

Bringing the Chinese Zodiac Heads Home

Vicky Gong

Introduction

"One day, two bandits entered the Old Summer Palace. One plundered, the other burned. Civilization was in the sack of the Palace. This is what the crime was. The fire was done in the interest of looting. (Victor Marie Hugo 1985, 50–65)" This is a quotation from French writer Victor Hugo in his book *Les Châtiments* about the Old Summer Palace (Yuanmingyuan). Two bandits symbolize Anglo-French troops, allying for the common profit. The Old Summer Palace was a complex of masterpieces, palaces, and gardens. It was built during the 18th and early centuries and served as the imperial gardens for the Qing Dynasty emperors. The looting occurred in 1860 during the Second Opium War. Recognizing that defeat was inevitable, the emperor himself fled the city while the gates were opened, and Anglo-French forces set about looting the Palace. It lasted several days, during which soldiers ransacked the complex, seizing invaluable artifacts, including sculptures, porcelain, jade, and gold. Finally, the burning of the Palace resulted in the destruction of countless irreplaceable works of cultural heritage. Many of the looted artifacts ended up in museums and private collections worldwide. Institutions like the British Museum and the French National Library still hold items taken from the Palace. There have been ongoing calls for the return of the looted artifacts. The Twelve Old Summer Palace bronze heads are a collection of heads in the shape of the Chinese zodiac animals that were part of a water clock fountain. Believed to have been designed by the Italian Jesuit missionary and artist, Giuseppe Castiglione, for the Qianlong Emperor, the statues were arranged in a circle and would spout out water from their mouths to tell the time (Ford et al. 2023) Many of the bronze heads were taken from the site by the troops. Efforts have been made by the Chinese government and citizens to recover and repatriate these cultural artifacts in recent years, and there are now seven out of twelve heads have been retrieved. The other five are still missing: researchers have no idea whether they are destroyed, hidden, or collected. If the five heads are found one day, the manner of their return will be an imperative question. This article explores three primary methods of restitution: replication,

borrowing, and artists' action. A comparison with precedents of cultural relics return gives an idea of the respective advantages and disadvantages of each method.

I. Replication: place the authentic zodiac heads in China, and the counterfeit one in other countries.

The first approach involves creating a duplicate of the original zodiac head and leaving it in the country of origin while bringing the authentic one back to China. It is a traditional approach to displaying artworks, but it's relatively new in terms of restitution. Offering countries high-quality replicas in exchange for returning artworks, rather than negotiating, shows more sincerity and friendliness. This approach could increase the likelihood of restitution and make the process of returning smoother. Another thing that should be noticed is that the replication of imitation is of a high standard. For instance, the British Museum used cutting-edge 21st-century technology and pioneering techniques from the late 1800s to create an impressive hieroglyphic Maya palace stairway at Palenque in southern Mexico. They scanned the 13 Maudslay casts of the hieroglyphic stairway in the museum and utilized Maudslay's photograph and Hunter's drawing to faithfully recreate the stairway digitally into a 3D model as it would have been in 1891, before significant erosion. This digital version of the stairway was then used with a milling machine to sculpt the stone stairway at a 1:1 scale. ("The Hieroglyphic Stairway at Palenque," n.d.) If researchers from China and other countries use this kind of technology to replicate artworks, visitors may have a similar experience whether they are appreciating the "real" or "fake" zodiac heads. This brings out another advantage of doing so: both the visitors and researchers from both countries, China and the country that owns the replica, will have the opportunity to observe the artifacts.

However, the replication technology has its drawbacks. Despite its high level, some experts argue that no replication can replace the original. Dr. Richard Kurin, an anthropologist and the Smithsonian Institution's Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture, emphasizes the irreplaceable value of original artifacts in understanding human history and culture (Smithsonian Education 2024). He explained that each artifact has a unique function in history and provides a tangible connection to the past. Consequently, using a replica instead of the real zodiac may impact visitors' experience, particularly those who come to the museum to see the authentic zodiac heads. In a survey conducted during Sotheby's Summer Institute 2024, students were asked whether they

would still visit the Louvre if they found out that the Mona Lisa on display was a copy. Out of 26 students, only 8 said they would still go. This indicates that the use of replicas in museums can indeed affect people's willingness to visit. This could lead to a decrease in visitor numbers, causing potential financial losses for museums in countries that agree to the returning policy. While financial considerations are important, money should not override ethical concerns in this matter.

Despite some people may think there is no point in replication as a method of restitution since every museum can have replicas. If it is simply a matter of replicating the zodiac heads and distributing them, why China needs to possess the original is a question. According to Francis Lewis News, the fact that colonization was "wrong" has become common sense, therefore the looting and unethical obtaining of these artifacts should be considered wrong and immoral too (Hunter 2022). The Second Opium War and the Anglo-French allied forces' invasion of China are humiliating events in Chinese history and should not be forgotten by any generation. The efforts to return the real zodiac heads should continue until the moment they are returned to China because the government and museums need to take steps to rewrite these mistakes, otherwise, they become complicit in them. For the countries who own the lost zodiac heads for any reason, it is within a museum's moral obligation to return stolen artifacts to their country of origin. Also, the zodiac heads hold significant value as they represent the culture and history of the land they derive from. The bronze statues of the heads were designed by the Italian Western painter Giuseppe Castiglione, supervised by the French Michel Benoist, and produced by the court craftsmen. The animal heads are modeled after the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac wearing robes. The selected material is the red copper refined by the Qing Court at that time, which has not been corroded for hundreds of years. According to research, every day, the 12 zodiac bronze statues will spray water in turn every hour, and at noon, the 12 statues will spray at the same time (Guo 2023). In this way, the zodiac heads are the embodiment of the strong national power of the Qing Dynasty. They reflect the peak of craftsmanship in Chinese history, evident in the bronze statues. The appearance of the animal's head draws on traditional Chinese culture but also uses Western technology, which reflects cultural integration. In this way, replication is a reasonable of bring the zodiac heads back to China.

