

ROUTLEDGE FOCUS

GLOBAL TRENDS IN MUSEUM DIPLOMACY

Post-Guggenheim Developments

Natalia Grincheva

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The logo consists of a stylized white silhouette of a person's head and shoulders, facing right, positioned to the right of the text 'ROUTLEDGE' and above the text 'Focus'.

Global Trends in Museum Diplomacy

Global Trends in Museum Diplomacy traces the transformation of museums from publicly or privately funded heritage institutions into active players in the economic sector of culture. Exploring how this transformation reconfigured cultural diplomacy, the book argues that museums have become autonomous diplomatic players on the world stage.

The book offers a comparative analysis across a range of case studies in order to demonstrate that museums have gone global in the era of neo-liberal globalisation. Grincheva focuses first on the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, which is well known for its bold revolutionising strategies of global expansion: museum franchising and global corporatisation. The book then goes on to explore how these strategies were adopted across museums around the world and analyses two cases of post-Guggenheim developments in China and Russia: the K11 Art Mall in Hong Kong and the International Network of Foundations of the State Hermitage Museum in Russia. These cases from more authoritarian political regimes evidence the emergence of alternative avenues of museum diplomacy that no longer depend on government commissions to serve immediate geopolitical interests.

Global Trends in Museum Diplomacy will be a valuable resource for students, scholars and practitioners of contemporary museology and cultural diplomacy. Documenting new developments in museum diplomacy, the book will be particularly interesting to museum and heritage practitioners and policymakers involved in international exchanges or official programs of cultural diplomacy.

Natalia Grincheva is a Research Fellow in the Research Unit of Public Cultures at the University of Melbourne. She is also Lead CI and Conceptual Designer of the award-winning digital mapping system Museum Soft Power Map. Dr Grincheva has been awarded numerous academic awards and fellowships, including Fulbright (2007–2009), Quebec Fund (2011–2013), Australian Endeavour (2012–2013), SOROS (2013–2014) and others. She has successfully implemented a number of research projects on new forms of contemporary diplomacy developed by the largest internationally recognised museums in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific.

Museums in Focus

Series Editor: Kylie Message

Committed to the articulation of big, even risky, ideas in small format publications, 'Museums in Focus' challenges authors and readers to experiment with, innovate, and press museums and the intellectual frameworks through which we view these. It offers a platform for approaches that radically rethink the relationships between cultural and intellectual dissent and crisis and debates about museums, politics and the broader public sphere.

'Museums in Focus' is motivated by the intellectual hypothesis that museums are not innately 'useful', safe' or even 'public' places, and that recalibrating our thinking about them might benefit from adopting a more radical and oppositional form of logic and approach. Examining this problem requires a level of comfort with (or at least tolerance of) ideas of crisis, dissent, protest and radical thinking, and authors might benefit from considering how cultural and intellectual crisis, regeneration and anxiety have been dealt with in other disciplines and contexts.

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Introduction

Museum diplomacy then and now

This book brings together two important topics that have not been explored in correlation with each other either in academia or in the professional world of museums. First, it focuses on a significant transformation of museums in the twenty-first century. In an era of increasing globalisation, museums have grown from publicly or privately funded repositories of cultural heritage into active players in the economic sector of culture. Second, the book traces how this transformation has challenged, advanced and reconfigured cultural diplomacy. It argues that contemporary museums have gone global and become key diplomatic players on the world stage without traditional patronage or support from their national governments.

Cultural diplomacy has traditionally been a strategic instrument of national governments to achieve foreign policy objectives. Though defined as an “exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture between countries to improve mutual understanding” (Cummings 2003, 1), it has always been a tool to communicate to the outside world. Nation states have employed cultural diplomacy to facilitate cross-cultural events or a series of cultural activities among different countries to achieve political or economic goals in the international arena.

