM, LL: There were quite a lot. Director, previous Director who wrote the essay, myself (Curator), Dr Lu (Associate Director), Collection Manager, Chief Registrar, Associate Registrar, Head of Collections, Conservator, PR, Marketing, two packers, art handlers, and probably more.

YZ: A large international exhibition requires many museum staff from almost all the departments to work together. For example, Painting and Calligraphy Department, Exhibition Design Department, Culture Exchange Office, Collection Management Department, Administrative Office, Security Department etc.

Analysis: Both CM and YZ said museum staff from diverse departments were involved in this exhibition.

Question E. What modes of transportation do you usually use when traveling artifacts internationally? Which mode (or modes) was used for this specific exhibition?

GH: We transported them by plane. We always choose plane when transporting objects in a long distance. For international exhibitions within the Europe, we sometimes choose trucks to deliver objects.

FZ: The objects of this specific exhibition were traveled by plane, and there were 2 couriers came with them. We usually transit exhibits by plane, it is the best way for sure. However, as for the international exhibition that we are currently working on, we shipped part of the objects by sea. I think it depends on the number and size of the objects, and budget is also a factor that we need to consider.

Analysis: For this exhibition, objects were traveled by air, considering the number and size of the objects. However, it is not always the case, museums choose to travel objects by truck, ship, or plane based on the unique situations of each exhibition.

CM, LL: In general, things often go by plane, sometimes by truck, but seldom by sea. It all depends on how far the things are going, and the size of the objects.

YZ: We normally travel artifacts by air, and it was the same for this exhibition. It becomes riskier and harder to control when the exhibits are on the way for too long, so we almost never choose ships. Moreover, museums usually send at least two couriers to escort the exhibits.

Analysis: Museum professionals from both sites said they normally choose to travel cultural heritage by plane, and almost never travel by ship. CM and LL emphasized the influencing factors such as the distance and the size of the objects, while YZ paid more attention to the control over the exhibits.

Question F. Which museum was responsible for the crating, shipment and insurance costs?

GH: We received an amount of money from Suzhou Museum and that should cover the expenses of, for example, crating, shipment and insurance.

FZ: Suzhou Museum covered 400,000 RMB (≈ 64510 US Dollar) of the whole cost. I think crating, shipment, and insurance were all included in this amount of money.

Analysis: Both the two interviewees said that it was the Suzhou Museum (the host site) that bore the cost of the exhibition.

CM, LL: Shanghai Museum paid for all these things, but we actually did the crating.

YZ: Shanghai Museum covered all of them.

Analysis: It was the Shanghai Museum (the hosting institution) that paid for the show.

Question G. Did your museum have the same or similar collection management standards for the artifacts included in this exhibition? What were the differences? And how did you reach agreement?

GH: Yes we did have the same collection management standards. The security levels are very high in both museums. Suzhou Museum is very professional here, it was very easy and nice to work with these colleagues.

FZ: Yes we did have the same collection management standards. For example, we said the objects need to be locked in the vitrine, the objects cannot be exposed to strong light directly, etc.

Analysis: The collection management standards were similar for each museum. They agreed that the security of the objects are always the first thing to think about.

CM, LL: Yes, they were pretty similar.

YZ: Yes, they were almost the same. We provided the American museums with the facility report of our museum, it reached all the requirements that they asked for. All the five

museums paid a lot attention to the security and conservation of the exhibits because they are so important and priceless.

Analysis: Interviewees said all the five museums had similar collection management standards.

YZ mentioned that Shanghai Museum provided a facility report to prove that the Chinese painting gallery is qualified for hosting this exhibition.

IV. Professional opinions

Question A. What would you say was the most challenging aspect of a collaborative exhibition partnership?

GH: I think the language could be a problem when collaborating internationally. It would take more time and money if we need to hire a translator to translate everything for us, otherwise it may cause some misunderstandings. However, this did not happen in this case. There are colleagues in Suzhou Museum who speak fluent English, and so do I, so it was not difficult to communicate with them.

FZ: Not for this exhibition, this one went super smoothly. However, generally speaking, loaning objects from the partner museums, conservation of objects, and exhibition design could be

challenging. Also, communication can be a problem, especially when you are speaking different languages and the people you are working with are kind of picky.

