

MAJOR TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY CHINESE ART

Li Xianting

The art concepts utilised in this discussion are largely derived from the aesthetic and conceptual language of 20th century Western Modernism. This is an acknowledgement of the fact that the language of Modernism has become the international language of art. To a large degree, this reality has dictated the development of modern Chinese art.

Yet there is another vitally important phenomenon that has shaped the development of Chinese art in the 20th century, and which explains the qualities of Chinese contemporary art which are different from Western art. Since the end of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), when China's doors were "blown" wide open by the West, China has undergone three major cultural and aesthetic transitions marked by a rejection of an established cultural and aesthetic system and the adoption of a new one, always based on a modern Western system. In the course of this process of adoption and adaptation, the Western system underwent various levels of transformation, so that in the end there has been, enacted on Chinese soil, a cultural dialectic between China and the West marked by a pattern of mutual influence and change. It is the phenomenon of these transitions and the cultural dialectic that they have engendered which sets the evolution of China's contemporary art apart from that of the West.

The first of these transitional periods began in the early part of this century, when the May Fourth movement [launched in 1919] raised the flag of anti-feudalist revolt and advocated the use of modern Western cultural ideas as a means of building a new culture for China. The May Fourth movement also signalled the rejection of traditional literati culture, and paved the way for the eventual adoption of Western-style realism as the main model for Chinese contemporary art.

The second transition occurred with the establishment of the Communist regime in 1949 and continued through the Cultural Revolution, a period which saw the establishment of new ideological foundations and the development of a new model for art — Maoist Revolutionary Realism — which advocated, on a thematic level, the introduction of utilitarian social concerns, and on a stylistic level, the absorption of elements of Chinese folk art into the imported Western and Soviet Socialist Realist models.

The third transition began in the early 1980s, when, after the isolation of the Cold War and Cultural Revolution periods, China once again unbolted its doors to the West, and information on contemporary Western culture and philosophy came flooding through the newly opened door. The revived contact with contemporary Western philosophical, cultural and aesthetic ideas led to a psychological rejection on the part of artists, particularly of the younger generation, of decades of Revolutionary Realism and its value concepts. The next ten years saw the emergence and development of Chinese avant-garde art. Just as occurred with the first instance of disillusion with existing cultural value concepts and the resulting attempts to rebuild a new culture in the May Fourth period, the world of contemporary Chinese art has seen conflict, interweaving, and mutually transformative effects among the Chinese literati tradition, Revolutionary Realism, and modern Western culture — a phenomenon which continues to be an important part of the creative process in China. Because of this, China's new art is not a continuation of the art of traditional Chinese culture, nor is it a rehashing of Western modern art: rather, it is a new integration of myriad influences and myriad cultural and aesthetic factors.

1919–1942: Disillusionment with Traditional Literati Culture and the Introduction of Western Realism.

Traditional Chinese literati art is characterised by the quest to manifest the "charm of the ink and brush"; to achieve the idealised quality of lightness and fluidity; and to transcend the everyday world. The highest manifestation of this literati aesthetic is found in post-Song literati painting [the Song dynasty ended in 1279 — Ed.], strongly representative of the post-Song intelligentsia's common ideals of "retreating from the world" (*bishi*), and "achieving tranquillity free of earthly cares" (*danpo*). Art is the spiritual manifestation of humanity: yet, with its escapist ideals and its yearning for tranquillity, the literati cast off any concern with the realities of human existence, and became increasingly effete. Its art came to be seen as an act of leisure and diversion, an elegant play, and an object of connoisseurship.

With the demise of the Qing dynasty, the internal and external turmoil affecting China awakened the more progressive of Chinese intellectuals from these other-worldly literati dreams, causing them to turn to alternative means of artistic expression, primarily to Western art trends which offered a strong contrast to the traditional literati aesthetic. Modern thinkers confronted the humiliation and sense of impotence affecting the Chinese national spirit, and embarked on a movement against tradition, characterised in part by an "aesthetic revolution" that completely rejected the cultural and aesthetic traditions of literati/feudal society.¹ Among the plethora of modern Western art trends introduced in China in the 20th century, realism held the greatest appeal for reformist artists and intellectuals as being the most closely reflective of their social concerns.

Influential and revolutionary modern thinkers such as Hu Shi (1890–1962) and Li Dazhao (1889–1927) summed up traditional Chinese culture as "passive" (*jing*) in nature. Kang Youwei (1858–1927), Chen Duxiu (1879–1942), and Lu Xun (1881–1936) further pointed out that the demise of Chinese literati painting in the modern world was inevitable, a result of its failure to objectively and faithfully depict observed reality: rather it was constantly engaged in the expression of subjective emotion, an exercise grounded in the desire to escape the world. The end result was that literati art had become increasingly empty and devoid of meaning. In its role of opposition, the May Fourth

movement planned to utilise the West's "active" (*dong*) cultural spirit to save and revitalize this "passive" (*jing*) culture, bringing in Western realism and its sense of direct engagement with the world to replace Chinese literati painting's subjective expression of emotion and ideal of transcendence.

From the point of view of aesthetics, literati art's transcendent, or metaphysical, qualities and the exquisite fluidity of its ink-and-brush play, without doubt represent one of the highest pinnacles of art. The metaphysical elements intrinsic to the literati desire for transcendence took literati artists along a path which joined the movement of ink and brush to an expression of the soul — in 20th century terms, a natural development in the evolutionary path of art.

It is important to note that just at the time when, in the early 20th century, Chinese thinkers were hoping to harness Western realism as a replacement for the Chinese literati painter's tradition of subjective expression, traditional European realism was just beginning its transformation into Modernism, a transformation in which the artist sought to escape the restraints of narrative and representation, and turned his attention to the possibilities of color, brushwork and pure form as a direct expression of the emotions.

In fact, beginning with the proponents of the "Art Revolution" led by Chen Duxiu, there were a number of artists in the 1920s and 1930s who recognized this problem. Chen Hengge (1876–1923), Ni Yide (1901–1970), and Huang Binhong (1854–1955) believed that literati painting's lack of emphasis on representational form was actually an artistic advance. These artists held that the main aesthetic question was not whether a painting or sculpture looked like "the real thing" being presented: but rather whether the form presented contained an inner "life" or "vitality." To them, what needed to be changed in traditional Chinese art was not the sublime technique of literati ink painting but rather the fact that literati art had too far distanced itself from real life. They pointed out that important Modernist movements such as Impressionism, Cubism, and Expressionism had all begun to move away from a concern with objective form, emphasising instead the free expression of a subjective world. In their minds, this was a positive trend, representing an integration of Eastern and Western aesthetics.

Traditional painters like Huang Binhong imagined the development of modern Chinese art as a process which would change the attitudes of literati art, emancipating it from its "otherworldliness." By bringing it back into the world, they hoped to transform the traditional subjective language of literati art from a classical language into a modern one. But in fact modern Chinese art did not develop in the way these artists had hoped. Instead, what emerged was a raging cultural debate between the artists who sought to reform traditional literati painting by bringing its language up to date on the one hand, and the artists who sought to replace it on the other, represented by the powerful Realist movement led by the painter Xu Beihong (1895–1953), and resulting in the emergence of realism as the major trend and the last word in modern Chinese art for a very long time.

As such, the stance of reformist artists such as Huang brought them into direct confrontation with more revolutionary artists like Xu who advocated the replacement of the "disengaged" literati aesthetic with Western realism, and for similar reasons abhorred the introduction of Western formalism advocated by Huang and others like him. This argument formed the first great cultural debate, a debate that continued for over twenty years.

Realism was of course not the only style of Western art to have had an impact on Chinese artists in the long period of experimentation, turmoil and change that characterised China in the first half of the century. In the 1920s and 30s there were a number of art students returning to China from study abroad, bringing with them experience of a wide range of Western Modernist art trends, from Impressionism to Surrealism, creating a small-scale modern art movement. Key representative artists of this movement included Lin Fengmian (1900–1991), Pang Xunqin (1906–1985), and Liu Haisu (1896–), who had all studied in France in the 1920s. Under their influence, art in styles representative of all the major Modernist schools began to appear in China, creating the impression that modern Chinese art was at the very least ideologically in step with the West.

Yet the influence of these supporters of Modernism was largely limited to a stylistic one: in the end, in the raging debate between Realists and Modernists, their position was the weaker one. Influential artists like Li Yishi (1881–1942), who had studied in Japan, and Xu Beihong, who had studied in France, argued against them, warning that it would be socially disastrous if modern art of the ilk of Matisse and Cézanne were to take hold in China: this would represent a dangerous emphasis of form over content.²

Given the social conditions of the times, to many Xu's arguments were convincing. The great cultural debate ended with the unquestioned dominance of realism. This marked an important watershed in the development of modern Chinese art: the aesthetic and ideological hegemony of realism meant that autonomy in artistic development had lost out in China. Instead, the dominant social reality "selected" a mode of art that met its ideological needs — needs that certainly would not be met by either literati or Modernist concerns.

In essence, the reason that realism became established as the single most important style in modern Chinese painting is that the Realist movement in China was not so much an aesthetic revolution as a social revolution that aimed at harnessing art to promote revolutionary ideals. The common goal of artists and intellectuals living through

the turmoil, pain and humiliation of the years of war and occupation in China was to find a way to save China from the troubles plaguing it: their advocacy of a spirit of “engagement with the world,” (*rushi jingshen*), the polar opposite of the literati ideal of “transcendence of the world,” (*bishi jingshen*), was the ideological manifestation of their sense of responsibility to put social revolution first, and to act in the name of social utilitarianism. The simplistic formula put forward by the leaders of the Realist movement went something like this: [In art] subjective expression = anti-nature and anti-reality: Realism = a respect for nature and reality = engagement with the world (*rushi jingshen*): Therefore, using a realist stance to fight against subjectivity also = engagement with the world.

Yet on an aesthetic level, this is a false proposition, because essentially the argument is founded on the assumption of the aesthetic validity of the call to rediscover “the spirit of engagement with the world” that was lost by Chinese literati painters after the Song. Once realism was adopted as an ideology, its development was no longer so much an issue of stylistic method or technique; rather, the development of the Realist movement took place on a lower plane of art, as the quest to be completely reflective of “life itself” inevitably gave rise to an increasing vulgarization. In fact the stated objective of the Realist movement was to arouse the people, and to emphasize the utilitarian social aim of “the popularization of art” — and it found a ready-made shortcut in what might be termed as the making of art “in the vernacular,” a tendency which eventually was to become the major characteristic of modern realist art in China.

Thus Western-style realism underwent a major transformation when it was transplanted into the social conditions of China at the time: it was appropriated and modified into an extension of this populist ideology which dictated the future direction of China’s own version of realist art.

Another, parallel art movement which reinforced the ideological direction for China’s contemporary art was Lu Xun’s “Woodcut Movement” of the 1930s. After Modernism and Realism, the Woodcut Movement represented China’s third major art movement of the early twentieth century.³ In essence the Woodcut Movement was similar to an underground resistance movement: it was characterised by a strong fighting spirit, a populist approach and a raging desire to liberate the Chinese people from their wartime enslavement. The Woodcut Movement was strong evidence of modern Chinese intellectuals’ concern for the suffering of the people. On an aesthetic level, the movement was responsible for introducing many types of woodcut styles, from German Expressionism to Soviet Socialist Realism, and was particularly influenced by the work of Germany’s Carl Meffert and Käthe Kollwitz, and Belgium’s Frans Masereel, giving rise to a nascent Expressionist sensibility.

The ideological connection between the Woodcut Movement and the Communist movement is an obvious one. Unlike the failed fledgling Modernist movement, the Woodcut Movement was full of the “spirit of engagement with the world.” With the end of the war and the success of the Communist revolution, the Woodcut Movement’s sense of rage gradually gave way to hope and enthusiasm for the new society. As a result, a new “pragmatic” realism came into being, reinforced by the merger of the Realist and the Woodcut movements with their similarly political orientation, and their emphasis on the popularisation of art.

The relative cultural immaturity of the times, the stress laid on social utilitarianism, and the undeveloped state of modern critical art theory also influenced the evolutionary path of China’s Realist movement. Given these conditions, all three anti-traditionalist movements (Modernism, Realism and the Woodcut Movement) carried within them an inability to absorb and digest the modern Western ideas that they were attempting to introduce. As a result, none of these movements was able to create a new and complete aesthetic language. The new “pragmatic” Realism, born of the similar aesthetic and ideological concerns of the early Realist and Woodcut movements, became the main characteristic of modern Chinese art and established the foundation for Maoist Revolutionary Realism.

1942–1979: The Emergence of the First Cultural Integration — The Maoist Model

As stated above, the Maoist model takes as its foundation the Realist movement that developed from the May Fourth period through to the 1940’s. In 1942, in his *Yan’an Talks on Literature and Art*, Mao Zedong put forth the two principles that art should serve political ends and that art should entertain and edify the masses, providing a new focus for artists of the time struggling to establish a new and culturally relevant art. In the ensuing years, Mao also issued directives putting into motion a series of large-scale political movements that emphasized the study and incorporation of folk art into the new Realist model.⁴

In 1949, with the establishment of the Communist regime, the ideological process of Sovietization began. The political idealism and folk art movements characteristic of the years in Yan’an became integrated with Soviet Socialist Realism, producing a new style of art — Maoist Revolutionary Realism. From the 1950s through to the 1970s there gradually developed new characteristics of Maoist Revolutionary Realism summed up in the slogans “Sublime, Outstanding, Perfect” and “Red, Bright, and Shining.”⁵ Maoist Revolutionary Realism became the symbol and the standard of the political idealism of this thirty-year period; at the same time, it became the first and only new Chinese art model of the 20th century since the abandonment and demise of traditional literati art.

The so-called elements of “sublime, outstanding, and perfect” mean that the individuals portrayed in paintings should appear as sublime or heroic, the pictures should convey an outstanding socialist message, and the complete, or perfect, sense of the abilities of the proletariat should be communicated. Essentially, Maoist Revolutionary Realism is the product of Mao’s concept that literature and art should politically serve the proletariat. From the point of view of Maoist aesthetics, it represents Mao’s efforts from Yan’an through the Cultural Revolution to carry out a “purge” or “purification” (*qingli*) of views on art and of those creating art, because to Mao this was the only way to achieve a realm of pure political idealism and perfection in art. The qualities of “sublime, outstanding, and perfect” are the demonstration of this pure realm.

The qualities of “red, bright, and shining” are Maoist art’s ideological characteristics, representing Mao’s principle that art and literature should entertain and inspire the masses. Maoist artists studied the bright, colourful elements of folk art so pleasing to the workers and peasants, and found the works that most incorporated these elements were the so-called “New Year’s paintings” (*nianhua*). New Year’s paintings are decorative, commemorative paintings created for folk festivals and important events in the village calendar. With their bright and festive appearance, what could be better than New Year’s paintings to commemorate the success of the Communist Revolution? Thus New Year’s paintings became the key stylistic element of the Maoist model.

In the 1950s, under the influence of the New Year’s painting movement, a number of artists created oil paintings and even sculptures based on this folk style. Some of the most successful examples are Dong Xiwen’s *First National Day Celebration*, whose bright colours, flat strokes and strongly decorative quality all show the New Year’s oil painting style at its most successful. Again, the famous plaster sculpture *At the Landlord’s Rent Collection Office*, a collaborative work of artists and peasants, is a particularly successful example of folk-style sculpture.

The close political and cultural ties between China and the Soviet Union during the 1950s naturally resulted in a process of “Sovietization” in art. Many young academy artists were sent to the Soviet Union to study art and a number of Soviet painters taught art in China during this period. However, the strong reemphasis on Chinese folk culture that emerged in the late 1950s and early 60s marked a return to the ideological concerns of the Yan’an tradition.

The Cultural Revolution was Maoist Revolutionary Realism’s high point. The fervent political idealism, combined with the increasing coldness of China-Soviet relations, did away with the solemn vestiges of Soviet Socialist Realism. Folk paintings were shown on a large scale in major national museum exhibitions, and their bright colours and romantic, festive emotion created a strong impression on artists, inspiring many, whether consciously or unconsciously, to make lavish use of reds and other bright colours in their palettes, and to paint with quick, energetic strokes that seemed to manifest an almost religious revolutionary zeal.

1979–1992: Major Currents in Modern Art

But, in the long run, Maoist Revolutionary Realism, with its absolutist ideology and pragmatist sensibility, blocked the natural and autonomous development of art, and rejected the possibility of other forms of modern art developing in China.⁶ In so doing, it also suppressed the individualism and vitality of Chinese artists. In this way, from its inception, Maoist Revolutionary Realism planted within itself a seed of self-negation: its demise was inevitable. As a cultural background and cultural point of reference it set the stage for the eagerness with which artists welcomed the influx of modern Western art and philosophy after 1979, and in itself holds the key to their desire for choice and social transformation. The loss of the Maoist model’s value structures in the post-Cultural Revolution period caused artists of necessity to begin the quest for a new set of values to support their development. They expressed their rejection of the now-discredited Maoist values in a widespread enthusiasm for modern Western culture.

The period after 1979 saw a flurry of experimentation with modern Western philosophical and aesthetic ideas, giving rise to new art trends and movements. The artists of this generation had experienced an absolutist model and wanted nothing more to do with it: instead, they took the Maoist model and its value system as their target of opposition. In this period of broadening mental and aesthetic horizons, artistic development was characterised by a three-fold quest: artists sought a dialogue with modern Western culture, a rediscovery of their native cultural identity, and an awakening of a “humanist” consciousness with its inherent element of cultural reflection and critique. This multifaceted quest became the fundamental characteristic of modern Chinese art in this period, and engendered four major stages of development.