Different states have supported the international missions of museums to promote national cultural ideas and values abroad to pursue strategic geopolitical interests. Museums have engaged in diplomatic activities through exporting individual collections of art since the Renaissance (Arndt 2005; Digout 2006; Sylvester 2009). For example, since its founding, the British Museum in London has been an important actor in cultural diplomacy, following its mandate as set by parliamentarians in 1753: “To allow visitors to address through objects, both ancient and more recent, questions of contemporary politics and international relations” (MacGregor 2004, 2).

A classic example of museum diplomacy is a series of large-scale exports of abstract expressionism in the epoch of the Cold War. During this period, American museums served as cultural ambassadors to other parts of the world to fight against communism (de Hart Mathews 1976; Hobbs 1997;

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Ninkovich 1997). Following the end of World War II, hundreds of exhibitions of American modern paintings sponsored by the United States (U.S.) government travelled to Europe, Latin America, Asia, Africa and eventually Soviet Russia. For example, the Museum of Modern Art was directly funded by the government to organise large and expensive exhibits, such as “The Modern Art in the US” (1956) and “The New American Painting” (1958), in Western Bloc European countries through the Congress for Cultural Freedom program (Cockcroft 1985).

These cases of cultural diplomacy demonstrate the powerful role of government in setting cultural agendas, defining geopolitical focus and commissioning the international activities of museums. Embarking on international partnerships with overseas counterparts, museums have depended on government support and served as political agents for promoting national ideologies and cultural values abroad (Arndt 2005). In recent decades, though, museums – as dynamic institutions reflecting the economic and political changes of neo-liberal globalisation – have changed dramatically. Challenged by gradually decreasing government funding, museums in different countries around the world have developed new ways to sustain their expensive operations in not only the national but also the international context (Alexander 1999; Fraser 2006; Grincheva 2016, 2017). The next section provides illustrations of this phenomenon across museums and countries.

The protagonists of the global expansion, the protagonists of the book

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is a world-recognised museum of contemporary and modern art, but it is also rather well known for revolutionising the professional world of museums with two key strategies of global expansion. These strategies are *museum franchising* and *global corporatisation*. *Museum franchising* is a hybrid form of museum management. It is a combination of non-profit organisational management and a new behaviour that sees museums as more autonomous actors in creative economy. Like in the business world, museum franchising is a contract-based practice of granting the right to use a brand name and employ a unique operational model in different places across countries (Dicke 1992). However, in contrast to business practices, museum franchising helps to advance the organisational mission rather than to merely maximise economic return.

With a main museum in New York (1939) and branches in Venice (1951), Bilbao (1997), Berlin (1997–2013), Las Vegas (2001–2008) and a planned franchise in Abu Dhabi, the Guggenheim has developed a strong infrastructure to support its international programming. This network expanded the Guggenheim’s exhibition spaces across borders, reaching much wider and more diverse audiences on a global scale. Having branches across countries allows the

museum to circulate its collections and exhibitions, develop its global brand name and, as a result, attract multimillion-dollar sponsorship opportunities.

This corporate sponsorship, though, is only a part of the global corporatisation strategy, successfully trialled by Guggenheim. *Global corporatisation*, as a practice adopted in the museum world, draws on the commercialisation of museum activities. It can include shopping, dining and other leisure or entertainment opportunities that bring more diverse customers to the door. In many cases, this practice is determined by reinforced corporate museum governance, and by partnerships with transnational corporations that usually seek to draw on a museum brand to win new markets. The Guggenheim's global programs, for example, include various projects generously supported by "image-conscious foreign corporations" such as Hugo Boss, UBS Wealth Management, Delta Airlines and Google, to name a few.

