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Conceptualizing *Made in China* for a museum exhibition

The Wereldmuseum Rotterdam is planning to hold an exhibition on China in 2023 in which fashion and design are one of the exhibiting categories. In preparation for the event, the museum is proposing to use the cliché *Made in China* as a provocative title for the exhibition. A workshop with the museum curators was held in 2021 to question the materiality central to the stereotypes associated with the proposed phrase to inform the curatorial direction of the forthcoming exhibition. As a workshop contributor invited to address the inquiry, I have, in this article, examined the phrase itself and China as a place, heritage and concept. The country-of-origin effect of the "made in" label was taken to analyze the phrase. While the negative connotations of *Made in China* in the exhibition title might have an impact on the perception of the exhibition, two interlocking components—transcultural dynamics and a site of friction —arising from the labeling system constitute a curatorial concept within which Chineseness embedded in the museum fashion and design artifacts are the offspring of the typified multifaceted "China" exchange, connection, and transformation.

Keywords: Made in China; fashion and design artifacts; Chineseness; geopolitics; transcultural; ethnography; curatorial concept

Introduction

Founded in 2014, The Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen (NMVW) is an overarching museum organization managing three ethnographic museums across the Netherlands: Tropenmuseum Amsterdam (est. 1864); the Afrika Museum (est. 1954) in Berg en Dal; and the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden (est. 1837), one of the world's first academic ethnographic museums. It oversees and works closely with

Wereldmuseum Rotterdam (WMR) (est. 1885), whose collection is owned by the city. Taking "an open attitude to the world" to "shape a global community", the NMVW is an ethnographic museum "about people".[1] With regard to China collection, the NMVW houses a combined total of over 20,000 Chinese objects and 2000 images ranging from Shang dynasty oracle bones, Chinese paintings, calligraphy, and ethnographic materials to contemporary art. The early China collection was amassed during the 18th century, and the majority of the collection was acquired in the 19th century. Three collecting trips to China made by the museum curators have expanded the 20th-century collection. The NMVW holds an outstanding collection of 19th- and 20th- century Chinese paintings and calligraphy, including export paintings on canvas and (reverse) glass; Yao religious paintings; Dongba manuscripts; numismatics; over 80 albums of watercolor paintings, some of which date back to the mid-18th century; and over 500 prints dating from the 17th to the 20th centuries (Photoconsadmin 2020). Since 2015, the museum collection policy on China has focused on contemporary art and photography, popular culture, fashion, and design (Noord 2020) to make connections with the existing museum collection (Ling 2019).

Drawing on the NMVW's China-collection, WMR is preparing for the exhibition on China in 2023, which will present historic objects and contemporary artifacts including fashion and design. The museum has proposed *Made in China* as a tentative title for the exhibition. A workshop[2] with the NMVW curators was then held in July 2021 to analyze the multiple connotations of this contested phrase to inform the

[1] https://www.tropenmuseum.nl/en/about-tropenmuseum/mission-0

[2] The rationale of the workshop is to interrogate the cliché of the phrase, *Made in China*, and its connotations as an exhibition title. The goal of the workshop is to inform curatorial direction for the exhibition. See the rationale and details of discussion topics in the workshop: https://www.materialculture.nl/en/events/made-china#

curatorial concept and direction. It addressed issues such as the connections and discrepancies connoted by the phrase; its allowance and disallowance; how it might be conceptualized and reinvested with value for visitors; the meaning of "China" as a place, heritage, and concept; and the multiple-classed, ethnicized, gendered, nationalized, and racialized positionalities of "being Chinese." Twenty NMVW museum curators, including the exhibition team, attended and engaged in a lively exchange during the online workshop.

As one of the invited contributors,[3] this article is developed from my response to the provocations and the discussions in the workshop. Its purposes are threefold: (1) to respond to *Made in China* as the exhibition title by considering its clichéd nature and usage to explore the country-of-origin effect in the context of fashion; (2) to conceptualize the phrase with reinvestment value that would benefit the curatorial direction; and (3) to exemplify the ways and extent to which *Made in China* as a concept might engage with multiple Chineseness and positionalities of being Chinese by means of two fashion and design artifacts in the NMVW China collections.

