

Terra Beijing in 2021

Since early 20th Century, China, a place where strong correlation existed between ceramic work and its culture, has realized the catalytic transition from an agricultural society to what now an industrialized society. The result, a country with 1.4 billion population, hosting several major cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Guangdong, of which each contains a vast majority of middle-class citizens, having a bit of money here and there to spend.

Given such a context, how would Terra, and the contemporary ceramic art styles it represents, fair in China? When thinking of how the usual suspects in the luxury goods are doing, the answer might appear to be quite positive, and tempting. On the hand, China is such a country instilled with a strong traditional taste in the subject of art and crafts. So, in this light, the answer might shift towards the spectrum of plausible or unlikely a bit. Like any other first-time questions such as “will my crash agree to a date proposal?”, “how will my work look like if it is to be formed with material and kiln from Jingdezhen?”, or “how well will I do as a parent?”, the theoretical result can swing from ‘great’ in the morning to ‘terrible’ in the night, depending on which route your train of thought decides to take. It seems that the answers to these questions are better answered when faced by real evidence.

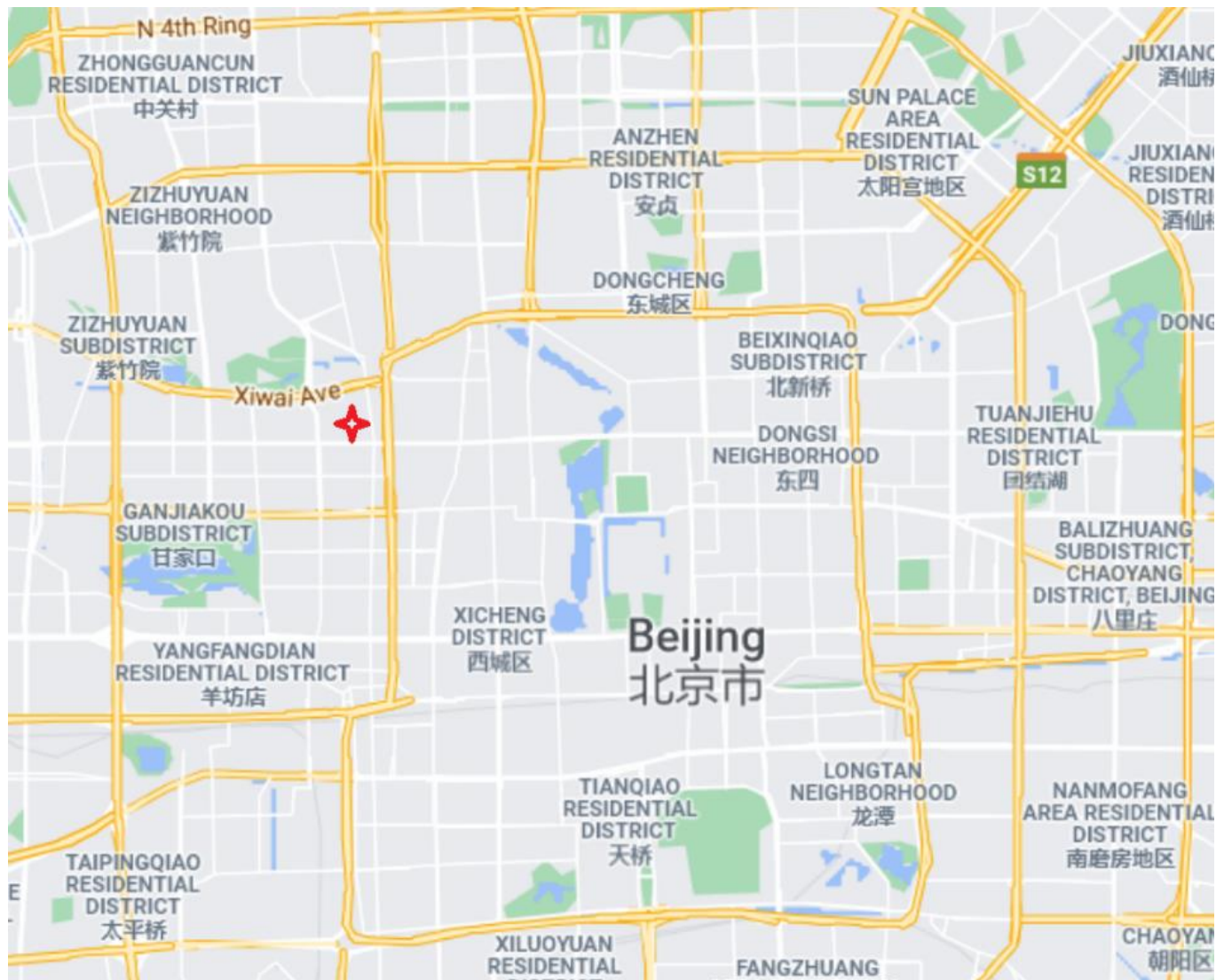


Figure 1 Two instances of traditional art of China

During the Winter of 2019 and the subsequent Spring of 2020, thoughts of having a Terra in China have been identified, seized, confirmed and consolidated into a plan of execution around the wooden table inside Ternatestraat 8 in Delft. And by the Summer of 2020, invitations have been sent to European artists, as well as Chinese artists, calling for artworks and to form a powerful collection

themed in Blue, the color of the ocean and sky, the color most favored statistically by man and woman, and the color with an ancient origin.

And by the end of the Autumn 2020, the location for Terra in China has been chosen at Beijing after a series of exploration among different cities in China. It is right on the edge of the North-West corner of the 2nd Ring Road, with Metro No.2 and No.6 fluxing through underneath North-South bound and West-East bound separately. Altogether, it is a fair distance of travel to reach Terra Beijing from major residence hotspot in Beijing. And a convenient destination if one is already in the vicinity of the central area of Beijing.



