

The provocatively titled *The Lost Frontier: Treaty Maps That Changed Qing's Northwestern Boundaries* (失落的疆域—清季西北邊界變遷條約與圖特展), currently on display at the National Palace Museum, offers a glimpse of a neglected but important part of China's late imperial history through maps, joint surveys and treaties concerning today's Xinjiang (新疆—New Territory), so-named by the Qianlong Emperor (乾隆帝).

The exhibition's literature piques the viewer's interest by stating that the maps were stamped "strictly confidential" by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and only released to the National Palace Museum in 2001 for safekeeping, and only declassified in 2007. It is anyone's guess as to why these "sensitive, controversial ... documents" were kept from public view for so long — though it probably has something to do with the anachronistic claim that the Republic of China (ROC) is the legitimate government of China.

The *Lost Frontier* brings to mind the 19th-century imperial struggles between Britain and Russia for supremacy in Central Asia, exhaustively portrayed in Peter Hopkins' book *The Great Game*. Similar to that great game, Russia had been skirmishing with China for control over Xinjiang. Situated along the Silk Road, Xinjiang occupied a strategic position and was — and to a certain extent remains — a major hub for trade.

The National Palace Museum picks up the story at the end of the second Opium War, when foreign powers were forcing China to open up to international trade, and moves up to the early Republican period. As Britain seized territory in the southeast, Russia took advantage of China's weak position and pressured the Son of Heaven to cede lands along the country's northwestern (as well as northeastern) borders in the Treaty of Peking in 1860, setting the stage for further land grabs.

This is made readily apparent in the exhibit's most comprehensive section, *Demarcating and Signposting*. The weaker China became, the further east Russia penetrated. The section breaks the region down into three parts — north, middle and south — and shows how joint surveys followed the signing of treaties and protocols, some of which are also on display.

The Russian maps, as illustrated for example by the *Map of Sino-Russian Border Demarcation in Kashgar*, are notable for their modern cartographic techniques that mark the topography of the land. They are less aesthetically pleasing than the Chinese maps, which are more figurative representations that resemble Chinese landscape paintings. (The Chinese maps came to resemble the Russian maps as time passed, a subject that is beyond the scope of *The Lost Frontier* but which would make for a fascinating exhibit in its own right.)

One gets the feeling that the entire exhibit is there to underscore the thesis that foreign aggression during the 19th century resulted in China's humiliation, while glossing over the fact that the region had historically been home to a diverse array of nomadic tribes and other cultures and had only recently been brought under Chinese control once and for all by the Qing, the Manchu dynasty that conquered China in the middle of the 18th century.

In the "middle section" of *Demarcating and Signposting*, we learn that the early ROC government signed the Protocol Regarding the Khorgos River, which ceded that body of water to Russia.

"Even the shoals that had so far belonged to the Chinese side were given over to Russia. It was such a pity that even the shoals ... had to be parted with," the exhibition literature states.

Simply placing the maps on display along with protocols and treaties (whose significance is limited to regions that are obscure and thus require more explanation than is given) raises more questions than it answers. This reviewer left thinking that the show serves a need for those in Taiwan who harbor illusions that Xinjiang is a part of the ROC, while appealing to the nationalistic sentiments of the busloads of Chinese tourists who increasingly make up a large proportion of the museum's audience.



A century of shame mapped out

The Lost Frontier offers viewers a glimpse of a neglected but important part of Sino-Russian history through maps, joint surveys and treaties — though with a decidedly nationalistic bent

BY NOAH BUCHAN
STAFF REPORTER



Top: *Map of Sino-Russian Border Demarcation in Kashgar*.
Above: *Map of the Khobdo and Tarbagatay Borders — Before and After*.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PALACE MUSEUM

EXHIBITION NOTES:

