formation, working in the present, and directed toward a future—available to . . . individuals, to a community or the nation" (97–98). But she argues that the films do not examine culture to make any claims for cultural difference or in relation to an alternative non-Western modernity. Zhang has always claimed (at least until 2017's epic *The Great Wall*, starring Matt Damon) that he makes films primarily for Chinese audiences. Unlike several of his Fifth-Generation cohort of movie directors, he has never learned a foreign language and often seems uncomfortable outside of China.

By way of a conclusion, Larson briefly examines the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony, designed and directed by Zhang, and for many of his critics the epitome of Zhang's cultural monumentalism and essentialism. On the contrary, she suggests his films "do not make claims on behalf of the particular forms of Chinese culture; they search for deeper cultural life: the possibilities of rejuvenation, as genuine, raw lived material through which the imaginary of a viable new future could spring" (343). Zhang makes films (and opening ceremonies) for the world: "The most important feature . . . is the inclusion within the films of a global perspective that changes how culture works" (345). English-speaking fans and critics of Zhang's films have much to contemplate in this richly argued and original book.

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Curating Revolution: Politics on Display in Mao's China, by Denise Y. Ho. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. ix+308 pp. £22.99 (paper).

"Revolution" is one of the keywords in the Chinese historical discourse of the twentieth century. In *Curating Revolution*, Denise Y. Ho offers a rich picture of the role culture played in harnessing the state's discourse in the Mao era. Based on archival research and oral memories of various exhibitions in Shanghai, Ho argues that museums per se as institutions of cultural display were not objects of criticism during the Cultural Revolution. Rather, cultural exhibitions, by displaying Maoist state ideology, offered a public space to educate and mobilize people to take part in the revolution.

When the Communist Party came to power in 1949, all cultural institutions were closely realigned with the new ideology of state socialism. The government endeavored to establish a unified socialist culture. In addition, during Mao's pursuit of totalistic iconoclasm during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), most of the Chinese traditional culture was ruthlessly suppressed. Against the backdrop of this particular period of Chinese history, *Curating Revolution* inquires into the role cultural exhibitions played in the construction of national identities and political legitimiza-

tion. In particular, it examines how various exhibitions incorporated the new state ideology in the form of narratives, material objects, and artifacts, and the political objectives that lay behind these cultural exhibitions.

Ho provides an in-depth analysis of the multifaceted ways cultural exhibitions "legitimated and made revolution" (13) for, as Ho explains, to do narration in the exhibition is also to make revolution (19). The book illustrates how the Mao-era politics of culture curated the Chinese revolution so as to call "on the masses to listen, to speak, to remember, to weep, to attack, and to condemn" (5), and her analysis of different exhibitions demonstrates how the state's political agenda was portrayed in diverse historical narratives. The First Party Congress site in Shanghai functioned as an authoritative textbook that portrayed Mao as a founder and leader of the country (chap. 1). Fangua Lane in Shanghai offered foreign visitors and schoolchildren opportunities to learn about history and class (chap. 2). The Science and Technology Education exhibits were to encourage Communist Young Pioneers to embrace the ideology of science and discard "superstition" (chap. 3). The Shanghai Class Education Exhibition displayed examples of individual class status, "to see class in people and in things" (chap. 4, 171). The Red Guard Achievements exhibit showed the history of how the Red Guards made revolution (chap. 5). Finally, the Shanghai Museum defended cultural relics (*wenwu*) by replacing the discourse of "Four Olds" (*sijiu*) with a revolutionary narrative (chap. 6).

Culture has always been a powerful and effective tool in Chinese political legitimation and mobilization. Although the history of Chinese museums is rather short (the first museum was established in 1906), the collection of antique objects had been a symbolic manifestation of power and authority in imperial China. Even during the Cultural Revolution, when teenage Red Guards in 1966 rampaged across the country destroying temples, palaces, and monuments as well as many ancient books and artworks, Premier Zhou Enlai and others still managed to protect some sites (including the Forbidden City) and the most valuable artwork taken from individual collections.

The book goes beyond an analysis of the central party-state's cultural policies and their political outcomes. Instead, it examines exhibitions as political, social, and cultural practice by curating the interaction between the central policies and local stakeholders in the production of cultural exhibitions. By illustrating the intertwined communication between the central cultural committee, the Shanghai officials, the local curators, the visitors, and individual collectors, Ho provides us with a multifaceted "behind the scenes" picture of Mao-era cultural exhibitions. For instance, she covers the negotiations underlying the building of new museums, the multiple forces at work in shaping museums and exhibitions, and the line between protecting cultural relics and raising class consciousness.

In sum, Denise Ho's monograph is illuminating reading for anyone interested in Chinese revolutionary history. I recommend it not only to historians of China but also to scholars who work on regions beyond China seeking to understand culture,

museums, and the political power of exhibitions. The book makes major contributions to the study of the Mao-era politics of culture and its role in creating China's socialist political culture. In the post-Mao era, when cultural relics became part of the Chinese cultural heritage discourse, historical objects fueled a nationwide culture fever in which traditions served as a national project of unity and a resource of local economic development. The book therefore prompts a comparison with contemporary China: Did the cultural exhibitions of the Mao era involve more authoritarian voices about what should be exhibited? Were the political effects of cultural exhibitions then more powerful than today, when culture serves as a commodity for consumption? By tracing and mapping the representations of exhibitions during different periods, we can obtain a more nuanced understanding of the effects of cultural exhibitions in revolutionary China.

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The Magic of Concepts: History and the Economic in Twentieth-Century China, by Rebecca E. Karl. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017. ix+216 pp. US$89.95/£77.00 (cloth), US$24.95/£20.99 (paper).

We need more books like this. It is rare to read a sophisticated, tightly argued, exploratory book that locates hidden assumptions and received opinion while at the same time introducing and reanimating an important circle of Chinese thinkers. As a prime example, the book focuses attention on theorist Wang Yanan (1901–69), who has not been prioritized in Chinese Marxist intellectual history. A reason may be that he was a sophisticated non-Communist Marxist who did not ventriloquize a "Chinese perspective" but rather insisted on positing universal questions from a specific place and in relation to philosophical questions that are still pressing today. Including him in the pantheon changes how the modern Chinese intellectual tradition is read. For instance, Wang engaged Liang Shuming, Qian Mu, and Zhu Qianzhi to appraise China's proto-Weberian sociological circles of his time. By introducing the nonaligned Marxists, Rebecca Karl casts light on the standard canon, and her critique shifts the frame.

The book has a hybrid quality. It is neither a historiographic critique à la Fred Cooper, nor a standard monograph, nor a comprehensive intellectual history. Rather, it is a little of all three. Consciousness may be buried in ephemeral remains and in historiographic philosophy; to fight over it requires excavating important thinkers' ideas out of the amber that entombs them. To be a good historian requires addressing history with a complex critical arsenal.