The famous BMW Guggenheim Lab, sustained by the iconic German car brand, toured around the world from New York to Berlin to Mumbai. Another well-known example is a series of blockbuster exhibitions on Giorgio Armani. The first-ever exhibit on fashion in an art museum travelled widely across the globe, from Las Vegas to Tokyo. Global corporatisation strategies did more than make Guggenheim more sustainable and competitive in the global economic sector of culture. They allowed it to implement large-scale international projects across continents. Drawing on a transnational network of corporate connections, Guggenheim was able to expand its reach and presence far beyond North America and Europe. Its new curatorial residencies, collection acquisition projects and audience development programs cover such geographical areas as Africa, Latin America and the Asia-Pacific.

Global corporatisation and museum franchising provide new avenues for international engagements and bring a museum to a new level of global outreach. However, it is not clear if these new practices facilitate cultural diplomacy. Can global expansion strategies give birth to a new type of museum diplomacy? Can such a diplomacy be defined by institutional commitments and mission on the world stage, rather than being shaped by government agenda? There are no simple answers to these questions. This book, however, takes up the challenge to address them.

The book was inspired by the growing power and multiplying effects of global expansion strategies, pioneered by Guggenheim but adopted across museums from different countries. Though severely criticised, both in academia and in the professional museum world, for sacrificing art scholarship for economic returns, Guggenheim's bold practices in global corporatisation and franchising have significantly influenced the development of museum agency across countries (Baudelle 2015). For example, "franchised museums pursuing global economies of scale and size (Tate, Pompidou, Getty, Paley Center, Reina Sofia, Imperial War, Louvre, Hermitage, Caixaforum or Ludwig) have multiplied with varying degrees of success" (Guerzoni 2015,

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190). Moreover, museum emulations of the McGuggenisation formula were rapidly erected in countries and regions beyond the Western hemisphere, including such parts of the world as “BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), the Orient and the Middle East, in Central and South America and in the former Soviet Bloc republics” (Guerzoni 2015, 190).

This book explores two particular cases of post-Guggenheim developments that evidence a successful adoption – or perhaps it is better to say adaptation – of the global expansion model of museums in China and Russia. First, to trace the development of global corporatisation practices among museums, the book offers the unique case of the K11 Art Mall, opened in Hong Kong in 2008 by Chinese billionaire Adrian Cheng. As the first fully retail-oriented museum in the world, K11 employs a new art-commerce business franchise model. K11 branches are speedily spreading across China and already cover almost 1.5 million square metres of total floor area across shopping malls (K11 2018). K11 aims to bring arts to the masses by redefining shopping experiences and creating opportunities for the growth and global promotion of contemporary Chinese arts.

Reflecting on the example of Guggenheim, Cheng explained: “K11 shares the same view as the Guggenheim Museum Foundation. Instead of waiting for people to come to a dedicated art museum, we bring art to the general public by opening up more channels where they could see art” (Cheng 2018). The global ambition of K11, however, goes beyond merely winning Chinese markets. Funded by K11 revenues, the non-profit K11 Art Foundation has been implementing large-scale international art programs, curatorial residencies and experimental projects with overseas museums. Aiming to promote contemporary Chinese artists on the global level, the international activities of the K11 Art Foundation directly contribute to China’s current foreign policy agenda for rebranding its cultural image on the world stage.

Second, to demonstrate productive deployment of cultural franchising, the book explores the International Network of Foundations developed by the State Hermitage Museum. One of the largest and well-recognised museums in the world, with three million objects in a collection representing different civilisations across time and space, the Hermitage enjoys a dedicated place among such universal museums as the British Museum in London, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Louvre in Paris. Since the 1990s, the Hermitage has been developing a powerful network of cultural foundations in different corners of the world. The network now numbers a dozen foundations and museum branches across North America, Europe and the Middle East and is also expanding to Asia. The development of this network has been to a certain degree empowered and encouraged by the Guggenheim experience in global franchising.

The first joint franchise, between the Hermitage and Guggenheim, was the hybrid Guggenheim–Hermitage that opened in Las Vegas in October 2001. It was followed by another attempt to build a new branch in Vilnius seven years later. Even though both cross-institutional franchise projects proved unsustainable, the director of the Hermitage does not consider these experiments to be failures and recollects the time of joint activities with special sympathy. We “have travelled to Singapore and various places. We’re ready to participate everywhere [. . .] to obtain a unique cultural effect (Kishkovsky 2009).”

