

# An Analysis of How Private Museums Create Attractions - A Case Study of the Guanfu Museum in Beijing

Ruiqi Shi \*

Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China

\* Corresponding Author Email: shi\_ruiqqi@163.com

**Abstract.** This paper focuses on the development status of private museums. Taking a typical private museum as an example, it deeply analyzes its innovative practices of following contemporary hot topics in the context of modern society, including creating the "Guanfu Cats" IP image, promoting traditional clothing culture, and providing a rich variety of seals. At the same time, it explores the efforts and achievements in knowledge and cultural output, aiming to reveal the unique value and significance of private museums in cultural dissemination and inheritance, and providing useful references for the development of related fields.

**Keywords:** Private Museums, IP Image Creation, Cultural Heritage Promotion, Knowledge Output.

## 1. Introduction

In the vibrant tapestry of cultural institutions, private museums have emerged as crucial players in recent years. They serve as not only repositories of historical artifacts but also as dynamic platforms for cultural exchange and education. As the cultural consumption market diversifies, with the public's appetite for unique and immersive cultural experiences on the rise, private museums find themselves at a crossroads. They are presented with the opportunity to fill niches that larger, state-run institutions may not fully address. For instance, they can focus on highly specialized collections, such as a private museum dedicated solely to the art of a particular region or time period. However, they also face the challenge of standing out in a crowded field. Competition for visitors, funding, and resources is intense, and private museums must be strategic in their approach to attract and retain an audience.

The Beijing Guanfu Museum, with its distinct character and innovative strategies, serves as an excellent case study. By examining its current state and the creative ways it engages with the public, we can glean valuable insights into how private museums can thrive in the contemporary cultural landscape. This analysis will not only contribute to our understanding of the museum's specific success but also offer broader lessons for the private museum sector as a whole, guiding future development and enhancing their role in cultural dissemination and inheritance.

## 2. The Current Situation of Private Museums

### 2.1. Venue Layout and Exhibition Settings

#### 2.1.1. First - Floor Halls

The Crafts Hall of the Guanfu Museum is a veritable treasure trove of traditional craftsmanship. Here, one can find intricate embroidery pieces that showcase the delicate art of needlework. The stitches are so fine that they seem to blend seamlessly, creating vivid images of flowers, birds, and historical scenes. The colors are often rich and vibrant, carefully selected to enhance the overall aesthetic. Next to the embroideries are the delicate wood carvings. Master craftsmen have transformed blocks of wood into intricate sculptures, from detailed figures of deities to elaborate scenes from folklore. Each carving tells a story, and the level of detail is a testament to the patience and skill of the artisans. The display cases are arranged in a way that allows visitors to view the crafts from multiple angles, ensuring they can fully appreciate the nuances of each piece.

The Home Furnishing Hall is designed to transport visitors back in time. The layout mimics the layout of traditional Chinese homes, with different rooms dedicated to different functions. In the

living room area, there are antique wooden chairs and tables, often made of precious woods like rosewood or mahogany. The chairs are designed with ergonomic considerations, providing both comfort and style. Ornaments such as porcelain vases and jade carvings are placed strategically around the room, adding a touch of elegance. The bedrooms are furnished with traditional beds, complete with intricately carved headboards and silk bedding. These displays give visitors a glimpse into the daily lives of people in different historical periods, highlighting the evolution of domestic aesthetics and lifestyle.

The Ceramics Hall is a chronological journey through the history of Chinese ceramics. Starting from the primitive pottery of the Neolithic era, which is characterized by its simple shapes and rough textures, the hall progresses through the dynasties. The Shang and Zhou dynasties' ceramics show more complex forms, often with geometric patterns and inscriptions. As we move towards the Tang Dynasty, the emergence of Tang - tri - colored pottery is a highlight. The bright, multi - colored glazes and lifelike sculptures of people, animals, and daily objects are a reflection of the prosperous and cosmopolitan nature of the Tang period. The Song Dynasty ceramics, with their understated elegance and refined craftsmanship, are also prominently displayed. The celadon wares, in particular, are known for their smooth, jade - like texture and subtle color variations. The Ming and Qing porcelain, with its elaborate designs and high - quality craftsmanship, represents the zenith of Chinese ceramic production. The hall not only displays the ceramics but also provides detailed information about the production techniques, kiln types, and cultural significance of each piece.

The Doors and Windows Hall is a celebration of traditional Chinese architectural art. The doors and windows on display are not only functional elements but also works of art. They are made of wood, often with inlays of jade, mother - of - pearl, or other precious materials. The carvings on the doors and windows depict a wide range of themes, from auspicious symbols like dragons and phoenixes to scenes from literature and mythology. The lattice patterns are also highly intricate, designed to let in light while maintaining privacy. Some of the doors and windows are large, elaborate structures that would have been used in grand mansions or temples, while others are smaller, more delicate pieces that were suitable for ordinary homes. This hall provides a unique perspective on traditional Chinese architecture and the cultural values embedded within it.

