While in some countries heritage has been used to illuminate marginalized histories and support the self-determination of minority identities, in Rwanda heritage is used to promote a national history and identity determined from the top down. This requires a singular narrative about the history of the country, which is produced at sites such as the Presidential Palace Museum. This paper-in-progress examines the ways in which knowledge about history is produced at the museum and in Rwanda writ large, as well as how non-approved narratives falter, particularly in the context of a narrowing space for civil society and non-governmental heritage actors. The modes of knowledge production and presentation of public history at the Museum demonstrate the ways in which heritage’s potential as a counterbalancing and pluralistic force is shut down.

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