

DRIFTING THROUGH THE PORCELAIN CAPITAL

ART RESIDENCIES AND THE ENFORCED CONTINUITY OF AN ILLUSTRIOUS PAST IN JINGDEZHEN, CHINA

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Art residencies are marketed by organizers and participants as catalysts for artistic, cultural, and technological reform; platforms for community outreach that generate international awareness of regional issues and enable locals to realize their latent creative capabilities.¹ Yet the reality of residencies often falls short of these promotional ideals. Residency programmes in the so-called 'Porcelain Capital' of Jingdezhen, China, exemplify this divergence of rhetoric and reality. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, an increasing number of North American and European artists have travelled to this city, leading locals to coin the terms 'Jingdezhen drifter' (*jingpiao* 景漂) and 'Jingdezhen phenomenon' (*Jingdezhen xianxiang* 景德镇现象) to refer to the 're-discovery' of their home.² While the city's history and the skill of its artisans are principal attractions for visiting artists, local art residency programmes tend to be self-sufficient, self-contained, and detached from the community, generating little possibility for social or artistic reform. Instead they are predisposed, through the highly contrived access to the city and circumscribed relations between resident artists and local artisans that they offer, toward the continuity of an image of Jingdezhen as the mythologized 'Porcelain Capital', and therefore rely on the preservation of existing conditions. In the broader institutional context of art residency as a contemporary phenomenon, this raises the following questions: Are art residency initiatives engines for social and artistic change, as they are promoted to be, or do they perpetuate existing inequalities? Are organizers and participants in art residency programmes committed to a mutual exchange of ideas and technologies with locals, or do they look only to generating profit, advancing their own careers, and adding to their résumés? More to the point, should we expect art residencies to accomplish anything other than these goals? Have we been misled by promotional hyperbole?

Sanbao International Ceramics Village and The Pottery Workshop (PWS), as the first and the longest-running dedicated art residency initiatives in Jingdezhen, provide an ideal means to interrogate these issues. Both were established by practising Chinese ceramicists who launched their careers overseas and continue to view international visitors as their primary client base. Both employ local artisans in service and labour roles, but restrict access to residency facilities through high fees and strict selection criteria. Additionally, employees are usually drawn from privileged sectors of the ceramics industry like the city's main tertiary education provider, the Jingdezhen Ceramics Institute (JCI). Although a residency at Sanbao

¹ See, for example, the website description of residencies given by Res Artis, a global network of institutions and organizers committed to promoting residency programs: Res Artis, 'Definition of Artist Residencies', Res Artis: Worldwide Network of Artist Residencies. Accessed through: resartist.org, on 3 April, 2018.

² Wang Qiwei, 'Jing Drifters: New Blood in China's Porcelain Capital', in: *GB Times*, n.p., 20 July 2015. Accessed through: gbtimes.com, on 9 Mar. 2016; Chen Jie, '景德镇陶瓷的民间审美样式与当代艳俗艺术' [Folk Aesthetics in Jingdezhen Ceramics and Contemporary Gaudy Art], in: *Popular Literature and Art* 2 (February 2012), p. 40.

→fig. 1 Communal area, Sanbao International Ceramics Village, 2018. Photo: Cathy Zhang.



or PWS helps visiting artists to develop their portfolios, neither institution is committed to promoting socio-cultural equality for ceramicists across social divides in the broader environment of Jingdezhen.