II. Borrowing: China own the zodiac heads, other countries that contribute to the restitution could borrow the zodiac heads from China for exhibition.

Borrowing is another way of repatriation which is similar to replication to some extent. It is especially a fine way when both places want to appreciate the real zodiac heads. Mara Cerquetti, a researcher in Cultural Heritage and Tourism at the University of Macerata University in Italy, said "Museums and education should enhance the distinctive features of local cultural heritage, both to promote the understanding of its complex value and to reach new audiences. (Cerquetti 2011)" The ownership of cultural relics belongs to a certain country, but everyone in the world should have the right to appreciate them. China could loan the zodiac heads to the museums that want to look at them and consider the countries that contribute to the return of the zodiac heads first, but the ownership should always belong to China. Nevertheless, it is not easy to negotiate sometimes, because it means the countries own the zodiac before do not have these rights anymore. For example, according to historical writers and journalists Charlotte Edwardes and Catherine Milner, Egypt demands the return of the Rosetta Stone, a 2,000-year-old relic key to deciphering ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, for almost 60 years (Edwardes and Milner 2003). The stone is currently housed in the British Museum for the past 200 years. Found by Napoleon's army in 1799, the stone is central to the museum's Egyptology collection and attracts millions of visitors annually. Thus, Britain is always reluctant to return the stone considering its historical value and the benefits it brings. Now, in an echo of the campaign by Athens for the return of the Elgin Marbles, the Egyptian government is calling for the stone to be returned and threatening to pursue its claim "aggressively" if the British Museum does not agree to give it back voluntarily. If one day the zodiac heads scattered abroad face the same circumstance, it is hard to let the other country agree on the agreement of borrowing.

An ethical discussion on this problem would be: Should artworks be preserved where they were created, where they can be best protected, or where they can be best exhibited? In a 2024 statistical survey conducted at Sotheby's Summer Institute, 14 out of 26 students expressed that they prefer artifacts to be preserved and displayed in their countries of origin. Actually, as the answer to this question would vary based on different situations, the decision of where the artifacts should be placed should be made by the countries of origin. Some museums argue that artifacts are safer in their possession because they have the resources to protect these relics from damage,

whereas countries experiencing armed conflict or political disputes might not be able to do so. A potential solution could be for countries to lease their cultural artifacts to museums. This way, countries retain ownership of their artifacts while ensuring their safety. Nevertheless, many museums continue to hold onto these artifacts even when the originating country is no longer in conflict and has the resources to care for them. For example, the Parthenon Marbles are still housed in the British Museum despite the Greek government's clear stance on their historical and cultural significance to Greek heritage and their requests for their return (Marshall 2023). For the zodiac heads, it is an art looting from any perspective. Therefore, there should be no reason not to return them, since China's stance is to allow them to stay in their country of origin.

III. Artists' Action: Artists catch people's attention by making some new artworks related to the looted zodiac heads.

Many artists use their country's traditional culture and elements as inspiration in their artworks. For example, Frida Kahlo a female Mexican artist extensively used elements of Mexican folk art and traditional culture in her paintings. Her self-portraits often feature symbols of Mexican cultures, such as traditional clothing, religious symbols, and natural elements (Neocrotalic.com 2023). Ai Weiwei is an important artist of using traditional Chinese culture in his artworks. He often draws inspiration from traditional Chinese ceramics and ancient artifacts in his contemporary art pieces. The artist, with his subversive wit, continues to explore Chinese historical objects. He transforms items from China's material history, altering traditional meanings for new purposes. Ai Weiwei highlights issues of looting and repatriation while continuing to examine the concepts of "fake" and the copy versus the original. He states that each piece is "A copy of an original, but not an exact copy – something that has its sensitive layer of languages, which are different, and that bears the mark of our time. (Stanska 2021)" Therefore, Ai Weiwei aimed to draw attention to the stolen zodiac heads and encourage people to contemplate their connection to history in the present time. This approach is valuable as its impact is widespread in the public sphere. However, if artists fail to introduce original elements based on the original artifact or acknowledge their sources of inspiration, their work could be considered art forgeries or plagiarism.

Conclusion

Overall, three reasonable approaches that can facilitate the restitution of the zodiac heads scattered around the world are replication, borrowing, and artists' actions in the public domain. Each action has its pros and cons, and the best approach varies depending on the specific situation. The restitution of artworks should take into consideration the country's economic situation, technological development, political relations between countries, and other complex factors. The looting of art and cultural property has profound consequences that extend far beyond the act of looting. Such objects often hold significance for communities, serving as symbols of their heritage. When they are stolen, it is not just the physical items that are lost, but also a part of the cultural community identity. Therefore, removing artifacts from their original context can obscure their ownership history and distort their understanding of the past. In this way, artworks are ways of telling history, especially the looted ones!