Analysis: According to the two interviewees, this specific exhibition went extremely smoothly, and the collaboration was very successful. However, the two interviewees both mentioned that language could be a problem when cooperating internationally. Fan Zhang also mentioned other the difficulties such as achieving agreements on exhibition design, loaning exhibits, and conservation of collections.

CM, LL: I think it was making sure that two sides understood each other, not in terms of the scholarship, but in terms of the contract and the agreement. Specifically in our case, some of the staff involved in the American museums are Chinese, and they understood that many things in China are done to trust, whereas the American system is much more legalistic. So there has to be some compromise on both sides.

YZ: Firstly, I think it was a challenge to our researchers. It was also the first time for them to see these authentic painting and calligraphy, usually they just saw these masterpieces online or in the catalog. Now they had the chance to physically see them, and do many comparative studies.

Secondly, meeting the international standards is also a challenge, but it was also an opportunity for us to learn something. It helped us to be more professional and more international.

Analysis: CM and LL said that reaching agreement between two sides was the most challenging thing, whereas YZ thought this exhibition was a challenge to the museum scholars.

However, professionals from both museums mentioned that there were different working standards in two countries.

Question B. What were the three most significant problems that arose during this process? How were these problems solved?

GH: Not from my point of view.

FZ: No problems occurred. Although we had a few discussions regarding the exhibition design, we made the agreement immediately.

Analysis: The two museum professionals both thought there were no significant problem happened when developing this exhibition.

CM, LL: The process of getting agreements - signing the contract and making sure the both sides understood it - took quite a lot of time. The fact that all the four American museums had

good relationships with Shanghai Museum helped a lot here; it enabled us to resolve any misunderstandings that happened. It was challenging but problems were resolved because all of us were very determined that we wanted to do this exhibition.

It is always hard to reach agreement when there are several groups of people who contribute toward decisions. To this exhibition, on the one hand, there were curators of the Chinese Art who know China quite well, and some ethnically Chinese curators who have known people of Shanghai Museum for decades. On the other hand, we had legal counsel who saw things purely from a legal point of view. Reconciling different viewpoints was part of the work we did. All the curators tried to put the Chinese viewpoint to our colleagues to make them understand what and why there were differences.

YZ: I think the biggest problem was communication. As you know, on our side, applying for the permission from the SACH took more than 2 months, getting feedback from the higher leaders of museum also took time; on the American side, they had to hear back from board members, which is also time-consuming, or sometimes they had a super long holiday and no one was able to contact them. Both sides could not understand the delay happened in this process at the beginning, so it required us to put a lot of effort to communicate with each other and explain why it took so long.

Another problem was about the budget. As I mentioned earlier, we got fund from the Shanghai Municipal Government because the insurance of these masterpieces are way too expensive. However, before that, Met suggested to us to apply for a government indemnity in America to cover the insurance cost. We did many paper works to apply for it, but it did not work out at the last minute, so we had to find other sponsors.

Analysis: Two of the three interviewees stated that communication and reaching agreement was a problem because there were five museums and two cultures involved in this exhibition, and many people who had different viewpoints contributed to the decisions. Interviewees agreed that the key to solve this problem is to understand each other, and this was what they were always doing. Other than communication, YZ also mentioned a problem about budget.

Question C. Did you encounter specific situations when your museum had significant differing opinions regarding exhibit design, transport, artifact conservation, etc?

GH: Not that I recall. The collaboration process was very smooth. We had agreements on everything since we have the same idea about how to show and protect the exhibits.

FZ: Not that I recall.

Analysis: The two interviewees gave the same answer to this question.

CM, LL: Not really. I don't want to go deep in this question, but generally speaking, when we encountered any differing opinions, we were able to resolve them in a very amicable way.

YZ: Not really, we had a very happy collaboration.

Analysis: The three museum professionals agreed that there was no significant differing opinions among the five museums, and they had a happy experience.

Question D. How much time would you recommend if you would do another international exhibit in the future? Would you recommend more or less time according to the scale of the exhibition?

GH: I don't think we need more time. However, I would still recommend more time, because in this way things can be done slowly, and step by step. A loose schedule would also allow the museum staff who are involved in the exhibition more time to work on other tasks that they have during that certain period.