The proliferation of art residency programmes in Jingdezhen, defined by the movement of global cosmopolitan artist-elites through a city struggling to survive in a post-industrial economy, is therefore a paradigmatic instance of what has recently been defined as ‘global gentrification’. Pioneering urban sociologist Ruth Glass first used the term ‘gentrification’ in 1964 to describe the housing situation in areas of post-war London that led to the displacement of established working-class residents by middle-class occupiers.³ The operative process here is therefore the displacement of a resident community by an external occupying, or colonizing group, who then transform the gentrified area to better reflect their own needs and values. In *Gentrification: A Working-Class Perspective* (2014), sociologist and social policy analyst Kirsteen Paton of the University of Liverpool draws out these processes in her critique of gentrification as a “key weapon in the neoliberal arsenal of regeneration,” projected by privileged groups as a “panacea to the decline wrought by deindustrialisation” but generally used to justify redevelopment in areas rendered economically obsolete.⁴ Her association of gentrifying projects with neoliberal politics exposes an underlying preference for individual over community needs, motivated by profit rather than desire for reform, and also highlights the extent to which such redevelopment serves to reinforce rather than ameliorate existing social inequalities.

The increasingly global extent of neoliberal ideology signals a need to expand this concept of gentrification beyond the metropolises of Europe and North America. For urban sociologists Rowland Atkinson, Research Chair in Inclusive Society at the University of Sheffield, and Gary Bridge, Professor of Human Geography at Cardiff University, this

³ Tom Slater, ‘Gentrification of the City’, in: Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (eds), *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, n.p. Accessed through: blackwellreference.com, on 4 April 2018.

⁴ Kirsteen Paton, *Gentrification: A Working-Class Perspective*, New York: Routledge, 2016, p. 10.

proposition of a global gentrification recalls the colonial projects of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The extra-territorial concessions founded by colonial elites, they argue, find contemporary parallel in the “exclusive residential enclaves” established around the world for today’s cosmopolitan elite, supported by the labour of the local population.⁵ As in Glass’ canonical definition of the term, the operative processes remain those of displacement, occupation and adjustment to a value-system imposed by outside forces, though there are differences in scale, diversity, and context. Global gentrification operates on an international scale, defined not only by issues of class but also by the distinction between grounded and transient populations, and it takes on a diversity of forms adapted to exploit the natural resources of various local contexts.

The role of gentrifying, or colonizing forces has also become more diverse. Many contemporary artists in Europe and North America, for example, could now be termed ‘colonizers’ forming “sophisticated nomadic clans who travel to survive”, and establishing ‘base camps’ in locations around the world where they contract the creation of their work to local labourers and embellish it with an added ‘authenticity’ in the process — i.e. art residency institutions.⁶ As ‘exclusive enclaves’ for a particular group of artist-nomads (ceramicists) intended to take advantage of a specific local context (Jingdezhen), a study of Sanbao and PWS as gentrifying institutions can productively expand current definitions of both gentrification and art residency. Rather than platforms for artistic, cultural, or technological exchange and experimentation, these institutions can be more accurately defined, respectively, as a ceramics-themed retreat, and a production facility offering easy, unidirectional access to cost-effective labour, materials, and equipment. Referring back to the questions posed above, and in contrast to their promotional materials, the history and daily running of Sanbao and PWS suggest that art residency institutions of their type reinforce existing social inequalities and are intended above all as a means to advance the career prospects of resident artists.

The Porcelain Capital

An understanding of the extent to which the services offered by Sanbao and PWS can expand our current definitions of gentrification and art residencies requires a recognition of the city’s history and contemporary context. Although many types of porcelain are produced in China, Jingdezhen far exceeds other ‘kiln-cities’ in historical significance, contemporary reputation, and diversity of production. Isolated from larger urban centres yet connected to China’s global trade network, Jingdezhen is a hub for ceramics art and culture. Almost continuous Imperial patronage from 1004 established the city’s centrality as the leading source of ceramics for both the court and overseas markets, at its most influential and productive during the eighteenth century. It was also during this century that Jingdezhen gained the title ‘Porcelain Capital’ (*cidu* 瓷都), an honour granted by the government that it held

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Rowland Atkinson and Gary Bridge (eds), *Gentrification in a Global Context*, New York: Routledge, 2005, pp. 1–3.