### **2.1.2. Second - Floor Exhibition**

The second - floor exhibition of the Guanfu Museum, centered around the twenty - four solar terms, is a unique and innovative concept. During the Beginning of Spring, the cultural relic on display might be a scroll painting that vividly portrays the awakening of nature. The painting could show tender shoots emerging from the ground, birds returning to their nests, and people preparing for the new farming season. Accompanying the painting might be a traditional plow or a set of farming tools, highlighting the importance of agriculture in Chinese culture and the significance of the season.

For the Winter Solstice, the museum might exhibit a bronze vessel used in ancient sacrifice ceremonies. These vessels were often intricately decorated with symbols related to the gods and ancestors. Along with the vessel, there could be written records or illustrations that explain the elaborate rituals associated with the Winter Solstice sacrifice. This combination of artifacts and information helps visitors understand the deep - seated cultural and religious beliefs that were associated with the solar terms in ancient times. Each of the twenty - four exhibits is carefully curated to reflect the specific characteristics, traditions, and cultural significance of the corresponding solar term, creating a cohesive and educational exhibition.

## **3. Following Contemporary Hot Topics**

### **3.1. Creating the "Guanfu Cats" IP Image**

#### **3.1.1. Interaction with Cats**

In modern urban life, the phenomenon of loneliness has become increasingly prevalent. Long working hours, high - pressure jobs, and the transient nature of urban living have led many people to

seek companionship. Pet - raising has emerged as a popular solution, with cats being one of the most beloved pets. The Guanfu Museum's introduction of the "Guanfu Cats" IP capitalizes on this trend. The cats in the museum are not just ordinary felines; they have become ambassadors of the museum. They have their own personalities, some are playful and affectionate, while others are more reserved and independent.

The museum has designated areas where the cats can freely move around, and visitors are encouraged to interact with them. These areas are equipped with cat toys, cozy beds, and scratching posts to ensure the cats are comfortable. The interaction between visitors and cats is a two - way street. Visitors get to experience the joy of petting a cat, which can have a calming and stress - relieving effect. At the same time, the cats' presence in the museum adds a touch of liveliness. For those who cannot keep a pet due to various reasons such as lack of space or time, the museum offers a chance to satisfy their yearning for feline companionship. This interaction has been known to create a lasting impression on visitors, often leading them to return to the museum not just for the cats but also to explore the cultural exhibits further.

### **3.1.2. Cultural and Creative Products and Applications**

The cultural and creative products inspired by the "Guanfu Cats" are a testament to the museum's creativity. The paintings of the cats are not only cute depictions but also often incorporate elements of the museum's cultural collection. For example, a painting might show a cat sitting next to an ancient porcelain vase, creating a visual connection between the modern and the historical. The ornaments, such as keychains, fridge magnets, and small statues, are designed with great attention to detail. Each cat - themed ornament has a unique design, and the quality of the craftsmanship is high, making them highly desirable souvenirs.

The museum's use of "Guanfu Cats" elements in its exhibition hall layout is also remarkable. There are cat - shaped signs that guide visitors through the museum, and the display cases may have small cat - related decorations. The cat roster that is given away with the purchase of cultural and creative products is a well - thought - out addition. It contains detailed information about each cat, including their age, favorite hiding spots in the museum, and even some funny anecdotes about their interactions with visitors. The cat - bookmark tickets are not only practical but also serve as a constant reminder of the museum visit.

The "Cats and Cultural Relics" themed exhibitions are a huge hit. The museum creates elaborate scenes where cats are placed in a way that they seem to be interacting with the cultural relics. For example, a cat might be sitting on a traditional wooden chest, looking curiously at the artifacts inside. These exhibitions are not only visually appealing but also generate a lot of interest on social media. The books published by the museum, like *Guanfu Cats: The Cat Curators of the Museum*, are not only popular among children but also among adults. The vivid stories and beautiful illustrations make the book a great read for all ages. The social media accounts of the museum, which regularly share cat - related content, have amassed a large following. This has led to increased footfall in the museum, especially among families with children, as they are eager to experience the world of "Guanfu Cats" in person.

### **3.2. Promoting Traditional Clothing Culture**

The Hanfu Punch - in Month activity organized by the Guanfu Museum has had a significant impact on promoting traditional clothing culture. Hanfu, the traditional clothing of the Han ethnic group in China, has experienced a resurgence in recent years, especially among young people. The museum's decision to offer a ticket discount for visitors wearing Hanfu is a brilliant marketing strategy. It not only attracts Hanfu enthusiasts but also encourages those who are curious about traditional clothing to try it out.

