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Platformed Inheritance: Digital Re-mediation, Intangible Cultural Heritage, and Innovative Artistic Expression in China

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Abstract: This article examines how Chinese intangible cultural heritage is re-mediated through digital archives, immersive museum interfaces, and short-video platforms, and how such re-mediation changes the relation between artistic inheritance and innovative expression. Developing the concept of platformed inheritance, it argues that digital heritage innovation is not a neutral extension of preservation but a socio-technical process in which practitioner knowledge, institutional authority, interface design, algorithmic visibility, and public participation jointly reshape the contemporary life of traditional arts. The study combines qualitative comparative case analysis with an empirical dataset, including a 72-item pilot corpus, a 2 × 3 audience experiment (N = 240), and a 24-participant interview matrix. Focusing on Digital Dunhuang, Palace Museum/Hong Kong Palace Museum immersive exhibitions, and Douyin intangible-heritage communication, the article identifies four mechanisms: selective visibility, aesthetic compression, participatory re-embedding, and responsible re-coding. The findings show that context-rich presentation improves perceived authenticity, learning intention, practitioner recognition, and support intention more consistently than aesthetic-only display. The article contributes a framework for evaluating digital art inheritance beyond technological novelty, audience scale, or visual spectacle, emphasizing traceability, interpretive depth, practitioner agency, transmission pathways, and global communicability.

Keywords: Intangible cultural heritage; Platformed inheritance; Digital heritage; Short video; Museum digitization; Chinese visual culture; Artistic innovation

1 Introduction

Artistic inheritance is increasingly negotiated within a media ecology where cultural memory, visual attention, institutional authority, and participatory creativity are organized through digital platforms. For intangible cultural heritage, this shift is especially consequential. Living heritage has traditionally depended on practice, apprenticeship, bodily discipline, community recognition, and intergenerational continuity. Yet contemporary publics often encounter traditional arts first through mobile screens, museum projections, virtual archives, algorithmically curated feeds,

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and visually intensive interfaces. The problem is therefore no longer simply whether digital media can help heritage travel. The more urgent question is what kind of inheritance becomes possible when heritage must become searchable, clickable, immersive, shareable, and measurable.

The call for a global vision of artistic inheritance and innovative expression requires an analytical vocabulary that can move beyond two insufficient positions. One position celebrates digital technology as a tool of preservation, access, and dissemination. Another criticizes digital circulation as commodification, simplification, or loss of authenticity. Both capture part of the issue, but neither fully explains the process through which heritage is selected, re-coded, circulated to new publics, and sometimes returned to practitioners and institutions as new expectations of visibility and value. This article addresses that gap by developing the concept of platformed inheritance.

Platformed inheritance refers to the mediated process through which living artistic traditions are selected, formatted, circulated, evaluated, and re-embedded through platform environments. It includes institutional digitization projects that translate fragile cultural materials into public-facing interfaces; museum exhibitions that convert historical motifs into spatial and immersive encounters; and short-video ecosystems that make craft, ritual, performance, and embodied knowledge visible to dispersed audiences. The concept does not replace safeguarding, transmission, or innovation. Rather, it names the new condition under which these older categories are increasingly interconnected with interface design, algorithmic distribution, metrics of engagement, and participatory cultural labor (Jenkins et al., 2013; Nieborg & Poell, 2018; van Dijck et al., 2018).

China provides a particularly important context because it combines a large system of recognized intangible cultural heritage with large-scale cultural digitization, rapidly expanding museums, and globally visible digital platforms. The public contextual indicators summarized in the data package anchor this study: China has been reported as maintaining 44 UNESCO-listed intangible cultural heritage items; Digital Dunhuang public reports describe high-resolution resources and virtual tours of 30 caves (State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 2017); the Hong Kong Palace Museum describes The Ways in Patterns as an immersive digital exhibition drawing on Palace Museum motifs across architecture, ceramics, textiles, AI exploration, 3D projection, and interaction (Hong Kong Palace Museum, 2025); and public data report 6,833 registered museums by August 2024 and 1.49 billion museum visits in 2024 (State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 2025). These indicators do not function as causal proof, but they justify why Chinese digital heritage is a valuable site for theorizing global art inheritance.