Stage One: 1979–1983

The Demand for Stylistic Freedom and the Return to Humanism

1. The New Formalist Movement

A new demand for stylistic freedom emerged in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution and the growing rejection of the Maoist model for art. This demand gave rise to a “New Formalist” movement which began in the late 1970s, and marked the awakening stage for modern art in China.⁷ Through a new exploration of the beauty of Form for its own sake, artists who had experienced the confines of Maoist Revolutionary Realism released themselves from the constrictions and the dictatorial severity of the Maoist model and expressed their interest in non-political, non-social subjects, and their desire to decide for themselves the format for artistic expression. In the spirit of the influx of popular culture from Taiwan and Hong Kong, the New Formalist movement reflected a relaxation in mind-set from the rigid absolutist mentality of the Cultural Revolution. The movement was marked by an interest in and experimentation with early Western Modernist styles such as Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism.

The two most important groups within the New Formalist movement consisted of the leaders of the art movements of the 1930s and 40s, and the more rebellious of those painters who had studied under the Soviet system in the 50s and 60s. The first group included the painters Lin Fengmian, Pang Xunqin, Liu Haisu, and Wei Tianlin. After the suppression of Modernist art movements in the 1940s, and in an environment completely cut off from the developments of modern Western art, these artists secretly carried out their formalist experiments, influencing a small but select number of their students such as Chen Junde, Han Boyou and Shen Tianwan, some of whom even went so far as to drop out of the Soviet-style art academies of the times in order to pursue their own directions. Others like Yuan Yunsheng and Xiao Huixiang, art academy students in the 60s, actually underwent political purges for their experimentation with non-Socialist Realist styles.

Again, the importance of the older group of painters in the New Formalist movement lies in the fact that they represented an undercurrent of Western Modernism running parallel to the official art in China, one that managed to survive even after the suppression of the Modernist art movements of the 1930s and 40s. Once China opened up to the West again in the post-Cultural Revolution period, and there was a renewed interest in and access to Western Modernist concepts, this movement naturally came to the fore.

Another important element of the New Formalist movement of the early 1980s was that, just as Western Modernism in its movement against traditional Western representational art turned to Eastern and African folk art for inspiration in the exploration of form, so the younger painters in the New Formalist movement turned their sights to a re-exploration of art in the native Chinese idiom, including traditional ink painting and folk art. This interest developed into a distinctly “Oriental” decorative style that became the most representative style of early 1980s modern art. The most influential artists working in this decorative style were Yuan Yunsheng and Xiao Huixiang, whose mural paintings strongly influenced the art of the period. The “Yunnan School” of Chinese painting, which has found so much favour in the United States, is in fact a derivative of this style. But because this trend was still largely a stylistic one, lacking a deeper aesthetic direction, it was easily overtaken by other new aesthetic and cultural movements developing throughout the 80s.

(One point worth noting is that around 1982 this new decorative style of painting began to show increasingly abstract tendencies, a trend that was frowned upon by the academies, who ideologically rejected abstract art. Also, because the new art of the 80s was increasingly focussed on social and cultural critique, the abstract style did not gain much of a following. However, throughout the decade there were artists who showed a strong interest in and experimented with the possibilities of abstract art.)

2. Scar Art and Native Soil Painting

The “Scar Art” and “Native Soil” movements reflect an important period of social criticism and humanist reawakening. The core group in these movements consisted of young intellectuals in their late twenties and early thirties who had been “sent down” to the countryside, former Red Guards who had directly experienced both the impact of the Cultural Revolution and of the new open-door reforms of the 80s. (I will call them the “first generation” of post-Cultural Revolution artists). In the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, these artists went through a period of grave critical reflection concerning the Cultural Revolution and the Maoist model, and focussed their concern on two major themes: “human nature” and “truth.” For youth of this generation, who had grown up in the closed-off world of the “new China,” the dictum that art should “truthfully reflect life” (referring to the idealised “truth” of the “New China”) was one of the most important concepts that they had absorbed in their limited aesthetic and artistic experience. But after being sent down to the countryside, these young élite, who were educated amid the glamour of Maoist Revolutionary Realism, were for perhaps the first time in their lives confronted with the harsh realities of rural poverty and misery.

Now they were faced with a perplexing duality, made up of the cruel realities of their Cultural Revolution experience on the one hand and the new perspectives of Western art and thought that they were absorbing in the open atmosphere of the early 80s on the other. This duality constituted a tremendous psychological and emotional collision between the differing realities of Western and Chinese culture, the advanced and the backward, the rich and the poor — a collision which impelled them into a period of grave reflection on the psychological and emotional pain they suffered upon realising the great deception that had been perpetrated upon them, and of a wider meditation on society and human nature. They embarked on a serious reassessment of Maoist model art, and in the process strengthened their rejection of that “reality” which had been so twisted and coloured by political ideology. The

recognition of what they now termed as "scarred" reality became their "truth." In direct response to Maoist Revolutionary Realism's principles of "sublime, outstanding, perfect," Scar Art painters adopted in their own version of "realist" painting a contrasting set of principles: "small" (*xiao*) (small topics, "small" people, particularly peasants) "suffering" (*ku*) (depictions of the real suffering involved in a life of hardship and poverty) and "old" or "worn out" (*jiu*) (the face of a backward society). They also focussed on discovering the reality of the land, and of simplicity, taking truth and kindness as their contextual basis for beauty. A sensitivity toward the dark side of society, a concern for the "little people," and praise of the pure and simple in life, constitute the main characteristics of the work of this period. Representative painters include Lo Zhongli, Cheng Conglin and Wang Chuan.

Later, Scar Art painting became increasingly co-opted for political purposes; and as the element of political utilitarianism became stronger and more obvious, the movement was abandoned by many artists. Yet the concern for and interest in the realities of rural life continued, giving rise to the "Native Soil" movement, which had a stronger focus on a rediscovery of the native landscape, and became both an influence on and a symbol of a growing nostalgia for the charms of peasant society in the face of modernization. Native Soil painting established itself as an important style whose influence continues today. Representative painters include Chen Danqing, He Dolin, and Zhou Chunya.

In the course of their development as distinct styles, the Scar Art and Native Soil movements, particularly the latter, transcended the Soviet Socialist Realist model on which Maoist Revolutionary Realism was largely based, and reoriented their artistic model toward classical European art, especially the 17th century Dutch school and the 19th century French representational painters. In the process they also were strongly influenced by the American painter Andrew Wyeth and the French Neo-Classicalists. Yet, despite the positive aesthetic achievements of these movements, they remained to a great extent stylistic trends that never attempted a thorough reassessment of contemporary Realism. In its later development Native Soil painting was weakened by an exaggerated focus on the exoticism of Chinese rural society, tending to emphasise and romanticise its unique qualities to appeal to Western art galleries and collectors, and in the process becoming more shallow. In this way the Native Soil movement lost the chance to make any significant or lasting impact on contemporary Chinese culture.

3. *The Stars Exhibitions.*

In late 1979, the seminal "Stars" art group raised the curtain on China's avant-garde art. An integral part of the activities surrounding the Xidan Democracy Wall movement, the *Stars* exhibitions of 1979 and 1980 created a major cultural impact. Their slogan of "Picasso is our banner, Kollwitz is our model" demonstrated their insistence on stylistic freedom, and the strong resurgence of humanism in art. The artists of the Stars group were largely of the same generation as the Scar Art artists. The main difference between them was that the Stars artists had not undergone the rigorous training in realist technique at the official painting academies. Perhaps for this reason, in staging their rebellion against official art (i.e., academic realist art), they didn't move in the direction of purely formalist experiments. Instead they became the first truly iconoclastic avant-garde group of the last decade.

From one perspective, the *Stars* exhibitions were milestones in contemporary Chinese art, for the first time strongly manifesting and further developing two important characteristics that uniquely define contemporary Chinese art. The first characteristic is their use of a strong social, political and cultural criticism to observe and depict the existential conditions of society. In their exhibitions, most of the works of the Stars artists, and particularly those of Wang Keping, contained strong elements of this socio-political criticism. The second characteristic is that in terms of their aesthetic vocabulary, the Stars adopted a strong element of symbolism while at the same time relying on realist technique in their execution.

In the West, realism has served as the fundamental language of art since the Renaissance. The high level of sophistication of realist vocabulary and technique in a sense inevitably engendered the exploration of form and the resultant plurality of styles that became the main characteristics of Western Modernism.

In China, on the other hand, since its introduction at the turn of the century, rather than proceeding along a linear path of development, Western-style realism has undergone constant transformations under the influence of the special characteristics and circumstances of modern Chinese culture. Thus, though it has become the main pictorial language for contemporary Chinese art, the standard of realist technique has never achieved the same level in China as existed in the West before Modernism. Because of this, many artists still feel challenged to explore further the possibilities of realist art.

Another point is that, since the 1940s, realist technique has been and continues to be the main technique taught at the art academies. This strong tradition of academic realism in modern Chinese art has had a huge and inescapable influence, overshadowing generation after generation of young artists, with the result that even those artists who have tried their utmost to break out of the realist tradition still carry its traces into their work.

The Stars made a valiant attempt to go beyond the conventional concept of realism. Yet their breakthrough lay not so much in terms of technique, but rather in their successful identification of another, more expedient way of casting off the representational realist burden: they did this by imbuing real objects with symbolic meaning. There are strong elements of symbolism in most of the work in the *Stars* exhibitions.

The Stars' failure to find a stylistic alternative to realism can be understood in light of the fact that, even though they were not graduates of the academies, their aesthetic frame of reference in the late 1970s--early 1980s was of necessity limited: in terms of technique, realism was still their earliest teacher. Only Wang Keping managed to go further: taking as his inspiration traditional Chinese "root carving" (*gendiao*), Wang exploited the fact that in this kind of art the emerging carved form is dictated by the natural shape of the root — or rather by Nature itself. Abiding by this principle in his sculpted wood pieces, Wang produced absurd and fantastical effects which had a strong influence on young artists. Yet most of the Stars, including the abstract painters among them, had not really gone beyond the fundamental aesthetic language of realist art.

Another factor in influencing the role of realism in the Chinese avant-garde of the 1980s is that, in the years following the *Stars* exhibitions, the leading exponents of avant-garde art increasingly were graduates of the art academies, with the result that in technical terms the realist element became even stronger. The main difference between the work of these young artists and that of the conventional realist painters was that they introduced into their work a greater focus on symbolic imagery, philosophical content, sense of the absurd and Expressionist elements.

Stage Two: 1984–1986 Cultural Criticism and the Elements of Heroism and Tragedy

As has been pointed out, the influx of works of Western philosophy, literature and art pouring into China in the early 1980s were eagerly devoured by young artists, and exerted a strong influence on them. This was particularly true of those artists born in the mid-to-late 1950s who were just entering the art academies in the early 80s, and were in this impressionable period of their lives experiencing new cultural perspectives and new aesthetic languages. In the mid-1980s they graduated and entered society. In their artistic activities they took as their main models Western Surrealism, Dada and Pop; took collective effort as their main method of operation; and used impromptu public (as opposed to "official") exhibitions as their main format of communication and display. Groups of young artists of similar sensibility were emerging in every area of China, eventually becoming part of the largest-scale modern art movement in recent history, which has come to be known as the "'85 New Wave" movement. The '85 New Wave was an intellectual and philosophical, as well as an art movement, involving the "second generation" of post-Cultural Revolution artists, who assiduously applied themselves to the study of modern Western philosophy and literature, who thought hard and wrote much — so much that, in their world, the writing of essays and manifestos on art became a key element of their activities and a major feature of the '85 New Wave movement.⁹

Yet, although the '85 New Wave derived its main source of intellectual and aesthetic nutrition from Western modern art and thought, the movement took as its point of departure the cultural environment of China, with the result that there was a mutual impact between artists' existential environment and their intellectual world.⁹ To the largely political focus of the earlier *Stars* exhibitions, the artists of the '85 New Wave added a broader cultural perspective. They gained an understanding of metaphysics from Western philosophy and applied it to their observation of Chinese culture and of the harsh reality of the lives of Chinese people.

Basically, there were three main concerns of the movement: an emphasis on the conceptual transformation of art; a strong cultural criticism, and reconstructionist ideal; and a consciousness of and concern with the "tragedy of life."

1) The conceptual transformation of art

In their attempt to achieve a conceptual transformation of art, the '85 New Wave artists borrowed on a large scale from Western avant-garde art in order to create an anti-art legacy. They were strongly influenced by Marcel Duchamp, Dada and Pop art and took to using found objects in their work. They declared war on traditional Chinese aesthetics and adopted the quest of Western modern art to constantly seek new forms of expression, reflected in their slogan "Respond to the challenge of the Western avant-garde!" They sought breakthroughs, à la Duchamp, on the question of the nature of art itself.

One of the most flamboyant artists of the '85 New Wave, Huang Yongping, applied Duchampian methods combined with Daoist and Zen theories of chance and constant change to create an art form that was based on, yet that would differentiate him from, his hero Duchamp. Huang invented what he called "Non-Expressionist Painting," creating his own roulette wheel and dice to determine his painting method, turning his power of decision-making in terms of what or how to paint completely over to chance. On several occasions, he burned all his works at exhibitions, seeking the most thorough way to "abandon art." On another occasion he washed a volume of Western art history and a volume of Chinese art history together in a washing machine, using the machine to represent people's cultural behaviour.

Another conceptually innovative and important artist of the '85 New Wave movement is Gu Wenda, who has consistently used Western avant-garde art concepts as a reference in his attempt to destroy and reconstruct Chinese cultural language symbols. In Gu's process of "reconstruction," he has carried Chinese language symbols into the

realm of the mysterious. In some of his major works, Gu turned Chinese ideographs into abstract symbols, putting them through a process of dissection, displacement and reordering, and presenting the result in a combined installation/performance art format that created a powerful atmosphere of ritual and worship, close to that of a Taoist temple. This ritual atmosphere has become the special feature of Gu's unique aesthetic language — a feature which he has consciously used to strike a "competitive balance" with the Western avant-garde.

2) *Cultural critique and the ideal of reconstruction*

For the '85 New Wave artists, "pure reason" and "spiritual transformation and transcendence" were the highest purposes of art. At the same time, they believed firmly in the ideal of revitalising and reconstructing Chinese culture through art, and created a whole vocabulary of new cultural and aesthetic imagery to express this ideal.

The painter Ding Fang employed references to Christianity combined with images of the rugged Yellow River loess plateaus where Chinese civilisation began, harnessing the heroic style of Western classical art and a reverential, quasi-religious spirit in an attempt to inspire and revitalize the weakened Chinese cultural spirit. Wang Guangyi used the pristine purity of the glacial wilderness as his main imagery: in his *Frozen North Pole* series, perfectly rounded forms hint at holiness and purity, while the awesome aura of a land of frozen silence echoes the potential of mankind to reach transcendental heights. Wu Shanzhuan's *Red Humour* series is a strong cultural critique, attempting to expose the truth of post-Cultural Revolution reality. Wu's creative technique is reminiscent of Robert Rauschenberg, although he uses Chinese ideographs as his main symbolic unit. Taking phrases from lewd advertisements found in dark little alleyways, and combining them in a format derived from Cultural Revolution big character posters, Wu creates an absurd mockery of the actual reality of "cultural deficit" (a culture "in the red" as it were) of post-Cultural Revolution China.

3) *Consciousness of the tragedy of life*

Chinese culture has always subjugated the individual to the group: the only difference is that traditional Chinese culture subjugated the individual within the larger framework of ethics and morality, while post-1949 socialist culture subjugated the individual to the political group. This tendency has served to destroy the vitality of the quest for greater self-expression. In the early 1980s, although the advent of a "renaissance" in art caused an awakening of people's consciousness, artists' individual vitality was still sapped by life in a strongly collective society and their mentality was still highly politicized.

The '85 New Wave took a different tack, placing an appreciation of the life experience of the individual among the major concerns of art. It is important to note that in this movement many of the artists directly confronted the unavoidable traumas of individual life given the social and cultural conditions of the times, and became greatly concerned in their art with expressing the "illnesses" affecting the individual life force as a consequence. In representing this awareness of the inescapable tragedy of life, artists tended to use two main approaches, which they termed the "cool treatment" (*jeng chuli*) and the "warm treatment" (*re chuli*), respectively.

The work of the artist Zhang Peili best exemplifies the characteristics of the "cool treatment." Zhang deals with the commonly seen or experienced "illnesses" of the individual psyche, especially when these illnesses arise as a consequence of abuse — whether self abuse, abuse inflicted on others, or abuse inflicted by others. In Zhang's art, elements of this sado-masochistic condition are enlarged, exaggerated, even made more insidious, transforming his works into a mocking indictment of those who would seek only to find beauty or entertainment in art. Geng Jianyi, another artist working with the "cool treatment," focusses on the embarrassing, humiliating moments faced by people in contemporary Chinese society, and depicts them in an excruciatingly frank and painfully eloquent fashion, often adding an unexpected twist that causes the viewer, almost numb to the fact that he is living in an unhealthy social environment, to be confronted with an intolerable new level of embarrassment. The works of these two artists, whether in their utilization of the flat, inexpressive strokes and sanitized colours of Western advertisements, or in the unemotional nature of their installations and performance art work, are strongly representative of the emotionally detached tenor of "cool treatment" art.

