

## **Report of the ITP 2019**

**Ye Ye, Curator**

**Emperor Qin Shihuang's**

**Mausoleum Site Museum**



With the support of the Sino-British Fellowship Trust, I had the honour to attend the ITP at the British Museum in 2019. Thank you to Sino-British Fellowship Trust! Thank you to the British Museum! This summer, in the UK, it was a very good journey for me and when I return to my museum I will share the professional experience with my colleagues.

The ITP training course at the British Museum is comprehensive and interesting, involving all aspects of Museum work - collections, exhibitions, conservation, research, audiences, education and so on. Visiting different types of museums has broadened my horizons, I enjoyed it very much and many of the workshops let me experience the joy of being 'hands-on'.

The sharing of two complete curatorial case studies, the *Manga* temporary exhibition and the Islamic World permanent gallery, gave me

a comprehensive understanding and learning of the details of the exhibition planning and preparation in the British Museum. This will be very helpful for my future curatorial work. My museum needs to complete five temporary exhibitions every year, which is the basic requirement of first-class museums in China. Therefore, strict workflow, specific task allocation and curatorial team management is very important.



The session on interpretation helped us to understand the visitors well and tell a good story in the exhibition. We need to be clear about how the objects selected for display support the narrative. This year, in our museum, I have planned and curated an exhibition about the first Emperor of China named “The Qin Dynasty’s Unification of China”. The exhibition tells the evolution of Qin from a feudal state to an empire, focusing on the rich remains of Qin culture and the influence of Qin

unification on Chinese civilisation and world civilisation. In the writing of the exhibition content, I will apply the storytelling skills I have learned in interpretation course to make objects speak for themselves. Through the objects I will tell the story of the Emperor Qin Shihuang and the history of the Qin Dynasty.



The session about audiences inspired me greatly, because the purpose of the exhibition is to engage the audience. When I am planning an exhibition, I will fully consider the needs and feedback of the audience, which plays an important role in the selection of themes and orientation of the exhibition. In my next exhibition “The Qin Dynasty’s Unification of China”, I will develop a detailed audience survey plan to listen to the visitor’s views and suggestions on the exhibition. These methods include

electronic information technology and paper questionnaires. Use electronic information technology to install equipment in the exhibition hall in order to obtain the number of visitors, the duration of the visitors' stay, the route of visits, as well as the objects that visitors are particularly interested in or not interested in. Traditional questionnaires can help make a detailed understanding of the audience's origins - age, gender, identity, education level, occupation and so on - and summarize their feedback suggestions for the exhibition for different audiences, so as to reflect on the content design of the exhibition.

The session on security was very helpful for my museum. Like the British Museum, my museum has a large number of visitors, so the security of the museum becomes an important issue. Before, we thought more about the safety of collections in museums. Now, through the study of the security course, I have realised that in the museum, in addition to collections, the security of people, buildings and information is also very important. During the holidays, my museum has a large number of visitors, up to 100,000 visitors each day. Faced with such a large number of visitors, the exhibition hall is very crowded, and it is difficult for museums to provide high-quality services to every visitor. Controlling the number of visitors and ensuring the orderly visits of visitors are not only beneficial to the museum's cultural relics protection, but also beneficial

to the safety of visitors. In the coming holidays, our museum will take measures to limit the number of visitors. All visitors must book tickets online in advance and visit the museum in different time periods. By controlling the number of visitors, we can not only provide better services for the visitors, but also ensure the safety of collections and people.

I liked the workshops that meant we could be 'hands-on', such as object packaging and fixing objects on exhibition boards. In China, object packaging and fixing objects for display are usually outsourced to some professional companies, and curators do not have to do it by themselves. The workshop about the packing of objects has taught me new skills and in the future I can pack some simple objects by myself. The workshop about fixing object on display boards taught me how to fix exhibits. In my museum, exhibition fixtures were made by exhibition companies. Sometimes they do not fully understand the ideas of the curators. Later, during the exhibition, I could fix some of the exhibits by myself. Therefore, it saves the cost of the exhibition and achieves the desired effect.



During the ITP, my department was the Asia Department. The Asia Department arranged a very rich and exciting event for us when the Head of the China Section, Jessica Harrison-Hall led us in a visit to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. At the Ashmolean Museum, I saw a lot of amazing collections and which coincidentally included my “Object in Focus” object - The Zande pot - which deepened my understanding of my object.



We also visited the stores of the Asia Department and studied the collection management system and collection database. What shocked me was that the contents of the collection database were very detailed. Every collection had detailed data about its basic information, description, exhibition history, storage location and records, which was particularly useful for collection research.

During a staff breakfast talk in the Korean Gallery, Jessica introduces me to the curator of this exhibition and we exchanged a lot of ideas about

the exhibition. With Jessica's introduction, I have met many of the colleagues in Asia Department, which laid the foundation for potential long-term cooperation in the future.

My UK Partner placement was Glasgow Museums. In Glasgow Museum's Resource Centre there are many collections and I could see well-managed storage. During the programme I was very interested in the work of the Open Museum. The Open Museum is for the people who like museums but don't come to museums. This is of great significance to the educational function of museums as this project can be carried out in some public spaces, communities and schools. In addition to the museum's own Open Museum, everyone can also create their own museum boxes with their own ideas. At the Glasgow Museum, I saw a lot of Open Museum boxes, some created by Museum curators, as well as museum boxes created by visitors themselves. These boxes represent the museum dream in everyone's heart. For my museum, we can also carry out the 'open museum' project. In schools, squares, parks and other places with large audiences, we can put our museum collection models so that people who can't come to the Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum can see the Terracotta Warriors and Horses. Because the terracotta warriors and horses are precious cultural relics, transportation is very difficult but with the open museum project, we can take the

terracotta warriors and horses models to any place.



In the final “Object in focus” project, my mentors Helen Anderson and Maria Esteban Palma (both from the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas) taught us a lot about the skills needed for panel and label writing. My ITP partner Asuman is from Turkey and our cooperation on this project was very pleasant. We successfully completed the exhibition design and established a deep friendship.



In a word, the six-week training at the British Museum is a very precious memory in my life. I have learned new knowledge and skills and met new friends. Thanks to my sponsors, the Sino-British Fellowship Trust, thanks to the British Museum, thanks to the ITP Manager Claire, thanks for the Head of the China Section Jessica, thanks for my mentors Helen and Maria, thanks for the curator of Glasgow Museums Patricia! You have all

given me great help. I enjoyed ITP very much! I will look forward to our better cooperation in the future!