This article asks three research questions. First, how do digital platforms and cultural institutions re-mediate Chinese intangible cultural heritage as a public-facing artistic experience? Second, what mechanisms translate embodied heritage practice into digitally shareable forms? Third, how can digital innovation be evaluated beyond technological novelty, audience scale, or visual spectacle? To answer these questions, the article integrates critical heritage studies, platform studies, digital heritage research, and visual culture theory. It then analyzes three case modes: Digital Dunhuang as institutional digitization, Palace Museum/Hong Kong Palace Museum immersive exhibition as museum-based digital design, and Douyin intangible-heritage short-video communication as platform circulation.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Critical Heritage Studies and Intangible Cultural Heritage

The 2003 UNESCO Convention defines intangible cultural heritage as practices, representations, expressions,

knowledge, and skills that communities recognize as part of their cultural heritage, and it defines safeguarding as measures that ensure viability through identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, and revitalization (UNESCO, 2003). This formulation is crucial because it refuses to reduce heritage to static objects. Living heritage remains alive because it is practiced, interpreted, adapted, and socially recognized.

Critical heritage studies complicate the managerial language of safeguarding by asking who authorizes heritage, whose memory is privileged, and how cultural value becomes institutionalized (Waterton & Watson, 2015). Smith (2006) argues that heritage is not a self-evident property of objects but a discourse and performance through which societies authorize versions of the past (Smith, 2006). Harrison (2013) similarly treats heritage as a set of social and material practices that assemble relations between past, present, and future (Harrison, 2013). Bendix et al. (2012) show that heritage regimes create recognition and resources while also introducing procedures of selection and exclusion (Bendix et al., 2012).

For intangible heritage, the politics of selection are unavoidable. Once a craft, ritual, performance, or aesthetic form becomes publicly recognized, it may gain legitimacy, funding, and public visibility. Yet recognition can also reorganize practice around display, tourism, certification, and institutional narrative. Digital mediation intensifies this tension by adding new filters: interface design, platform metrics, visual legibility, and audience participation. This is why digital heritage must be studied not only as preservation but also as a transformation of cultural authority.

2.2 Platformization and Cultural Production

Platform studies provide a second conceptual lens. Nieborg and Poell (2018) define platformization as the penetration of platform infrastructures, economic models, and governance mechanisms into cultural production (Nieborg & Poell, 2018). Cultural forms become increasingly shaped by platform logics: visibility is ranked, circulation is measured, interfaces configure behavior, and creative labor adjusts to algorithmic incentives. Van Dijck et al. (2018) further argue that platforms reorganize public life through datafication, commodification, and selection (van Dijck et al., 2018; Zuboff, 2019).

For artistic and heritage communication, platformization matters because it changes how cultural forms become public. A traditional craft video is not merely a record of practice. It is a platform object formatted through duration, thumbnail, soundtrack, caption, hashtag, comment field, recommendation algorithm, and engagement metrics. A digital exhibition is not merely a translation of museum content. It is an interface that choreographs movement, immersion, attention, and interpretation. A digital archive is not simply a database; it reorganizes art-historical access through search, navigation, resolution, and metadata.

Research on algorithmic visibility shows that digital systems are implicated in the production of relevance. Gillespie (2010) argues that algorithms help organize what becomes publicly visible (Gillespie, 2010), while Bucher (2018) emphasizes the felt power of algorithmic systems in everyday cultural practice (Bucher, 2018). For heritage practitioners and museums, this means that digital communication increasingly requires knowledge of what platforms reward: clarity, affect, novelty, rhythm, transformation, shareability, and visual intensity. The danger is not only commercialization but the narrowing of what counts as culturally communicable.

2.3 Digital Heritage, Visual Culture, and Innovative Artistic Expression

Digital heritage scholarship has emphasized documentation, access, participation, and interpretation. Cameron and Kenderdine (2007) highlight the interpretive potential of digital cultural heritage while warning that digital representation always entails curatorial choices (Cameron & Kenderdine, 2007). Giaccardi (2012) argues that heritage is increasingly co-created through networked participation (Giaccardi, 2012), and Parry (2013) shows how museums are transformed by digital affordances that affect collection, display, learning, and public engagement (Parry, 2013). These insights are particularly relevant to art studies because digital heritage is not simply a technical reproduction; it is a new aesthetic and epistemic form.