In scrutinizing the cliché of the *Made in China* title, I will first unpack its ambiguity by dissecting the county-of-origin effect, which highlights the transnational connections within the labeling system. Two interlocking compositions—transcultural dynamics and the site of friction —emerging from the labeling system are then used as a framework to examine the opportunities and dilemmas in adopting the phrase *Made in China* as the title and as a curatorial concept. After that, I will explore the qipao from the viewpoint of the Indonesian-Chinese diaspora in the Netherlands and a

[3] Invited by the NMVW, I was one of the three speakers contributing to the inquiry of the workshop. The other two speakers were Song Hwee Lim (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) and Yiman Wang (University of California, Santa Cruz). See the link in footnote 2 for details.

contemporary design from Hong Kong-born and -bred designer Kit Man. Both artefacts were acquired with my involvement[4] in 2019. They are slated to be part of the exhibit and will be analyzed within the framework of Chineseness (Ang 1998; Chow 1998) to exemplify the ways in which the exhibition might embrace multiple Chineseness and "China" as a place, heritage, and concept. My involvement in the acquisition of the studied objects has enabled me to gain first-hand information from the donors. I am conscious of the partial account on the artefacts in the analysis, and the curatorial rationale and approach are beyond my decision and the scope of this study. The point is to depict the embedded Chineseness of the studied artifacts to inform the curatorial direction on narrating, curating and presenting "Chinese" subjectivity in the forthcoming exhibition.

Country-of-origin effect of *Made in China*

The "made in" label is central to understanding the interplay between the material and symbolic production of fashion and national identity (Ling and Segre-Reinach 2018). On the material level, its relation to the country-of-origin (COO) effect has been widely investigated in marketing literature. Early studies outlined the reputation and stereotypes attached to the product of a specific country (Nagashima 1970; White 1979) and the bias that consumers may hold against the CCO of a product (Samiee 1994). These factors are particularly reflective in the *Made in China* tag, as its reliability, safety, ethical record, and international credibility have been called into question (Kabadayi and Lerman 2011). Just as consumers connect a product with the COO to form an image of the country, the image of the country as a country of origin affects the

[4] I was Rita Bolland Fellow at the Research Center for Material Culture in NMVW in 2018 and 2019. One scope of work was to take part in museum acquisition in the regions of China and Asia. The Indonesian-Chinese dresses and accessories were acquired when I was working at the museum in 2019. The same year following my fellowship, I was invited to assist the museum to expand on the China collection by acquiring contemporary design objects including those of Kit Man.

product's image too. Such a symbolic level of impact has been seen through the affiliation with America and jeans, Germany and cars, Japan and electronics, and France and Italy and fashion and luxury *(ibid.)*. Similarly, during the heyday of industrialization in the 1960s and 1970s of Hong Kong, the famous *Made in Hong Kong* tag stood for quality, speed, and compliance to international standards; since then, the image of a hardy and industrious Hong Kong has been stitched onto the social fabric of the city (Turner and Ngan 1995).

In the context of fashion, a respectful "made in" tag has a strong impact on not only its product's attributes, but also its affiliation with national identity (Segre-Reinach 2016). The most appealing tag to fashion consumers is inarguably *Made in Italy*. As a synonym of luxury, quality, and craftsmanship, the concept of *Made in Italy* or merely the Italian fashion industry itself emerged when high-fashion shows were held in Florence in the 1950s. The rhetoric of entrepreneurs, managers, and marketing experts coupled with a conscious branding strategy have proliferated the cultural phenomenon of Italian fashion and subsequently elevated the *Made in Italy* tag to the national label (Lazzeretti and Oliver 2020; Belfanti 2015). Numerous studies have examined the characteristics and evolution of the fashion industry, as well as the *Made in Italy* label (Lazzeretti and Capone 2020; Belfanti 2015; Segre-Reinach 2015). In that regard, clothing and fashion are "used as vehicles to transmit ideology, taste, and style that the European elite had forged to create its various identities and ideals of beauty" (Paulicelli 2014, 159). The "discursive formations" of *Made in Italy* have subsequently become a key part of the components in the process of national identity construction (Segre-Reinach 2010). Over time, the concept of *Made in Italy* has evolved in response to the international market and the changes in the Italian social fabric. The increasing

international success of *Made in Italy* has become integral to the DNA of Italy and its fashion (Belfanti 2015; Segre-Reinach 2015).