The Guggenheim–Hermitage Museum was a robust platform on which we could “carry out our research work, create a new model for collaboration in the field of culture and continue to fulfil our main mission” (Gibson 2003, 22). The Hermitage International Network of Foundations has a distinct diplomatic ambition. It helps the museum pursue its commitments to establishing and sustaining “strong cultural ties and collaborative cultural relations” throughout Russia and the rest of the world by providing dedicated channels for Russian cultural diplomacy (Piotrovsky 2017).

These cases from China and Russia do more than offer captivating examples of how the Guggenheim’s global expansion models were successfully adopted and further transformed by museums beyond the Western world. More importantly, these examples evidence the emergence of new alternative avenues of museum diplomacy that no longer depend on government commissions to serve immediate geopolitical interests. As the book further illustrates, both Russian and Chinese cases of museum global expansion shape a new generation of museum diplomacy in the twenty-first century. The book identifies these alternative pathways of contemporary museum diplomacy to explore how it works and what challenges and opportunities it brings to museums.

Methodological adventures: from desk research to immersive auto-ethnography

The empirical framework of the book is twofold. First, it closely analyses global expansion strategies employed by Guggenheim under the leadership of Thomas Krens. He is a legendary person who is well known for transforming the museum into a truly transnational enterprise. These explorations help to provide scope for and to outline key characteristics of museum franchising and global corporatisation to interrogate their role and place in contemporary museum diplomacy. The book explores the wider context of the Guggenheim’s institutional history, philosophy, organisational behaviour, financial sustainability and global partnerships. An in-depth institutional analysis is based on qualitative research, including the analysis of online informational resources and annual organisational reports (1977–2010) as well as U.S.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) reports. IRS reports such as Form 990, collected from 2001 to 2012, were particularly instrumental in analysing the Guggenheim's operational budget. They helped to identify external funding sources and explore the structure and composition of the museum's Board of Trustees as well as its transformations through time.

Also, the book offers unique insights from management staff of the Guggenheim Museum in New York and one of the former branches of the Guggenheim, the Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin, Germany. I collected these internal perspectives through interviews conducted 2010–2012, when I commenced my doctorate research on the phenomenon of the Guggenheim. I was lucky to talk in person with Joan Young, Director of Curatorial Affairs, and Laura Miller, Director of the Marketing Department. In addition, I talked with Sara Bernshausen, the Associate Gallery Manager at Deutsche Guggenheim. These interviews clarified important nuances and details of the Guggenheim's activities on the global stage and provided an invaluable contribution to the analysis in this book. My attempts to interview Thomas Krens to get more personal insight into his visions for the revolutionary transformations of the museum were, unfortunately, unsuccessful. However, he is quite an outspoken person and has always been very open about sharing his opinion in the media. Drawing on these media interviews, I have been able to piece together Krens's management philosophy, which turned the museum into a global franchise.

The book applies global expansion models to case studies from non-Western contexts, such as the Hermitage Museum in Russia and K11 from China. These cases of museum franchising and global corporatisation identify and explain the direct implications of new practices for contemporary cultural diplomacy. They provide empirical evidence to the main arguments of this book, which seeks to identify and explain a new type of museum diplomacy. This diplomacy redefines the traditional relationship between national governments, museums and other stakeholders by seeing museums as key players in diplomacy.

However, to uncover the motivations, reasoning and logic behind museum franchising and global corporatisation employed by museums in China and Russia, a document analysis was not enough. Exploring less transparent environments within more authoritarian political regimes in China and Russia required a full immersion in the context of museums, their activities and networks. My methods comprised an ethnographic trip to China in summer 2018, and even my personal auto-ethnographic experience of volunteering for the Hermitage Museum Foundations in New York (2010) and London (2011).