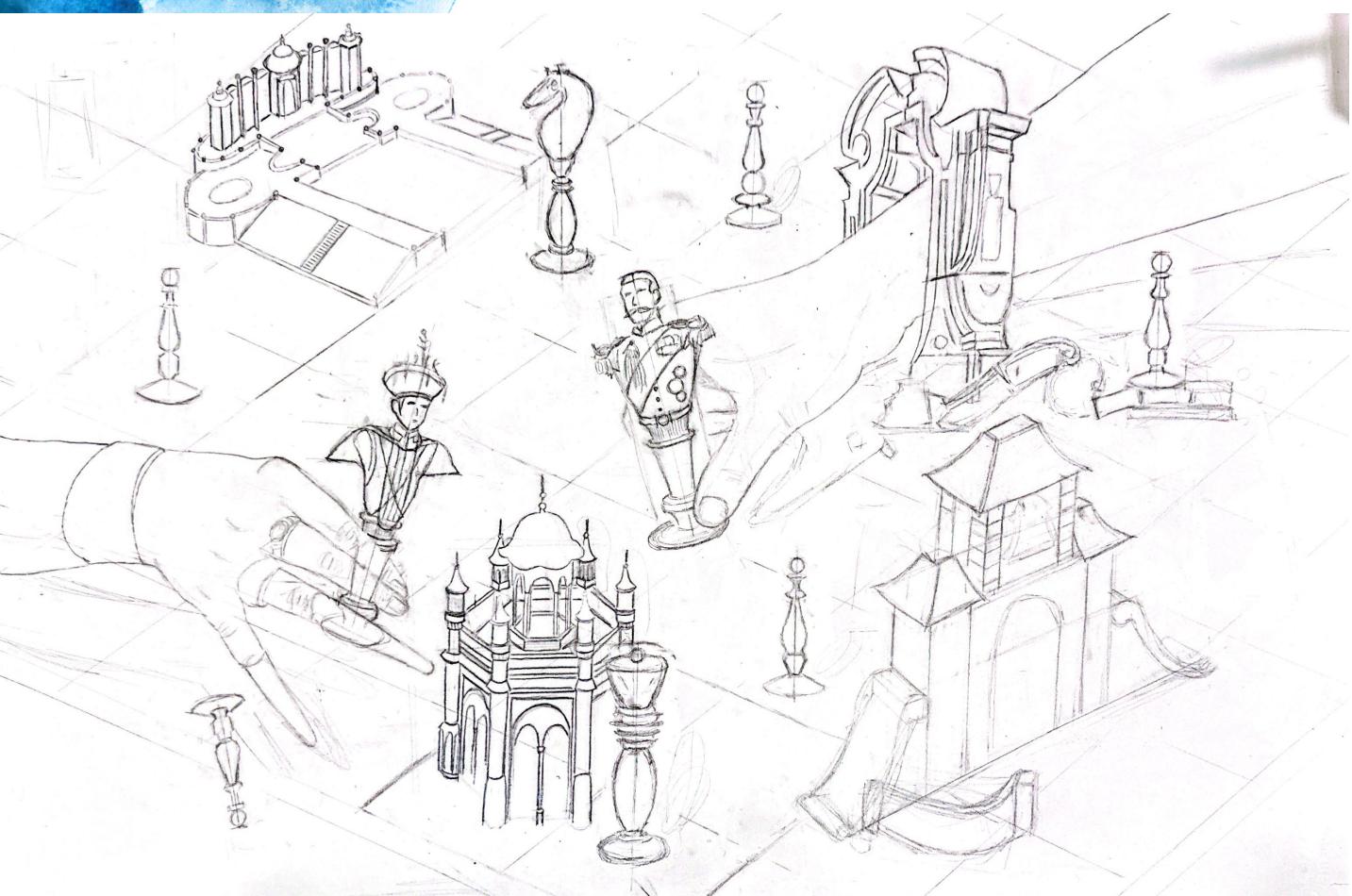
Another point worth mentioning is that my high school is located within the Old Summer Palace. Whenever I take a walk there after school, I often see many broken sculptures, walls, and artifacts. I used to wonder why this large imperial garden from the Qing Dynasty hadn't been restored and rebuilt. I think it's because every Chinese believes that, one day in the future, those missing buildings and artifacts will return to their original place, back to their home. I hope that the twelve bronze zodiac heads will once again spout water by the fountain in the Old Summer Palace.

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---- **The Looting of the Old
Summer Palace
Beijing, China**

Vicky Gong

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- Introduction
 - About the Old Summer Palace and the Second Opium War
 - About the Chinese zodiac heads
- Three ways of restitution
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 - Personal Idea

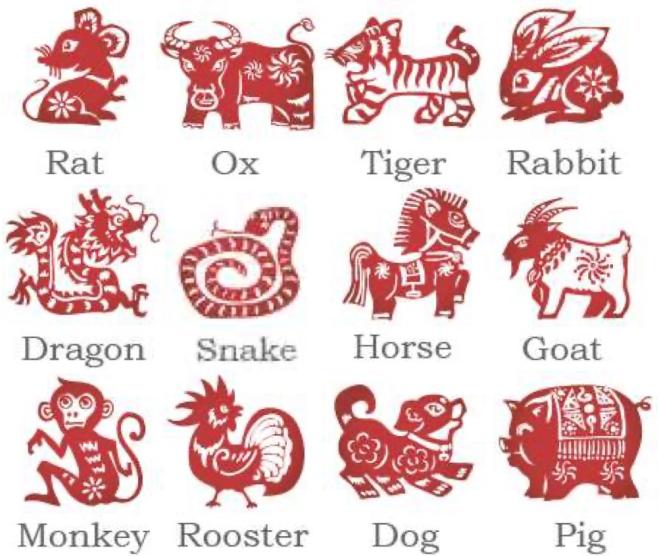
The Old Summer Palace and the Second Opium War