Made in China, however, is associated with notions of poor quality and cheaply manufactured products. Although, as many have illustrated (Wu, Hu, Xu and DeLong 2018; Chrétien-Ichikawa 2015; Zhao 2013), China-made clothes in recent decades have mastered skill and quality with Italian-made machinery, technology, and know-how (Moon 2019; Segre-Reinach 2019), this mastery has not been effectively translated into the perceived value of China's products. Instead, top-down state initiatives, for example Made in China 2025, are in place to transform the country from the factory of the world to a world-class tech center and a design hub in order to increase GDP growth outside of manufacturing while upgrading the façade of its cultural and creative industries (Gu and O'Connor 2020; Chumley 2016; Keene 2013). A "made in" tag that connotes pride and prestige can certainly be a prescribed antidote for overpriced fashion commodities and, most of all, an engine for national identity construction. However, China's international relations and record of human rights and ethical practices (Kabadayi and Lerman 2011) hinder its ability to cultivate an enticing global—let alone national—image for its "made in" label. In essence, the stigma of its manufacturing label may have an impact on the perception of *Made in China* in the exhibition title and the exhibits.

Until recently, the desirable *Made in Italy* tag has, in part, been taken over by Chinese migrants in Prato (Ottati 2015), an Italian industrial district with the second largest Chinese community in the country. Italian products once made by Italian workers are now increasingly made by the Chinese (Ceccagno 2017). Yet, the ambiguity of the labeling system only reveals part of the manufacturing process, obscuring the geography of production, the inequality, and the distorted realities behind

the label (Barna and Dobos-Nagy 2021). In fact, the "made in" tag only reveals the head and the tail of the global production chain. It omits many countries that supply components that go into the product (Koopman, Wang and Wei 2008). For a typical sneaker, for instance, China might be involved in more than half of its assembly in the global supply chain. Partial component manufacturing from nine other countries across the world makes up the rest of the process.[5] Having been seamlessly integrated into the global production chain, "China is the archetype of a national economy" (Koopman, Wang and Wei 2008, 1). In most cases, it is the last section of a transnational and "extensive global production chain that ends up assembling components from various countries into a final product before it is exported" elsewhere (*ibid*).

The transcultural dynamics of *Made in China*

Just as the "made in" label entails an assembly process across the globe with a transnational workforce entering into the end product, the current state of post-reform China is not a unilateral effort in the making. Transnational and transcultural exchanges are the foundation of contemporary China. Following the decade-long Cultural Revolution came the lifting of a travel ban from Taiwan and Hong Kong to mainland China in the 1980s. Both of these Chinese regions already achieved high levels of economic growth in the 1960s (Vogel 1991). Indeed, Hong Kong was one of the most prominent worldwide financial centers and has been routinely promoted as a desirable shopping paradise by the Hong Kong Tourism Board.[6] Taiwan has become an essential hub for the global manufacturing of electronic components and information technology.

[5] Percentage of component assembly from top ten sneaker producers for one standard sneaker by country: 1. China, 55.5%; 2. India, 10.7%; 3. Vietnam, 5.8%; 4. Indonesia, 5.1%; 5. Brazil, 3.7%; 6. Turkey, 2.2%; 7. Pakistan, 2%; 8. Bangladesh, 1.7%; 9. Mexico, 1%; 10. Italy, 0.7%. Source: Sneakers Unboxed: Studio to Street, Design Museum, London, May – Oct 2021.

[6] https://www.discoverhongkong.com/uk/explore/shopping.html

As a result of the lifting of the travel ban, not only did Taiwanese and Hong Kong travelers learn about contemporary China first-hand, but they also taught the Chinese much about contemporary lifestyle, popular culture, and consumer culture, which were quickly and enthusiastically adopted in China, transforming the Chinese culture and creative practices at a local level. Some of Taiwan's influences on China, although not necessarily identified as such, include instant noodles and practices such as Japanese karaoke (Gerth 2010).