FZ: It depends on the scale of the exhibition, the type of the objects, and the communication between museum staff. I think one year or one and half years of preparation should be enough for most of the medium or even large sized international exhibitions. However, more time is always better since there are many unexpected things that could happen during

each stage of the process. In addition, you want to count in the time you need for the installation in advance since it varies from exhibition to exhibition.

Analysis: The two interviewees agreed that one year of preparation for this exhibition was enough, and both of them still recommended more preparation time, however due to different reasons. Gunnel thought a looser schedule would be better for museum staff, whereas Fan was more concerned about the problems may occur during the process.

CM, LL: I think it totally depends on the scale, but could also be affected by several factors.

In our case, American museums were the lender, but it might take more or less time if Chinese museum was the lender. In addition, western museums usually need to do fund-raising for international exhibition, which also takes time. We did not do that because Shanghai Museum paid for everything. Also, research is very time-consuming. For a big exhibition, it can take up to five years, at least 2 years, if you want to make a detailed catalog of the exhibits. And institutional priority also matters.

YZ: I would recommend more time. In our case, we actually spent two years on it. It was okay, but the communication and the perfection of the ideas before that could took a lot of time. Besides, it depends on the scale of the exhibition, for example, how many pieces of exhibits are you going to display, how many museums are you collaborating with, if you already

have a good relationship with these museums, etc, all these factors matter when you prepare for an exhibition.

Analysis: Museum professionals from both sides said it depends on the scale of the exhibition.

CM and LL did not specifically say if they would recommend more time for preparation, but they did say that other factors such as who is the lender and borrower, if they want to produce a catalog, if they need to do fund-raising, and the institutional priority also should be taken into consideration. On the other hand, YZ recommended more time because the communication before the actual work could take a lot of time. Besides, she found the relationship between two sides is also an important factor.

Question E. How satisfied were you with this process? ‘Not Satisfied’ – ‘Somewhat Satisfied’ – ‘Satisfied’ – ‘Very Satisfied’. What was the most rewarding part about the collaboration process?

GH: I am very satisfied with our collaboration. Everything was so well prepared, and we always reached agreements.

From the professional point of view, I think the most rewarding things were being able to meet colleagues on the other side of the globe who share the same interests with us, and

having a chance to work with cultures, to exchange ideas. It was a very nice and valuable experience.

Personally, I think the best part was to see the positive feedback of the audience. I went to the exhibition on a Sunday, it was so crowded, the audience seemed very interested in the exhibition, and that made me feel so proud.

FZ: I am very satisfied with this collaboration.

To me, the most rewarding part is that I got the opportunity to learn something new from the western museum professionals, such as the innovative ideas about exhibition design.

Also, these are valuable experiences to my own career. I gained more expertise in this field, I am able to see things from different angles, and I can arrange things more considerately.

To the museum, it strengthened the relationship between the two museums, spread culture, and helped Suzhou Museum to be more recognizable in the worldwide museum field.

Analysis: Both of the museum professionals were very satisfied with the collaboration. They

both talked about the rewarding parts of doing this exhibition from the museum viewpoint

and personal viewpoint. Generally speaking, they agreed that international exhibition is a

good media to spread cultures, a good way to enhance the connection between partner

museums, and a valuable opportunity for museum professionals to talk to each other.

CM, LL: I was very satisfied with this collaboration.

The most rewarding part is definitely the number of audience we got. It was a very nicely designed and curated exhibition. I think there were 450,000 people went to Shanghai Museum to see this exhibition, it was a great triumph I would say. We would never get so many audience if we do a Chinese painting exhibition here in Kansas City, even the Metropolitan Museum of Art would not get that many. It was so great to see the Chinese people's enthusiasm about all these Chinese paintings in American collections.

Besides, the relationships among museums became even stronger after this collaboration.

The catalog that the Shanghai Museum made for this exhibition was very sophisticated.

This exhibition got plenty of generously written reviews in China. It would have been even better if we had been able to get more publicity here in the USA.

YZ: I was very satisfied with this collaboration. Like I said, the four American museums waived the loan fee for us, and it saved us tons of money. When selecting exhibits, the curators of the four museums were very generous and gave many professional suggestions.