Visual culture theory helps explain why digital heritage is often encountered as image, interface, and atmosphere. Mirzoeff (1999) conceptualizes visual culture as the field through which modern societies organize seeing, power, and meaning (Mirzoeff, 1999). Manovich (2001) argues that new media transform cultural objects into programmable, navigable, and modular forms (Manovich, 2001). When traditional motifs enter immersive exhibitions or short-video feeds, they are not only preserved; they are re-composed as visual events. Patterns, gestures, textures, and tools become shareable aesthetic fragments that circulate beyond their original ritual, craft, or community contexts.

The literature, therefore, requires a bridge concept. Heritage studies explain why continuity, community, and agency matter. Platform studies explain the infrastructural conditions of circulation. Visual culture explains the aesthetic forms through which heritage becomes perceivable. What remains underdeveloped is a framework that connects these levels and evaluates digital innovation by its effects on inheritance. Platformed inheritance is proposed as that framework.

3 Theoretical Framework: Platformed Inheritance

Platformed inheritance is defined as the process through which living artistic traditions are re-mediated through digital platforms and institutional interfaces in ways that alter their visibility, authority, aesthetic form, and social transmission. The concept contains four propositions.

First, inheritance is selective. No platform, archive, or exhibition can transmit the totality of a tradition. Digital mediation selects what becomes visible: a gesture, motif, tool, master, story, before-and-after transformation, or spectacular detail. Selection is unavoidable, but it becomes problematic when the selected fragment is mistaken for the whole practice.

Second, inheritance is formatted. Digital environments require heritage to assume platform-compatible forms. Short videos privilege concise sequences and affective hooks; immersive exhibitions privilege sensory atmosphere and spatial experience; digital archives privilege navigation, metadata, and high-resolution access. Formatting can make heritage intelligible to new publics, but it may also impose external rhythms on slow craft and situated knowledge.

Third, inheritance is evaluated. Platform metrics such as views, likes, shares, comments, completion rate, and livestream conversion introduce new measures of value. These measures do not merely record public interest; they shape creative decisions and institutional priorities. A form that performs well digitally may gain disproportionate attention, while less spectacular practices remain marginal.

Fourth, inheritance is re-embedded. Digital circulation can return to communities and practitioners through renewed interest, apprenticeships, tourism, institutional support, or market demand. Yet re-embedding is not automatic. It depends on whether digital visibility is connected to practitioners, learning infrastructures, ethical attribution, and

sustained cultural contexts. The framework, therefore, resists a linear preservation model and treats inheritance as a recursive process in which tradition, technology, and public reception continually modify one another.

4 Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative comparative case-analysis design, supplemented by an empirical data package. The empirical package is used to connect theoretical claims with systematic evidence across corpus coding, audience response, and interview interpretation. It allows the analysis to move beyond illustrative case description and specify how platformed inheritance operates across archive, exhibition, and feed environments.

The comparative design focuses on three modes of public-facing digital heritage communication: institutional digitization, immersive museum design, and short-video platform circulation. These modes were selected because they represent distinct but interconnected forms of digital re-mediation. Each mode has a different relation to visibility, authority, participation, and innovation. Comparing them allows the analysis to identify mechanisms that recur across media without collapsing their differences.

4.2 Case Selection

Digital Dunhuang represents institutional digitization. It foregrounds high-resolution documentation, virtual access, and the transformation of mural and grotto heritage into navigable digital environments. The Palace Museum / Hong Kong Palace Museum immersive exhibition represents museum-based digital design. The case foregrounds pattern, atmosphere, interaction, and the translation of historical motifs into spatial audiovisual experience. Douyin intangible-heritage communication represents platform circulation. It foregrounds algorithmic visibility, short-video narration, practitioner persona, comment-based participation, and commerce or tourism conversion.

The three-case design is intentionally comparative rather than exhaustive (see Table 1). It does not claim to represent all Chinese digital heritage practices. Instead, it captures three influential mediation logics: archive, exhibition, and feed. These logics are central to contemporary public encounters with traditional arts in China and increasingly visible in global cultural communication.

