

Call for Papers



Bridging the Gap Between Migration and Museum Studies in Chinese Diasporas and Beyond

Dates: Thursday 9 and Friday 10 January 2025.

Venue: Online with the possibility of having one small in-person section at the University of Westminster, London.

Fee: the symposium is free. Participants attending the in-person session shall cover the travel and accommodation themselves.

Language: English and Chinese

This symposium is jointly organised by the Hub on Migration, Exile, Languages and Spaces (HOMELANDS) Research Centre of the University of Westminster and the Chinese Heritage Centre of the Nanyang Technological University, supported by Centre for Chinese Language and Culture, Nanyang Technological University. It is the concluding event of the ‘Global Diasporic Chinese Museums Network Initiative’ project that has received funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Chinese Heritage Centre of the Nanyang Technological University.

The museum has become a vital platform for preserving diasporic heritage, articulating identities and negotiating the relationship between diasporas and the homeland. There has been an upsurge in the building of museums on Chinese diasporas in China and around the world over the past decades. From the late 1980s, museums related to Chinese diasporas have started to emerge in mainland China as new members of China’s museum scene. In parallel, museums of different sizes on the history of Chinese migration and settlement have been established by Chinese communities around the world. What we see here is an emerging global ‘museum-scape’ on the representations of Chinese diasporas.

The investigation of diasporic Chinese museums is a multi-disciplinary endeavour. It asks us to transcend borders, defined not only in national and geographical terms but also in terms of the boundaries between different disciplines and between academics and museum professionals. Conventionally, museum scholars do not usually engage with the issue of mobility and diaspora. Only recently have we seen the publications of research on migration museums, mostly in the European context. Likewise, migration scholars tend to focus on the movement of people alone,

overlooking the movement of things and the material environment in which migration takes place and the material consequences of the movement. This symposium is aimed at filling this gap by bringing together academics, museum curators and cultural policymakers to discuss museum representations of Chinese diasporas by focusing on the intersection and interaction of the movement of people and the movement of things in a global context through the prisms of (1) the collection, classification and evaluation of museum objects, (2) curating and exhibition, (3) audience and public engagement, (4) cultural policies about diasporic museums and heritage.

Themes for the symposium include, but are not limited to:

- Historical perspectives on diasporic Chinese museums
- Museums and migrant communities
- Museums, nationalism and transnationalism
- Museum representations of diasporic identities
- Museums and the imagination of home (land)
- Museums and the development of *qiaoxiang*
- Museums and diasporic place-making
- Museums and diasporic memories
- Museums, social repair and reconciliation
- Museums, adaptation and integration
- Museums, multiculturalism and superdiversity
- Museums, tourism and urban regeneration
- Museums, de-colonisation and post-colonial identities
- Museums, care and well-being
- Museums, gender and sexuality
- Museums, generation and cultural transmission
- Virtual museums, digital technology and AI
- Theories and methods in the research into migration and museums

Please send an abstract of 250 words and a bio (max. 100 words, detailing affiliation, career stage and disciplinary background) to Dr. Huimei Zhang (hm.zhang@ntu.edu.sg) by 30 October 2024. The abstract and bio can be either in English or Chinese. For queries, please get in touch with Professor Cangbai Wang (c.wang6@westminster.ac.uk)

We aim to collect papers from the symposium to publish a journal special issue or an edited volume in 2025/2026.