For the museum, the most rewarding part was absolutely the number of audience that this exhibition attracted. People lined up in early morning in order to see this exhibition. Like I said earlier, this exhibition was unprecedented. All the audience and museum professionals

gave wonderful feedback on it. We worked so hard for this exhibition, and as you know, some problems arose during this process, but it all worth it when we saw the audience and heard their praise. As far as I know, all the directors and curators of the five involved museums were very happy about the exhibition.

For me personally, I learned a lot from this collaboration experience. For instance, how to develop an exhibition that can meet the strict international standards, and how foreign colleagues work in certain situations. It was kind of hard at the beginning, but once we got it, we understood the necessity of these standards, and they set the model for our future international exhibitions.

Analysis: All of the interviewees said that they were very satisfied with this collaboration. They agreed that the most rewarding part was to see this exhibition turned into a very successful one - it attracted 450,000 audience, and got a lot of positive feedback from the public and social media. CM wished this exhibition would get more publicity in America. YZ mentioned that it was a good opportunity to learn things from western museum professionals.

Question F. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding traveling collaborative exhibitions⁷⁰?

CM, LL: Yes, I'd like to say that this exhibition had a positive impact to us.

Our Chinese paintings are very famous internationally, however, in Kansas City, they are not as popular as our western oil paintings mostly because they are not brightly colored, and they are all about landscape rather than figures. We wanted to use this exhibition to promote Chinese paintings here in Kansas City, and we think the public should be aware that there was such an exhibition happened in China. So, after all the nine paintings came back from Shanghai Museum, we did a miniature Chinese painting exhibition with a contemporary Chinese landscape painter. We worked with the PR and Marketing departments a lot to promote this miniature exhibition. We told the public that these collections just came back from an exhibition in China and they are going to be put in storage for a long time after this. It was a success; we got many more audience than we normally get for our Chinese paintings exhibitions.

Analysis: CM said that they did a follow-up miniature exhibition when the collections of Nelson-Atkins were returned from China, and this exhibition got a great popularity in Kansas City.

⁷⁰ GH, FZ and YZ did not answer this question.

Discussion and Results

Three main categories of questions emerged from the findings in the previous chapter: What is the process of developing international collaborative exhibitions? What is the process of traveling international collaborative exhibitions? What is your professional opinion about such a collaboration?

What Is the Process of Developing International Collaborative Exhibitions with China?

The findings related to this question was that there seemed to be three main concerns when developing an international exhibition between Chinese museums and museums from abroad: developing ideas, reaching agreements and getting permission from governmental agencies. In both case studies, exhibition ideas were proposed by the host sites, but the sample size was too small to generalize to other international exhibitions. Reaching agreements was vital to the whole collaboration process, museum professionals from both the origin and host sites had inputs on the exhibits checklists, the exhibition design and the contract making process. Getting permission from several levels of governmental agencies could be problematic, thus, it was recommended by the museum professionals to leave more time for this process.

The second concern regarding the development of an international exhibition was reaching agreements among partner museums, including agreements on exhibits checklists, exhibition design, and contracts.

There seemed to be no strict rule saying which side should choose the exhibits: any professional of the involved museums who knew the exhibits well could take charge of this job. However, all five interviewees noted that both the host sites and origin sites had inputs here. Final checklists would not be agreed upon until all of the professionals from both sites were satisfied with the list.

In terms of exhibition design, the biggest concern for the museum professionals was the security and preservation of the collections. For the host site, they also wanted to keep the exhibits safe and to show them to the audience better at the same time. The Shanghai Museum even provided a facility report to the American museums to show that they were capable of preserving the exhibits.

Participants agreed that a contract should be clear, comprehensive and avoid any loopholes. According to Gunnel Holmer, contracts explained “who should take the responsibilities, and who should write the checks,” and she also mentioned that the Swedish Glass Museum had a standard contract for international exhibitions. In contrast, the Shanghai Museum and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art refused to share their contract and budget because they were confidential.

The third concern of developing an international exhibition with China was for the Chinese museums to get permissions from the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) of China⁷¹ to import or export exhibitions in advance. The application for importing exhibitions should be turned in three months before the opening date, while for the exporting ones, six months ahead is required. Fan Zhang recommended museums leave even more time for this process, because there are several levels of governmental agencies that a museum needs to pass.