Contrarily, the work of the artists using the "warm treatment" to communicate the tragic aspects of life demonstrate strong Expressionist elements. Rather than brutal exposure of sado-masochistic illness, they seek to express a sense of sympathetic understanding, even pity, for the trials of life and death and for the individual self faced with these trials. They also differ from the "cool treatment" artists in that, rather than adopting the detached, emotionally uncommitted tone of the latter, they are concerned with expressing the passion of the individual towards life, and his quest to understand it. Representative painter Zhang Xiaogang is like a sleepwalker, pacing on the mysterious path between life and death. His canvasses are invested with the delicate yet rich sentiments of the Eastern sensibility, so that the strange spectres and broken bodies that inhabit his paintings are made eerily beautiful as well as tragic. In Pan Dehai's *Corn* series, the small, numb cellular spaces that lie within the skin of the human figures are at the same time exposed and imbued with a mysterious darkness, as though the artist were undertaking a dissection of the soul itself, revealing an inner view of the hurts of life.

The '85 New Wave movement also was characterised by a strong interest in performance art, usually conceptual in nature, that very often was used to express the sense of the tragic in life. A great deal of New Wave performance

art took the form of a kind of “bondage art,” in which the artists used a variety of materials — cloth, plastic, tape, etc. — to bind themselves. In fact, this “bondage art” now constitutes a genre of performance art almost unique to the Chinese avant-garde. Perhaps this is the result of the peculiar reality in which Chinese artists must exist — a reality which has given them a strong sense of being bound and repressed, so that for many a form of ritual self-abuse is the most relevant and perhaps the only way to express their sense of tragedy.

The '85 New Wave movement lasted three years, from 1984–1986. As pointed out above, it hungrily absorbed and made use of Western Dada, Surrealism, Pop and Conceptual art — the entire range of the Western avant-garde vocabulary. On the one hand, these artists, graduating from the official art academies with a strong technical training in realist art, were able to make use of that very training in their bid to transcend the strictures of Maoist Revolutionary Realism. On the other hand, they engaged in experiments in Surrealism, Dada and Pop, in essence finding a shortcut to the avant-garde. In a sense, Surrealism was best suited to the '85 New Wave artists as a means of conveying the common philosophical and intellectual outlook of their generation. Yet, just because of this, differences in the aesthetic vocabulary of Western Surrealism and the Chinese version become apparent. While Western Surrealism focusses on the expression of the subconscious, Chinese Surrealism as defined by New Wave art emphasizes philosophical expression. Unlike Western Surrealists, the New Wave artists do not dissect and displace realistic images in order to transform them to an extreme degree; rather, they take realistic images and somehow manage to make them alien to us. Also, because of the strong emotional factor coming into play in the work of the New Wave artists, many of them blended Expressionist elements into the language of Surrealism, reinforcing the unity of the emotionally expressive images and the metaphysical thought behind them. This characteristic is still evident in the work of many artists today.

As for the Dada and Pop aesthetic vocabularies, they were adopted by the '85 New Wave more with the intention of breaking down the traditional forms of art and conventional aesthetic sensibilities. Both Dada and Pop were used, as the old saying goes, “to smash the jade with a piece of rock from another mountain” (*gongyu jielai de tashan zhishi*) and reflected a fundamental reassessment and critique of Chinese culture. This intention was grounded in a kind of emotional complex which gave artists in the first place a sense of urgency to study and learn from Western modern art and philosophy, and in the second place a strong sense of mission to apply what they had learned in dealing with and hopefully solving the problems of their own land. In other words, artists started out dealing with questions of art and aesthetics, but in the end, no matter what kind of artistic language they experimented with, they eventually tried to apply it as a means of dealing with cultural issues rather than aesthetic ones. In doing so, the '85 New Wave attempted to shoulder a burden far too heavy for them. Thus, if the creation of a new aesthetic vocabulary defines the essential quality of creating a new art form, then the '85 New Wave was not so much an art movement as a cultural movement. That is why, in the end, there were few among the '85 New Wave artists who managed to develop a unique creative language of their own. This failure was to some extent responsible for the rise of a new movement in 1987 antithetical to the concerns of '85 New Wave art.

Stage Three: 1987–1989

The “Back-to-the-Roots” Movement and the Search for a “Purified Language”

Beginning in 1984 the literary world saw a “Back-to-the-Roots” movement which was influenced by the Native Soil art movement, and characterised by a renewed interest in Eastern philosophy and in a consciousness of the unique cultural characteristics of the motherland.¹⁰ By 1987, the Back-to-the-Roots movement had become a full scale social trend, evident in the visual as well as in the literary arts. Also in 1987, another, parallel movement sprang up, known as the “Purified Language” movement, which sought a purer visual language for art. Both movements were in a sense reactions against the heavy influence of Western Modernism and avant-garde art in the '85 New Wave. Artists of the Back-to-the-Roots movement applied elements of classical Daoist and Zen philosophy, Eastern mysticism, and the “ink-play” of traditional literati painting in response to the '85 New Wave's emphasis on Western art and philosophy, and to the excessively serious tone of its art. The “Purified Language” movement emphasised the pure and autonomous nature of art to counter the '85 New Wave's heavy philosophical and intellectual bent.

Two new art forms emerged from these movements. The first, as exemplified in the paintings of Zhu Xinjian, involved the absorption of traditional Chinese literati inkplay into what became known as “New Literati” painting, emphasising spontaneity, and a buoyant, carefree (one could say “irresponsible”) spirit, and made a strong impact at the time. The rediscovery of the aesthetic language of traditional literati painting in a way satisfied the psychological loss experienced by some artists as a result of the onslaught of Western Modernist and avant-garde art. This psychological imbalance was redressed by returning to classical Chinese painting's spirit of idle play, seen as a means of countering the '85 New Wave's heavy cultural reflection and criticism.

But the development of New Literati painting was inhibited by the fact that it relied too heavily on a mere borrowing of the uniqueness and eccentricities of classical painters as a means of fulfilling a psychological craving: in the end the artists failed to address their own current reality. The result was that the effectiveness of New Literati painting as an art form was undermined by its tendency merely to amuse and please the eye with its beauty. It quickly became a commercial more than an aesthetic success, and in the end its influence on the development of China's new art turned out to be a short-lived one.

The second, and more important trend, sought to discover and transform the fundamental symbols of traditional art and culture. For example, some artists studied the painterly qualities and expressiveness of calligraphic strokes to restructure a new vocabulary for abstract ink painting. Other influential artists such as Xu Bing and Lü Shengzhong undertook a rearticulation and semantic transformation of fundamental cultural signs such as Chinese ideographs and paper cuts used in ritual ceremonies. Both Lü and Xu were strongly influenced by the '85 New Wave. In Xu Bing's important installation *A Mirror to Analyse the World* (also known as *A Book from the Sky*) Xu borrowed the technique of '85 New Wave artists such as Gu Wenda, of altering and "miswriting" Chinese characters. The difference is that while the New Wave artists were working from a Dadaist perspective, Xu was using the miswriting of Chinese characters as a means of cutting words off from their meanings, turning them into purely abstract symbols in a quasi-structuralist fashion.

Xu spent months meticulously carving woodblock ideographs that superficially looked like Chinese characters, but which on closer inspection proved to be nonsensical. Using the radicals of Chinese characters as his basic unit of form, Xu made monumental sized scrolls and executed on their surface a number of prints and overprints to create new character structures. He then hung the scrolls according to the conditions of the specific exhibition venue, constructing a carefully determined space. Through the ceaseless and meticulous repetition involved in executing this major piece of work, Xu succeeded in creating a kind of neo-Zen atmosphere.

Lü Shengzhong, on the other hand, was responding to another important trend of 80s art that also developed under the influence of Western Modernism, involving its interest in the possibilities of ethnic art in a quest to rediscover the richness of Chinese folk art. In the mid-1980s this enthusiasm for folk art turned from the study of folk art as formalist "signs" to a study of the cultural significance of these signs. Lü Shengzhong was active in this transition. In works incorporating specific folk imagery such as the "tussle-haired baby" (*zhuaaji wawa*) motif¹¹, Lü was participating in an effort to reinterpret the mystical significance of Chinese concepts of birth, and of the soul. In his major series of installations, *Summoning the Spirits*, the artist employs a structuralist principle as his starting point. Using a repetitive structure of paper doll cutouts in linked and collaged formats, Lü transforms the traditional magical use of these paper cutouts as a means of calling the spirits, into a modern language structure whose final aim is to create a new, contemporary environment for Eastern mysticism.

Using a modern Western aesthetic language as a means of uncovering new meanings in traditional cultural symbols, Xu and Lü's works constitute a first step in constructing a new, integrated modern Chinese aesthetic language. But their work remained at the first-stage level: consciously or unconsciously, both these artists became increasingly absorbed in their personal aesthetic language, with the result that their later work showed a danger of becoming excessively formulaic and predictable — a problem that at one level afflicted the whole Purified Language movement.

Stage Four: 1989–1992 **Anti-Idealism, Cynical Realism and Political Pop**

1) The anti-idealist reaction

Like 1979, 1989 was the most sensitive year of the decade for Chinese artists and intellectuals. In early February, the *China/Avant-Garde* exhibition was held in Beijing at the prestigious China Art Gallery. Nearly all the major artists of the decade participated. In some cases the art shown still manifested the tragic-heroic spirit of artists who hoped to reconstruct a new culture, while in others it demonstrated achievements of artists in integrating lessons of Western Modernist and avant-garde art and reaching the first stage in the development of an art form uniquely reflective of China's culture. In any case, no matter to which group the artists belonged, all showed a certain idealism and courage in entering for the first time an "official" gallery which was the most prestigious in China. Then, on opening day and completely unexpectedly, the sound of gunshots echoed through the gallery: the artists Tang Song and Xiao Lu had fired shots at their own installation, shocking the officials attending the show, and startling the artists and the audience. The result was that, amidst chaos and confusion, the exhibition was temporarily shut down. When the high rank of the owner of the gun used to fire the shots was discovered, the well-connected Tang and Xiao (both children of high-level officials) were released — and this only three days after having been arrested. Under the watchful eyes of plainclothes police, the exhibition was allowed to reopen.

But in the scenario of the arrest of two individuals on what in most circumstances would have been considered serious charges, followed by their subsequent speedy release, Chinese artists had effectively exposed one of the most sensitive political issues in Chinese society: the flexibility of the law. Because of this, those two gunshots transformed the entire *China/Avant-Garde* exhibition into one big, chance happening that underscored the opposition to the official line and the political sensitivity of the Chinese avant-garde since the *Stars* exhibitions of 1979–80. Thus, the gunshots fired by Tang and Xiao into their installation were also the mechanism by which the *China/Avant-Garde* exhibition, and the 80s avant-garde art movements that it represented, were led to the execution block. Effectively, the artists involved were thrown out of the national art museum and forced once again into the world of the underground. In a way the fate of the exhibition was a precursor to the fate of the student movement at Tian'anmen, in the sense that the *China/Avant-Garde* show became the final demonstration of 80s avant-garde art, marking the conclusion of an era and also the end of its ideals.

For those idealistic New Wave artists who still believed in the possibility of applying modern Western aesthetics and philosophy as a means of revitalizing Chinese culture, the events of 1989 in many ways recall the aftermath of the Xidan Democracy Wall movement of a decade earlier: once again young, idealistic artists were faced with a situation that crushed their idealism and broke their spirits. The reaction of many was to turn against the heroism, idealism, and yearning for metaphysical transcendence that characterised the '85 New Wave movement, and turn instead to their antithesis: a form of anti-idealism characterized by an immersion in popular culture and a deconstructionist approach that for many quickly resolved itself into the Cynical Realist and Political Pop styles.

2) *Cynical Realism and the sense of malaise*

"Cynical Realism," [the Chinese term *bopi*, rendered here as "cynical," can also be translated as "rogue" — Ed.] the term I have chosen to describe one style of anti-idealist art, employs an expression that the Chinese use to describe a certain way of dealing with the world, which generally also carries the connotations of dissipated, jaded, scoundrelly, resigned, indifferent and mocking.¹² The main exponents of the Cynical Realist style are young artists who were born in the 1960s, and who in the 80s were largely still studying at the academies. They constitute the "third generation" of post-Cultural Revolution artists, and the social and cultural environment in which they came of age was vastly different from that of the previous two. The first generation grew up in the immediate aftermath of the end of the Cultural Revolution, while the second, the '85 New Wave artists, came of age under the compelling influence of modern Western thought. But both groups, whether in their search for a new humanism on the one hand or in their attempt to revitalize the cultural spirit through an absorption of modern Western ideas on the other, can be categorised as idealists who firmly believed in the possibility and the mission of saving Chinese culture. But the case was very different for the young artists born in the 1960s.

In the 1970s, many of these artists were just starting primary school, beginning their education in a social environment where concepts and ideologies were constantly changing. In the 1980s, they were studying art amidst the avant-garde challenge of applying contemporary Western ideas to save and revitalize Chinese culture. By 1989, when most of them were just emerging from the academies, they had visited for themselves the *China/Avant-Garde* exhibition and seen first-hand the dreams of "saving Chinese culture" evaporate into thin air. Whether in terms of social or artistic ideals, the only legacy left to them from the hopes and struggles of the last ten years consisted of nothing but broken fragments.

With little left to hold on to, these young artists rejected what they viewed as the empty dream of structuring a new value system to save society, and gave up any pretence to heroism or idealism. Instead, they confronted the reality of their own helplessness in order to save themselves. A sense of malaise became for them the "truest" reflection of their feeling of the meaninglessness of their own lives and the social conditions in which they existed: since it was all meaningless anyway, there was no call for an attitude of reverence toward life. In the place of reverence and seriousness they adopted a kind of rogue cynicism in their treatment of the reality that confronted them.

The attitude of malaise adopted by the Cynical Realist artists was their means of expressing their rejection of the idealism and heroism of the 80s movements, and particularly of the '85 New Wave. The Cynical Realists traded in the lofty, idealist platform of the New Wave artists for a ground-level perspective which placed them and their artistic activities directly back in the middle of mundane reality. They used a roguishly cynical approach to illustrate themselves and their immediate and familiar environment, with its tableaux of boredom, chance, and absurdity. Representative artist Fang Lijun began to paint portraits of himself and his friends in the midst of executing giant yawns. Fang also created his own unique lexicon of symbols, based on what might be termed a "bald cynicism." Another important Cynical Realist painter, Liu Wei, created an irreverently cynical pictorial language centered on a series of distorted family portraits, using his own bizarre vocabulary to render ridiculous the solemn, self-important postures of army cadres and even the poses of his own family members. This "distorting perspective" of Cynical Realist art has become the signal expression of the sense of malaise widespread in post-1989 Chinese society.

At the same time, the frank directness of Cynical Realist painters naturally makes their painterly technique tend toward the realist style. Especially as these artists are not at all convinced that constant study of and experimentation with Western Modernist styles will in any degree save Chinese culture, they adopt the attitude of "why forsake the near to chase after the far?" These renegade graduates of the official art academies have at their fingertips a great facility in realist technique that is part and parcel of modern Chinese art academy training, and they are more than happy to make practical use of their talents. At the same time, they are perfectly willing to learn whatever they can from Western artists, and are especially partial to the works of Lucian Freud and Balthus.

3) *Political Pop art and the deconstructionist mindset*

The nucleus of the Political Pop movement consists of artists from the '85 New Wave movement who have given up the serious metaphysical concerns of their earlier work and have instead adopted a deconstructionist approach matched to a Pop technique, to execute works of comic satire which illustrate their view of influential political figures, particularly Mao, and major political events. In fact, from 1987 to 1988 artists such as Wang Ziwai and Yu Youhan had already begun to paint Mao. One of the key artists of the '85 New Wave movement, Wang

Guangyi, had also begun his *Mao* series in these two years, consisting of portraits of Mao Zedong overlaid with a black grid — but at this time these portraits still carried with them the serious cultural criticism typical of the 80s avant-garde. In 1990 Wang began his *Great Criticism* series, which signalled his switch to a more humorous and genuinely Pop approach.

In the *Great Criticism* series Wang employs slogans from the big character posters and propaganda paintings that were key elements of Cultural Revolution “art for the masses” and juxtaposes them with images of popular Western consumer products such as Coca-Cola. This seemingly arbitrary combination of political and commercial symbols creates a humorous and absurd effect that yet carries with it an implied cultural criticism.

Yu Youhan’s *Mao* series takes Mao’s principles of “art for political ends” and “art for the entertainment of the masses” and applies them in his own way. The basic principles of Maoist art stressed the study and absorption of traditional folk arts as the nucleus of artistic development. In his paintings, Yu Youhan apparently follows suit, using “folksy” elements such as a bright palette reminiscent of the traditional peasant New Year’s paintings, and flowered patterns taken from the patterns of dyed cloth typically found in rural households, which the artist often actually block prints on to the painting surface. But in Yu’s paintings, these elements so closely identified with “Maoist culture” are applied in unexpected ways, and take on a deeper and more complex cultural significance.

Zhang Peili’s painting, *Standard Pronunciation 1989*, demonstrates the artist’s discovery of a “national face” of China, a face that is the graphic depiction of a mentality. To the millions of Chinese for whom watching television is a daily activity, the excruciatingly familiar face of the national broadcaster is an eloquent reminder of the ubiquitous political propaganda which surrounds and oppresses them.