- a complex of masterpieces, palaces, and gardens
- built during the 18th century
- served as the imperial gardens for the Qing Dynasty emperors.
- The looting occurred in 1860 during the Second Opium War.
- Anglo-French forces ransacked the complex, seizing invaluable artifacts
- looted artifacts ended up in museums and private collections worldwide. (British Museum, French National Library)

Why I'm interested

- Skating
- My high school is here!
- No repair & construction
(2 reason)





Chinese Zodiac

Zodiac Animal	Recent Years	Personality Traits
Rat	1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020	Quick-witted, resourceful, versatile, kind
Ox	1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, 2021	Diligent, dependable, strong, determined
Tiger	1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010, 2022	Brave, confident, competitive
Rabbit	1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011, 2023	Quiet, elegant, kind, responsible
Dragon	1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012, 2024	Confident, intelligent, enthusiastic
Snake	1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, 2025	Enigmatic, intelligent, wise
Horse	1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, 2026	Animated, active, energetic
Goat	1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015, 2027	Calm, gentle, sympathetic
Monkey	1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, 2028	Sharp, smart, curiosity
Rooster	1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017, 2029	Observant, hardworking, courageous
Dog	1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, 2030	Lovely, honest, prudent
Pig	1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019, 2031	Compassionate, generous, diligent

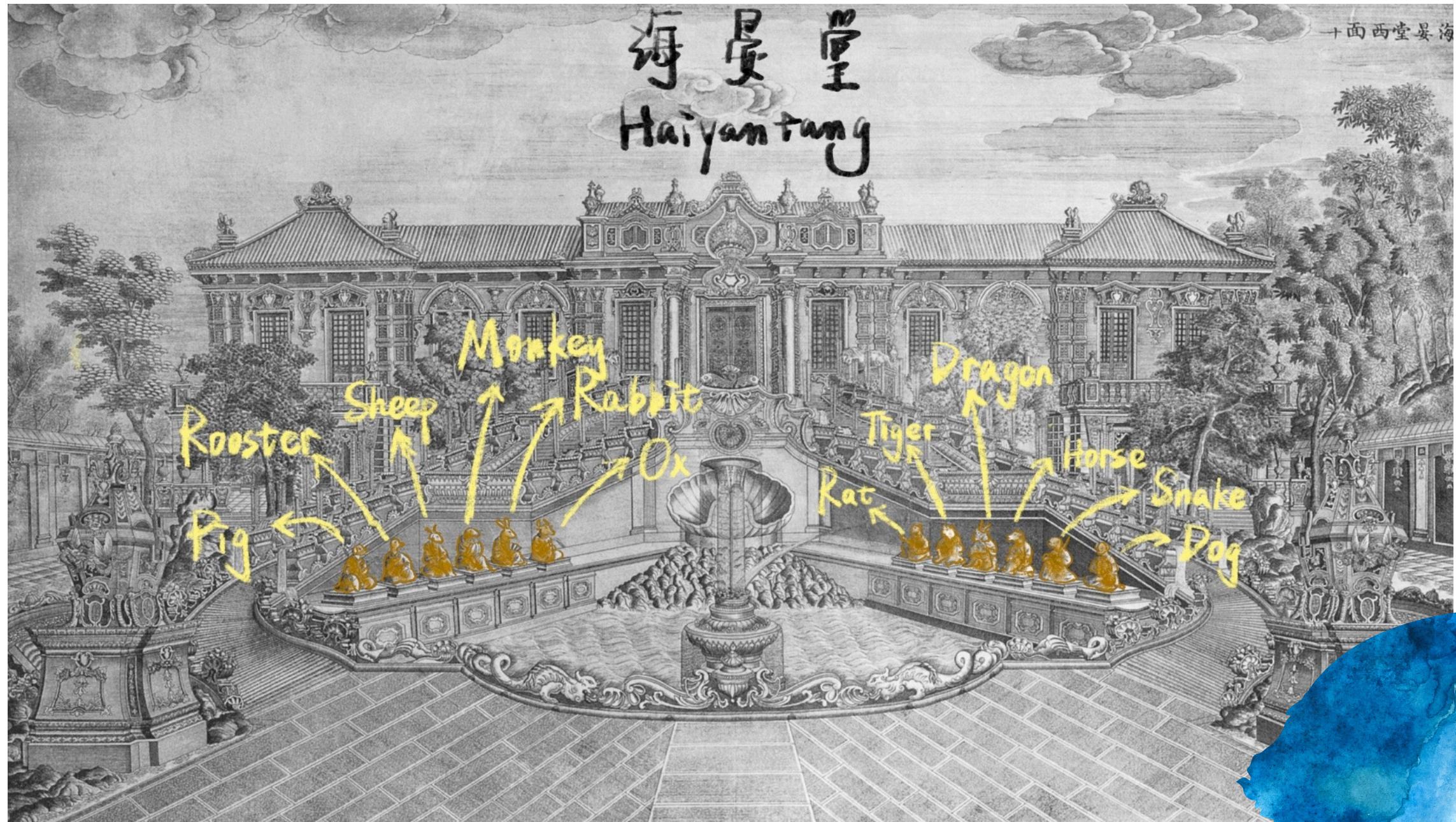
The Chinese zodiac heads



- part of a water clock fountain
 - were arranged in a circle and would spout out water from their mouths to tell the time
 - designed by the Italian Jesuit missionary and artist, Giuseppe Castiglione, for the Qianlong Emperor
-
- Current situation
- seven out of twelve heads have been retrieved.
The other five are still missing: researchers have no idea whether they are destroyed, hidden, or collected