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Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.), ‘Online Digital Artwork and the Status of the “Based-In” Artist’, in: *E-Flux* 65, n.p., August 2015. Accessed through: supercommunity.e-flux.com, on 10 February 2018.

until 2004.⁷ This recent loss of official recognition is symptomatic of a broader trend toward decline in the city since the turn of the twentieth century that created the necessary conditions for contemporary gentrifying projects like Sanbao and PWS. Jingdezhen's prestige began to wane with the gradual collapse of imperial rule in the nineteenth century, culminating with the abdication of the last emperor in 1912. As anthropologist Maris Boyd Gillette shows in her recent study *China's Porcelain Capital: The Rise, Fall and Reinvention of Ceramics in Jingdezhen* (2016), government patronage sustained Jingdezhen throughout its history. The first sign of a breakdown in this relationship arose in 1786, ironically not long after the city received the title of 'Porcelain Capital', when the last imperially-appointed supervisor was removed from his post. The court subsequently cut their orders of porcelain, while demand from Europe waned with changing tastes and the promotion of local substitutes.⁸

By the twentieth century, little remained of the erstwhile Porcelain Capital. From the 1910s to 1940s attempts were made to revive Jingdezhen, but none were successful. During WWII, extensive Japanese bombardment forced many to flee the city, until only eight public kilns remained in operation by 1948.⁹ Following the founding of the People's Republic, Jingdezhen's first state-owned factory opened in April 1950, and by 1956 production had been consolidated into ten state-owned enterprises and twenty collective factories. The government regularly placed large orders and the local economy rapidly recovered until, by 1957, the city attracted more foreign currency than any other industrial site in China.¹⁰ Production continued to increase in the 1960s, when the low socio-economic status of most residents shielded them from the worst excesses of the Cultural Revolution. Even Mao Zedong was not immune to the charms of the city's porcelain and, in 1975, commissioned two 138-piece sets of *famille rose* dinnerware now popularly known as the '7501' series.¹¹

With Mao's death in 1976 and the implementation of Deng Xiaoping's policies of 'reform and opening' (*gaige kaifang* 改革开放), state-directed industry was superseded by a more market-oriented vision that created the conditions for contemporary gentrification. The first effects of this shift were felt in 1995, when Jingdezhen's oldest state-owned factory was forced to close, and by October 1998 all state enterprises had folded. The principal cause was the government decision in 1994 to tighten restrictions on bank loans, a primary source of income for factories. Because of the closures, between 60,000 and 100,000 artisans lost their jobs, plunging the city into a slump that led to the reassigning of the title 'Porcelain Capital' to Chaozhou, Guangdong province, in recognition of the greater volume and value of its porcelain output.¹² Jingdezhen's artisans were forced to seek alternative sources of income, turning to the demand for historical reproductions and 'art porcelain', produced in independent workshops rather than factories. In the absence of government or other institutional support,

⁷ Maris Boyd Gillette, *China's Porcelain Capital: The Rise, Fall and Reinvention of Ceramics in Jingdezhen*, New York: Bloomsbury, 2016, pp. 7, 14, 23–25.

⁸ Michael Dillon, *A History of the Porcelain Industry in Jingdezhen*, Leeds: University of Leeds, 1976, p. 52.

⁹ Maris Boyd Gillette, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 35–38, 40.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 47–52.

¹¹ 'For Sale: Porcelain Made Secretly for Mao', in: *The New York Times*, December 12, 1996, p. 8.

¹² Na Lan, 'Jingdezhen, Still China's Porcelain Capital?', *CRI Online*, August 7, 2004. Accessed through: english.cri.cn, on April 29, 2018.



↑ fig. 2 Artist workshop, Sanbao International Ceramics Village, 2018. Photo: Cathy Zhang.

this precarious economic environment provided an opening for art residency programmes to draw on the city's historical prestige and to take advantage of its inexpensive materials, facilities and labour. Like a colonizing force, artists from Europe and North America rapidly descended on the city following the establishment of these programmes, altering the local landscape to suit their personal values and needs.