Table 1 Comparative Case Design

Mode	Representative Case	Dominant Medium	Analytic Focus	Core Tension
Institutional Digitization	Digital Dunhuang	Digital archive / virtual interface	Documentation, Access, High-Resolution Visuality	Preservation Versus Experiential Abstraction
Immersive Museum Design	Palace Museum / HKPM Immersive Exhibition	Spatial Audiovisual Interface	Pattern, Atmosphere, Interaction, Visitor Experience	Innovation Versus Historical Contextual Depth
Short-Video Circulation	Douyin ICH Communication	Algorithmic Feed / Livestream	Visibility, Narration, Practitioner Performance, Participation	Public Reach Versus Metric-driven Compression

4.3 Corpus and Empirical Package

The data package includes a 72-item comparative corpus distributed across the three case modes: 17 Digital

Dunhuang archive items, 14 Palace Museum immersive-exhibition items, and 41 Douyin intangible-heritage short-video items. The corpus records exposure units, contextual depth, metric orientation, visibility hooks, attribution, and re-embedding cues. The package also includes a 2 × 3 audience experiment with 240 participants, crossing presentation style (aesthetic-only versus context-rich) with medium condition (archive interface, immersive exhibition, and short video). Finally, it includes a 24-participant interview matrix involving museum curators, heritage researchers, ICH practitioners, platform creators, digital exhibition designers, and young audience members.

These materials are treated as an integrated empirical package. The corpus documents observable presentation patterns, the survey records audience responses to controlled presentation conditions, and the interview matrix provides anonymized interpretive evidence from relevant stakeholder groups. Together, they support triangulation across content, reception, and professional interpretation (see Table 2).

Table 2 Corpus Summary by Case Mode

Mode	*N*	Mean Duration/Exposure	Mean Context Depth	Mean Metric Orientation	Most Common Re-Embedding Cue
Digital Dunhuang Archive	17	211.8 Sec	3.00	56.6	Purchase/Visit Conversion Cue
Palace Museum Immersive Exhibition	14	270.0 Sec	3.79	59.3	Comments Only
Douyin ICH Short Video	41	100.2 Sec	3.10	52.3	Purchase/Visit Conversion Cue

4.3.1 Experimental Stimuli Operationalization

The 2 × 3 audience experiment crossed presentation style (aesthetic-only versus context-rich) with medium condition (archive interface, immersive exhibition, and short video). The aesthetic-only condition was designed to foreground the perceptual and affective surface of heritage representation. Across the three media, it emphasized visual attractiveness, motifs, color, spatial atmosphere, finished craft objects, visual transformation, immersive effects, or short-video attention hooks, while providing no or only minimal historical background, practitioner information, craft procedure, cultural context, learning pathway, or institutional/community link. This condition does not treat aesthetic expression as inherently superficial. Rather, it isolates what happens when heritage is primarily encountered as a visual surface and allows the study to examine how audiences evaluate authenticity, learning intention, practitioner recognition, sharing intention, and support/visit intention under visually driven presentation.

The context-rich condition retained the same basic medium form and visual material but added interpretive and source-related information. In this condition, participants were provided with clearer attribution to practitioners or institutions, historical background, craft-process explanation, regional or community context, and links to learning resources, exhibitions, workshops, or official channels where appropriate. In the archive-interface condition, aesthetic-only stimuli consisted of high-resolution images, virtual browsing, and close visual details, whereas context-rich stimuli additionally included object provenance, cave or artifact background, conservation information, historical explanation, and further learning links. In the immersive-exhibition condition, aesthetic-only stimuli emphasized pattern projection, spatial atmosphere, interactive installation, and visual immersion, whereas context-rich stimuli added curatorial explanation, motif sources, object interpretation, historical context, craft knowledge, and educational pathways. In the short-video condition, aesthetic-only stimuli relied on fast editing, finished-object display, close-up hand gestures, visual transitions, music, and attention-grabbing openings, whereas context-rich stimuli additionally identified practitioners, places, procedural steps, historical meanings, and links to workshops, exhibitions, or institutional resources. The design,

therefore, compares not different heritage topics, but different levels of contextual scaffolding within comparable media environments.

