

True Story Award 2025

Finalist

Author:

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English

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Jury Statement:

This deeply investigative story delves into the complex provenance of Chinese artifacts looted during the Boxer War, showcasing meticulous research that spans continents and centuries. The writer reconstructs the forgotten journeys of historical treasures with rigorous archival digging, interviews with curators and scholars, and an interdisciplinary approach. The narrative not only traces the looted artifacts but also contextualizes them within broader questions of colonial legacies, ethical restitution, and global power dynamics. The story balances granular details, such as inscriptions on a guqin or the intricate history of Ziguangge paintings, with the larger systemic issues of looted heritage and cultural erasure. The collaboration between German and Chinese experts highlights the painstaking efforts required to uncover these hidden histories. This work exemplifies how investigative journalism can illuminate long-overlooked ethical questions and inspire dialogue about restitution, justice, and shared global heritage. Its depth of research sets a benchmark for excellence in this category.