The post-’89 Political Pop movement in fact marks the second time that Pop art has played an important role in Chinese avant-garde art. In 1985 there was a major exhibition of the works of American Pop artist Robert Rauschenberg in Beijing, which had an enormous impact on young artists. Soon Pop was all the rage. The most significant and lasting effect of this first Pop craze was that for the first time Chinese artists were inspired to try “off-the-easel” art and were stimulated to experiment with non-traditional materials. However, artists at the time had only a narrow conception of the true intentions and significance of Pop art, perceiving it mainly as a tool for attacking the conventional Chinese view of aesthetics. They neglected Pop art’s main concern as an engagement with and reflection of popular fashions and mass culture. It wasn’t until five years later, after a confluence of factors such as the fatal wounding of the heroic idealism of the ’85 New Wave, the significant changes wrought in the social environment, and the impact of the major economic reforms of the late 80s, that society experienced the change and stimulation that allowed sensitive artists to understand and to realize the power of the Pop style to expose the realities of popular culture.

An existence saturated with politics has become the accustomed state of being for most contemporary Chinese: every person, (and particularly intellectuals), will consciously or unconsciously adjust his own position according to the changes in the political climate. Efforts to avoid this political reality, or even to adopt an alternative political stance to fight against it, are only further evidence of the power of the system. Political Pop uses the acknowledgement of this political reality as its starting point, but then proceeds to satirize politics, providing an effective (but by no means heroic) means of neutralizing the hold of a politically saturated mentality on the inner mind.

Like the so-called “Mao fever” that emerged in Chinese society in early 1990, Political Pop art reflects a complex social psychology which is rooted in the difficulty Chinese people have had in releasing themselves from a deep-seated “Mao complex.” In a sense, “Mao fever” and Political Pop art are linked in that there is inherent in both the use of past icons or “gods” to criticize, or in the case of the latter, to satirize, current reality.

In terms of aesthetic language, Political Pop has been heavily influenced by Andy Warhol and deconstructionism, and still retains a difficult-to-break link with the ’85 New Wave’s tendency to “over-conceptualize.” The tide of commercialism of the last few years has brought about a change in perspective, most clearly and naturally reflected in the work of the young artists born in the 1960s, many of whom enthusiastically jumped on the Political Pop bandwagon in 1992. These younger artists suffer less from the “Mao complex,” even though in their works they are very alive to the fact that politics is the most sensitive point of contemporary Chinese reality. In their art, political images become confused and mixed up with disparate commercial symbols, as is the case with representative artist Feng Mengbo. In his *Video Endgame* series Feng takes characters from the revolutionary “Model Operas” popularized during the Cultural Revolution and places them into oil paintings which show them as figures in video game screens. Like Wang Guangyi, Feng is making use of two major symbols of popular culture, but he creates a strong sense of displacement by transposing political symbols from the past into a cultural format specific to the present “age of technology.” In this sense, Feng’s language is more culturally targeted.

Qiu Zhijie’s installation *Homage to Vita Nuova* is a large plexiglass assemblage made of a flexible number of clear panels printed, hand-painted and silk-screened with scenes and images of the artist’s own past. As the viewer walks among the panels, the perspective shifts and changes according to the viewer’s position, so that images also shift

and change, acting as backdrops for one another, merging, or blotting each other out. Qiu has created the effect of a world with its own narrative language: a story that unfolds with the chaos and noise of a temple fair. Since the artists of Feng and Qiu's generation view the world more easily from the perspective of popular culture, in their work there is an element of "cultural" Pop which is actually stronger than the element of "Political Pop."

Given their common use of a deconstructionist language system in articulating elements of contemporary Chinese culture, Cynical Realism and Political Pop are twins born of the same root. Ultimately, they both seek to "restructure" a true sense of contemporary culture. The main difference between them is that Cynical Realism expresses a reality filled with malaise, while Political Pop transforms the reality of big politics and ideologies into uncertain popular symbols.

Contemporary Chinese society cannot be considered as either a completely industrial or a post-industrial society, and so obviously cannot have inherent in its sociology Modernist or Post-Modernist trends in the Western sense. However, in the decade since China once again opened up to the West, a peculiar cultural condition has arisen in which the elements and messages of a peasant society, industrial society, and post-industrial society co-exist. This does not make for a society that can develop according to the logic of Western Modernist or Post-Modernist theories. But this chaotic situation provides a fertile breeding ground for all kinds of art, each with its own logic for existence and evolution. Cynical Realism, in reexamining the possibilities of realist art, gained some of the benefits of a Modernist perspective. At the same time, its playful, roguish qualities demonstrate some affinity with the playful spirit of *literati* art: and yet, from a cultural perspective, it is the most anti-idealist of all post-'89 art.

Political Pop art is more influenced by Warhol and Post-Modernism; yet in the post-Mao era it has resurrected multifaceted images of Mao that had begun to fade from people's minds. These complex trends are a product of the increasingly pluralistic and complicated pattern of contemporary Chinese society.

The anti-idealism, irreverence, and deconstructionist approach evinced by China's new art in the post-'89 period demonstrate much that is in common with Post-Modernism as defined by Western thinkers. Naturally we do not have to insist on using the concept of Post-Modernism in discussing China's new art: in the end, the most important point is that the new trends emerging in China's post-'89 art are radically different from the trends of the 80s; and that the common thread linking these new trends is the search for an alternative entry point into the heart of reality.

A clear sense of criticism is the most fundamental characteristic of the avant-garde art produced in China in the last decade. Yet each stage of its development was characterised by a different critical sensibility: the early 1980s can be characterised as the stage of social criticism, the mid-80s as the stage of cultural criticism, and the 90s as the stage of art criticism. In the first two stages, only a handful of artists achieved a clear individual language of expression: the overall tendency still was to apply the language of Western Modernism or avant-garde art as a tool to recognize and reflect the problems of Chinese society and culture. The post-'89 stage of "art criticism" has produced art that represents a first step in being able to forcefully and innovatively wield the language of Western Modernist and avant-garde art to penetrate social and cultural realities. In this sense China's new art is now poised in the wings of the international art arena, and has launched its prologue in the establishment of a new dialogue with Western culture. Above all, it is our hope that, as contemporary Chinese art comes into its own, it will develop a unique aesthetic language that will signify and communicate the reality of our times.

Autumn 1992,
Beijing

(Translated by Valerie C. Doran)

* The illustrated footnotes to this essay can be found on pp. LXXI–CII of the Appendix section.

Li Xianting is a respected art critic based in Beijing, and one of the first critics to report on early avant-garde art movements, beginning with the "Stars" art group in 1979–80. He was also an editor at *Art* magazine, and Editor-in-Chief of the seminal journal *Fine Arts in China* (*Zhongguo meishu bao*) until it was forced to close down in June, 1989. He is Curator, with Tsong-zung Chang, of the exhibition *China's New Art, Post-1989*.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS TO MAJOR TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN CHINESE ART

Li Xianting

1.

Chen Duxiu and Lū Zheng were the first to call for an “art revolution” in 1917 when they published an exchange of letters in the leading May Fourth periodical *La Jeunesse (Xin qingnian)*, Vol. 6. 1. In his letter, Chen Duxiu said it was imperative that “the vile Chinese painting” (*Zhongguo ehua*) prominent from the Mongol-Yuan to the Qing dynasty be discarded.

Also in 1917, Kang Youwei expressed a similar sentiment in his Introduction to the *Catalogue of Paintings in the Wanmucao Tang Collection (Wanmucaotang canghua mu xu)*. Liang Qichao and Lu Xun, a prominent figure of the New Culture Movement, shared Kang’s view.

Xu Beihong, the leading exponent of Chinese realism, later claimed that he was a “disciple” of Kang Youwei (see Xu’s Beihong’s “Life” [*Beihong zishu*] published in Companion [*Liangyou*] magazine in 1930). Xu’s decision to pursue his passion for realism in France, as well as his later efforts to establish realism as the mainstream form of contemporary Chinese art, were most probably linked to his early exposure to Kang’s ideas.

2.

For details of this debate, see Lang Shaojun’s *On Modern Chinese Art* (Nanjing: Jiangsu chubanshe, 1988), pp. 25–9, and Li Xianting, “A Critique of the May Fourth Revolution in Art” in the periodical *Duoyun* (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe), 1990, No. 3. The controversy raged during the *First National Art Exhibition* organised by the Nationalist (KMT) Nanjing government in 1929. It was sparked off by an article by Xu Beihong published in the exhibition catalogue. Xu averred that the “best thing about the exhibition” is the fact that none of that brazen stuff by Cézanne, Matisse or Bonnard has been included.” He went on to say that “it would be an outrageous waste of public funds and probably little better than importing a load of morphine or heroin” if the Chinese government established a national art gallery and “packed ten rooms with paintings by Cézanne and Matisse (things I can churn out at the rate of two an hour) priced at three to five thousand *yuan* each. If they do this I’ll have no choice but to shave my head and become a monk, only then will I be spared exposure to such despicable, muddleheaded and vile decadence.” The poet Xu Zhimo held the diametrically opposite opinion. Declaring Cézanne to be the “uncrowned king” of modern art, he observed that Beihong’s remarks were “petulant” and no better than the ill-informed criticisms that Parisians had levelled against Cézanne in the past. Li Yishi, another participant in the controversy, sided with Xu Zhimo. Li, however, felt that works by Cézanne and Matisse should not be encouraged in China for “if they become popular they will have a great and, I fear, deleterious impact on society”

Illustrations 1–10

It is possible here to discern the influence of a range of early Western Modernist artistic styles like Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism and Surrealism on the Chinese art of the 1930s and 40s.

Illustrations 11–32

The following points should be noted when considering the history of realism in modern China:

1. What started out as sketching from life was later influenced by more utilitarian social elements.
2. It was used to transform traditional Chinese landscape painting. This is particularly evident in the paintings of Xu Beihong and Jiang Zhaohe. Figures are depicted with realistic anatomical detail, shading is emphasised as is the relationship between figures and their background, whereas traditional Chinese landscape painting often used “positive” blank space (*kongbaishide xu*) in backgrounds.
3. The rapid infiltration of popular art led to the production of calendar paintings (*yuefenpai nianhua*) which became extremely popular and the standard aesthetic for modern (pre-1949) mass taste. The bright, clean and comely forms and colours of these works exerted an undeniable influence on the evolution of official art, in particular “Maoist art.”

3. & Illustrations 33–36

In 1929, Lu Xun and Rou Shi co-edited four art books, two of which were collections of woodcuts. In 1930, Lu Xun edited and published *Selected Paintings from the New Russia (Xin’e huaxuan)* and another volume of illustrations (*Meipeierde muke (Shimitu) zhi tu*) done by the German woodcut artist Carl Meffert for Cement (*Shimi tu*), a novel by the Soviet writer Gladkov.

In his Introduction to *Selected Paintings from the New Russia* Lu Xun noted that "woodcuts have an immediate relevance and value during a time of revolution, for they can be produced with great haste."

In the following years Lu Xun published and arranged for exhibitions of both foreign and indigenous woodcuts that he had collected. His activities inspired a nationwide woodcut movement. Lu Xun's advocacy of woodcuts was linked to his perception of the social revolution that was unfolding in China at the time. To a certain extent he saw the movement as being aimed against "those who enjoy introducing the artistic oddities of the European fin de siècle. Such works only encourage artistic folly and our art world is clogged with grotesqueries as a result." This quotation comes from a letter Lu Xun wrote to Xidi (Zheng Zhenduo) on 2 June, 1934, shortly after the publication of *Yinyuji*, a collection of woodcuts. Heavily influenced by works Lu Xun had introduced from overseas, in particular those of Meffert, the Belgian Frans Masereel and the German Expressionists, most Chinese woodcuts from this period lack their own artistic vocabulary.

4. & Illustrations 37–40

During the Yan'an culture movement artists and writers joined the revolutionary ranks of the Communist Party; culture itself became a form of propaganda in the service of the workers, peasants and soldiers. For a detailed chronology of this period, see Ai Ke'en's *A Record of the Flourishing of the Yan'an Arts Movement (Yan'an wenyi yundong jisheng)*, (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1987).

According to Mao Zedong, an artist could only be effective if he immersed himself in the life of workers and peasants, and became familiar with their language. Only then would it be possible to create artistic works which the masses of workers and peasants could truly enjoy. The phrase "workers and peasants" denoted the peasantry, especially during the Yan'an period. The basic aim of the Yan'an arts movement was, therefore, the assimilation of peasant artistic styles. This was particularly so after Mao Zedong spoke at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art in May 1942. The cultural line Mao promoted at that forum led to the production of works that contained salient elements of folk art and peasant culture. They included, for example, the *yangge* opera *The Brother and Sister Pioneers (Xiongmei kaihuang)*, the Western-style opera *The White-Haired Girl (Baimao nü)*, Zhao Shuli's novel *Rhymes of Li Youcai (Li Youcai banhua)*, as well as the woodcuts of Gu Yuan.

The Yan'an period marked a turning point in modern Chinese art history with folk art in particular having a fundamental impact on the discourse of élite Chinese culture. Prior to this, modern Chinese art was essentially the product of Western influence. Yan'an, however, the holy land of the Chinese revolution, had attracted large numbers of progressive and Westernized artists, and the folk art movement transmuted their art. One artist whose work is symbolic of this process is Gu Yuan. Originally influenced by Western artistic representation which emphasised chiaroscuro, Gu Yuan found that in Yan'an the peasants thought these shaded countenances were ugly, calling them "yin-yang faces." He modified his approach, absorbing elements from paper-cuts done for window decoration, woodblock New Year's pictures and paper funeral objects (in particular paper money), creating a style that gave prominence to line over shading, and leaving the faces in his works blank. His prints were to have a widespread impact on Chinese woodcuts and art in general. (See illustration).

Another basic element of the Yan'an culture movement, and one Mao repeatedly emphasised both in his "Talks" at the May 1942 forum and in subsequent "directives" on culture, was the need for artists to extol the positive and uplifting aspects of life. The Yan'an arts movement was part of the larger Yan'an Party Rectification Campaign which was, to an extent, aimed at denouncing works that exposed the negative side of the Party and the revolution. Jubilation was the cornerstone of Chinese folk culture and it meshed perfectly with Mao's calls to praise the positive aspects of the revolution. The folk art of Yan'an determined the course that Chinese art followed up to the Cultural Revolution (1966).

5. & Illustrations 41–61

In 1949, the Communist Party came to power on the Chinese mainland and launched the first of many ideological purges of artists and writers. In July 1949, the All-China Congress of Representatives of Literary and Artistic Workers was held and the All-China Literary and Arts Association, a unified government body overseeing the arts, was established. Its mission was to apply Mao Zedong's line on the arts.

In November of the same year, *Wenhui Daily (Wenhui bao)*, the Shanghai-based newspaper, sponsored a discussion on whether it was permissible for the petit bourgeoisie to be represented as protagonists in literary and artistic works. He Qifang, a poet and literary critic, drew the discussion to a conclusion with the statement that "they [the petit bourgeoisie] should not be written about too much and when they are written about it should be done critically."

On 10 May, 1950, *Literary Gazette* (*Wenyi bao*), the official organ of the Ministry of Culture, published an article by Zhou Yang, the Minister of Culture, in praise of the play *Song of the Red Flag* (*Hongqi ge*), a paean for the workers. On 8 September, Jiang Qing called on writers to "concentrate on the major themes of the age" at a meeting on film.

On 20 May, 1951, Mao Zedong wrote a major editorial for People's Daily (*Renmin ribao*) entitled "We Must Pay Attention to the Discussion of the Film *The Life of Wu Xun* (*Wu Xun zhuan*)" in which he called on cultural workers to create works that praised "the uplifting economic situation, the strength of the new ruling class, as well as emergent heroic figures and revolutionary thinking." He denounced Sun Yu's film *The Life of Wu Xun* for depicting outdated social types, using the attack on the film as an excuse for a major cultural purge.

In late December 1951, Mao launched the "Three and Five Antis" political purge [Translator's note: The Three Antis were "to oppose corruption, waste and bureaucracy inside the Party and state organs." The Five Antis were "to oppose bribery, tax evasion, theft of state property, cheating on government contracts and stealing economic information."]

On 10 May, 1952, *Literary Gazette* began serialising a "Discussion on How to Create New Heroic Figures."

On 10 January, 1953, *Literary Gazette* published a key editorial, "Overcome Backwardness in the Arts, Put a Premium on Reflecting the Magnificent Realities of Today."

In February 1955, the arts world launched a denunciation of Hu Feng's theory that art should reflect human nature. Mao Zedong wrote an editorial note for *People's Daily* to introduce the material collected to criticise Hu at the same time as condemning Hu and his associates as a "counter-revolutionary clique." They were subsequently purged and arrested.

In 1957, Mao launched an even larger purge, the "Anti-Rightist Movement," during which numerous cultural figures and many university students were denounced. Some of these art students were guilty of nothing more serious than having expressed a liking for styles of art other than realism, such as Impressionism.

In 1958, Mao's political idealism reached a pinnacle. On 22 March, at a National Art and Science Research Symposium held in Chengdu, Sichuan, Mao made a speech in which he declared that "proletarian literature and art should avail themselves of a creative method that combines Revolutionary Realism with Revolutionary Romanticism." On 26 September, *Literary Gazette* published an editorial which explicated Mao's view as "demanding [of cultural workers] that they realistically represent the changing realities of continuous revolution at the same time as giving full play to the sublime and lofty ideals of communism." In this year a massive wall-painting movement resulted from large numbers of artists being sent to the countryside to work with peasants. Romantic and cartoon-like murals soon covered walls throughout rural China. (See illustration 45. This is a depiction of a bumper harvest in an impoverished village in Jiangsu Province.)

