

# A New Model Exemplifies the Art Museum Boom in China: Yang Chao in Conversation with Zheng Shengtian

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**Zheng Shengtian:** There is a boom of new art museums in China, both state-owned and private, and as an observer from outside of China I notice development has accelerated very quickly over the past two years. Some highlights include large private museum projects such as the Sifang Art Museum in Nanjing, the Yuz Museum in Shanghai, the OTC Contemporary Art Terminal in Xi'an (OCAT), and many more in other cities. These museums are large in scale, with state-of-the-art design and facilities. According to some statistics, every month in China there are inaugurations of new museums, sometimes as frequently as every day. This pace stuns Western observers, and they want to know what has been driving these museum projects. You have been director of the Xi'an Art Museum since its inception in 2009, and you know all kinds of art museums inside and out. Moreover, you participated in the Museum Directors' Dialogue at the U.S.–China Forum on Arts and Culture held in Beijing in 2012. Can you begin by giving an overview of art museums in China? I would like to hear your insights.

Yang Chao, Director, Xi'an Art Museum. Courtesy of Xi'an Art Museum.



**Yang Chao:** In fact, there are some ongoing problems in the way these museums are developing. There is both positive and negative energy in it. Whichever it is, the building of art museums in China began only a few decades ago; the nation did not have an art museum until 1936. In the first half of the twentieth century, Chinese cultural leaders such as Cai Yuanpei, Lu Xun, and Xu Beihong advocated for the building

of art museums. Xu Beihong urged the government to set up a fund to purchase well-known paintings from the West. It was good timing in those years because Western paintings were being sold at relatively low prices. Xu Beihong also proposed to build an art museum to house these works of Western art. In those days, very few people understood the value of an art museum except these few cultural leaders. Only they knew about the importance of art museums for a city and even for the whole nation. After 1958, a few art museums were built, including the National Art Museum of China. However, very few provinces had art museums at this time, and these early museums were exhibition halls that shared their space with other functions. The development of art museums in China lagged far behind

Western counterparts. The history of the art museum can be traced back to the third century BC, in Egypt, when the *Musaeum* (Temple of the Muses) at Alexandria, the prototype of museums, was first built. The early museums were used for research and for the display of art, and they did not serve the public in the same way that a modern museum does. Western art museums have gone through two thousand years to perfect their practices. Here, in China, we have condensed this long process into only a few decades. So this incredible fast-forwarding of new museums inevitably raises many issues. We are learning from the experiences of our predecessors, but we still have many problems.

The progressive history of museums includes a few phases. While the first was when the *Musaeum* at Alexandria was built, the second phase came much later. Many important museums were instituted in the late eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, including the British Museum and the Louvre. It was at this time that museums adopted the idea of catering to the public. However, we may think of them as “semi-public,” since access to these museums was possible only for those who were “respectable,” and not the general public. In 1759, the British Museum became the first public national museum in the world, opening its doors to those who were studious and curious.

The third phase of museum-building was the four decades between the 1860s and the 1900s, when America began its rapid economic growth. American tycoons built many art museums, purchased many artworks, and took the lead in museum-building in the nation. This was the time when museums truly became public. And from this time forward, until the mid 1980s, museum-building heated up around the world.

China started off the fourth phase. Beginning in the 1990s, China took the world by storm, leading in the volume of museums being built. This movement was driven by a couple of factors. The first was the Chinese government; many art museum projects were initiated by the government on the conviction that each city must have its own urban culture and discover its own cultural values, and the way to accomplish this was to build art museums, concert halls, opera houses, and public libraries. These public projects are considered important elements in showcasing the “soft power of culture” in Chinese cities. The second factor is in the private sector. Some collectors and entrepreneurs have joined this movement, with various intentions. Some come with a genuine passion for art and culture; others might have a hidden agenda that is self-serving. Nonetheless, all these factors have helped to push the art museum movement forward.

**Zheng Shengtian:** Are there policies or regulations from the government that propel this movement?

**Yang Chao:** No. The government does not have any regulations.

**Zheng Shengtian:** Is it true that some cities are ahead of the others in this process because of their leaders' vision? Surely, some cities just follow suit, but which cities are leading this movement?

Entrance to Xi'an Art Museum. Courtesy of Xi'an Art Museum.