海晏堂西面十

海晏堂
Haiyantang



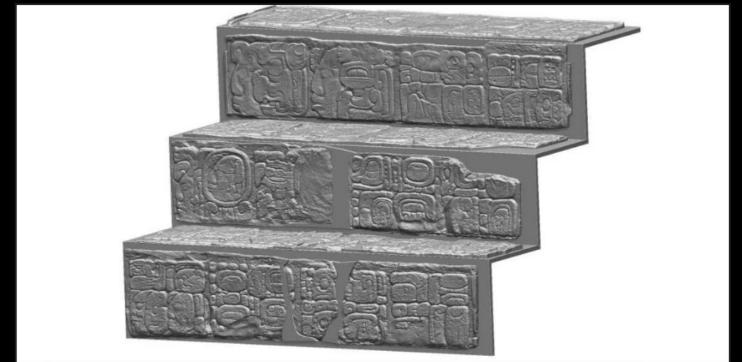
I. Replication

- **Place the authentic zodiac heads in China, and the counterfeit one in other countries**

Pros

- Offering countries high-quality replicas in exchange for returning artworks, rather than negotiating, shows more sincerity and friendliness. This approach could increase the likelihood of restitution and make the process of returning smoother.
- the replication of imitation is of a high standard
- the British Museum used cutting-edge 21st-century technology and pioneering techniques from the late 1800s to create a hieroglyphic Maya palace stairway at Palenque in southern Mexico.
- a similar experience whether they are appreciating the “real” or “fake” zodiac heads.
- both the visitors and researchers from both countries, China and the country that owns the replica, will have the opportunity to observe the artifacts.

3D technology



3D rendering of stairway casts.

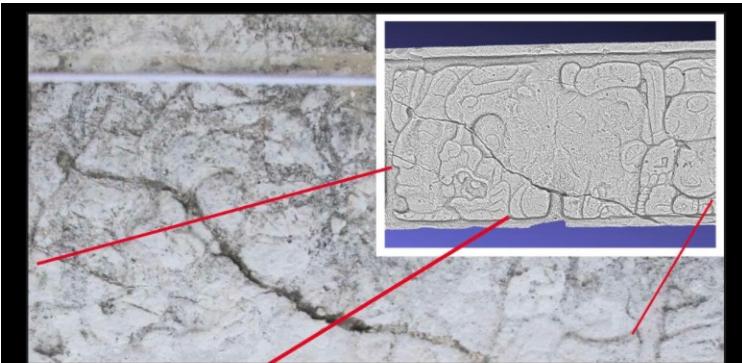


Photo of part of one step from 2018. Superimposed – 3D scan of a Maudslay cast to show the amount of detail lost between 1891 and 2018.

Please help my ESSAY!

- You are going to an exhibition at the Louvre and desperately want to see the Mona Lisa, but you are told that the Mona Lisa is a replica.
- Will you still go there?



Original



Our Replica Oil Painting

Fabulous Masterpieces

I. Replication

Cons

- some experts argue that no replication can replace the original
- Dr. Richard Kurin, an anthropologist and the Smithsonian Institution's Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture: each artifact has a unique function in history and provides a tangible connection to the past.
- using a replica instead of the real zodiac may impact visitors' experience, particularly those who come to the museum to see the authentic zodiac heads.
- This could lead to a decrease in visitor numbers, causing potential financial losses for museums in countries that agree to the returning policy.
- While financial considerations are important, money should not override ethical concerns in this matter.



Question raised: *What is the point of having the original one?*



- If it is simply a matter of replicating the zodiac heads and distributing them, why China needs to possess the original is a question.
- Expert view: the fact that colonization was “wrong” has become common sense, therefore the looting and unethical obtaining of these artifacts should be considered wrong and immoral too.
- rewrite these mistakes
- The zodiac heads hold significant value as they represent the culture and history of the land they derive from.
- The bronze statues of the heads were designed by the Italian Western painter Giuseppe Castiglione, supervised by the French Michel Benoist, and produced by the court craftsmen.
- Material, technology, appearance, function.
- The 12 zodiac bronze statues will spray water in turn every hour, and at noon, the 12 statues will spray at the same time.
- The zodiac heads are the embodiment of the strong national power of the Qing Dynasty. The appearance of the animal's head draws on traditional Chinese culture but also uses Western technology, which reflects cultural integration.

II. Borrowing

- **China own the zodiac heads, other countries that contribute to the restitution could borrow the zodiac heads from China for exhibition.**