The intense transcultural interaction between Hong Kong and China led to mainland China's first Fashion Week, CHIC (1993), in Beijing, gaining international exposure. Clearly, mainland China's fashion workers encountered a steep learning curve during their countless international collaborations (Dematteo 2021) and Sino-Italian joint ventures (Segre-Reinach 2019) over the course of three decades. China's claim to being a global powerhouse in clothing and textile manufacturing was arguably acquired through the know-how of Hong Kong manufacturing investors who transplanted their factories to the mainland in the face of rising production and labor costs. Many central to the city's lucrative export market from the 1960s to the 1980s carried a steady flow of orders from international high-fashion labels, such as DKNY, Armani, and Calvin Klein. The mainland counterparts learned to meet specifications and international standards while guaranteeing quality and craftsmanship, as well as a quick turnover (Moon 2019, Ling 2018).

Along with the gradual migration of clothing factories from Hong Kong to the mainland, the accelerated growth of fashion businesses and consumer markets occurred, beginning in the 1990s. Established Hong Kong creative workers were enticed to the mainland by a market economy that was multiplying in size and scale. As part of the new generation of the Chinese creative workforce, many Hong Kong creatives moved to

the mainland to take up supervisory roles. This transcultural and translocal exchange, through the influx of Hong Kong creative workers living in the mainland, has fruitfully cultivated China's contemporary lifestyle and popular culture (Chow and de Kloet 2013), setting in motion Chinese creativity unique to the mainland. A rarely known cocreation between the creative workers of Hong Kong and the mainland marks the debut of the Chinese haute couture line, Wuyong (meaning *Useless*) in Paris Fashion Week (2007). Although Changchun-born and Guangzhou-based Ma Ke is the known designer-figure behind the brand, it was Stanley Wong, Hong Kong's renowned designer-artist, who conceptualized and artistically directed the motionless models on tall, illuminated plinths; the show premiered at the gymnasium of the Lycée Stanislas, Paris (Ling 2018).

Made in China **as a site of friction**

Today, the political tension between China and the two Chinese regions – Hong Kong and Taiwan – is creating further conflicts and discomfort. The Sino-US trade war is also bringing to light conflicting situations. The phrase *Made in China* has entered a new phase of geopolitics. Particularly reflective is the notion of Chinese identity. The news reports of the Chinese and American governments have portrayed two opposing national images of China in an effort to safeguard their own economic and political interests (Wang and Ge 2020). On the one hand, China's news reports have actively constructed the country as a victim of the trade war, defender of free trade, driver for negotiations, and beneficiary of mutual cooperation. The American news media, on the other hand, has portrayed China as a deceitful communist and played up the "China threat" theory (*ibid*). This has created a rupture with the notion of Chinese identity, particularly for the Chinese outside of the PRC. Despite the political, cultural, and social relevance to some, many have viewed it with suspicion and scepticism. This has

led those with Chinese descent to simultaneously mobilize and disavow their Chinese identity.

The pandemic has exacerbated the problem further, as racism against Chinese and other East and Southeast Asian communities has surged globally. Hate crimes against Asians are on the rise across the board. Chinese and Asian diaspora are in the heat of a battle fuelled by racism, geopolitics, and identity crises. Meanwhile, alternative identity categories, such as Asian, Asian American, East Asian, East, and Southeast Asian, have subsequently been formed to challenge a perceived homogenous and hegemonic Chinese identity (Song 2021, Reny and Barreto 2020, Yeh 2020).

Shaped by the fast-changing global geopolitics, China's complex relationship with the overseas Chinese and Chinese of the PRC necessitates rethinking Chinese identity, Chineseness, and being Chinese. How can China be understood if Chinese identity is unclear? What, then, is China? Whose China is it—or whose Chineseness is it (Teng 2005)? What is the point of Chineseness (Ang 1998, 227)? To whom does it matter? What does being Chinese mean (Chu 2008)? Can we speak of culture, heritage, and creativity in, of, for, and with China collectively? How? What is multicultural heritage (Harrison 2013) in the context of "China"? How can one appraise transcultural, cocreated Chinese artifacts and position Chinese creativity?

China is clearly a diverse composition of many cultures that all seek to respond to a ubiquitous desire to partake in the global agenda. The interaction of local and global forces with respect to cultural norms and values is constantly mutated in the transglobal landscape; the eventual outcome cannot be thoughtlessly pigeon-holed in a curatorial exhibition. A different set of value systems and appraisals is needed. While the heterogeneity of culture, heritage, and creativity in China may be acknowledged, those from the disparate multicultural shore are also part and parcel of the reality of

China. Only by considering China to be a space of connection and by honoring Chineseness, albeit in flux, and China's multicultural heritage may we engage (the museum visitors) with China.