Sanbao International Ceramics Village:
A package tour of rural China

The site of Sanbao was originally a cluster of houses called Sijiali or 'Four Household Village', surrounded by hills and bamboo groves about twenty minutes from the centre of Jingdezhen. In 1995, alarmed by the spread of urban development, ceramicist and film-maker Li Jianshen purchased the three houses still standing to ensure their preservation.¹³ The site remained intact until 1997, when Li revealed his plans to a group of touring Canadian artists.¹⁴ Li was chosen to lead the tour because of his friendship with several of the artists, with whom he had exhibited in the US and Canada. Although he was born and grew up in Jingdezhen, gaining a BA in 1982 and MA in 1987 from

¹³
Maris Boyd Gillete, op. cit. (note 7), p. 124; Zhang Ming, '从制陶到造村: 李见深与三宝国际陶艺村' [From Making Ceramics to Building a Village: Jackson Li & Sanbao Ceramic Art Institute at Jingdezhen], in: *Zhuangshi* 8 (2014), p. 52.

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Susan Jefferies and Anne McPherson, 'White on White: Contemporary Canadian Ceramics', *Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery: Exhibitions*, n.p. Accessed through epe.lac-bac.gc.ca, on 23 May, 2016.



← fig. 3 Ceramics to be glazed, Sanbao International Ceramics Village, 2018. Photo: Cathy Zhang.

JCI, in 1993 Li relocated to New York, becoming the first Chinese artist to receive an MFA from the New York State College of Ceramic Arts, Alfred University.¹⁵ He travelled extensively within China and in North America, Australia and Europe, building his reputation as a global contemporary artist, arts organizer, and arts exchange programme director, while also personally undertaking many residencies that served as a vital inspiration for his decision to establish Sanbao at a time when few other residency programmes existed in China.¹⁶ Paul Mathieu, one of the artists who visited Sijiali in 1997, described the site as a peaceful group of “three old farmhouses, nestled against a small hill,” while Iowan ceramicist John Stephenson, another early visitor, wrote of Li’s hope to provide residents with “an opportunity to plant rice in flooded fields ...[to harvest] tea ...and [plant] their own fresh vegetables.”¹⁷ Even before Sanbao was founded, then, the site conjured visions for overseas artists of a China frozen in an idealized past, adjacent

¹⁵ Zhang Ming, op. cit. (note 13), p.56.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 54. The only other residency institutions operating at this time were the Chinese European Art Centre in the port-city of Xiamen, opened in 1999, and the Red Gate Gallery in Beijing, opened in 2001 – notably, both were founded by overseas visitors to China and designed to appeal to an international clientele.

¹⁷ Elaine Hardman, ‘Paul Mathieu: Chinese Elements’, in: *Ceramics: Art and Perception* 63 (2006), p. 24; John Stephenson, ‘Jackson Lee at San Bao’, in: *Ceramics: Art and Perception* 38 (1999), p. 70.

to but isolated from the city with its fantasy-dispelling urban and social development. Rather than the experimental artistic, cultural, and technological exchange with which art residencies are usually associated by their promoters, then, Sanbao was driven by a conservative desire to preserve what Li perceived to be a rapidly disappearing cultural heritage.

Sanbao officially opened in 1998 and hosted its first group of residents in the same year. Michael Boylen, one of those artists, echoed Mathieu with his description of “beautiful old farmhouse[s] [in] a small, idyllic mountain valley,” where he and other residents “communed with” local artisans and worked in a replica Ming-dynasty workshop.¹⁸ By 2001, it had grown to include a hotel, restaurant and private museum, filled with antique ceramics, tools and curios that Li collected from local markets.¹⁹ In October 2005, the municipal government laid an asphalt road to the city, though there are still no public transport lines operating on this route. When resident artists want to explore the area, they are taken on chartered buses to tourist hot-spots, including the recently redeveloped site of the old Imperial Factory and adjacent ‘Old Street’, lined with souvenir shops in a pseudo-classical style; the Ancient Kiln Folk Customs Museum, a group of restored Ming and Qing workshops opened in the 1980s and promoted as an interactive ‘living history’ attraction; the Hutian Ancient Kiln Site, renovated in 2010 as a venue for exhibitions; and the gallery for works by student and staff at JCI.²⁰ All these destinations, with the possible exception of the JCI gallery, appeal primarily to international visitors, confirming and catering to their imagined visions of Jingdezhen as an idyllic remnant of China’s past, a museum-piece untouched by the corrupting influence of modernity.

