

Commemorating Ruins & Ruined Commemorations: The Beichuan National Earthquake Museum

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Sites & Sights of Commemoration

Sites and Sights of Commemoration examines the ways specific Chinese episodes of trauma have recently been commemorated in state-funded Chinese museums and films, and interrogates the ways that these "sites" and "sights" discursively, representationally, and affectively create meaning.

Places visited so far:

- Old Summer Palace (Beijing)
- Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (Beijing)
- Tangshan Earthquake Museum & Tangshan Earthquake Memorial Hall
- Northeast Martyrs Memorial Hall (Harbin)
- Unit 731 Museum (Harbin)
- Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall
- National Earthquake Museum (Beichuan)
- Jianchuan Museum Cluster
- Sihang Warehouse Museum (Shanghai)
- Songhu Campaign Memorial Hall (Shanghai)
- Martyrs Memorial (Shanghai)
- Geleshan Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery (Chongqing)
- Hong Yan Village (Chongqing)
- Baigong and Zhazidong Concentration Camps (Chongqing)

My Research into the Ruin & Commemoration So Far...

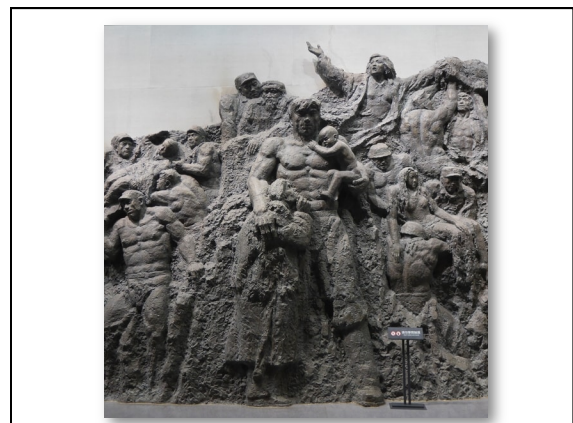
- Schultz, Corey K.N., "Mediating Trauma: The Nanjing Massacre, *City of Life and Death*, and Affect as Soft Power," in *Chinese Cinemas: International Perspectives*, Felicia Chan and Andy Willis, eds. (London: Routledge, 2016): 53-68.
- Schultz, Corey K.N., "Memories in Performance: Commemoration in Jia Zhangke's *24 City*," *Film-Philosophy* 20 (2016): 265-282.
- Schultz, Corey K.N., "Moving Portraits: Portraits in Performance in *24 City*," *Screen* 55, no. 2 (2014): 276-287.
- Schultz, Corey K.N., "Ruin in the Films of Jia Zhangke," *Visual Communication* 15, no. 4 (2016): 439-460.



... The earthquake relief was a great success as Chinese people made concerted efforts and demonstrated fearless spirits in the swift rescue work. More human and material resources have been put in place in the relief and reconstruction work after Wenchuan Earthquake than in any previous natural adversities in the Chinese history. In particular, **Chinese people's heroic deeds in the almost miraculous post-earthquake reconstruction work have created countless epic moments in human history.**

"Everlasting Memories - The Memorial Exhibition of May 12 Wenchuan Earthquake" records the great earthquake relief and reconstruction process from May 12, 2008 to September 30, 2011, and mainly displays the catastrophic effects of the earthquake and revives the hugely successful post-earthquake relief and reconstruction work. **The strength of the CPC and the Chinese people is demonstrated and the incomparable superiority of the socialist system is highlighted. The purpose of the exhibition is to inspire people of all ethnic groups to stand strong and get united in the face of extreme difficulties as they have done in the Wenchuan relief and reconstruction work under the leadership of CPC...**





"...trauma sites exhibit a fundamental difference from other memorial museums. Strictly speaking, they do not represent anything; rather, since the traumatic events happened there, they directly expose some precise material traces of them. In a way, what we have here is a shift from representation to re-presentation, which is a consequence of the unique indexical nature of these places and the direct links they maintain with the actual trauma [...] The more faithfully a trauma site maintains an indexical link with the past, conserving the actual remains of the original place, the stronger will be the effect of the rhetoric of re-presentation."

Patrizia Violi, "Trauma site Museums and the Politics of Memory: Tuol Sleng, Villa Grimaldi and the Bologna Ustica Museum," *Theory, Culture and Society* 29, no. 1, p. 41.