Artifacts as process: A vehicle of exchange, connection, and transformation

With respect to handling Chinese artifacts, instead of presenting them as the end product of Chinese culture and heritage, Wang (2021) suggested that they be considered a process of change and an ever-evolving agent that might draw connections with and transformation from China. Not only would this notion promote new discovery from the museum's China collection, but it would also manifest the relation between their inherent connection in, of, for, and with China and the Netherlands, the diasporic community, and the visitors.

In 2019, alongside with the curators of fashion and of China at NMVW, I was involved in the acquisition of a small collection of Chinese dresses and accessories. Presented to us were a few exquisite Shanghai-tailor-made qipao from the early 1930s and Chinese beaded handbags and shoes from the 1940s. The donor had inherited them from her Indonesian-Chinese mother, who had resided in Indonesia at the time the dress was made and had migrated with her daughter to the Netherlands in the 1940s. The donor recorded touching memories, decades of family history, and generational relationships through this refined collection. Accordingly, the dress had been worn on certain occasions, such as a wedding, when the mother wanted to evoke a sense of Chineseness, reinstating her Chinese identity in Indonesia and the Netherlands. The qipao brings to mind one's intrinsic relationship with ethnicity and identity formation, which markedly "informs our understanding of the need for belonging and connection in a climate of advanced globalisation and forced migration" as populations continue to move across the world (Sim 2019, 1).

Part of the exquisite collection is an early 1930s delicate semi-transparent body-hugging black laced qipao, well ahead of its time. It calls into question its representation of Chineseness, as modest and relatively staid qipao was standard wear for Chinese women residing in early 1930s Shanghai/China. But for the Chinese outside of China, the idea of Chineseness is an inseparable layer of everyday reality and consciousness (Chu 2008). Chineseness as a form of belonging does not reside in the Chinese state's definition, for it is a relationship forged between the cultural linkages with China and the political identity with host states (Reid 2009). It is often shaped by Otherness, without the boundary of the nation-state. When the donor revealed her unfamiliarity with the name of her inherited dress—qipao—and told us that it was commonly referred to as a "Shanghai dress" in her community (Liew 2019), we were reminded of the multiple Chinese histories, identities, cultures, and heritages embodied in the dress. As with authenticity and inauthenticity, sameness and uniqueness are confronted in the multiplicity of Chineseness; the hegemonic center of origin is a contested field for many who have challenged and deconstructed it (Ang 1998; Chow 1998; Chun 1996; Tu 1991). The varied ways or notions of being Chinese are neither definite nor fixed; rather they are dynamic, differentiated in varied context, time, and place, and typified by constant (re)negotiation and rearticulation in the diasporic paradigm (Ngan and Chan 2012).

It is precisely the process of being Chinese, the exemplification of Chineseness expressed in the Indonesian-Chinese qipao that speaks to the concerned community and visitors in the host country. The dress is currently displayed in a semi-permanent exhibition entitled "Crossroads Rotterdam" at WMR (from August 2020) through the lens of multiple Chinas (Ling and Segre-Reinach 2018). However, the dress may be

exhibited as a representation of multicultural Chinese heritage in the forthcoming exhibition, highlighting the inherent process of being Chinese.

Currently displayed in "Tropenmuseum, what's the story?" (from July 2020) an exhibition at Tropenmuseum Amsterdam showcasing contemporary objects collected by the NMVW, the work of Hong Kong-born, -bred, and -based designer Kit Man (KM) (b. 1980) is another collection that will be included in the forthcoming exhibition that I acquired for the museum in 2019. Kit Man began his creative career in an advertising agency; his work includes a series of playful designs, such as T-shirts, banners, badges, stickers, posters, and towels, that bear slogans such as "Hong Kong Kicks Ass," "I Support Cantonese" in Kickass font type, a typeset design of 6000 traditional Chinese characters with Cantonese words that the designer created in 2016–2018. In response to Hong Kong's social issues, the typeset was made in and for Hong Kong in order to preserve traditional Chinese characters and Cantonese[7]. With no traditional Chinese calligraphic training, the designer emulated the writing on Japanese liquor bottles and comic book artists who used a calligraphy brush. KM transformed a set of handwritten calligraphy in a mixture of bold, free-style, and fine strokes into a new and accessible computerized typeface (Kit-Man 2019).