The sight of visitors in elaborate Hanfu walking through the museum's halls creates a visually stunning and immersive experience. The different styles of Hanfu, from the elegant quju to the more casual beizi, add a touch of historical authenticity to the museum environment. The museum also

provides dressing rooms and some basic guidance on how to wear Hanfu properly for those who are new to it.

The social media promotion of the activity has been a game - changer. By encouraging visitors to post their Hanfu - wearing photos and videos on social media with specific topic tags, the museum has managed to reach a wide audience. The number of posts related to the museum on platforms like Weibo and Douyin has skyrocketed. These posts often feature not only the beautiful Hanfu but also the cultural relics in the background, creating a connection between traditional clothing and historical artifacts. The exposure has led to an influx of new visitors, many of whom are young people who are interested in exploring traditional culture. This activity has not only made the museum more popular but has also played a role in promoting the revival of Hanfu culture and increasing public awareness of traditional Chinese clothing.

### **3.3. Providing a Rich Variety of Seals**

Seal collecting has a long - standing tradition in China, and the Guanfu Museum's offering of a diverse range of seals caters to this interest. The free seals, especially the two delicate color - printed ones inspired by cats and cultural relics, are highly sought - after. The design of these seals is unique, with one side featuring a charming cat face and the other side displaying a famous cultural relic from the museum's collection. The 33 seals with cat and cultural relic prototypes also offer a wide selection. Each seal has a different design, some showing cats in various poses next to cultural relics, while others incorporate elements of both in a more abstract way.

The paid seals from the stamp machines are also of high quality. The distribution of these stamp machines throughout the museum is well - planned, ensuring that visitors can easily access them during their visit. The fact that the museum has a relatively small passenger flow compared to national museums means that the seals are less worn out. The staff's timely ink refills ensure that the stamps always produce clear and sharp impressions.

For many visitors, seal collecting has become an integral part of their museum experience. They carefully plan their route through the museum to collect all the seals. Some even bring special notebooks or albums dedicated to their seal collection. The seals, with their unique designs, serve as a tangible reminder of the museum visit. They also act as a form of cultural dissemination. When visitors show their seal - filled notebooks or postcards to their friends and family, they are sharing the museum's cultural offerings, often sparking interest and curiosity about the museum and the cultural relics it houses.

## **4. Knowledge and Cultural Output**

### **4.1. Continuously Updating Cultural Relic Explanations on Social Media Accounts**

In the digital age, social media has become an indispensable tool for cultural institutions. The Guanfu Museum's social media accounts are a hub of activity. The professional docents use a variety of media to explain the cultural relics. Short videos are a popular format. In these videos, the docent may hold the cultural relic and provide a detailed, yet easy - to - understand explanation. For example, when explaining an ancient bronze mirror, the docent will not only describe its physical features such as the shape, size, and decorative patterns but also delve into its historical significance. Bronze mirrors were not only used for personal grooming but also had cultural and religious connotations in ancient China.

Illustrated tweets are another effective way of sharing information. These tweets often feature high - quality photos of the cultural relics, with detailed captions that provide historical context, production techniques, and cultural value. The interactive nature of social media allows for a two - way conversation. The comment section is filled with questions from the audience, such as "What was the purpose of this particular symbol on the relic?" or "How was this artifact made?" The museum staff are quick to respond, often providing additional resources or further explanations. This interaction

has created a community of cultural enthusiasts around the museum's social media accounts, where people can share their love for history and culture and learn from each other.

#### **4.2. Simultaneously Offering Curator Open Classes and Public Welfare Lectures**

The curator open classes at the Guanfu Museum are highly regarded. The curator, with years of experience in the field of cultural relics and museum management, brings a wealth of knowledge to the classroom. In these classes, the curator may start by tracing the history of the museum, from its humble beginnings to its current status as a respected cultural institution. The story of how the museum acquired its most precious artifacts is often a fascinating part of the lecture.

When discussing the collection and protection of cultural relics, the curator will share the challenges faced in preserving these artifacts. For example, the difficulties in maintaining the right temperature and humidity levels to prevent damage to delicate textiles or the complex restoration processes for ancient ceramics. The curator also emphasizes the importance of cultural inheritance and innovation, discussing how the museum is constantly looking for new ways to present its collections to the public and make them more accessible.

The public welfare lectures at the museum are equally impressive. When archaeologists are invited to speak, they may present the latest archaeological discoveries, complete with photos and 3D models of the excavation sites. Cultural scholars, on the other hand, may provide in - depth interpretations of traditional cultural classics, such as the Book of Songs or the Analects of Confucius. Artists invited to the lectures share their creative processes, often using examples from traditional Chinese art forms like calligraphy, painting, and sculpture. These lectures attract a diverse audience, from students interested in history and culture to professionals in the cultural field. They not only expand the audience's knowledge but also foster a sense of community and a shared appreciation for traditional culture.