What Is the Process of Traveling International Collaborative Exhibitions with China?

There were three major findings correlated to this question. The first finding was, in both case studies, the origin sites were the side that dealt with the packing and crating of the exhibits. The second finding was that shipping by air was the preferable mode of transportation when transiting exhibits. The third finding was museums did not work directly with customs, rather, they hired transportation companies or customs broker to take charge of it.

According to the participants in this study, four steps were needed to travel an exhibition: museums reaching agreement on topics, objects and other important information of the exhibition; both museums applying for permissions to do international exhibition from their government agencies; packing; and transport (leaving the origin country's Customs, entering the

⁷¹ The majority of the public museums are subordinates to the SACH of China. A relatively small number of public museums belong to other governmental department, which are not included in the discussion here.

host country's Customs). After settling the list of the exhibits, signing the contract, and getting the permission from the SACH of China, museums could move forward on the transport process.

Usually, the origin site took charge of the packing and crating. However, according to Gunnel Holmer, they found an outside company to do the packing and crating, whereas Collin Mackenzie said they had specialized museum staff to do this job.

All of the five museum professionals interviewed in this study agreed that they usually choose to transport cultural heritage by air, and there are always couriers to fly with the exhibits. As Fan Zhang said, the mode of transportation depended on the size and number of the exhibits, the distance between two places and the budget.

The trickiest part of transiting cultural heritage seemed to be passing the Customs. Yanqun Zhou admitted that Chinese Customs could have a negative impact on this process because there are so many regulations and document works involved. She also said that sometimes the exhibits have to stay at the customs overnight because of the inspection, but they always tried to avoid this situation. For the Swedish glass exhibition, it took two days to pass the customs, which was a relatively long time; thus, Gunnel Holmer and Fan Zhang both suggested leaving more time for the customs.

All five interviewees said that museums usually hire a transportation company or customs broker that they trust to deal with the customs. Therefore, the quality of the transportation

company or the customs broker is very essential. If the company or broker were very experienced, and started reporting the export or import appropriately, there should be no problem later when the exhibits arrive.

In summary, the process of developing and traveling international exhibition was: coming up with the idea of doing an international exhibition; reaching agreements regarding the contract and the exhibition design among all the partner museums; preparing all the application documents for permission to import or export; packing and transiting the exhibits; passing Customs; arriving at the museums; and returning exhibits to the origin sites.

What Do Museum Professionals Think about Working Internationally?

There were three major findings to this question. The first one was that all the five museum professionals said that they were very satisfied with the collaboration between Chinese and western museums. The second one was museum professionals agreed that there were both challenges and rewards during the collaboration. The biggest challenge noted by all the participants were the problems in communication and reaching agreements. The rewards of working internationally include getting more worldwide impacts; having a great opportunity to communicate with and learn from professionals from other cultures; and the collaboration

strengthened the relationship among partner museums. The third finding was the reason why museum professionals think it was necessary to collaborate internationally.

Challenges

Regarding the challenge of collaborating internationally, all five museum professionals thought that communication and reaching agreements were very challenging.

First, the two sides spoke different languages, sometimes it might cause misunderstandings, and finding a translator was not always practical.

Secondly, the two sides came from different cultures; therefore, there were different ways of thinking and solving problems involved. Collin indicated that when preparing for the Chinese painting and calligraphy exhibition, there were curators of Chinese Art who know China quite well, and some ethnically Chinese curators who had known people of Shanghai Museum for decades, thus, they understood the Chinese thinking path very well. On the other hand, there were legal counsels who saw things purely from a legal point of view. All of these people had the ability to influence the decisions, so a lot of communication must be done to make sure that there was no misunderstanding because of the cultural differences.

Thirdly, the working process of the Chinese museums and foreign museums were quite different. According to Yanqun Zhou, the Shanghai Museum spent more than two months to get

the permission from the SACH of China, and it always took a while to get feedback from the higher leaders. On the American side, they had to hear back from board members, or sometimes they had a super long holiday and no one was able to contact them during this period. Both sides could not understand the delays that happened in this process, so it required a lot of effort to communicate with each other and explain why it took so long.

