

China's Legacy: Let a Million Museums Bloom

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This year, Holland Cotter writes, in a drive to promote awareness of China's national heritage, the government introduced a free-admission policy at the country's public museums...

But the look of anxious exasperation on the face of a curator watching crowds of schoolchildren swarm through a gallery of ancient ceramics here on a recent morning told a different story. They touched every exposed surface, leaned on glass cases and smeared them with fingerprints. Body contact and the art experience seemed to be inseparable. A running joke is that once only a few people came to these institutions to see the art; now many will come, not for the art but for the air-conditioning.

"chinese" art museums are "different" in their materiality and audience participation to those in the "west"...

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/04/arts/design/04museums.html?hp>

Check out also this interactive slide show and audio guide:

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2008/07/03/arts/design/Cotter-China-multimedia1/index.html>