4.4 Coding and Analytical Procedure

The coding scheme operationalizes four mechanisms: selective visibility, aesthetic compression, participatory re-embedding, and responsible re-coding. Selective visibility was coded through motif prominence, practitioner persona, institutional authority, and first-shot visual intensity. Aesthetic compression was coded through accelerated process, decontextualized motif, sensory immersion, duration, and context-depth score. Participatory re-embedding was coded through comment-based participation, learning pathway, commerce or tourism conversion, workshop links, practitioner profiles, museum links, and educational resources. Responsible re-coding was coded through practitioner agency, traceability, source attribution, and historical grounding.

The analysis proceeded in three stages. First, the cases were read for their dominant mediation logic: archive, immersion, or feed. Second, the corpus codes were compared across case modes to identify recurring patterns and divergences. Third, survey and interview materials were used for triangulation: they clarified how the interpretive mechanisms correspond to audience and practitioner concerns. Coding frequency and distribution in the 72-item corpus are seen in Table 3.

Table 3 Coding Frequency and Distribution in the 72-Item Corpus

Code	Frequency	Most Visible in	Analytic Salience
SV1 Spectacular Motif	22	Douyin ICH Short Video	Medium
SV2 Practitioner Persona	48	Douyin ICH Short Video	High
SV3 Institutional Authority	21	Digital Dunhuang Archive	Low
AC1 Accelerated Process	27	Douyin ICH Short Video	Medium
AC2 Decontextualized Motif	50	Douyin ICH Short Video	Medium
AC3 Sensory Immersion	19	Digital Dunhuang Archive	Low
PR1 Comment-based Participation	21	Palace Museum Immersive Exhibition	High
PR2 Learning Pathway	54	Palace Museum Immersive Exhibition	Medium
PR3 Commerce/Tourism Conversion	34	Douyin ICH Short Video	Medium
AG1 Practitioner Agency	28	Digital Dunhuang Archive	Low
AG2 Platform Metric Dependency	18	Palace Museum Immersive Exhibition	Low
TR1 Traceability	32	Palace Museum Immersive Exhibition	Medium

4.5 Data Transparency and Ethical Treatment

All participant-related information is anonymized and reported in aggregate or through role-based codes. The survey data are presented by condition rather than by identifiable respondent, and interview excerpts are attributed only to coded roles. Public contextual indicators are separated from corpus, survey, and interview evidence so that the evidentiary status of each data source remains clear.

5 Findings and Analysis

5.1 Selective Visibility

The first mechanism is selective visibility. In digital heritage communication, visibility is both an opportunity and a

filter. Digital Dunhuang makes fragile mural and grotto resources accessible through high-resolution images and virtual navigation. This expands access for audiences who cannot physically visit the site and enables close attention to details that may be difficult to observe in situ. Yet the interface also selects particular modes of encounter: visual inspection, spatial navigation, and aesthetic appreciation. Ritual context, environmental atmosphere, conservation labor, and local histories are condensed into an interface-based experience.

In immersive museum design, selective visibility is frequently organized around motifs. Traditional patterns, objects, and symbols become the basis for projection, interaction, and multisensory design. This mode renews attention to artistic form by allowing visitors to encounter historical visual systems as dynamic environments rather than static displays. However, the same process may privilege visually attractive elements over less visible dimensions of craft knowledge, material labor, and historical complexity. Innovation succeeds when it makes the unseen structure of tradition more legible; it becomes shallow when it only enlarges the decorative surface.

Short-video platforms intensify selective visibility because attention is organized through feeds. Heritage items that offer strong visual transformation, dramatic contrast, recognizable persona, or affective storytelling are more likely to circulate. In the 72-item corpus, the most common visibility hooks include practitioner persona, spectacular motif, close-up hand gesture, product or livestream sales, master-apprentice story, and before-and-after transformation. This visibility can make heritage encounterable within everyday media routines. Yet it can also bias public memory toward the spectacular, the affectively immediate, or the commercially convertible.

5.2 Aesthetic Compression

The second mechanism is aesthetic compression. Intangible heritage is often slow, repetitive, and apprenticeship-based. Its knowledge resides not only in finished products but also in bodily discipline, tool familiarity, material judgment, seasonal rhythm, oral explanation, and community-based recognition. Digital media cannot transmit all of this at once. It compresses practice into scenes, sequences, images, sounds, captions, and narrative hooks.