### **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Guanfu Museum in Beijing has demonstrated remarkable creativity and adaptability in its operations. Its unique venue layout and exhibition settings, from the themed halls on the first floor to the solar - term - inspired exhibition on the second floor, offer visitors a rich and diverse cultural experience. The museum's engagement with contemporary hot topics, such as the creation of the "Guanfu Cats" IP, the promotion of traditional clothing culture, and the provision of a rich variety of seals, has not only made it more appealing to a wider audience but has also injected new life into the traditional museum experience.

The knowledge and cultural output through social media and educational programs like curator open classes and public welfare lectures have further enhanced the museum's role as a cultural educator and disseminator. Private museums, like the Guanfu Museum, are indeed irreplaceable in the cultural landscape. They offer a more personalized and niche approach to cultural presentation, which can attract audiences who may not be as interested in the more general offerings of larger institutions.

However, the challenges facing private museums cannot be overlooked. Funding shortages often limit their ability to expand their collections, upgrade their facilities, or invest in advanced technology for exhibition and preservation. The lack of professional talent, especially in areas such as curation, conservation, and marketing, can also hamper their growth. Low social recognition means that they may not receive the same level of support from the public or government as national museums.

To overcome these challenges, the government can play a role by providing financial incentives, such as grants or tax breaks, to private museums. Social institutions can also collaborate with private museums, for example, by sponsoring exhibitions or providing volunteer support. Private museums themselves need to be more proactive in fundraising, talent recruitment, and marketing. They should continue to innovate in their exhibition design, educational programs, and cultural product development.

Looking to the future, private museums have great potential. Strengthening cooperation with other cultural institutions and enterprises can lead to joint exhibitions, cultural events, and the development of new cultural products. The increased application of digital technology, such as virtual reality and augmented reality, can create immersive online museum experiences, breaking down geographical barriers. Moreover, by focusing on talent cultivation, private museums can ensure that they have a skilled workforce that can meet the evolving needs of the cultural sector. Through these efforts, private museums can continue to thrive and contribute significantly to the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage. They can become even more integral parts of local and global cultural ecosystems, fostering cross-cultural understanding and inspiring a new generation's interest in history and culture.

In addition, private museums could consider forming partnerships with schools and educational institutions. By integrating their collections and educational resources into school curricula, they can provide students with hands-on learning experiences outside the classroom. For example, schools could organize field trips to the museum, where students can directly interact with the cultural relics, participate in workshops led by museum experts, and gain a deeper understanding of historical and cultural concepts. This not only enriches the educational experience but also helps inculcate a sense of cultural appreciation from an early age.

Another area of potential growth is in international cooperation. Private museums can collaborate with their counterparts from around the world to host international exhibitions. These exhibitions can showcase cultural artifacts from different regions side by side, highlighting the similarities and differences in human history and culture. Such exchanges can also lead to knowledge-sharing in areas such as museum management, conservation techniques, and exhibition design. By participating in the global cultural dialogue, private museums can enhance their international visibility and contribute to a more inclusive and diverse global cultural landscape.

Furthermore, private museums can leverage the power of storytelling. Each cultural relic has a unique story to tell, and by presenting these stories in an engaging and accessible manner, museums can captivate their audiences. This could involve creating audio-visual presentations, interactive exhibits, or even immersive theater-style performances within the museum premises. By making the museum experience more than just a display of artifacts but a journey through time and culture, private museums can leave a more lasting impression on visitors and further enhance their role as cultural storytellers.

In conclusion, while private museums face numerous challenges, the opportunities for growth and innovation are abundant. By learning from successful examples like the Beijing Guanfu Museum and implementing strategic initiatives in areas such as collaboration, digital transformation, education, and storytelling, private museums can carve out a unique and vital space in the cultural world, ensuring that the rich tapestry of human history and culture continues to be explored, appreciated, and passed down for generations to come.

## References

- [1] Song Yuchen. "An Analysis of the Cultural Dissemination Power of the Museum IP Image Construction - Taking the 'Guanfu Cats' of the Guanfu Museum as an Example." *Collection*, 2023, Issue 06, pp. 92 - 94.
- [2] Su Hui. "Research on the Communication Strategies of Private Museums." *Jinan University*, 2022, Issue 12, p. 54.
- [3] Li Sifei. "A Brief Discussion on the Cultural and Spiritual Connotations of the Beijing Guanfu Museum." *Proceedings of the 2020 National High-end Forum on Educational and Teaching Innovation and Development of the Educational and Teaching Innovation Professional Committee of the China Education Development Strategy Society (Volume III)*, April 2020, p. 2.
- [4] Zhou Xinyi, Bu Honglin, Zhai Yao. "Research on the Design and Marketing Strategies of the Cultural and Creative Products of the Palace Museum." *Industrial Innovation Research*, 2022, Issue 11, pp. 75 - 77.