Pros

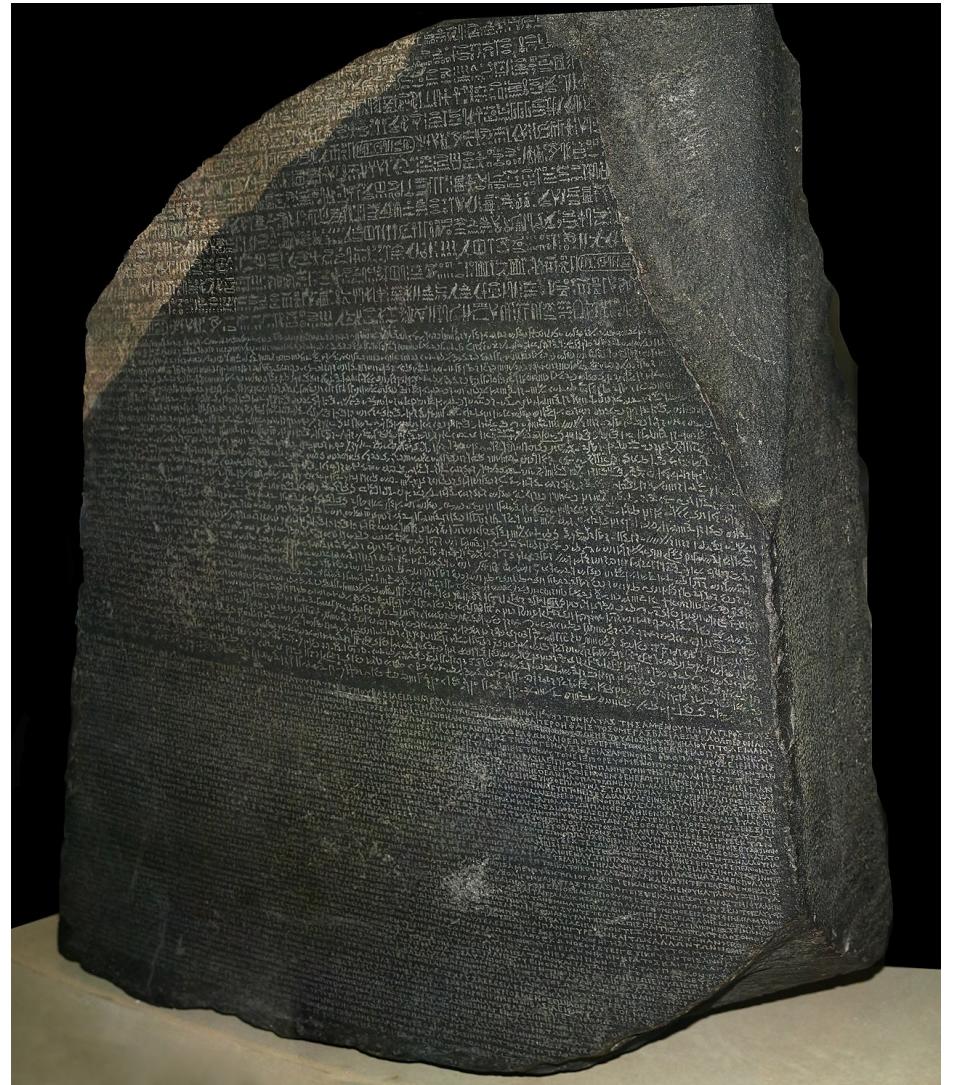
- similiar to Replication
- Museums and education should enhance the distinctive features of local cultural heritage, both to promote the understanding of its complex value and to reach new audiences.”
- The ownership of cultural relics belongs to a certain country, but everyone in the world should have the right to appreciate them.



II. Borrowing

Cons

- it is not easy to negotiate sometimes, because it means the countries own the zodiac before do not have these rights anymore.
- Egypt demands the return of the Rosetta Stone, a 2,000-year-old relic key to deciphering ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, for almost 60 years.
- The stone is currently housed in the British Museum for the past 200 years. Found by Napoleon's army in 1799, the stone is central to the museum's Egyptology collection and attracts millions of visitors annually. Thus, Britain is always reluctant to return the stone considering its historical value and the benefits it brings.
- If one day the zodiac heads scattered abroad face the same circumstance, it is hard to let the other country agree on the agreement of borrowing.



Please help my ESSAY!

- Should artworks be preserved where they were created, where they can be best protected, or where they can be best exhibited?

Another question raised: *Should artworks be preserved where they were created, where they can be best protected, or where they can be best exhibited?*

- The decision of where the artifacts should be placed should be made by the countries of origin.
- Some museums argue that artifacts are safer in their possession because they have the resources to protect these relics from damage, whereas countries experiencing armed conflict or political disputes might not be able to do so.
- A potential solution could be for countries to lease their cultural artifacts to museums. This way, countries retain ownership of their artifacts while ensuring their safety.
- Many museums continue to hold onto these artifacts even when the originating country is no longer in conflict and has the resources to care for them. For example, the Parthenon Marbles are still housed in the British Museum despite the Greek government's clear stance on their historical and cultural significance to Greek heritage and their requests for their return.
- For the zodiac heads, it is an art looting from any perspective.



III. Artists' Action

- **Artists catch people's attention by making some new artworks related to the looted zodiac heads.**
- **Ai Weiwei** For more than a decade, he lived and worked in New York, returning to China in 1993. He was detained in April, 2011 for close to three months, causing an international outcry. He is currently prohibited from leaving Beijing.
- The Zodiac Project is Ai Weiwei's first major public sculpture. For this monumental new work, Ai has recreated the famous twelve bronze animal heads.
- By recreating the disembodied heads of these figures on a monumental scale, Ai Weiwei raises issues of cultural patrimony, national pride, and China's ongoing relationship with its own history.



Please help my ESSAY!