**Yang Chao:** At this time, not all the provincial capitals have art museums, not to mention smaller cities away from the major centres. I live in Xi'an, a city with a long history and cultural tradition. It is a well-known cultural city. However, the cultural past alone does not make Xi'an a true cultural city; it must also establish its modern and contemporary culture. The government of Xi'an presented a concept called "Museum City," and the Qujiang New District Administration Committee in Xi'an was the leading advocate of this concept. They formulated a policy of providing free land for lease to private corporations and entrepreneurs who would invest in museum and gallery projects. The Administration Committee used government funds to build the Xi'an Art Museum, Xi'an Concert Hall, Shaanxi Grand Opera House Xi'an, and Xi'an Guanzhong Folk Art Museum.

These museums are complemented by dozens of other museums and art galleries built by the private sector. With all these cultural venues, an urban zone of contemporary culture is emerging. Xi'an is taking the lead across China in this regard. As far as I know, many cities are now planning their own museum projects. Some cities are proposing to build a Museum Zone. I do not know much about the details of this.

**Zheng Shengtian:** Since the municipal governments realized the necessity of building cultural projects, have they "legislated" in favour of these projects? Do they give support through funding? Do they systematically plan for projects in the cities? Or do you think these projects are carried out simply as a good idea? Do you think the decision makers in the government understand what it takes to build a museum?

**Yang Chao:** The municipal governments certainly support their own museum projects with funding. However, they generally do not have a policy for the private sector that wants to join in. They do not have a



20 Year Retrospective Exhibition of 1991 San Diego Chinese Artists Workshop. Courtesy of Xi'an Art Museum.

favourable policy for land use for the private sector; neither do they give tax incentives. However, when Xi'an presented the concept of Museum City, the Qujiang New District Administration Committee was the first one in China to formulate a favourable policy in land leasing and tax credit for museum builders from the private sector. These policies were announced and distributed as government documents, and they led the construction wave of many museum and art galleries across the city of Xi'an. The Chinese tend to follow trends blindly, and many other cities soon followed in the footsteps of Xi'an by presenting their own "concepts." However, they often neglect important questions. For example, once the museum is built, who are the audiences? And how does one find funding to run the museum? From a strict point of view, many art museums in China do not have a fundamental understanding of museum culture; they are simply exhibition places. Research and collections are absent.



Group calligraphy exhibition at Xi'an Art Museum. Photo: Keith Wallace.

**Zheng Shengtian:** This goes back to my previous question, and based on what you have said, the governments seem not to have a comprehensive plan for building museums and art galleries—neither with funding nor with human resources—which leads to some problems. In the case of Xi'an, how many responses were there to the policy of free land leases?

**Yang Chao:** There were many. It was extremely important for the government to select the right candidates. Many applicants came, and with different intentions. The government had to support those who present a genuine passion and a feasible plan for their museum projects. Many investors from the private sector came with misguided intentions. They were seeking fulfillment of personal interests and profits from museum projects; they were not concerned with the city's culture; and they had no intention of making the cultural resource available to the city residents and enhancing their aesthetic awareness.

In China, people who want to build art museums can be divided into several categories. First are large real estate developers. They build a museum within their real estate projects, and the museum is a cultural decoration to enhance the commercial value of the property. Museums of this kind are nothing but a marketing tool. Some speculators are even using the proposed museum projects to ask for more land and leasing privileges from the government.

Second is the “artist museum.” These are the museums built by some successful artists for themselves to celebrate their accomplishments. In recent years, the art market has thrived in China; in particular, traditional art is in high demand and benefits many artists who are accumulating massive wealth. The problem is that their work doesn't necessarily have high artistic merit. They may be well received in their local communities but would be considered mediocre within a national context. Their names won't be mentioned in art history. I have seen a growing number of “artist museums” in recent years all across China, and they exclusively exhibit the works of the founding artist.

The third kind of museum is built by investors who have genuine ambitions to nurture and encourage arts and culture. They believe in museums and intend to make a difference. I personally favour this kind of museum investor. The fourth kind of museum is an exhibition space for a personal collection. Most of these personal collections are historical artifacts and often very low in cultural value, and many of the objects in them are forgeries. These places are built in the name of a museum, while their real intention is to occupy land and to cheat for resources from the government. Recent media reports have revealed that some museum projects are actually a tool for money laundering.

What I have just mentioned is a summation of museums and art galleries in China. The commonality among them is the lack of long-term planning. Many museums in real estate projects have quickly been converted into a restaurant or a supermarket once the real estate project is completed. This phenomenon is not surprising. Many museums within the private sector are not supported by long-term funding, so they have to change their function in order to survive.