WHAT: *The Lost Frontier: Treaty Maps That Changed Qing's Northwestern Boundaries* (失落的疆域—清季西北邊界變遷條約與圖特展)
WHEN: Until Aug. 10. Open daily from 9am to 5pm
WHERE: National Palace Museum (國立故宮博物院), 221 Zhishan Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市至善路二段221號)
ADMISSION: NT\$160
ON THE NET: www.npm.gov.tw/exh98/frontier

New museum on life of Chopin opens in Warsaw

Poland's culture minister calls the Frederic Chopin Museum 'the most modern biographical museum in Europe and even the world'

BY VANESSA GERA
AP, WARSAW

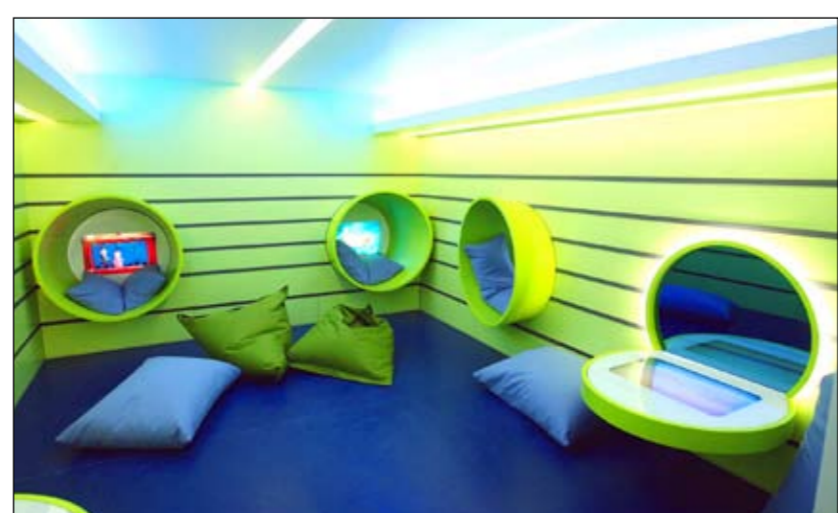


The last piano that Frederic Chopin composed on. A death mask made after he succumbed to what was probably tuberculosis. A lock of his brown hair.

Those are among objects on display at a new museum dedicated to the life of the Romantic-era composer that opened on his 200th birthday on Monday in his native Poland.

The interactive multimedia museum is located in the center of Warsaw, where Chopin moved in infancy from a nearby country estate, and where he spent the first 20 years of his life before moving to Paris.

Culture Minister Bogdan Zdrojewski



hailed it as "the most modern biographical museum in Europe and even the world" at a ceremonial opening that comes amid a year of celebrations of the much-revered musician.

A central challenge that curators faced is the loss of many objects related to Chopin's life. Some, like letters, were destroyed by women he was romantically involved with; others were consumed in the devastation of World War II.

Polish authorities began gathering musical scores, sketches and other objects tied to Chopin in 1899 and are still pursuing them at auctions around the world, curator Alicja Knast said.

"They are priceless in terms of emotional value," she said.

The museum is arranged thematically with spaces devoted to different aspects of his life.

A room devoted to Paris salon life features Chopin's last piano, built by the prominent piano maker Ignace Pleyel. Visitors learn that Chopin earned his living in Paris by giving lessons — he

was a much-prized teacher and one of the city's most expensive.

Another room is devoted to the time he spent at Nohant, the French chateau that belonged to his companion of eight years, writer Aurore Dupin — best known by her nom de plume George Sand.

The room is filled with the sound of chirping birds, meant to evoke the natural setting of the place where Chopin composed some of his masterpieces.

On display is a kerchief of white damask on which Sand embroidered Chopin's initials. Visitors can pull out slabs labeled with the names of works composed at Nohant, triggering recordings of the pieces.

The final room is devoted to his death at age 39 on Oct. 17, 1849. A dark space bereft of the music filling most of the museum, it includes a plaster death mask taken of Chopin's face. On display are also invitations to his memorial service in Paris, as well as a lock of his brown hair safeguarded by his family.