By 2016, Sanbao had hosted artists from not only North America, but also Mexico, Australia, South Korea, Hong Kong, Finland, Norway, Italy, the Netherlands, and many other countries, in rooms fully equipped with Western-style toilets, showers, electric blankets and other modern conveniences.²¹ Chinese artists, on the other hand, have described the village as too isolated from the city, more suited to “cheating foreigners” than creating ceramics.²² Yet Sanbao is not intended to appeal to local clientele: the minimum residency fee of US\$400 per week (plus a deposit of US\$300) is over twice the current average weekly wage in Jingdezhen of US\$152.68 or ¥959.79.²³ Sanbao is almost entirely funded by this income, supplemented by online sales of materials and on-site sales of resident artists’ ceramics to other visitors.²⁴ The type of work produced in Sanbao generally doesn’t appeal to local residents — Wang Zhuwen, for example, a ceramicist specializing in reproduction Yuan-dynasty wares, confided in a conversation with Gillette that she finds work by European resident artists in Sanbao to be “really abstract” and incomprehensible, in contrast to the “direct and clear” forms of Chinese

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Michael Boylen, ‘Alfred China Summer’, in: *Studio Potter* 27: 2 (June 1999), pp. 91–92.

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Yonina Blech-Hermoni, ‘A Summer Residency in China’, in: *Ceramics Monthly* 50:1 (January 2002), p. 77.

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Maris Boyd Gillette, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 115–19.

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Ibid., 124–25.

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Zhang Ming, op. cit. (note 13), p. 53.

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Sanbao Ceramics, ‘International Residency Programs’, China Clay Art - Sanbao Ceramics. Accessed through: chinaclayart.com, on 3 Apr. 2018; CEIC, ‘China Average Wage: On Duty: Jiangxi: Jingdezhen’, *CEIC Data*. Accessed through: ceicdata.com, on 3 April 2018.

²⁴

Zhang Ming, op. cit. (note 13), p. 55.

ceramics.²⁵ From a dilapidated village destined to become a suburb, Li developed Sanbao into a pastoral retreat for overseas visitors, a facsimile of rural China where they can indulge their dreams of 'going East' on package tours of the area, without having to confront the more prosaic challenges of cultural adjustment. The model of art residency that this suggests is not oriented toward reform, but instead promotes adherence to the archaic fantasies of a privileged elite of artist-nomads. Following the logic of global gentrification, the movement of these artists through Sanbao can be summarized as one of colonizing occupation and displacement, a neoliberal privileging of individual over community needs that transforms the local area to suit an externally imposed value-system while preserving existing social inequalities.