Other challenges such as loaning objects from the partner museums, conservation of objects, exhibition design, research of the exhibits, meeting the international standards, and budget were also mentioned by the professionals interviewed.

Rewards

As for the rewards of developing an international exhibition, four out of the five interviewees said that the most rewarding thing was to see that the exhibitions were a huge success. Collin mentioned there were more than 450,000 viewers of the Chinese painting and calligraphy exhibition, which was more than his expectation. Yanqun said seeing all the visitors and their feedback made her feel that the hard work that so many museum staff of different departments did was worthwhile. Gunnel agreed that seeing all the visitors made her feel proud.

Moreover, the huge success of the Chinese painting and calligraphy exhibition even caused some impacts in America. As Collin said, they developed a miniature Chinese painting and

calligraphy exhibition at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City after their exhibits were returned to their museum. This miniature exhibition got a lot attention because the public knew that they had just returned from a large and successful exhibition in China.

Another reward of collaboration mentioned by some of the interviewees was that it provided an opportunity to work with professionals from other cultures. For example, Gunnell noted that “the most rewarding things were being able to meet colleagues on the other side of the globe who share the same interests with us, and having a chance to work with cultures, to exchange ideas. It was a very nice and valuable experience.” Yanqun agreed and said that “I learned a lot from this collaboration experience. For instance, how to develop an exhibition that can meet the strict international standards, and how foreign colleagues work in certain situations.”

In addition, three out of the five interviewees stated that these specific collaborations strengthened the relationship among the partner museums. Fan and Collin both said that they had a great experience working with the partner museums, and the museums involved have built friendly relationship with each other.

The reasons to collaborate

According to all of the participants in this study, Chinese and western museums wanted to collaborate. Participants hoped to strengthen the relationship among the partner museums, to

spread culture, to serve the public better, and to talk with museum professionals from other cultures. They believed that collaborative international exhibitions could help their museums to have more impact worldwide and to improve their institution. All five interviewees believed that these exhibitions supported their museums' mission and vision in terms of topic and scope. As Jim Collins said in *Good to great and the social sectors*, "For a social sector organization, performance must be assessed relative to mission."⁷²

There are also other reasons for collaboration. Yanqun Zhou from the Shanghai Museum mentioned that experience was an important reason. Gunnel Holmer from the Swedish Glass Museum wanted to promote Swedish glass products in China. Collin Mackenzie from the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art believed that Chinese audiences deserved to see Chinese masterpieces.

⁷² Jim Collins, *Good to great and the social sectors: why business thinking is not the answer : a monograph to accompany Good to great : why some companies make the leap--and others don't*. Boulder, Colo.?: J. Collins].2005, 5.

Conclusion

There are three main conclusions that resulted from this study. The purpose of this paper was to describe the process of developing and traveling international collaborative exhibitions between Chinese and foreign museums and to hear museum professional's voice on this topic. This description was addressed through the three main questions that emerged from the interviews: What is the process of developing international collaborative exhibitions? What is the process of traveling international collaborative exhibitions? What is your professional opinion about such a collaboration?

The first conclusion was that although the collaboration between host museum and origin museum was friendly and effective, applying for permission from the State Administration of Cultural Heritage to develop an international exhibition between a Chinese museum and a foreign museum was complex and time-consuming. However, the Chinese museum professionals did not see this application process as a negative thing; instead, they thought it indicated that the government cares about culture heritage and museums, and there was a mature supervisory system for developing international exhibitions.

The second conclusion was that the customs process was not a difficult issue for museum professionals or their institutions, since the customs work was totally undertaken by a third party transportation company or customs broker.

The third conclusion was that museum professionals agreed that the museum field in China and abroad needed to collaborate more internationally. There were many reasons to support this opinion. For example, international exhibition helped attract more audience thus both the hosting and lending institutions gained much more impacts than they usually get when working alone; international collaboration was a great opportunity for museum staff to communicate and learn from each other; and collaboration strengthened the friendly relationship among partner museums.

There was a fourth conclusion that emerged as well: international exhibitions had larger impacts than expected on the host museums and their publics. The Chinese public responded enthusiastically to good international exhibitions.