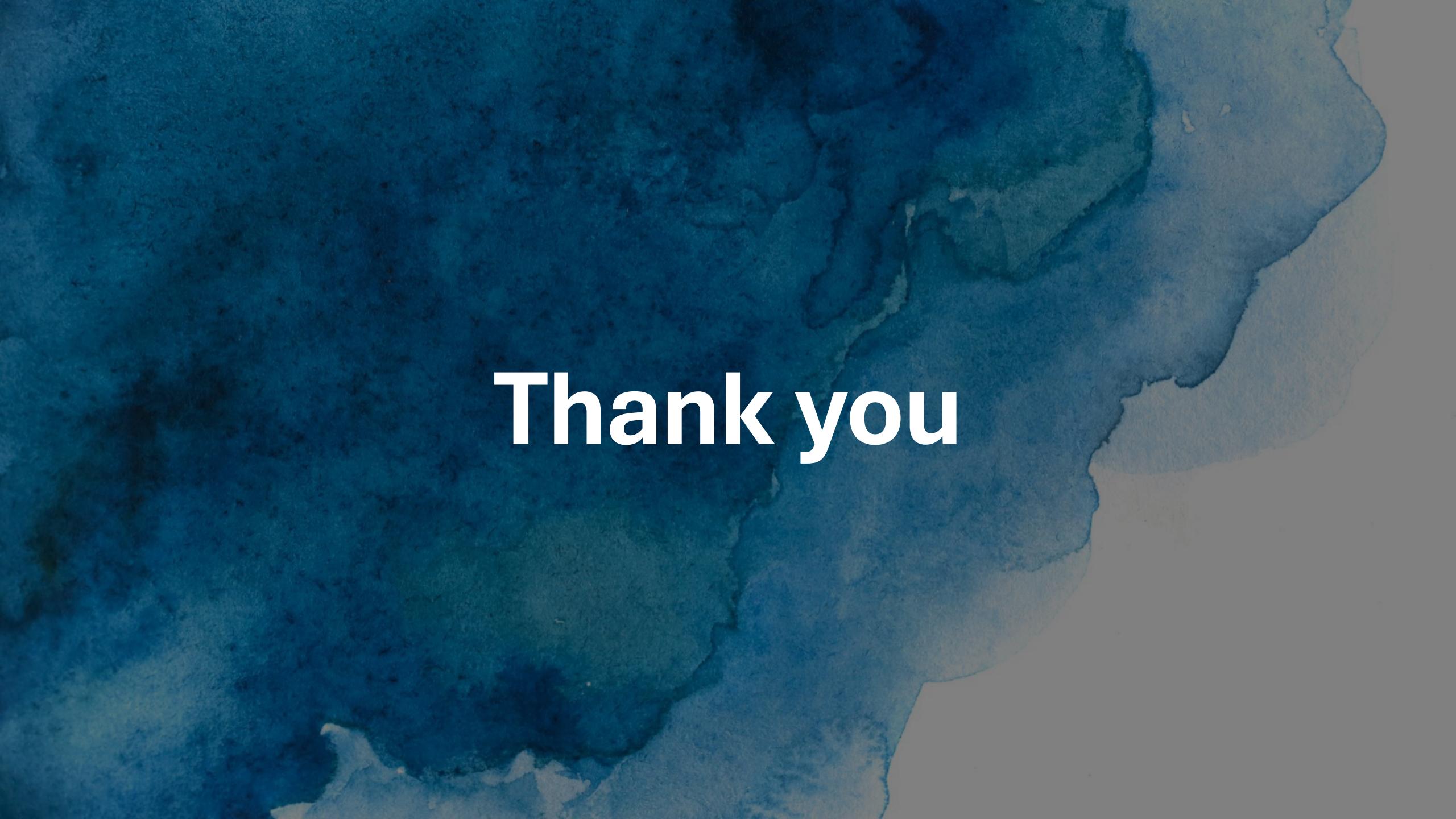
- Seven out of the 12 animal heads in Weiwei's piece are based on the original fountain works that have been discovered. The remaining five are the artist's reimagining of the currently missing artifacts.
- Bigger, financial profit, good intention
- **Is that an art forgery?**



Conclusion

- Each has its pros and cons
- Varied in different situations
- The looting of art and cultural property has profound consequences that extend far beyond the act of theft.
- Such objects often hold significance for communities, serving as symbols of their heritage.
- When they are stolen, it is not just the physical items that are lost, but also a part of **the cultural community identity**. Therefore, removing artifacts from their original context can obscure their ownership history and distort understandings of the past.
- Artworks are ways of telling our history, especially the looted one!





Thank you

Student: Yunshan (Vicky) Gong

Course: Art Crime

Lead Instructor: Caterina Pierre

Co-Instructor: Claudia Sohrens

Course Description: From the looting of antiquities to Nazi theft to the seizure of paintings right off museum walls, the world of international art crime is both fascinating and diverse. In a dynamic virtual learning environment that balances live sessions with different types of interactive activities, students engage in an intensive study of this high-stakes arena, where millions of dollars as well as the reputations of premier art institutions and experts are on the line. Students learn how fakes enter the market and what methods are used to determine whether a work of art is authentic or a forgery; students also investigate how and when stolen works are restituted to their rightful owners. This course is ideal for students who love true crime and detective work, are inherently curious, and are interested in law and ethics.

Using case studies of the most notable art crimes and legal cases of the past three centuries, students are introduced to basic legal and ethical issues specific to the art market, guided by an expert educator and an internationally renowned art law specialist. Students discover how two unarmed men posing as police officers could steal 13 famous artworks valued at nearly \$500 million right off the walls of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. Students also look at works of art stolen by the Nazis and then ultimately restituted to their rightful heirs, such as the captivating case of Gustav Klimt's Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I, which was profiled in the 2015 film The Woman in Gold. Finally, students explore famous cases of forgery in art and discuss how such imitations can be discovered by art world professionals.