My ethnographic research in China included immersive observations of the interior design, audiences and activities and exhibitions of two K11 Art Mall branches in Shanghai and Hong Kong. Moreover, it incorporated numerous interviews with a wide body of respondents, who I recruited by

employing a snowballing approach. It was not easy to find the right people to talk to, due to both language barriers (especially in Shanghai) and the local political culture and environment. I needed to actively engage with my personal connections to find ways to reach out to people working for K11. These new acquaintances were important for me to expand my network and connect to more relevant people among the huge K11 community of employees and top management.

However, I was lucky enough to progress in my recruiting adventures to interview Venus Lau, the Artistic Director of the K11 Art Foundation based in Shanghai, as well as Ross Leo, the Executive Director of the Foundation in Hong Kong. Furthermore, I convinced Adrian Cheng, the leader and founder of K11, to respond to my questions via email, after multiple online conversations with his numerous assistants. These interviews were very helpful in illuminating the institutional ambitions of K11 to play the key role on the global stage in promoting contemporary Chinese arts and projecting a Chinese cultural image.

While I also personally met with and interviewed an army of lower staff managers at K11, including curators, marketing and public relations officers, receptionists and guides, these interviews proved less informative. In most cases, K11 employees strictly conformed to the institutional perspective and were reluctant to share any personal viewpoints that might deviate from the official institutional position. I ended up interviewing various respondents outside K11 in order to piece together the complex puzzle of the retail-based museum phenomenon and its role on the global stage. My interviewees included emerging, well-established and internationally recognised artists, museum scholars and researchers, cultural practitioners and museum workers from other private and public institutions. It even included students who had previously interned for K11. The majority of them, of course, opted to be anonymous respondents, as it was the only way for me to lure out some illuminating nuances, critical perspectives and missing details.

My research into the State Hermitage had a different but similar approach. On the one hand, I could rely on a large body of documentation produced by the Hermitage Foundations in different countries, including annual Foundation reports as well as various project and program reports. In particular, I was able to rely on annual reports and newsletters of the State Hermitage Museum Foundation U.S.A. (2010–2015) and U.K. (2010–2015). Qualitative analysis of these documents helped to explore in more detail the activities, stakeholders, audiences and budgets of these non-profit institutions over recent years. Apart from the analysis of this official institutional perspective, I drew on my personal volunteer experience in London and Washington D.C., during which I took on such roles as Communication Associate and D.C. Event Coordinator.

In 2010–2011, my volunteer engagements were not intended to gain experience for the purpose of this book. In fact, as an international graduate student in both countries, I was attracted by the opportunity to be part of the Hermitage family while away from home. Through this experience, I was able to connect to my Russian culture and heritage and share it with my new overseas friends and colleagues. However, it was also the time I first observed and realised the power of the museum's global networks to establish strong connections with local audiences, engage wealthy stakeholders, consolidate diaspora communities and implement a great number of international exchange projects.

I was lucky to work hand in hand with the then-Director of the Foundation in the U.S., Masha Tolstoy Sarandinaki, the American-born great-granddaughter of the famous Russian writer Leo Tolstoy. My work was also supervised by Paul Rodzianko, Chairman of the Foundation (2007–2015). He is a wealthy philanthropist who has supported numerous Russian cultural organisations and projects in the U.S.

In London, I had the opportunity to work with Dr Thierry Morel, then-Director of the Foundation U.K., and Geraldine Norman, Chief Executive of the U.K. Foundation. Norman not only has served on the Foundation since its inception but is also a dedicated Hermitage historian. She spent many years in Saint Petersburg researching and has published two books about the history of the Hermitage. It was Norman who personally introduced me to Dr Mikhail Piotrovsky, the legendary Director of the Hermitage Museum, when he was in London on one of his diplomatic visits.