This study had three limitations. The first limitation was that it only explored two international exhibition case studies. The second limitation was that the research only explored international exhibitions that were imported into China. The final limitation was that only five museum professionals were interviewed.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Instrument

Consent Form for Exemptions (Copy for Interviewees)

The Process of Developing and Traveling Exhibitions between Museums in China and the West

University of Washington

Researcher's Name: Zhongming Ye. Phone: 206-604-5458. Email: zhongy4@uw.edu.

Thesis Advisor: Wilson E. O'Donnell, Associate Director of the Museology Graduate Program.

Phone: 206-543-4642. Email: wilsonod@uw.edu.

I am asking you to participate in an interview that is part of my Master's Thesis work at the University of Washington. The purpose of this research is to describe the process of developing and traveling collaborative exhibitions between Chinese and western museums. Your participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits, and you may discontinue participation at any time. This interview will be audio taped for my note taking only. I may use your title and name of your institution in my final paper. If I directly quote you, I will send the quote to you before publication. If you have any questions now or in

the future, you may contact me through the information on this document. Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate in this interview?

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Consent Form for Exemptions (Copy for researcher)

The Process of Developing and Traveling Exhibitions between Museums in China and the West

University of Washington

Researcher's Name: Zhongming Ye. Phone: 206-604-5458. Email: zhongy4@uw.edu.

Thesis Advisor: Wilson E. O'Donnell, Associate Director of the Museology Graduate Program.

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I am asking you to participate in an interview that is part of my Master's Thesis work at the University of Washington. The purpose of this research is to describe the process of developing and traveling collaborative exhibitions between Chinese and western museums. Your

participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits, and you may discontinue participation at any time. This interview will be audio taped for my note taking only. I may use your title and name of your institution in my final paper. If I directly quote you, I will send the quote to you before publication. If you have any questions now or in the future, you may contact me through the information on this document. Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate in this interview?

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Interview Protocol

The Process of Developing and Traveling Exhibitions between Museums in China and the West

Date:

Time:

Location:

Interviewer: Zhongming Ye

Interviewee:

Researchers Statement:

I am asking you to participate in an interview that is part of my Master's Thesis work at the University of Washington. The purpose of this research is to *describe the process of developing and traveling collaborative exhibitions between Chinese and western museums*. Your participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits, and you may discontinue participation at any time. This interview will be audio taped for my note taking only. I may use your title and name of your institution in my final paper. If I directly quote you, I will send the quote to you before publication. If you have any questions now or in the future, you may contact me through the information on this card or document. Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate in this interview?

Interview Procedures:

Approximate length of interview is 30 minutes. Three major questions will be addressed.

I. What is the process of developing international collaborative exhibitions?*

II. What is the process of traveling international collaborative exhibitions?

III. What's your professional opinion about such collaboration?

* *International collaborative exhibition*: There are several kinds of international collaboration exhibits, but this paper focuses on collaboration between two museums, one of them acting as the origin side, and the other as the host side.

Interview Instrument

I. Introduction Questions: The following set of questions relate to the Pan Gongkai ink painting/ Sweden Glass international exhibits.

- A. How many artifacts were included in the exhibit? And how many of them were traveled *from / to* China? How much exhibit space did this exhibit require in square feet?
- B. In terms of scale, based on the number of artifacts, exhibit space used and costs associated, would this exhibit be considered a small/medium/large international exhibit?
- C. Is *name of museum tailored to the interview* the only host site of this exhibit? If not, what were the others?
- D. How much did *name of museum tailored to the interview* spend on the exhibit? On which

part did the museum spend the largest amount of money? For example, the exhibit design, the transportation of artifacts, the insurance cost, the salary of employees, etc.

E. How much time did you invest in *developing/acquiring* the exhibition from first contact to the opening date?

II. Collaboration Questions: The following set of questions relate to the collaborative process

A. The collaboration

a. Which museum proposed this exhibit?

b. How did the museums find each other?

c. Why do you think western museums want to collaborate with Chinese museums?

d. How does this exhibit support your mission/vision?

- How important was the topic of this exhibition to your decision?

- How important was the fact that this exhibition was international?

e. Did the museums have legal contracts or agreed upon guidelines with each other? If so,

what were the most important aspects that you addressed in the contracts/guidelines?