In the archival mode, compression takes the form of datafication and visual segmentation. Murals, caves, objects, and patterns become images, files, metadata, and navigable units. This can protect fragile heritage, support research, and create educational access. The risk emerges when the archive is mistaken for the living totality of heritage. A digital image can preserve visual information, but it cannot automatically preserve the ritual, pedagogical, and environmental relations through which meaning is transmitted.

In the immersive museum mode, compression becomes experiential design. Historical motifs are translated into sound, projection, movement, and interactive participation. The visitor does not simply view heritage but moves through an aestheticized environment. This can transform passive spectatorship into embodied attention, but it may also substitute atmospheric intensity for historical interpretation. The coding frequency shows that decontextualized motifs and accelerated processes appear frequently across the corpus, reminding us that digital innovation often simplifies before it explains.

In the short-video mode, compression is most radical. Crafts requiring years of apprenticeship are often condensed into intelligible sequences lasting only seconds. Platform creators, therefore, rely on visual sequencing, accelerated editing, simplified explanation, personal storytelling, and affective framing. These techniques are not inherently superficial; they may serve as entry points that invite further learning. But without links to practitioners, institutions,

or learning contexts, short-video compression risks creating a public that recognizes heritage aesthetics without understanding heritage practice.

5.3 Participatory Re-embedding

The third mechanism is participatory re-embedding. Digital communication becomes meaningful for inheritance only when visibility is reconnected to people, practices, and institutions. Audience participation may take the form of comments, sharing, imitation, remixing, purchasing, visiting, enrolling in workshops, or following practitioners. These activities differ in depth. A like is not equivalent to an apprenticeship; a remix is not equivalent to community recognition. Nevertheless, participation can open pathways through which heritage becomes socially active rather than merely displayed.

In the case of institutional digitization, re-embedding occurs when digital access supports research, education, conservation awareness, and cultural exchange. Digital Dunhuang is strongest when it functions not only as a visual database (State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 2017) but also as an entry into art-historical, religious, conservation, and Silk Road contexts. Its global value lies in enabling translocal publics to engage with Dunhuang as a site of cultural encounter rather than merely as a collection of beautiful images.

In immersive museum design, re-embedding depends on interpretive scaffolding. If visitors are invited to connect digital patterns with material objects, historical techniques, symbolic systems, and contemporary creative practice, immersive design can function as artistic education. If interaction is limited to spectacle, re-embedding remains weak. The survey results suggest that context-rich exhibition conditions improve perceived authenticity and support intention more than aesthetic-only conditions.

On short-video platforms, re-embedding is most uncertain but also most dynamic. Practitioners may gain visibility, income, and recognition; younger audiences may discover traditions that previously seemed distant; and local crafts may enter national or global cultural conversation. At the same time, platform visibility is unstable. It depends on algorithms, trends, and commercial attention. Therefore, heritage communication should connect platform exposure to durable infrastructures: practitioner profiles, verified attribution, educational resources, offline workshops, institutional collaboration, and community-led interpretation.

Table 4 reports aggregate audience responses based on the stimulus operationalization described in Section 4.3.1.

Table 4 Experimental Survey Results (N = 240; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Medium condition	Presentation Style	*N*	Authenticity	Learning	Practitioner Recognition	Sharing	Support/Visit
Archive Interface	Aesthetic-only	40	3.24	3.73	3.50	3.61	3.58
Archive Interface	Context-rich	40	3.91	4.23	3.57	3.90	4.12
Immersive Exhibition	Aesthetic-only	40	3.42	3.60	3.26	4.18	3.82
Immersive Exhibition	Context-rich	40	4.52	3.94	3.85	4.61	4.42
Short Video	Aesthetic-only	40	3.44	3.19	3.39	3.45	3.77
Short Video	Context-rich	40	3.69	4.31	4.14	3.90	3.67

Note: Results are reported in aggregate using anonymized participant records.

The triangulation matrix is seen in Table 5.