The museum is housed in the stately Ostrogski Palace, home of the Fryderyk Chopin Institute, which underwent major renovation and expansion to house this revamped museum.

Tickets cost US\$7.5 and must be reserved over the Internet or purchased in advance at the museum.

On the Net: biuro.chopin2010.pl/en/what-we-do/investments/the-fryderyk-chopin-museum.html

Exhibition halls in the newly renovated Frederic Chopin Museum, which opened in Warsaw on Monday.

PHOTOS: EPA

EXHIBITIONS



Gregory Crewdson, *Untitled (Birth), Winter*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAKSHI GALLERY

In his solo show *Beneath the Roses*, Gregory Crewdson exhibits photographs he made using intricate production techniques usually found in film to produce works that border on the eerie.

■ Sakshi Gallery (曼可喜當代藝術), 33 Yitong Street, Taipei City (台北市伊通街33號). Open Tuesdays to Saturdays from 1:30pm to 9:30pm and Sundays from 1:30pm to 7:30pm. Tel: (02) 2516-5386
■ Until March 13

Chinese contemporary painter Meng Yangyang (孟陽陽) continues her examination of children with a series of new works at Gallery J Chen. Meng's earlier works examine children's fantasies. With this show, her flat and dripping figures, rendered only in outline on a background of earthy blues, browns and yellows, focus on memory and suggest that like nostalgia it is a vague fiction.

■ Gallery J Chen, 3F, 40, Ln 161, Dunhua 5 Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段161巷40號3F). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from noon to 9pm. Tel: (02) 2781-0959
■ Until March 28

Fourteen Bangkok-based artists come together for *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, a new media exhibit that examines Thai politics and challenges the country's more conservative currents in art. The artists' collective, which calls itself As Yet Unnamed (www.asyet.org), presents group and individual artworks and a film documenting their collaborations, and holds lectures and workshops.

■ Barry Room, Taipei Artist Village (台北國際藝術村百里廳), 7 Beiping E Rd, Taipei City (台北市北平東路7號). Open Tuesdays to Fridays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 3393-7377
■ Until March 14

Tao Ya-lun (陶亞倫) cuts away the distractions of the daily grind through the use of lasers in his solo exhibit *Impenetrable Superficiality* (切不開的表面).

■ Gallery 100, 6, Ln 30, Changan E Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市長安東路一段30巷6號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 9pm. Tel: (02) 2536-2120
■ Until March 29

Doldrum: The Route to a Distant Place 1 無風帶 — 通往某個遠方的途徑1 by Taiwanese contemporary artist Liu Chih-hung (劉致宏) is a series of cartographic installations that examine the nature of boundaries and space.

■ VT Art Salon (非常廟藝文空間), B1, 47 Yitong St, Taipei City (台北市伊通街47號B1). Open Tuesdays to Thursdays 2pm to 11pm, Fridays and Saturdays from 2pm to 1am. Tel: (02) 2516-1060
■ Until March 27

Calls for submission

Urban Nomad Film Fest (城市游牧影展) is now accepting short film submissions for its ninth edition, which begins on April 30. NT\$15,000 in prizes is up for grabs.

■ Submission deadline is March 10
■ For complete details (in Chinese and English) and entry form visit urbannomadfilmfest.blogspot.com

Taipei Artist Village is accepting proposals for two projects as part of its Treasure Hill Public Art Project. The first, with a budget of NT\$1.2 million, seeks proposals for mural arts. The second project, titled *Image and Light Art*, seeks proposals to create an integrated and artistic experience for the riverside adjacent to Gongguan (公館) and the two entrances to Treasure Hill (寶藏巖). The budget is NT\$6.5 million.

■ Submission deadlines for both projects are March 22 at 6pm
■ Call Kate Chen at (02) 3393-7377 X208, or send an e-mail to katechen@artistvillage.org
■ On the Net: www.artistvillage.org/events.php?type=5