The dynamic strokes and colloquial phrases provided a remarkable juxtaposition to the museum's Dongba manuscripts (Noord 2021): the enchantment of ancient pictography versus the playful strokes of contemporary Chinese calligraphy. The near-to-extinct Dongba script is a mnemonic system of pictography developed in the 7th century (circa) in Southern China. By the 10th century, it was widely used as part of the

[7] Seen as a vital part of the cultural identity for its native speakers, Cantonese is spoken mainly across Hong Kong, Macau and Southeastern China. Traditional Chinese characters have remained the same structure since the 2nd century and served as the standard print form throughout the Sinosphere until mid-20th century. They remained in common use in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and many overseas Chinese communities outside Southeast Asia.

language of the Naxi people, an ethnic minority group. However, its religious affiliation with the pre-Buddhist tradition of Tibet led to its destruction in the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). The survivors were taken to the United States, Europe, and Taiwan (Wiens 1999). Created in response to Hong Kong's social unrest,[8] namely, the fears of the replacement of Cantonese for Mandarin[9] leading to a disappearing local culture and language (Sautman and Xie 2021), the disparate historic junctures of political, ideological, and social changes played out in KM's calligraphy broadcast the discontentment of the Dongba scripts during the Cultural Revolution.

The discourse of being Chinese exemplified by KM's calligraphy is defined by local experiences and bottom-up individual stories. For those Chinese living on the periphery of the grand narrative of China, being Chinese is contested and expressed through the connections and differences between China as a polity and regime on the one hand and China as a place, race, and civilization on the other (Fong 2017). The narrative of contemporary exhibits like those of KM could rejuvenate the interest in museum's historic Chinese artifacts. More importantly, the heterogeneity of Chinese cultures, ancient and contemporary expressions, multiple contradictions and repetitions of history engendered by art, fashion and design, nationalism, capital in the legacy of Maoist interpellations (Davidson 2020), and—most of all—the multiplicity of Chinese creativity can then be addressed.

From *Made in* to *Making China*

[8] The creation began in 2016 following the Umbrella Movement (Sep – Dec 2014), a student-led sit-in protest against the proposed reforms to the Hong Kong electoral system, which was seen as tantamount to the Chinese Community Party. It took two years of work before it was completed in 2018, running up to 2019-20 Hong Kong protests, a series of protests against the Extradition Law Amendment Bill.

[9] Mandarin is the official language of the People's Republic of China. Simplified Chinese characters are standardized characters used in mainland China.

In sum, the complex cultural, economic, and political dynamics of *Made in China* are by no means free of contradictions and dilemmas. The stigma surrounding *Made in China* as a manufacturing label on both the material and symbolic levels are partly the result of China's economic growing pains alongside a political and social heavyweight. As an exhibition title, the phrase might invite criticism regarding Chinese products or merely the Chinese subject. Lim (2021) proposed replacing the verb in the title to shed light on the process of "making," as the idea and image of China are very much in construction. China can be seen as, in Anderson's (1983) words, imagined communities. Just as there was no Chinese nation-state, Chinese nation or even China as such before the 20th century, the divergent languages and customs of the fifty-six official ethnic groups in China, with only the distant top-down State to hold it all together (Lee 2018). The rephrased *Making China* could encompass the dynamics of the past and present; changes and uncertainties; and the producers, receivers, and onlookers that the process of making "China" brings to light. In other respects, *Made in China* as a concept or idea can provide much food for thought for curatorial direction; an artifact narrated solely from the perspectives of history and material culture might struggle to be fully appraised. The Indonesian-Chinese qipao and KM's Kickass font type in NMVW China-collection served as examples for communicative possibilities between place and space, nations and regions, facilitating transcultural exchanges and transglobal connections that are otherwise separated. They highlight competing narratives in a transnational and translocal context that might embrace the multiple-classed, gendered, nationalized, ethnicized, and racialized positionalities. As China and the world order cannot be taken separately, dissecting the operations of *Made in China* as a concept through the museum fashion and design artifacts necessitates the comprehension of making China, the process of which embodies heterogeneous voices and positionalities

of being Chinese enabling the Chineseness dots to be joined, messages to be communicated, and the nexus of sociocultural, political, and colonial entanglement to be articulated.

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