Location of Terra Beijing

Figure 2 Zoomed view of Terra Beijing on the map

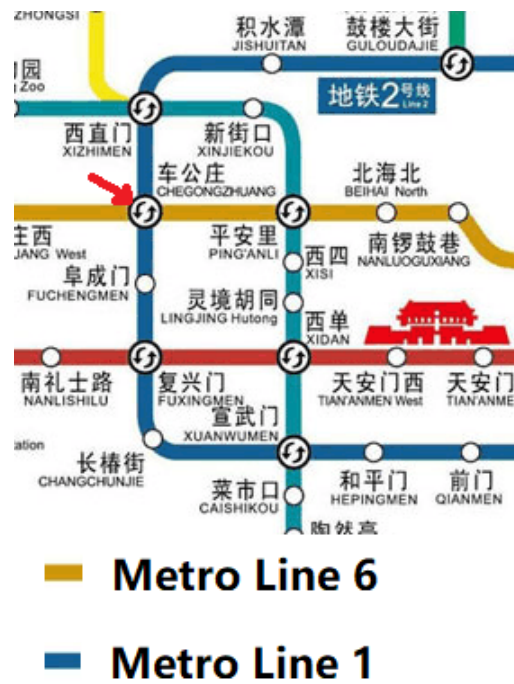


Figure 3 The zoomed view of Metro connections close to Terra Beijing

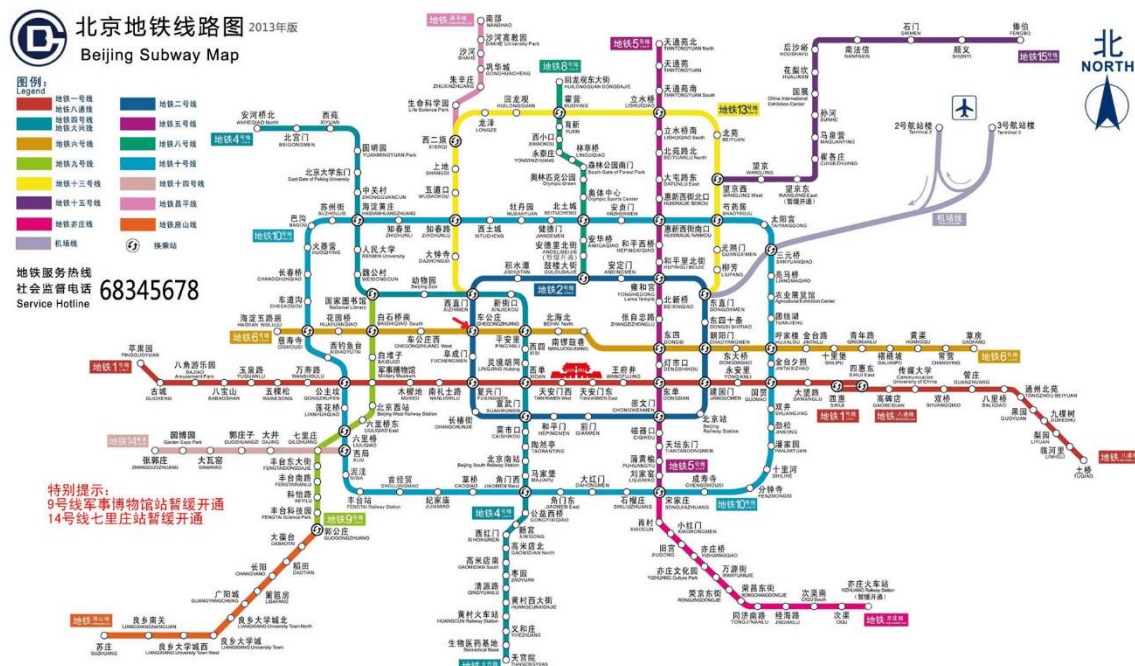


Figure 4 Metro Network of Beijing, the big picture

While we were busy selecting the location for Terra Beijing, beautiful artworks from the selected artists were flowing towards Terra Delft. In the last couple of weeks of 2020, and the beginning ones in 2021, Joke and Simone have busied themselves wrapping, stuffing, packing, paving and arranging all the artworks into 4 shipment crates as tall as fences used in hurdling. And they have done it! When seeing the shipment crates departing Terra Delft to China, I quote Simone "It is like seeing children leaving home." On the other end of the Eurasia continent, we were very much thrilled knowing that all the ceramic works are taking their first leg of trip from Rotterdam to Tianjin.

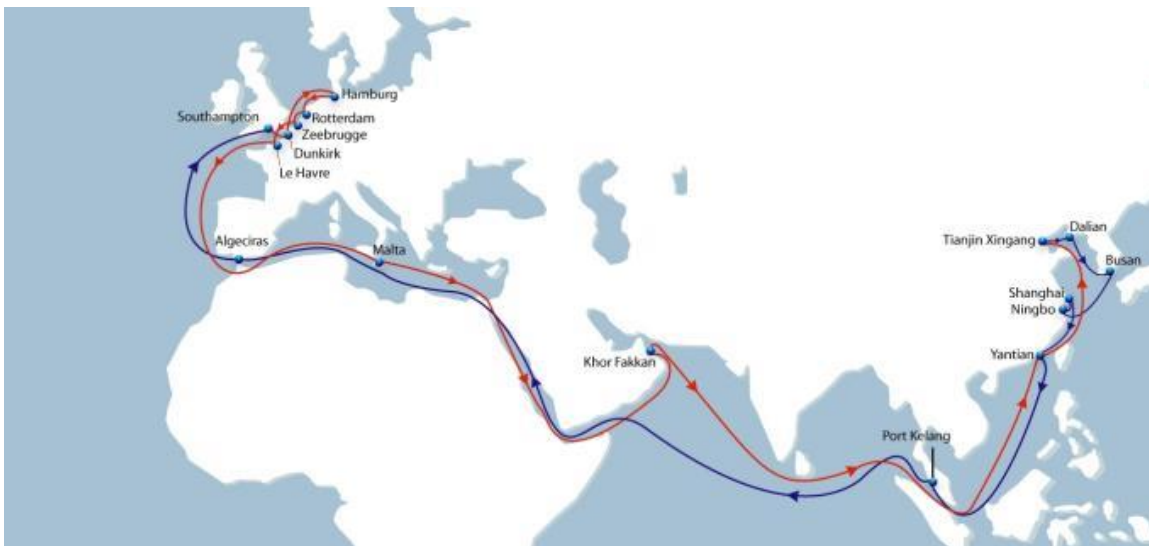


Figure 5 An image illustrating the vessel trajectory connecting the two side of the continent

With our finger crossed for the artworks in transit, the attention of ours went back on the renovation of the gallery space. It has to serve as a blank background, being empty, but at the same time, be sort of elegant and mild, so that the artworks can be displayed with authenticity. The design plan was made by an experienced designer, an architect, who is a common good friend of ours. The outcome? We all just loved it.



Figure 6 Visual rendering of the interior of Terra Beijing (design by Xiaoting Chen)

From Nov. 2020, a group of masters commenced the realization of the design plan. They come from the South of the country, from AnHui province, and are very skillful and experience in a variety of renovation works, and each has a lovely character. The winter of 2020 in Beijing was very cold, but the masters nevertheless worked very hard to keep the progress steady. We are grateful for their work, and it was a pleasant memory.