**Zheng Shengtian:** According to what you are saying, many of these so-called museums cannot be considered true museums. Some are building a museum for money laundering, and others are simply pursuing a marketing strategy or driven by personal interests. What I want to know is whether you think China has some public museums that are run by commonly recognized international standards.

**Yang Chao:** I personally believe that there are people who have a genuine passion for art and culture, and many have the financial capabilities to build a museum. However, it is difficult for them to actually carry it out. The bottleneck is that they neither have land nor support from policy-making officials. For the speculators, they have the land to build museums because they have already purchased it for their real estate projects. In the case of the “artist museum,” because some artists are well known in the region, their land application is often supported by the local government. However, for those who have genuine intentions to build an art museum for the city and care for the humanities, it is very difficult to acquire land from the government. This is because the government does not understand their passion or recognize their commitment to the public good.

**Zheng Shengtian:** How so? If the government genuinely supports art museums, can they not favour those who have the good intentions? They certainly do not want to support money laundering. Why is it so difficult for the government to support individuals who want to build a non-profit cultural institution?



The Transformation of Canadian Landscape Art: Inside and Outside of Being, 2014. Courtesy of Xi'an Art Museum.

**Yang Chao:** It is difficult because there is no adequate or systematic policy, either from the central government or from the local government, to support the building of art and culture facilities. Since an overarching policy is absent, government leaders find it difficult to provide support for these cultural projects even though they may recognize their social benefits. For example, if a government official were to give a free land lease to an

individual investor of a cultural project, he or she would immediately face questions and criticism. First of all, the state has no tax incentives policy for investment in a cultural project. Xi'an Art Museum has to pay tax. Our donors all have to pay tax. If the museum receives a donation of ten million yuan, it needs to pay several hundred of thousands yuan for the turnover tax. If the museum has a surplus, it needs to pay income tax on that too. Secondly, China has no regulations that favour building cultural projects. If you use your own money to build an art museum, you can certainly do that; but if you have a real passion for cultural projects and ask the government for resources, it is unlikely that you will succeed. As far as I know, there is no art museum in the private sector receiving its funding from the government.

**Zheng Shengtian:** This is pretty much the same in Western society. There are many people who have a passion for culture and a desire to contribute to the common good of society. I have dreamed of building a museum, but I cannot do it because I don't have the financial capacity. Only entrepreneurs like the Guggenheims or business giants have been able to do it. People like them did not need a favourable policy from the government. They could buy land, build museums, and provide long-term funding. For example, the founder of Frye Art Museum in Seattle, Charles Frye, was an entrepreneur. With stable private funding, the museum has been able to operate for many decades without support from the government. This art museum offers free admission for everybody to its exhibitions and collection. Now, in China, there are many wealthy people. Are there entrepreneurs who have the capacity to do things like this?

**Yang Chao:** I believe that many wealthy people in China have this financial capacity. If all of them had been interested in museums, China would have tens of thousands of them by now. Unfortunately, most of these people would not do that, which has to do with the social reality in China. The Chinese are more pragmatic; Westerners are more spiritual. Westerners need a platform to house their soul. There were churches in the West in the Middle Ages, then there were many museums built in later years. Both churches and museums are a haven for soul-searching people. This is also true in Latin America. In Asia, things are different, especially in China. Investment in the social good is not part of the mainstream, and it will not gain support from society; it is not even understood by society. Hypothetically, I could build a non-profit art museum, but people around me would question why I was doing that. When I began to run the Xi'an Art Museum, an important government official asked me: "You are a business person; why would you do something that doesn't make any profit?" Many people asked me questions like that.

This is to say that China is a materialistic society. Some people have not yet reached a certain high moral ground. Many people with the financial capacity are those who I have mentioned above. They have the financial capacity and need no favourable policies, but they use the lens of profit-making to evaluate non-profit projects, so they would not do it. Those who have genuine intentions generally do not have the financial capacity. Even

if a few of them have this capacity, they are not supported by favourable government policies.

**Zheng Shengtian:** Returning to the experience of Western society, both John D. Rockefeller and Solomon R. Guggenheim were businessmen. They had always sought profit. But when Rockefeller built the Asia Society Museum half a century ago, his intention was to give a portion of his wealth to repay society. He was not expecting any financial returns, although his donation did enhance the image of his business empire. There are now many people in China who have great financial power, but many of them have not seen the value of building culture for the public good, and they don't have a philanthropic consciousness. How do you think we can motivate them to invest in non-profit projects?