Table 5 The Triangulation Matrix

Mechanism	Corpus Evidence	Interview Evidence	Survey/Experiment Evidence
Selective Visibility	Metric orientation and motif/persona hooks dominate short-video items	Participants mention first-three-second hooks and beautifully finished objects	Aesthetic-only stimuli score slightly higher on sharing but lower on authenticity
Aesthetic Compression	Accelerated process and decontextualized motif codes appear frequently	Practitioners report loss of slow training and embodied knowledge	Context-rich stimuli score higher on learning intention across all media
Participatory Re-embedding	A few items include workshop/learning links; many rely on comments only	Audiences want pathways to exhibitions, workshops, or practitioner profiles	Support/visit intention rises under context-rich conditions
Responsible Re-coding	Archive and immersive modes show higher context depth than short videos	Curators stress explanation, traceability, and historical grounding	Practitioner recognition improves when source/context information is explicit

5.4 Responsible Re-coding

The fourth mechanism is responsible for re-coding. Re-coding refers to the transformation of heritage elements into new media forms: a mural into a digital panorama, a motif into an interactive projection, a craft process into a short-video narrative, or a performance tradition into an online participatory event. Responsible re-coding asks whether this transformation remains traceable, accountable, and reversible. In other words, can audiences return from the digital aesthetic surface to the people, places, techniques, and histories that made the representation possible?

The interview matrix was designed to capture this concern. One heritage practitioner states that audiences may know the beautiful finished object without knowing the years of repetitive training behind one gesture. A digital exhibition designer notes that immersion should not be a larger decorative screen but a pathway from feeling to explanation and then to historical understanding. These excerpts provide anonymized stakeholder perspectives on the risks of decontextualized visibility and the need for interpretive depth.

Responsible re-coding matters because digital innovation can easily become extraction. A motif can be detached from object, community, locality, and practice; a craft can become a visual trick; a ritual can become a consumable aesthetic scene. The alternative is not anti-digital preservation. The alternative is accountable innovation: clear attribution, contextual explanation, practitioner visibility, community benefit, learning pathways, and design choices that make cultural specificity globally communicable without flattening it.

6 Discussion

6.1 Beyond Preservation Versus Innovation

The analysis suggests that the relation between inheritance and innovation should not be framed as a binary. Digital innovation does not automatically damage authenticity, nor does technological sophistication automatically strengthen inheritance. The crucial issue is the quality of mediation. A digital archive, immersive exhibition, or short-video feed can either deepen or flatten cultural understanding depending on how it organizes selection, context, practitioner agency, and audience participation.

Platformed inheritance, therefore, requires an evaluative vocabulary beyond reach. In many digital cultural projects, success is measured through visits, views, clicks, followers, media attention, or conversions. These indicators matter

because public visibility is necessary for cultural transmission in contemporary media environments. However, they are insufficient as heritage criteria. A platformed heritage project should also be evaluated by interpretive density, ethical attribution, accessibility, learning pathways, practitioner benefit, and community continuity.

6.2 Global Communicability without Cultural Flattening

Global vision does not mean making local heritage universally consumable by removing cultural specificity. It means building interfaces through which culturally specific practices can become intelligible across contexts without losing internal complexity. The global circulation of Chinese artistic heritage is strongest when translation does not erase situated knowledge but makes it available for careful, layered interpretation.

This point is central to art studies because global circulation often rewards instantly recognizable symbols. Dragons, caves, palatial patterns, calligraphic gestures, embroidery textures, and craft tools are visually powerful, but their power can be reduced if they circulate as empty signs. Platformed inheritance calls for a different model of global communication: one in which visual entry points lead to explanation, explanation leads to traceable cultural context, and context leads to ethically meaningful participation. The evaluation model for responsible digital heritage innovation is shown in Figure 1.