Despite this personal connection, it was not possible to catch Piotrovsky for an interview due to his busy travelling schedule, which kept him on the move across countries and continents on various missions. However, this book offers invaluable insights from Katia Sirakanian, Head of the Development Department of the State Hermitage Museum, who was interviewed in May 2017. This interview clarified important nuances of the museum's global expansion strategy, which has seen them successfully reach out to new, powerful and wealthy supporters in many countries around the world.

As these insights reveal, my methodological approaches combined traditional desk research with adventurous and international travel experiences. It was a decade-long journey that led to the development of this book and generously provided multiple opportunities to observe the emergence of the phenomenon of museum global expansion. It also offered authentic experiences to learn how we can discuss and explain this phenomenon.

Conceptual foundations and the design of the book

The main goal of the book is to provide a fresh perspective on museum franchising and global corporatisation. Both of these practices have been previously discussed, predominantly in relation to Guggenheim and, in most

cases, in terms of imperialistic McDonaldisation. For example, the Guggenheim's international activities have been severely criticised in both the media and academic literature as a manifestation of neo-colonial powers, or even as an aggressive expansion of cultural imperialism (Rauen 2001; Sorkin 2005). Guggenheim was accused of being a "superpower hegemon, seducing locals into paying through their noses for the 'privilege' of having its brand and its protection" (Sylvester 2009, 120).

Acknowledging the political implications of the Guggenheim's global expansion model, this book aims to go beyond an imperialistic reading of these new practices. It situates global corporatisation and museum franchising within a cultural diplomacy framework to find a new language for these museum innovations. As one of the first publications in the "Museums in Focus" series, this book offers a new approach that questions, analyses and explains the global expansion models that shape international trends in museum diplomacy. The book contributes to the key goals of the series by facilitating a debate across disciplines. It employs the framework of contemporary cultural diplomacy to reconceptualise Guggenheim's international activities and its transformations in the context of other museums across countries.

Cultural diplomacy is still a contested academic field and a "relatively uncharted territory" that exists across more consolidated disciplines, including political science, international relations and public communication (Goff 2013; Lamonica and Isernia 2016; McConnell et al. 2012). The book builds on the foundational developments of the current diplomacy scholarship and focuses on two key aspects that challenge traditional forms of museum diplomacy. The first aspect is the appearance of powerful non-state actors that increasingly intervene in diplomatic activities among nation states. Second, the book finds a way to accommodate a more nuanced exploration of contemporary cultural diplomacy that no longer fits the narrow paradigm of government-led activities. To do this, it employs Joseph Nye's (2004) theory of soft power, which refers to the ability of a country to achieve its foreign policy objectives through persuasion and attraction.

In an age of increasing globalisation, new technologies and access to international resources have significantly empowered new diplomatic players. In pursuit of their own institutional interests and commitments, these non-state players take a more autonomous role on the global stage. They also enjoy a much wider reach to audiences and constituencies across borders and acquire powers to shape global discourses, set international agendas and communicate messages of political significance (Habermas 2001; Kelley 2010, 2014). However, these actors earn their diplomatic legitimacy not through their official status, like governmental players, but rather through their capabilities to raise their own budget to go global, to offer professional expertise in addressing international issues and to earn credibility in the

eyes of the global publics (Avant et al. 2010). As a result, these actors can develop their global reputation, recognition and visibility when they start to project their own soft power.

Within Nye's power typologies, ranging from the hard power of military might to the multilateral diplomacy of institutional structuration, soft power is understood as a more advanced and sophisticated tool for achieving foreign policy objectives by simply seducing other actors or influencing "others to get the outcomes one wants" (Nye 2004, 2). Nye argues that this type of power offers an alternative solution to address the complexity of international relations by employing culture as the foundation of international influence on other societies. In recent years, the term soft power has been employed not only to describe the ability of a country to influence the behaviour of other states but also to refer to an institutional capacity to generate the power of attractiveness to achieve organisational goals in a broader international environment (Kenta et al. 2016).