**Yang Chao:** I am sure there will be Rockefellers in China in the future. Due to cultural differences, it is currently difficult for China to have important philanthropists as found in the West. On the contrary, Chinese culture has been characterized as a *jiaguo* ("family-state") system. *Jia* means family; and *guo* refers to the state. The family and the state constitute the entire Chinese cultural thinking. There is no other public cultural space beyond that. One can notice the limitations of this way of thinking when considering the layout of Chinese cities. In ancient times, Chinese urban planning did not include a public square. As we know, the public square is an important space in Western tradition. The city square is not only a geographical space; it is also a cultural space. Along with the square there are often churches, art galleries, libraries, and other public cultural venues. China's *jiaguo* culture is deeply rooted in its long tradition. Once someone becomes rich, the first thing considered is his or her own family. This person will not have an interest in public space beyond the family. This way of thinking is also popular among Chinese cultural elites. There were no public intellectuals in China's past. The definition of a public intellectual is one who dares to rationally disseminate knowledge in public.

For the same reason, Chinese tycoons tend not to spread their wealth to public spaces or serve the public. This way of thinking has become a vicious cycle. If someone rises up to benefit public interest, people ask: What is the city government doing? In their view, all public good is the responsibility of the government, and all domestic investment is the responsibility of individuals. This mindset has prevented people from getting involved in the public good. Moreover, the city governments' investment is not entirely at the service of the public. Their priority is to serve the bureaucratic system. In sum, the number of museums is large in China, but most of them are not functional. Many art museum projects in China today are focused on personal benefit rather than concern for public interest.

You have asked me how to push entrepreneurs to invest in the public interest. Again, all we need is a policy from the state. If the government set up a favourable policy for individuals who want to build a museum, I believe there would be an immediate and positive response. What I am

trying to say is that there are two obstacles: one is the cultural mindset, and the other is the lack of policy.

**Zheng Shengtian:** Do you think the boom of art museums in China in the past two years is in fact a bubble that may not be sustainable?

**Yang Chao:** It is a phase of the “Great Leap Forward.” The fact that so many museums are emerging within a short period of time is an anomaly. Culture develops very differently from economic growth. Cultural development is gradual. Both state-owned museums and private museums are facing two other perennial problems: one is the shortage of funding; the other is the shortage of professional staff. It is not easy to find a good solution to these problems. The shortage of funding is caused by an inadequate understanding of art museums by the decision makers. For example, investors might inject a billion yuan to build a museum, and once the construction is done, they think the mission is complete. What follows is that they have only a few million yuan to run the museum. This small amount is barely enough to cover the staff salary and hydro bills, not to mention the collections, research, public education, and international exchange programs. So the museum is reduced to a mere exhibition space. This is true in all state-owned museums as well. I can say for certain that none of these museums receives regular annual funding from the government to build their collections.

**Zheng Shengtian:** This is contrary to one’s expectations from a new museum project. If we are planning to build a new art museum in Vancouver, the first requirement is funding. The funding should not only cover the construction costs, but also the cost of human resources and program development. Without securing this funding, we would not embark on a new museum project, even though we have a sky-high ambitions. From what you are saying about private museums in China, they just build the house, but they do not plan for the finances to maintain it. This is why these museum projects are not sustainable.

**Yang Chao:** This is what’s happening now in China. There are many art museums opening up, and many fade away in a few years. Every year we see many museums closing down.

**Zheng Shengtian:** Is there a ratio between the numbers of museums opening up versus those closing down?

**Yang Chao:** More than one third of the museums are closing down, but there are more new ones being built. Some museums present only one or two exhibitions a year. These private art museums should consider the question of whether they can depend on the companies that built them in the first place, and whether they should prepare a self-sustaining model for themselves in case of possible bankruptcy of the parent companies. They have to find other sustainable funding sources.

Biennial projects in China have met the same fate. Some disappeared after holding only two consecutive events. Few of them have been able to last as long as three events. Of course there are the more successful ones, but the funding of these projects was subject to the personal leadership from the government. Although a government official today might be interested in supporting a biennial project, a few years later his successor might kill it because of personal lack of interest.