The Pottery Workshop

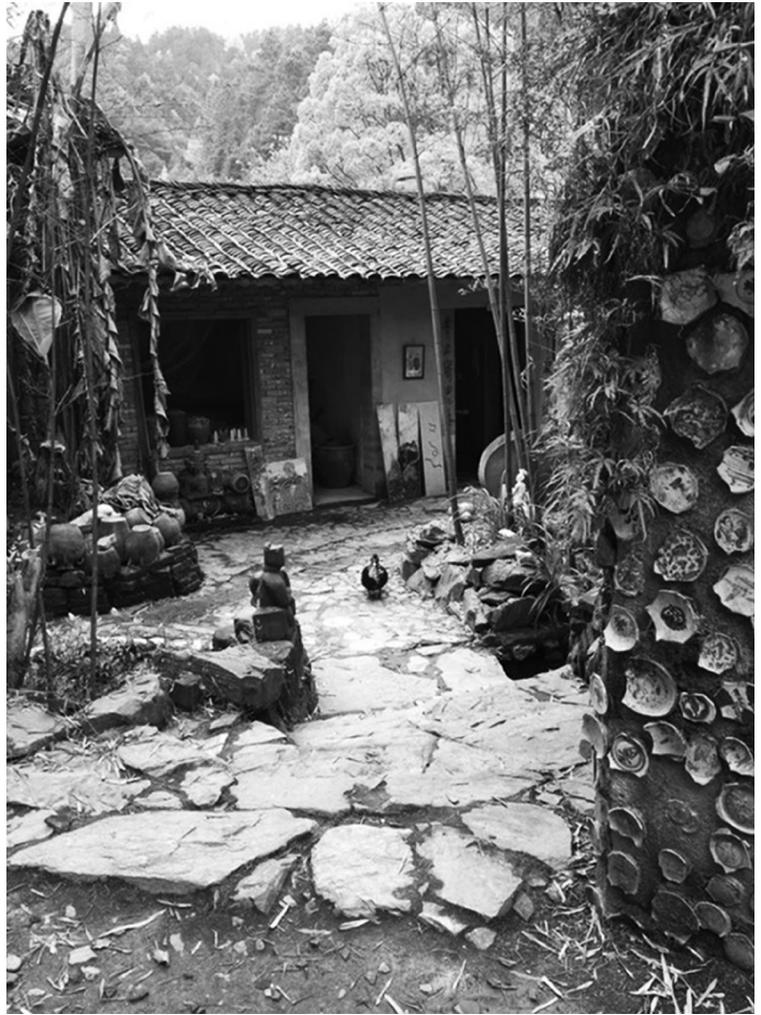
PWS opened in 2005, seven years after Sanbao. Although it represents a different model of residency, it has followed essentially the same line of development. Like the older institution, PWS was founded by a ceramicist of Chinese descent with a global résumé: Caroline Cheng, born in England and raised in Hong Kong, whose family connections in academia, business, politics, antiques dealing, and art collecting give her a particular cachet as a facilitator of global art residencies. Like Li, Cheng studied in North America, receiving a BFA from Michigan State University in 1986 and MFA from the San Francisco Academy of Art University in 1988.²⁶ She has since accumulated a range of international experiences and connections that build on this foundation, earning her a place of honour among the cosmopolitan artistic elite in Hong Kong and ceramics circles in North America and the UK.

Despite their professional affinities, the founding principles of Li's and Cheng's art residency programmes are fundamentally distinct. In contrast to Sanbao, PWS is a branch of a larger private arts organisation with bases across China. The first PWS was founded in 1985, in Hong Kong, by ceramicist Mak Yee-fun, who envisioned it as a modest space where other local enthusiasts could meet to create and display work, offering a programme of open classes usually attended by less than ten students. In 1995, when directorship passed from Mak to Cheng, the latter resolved to expand this programme by inviting her overseas ceramics contacts to give lectures. PWS Hong Kong now attracts over a hundred students to each class, though it remains a solely educational institution intended to appeal to casual hobbyists. In 2002, Cheng founded another PWS in Shanghai's Tianzifang arts district to provide not only classes but also a commercial outlet for ceramics made in the Hong Kong studio. This PWS is closely tied to Shanghai's cosmopolitan elite, tailored to wealthy businessmen and corporate clients who use it as a venue for team-building activities. PWS Shanghai also attracted broader interest among international artists, many of whom confided in Cheng that they had originally planned to work in Jingdezhen but had been discouraged by organisational difficulties, thereby prompting her decision to establish

²⁵
Cited in Maris Boyd Gillette, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 128-29.