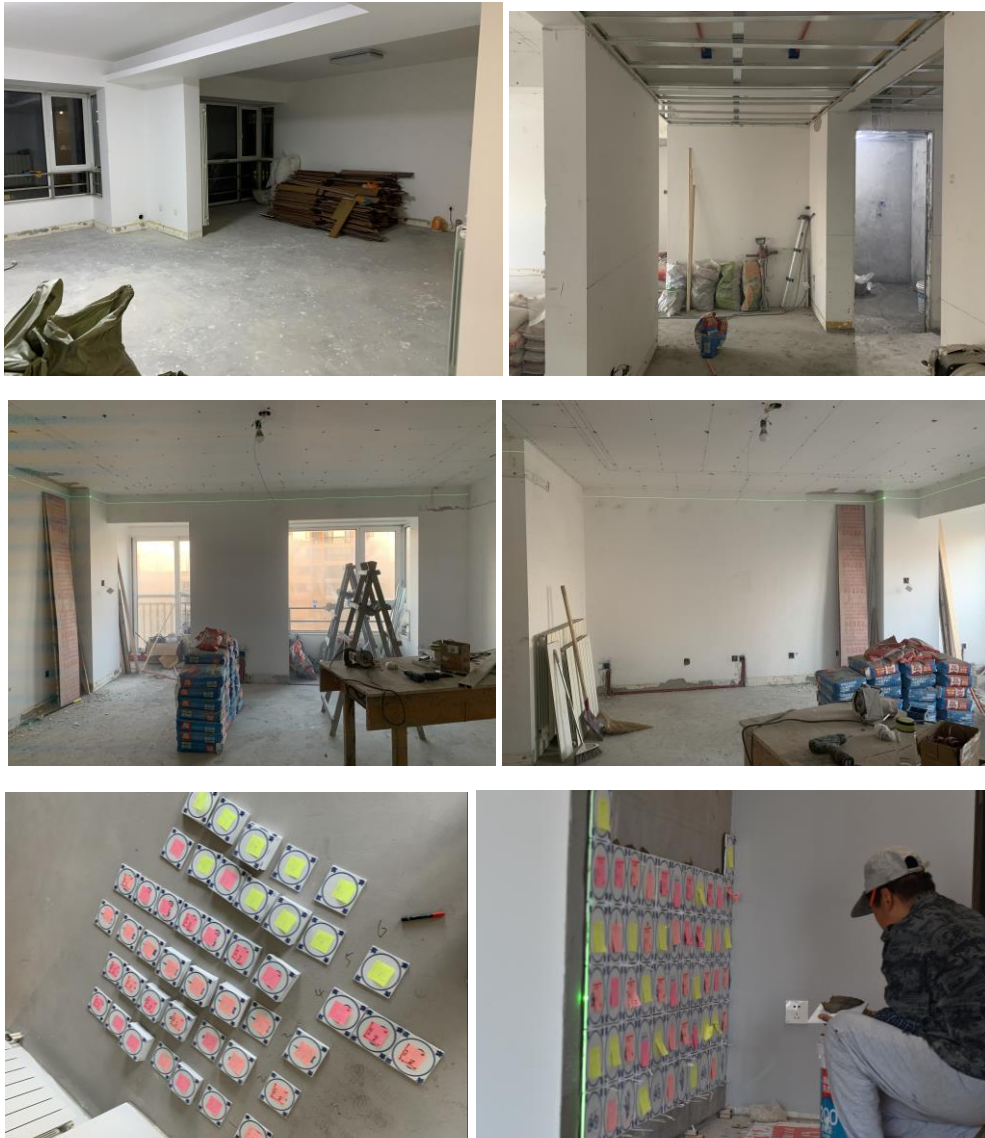


Figure 7 Renovation of in Progress

The renovation completed in September 2021, and we started to receive visits on appointments since then. From the faces of the visitors, we observe genuine expression of attraction to the beautiful works in display. And most have mentioned the immediate difference in styles between the Western contemporary works and the Chinese ones, a fresh taste. We think this is a very positive sign of local reception towards Terra Beijing.

What comes next? Exploration of the market in Beijing, which includes but not limited to attending local events, receiving visitors, and growing a feeling of how to find the appreciators of contemporary ceramic art. All in all, 2021 has been the launching year of Terra Beijing, and we could not help imagining and looking forward to the 2022.



Figure 8 View towards the East wall of Terra Beijing



Figure 9 View towards the West Wall of Terra Beijing