In 1964, Mao Zedong launched the Socialist Education Movement. During this movement and the subsequent Cultural Revolution, which began two years later, the majority of artists were purged. Art became little more than a vehicle for the glorification of the workers, peasants and soldiers and a means for lauding the achievements of socialism.

On 23 May, 1968, *Wenhui Daily* published an article, "Let the Stage of Literature and Art Forever be a Front for the Propagation of Mao Zedong Thought," which outlined the "three prominences" (*san tuchude chuangzuo yuanze*), Jiang Qing's creative principle for the arts. The "three prominences" were: to give prominence to positive characters; to give prominence to the heroic characters among the positive characters; and to give prominence to the central heroic character among the heroic characters. The Maoist cultural principle of creating "sublime, outstanding and perfect" (*gao, da, quan*) heroes thus reached its peak.

The creation of "Red, bright and shining" (*hong, guang, liang*) works was a Maoist cultural principle that resulted from a confluence of nativist and Soviet influences after 1949. In October 1949, the vice-chairman of the Soviet Artists' Association visited China, leading to the formal introduction in China of Soviet Socialist Realism. From the early 1950s, China sent students to study in the Soviet Union.

In March 1951, the Chinese Artists' Association held a *National Exhibition of New Year's Paintings* which led to a New Year's Painting Movement that lasted for some years. It had the effect of standardising art so the majority of artists produced works of gaiety and dazzling colour.

Dong Xiwen's *First National Day Celebration* (*Kaiguo dadian*), created in 1953, initiated the style of New Year's painting in oils.

In 1955, the Soviet artist Maximov taught oil painting in China with students from the major art academies throughout the country attending his classes.

From the late 1950s, Maximov's students, along with art graduates returning from the Soviet Union, formed a powerful cadre in China's art academies. In the late 1950s and up to the mid-1960s, Soviet Socialist Realism was the predominant artistic style in Chinese painting. Of crucial importance was the fact that the Soviet style of realism was used as the basis for the curricula of the nation's art academies. Institutionalised in this way, Revolutionary Realism took hold in the minds of generations of Chinese artists.

(Soviet-style Socialist Realism was a form of 19th Century European realism reformulated by the Russian democratic revolutionaries and theoreticians B. G. Peilinsky (1811–48) and N. G. Chernichevsky (1828–89). They highlighted the dimension of subjective criticism in the realist tradition, one that is also known as "Critical Realism." Under the Soviets this element of criticism was replaced by the political requirement for artists to glorify reality. The evolution of realism in China was strikingly similar. Actually, this totalitarianisation of art was part and parcel of the history of all Communist states.)

Mao Zedong never failed to emphasise that art had to appeal to the broad masses; he was particularly insistent on this during periods of political uncertainty. The repeated discussions concerning the "nationalisation of art" (*yishu minzuhua*) from the late 1950s to the mid-60s, as well as the call for artists to learn from folk artists and peasants, produced examples such as the famous sculpture *At the Landlord's Rent Collection Office* (*Shouzuyuan*) — the result of artists working with peasant artisans to set up a class education exhibition in the Sichuan countryside. These were all the outcome of Mao's directives on art.

The year 1966 saw the unfolding of the Cultural Revolution. The *Hu County Peasant Art Exhibition* was given entrée to the China Art Gallery in Beijing, helping spur the popularisation of worker and peasant art. The bright and simple colours of these works, their romanticism and vibrance had a profound impact on artists, particularly those trained in the Soviet tradition.

6.

The political utilitarianism of art in China from the last century to the end of the Maoist era was, in reality, the product of the internalisation of Confucian values by generations of educated Chinese. The cultural cornerstone of Confucianism was that "art should be used to express the Way" (*wen yi zai dao*). People were inculcated with a spirit of social engagement and a sense of mission. This has made it impossible for creative people to break free of political utilitarianism to strive for the metaphysical spirit so necessary for artistic creativity. The Confucian tradition of moral perfectionism has, during its evolution, incorporated elements from both Daoism and Buddhism, thereby achieving a measure of otherworldliness. But this amalgamation of influences spawned a contradiction at the very heart of Confucianism: on one hand there was a need "to cultivate the self" (*xiushen*), and, on the other, a duty "to bring order to the nation and through it all under heaven" (*zhi guo ping tianxia*). This deep-seated antagonism produced a schizophrenia among generations of Chinese intellectuals. The saying from the ancient Confucian sage Mencius that "If you prosper, then work to serve the whole kingdom; if you remain impoverished, then nurture your own virtue in solitude" was accepted as a personal philosophy by Chinese intellectuals throughout the ages. "To prosper" means to be able realise the ideal of political involvement. If it is not possible to prosper then one must retire from active involvement in the world. This is the philosophy behind the actions of some modern innovative artists like Lin Fengmian who eventually chose the time-hallowed path of abandoning the world. Chinese artists have consistently failed to develop an interest and involvement in human life itself. The scholar-gentleman, or "literati," painting that evolved from the Song dynasty gradually superseded the belief that "art should be used to express the Way," but it marked a rejection of the world. The powerful trend in favour of realism championed by modern Chinese thinkers, including Mao Zedong, was a reaction against Song-Yuan literati art. Ironically, in the end the proponents of realism reaffirmed the Confucian dictum that "art should be used to express the Way." Thus, in the end, no basic revolution in art was achieved at all.

7. & Illustrations 62–64

The most important representative exhibition of formalism (*xingshizhuyi*) was held during the Spring Festival in February, 1979, in Shanghai. The works were almost exclusively landscapes and still-lives done basically after the style of Impressionism and Cubism. These three illustrations are of works by artists born in the mid 1930s who had a close association with Lin Fengmian, Guan Liang, Wu Dayu and Liu Haisu in Shanghai during the 1930s and 40s.

Of these three, Shen Tianwan was studying at the East China Art School (later renamed the Nanjing Art School) when the curriculum was transformed along Soviet lines in the early 1950s. Unable to accept these changes, Shen left the school. Han Boyou, influenced by the Chinese artists mentioned above, was enamoured of modern painting and in 1963, at the height of Soviet cultural influence, he resigned from his position with the Chinese Artists' Association and began experimenting with Cubism. After graduating, Chen Junde stayed on at the Shanghai Drama Academy to teach and came under the influence of the modernist teacher Min Xiwen and then sought out Lin Fengmian for instruction, thereby freeing himself from Soviet influence to embark on a career as an Impressionist.

Illustrations 65–68

The *Oil Painting Exhibition of Beijing Spring Landscapes and Still-Life* was held during the Spring Festival of 1979. Featuring only landscapes and still-lives this exhibition effectively rejected the political utilitarianism of Maoist Revolutionary Realism. Over forty artists, most of them well-known and established figures, took part in the exhibition. Many of them, including Dong Xiwen, Liu Gongliu, Zhan Jianjun and Lin Gang, were prominent during the Maoist years; yet the paintings they showed in this exhibition revealed they had freed themselves from the constraints of art in the service of politics. The exhibition also provided artists like Liu Haisu, Pang Xunqin, Wu Guanzhong and Yuan Yunsheng with an opportunity to reveal publicly their “underground” explorations in realms not dominated by Revolutionary Romanticism. Jiang Feng, the former chairman of the Chinese Artists’ Association denounced as a Rightist in 1957 and not rehabilitated until the end of the Cultural Revolution, wrote the formal introduction to the exhibition, one which caused a sensation at the time. The central theme of Jiang’s essay was an appeal for artists to be allowed freedom of association and expression. He was of the opinion that “unofficial art salons are beneficial to the development of art.”

Works by Pang Xunqin done in the early 1970s show his exploration of the decorative style of exoticism (see illustration). Yuan Yunsheng’s work reflects his interest in decorative art similar to that seen in the mural he did for the Beijing International Airport. At the time the works of new artist Feng Guodong done in both Fauvist and post-Surrealistic styles enjoyed considerable attention.

The artists who participated in this exhibition later formed the Oil Painting Research Association. This group held three exhibitions and had a considerable impact on the Chinese art scene at the time.

Illustrations 69–70

The Beijing International Airport mural, a decorative work by Yuan Yunsheng and Xiao Huixiang, had a considerable influence on the changing artistic style of the early 1980s. Decorative art was, for a time, synonymous with modern art. It was a peculiarly Chinese style which had a revolutionary impact on attitudes formerly determined by Revolutionary Romanticism and political utilitarianism.

Illustrations 71–72

The members of the “Anonymous Painting Association” (*Wuming huahui*) in Beijing were not trained in the academy. Its chief members were Zhao Wenliang and Yang Yushu, artists who began doing impressionistic works in the 1970s, at the height of the Mao era. They attracted the attention of many younger artists who were anxious to reject the straightjacket of Maoist culture.

Illustrations 73–75

Born in 1948, Xue Mingde attended the middle school attached to the Sichuan Art Academy. He was criticised by the school authorities for his interest in Impressionism. In early 1979, he “exhibited” his works — a cross between Impressionism and Expressionism — on the Democracy Wall at Xidan in central Beijing.

The Contemporaries (Tongdai ren) exhibition in Beijing and the Yunnan Monkey Year Society (Shenshe) exhibition held in Kunming were important examples of formalism in early 80s’ China. The Yunnan school of artists developed out of the Monkey Year Society, giving an added lease on life to the decorative style of contemporary art.

Illustrations 76–78

Abstract art reached a height of popularity during 1981–83. In *The Path of Beauty* (*Meide lucheng*, Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1981), the academic Li Zezhou made the point that art evolved from the representation of concrete forms to the expression of the abstract. This statement had a tremendous impact in the art world. As an editor of the authoritative official journal *Art* (*Meishu*), I noted the move towards abstract art and produced an issue of the journal devoted to the subject (*Art*, No. 1, 1983). This led, however, to my being purged during the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign later that year for maintaining a “bourgeois artistic standpoint.”

The abstract art produced in China in the early 1980s was the result of formalism; form and decoration were the wellsprings of these works. At least they indicated that artists had made a clean break with realism. The development of contemporary Chinese culture, however, is dependent upon shifts in values. Such a shift took place, for example, in the early 1980s. Following this change, experimentation with abstract art became little more than an empty gesture imitating Western models.

After 1985, however, things changed. There were two distinct new developments in abstract art. The first of these was the appearance of works that took their inspiration from traditional Chinese painting, architecture and bronzes. This is evident in the paintings of Xiao Huixiang and Chen Xiangxun whose use of lines is influenced by the

brush work of ink painting. Fu Zhongwang, meanwhile, used traditional furniture as a resource and Sui Jianguo's work reflects an appreciation of inlaid objects such as porcelain. (For examples of Fu's and Sui's work, see the illustrations in this catalogue). The second form of post-1985 abstract art is represented here by the paintings of Shang Yang and Shen Qin (see illustrations), who use the vocabulary of abstract art to express the tranquil inner world of Eastern spirituality.

Illustrations 79 to 81

An example of "Scar Realism" (*shanghen xieshijuyi*). The word "scar" was popularized in 1978 by Lu Xinhua, a Shanghai rusticated youth, who wrote a highly popular short story about the sufferings of young people in the countryside during the Cultural Revolution. After the publication of Lu's story the word "scar" came to be used to describe any creative work (whether it be in literature, cinema, photography or art) that revealed the dark side of society or the tragic fate of common people. The majority of "scar artists" were former rusticated youths, and many of them were in the first batch of post-Cultural Revolution university entrants.

"Scar art" made its initial appearance in the Sichuan Art Academy. The main reason for this was that teachers at the school encouraged students to paint creatively and take part in exhibitions rather than simply spending all their time in classrooms perfecting basic technique. The students were, however, the product of Maoist culture. Their rebellion against it was an emotional rejection of what they felt they had suffered at the hands of society, but as such it did not encompass a denial of their roots in realist art. Given their limited exposure to international art they found Russian Critical Realism particularly appealing. As we can see from the painting by Cheng Conglin reproduced here, it is, in terms of the dramatic elements employed, as well as in its composition and style, obviously the result of the Soviet artist Sulikov's influence.

Scar art and literature suited perfectly the ideological requirements of post-Mao politics while in no way exceeding the boundaries of state-sanctioned realism. It is no wonder that Scar art and literature was the first form of post-1976 culture recognised by the authorities. Luo Zhonglin and Cheng Conglin, painters who produced Scar art, received major government awards and promotions, becoming the youngest professors in the academies and new leaders in the official art world.

Illustrations 82–85

Rustic realism. The influence of 17th century Dutch oil painting is obvious in the work of Chen Danqing. The solidity and richness of rural idylls held a powerful appeal for artists used to the lightness and prettiness of Maoist art. His oils reflected an aesthetic that had nothing to do with the political emotionalism of Scar art, and he was widely emulated. This fad for rural lyricism lasted for some time.

Yuan Yunsheng produced his painting *Return, My Soul!* (*Hun xi guilai*) in the hope of reviving the long-lost virile national spirit of the Han and Tang dynasties.

He Duoling, a Sichuan artist influenced by Wyeth, created in his rural works an ambience of solitude and sentimental nostalgia.

In sketches inspired by the landscape of northern Shaanxi, Ding Fang realized the hope first expressed by Yuan Yunsheng, creating a space in Chinese art for an aesthetic that favoured the ungainly and sodden.

Illustrations 86 to 96

Works from the *Stars* exhibitions (*Xingxing meizhan*). The Stars held two exhibitions. The first of 163 works was held on the pavement outside the China Art Gallery on 27 September, 1979. It was closed down the same day by the police. Following the forced closure, the Stars gathered at Democracy Wall in Xidan and marched on the Beijing Municipal Government in protest, calling for artistic democracy. Some prominent art bureaucrats like Jiang Feng and Liu Xin sympathised with their plight and the exhibition was eventually reopened at Beihai Park on 23 November. Initially, there were twenty-three members of the Stars, the majority of whom were young amateurs without a formal academic education.

The most important artists who participated in the first exhibition were Wang Keping, Huang Rui, Ma Desheng, Qu Leilei, Bo Yun, Yan Li, Yang Yiping, Li Shuang, and Shao Fei. Most of their work featured social criticism; their artistic vocabulary was predominantly symbolist, although Yan Li showed he had an understanding of and talent in dealing with Cubism. The most noteworthy artist was Wang Keping, who combined the sense of absurdity of modern Western discourse with the root carving popular among Chinese folk artists. He created works steeped in the Chinese world, showing himself to be the most unique artistic innovator of the last decade.

The second *Stars* exhibition opened on 20 August, 1980, at the China Art Gallery. It ran for fifteen days. The most important addition to the ranks of the Stars at this time was Bao Pao. Bao's abstract sculptures drew considerable attention.

8.

From its inception, the new Chinese art was in opposition to official culture. It took the form of an underground movement with artists forming their own associations and finding funds for privately-run exhibitions. The early 1980s' groupings called themselves "associations" (*huahui*), while those that appeared in the '85 New Wave Art Movement preferred the term "colony" (*qunti*), a term popularised by the publication of the manifesto and works of "The Northern Art Colony" (*Beifang yishu qunti*) in *Fine Arts in China* in 1985. As an editor of the paper I began a regular column to introduce the new artistic collectives appearing around the country.

The '85 New Wave Art Movement saw the development of these artists "colonies" for a number of reasons. In the first place, the authorities at the time were as unwilling to recognize new artists as they had been at the beginning of the 1980s. Maoist art still held sway in official circles as evinced by the *Sixth All-China Art Exhibition* held in 1985. This left young artists with no alternative but to find different outlets for their views and their work. Secondly, the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign of 1983–84 quashed most of the artists' associations that had formed in the early 80s. At the Fourth Congress of Writers and Artists in 1985, the authorities sanctioned "creative freedom," allowing for a relatively relaxed cultural atmosphere. Artists readily took advantage of this. Thirdly, the '85 New Wave Movement was the result of group discussion and deliberation, not of individual action. As it was predominantly an underground movement, people gathered in mutually supportive groups. According to partial statistical information, 79 art groups appeared in the years 1982–86 in 25 cities, autonomous regions and provinces. From 1978 to 1984 there were 37 group exhibitions; in 1986 alone there were 110.

9.

There are a number of questions to be considered when discussing the tendency of artists to engage in theoretical discussions and their pursuit of philosophical questions in their art works. 1. The majority of artists shared an enthusiasm for writing and publishing articles on philosophy, culture and art. 2. Many of their works contained an obviously philosophical dimension. This is particularly apparent, for example, in the works of Wang Guangyi, Shu Qun, Liu Yan, Huang Yongping and the artists' discussions of their philosophical endeavours. 3. The artists adopted this approach as a result of their contact with Western works of philosophy and culture. Gu Wenda, for example, used his years as a graduate student (1978–81) to read virtually all of the Western works (modern philosophy, the natural sciences and literature) translated into Chinese as well as the Daoist classics, Laozi and Zhuangzi. Huang Yongping claimed that he spent the summer of 1984 "immersed in Ludwig Wittgenstein." Shu Qun said that in 1984 he "had the good fortune to get a photocopy of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* which I devoured avidly." (These quotations are from letters written to the author).

Illustrations 97–105

Works influenced by Duchamp, Dadaists and Pop art. The Pop-meister Rauschenberg held an exhibition in Beijing in 1985 which had an seismic impact on the Chinese art scene. Rauschenberg clones appeared overnight throughout China. They may have misinterpreted the American artist but it was a misinterpretation within a specifically Chinese cultural context. After all, these imitations appeared at a time when the art inspired by the "Stars" had run its course and amidst an atmosphere of nativist revival and nostalgia for the Cultural Revolution. They were rebelling against new conventional art, whether it be rehashed literati painting or Native Soil art.