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Feng Jiaxue, '郑祚:乐在陶中'
[Caroline Cheng: The Joy of Ceramics], in:
China's New Age 4 (2011), pp. 48-49.

→fig. 4 Artist workshops, Sanbao International Ceramics Village, 2018. Photo: Cathy Zhang.



a third PWS in the Porcelain Capital in 2005.²⁷ This was the largest and most ambitious to date, with three principal aims: to further expand the global reach of the brand, to make a profit through commercial sales and, most importantly, to initiate an art residency programme. In 2007, the success of PWS Jingdezhen inspired the founding of yet another branch in Beijing — on the tourist-oriented Nanluoguxiang, an alley lined with bars, cafés, restaurants and souvenir shops that likely inspired Jingdezhen’s “Old Street”. Reflecting its location, this branch focuses on the sale of work produced in the Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Jingdezhen studios, to a transient clientele of international tourists.²⁸

Each PWS branch is therefore deliberately designed to suit the particular character of its site: PWS Hong Kong serves the needs of local amateurs, PWS Shanghai caters to the boutique tastes of a business elite, PWS Beijing appeals to international tourists seeking souvenirs, and PWS Jingdezhen offers overseas ceramicists a convenient base from which to take advantage of the city’s unique resources. The workshop occupies a series of studios and residential spaces within

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Maris Boyd Gillete, *op. cit.* (note 7), p. 126.

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Feng Jiaxue, *op. cit.* (note 26), p. 48.

a former industrial complex known as the Sculpture Factory (*Diaosu Cichang* 雕塑瓷厂). Originally founded as a collective enterprise for the production of socialist realist porcelain sculptures in 1956, during the push toward privatisation in the 1990s studios were opened for rent to local entrepreneurs, who focused on the creation of art porcelain.²⁹ Recalling his first visit in 2003, English-Australian ceramicist Roger Law describes the Sculpture Factory's rapid transformation from empty courtyards full of chickens, enclosed by shuttered storage spaces, to a labyrinth of glass-and-steel studios and boutiques occupied by affluent young art stars.³⁰ By 2012, the complex had expanded so much and gained such a reputation for innovation that one writer termed it "a ceramics 798", drawing a comparison with the famous 798 arts district in Beijing.³¹ Residents included not only local entrepreneurs, but also Australian ceramicist Jodi Dawson, French painter Raphael de Villers, Swedish designer Agnes Fries and Dutch designer/ceramicist Carola Zee, among others, for whom the Factory offered a cost-effective production base.³²

Within this bustling hub of artistic activity, Cheng's vision of an art residency programme was the first founding aim to be accomplished, with the construction of fully air-conditioned studios, high-end accommodation, free Wi-Fi, meals, and on-site translators. By 2008, PWS Jingdezhen also included a Pottery Workshop Café, a regular Saturday Creative Market run by students from JCI, and exchange agreements with many other tertiary education institutions around the world, including Cheng's *alma mater* Michigan State, Musashino University, Tokyo, and the Australian National University, Canberra.³³ Once again, the weekly residency fees of ¥2800 (plus a deposit of the same amount) are far beyond the budget of local artisans and even many overseas ceramicists, limiting the clientele to an elite group of contemporary practitioners.³⁴ Most artists arrive with developed projects already in mind, and are interested only in meeting the artisans who can help them fulfil their aims as quickly and cost-effectively as possible.³⁵ In interviews with artisans, Gillette discovered that visiting artists rarely employ more than a few people at once, and almost never give written references for future employers. Many are very strict with those they employ, forbidding them to replicate anything they help to produce, sell misfired works, or even create comparable pieces.³⁶ Liu Zhimin, for example, an enterprising local ceramicist often employed by PWS residents, recalls that one artist who commissioned his services warned that "if he found any of the pieces... made for him on the market, he would make [him] return all the money he had paid."³⁷ While Sanbao offers resident artists a package tour of an imaginary and idealized China, those who stay at PWS view their time in the city as an economic necessity rather than a vacation, taking

²⁹ Maris Boyd Gillette, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 55, 102.