Another problem with art museums in China is the building of a collection. Many art collections are far from systematic. In other words, many collections are like random displays of produce in a grocery store and have no focus. Few collectors have collected artwork in a consistent way. Since there is no guaranteed revenue for management, collection, and research, many art museums are struggling to survive. This is why so many of them have closed. Had there been policies from the government, sincere investors would have come forth to solve these problems because they genuinely care about art museums and public culture. Three decades from now, many art museums will disappear, and only a few will be able to sustain themselves. These museums will be the long-lasting ones.

**Zheng Shengtian:** Yes. A city does not need many art museums. Three to five is an optimal number. In New York City, for example, there are the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim, MoMA, and a few others. They help establish the cultural life and the legacy of the city. Any time you visit the Met, you will see a huge crowd of visitors. I hope in ten or twenty years China will have better art museums.

Now, I would like you to talk about your personal experience. You are the founder of the Xi'an Art Museum. The museum is unique in its ownership. It is a state-owned museum but run by a businessman. Can you tell me your story? How was it built? How did you come up with this idea? Was there give-and-take with the government? Or was the idea purely yours?

**Yang Chao:** I often say I have an “art museum complex.” Since the early 1990s, I have extensively traveled to Europe and America. I noticed that developed countries had built great museums. Their museums have much better “hardware” and “software” than what Chinese museums have. Because I have this “art museum complex,” I was thinking to myself: If I were a museum director, I would devote myself to building a better museum for China. In 2003, the Qujiang New District Administration Committee came to me. They commissioned me to build the “Great Tang All-Day Mall” project—a large business zone in the city of Xi'an. This is an elongated and narrow strip, located south of the Big Wild Goose Pagoda. We wanted to punctuate a one-and-a-half-kilometer strip by building a city square and a leisure zone. In planning this leisure zone, the first thing that came to mind was to build some cultural facilities to integrate local business with public culture.

We thought of a concert hall, an art museum, an opera house, a museum of literature, and a cinema complex. I got this idea because I regard Xi'an as a



Top: Great Tang All Day Mall Project. Photo: Keith Wallace.

Bottom: Xi'an Leisure Zone. Photo: Keith Wallace.

cultural city; Xi'an is the city in China with the strongest cultural heritage. The basic elements of the cultural city are its urban cultural facilities, and at that time, there were few cultural facilities in Xi'an. Therefore, we planned to build the Xi'an Art Museum, the Xi'an Concert Hall, the Shaanxi Grand Opera House Xi'an, and the Xi'an Museum of Literature. Considering the commercial nature of this business zone, we changed the plan to build the Xi'an Museum of Literature, instead of planning for a cinema complex. The government of Qujiang New District invested in all these projects. I was responsible for all the planning.

When the projects were being built, the government of Qujiang New District asked me to be the director of Xi'an Art Museum. I was excited about the offer. However, there was a dilemma. I had a business for myself. I would need to leave my company if I accepted this opportunity. The state-owned art museum director must be a government employee with a rank. If you join the government, you cannot run your own business. I did not want to leave my company, and I talked to the officials about my conflict. Fortunately, they were open-minded. They created a "state-owned and private-run" model. In other words, the art museum is state-owned, but it is run by someone from the private sector. After a few years as an experiment, this system has been working well. Many other municipal governments have followed suit. Dozens of them came to Xi'an to learn from us. From what I understand, there are seven or eight art museums that are adopting this system. One of the advantages of this system is it combines the merits of both the state-owned system and private sector.

**Zheng Shengtian:** Does the government provide funding to the Xi'an Art Museum?

**Yang Chao:** All state-owned art museums are funded more or less by the government. In the case of Xi'an Art Museum, we don't receive regular funding. However, we do sometimes receive grants from the government. The specific fund is the "Cultural Industry Supporting Fund," designated for cultural enterprises, including non-profit cultural projects that serve the public interest. At other times, we get financial support from the government for projects that we co-operate on with the government. Overall, the funding we get from the government is much less than a typical state-owned art museum. On the other hand, we have better exhibitions than a typical state-owned art museum. It has been proven that art museums usually do not run well under the direct control of the government. Under the flexible management of the private sector, an art museum is better off. Every year we find corporate sponsors and, together with the "Cultural Industry Supporting Fund" from the government, we secure the revenue to run the museum. This has created a sustainable cycle. We are doing some studies on how to build capital and an industrial network within the "state-owned and private-run" museum model (including private art museums) for its future development.

**Zheng Shengtian:** You mentioned the sustainable cycle. Do you mean the revenue generated from all sources of income, such as a museum store? How much of this income accounts for your total budget?