I. Intellectual Curiosity

ENGAGEMENT

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent | The student was fully immersed in the course and proactively contributed to personal and group intellectual development by offering ideas and asking thoughtful, probing questions of others. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | The student participated in the course by offering some ideas; however, Faculty would have liked to hear the student's voice more. The student's contributions are valuable! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developing | The student's participation was limited. Faculty advise the student to offer ideas and ask more questions in the future. |
-

DESIRE FOR LEARNING

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent | The student displayed a strong desire for learning and demonstrated exceptional commitment to the course material by completing optional activities during the independent study module. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | The student demonstrated a desire for learning the core curriculum and completed the required assignments. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developing | The student needs to demonstrate more desire to learn to achieve success in completing required assignments. Faculty advise the student to develop more academic rigor and a goal-oriented mindset. |
-

II. Academic Preparation

PREPARATION

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent | The student was always prepared for assignments and projects, impressing Faculty with the student's strong commitment to the course. |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

<input type="checkbox"/> Good	The student was mostly prepared for assignments and projects; the student could better demonstrate commitment to the course by reviewing the required readings more closely and contributing more often during class discussions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Developing	The student needs to prepare better for assignments and projects. Faculty encourage the student to review the course syllabus more closely and be sure to submit all projects on time.

TIME MANAGEMENT

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	The student demonstrated strong time management skills in creating and preparing assignments and the final project, resulting in fully realized work.
<input type="checkbox"/> Good	The student demonstrated satisfactory time management skills preparing assignments and the final project; however, the student's work could benefit from additional refinement as a result of improving these time-management skills.
<input type="checkbox"/> Developing	The student had challenges with time management in creating and preparing assignments and the final project, resulting in partial work. Faculty advise that the student focus on developing time management skills.

III. Collaboration

LISTENING

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	The student actively listened when others spoke, then incorporated or built off others' ideas to deepen their own understanding of a topic.
<input type="checkbox"/> Good	The student listened when others spoke; however, the student also demonstrated moments of preoccupation. Faculty advise the student to listen more actively.
<input type="checkbox"/> Developing	The student displayed limited attention. Faculty encourage the student to pay closer attention and to listen more attentively when others are speaking.

ETIQUETTE

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	The student personally and actively helped contribute to building a positive learning environment and supported their peers in the classroom.
<input type="checkbox"/> Good	The student contributed to a positive learning environment. Faculty advise the student to focus more on supporting their peers in the classroom.
<input type="checkbox"/> Developing	The student displayed occasional preoccupied behavior during class. Faculty advise the student to focus on creating positive and supportive peer interactions.

GROWTH

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	The student was open to constructive criticism, integrating feedback in order to make their work even stronger and showing maturity beyond their years.
<input type="checkbox"/> Good	The student was open to constructive criticism, and Faculty encourage the student to better integrate this feedback in order to make their work even stronger.
<input type="checkbox"/> Developing	Faculty advise the student to explore opportunities to better integrate feedback into their work.

IV. Final Project(s)

Solving an Art Crime Case

For the Final Project, students will choose one of the following options.

1. Students may choose to take on the role of either an FBI investigator, a restitution specialist, or a museum curator. Choosing from a list of possible art crime cases, students will be asked to create a written plan to either track down stolen objects (FBI investigator); return looted objects to an individual or a government (restitution specialist); or

discover whether an artwork that has just been donated to their museum is an authentic work of art by the artist associated with it (museum curator).

OR

2. Students may also choose to be an art lawyer, and in this example can select a case in which they are to defend a position. Possible cases and readings to help guide your plan will be distributed separately and will be posted to Canvas.

The project should include the following:

1. Evidence of planning, which should include a brief outline of the student's ideas.
2. Reading list, including all online and article sources used in the project.
3. Evidence of revisions (students are free to share drafts with the instructors for feedback).
4. Written text, approximately 2,000 words in length.
5. Images for the virtual oral presentation.

The final project should be illustrated by a PowerPoint presentation and uploaded as a PDF, with an emphasis on images and explanatory statements. Students are expected to confidently pitch their solutions and ideas for the art crime and/or art law cases they have chosen in a presentation on the final day of class.

Narrative Evaluation:

Yunshan Vicky Gong was an excellent student in the Art Crime course. Vicky chose to work on the looting case concerning the Old Summer Palace in Beijing. It was one of the most important imperial residences and gardens in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1860, during the Second Opium War, the Old Summer Palace was looted and destroyed by French and British troops. Vicky concentrated on the twelve zodiac heads looted from the Old Summer Palace, as there were too many looted objects to discuss them all in the time allotted for her presentation and the word count allotted for her written paper.

Vicky presented the case with clarity, which was not a simple matter as it was a complicated case with numerous artworks looted and a large property destroyed. Vicky settled on this case early in the course, as she had a personal connection with it: her high school is near the remains of the Old Summer Palace, and she had recently visited the museums at Princeton University, which have an edition of the twelve zodiac heads by the contemporary artist Ai Weiwei. Vicky's presentation combined her research about the case and her own photos of ruins, connecting the scene of the crime with her personal story. By asking her peers to participate in thoughtful surveys throughout the presentation, she was able to revive the interest and discussion around this case in a very interesting and engaging way. It is important to note that Vicky had only nine days to produce the materials. Her presentation was fun, and allowed students to discover their own Chinese zodiac sign, as well as to do some interactive looking at looted objects from the palace.

Vicky also completed all eight of the Discussion Board posts, as well as the in-class creative projects, which included making an abstract self-portrait, a cyanotype print, and a camera obscura. She participated in the group zine project, where she shared photographs of New York City through colorful filters and an image of a Vincent van Gogh painting that she saw during our class visit to The Metropolitan Museum of Art. She commented in the Zine about how the meaning of art is not static, and how artworks change as the people who view them change over time and history. The faculty believe the projects that Vicky completed in Art Crime will convert into skills that she will transfer into her academic and professional work beyond this course, such as research, writing, oral presentation, reading, and creative thinking.

Vicky was a pleasure to work with and the faculty are pleased to have had the opportunity to meet her and work with her in the Art Crime course this summer.