This book explores this institutional soft power in relation to contemporary museums. It expands an emerging museum studies scholarship that only recently started to define museums as "networked civil society institutions with soft power." The soft power of museums could be understood as an ability to "amplify civic discourse, accelerate cultural change, and contribute to cultural intelligence among the great diversity of city dwellers, visitors, policy makers and leaders" (Lord and Blankenberg 2015, 19). The book explores museums as non-state actors of diplomacy leveraging their powers on the global stage. Museums do this through developing complex constituent networks, liberating their cross-cultural engagements from financial dependency on their nation states. At the same time, the book aims to demonstrate that by generating this institutional soft power, museums build their global reputation, expertise and credibility for representing national cultures abroad and contributing to state efforts in cultural diplomacy.

Chapter 1, "Cultural Diplomacy of a Different Kind," establishes the conceptual foundation of the book. It elaborates on two key aspects of the global political climate in which states, international organisations and non-state actors become more "integrated into the complex, multi-faceted patterns of world politics" (Hocking et al. 2012, 18). The chapter explores the foundational principles of non-state legitimacy and relates them to museums' international activities. It also expands the framework of museum diplomacy by integrating the concept of institutional soft power to explain cases in which diplomacy draws primarily on museum leadership, as opposed to governmental initiatives. Furthermore, the chapter defines boundaries of cultural diplomacy in relation to other terms and concepts that are frequently used interchangeably with museum diplomacy.

These conceptual foundations inform the following two chapters of the book, which illustrate exactly how these principles work through specific case studies. These specific chapters focus on two different global expansion strategies successfully trialled by Guggenheim and further transformed by K11 and the Hermitage Museum.

Chapter 2, “Museum Diplomacy as a Corporate Enterprise,” explores corporate partnerships and museum commercialisation as implemented by Guggenheim. It further traces the transformation of these practices in the context of contemporary China by exploring more closely the case of K11 Art Mall. The chapter discusses the unintentional contributions of Guggenheim to projecting American liberal democracy and the freedom of the market economy. But it also reveals that the Guggenheim’s international programming has a stronger institutional focus and agenda, placing it outside of cultural diplomacy activities. The diplomatic manifestation of the global corporatisation practice is, nevertheless, identified through a close analysis of K11 international activities. In this way, the chapter documents the emergence of powerful private actors of diplomacy among museums in an authoritarian regime such as China. K11 offers a convincing case that demonstrates the power of private diplomacy to represent national arts and culture in the global arena.

Chapter 3, “Museum Diplomacy as a Global Franchise,” investigates the structure, rationale and design of transnational museum networks in the context of two museums. This chapter aims to demonstrate how franchising strategy, first pioneered by Guggenheim, has re-emerged in the International Network of the Hermitage Museum Foundations. The network empowered the museum to go global without the traditional patronage of the Russian government. First, the chapter explores the birth of the Guggenheim franchising model, its rapid development at the beginning of the twenty-first century and its gradual decline in recent years. While demonstrating the direct implications of the museum’s global branding, the chapter questions whether the Guggenheim’s branches abroad could facilitate cultural diplomacy. However, the case of the Hermitage reveals that cultural franchising can create a global infrastructure for non-state cultural diplomacy. The Hermitage International Network provides a unique example of highly effective museum diplomacy that outperforms the Russian government in its international outreach and impact.

Comparing and contrasting three cases of global expansion practices and their implications for cultural diplomacy, the book offers new insights into the development and transformation of museum diplomacy in the era of globalisation. It illustrates that museums are becoming important centres of soft power, and their international brands, presence and visibility allow them to implement transnational projects and programs with strong diplomatic agendas and significance. While the case of the Guggenheim, in the

context of the U.S. only, interrogates global museum practices to pave the way for contemporary cultural diplomacy, the case studies of Russian and Chinese museums prove these to be key dimensions of museum diplomacy in the twenty-first century.

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