These younger artists used Pop art (some may prefer to call it a "misuse") to launch an assault on neo-Conservative post-Mao art. They wanted to get art off the walls and out of the new straightjackets of officially condoned painting. In the '85 New Wave Art Movement they may have misconstrued Dadaism but they got the message right: upset aesthetic conventions. The epicentres of this movement were the Xiamen Dadaists, the *Zero Art* exhibition in Hunan and the *Modern Art* exhibition in Taiyuan, Shanxi.

The Xiamen Dadaists started up in 1983, although their most active period began in 1985, under the leadership of Huang Yongping. In 1986, they staged three events: a mass exhibition; a mass burning of works; and an exhibition of building materials and rubbish in the Provincial Art Gallery of Fujian. They declared that, "It took us five years to learn everything we know about art and it's going to take us another ten to unlearn it." In 1987, Huang Yongping created his work *The History of Chinese Art and A Short History of Modern Art after Two Minutes in a Washing Machine*.

Illustrations 106–119

Works representative of cultural criticism and reconstruction. Because they wanted to express a supra-experiential hypothesis concerning the new culture of the future, these artists generally chose a surrealist style of artistic discourse. Generally speaking, these works are referred to as “rational painting.” Theirs is a metaphysical, abstract pursuit aimed at a type of expression different from the emotive or personal experience of the life-force. The representatives of this school of art are the “Northern Art Collective” of Northeast China and “The First Station Group” of Nanjing. (See note 9).

At the height of the Pop art craze in late 1985, Wu Shanzhuan, Ni Haifeng and four others created the *75% Red, 20% Black and 5% White* series, the most successful Chinese adaptation of Pop art. It was also the first work of Chinese Pop to use Chinese characters (Gu Wenda’s use of characters, although predating this, was nonetheless limited to a more early Modernist style of artistic expression).

This work is noteworthy because of the following points:

1. *75% Red, 20% Black and 5% White* used the black poster characters familiar from the days of the Cultural Revolution when such characters were used universally for political propaganda.

2. The coloured background of *75% Red, 20% Black and 5% White* is again an echo of the “red deluge” of the Cultural Revolution. (In 1967, there was a nationwide call for the streets in all Chinese cities to be painted red. This combined with the red flags that adorned buildings and streets created the effect of a “red deluge” or “sea of red.” This is combined with elements taken from the simplistic political slogans also dating from the Cultural Revolution period. (Again, slogans were an integral part of public life throughout the Cultural Revolution. Obvious examples of such slogans are “struggle against individualism and denounce revisionism,” “obliterate the bourgeois and encourage the proletariat,” “grasp revolution and increase production,” “the red, red, reddest red sun in our hearts, Chairman Mao,” and so on.)

3. The use of popular Cultural Revolution styles for written characters, although what the characters actually spell out are sentiments and attitudes more in keeping with the mood of the mid-1980s. For example, “cabbage 3 cents a catty,” “neighbourhood committee,” and so on.

It is for these reasons that I include these works in the genre of cultural criticism. Later on, Wu Shanzhuan’s *Red Humour* series and Ni Haifeng’s *Village Broadcasting Station* were a continuation of this train of thought (see the comments on Wu and Ni in this volume). Both Wu and Ni were to participate in the 1989 art exhibition: Wu with his *Selling Prawns* and Ni’s *Slaughtering a Chicken*. These works were inspired more directly by Joseph Beuys than Pop art. Their goal, however, remained the same: cultural criticism.

Illustrations 120–143

The artistic works that reflected a basic interest in life and the life-force are those that perhaps offer the richest range of creativity of the whole ‘85 New Wave. They are also the works which are least hampered by the limitations of the movement’s generally simplistic philosophising. They emphasise the individual experience of life.

“The Southeastern Art Research Collective,” the most famous of the groups involved in this endeavour, declared “a person is both part of humanity but also an individual, and it is this principle that leads us to delve into the dark recesses of the mind in search of the chaotic ‘inner symbolic universe.’ We locate our art in the entire process of life.” — Mao Xuhui

“You are confronted by a canvas. It feels like all of the thrill and challenge of life is there staring at you. You are involved in a fight to the death.” — Pan Dehai

In the notes he wrote at the time he was creating *The Spirit*, Zhang Xiaogang said the following:

“Illness affords us that unique experience whereby we are allowed to wander in the borderlands between life and death. Only then can one really learn the meaning of dreams. . . . It is at this point that our love is cleft in two: on one hand there is a longing for the rich mosaic of life, while on the other there is an irresistible urge to die. It is our humanity that transforms death into a type of religion.”

Another prominent group, “The Southwest Shandong Collective,” chose to use a more convoluted form of expression to “reject so-called ‘culture.’ We are drawn to the earth, and the primitive. We glorify it. We are incapable of creation, we just do what comes naturally.” — Huang Chao

Because of the input of the individual, the works of this “school of life” carry a hint of Expressionism added to the influence of philosophy (its advocates all liked reading); the imagery of their works also reflects an interest in the discourse of Surrealism.

A colder and more clinical approach to this humanism, or "school of life" approach is found in the works of the New Spaces Exhibition '85 of Zhejiang Province and the "Pond Society" that resulted from it. Since there were superficial similarities to the work of the "Northern Art Collective" both were dubbed by some critics at the time as being proponents of "rational painting." This group of southern artists, however, emphasised the clinical nature of direct impressions, an interest in life experiences and non-philosophical thought. The most representative artist of this school is Zhang Peili. In discussing his composition *X? — The Glove* Zhang said he was interested in the properties of "the intermediary objects" (the gloves) in their relationship with other things. Here the concern is for the restrictions and limitations placed on life, while maintaining an interest in the symbols of the uncertain. We are including in our illustrations a large range of works from this school including paintings, installations, performance art, postal art and video art. They are all related to the offensive dimensions of language and the direct experiences of life. (See also the comments on Zhang Peili and Geng Jianyi in this volume).

The first appearance of performance art in China was in December 1985, when the Beijing artist Wu Guangyao wrapped himself up in cloth. This was followed in November 1986 by the Shanghai artists Ding Yi and Qin Yifeng doing cloth sculptures in the streets of the city, including self-mummification. They claimed this "represented the tension of the life-force of objects with static images."

In 1987, the Beijing "Ideas 21" group wrapped people up in cloth, then cut these "mummies" open layer by layer until they were exposed nude to the freezing temperatures of the winter. This was done so they could "experience the bone-rattling coldness of the air".

Also in 1987, the artists in "Ideas 21 — the Signalpost of the Great Tragedy" (see illustration) wanted to "avail [themselves] of a chord as natural as that of folk songs that will reverberate between Heaven and Earth. Evoke the spirits of the ancestors who built the Great Wall. Experience the harmony of Nature and Man while also groaning with the agony of oppressive weight and displaying resistance".

The most extreme expression of this school of art was seen in the "Tibet fad" of the '85 New Art Movement when many artists went to Tibet in search of adventure and danger, "hoping to awaken the power of the soul through a direct experience of the lifeforce" (Ding Fang in *Fine Arts in China*.)

Illustrations 144–147

Surrealist-style art.

10.

In the early 80s the "Back-to-the Roots" movement was a school of artistic and literary endeavour involving the use of a staid set of traditional elements to engage in the search for the "national spirit." The aim was to express a self-reflecting and critical consciousness. Following 1987, however, as a social temper it reflected rather an extreme opposition to Western culture in favour of a traditional Chinese spirit.

We can get some idea of the shift in popular tastes from the number of books published at the time. In the early and mid-1980s, Western works of literature and philosophy filled bookstore shelves. They were gradually overtaken by Chinese philosophical works, in particular pre-Qin philosophical texts as well as a range of works of Eastern mysticism (including works on physiognomy, fortune-telling, *qigong* and longevity) after 1987. Dozens of books related to the *Book of Changes* also appeared.

11.

The tussle-haired baby (*zhuaji wawa*) is a popular motif that appears in Shaanxi folk papercuts and decorative foodstuffs made from flour. Many artists and academics went on field trips to Shaanxi from the early 80s, returning to Beijing to hold various exhibitions. These had a considerable influence and led to an artistic fashion favouring folk art that has lasted many years. The impact of this fashion was also reflected in the decision by the Central Academy of Fine Arts to establish a Department of Folk Art under Jin Zhilin, the first artist to study Shaanxi folk art. He has written a monograph on the *zhuaji wawa*.

Illustrations 148–156

Some of the artists involved in the "Purified Language" movement gathered under the banner of "New Academic Art." Most of the artists in this school accepted the language and symbolism of '85 New Wave art or were in part inspired by it. The illustrations show Chen Wenji's use of Surrealism and the defamiliarisation of the everyday, inspired by '85 New Wave art. Xu Bing's use of Chinese characters also rehearses the '85 New Wave movement. New Academic Art emphasises the importance of an academy training in basic techniques and attention to fine and detailed work.

The most important representatives of the Purified Language movement were the abstract artists in Shanghai. They were opposed to any social involvement on the part of art and artists, concerning themselves rather with the purity of artistic language and elements of Eastern philosophy. The following are some of the titles of works done by artists in this school in 1987.

Li Shan's *Expansion* series; Zhang Jianjun's *Being/Non-Being* series; Liu Yaping's *Extremities and Body* series, Chen Zhen's *Qi Flow Chart* series; Ding Yi's *Extended Borders*; Yu Youhan's *Circle* series; Qian Ping's *Chan/Zen* series, and so on.

In their various notes on their work we find such comments as:

"Laozi's dialectical view of movement and development is a paramount achievement of Chinese culture. His remarks on nature, non-action, the void-static and the submissive are the very things that one searches for in artistic creation." — Yu Youhan.

Hai Qing remarked on Zhang Jianjun's works that: "He has carefully delineated the 'small universe' within himself. The harmonising of stillness and movement are representative of the unity of the universe and this is the core of his pursuit."

Lin Han comments on Qian Ping: "Joy, comfort, silence, mystery . . . are all part of the Zen-like secrets sought after by this artist."

12.

Popi is a colloquial expression that originated in Imperial times. I use it to describe a cultural phenomenon which covers a range of popular and artistic sentiments characterised as cynical, loutish, lackadaisical, world-weary and dissolute attitudes. Geremie Barmé has pointed out to me some references to this concept in 1920s' and 30s' Chinese literature, including a 1924 essay by Zhou Zuoren called "Phacakueh" (*Pojiaogu*) in which Zhou mentions the loutish character Niu Er in the classical novel *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan*) being a *popi*. Zhou compares Niu Er to figures who feature in the "novelas de picares" or picaresque literature of Spain, and is the type of personality described by the Japanese as "hoods" or the British as "rogues." In *My Country and My People* Lin Yutang claims that being "dissolute" (*fanglang*), in its unique Chinese sense, is the most sublime purpose of life, the most lustrous aspect of decadent authoritarianism."

Zhu Xinjiang and Zhou Jingxin, the founders of the school of "New Literati Painting" (*xin wenrenhua*), participated in a seminar held as part of the *Hubei Invitation Exhibition for New Traditional Chinese Painting* in 1985. It is no coincidence that they produced a painting entitled *The Popi Niu Er* in which the loutish Niu Er is shown swaggering about the streets of Kaifeng. This comic representation was, I believe, the first example of the artistic representation of a common social mood that encourages an attitude of "approaching life playfully" (*wan'r rensheng*). New literati artists, however, could do little more than imitate traditional themes and styles in expressing their *popi* sensibility. Cynical Realism, on the other hand, has been able to adapt the spirit of the *popi* in its contemplation of contemporary realities.

A number of Mainland commentators noted this *popi* mood from the late 1980s, and have utilised the term "hippy spirit" when describing it. As Geremie Barmé pointed out to me, however, there are various levels of idealism within hippy culture which are in strong contrast to the anti-idealism of the *popi*. The *popi* is grey in his approach to life, an approach similar to that common among the scholar-gentry of classical times who were frustrated in their official careers. This is particularly evident in the careers of men during the Wei-Jin period of the 4th Century and again finds expression in some works of the Mongol-Yuan dynasty.

The Sinologist John Minford expressed a similar view in 1985 as follows:

"... on this post-Mao wasteland a strange new indigenous culture is evolving, which could, perhaps a little provocatively, be called the culture of the *liumang* (an untranslatable term loosely meaning loafer, hoodlum, hobo, bum, punk). The original *liumang* is to be seen cruising the inner city streets on his Flying Pigeon bicycle, looking (somewhat lethargically) for the action, reflective sunglasses flashing a sinister warning. *Liumang* in everyday speech is a harsh word. It is the word for anti-social behaviour, a category of crime.

But the *liumang* generation as I see it is a wider concept. Rapist, whore, black-marketeer, unemployed youth, alienated intellectual, frustrated artist or poet — the spectrum has its dark satanic end, its long middle band of relentless grey, and, shining at the other end, a patch of visionary light. It is an embryonic alternative culture, similar in certain striking ways to that of the 1960s in the United States and Europe." (Quoted in Geremie Barmé and Linda Jaivin, eds., *New Ghosts, Old Dreams: Chinese Rebel Voices*, New York: Times Books, 1992, p. 248.)

(Notes translated and edited by Geremie Barmé)



1
丁衍鐸
青春 30年代初
DING YANYONG
YOUTH early 1930s



4
林風眠
構圖 1933
LIN FENGMIAN
COMPOSITION



7
陽太陽
靜物 30年代
YANG TAIYANG
STILL LIFE 1930s



2
龐薰琹
丘堤女士像 1933
PANG XUNQIN
PORTRAIT OF LADY QIU TI



5
關良
靜物
GUAN LIANG
STILL LIFE



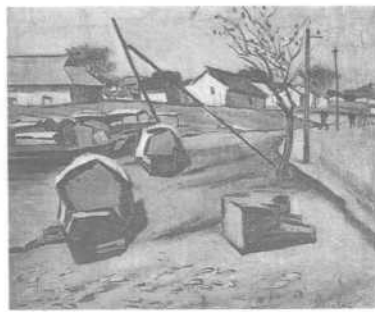
8
殷平佑
海 30年代
YIN PINGYOU
THE SEA 1930s



3
方幹民
秋曲 1933
FANG GANMIN
AUTUMN MELODY



6
劉海粟
黃山溫泉
LIU HAISU
HOT SPRING AT HUANG SHAN



9
倪貽德
河岸 1934 65X54cm
NI YIDE
BY THE RIVER



10
潘玉良
秦淮河 30年代初
PAN YULIANG
QIN HUAI RIVER early 1930s



13
徐悲鴻
女人體 1924
XU BEIHONG
FEMALE NUDE



16
顏文樑
臥室
YAN WENLIANG
BEDROOM



11
李鐵夫
音樂家肖像
LI TIEFU
PORTRAIT OF A MUSICIAN



14
常書鴻
雞
CHANG SHUHONG
CHICKEN



17
劉開渠
裸女(雕塑) 1933
LIU KAIQU
FEMALE NUDE (Sculpture)



12
馮鋼百
自畫像
FENG GANGBAI
SELF PORTRAIT



15
許幸之
柿
XU XINZHI
PERSIMMONS



18
方君璧
人體
FANG JUNBI
HUMAN FIGURE



19
徐悲鴻
僕我後 1933 230×318cm
XU BEIHONG
WE HAVE WAITED FOR OUR PRINCE



22
梁鼎銘
前仆後繼
LIANG DINGMING
MOVING FORTH



25
徐悲鴻
愚公移山 1940 144×431cm
XU BEIHONG
YU GONG MOVING MOUNTAINS



20
唐一禾
窮人
TANG YIHE
THE POOR



23
蔣兆和
賣綫(局部) 1937
JIANG ZHAOHE
THREAD PEDDLER (detail)



26
蔣兆和
流民圖(局部) 1943
JIANG ZHAOHE
REFUGEES (detail)



21
司徒喬
放下你的鞭子
SITU QIAO
PUT DOWN YOUR WHIP



24
徐悲鴻
泰戈爾像 1940 51×50cm
XU BEIHONG
PORTRAIT OF TAGORE



27
徐悲鴻
紅葉雙鶻(局部) 1953 88×59cm
XU BEIHONG
MAGPIES AND FOLIAGE (detail)



28
李慕白·金雪塵
早期月份牌年畫
LI MUBAI & JING XUECHEN
EARLY NEW YEAR CALENDAR



31
金梅生
優秀的女飼養員 50年代末
JIN MEISHENG
OUTSTANDING BREEDER
late 1950s



34
野夫
搏鬥 1933 18.4×14.5cm
YE FU
STRUGGLE



29
早期月份牌年畫
EARLY NEW YEAR CALENDAR



32
李慕白·金雪塵
革命傳統代代傳 70年代
LI MUBAI & JING XUECHEN
PASSING DOWN
THE REVOLUTIONARY TRADITION
1970s



35
張望
負傷的頭 1934 13.2×7.9cm
ZHANG WANG
HEAD INJURY



30
早期月份牌年畫
EARLY NEW YEAR CALENDAR



33
江豐
到前綫去 1932 6.7×9.7cm
JIANG FENG
TO THE FRONT LINES



36
李樺
怒吼吧中國 1935 23×16cm
LI HUA CRY OUT, CHINA



37
古元
區政府辦公室 1942 10.2×10cm
GU YUAN
DISTRICT GOVERNMENT OFFICE



40
夏風
瞄準 1945 10×13cm
XIA FENG
FOCUS ON AIM



43
人民的西湖 1951
(漢雅軒藏品)
WEST LAKE FOR THE PEOPLE
(Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