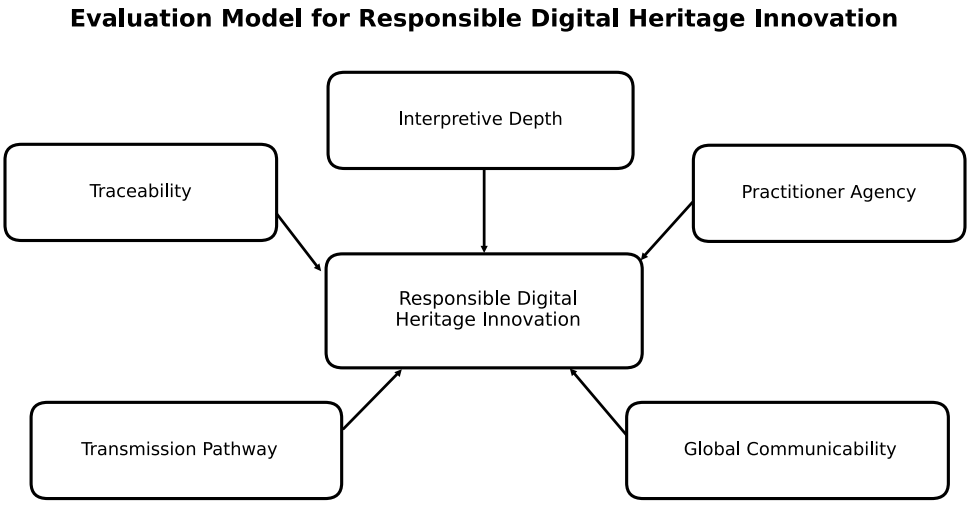

Figure 1 Evaluation Model for Responsible Digital Heritage Innovation

6.3 Implications for Art Studies and Design Practice

For art studies, the framework contributes a vocabulary for analyzing how artistic inheritance is reorganized by media infrastructures. It shows that heritage is not simply preserved, displayed, or disseminated; it is selected, formatted, evaluated, and re-embedded. For design practice, the framework clarifies the responsibilities of curators, interface designers, platform creators, and cultural institutions. They are not merely packaging heritage. They are cultural intermediaries who decide how tradition becomes visible, how audiences participate, and how artistic meaning is translated.

For museums and cultural institutions, the practical implication is that digital projects should be designed around interpretive pathways rather than only immersive effects. For platforms, it suggests that heritage content should be supported through attribution tools, educational linking, practitioner verification, and recommendation environments

that do not only reward spectacle. For practitioners and communities, it suggests that digital visibility is valuable when it strengthens rather than replaces transmission. Evaluation criteria for responsible digital heritage innovation are seen in Table 6.

Table 6 Evaluation Criteria for Responsible Digital Heritage Innovation

Criterion	Key Question	Positive Indicator	Warning Sign
Traceability	Can Audiences Identify Source, Practitioner, Locality, and Context?	Clear Attribution and Contextual Links	Anonymous or Decontextualized Heritage Motifs
Interpretive Depth	Does the Project Explain Meaning Beyond Visual Appeal?	Layered Explanation, Archives and Education	Spectacle without Historical Grounding
Practitioner Agency	Do Practitioners Shape Representation and Benefit from Circulation?	Visible Authorship, Collaboration, Compensation	Extraction of Craft as Decorative Content
Transmission Pathway	Can Attention Lead to Learning or Participation?	Workshops, Guides, Institutional Links	Short-lived Attention with No Follow-up
Global Communicability	Can international Audiences Understand without Flattening?	Translation with Specificity and Context	Universalized Exoticism

7 Conclusion

This article has argued that the digital future of artistic inheritance should be understood through the concept of platformed inheritance. In contemporary China, intangible cultural heritage and traditional artistic resources circulate through archives, exhibitions, short-video platforms, and participatory interfaces. These media do not merely preserve or disseminate heritage; they select, format, aestheticize, evaluate, and re-embed it. The resulting process can expand access and renew public interest, but it can also compress embodied knowledge into attention-friendly fragments.

The study identified four mechanisms of digital re-mediation: selective visibility, aesthetic compression, participatory re-embedding, and responsible re-coding. These mechanisms explain why digital innovation must be evaluated carefully. A heritage project may be visually impressive but weak in transmission; a short video may be brief but effective as an entry point; a digital archive may be technically sophisticated but culturally thin if detached from interpretation. The question is not whether digital media are good or bad for heritage. The question is how mediation is designed, governed, and connected back to living communities.

The broader contribution is to redefine innovative artistic expression as responsible re-coding. Innovation should not be measured only by novelty, immersion, or visibility. It should be measured by whether it sustains cultural traceability, interpretive depth, practitioner agency, and community continuity while enabling traditional arts to circulate across cultural and technological boundaries. Such an approach is especially important for a global forum on artistic inheritance and innovative expression because it positions digital creativity not as a departure from tradition, but as a demanding ethical practice of transmission.

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