**Yang Chao:** We first work out a schedule of the year-round exhibition program, and then we calculate the budget. If the exhibition plan is too ambitious and beyond the budget we have, we have to review the plan and make changes. These changes are to ensure there is funding for each exhibition. Then we decide where to find the funding for each exhibition. As I mentioned, sometimes it is through corporate sponsorship, sometimes from collaboration with the government, and sometimes we invest by

ourselves or we co-organize with other institutions. We have many ways to find funding. We accept the support of whomever wants to come forward to fund public cultural projects.

Museums in China don't have an established system or regulation to run their business like that in advanced countries. This calls for a very capable museum director, especially with respect to fundraising. A Chinese director has to take care of everything. In contrast, many Western museum directors function like a chancellor of a university. A chancellor of a university does not need to oversee teaching. He or she uses his reputation to acquire resources for the university. I think the director of a museum in China should follow what is practiced in the West. He should use his own personal capacity to obtain resources for the art museum, including funding and collections. In the "state-owned and private-run" system, the museum director has to be very influential in society. Otherwise, it is difficult to move the museum forward.

**Zheng Shengtian:** What do you see as the future of Xi'an Art Museum? Do you have a specific direction you are developing?

**Yang Chao:** The first thing I would like to do is to get people to know about art museums. The average person in China is quite limited in his or her understanding of art museums. Therefore, first of all, I want people to understand the function of an art museum. More importantly, the government needs to take the lead. The Chinese government has lots of authority, so one must persuade it to provide more favourable policies. We also need to educate people about the public nature of art museums, the functionality of art museums. The more people understand art museums, the more likely they will support us. In the meantime, we are increasing the number of shareholders. We welcome more people who are capable, willing, and passionate to join in the building of art museums. The larger the number of shareholders we have, the more financial power our organization will gain.

**Zheng Shengtian:** You mention "shareholders." Are they the same as the board of trustees in a typical Western non-profit organization?

**Yang Chao:** They are the same. In the "state-owned and private-run" system, we have our own board of directors. This is absolutely necessary.

**Zheng Shengtian:** In a business, shareholders take returns and are awarded a bonus. Do you give returns to the board of directors?

**Yang Chao:** Our requirements for shareholders are that they be passionate about art museums and financially capable of investing in public culture. I believe that investment in public culture should not ask for returns.

**Zheng Shengtian:** So they are not shareholders, but trustees?

**Yang Chao:** The "state-owned and private-run" museum system is a Chinese characteristic. The trustee must also be a shareholder. One must first make an

investment. The return is their enjoyment of contributing to public culture. This is the direction for our future. Many private enterprises are looking for a cultural identity after they become wealthy. I say we need to increase our shareholders and expand the board. A “state-owned and private-run” museum also needs to have a committee composed of art professionals, to share responsibilities with the museum director. Museum directors in China have the final say for everything; they act like dictators. This is not good for the long-term development of the museum, so there must be a professional committee to make the most important decisions for the museum. The museum also needs to set up a system for a curator and let the curatorial team decide the future exhibition projects. What is left for museum directors to do? They must oversee the running of the museum, with a priority on funding. Therefore, the director of the “state-owned and private-run” museum must work out a way to find a sustainable business structure to secure stable funding for the museum and must ensure that this funding grows annually. This is what I learned from my experiences after running for some years now an institution in the “state-owned and private-run” museum system.

**Zheng Shengtian:** As Xi’an Art Museum has now established itself, have you ever considered expanding its influence to other parts of China, or even overseas?

**Yang Chao:** We have talked about this before. Take Vancouver, for example: the Chinese population represents a large proportion of the city. The demographic is very diverse, and each ethnicity has its own strength. There are Chinese, South Asians, Koreans, Japanese, Middle Easterners, and so on. It is a place where diverse cultures are mixed together. As Chinese, we have the passion to invest here in building a non-profit, public-oriented art museum to represent Asia or China. I think this is a very good thing. I have been looking for investors.

**Zheng Shengtian:** Are you planning to build a branch of Xi’an Art Museum outside of China?

**Yang Chao:** A new art museum is needed in Vancouver. A while ago I was talking with some potential investors about this. Last night, I met some of them again. We hope to either build a new art museum or set up a new division within an existing museum in Vancouver. Either way, it is a very good thing.

**Zheng Shengtian:** I hope Xi’an Art Museum will further develop its “state-owned and private-run” museum model, and I hope you extend your influence to overseas cities that are populated with Chinese. Thank you.