38
古元
減租會 1943 20×13.5cm
GU YUAN
RENTAL NEGOTIATION



41
侯逸民·鄧澍
慶祝中國共產黨三十周年 1952
HOU YIMIN & DENG SHU
CELEBRATING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY



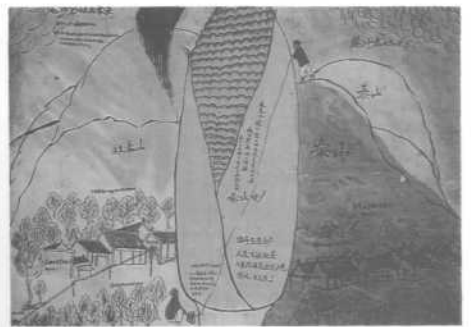
44
金浪·顧生岳
迎紅旗 (漢雅軒藏品)
JIN LANG and GU SHENG YUE
WELCOMING THE RED FLAG
(Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



39
郭鈞
宣傳新法接生 1944 12.5×10cm
GUO JUN
PROMOTING NEW METHODS OF
CHILD DELIVERY



42
林崗
黨的好女兒：趙桂蘭 1951 (漢雅軒藏品)
LIN GANG
ZHAO GUILAN: GOOD DAUGHTER OF
THE PARTY (Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



45
遮山影日玉米王：江蘇邳縣農民畫 1958
KING OF CORN THAT BLOCKS MOUNTAINS AND
SUN FROM VIEW: JIANGSU,
PI PROVINCE PEASANT MURAL



46
董希文
開國大典 1953 230×405cm
DONG XIWEN
FIRST NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION
(Copy of 1953 painting)



48
王式廓
血衣(素描) 1959 192×345cm
WANG SHIGUO
BLOODY SHIRT (Sketch)



51
孫滋溪
天安門前 1963 220×332
SUN ZIXI
IN FRONT OF TIAN'ANMEN



47
董希文
開國大典 (1972年修改版)

DONG XIWEN
FIRST NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION
(1972 revised version)

(此作品前後修改過三次，圖46根據一九五三年原作複製，一九五五年原作的高崗，前排右數第一人，因涉嫌反黨集團，被毛清洗，此作即把高從畫中抹掉。後劉少奇在文化大革命中被清洗，此作即把劉從畫中抹掉，見七二年修改稿。)

NOTE: The original painting, done in 1953 and depicting the major Communist Party leaders at the First National Day Celebration, has been altered three different times. In 1959, Gao Gang (first from right, front row) was accused of anti-Party activity and ordered purged by Mao. His image was subsequently obliterated from the painting. Later, Liu Shaoqi was purged during the Cultural Revolution, and his image was also removed from the painting, as can be seen in the 1972 version. (Altogether there are four different versions of this painting).



49
李琦
毛主席走遍全國 1960
LI QI
CHAIRMAN MAO TOURS
THE NATION



52
收租院(泥塑) 1965
AT THE LANDLORD'S RENT COLLECTION OFFICE
(plaster sculpture)

(原作立於四川省大邑縣地主莊圍階級教育展覽館。原作吸收了民間泥塑諸多手法，諸如眼睛用玻璃珠、着色等。共塑一百一十四個與真人等大的人物。分交租、驗租、過斗、算賬、逼租、反抗六個部份。文革中為了加強反抗形象共修改過四次。)

Note: The original sculpture was first exhibited in Sichuan province at the Dayi county Landlord's Estate Educational Exhibition Hall. The work uses many elements of folk sculpture, such as glass eyes, bright colors, etc. The sculpture depicts a group of 114 life-sized figures engaging in activities typical to the situation; there are people paying the rent, settling bills, assessing levies, trying to avoid payment, and protesting against the landlord. During the Cultural Revolution the sculpture was altered four different times to emphasize the protest element.



50
侯一民，鄧澍，周令釗
永遠跟着共產黨，永遠跟着毛主席
HOU YIMIN, DENG SHU & ZHOU LINGZHAO
FOREVER FOLLOW THE COMMUNIST PARTY,
FOREVER FOLLOW CHAIRMAN MAO



53
劉春華
毛主席去安源
LIU CHUNHUA
CHAIRMAN MAO GOES TO AN YUAN



56
陳衍寧
毛主席觀察廣東農村
CHEN YANNING
CHAIRMAN MAO TOURS A GUANGDONG
VILLAGE



59
蔡迪安
革命代代如潮湧 1976 (漢雅軒藏品)
CAI DI AN
EACH GENERATION IS A REVOLUTIONARY
TIDE (Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



54
侯一民，鄧澍，靳尚誼，詹建俊，羅工柳，
楊林桂，袁浩
要把無產階級文化大革命進行到底 1974
HOU YIMIN, DENG SHU, JIN SHANGYI,
ZHAN JIANJUN, LUO GONGLIU, YANG LINGUI
and YUAN HAO
WE MUST FOLLOW THROUGH WITH
THE PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION



57
唐小禾
在大風大浪中成長 七十年代中
TANG XIAOHE
TO GROW UP AMONG STORMS AND WAVES
mid-1970s



60
查世銘
朝氣蓬勃 1976 (漢雅軒藏品)
CHA SHIMING
YOUTH OF THE REVOLUTION
(Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



55
高虹，彭彬，何孔德
步調一致才能得勝利：1928年毛主席在桂東
沙田頒布《三大紀律八項注意》 1974
GAO HONG, PENG BIN, HE KONGDE
CONSISTENT APPROACH IS THE ONLY WAY
TO VICTORY: CHAIRMAN MAO DELIVERS
"THREE GREAT DISCIPLINES AND EIGHT
REMINDERS" SHATIAN, EAST GUIDONG



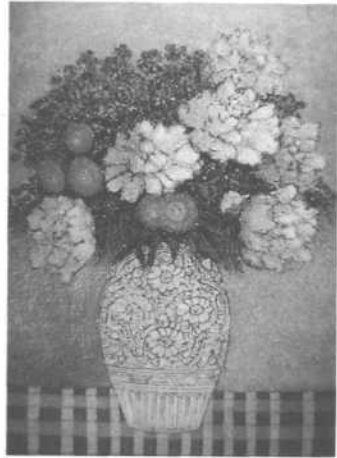
58
劉文西等
毛主席與八路三小孩 七十年代
(漢雅軒藏品)
LIU WENXI AND OTHERS
CHAIRMAN MAO AND THREE CHILDREN OF
REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIERS 1970s
(Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



61
馬振龍
(戶縣農民)公社春長在
MA ZHENLONG (Hu County Peasant)
LONG LIVE THE PEOPLE'S COMMUNE



62
陳鈞德
山景 (參加12人畫展) 1978
CHEN JUNDE
MOUNTAINSCAPE



65
龐薰琹
靜物 1972
PANG XUNQIN
STILL LIFE



68
馮國東
自在者 1980 120X408cm
FENG GUODONG
AT EASE



63
沈天萬
風景 (參加12人畫展) 1978
SHEN TIANWAN
LANDSCAPE



66
詹建俊
風景 1979
ZHAN JIANJUN
LANDSCAPE



69
袁運生 北京首都機場壁畫：
潑水節——生命的贊歌 (局部) 1979
YUAN YUNSHENG
WATER FESTIVAL - A CELEBRATION OF
LIFE: MURAL AT BEIJING'S CAPITOL
AIRPORT (detail)



64
韓柏友
戰馬超 (參加12人畫展) 1978
HAN BOYOU
BATTLING MA CHAO



67
馮國東
鄉村 1978
FENG GUODONG
VILLAGE



70
蕭惠祥 北京首都機場壁畫：
科學的春天 (局部) 1979
XIAO HUIXIANG
SCIENTIFIC SPRING: MURAL AT BEIJING'S
CAPITOL AIRPORT



71
趙文量
殘荷 1975
ZHAO WENLIANG
WILTED LOTUS



74
汲成
肖像 1979
JI CHENG
PORTRAIT



77
蔣鐵峯
抽象 1982
JIANG TIEFENG
ABSTRACTION



72
楊雨樹
劫後、中國瓶花 (參加無名畫會) 1975
YANG YUSHU
AFTER THE RAID, CHINESE VASE AND
FLOWERS



75
蔣鐵峯·陳之川
蝴蝶 1978
JIANG TIEFENG, CHEN ZHICHUAN
BUTTERFLIES



78
王克平
無題 1983
WANG KEPING
UNTITLED



73
薛明德
肖像 1978
XUE MINGDE
PORTRAIT



76
包炮
抽象雕刻 1980
BAO PAO
ABSTRACT SCULPTURE



79
羅中立
父親 1980
LUO ZHONGLI
FATHER



80
程叢林
1968年X月X日雪
CHENG CONGLIN
SNOW ON X MONTH X DAY IN 1968



83
何多苓
春風已經蘇醒 1980
HE DUOLING
AWOKEN BY THE SPRING WIND



86
王克平 沉默 1979 (漢雅軒藏品)
WANG KEPING
SILENCE (Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



81
王川
倖存者 1981 200X150cm
(漢雅軒藏品)
WANG CHUAN
SURVIVORS (Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)
鄉土寫實



84
何多苓 灰色的天空 1983
HE DUOLING GREY SKIES



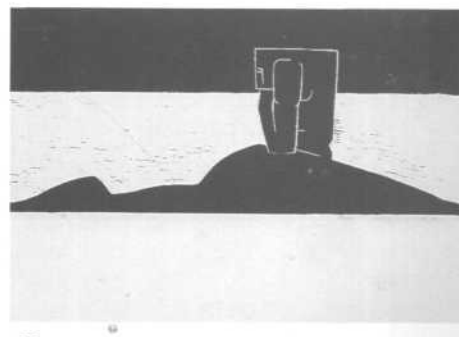
87
王克平 偶像 1979 (漢雅軒藏品)
WANG KEPING
IDOL (Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



82
陳丹青
西藏組畫·進城 1980
CHEN DANCHING
GOING TO TOWN from TIBET SERIES



85
丁方 抗旱 1983
DING FANG FIGHTING THE DROUGHT



88
馬德升 無題 1978 (漢雅軒藏品)
MA DESHENG
UNTITLED (Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



89
黃銳
無題 1980 (漢雅軒藏品)
HUANG RUI
UNTITLED (Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



92
毛栗子
琴鍵 1991 (漢雅軒藏品)
MAO LIZI
KEYBOARD (Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



95
楊益平
睡眠的紅衛兵 八十年代末
(漢雅軒藏品)
YANG YIPING
RED GUARD ASLEEP late 1980s
(Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



90
黃銳
墨 1992
HUANG RUI
INK AT MODERN ART CENTRE, OSAKA



93
嚴力
對話 1978
YAN LI DIALOGUE



96
楊益平
舊事 八十年代末
(漢雅軒藏品)
YANG YIPING
MEMORY late 1980s
(Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



91
毛栗子
紅牆 1979 (漢雅軒藏品)
MAO LIZI
RED WALL (Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



94
楊益平
小食店 八十年代末
(漢雅軒藏品)
YANG YIPING
RESTAURANT late 1980s
(Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



97
黃永砫
熱帕勒(塚草) 1978年在上海展出
1984
HUANG YONGPING
HAYING, exhibited in Shanghai in 1978



98
黃永砫，林嘉華，焦躍明，俞曉明
發生在福建美術館的事件展覽 1986
HUANG YONGPING, LIN JIAHUA,
JIAO YAOMING, YU XIAOMING
A HAPPENING AT THE FUJIAN MUSEUM OF ART



101
谷文達
難道要我們批閱三男兩女所寫
的靜字嗎？ 1986
GU WENDA
ARE WE REALLY GOING TO
CRITIQUE THE "JING" WRITTEN
BY THREE MEN AND TWO WOMEN?



104
邢勝華
對話（現成品） 1985
XIN SHENGHUA
DIALOGUE (found objects)



99
黃永砫，林嘉華，焦躍明，俞曉明等
焚燒作品的藝術事件 1986
HUANG YONGPING, LIN JIAHUA,
JIAO YAOMING, YU XIAOMING
BURNING ART WORKS AT A HAPPENING



102
谷文達
地上有一盤沒有下完的險棋 1987
GU WENDA
AN UNFINISHED GAME OF DIFFICULT CHESS
REMAINS ON THE FLOOR



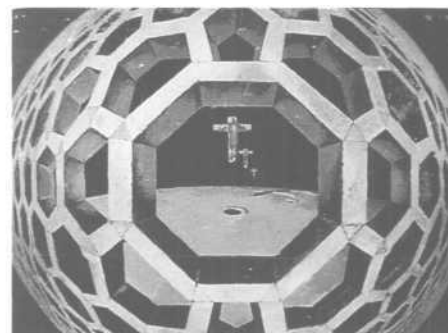
105
艾尼瓦爾
無題（現成品裝置展覽一角）
1985
AINI WA'ER
UNTITLED (installation)



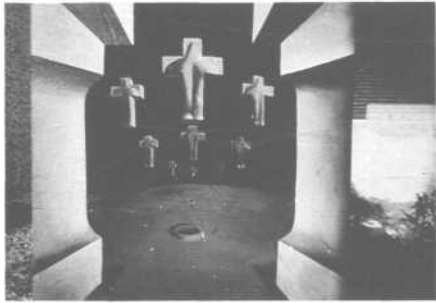
100
黃永砫
中國繪畫史與西方現代繪畫簡史
在洗衣機裡攪拌了兩分鐘 1987
HUANG YONGPING
HISTORY OF CHINESE PAINTING
AND HISTORY OF MODERN
WESTERN PAINTING TOSSED
TOGETHER IN A TWO-MINUTE
WASHING MACHINE CYCLE



103
王紀平等
旗（裝置） 1985
WANG JIPING AND OTHERS
FLAG (installation)



106
舒羣
絕對原則系列之一 1985
SHU QUN
from ABSOLUTE PRINCIPLES SERIES



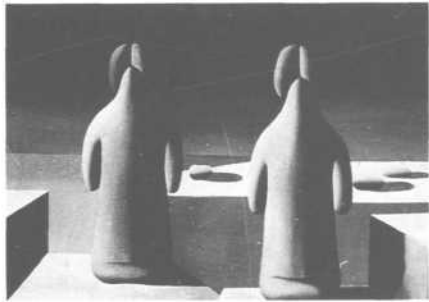
107
舒羣
絕對原則系列之一 1985
SHU QUN
from ABSOLUTE PRINCIPLES SERIES



110
王廣義
毛澤東1號 1988 200×480cm
WANG GUANGYI
MAO ZEDONG NO. 1



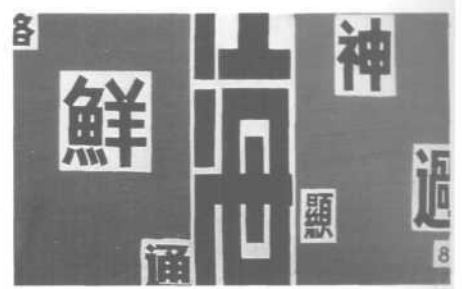
113
孟祿丁，張羣
新時代亞當夏娃的啟示 1985
MENG LUDING, ZHANG QUN
A SIGN FOR ADAM AND EVE OF
THE NEW AGE



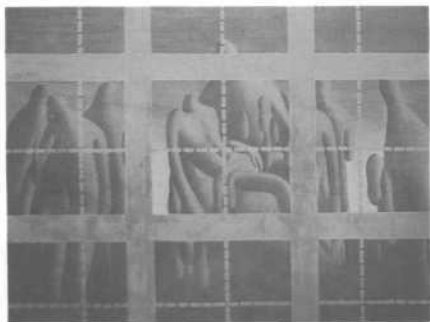
108
王廣義
凝固的北方極地之一 1985
WANG GUANGYI
from THE FROZEN NORTH POLE SERIES



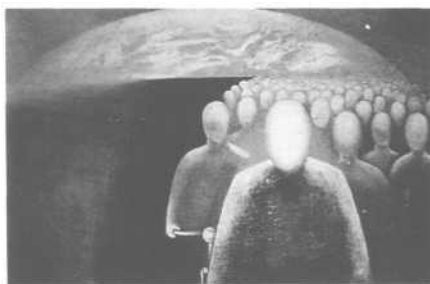
111
丁方
悲劇的力量 1987
DING FANG
THE POWER OF TRAGEDY



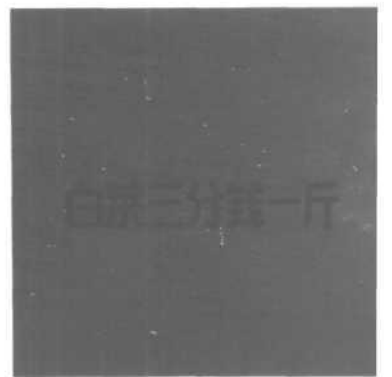
114
吳山專，倪海峯，張海舟，宋澄華，駱獻躍，
呂海舟，黃堅
紅75%黑20%白5%系列之一 1986
WU SHANZHUAN, NI HAIFENG, ZHANG HAIZHOU,
SONG CHENGHUA, LUO XIANYUE, LÜ HAIZHOU,
HUANG JIAN
from 75% RED, 20% BLACK, 5% WHITE SERIES



109
王廣義
紅色理性：偶像的修正 1987
200×150cm
WANG GUANGYI
RED RATIONALE: CORRECTION OF
AN IDOL