³⁰ Roger Law, 'Imperial Potters', in: *Ceramic Review* 235 (February 2009), p. 10.

³¹ Fang Lili, 'Jingdezhen and the Artist: 1910–2012', in: Willow Weilan Hai Chang and J. May Lee Barrett (eds), *New "China": Porcelain Art from Jingdezhen, 1910–2012*, New York: China Institute Gallery, 2012, p. 10.

³² Colin Martin, 'International Ceramic Artists Working in China', in: *Craft Arts International* 86 (January 2012), pp. 97–98; Heidi McKenzie, 'Reversing the Flow: European Designers in China', in: *Ceramics Monthly* 62: 2 (February 2014), pp. 30–35.

³³ Feng Jiaxue, op. cit. (note 26), pp. 50–51.

³⁴ Pottery Workshop, 'Jingdezhen 景德镇 / Welcome to Jingdezhen', *Pottery Workshop*. Accessed through: potteryworkshop.com.cn, on 4 April 2018.

³⁵ Robyn Phelan, '15 Days in Jingdezhen', in: *Ceramics Technical* 30 (May 2010), p. 75.

³⁶ Maris Boyd Gillette, op. cit. (note 7), p. 128–130.

advantage of access to inexpensive and abundant labour, equipment and raw materials from the comfort of an air-conditioned studio. Like the colonial elites of the past, they are an occupying force who privilege opportunities for profit or gain over any potential benefits to the community in which they reside, preferring to maintain existing inequalities that allow them to exploit local resources rather than stimulate greater socio-cultural equality.

Art residencies are often promoted as dynamic “bridging mechanisms” founded on principles of “mutual responsibility, experimentation, exchange and dialogue” between local populations and visiting artists.³⁸ Yet any exchange or dialogue achieved is always unequal, privileging the needs of the cosmopolitan artist-nomads who undertake (and fund) the residency over those of people in the surrounding area. This is particularly visible in the case of Sanbao and PWS, both of which trade on the prestige of their location in Jingdezhen, the world’s ‘Porcelain Capital’, and take advantage of the access to materials, equipment and skilled labour that the city offers, but operate solely for the benefit of their organizers and participants. Rather than reform, these institutions encourage an unchanging continuity and even a return to tradition, offering artists package tours of an idealized China that bears little resemblance to the realities of Jingdezhen and a factory where the global artistic elite can subcontract the creation of their work to local labourers. As symptoms of the city’s increasing gentrification in a post-industrial economy, Sanbao and PWS support contemporary extensions of this social process into a global context as a neoliberal urban strategy that recalls the colonizing projects of the past. As residencies, they force us to reorient the typical definition of such initiatives as innovative or boundary-defying, and to recognize that their elite client-base often demand the preservation of existing conditions to suit their needs and desires, even if this means isolating themselves from any contact with a less desirable reality.

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Cited in Maris Boyd Gillette, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 128-29. Although such strict enforcement of intellectual property protection is relatively typical within European and North American art and design communities, the contemporary porcelain industry in Jingdezhen is premised on an entirely different set of standards. As Gillette has explained in great detail elsewhere, ‘copying’ from reference materials including books, auction catalogues, photographs, museum pieces and works of contemporary art is a central aspect of artistic practice for producers in the Porcelain Capital. Maris Boyd Gillette, ‘Copying, Counterfeiting, and Capitalism in Contemporary China: Jingdezhen’s Porcelain Industry’, in: *Modern China* 36, no. 4 (July 2010): pp. 377–378. The extensive misunderstanding of this context among art residency participants in Jingdezhen is therefore another indication of the extent to which their experience of the city is fundamentally disconnected from local conditions.

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Res Artis, op. cit. (note 1).