B. The Design of the exhibit

a. Which museum *selected/decided* the objects? How were the objects chosen?

b. (*For the host site*) How did you design the exhibit to adjust it to a different context?

b. (*For the origin site*) How were you involved in the design of the exhibition for the host site?

III. The process of traveling international collaborative exhibits

A. What were the specific steps of the travel process?

B. What were the impacts of Customs regulations/guidelines on this process?

C. Which governmental agencies and departments were involved in this process?

D. How many museum staff were involved in this process and what were their job titles?

E. What modes of transportation do you usually use when traveling artifacts internationally?

Which mode (or modes) was used for this specific exhibition?

F. Which museum was responsible for the crating, shipment and insurance costs?

G. Did your museum have the same or similar collection management standards for the artifacts included in this exhibition? What were the differences? And how did you reach agreement?

IV. Professional opinions

A. What would you say was the most challenging aspect of a collaborative exhibition partnership?

B. What were the three most significant problems that arose during this process? How were these problems solved?

C. Did you encounter specific situations when your museum had significant differing opinions regarding exhibit design, transport, artifact conservation, etc?

D. How much time would you recommend if you would do another international exhibit in the future? Would you recommend more or less time according to the scale of the exhibition?

E. How satisfied were you with this process? 'Not Satisfied' – 'Somewhat Satisfied' –

‘Satisfied’ – ‘Very Satisfied’. What was the most rewarding part about the collaboration process?

F. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding traveling collaborative exhibitions?

G. I would love to get copies of some important documents involved in this collaboration if it is possible. For example, the customs forms that you used for this specific exhibition, your collection management policy, and the insurance policy.

Confidentiality and Research Information:

I want to thank you for taking the time to have this conversation with me. Do you have any questions? If you have any questions, please contact me through the information on this card. Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix B: Application Form for Importing Exhibition

文物入境展览申报表

展览名称：
展览时间：
展览地点：
申报单位（公章）

负责人（签字）

年 月 日
国家文物局制

展览名称			
来展国别（地区）			
展出时间			
展出地点		展览面积	
展品情况			
经费预算		经费来源	

展品保险		承保人	
承办单位	境内		
	境外		
参展单位	境内		
	境外		
协办后援单位			
入境海关			

Appendix C: Exhibit Catalog for Importing Exhibition

文物入境展览展品目录

编号	文物名称	数量	收藏单位	估价	备注
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					

Appendix D: Exhibit Inventory for Importing Exhibition

OBJECT LIST		INVENTORY		TECHNIQUE		TOTAL VALUE		0	SEK
OBJECT/TITLE	NUMBER	YEAR	TECHNIQUE	DIMENSIONS	OWNER	VALUE (SEK)	COMMENT	PICTURE	
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									

文物出境展览展示品 申报表

展览名称：

拟展时间：

出展国家（地区）：

申报单位（公章）：

负责人（签字）

____年__月__日

国家文物局制

编 号

文物名称		出土地点		出土时间	
时 代		尺 寸			
文物等级		质 地		数 量	
发表书刊			发表时间		
收藏单位			藏品编号		
曾于	年赴	展览	曾于	年赴	展览
曾于	年赴	展览	曾于	年赴	展览
简要说明:					
照 片:					

填写说明：编号为送审文物序号，应与《文物出国展览汇总登记表》一致；藏品编号指收藏单位的藏品登记号或考古报告发表的器物登记号；简要说明主要为器物描述或其他需要说明的问题；照片一般应为扫描照片，也可为 5 × 3.5 英寸彩色或黑白照片。

文物出境展览 结项备案表

展览名称：

申报单位（公章）

负责人（签字）

年 月 日
国家文物局制

展览名称	中文	
	原文	
展览批准机构、 批准文号及日期		
出展国别（地区）		
展出时间		展出场地
展品情况	总计 件（组），其中一级文物（组）	
承办单位	境内	
	境外	
参展单	境内	
	境外	

位					
协办后援					
保 险	险种及费率				
	承保人				
包装 运输	包装公司				
	承运人				
出入	海关备案号				
境 海 关	出境	口岸		时间	
	入境	口岸		时间	
手续	结案时间				
展览情况（观众人数统计及参观展览的社会政要名流情况）					
展品受损情况及原因分析					
受损文物的赔付情况					