112
成肖玉
東方 1985 45×65cm
CHENG XIAOYU
THE EAST



115
吳山專，倪海峯，張海舟，宋澄華，
駱獻躍，呂海舟，黃堅
紅75%黑20%白5%系列之一 1986
WU SHANZHUAN, NI HAIFENG,
ZHANG HAIZHOU, SONG CHENGHUA,
LUO XIANYUE, LÜ HAIZHOU, HUANG JIAN
from 75% RED, 20% BLACK,
5% WHITE SERIES



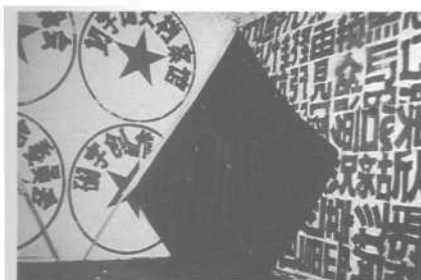
116
吳山專
紅色幽默 1987
WU SHANZHUAN
RED HUMOUR



119
唐宋·肖魯
《中國現代藝術展》槍擊事件現場 1989
TANG SONG, XIAO LU
SITE OF PISTOL SHOT HAPPENING DURING
"CHINA/AVANT-GARDE" EXHIBITION



122
張曉剛
生生不息之愛系列之一 1987
ZHANG XIAOGANG
from FOREVER LASTING LOVE SERIES



117
吳山專
紅色幽默：紅印 1987
WU SHANZHUAN
RED HUMOUR: RED STAMPS



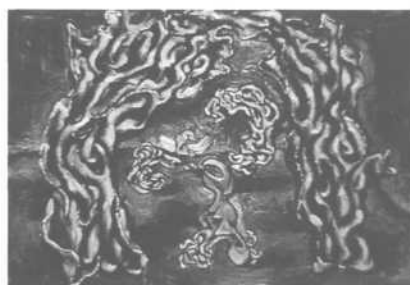
120
陳宇飛
肖像 1984
CHEN YUFEI
BUST



123
毛旭暉
水泥房間裡的人體·正午 1986 100X65cm
MAO XUHUI
BODY INSIDE A CONCRETE CELL, NOON



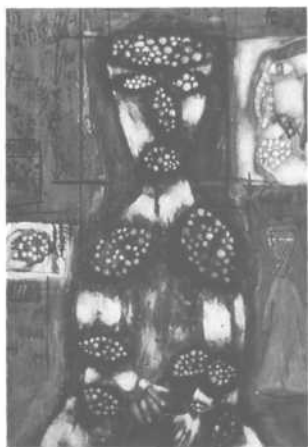
118
倪海峯
無題 1987
NI HAIFENG
UNTITLED



121
張曉剛
幽靈系列之一 1984
ZHANG XIAOGANG
from SPIRITS SERIES



124
葉永青
春天喚醒冬眠者 1986
YE YONGQING
SPRING WAKES THE WINTER
HIBERNATOR



125
潘德海
苞米系列之一 1988
PAN DEHAI
from CORN SERIES



128
王强
第五交響樂第二樂章開頭的柔板
(雕塑) 1985
WANG QIANG
OPENING OF THE SECOND
MOVEMENT FROM BEETHOVEN'S
SYMPHONY NO. 5 (sculpture)



131
張培力·耿建翌·曹學雷
捆扎件·舊報紙·尼龍繩 1986
ZHANG PEILI, GENG JIANYI,
CAO XUELEI
TIED PIECES · OLD NEWSPAPERS
NYLON ROPES



126
管策
無題 1986 140×100cm
GUAN CE
UNTITLED



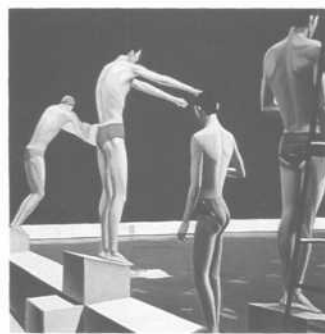
129
柴曉剛
未竟之渡 1985 (漢雅軒藏品)
CHAI XIAOGANG
INCOMPLETE PASSAGE
(Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



132
張培力
X?系列之一 1987
ZHANG PEILI from
X? SERIES



127
侯文怡
無題(現成品裝置) 1984
HOU WENYI
UNTITLED
(installation from ready-made objects)



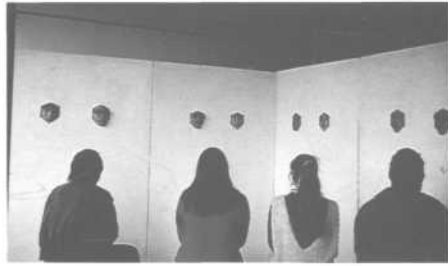
130
張培力
仲夏的泳者 1985
ZHANG PEILI
MIDSUMMER SWIMMERS



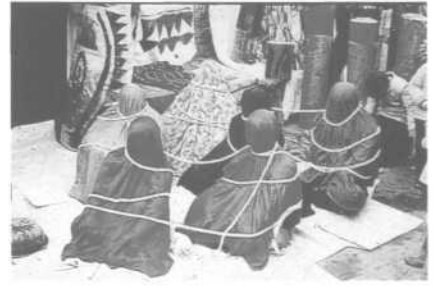
133
張培力
X?系列(裝置) 1987
ZHANG PEILI
X? SERIES (installation)



134
張培力
30X30 (錄像) 1988
ZHANG PEILI
30X30 (video frame)



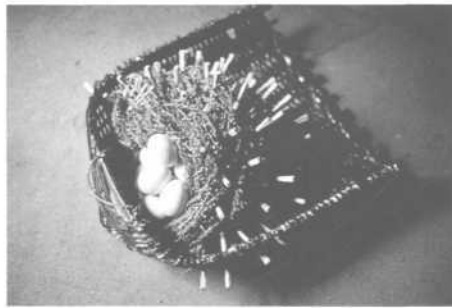
137
耿建翌
自來水廠 (一個互相窺視的裝置) 1988
GENG JIANYI
WATER FACTORY: A MUTUALLY VOYEURISTIC
INSTALLATION



140
武平人等
'87行爲 1987
WU PINGREN AND OTHERS
'87 ACT



135
耿建翌
1985年夏季的又一個光頭 1985
GENG JIANYI
ANOTHER SHAVED HEAD IN THE
SUMMER OF 1985



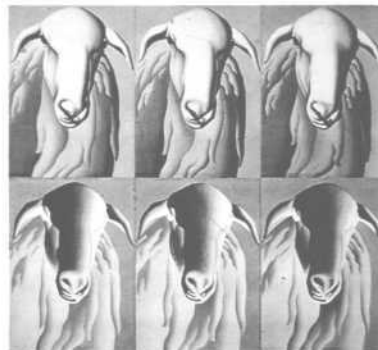
138
唐宋
巢 (千根火柴做成的裝置) 1988
TANG SONG
NEST (Installation made from 1,000 matches)



141
趙建海, 盛奇, 鄭玉珂, 康木
大悲劇烽火台系列 1988
ZHAO JIANHAI, SHENG QI, ZHENG YUKE,
KANG MU
MAJOR TRAGEDY, SIGNAL STATION SERIES



136
耿建翌
第二狀態 1987 200X145cm
GENG JIANYI
THE SECOND STATE



139
宋陵
無意義的選擇? 1987
SONG LING
A MEANINGLESS CHOICE?



142
魏光慶
自殺系列 1988
WEI GUANGQING
SUICIDE SERIES



143
顏磊
膠帶捆扎 (行為藝術) 1991
YAN LEI
TAPE BONDAGE (Action Art)



146
徐一暉
海 1985 (漢雅軒藏品)
XU YIHUI
OCEAN (Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



149
徐冰
析世鑒·世紀末卷 (裝置)
1988
XU BING
A MIRROR TO ANALYSE
THE WORLD (installation)



144
任戎
圓寂的召喚 1985
REN RONG
THE CALL OF NIRVANA



147
徐一暉
莫勒亞特南部 1985 (漢雅軒藏品)
XU YIHUI
SOUTHERN PART OF MOJAVE
(Collection Hanart T Z Gallery)



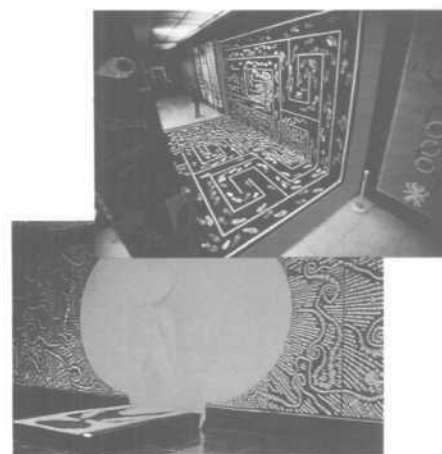
150
徐冰
析世鑒·世紀末卷 (原版局部)
(漢雅軒藏品)
XU BING
A MIRROR TO ANALYSE
THE WORLD (detail)



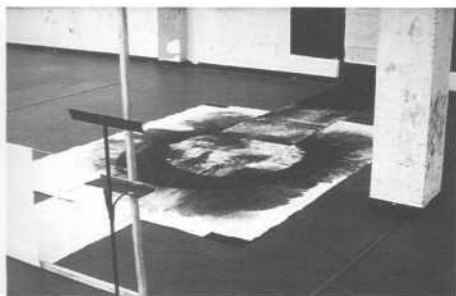
145
任戎
北方的暗示之四 1986
REN RONG
INTIMATION FROM THE NORTH NO. 4



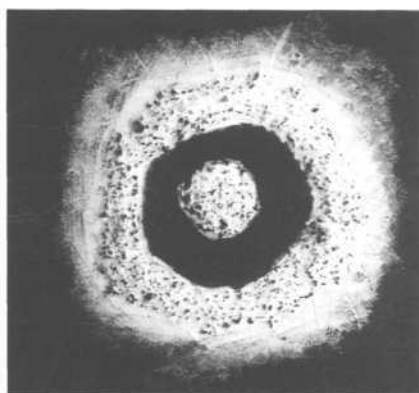
148
陳文驥
灰色的環境·藍色的天 1987
CHEN WENJI
BLUE SKIES · GREY ENVIRONMENT



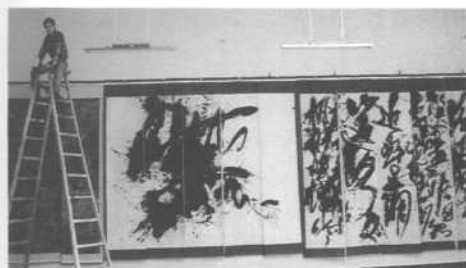
151
呂勝中
神路·召魂 (剪紙裝置, 展覽局部) 1988
LÜ SHENGZHONG
SPIRITS' PATH · SEANCE
(paper cutting installation, detail)



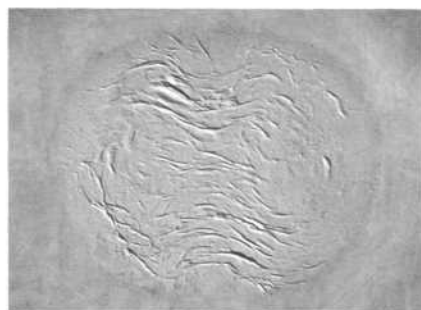
152
王公懿
水墨(装置) 1977
WANG GONGYI
INK (Installation)



155
徐虹
喜马拉雅山系列 1988
XU HONG
from HIMALAYAN SERIES



153
宋刚
活页日记系列之一 1988
SONG GANG
from LOOSE LEAF DIARY SERIES



156
尚扬
状态:5 1989 (汉雅轩藏品)
SHANG YANG
CONDITION: No. 5



154
余友涵
圆 1977
YU YOUHAN
CIRCLE

Footnote 1
No illustration

Footnote 2
(1) Modernist Movement in the 1930s and 1940s
illus. 1 to 10
(2) Realist Movement
illus. 11 to 22
(3) Realism and the Restructuring of Ink Painting
illus. 23 to 27
(4) Realism and New Year Calender of the 1930s and 1940s
illus. 28 to 32

Footnote 3
Woodcut Movement
illus. 33 to 36

Footnote 4
The Yan'an Cultural Movement and Woodcuts
illus. 37 to 40

Footnote 5
New Year's Painting and its Influence on Oil Painting
illus. 41 to 61

Footnote 6
No illustration

Footnote 7
(1) Wave of Formalism
illus. 62 to 64
(2) New Year Landscape and Still Life, Oil Paintings of the 1970s
illus. 64 to 68
(3) The Decorative Style (Capitol Airport 1979)
illus. 69 to 70
(4) The Anonymous Painting Association, Beijing
illus. 71 to 72
(5) The "Contemporaries" (*Tongdai ren*) exhibition in Beijing and the Yunan "Monkey Year Society" (Shenshe) exhibition
illus. 73 to 75
(6) Abstract Art of The Early 1980s
illus. 76 to 78
(7) Scar Art
illus. 79 to 81
(8) Native Soil Movement
illus. 82 to 85
(9) The Stars Exhibitions
illus. 86 to 96

Footnote 8
No illustration

Footnote 9
(1) Dada and Pop-Inspired Art
illus. 97 to 105
(2) Cultural Criticism and Reconstruction
illus. 106 to 119
(3) School of Life
illus. 120 to 143
(4) Surrealist-Style Art
illus. 144 to 147

Footnote 10
No illustration

Footnote 11
The Purified Language Movement
illus. 148 to 156

Footnote 12
No illustration

CHINA'S NEW ART, POST-1989

後八九中國新藝術

BOOKS REGISTRATION ORDINANCE
Chapter 142
Number: HK 936193 13

hanart
T Z Gallery
漢雅軒

CHINA'S NEW ART, POST-1989

WITH A RETROSPECTIVE FROM 1979-1989

Organised by Hanart T Z Gallery

Organising Curators: Chang Tsong-zung 張頌仁, Li Xianting 栗憲庭

Hong Kong Exhibition Curator: Oscar Ho 何慶基

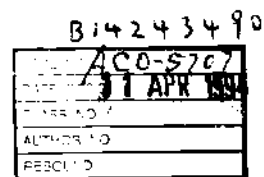
Taiwan Exhibition Coordinator: Joyce Hung 洪致美

Assistant Curator: Liao Wen 廖雯

Catalogue Editor-in-Chief: Valerie C. Doran 任卓華

Editorial Board: Tsong-zung Chang 張頌仁, Li Xianting 栗憲庭, Valerie C. Doran 任卓華, Liao Wen 廖雯,
Don J. Cohn 龔丹, Zhang Jingqing 張靜清, Jeffrey Hantover 韓傑, Jannie Sze 施遠, Eric Wear 華立強

Jointly presented by Hanart T Z Gallery, Hong Kong Arts Centre and Hong Kong Arts Festival Society



Exhibition Dates and Venues:

31 January-14 February, 1993 Exhibition Hall, Low Block,
Hong Kong City Hall,
Central, Hong Kong

2 February-25 February, 1993 Pao Galleries, 4th and 5th Floors,
Hong Kong Arts Centre,
2 Harbour Road,
Wanchai, Hong Kong

* The exhibition's international tour will commence in Australia in June 1993, at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (*Curatorial Adviser:* Dr. Nicholas Jose 周思).

Special thanks to

Mr. David Tang for his encouragement and support

and to

Pressroom Printer and Designer for their professional assistance above and beyond the call of duty.

CONTENTS

<i>Introduction: Into the Nineties</i> by Chang Tsong-zung 張頌仁	I–VII
<i>1989 and China's New Art Post-1989</i> by Oscar Ho Hing-Kay 何慶基	VIII–IX
<i>Major Trends in the Development of Contemporary Chinese Art</i> by Li Xianting 栗憲庭	X–XXII
<i>Brush-Strokes and the Party Line: Tensions between Artists and Officialdom in China</i> by Michael Sullivan 蘇立文	XXIII–XXVI
<i>The Orthodox and the Avant-Garde: An Historical Examination</i> by Shih Shou-chien 石守謙	XXVII–XXX
<i>Modern Chinese Art — The Early Phase (1911–1949)</i> by Lang Shaojun 郎紹君	XXXI–XXXIV
<i>Building in a Gorge</i> by Liu Xiaochun 劉曉純	XXXV–XXXVI
<i>Towards the World: China's New Art, 1989–93</i> by Nicholas Jose 周思	XXXVII–XL
<i>Choice and Opportunity: The Fate of Western Contemporary Art in China</i> by Yi Ying 易英	XLI–XLVI
<i>Exploit, Export, Expropriate: Artful Marketing from China, 1989–93</i> by Geremie Barmé 白傑明	XLVII–LI
<i>Unrepentent Prodigal Sons: the Temper of Contemporary Chinese Art</i> by Liao Wen 廖雯	LII–LIX
<i>The Problems of Chinese Artists Working Overseas</i> by Fei Dawei 費大為	LX–LXI
<i>Locating Creative Space</i> by Francesca Dal Lago 菲蘭	LXII–LXIII
<i>What You See Is Not What You Get: Chinese Painting after June 4</i> by Jeffrey Hantover 韓傑	LXIV–LXV
<i>Interpretations</i> by Eric Wear 華立強	LXVI–LXX
Appendix	LXXI
Illustrated Notes to <i>Major Trends in the Development of Contemporary Chinese Art</i> by Li Xianting 栗憲庭	LXXII
Illustrated Introduction to Performance Art in China, Post-1989	C
<i>The 1985 New Wave Art Movement</i> by Gao Minglu 高名潞	CIV
Plates of artworks and artists' biographies	1–233