

**HISTORY OF ART DEPARTMENT  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD**

**HONOUR SCHOOL OF HISTORY OF ART:**

**Art in China since 1911  
Trinity Term 2010  
Professor Craig Clunas**



**Hai Bo, 'They', 1999**

**Tuesdays 11-1**

**Office hours: Mondays 4-5  
Telephone: 01865 286834  
Email: [craig.clunas@hoa.ox.ac.uk](mailto:craig.clunas@hoa.ox.ac.uk)**

## **Course description:**

This course, for which no prior experience of Chinese art or history is required, will provide an overview of developments in the visual arts of China from the end of the imperial period to the present, and will relate them to changes within the broader culture. How did the material forms and contexts of art, as well as the social roles of its makers and audiences, change over this period? Students will study a range of visual materials, from painting in 'traditional' and 'western' formats, through graphics and photography, to the performance and installation art of more recent times. They will engage with the issues, central to the artists of this period, of how to make art that is both 'modern' and 'Chinese', and will look at the ways the turbulent politics of twentieth century China have been expressed in visual terms, and have in turn inflected the visual images which have been produced.

## **Tutorials:**

These will be held in Weeks 2, 4, 6, and 8, times to be arranged. You will write two essays and prepare two 'virtual exhibition' Powerpoints, the details of which I will explain when we meet. Topics are as follows:

### **1: Essay**

- To what extent is Chinese art of the Republican period 'a dialogue with the West'?

### **2: Powerpoint 'Virtual exhibition'**

- Realism in Chinese art 1911-1976

### **3: Essay**

- To what extent is the programme laid out in Mao's 'Yan'an Forum' manifested in Chinese art after 1949?

### **4: Powerpoint 'Virtual exhibition'**

- How Chinese is 'Chinese contemporary art'?

## **General background reading on modern Chinese art (arranged in order of their date of publication):**

Mayching Kao ed., *Twentieth century Chinese Painting* (Hong Kong, 1988)

Scott Minick and Jiao Ping, *Chinese Graphic Design in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1990)

Richard Kraus, *Brushes with Power* (Berkeley, 1991)

Jerome Silbergeld, *Contradictions: Artistic Life, the Socialist State and the Chinese painter Li Huasheng* (Seattle, 1993)

John Clark ed., *Modernity in Asian Art* (Broadway NSW, 1993)

Stefan Landsberger, *Chinese Propaganda Posters: From Revolution to Modernisation* (Amsterdam, 1995)

Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-century China* (Berkeley, 1996)

*Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting: Tradition and Innovation* (Hong Kong, 1996)

Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, Zheng Shengtian, eds, *Shanghai Modern, 1919-1945* (Munich, 2004)

John Clark *Modern Asian Art* (Honolulu, 1998)

Julia Andrews, *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Chinese Art* (New York, 1998)

Gao Minglu, ed. *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (Berkeley, 1998)

Stefan Landsberger, *Paint it Red: Fifty Years of Chinese Propaganda Posters* (Groningen, 1999)  
Robert L. Thorp & Richard Ellis Vinograd, *Chinese Art and Culture* (New York, 2001), pp. 367-414  
Wu Hung, *Chinese Art at the Crossroads* (London, 2001)  
Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith eds., *Chinese Art Modern Expressions* (New York, 2001)  
Gordon S. Barrass, *The Art of Calligraphy in Modern China* (London, 2002)  
Martina Koppel-Yang, *Semiotic warfare : a semiotic analysis, the Chinese avant-Garde, 1979-1989* (Hong Kong, 2003)  
Huang Rui Beijing 798: *Beijing 798 : reflections on art, architecture and society in China* (Hong Kong, 2004)  
Richard Kurt Kraus, *The Party and the Art in China: the New Politics of Culture* (Lanham, 2004)  
Michael Nuridsany, *China Art Now* (Paris, 2004)  
Dian Tong, *China! New Art and Artists* (Atglen PA, 2005)  
Karen Smith, *Nine Lives; the Birth of Avant-Garde art in New China* (Zurich, 2006)  
Craig Clunas, *Art in China 2<sup>nd</sup> edition* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 201-35

### **Web-Based Resources:**

In addition to printed sources, there are some excellent websites around:

<http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/> is the online version of the *Dictionary of Art*. Material on China is of variable quality, but do not overlook this resource.

<http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/exhib/gug/intr/china.html> is basically an on-line version of Julia Andrews, *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Chinese Art* (New York, 1998), and has a very good range of illustrations.

**This will probably be the single most useful website to you for the earlier parts of the course.**

[http://cn.cl2000.com/art100/index\\_en.htm](http://cn.cl2000.com/art100/index_en.htm) '20th Century Chinese Oil Painting Exhibition', website of the China Oil Painting Society, with historic gallery

[http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/arthistory/department/general/MCAA\\_Bibliography.pdf](http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/arthistory/department/general/MCAA_Bibliography.pdf) is a huge bibliography of modern Asian art, maintained by John Clark at the University of Sydney

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/art/china> is a 'Bibliography of Contemporary Chinese art' maintained by Britta Erikson of Stanford University

<http://www.yishujournal.com> Website of *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art* (gives contents pages, and complete run in CC Office)

### Some useful non-art sites:

<http://www.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/igcs/> is an 'Internet Guide for Chinese Studies'

<http://chp.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/> 'Historical Photographs of China'

<http://factsanddetails.com/china> 'Facts and Details: China'

<http://thechinabeat.blogspot.com/> 'The China Beat: Blogging How the East is Read'

**There are links to these sites and other on the Weblearn site for this course.**

## WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS

### Week 1:

#### Avant-garde and tradition in Republican China 1911-1937

The idea of an 'avant-garde' is an important one in Chinese art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond, appearing for the first time in the 1920s. But what does it mean and how should we interpret it? What does it tell us about the relationship of art and history in China? The centuries old practices of brush and ink painting continued to coexist in 20<sup>th</sup> century China with new forms of pictorial practice – how were they sustained in terms of both artists and audiences?

- Ralph Croizier, 'Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The Juelanshe (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China', in John Clark ed., *Modernity in Asian Art* Broadway NSW, 1993), pp. 135-54
- John Clark *Modern Asian Art* (Honolulu, 1998), pp. 217-236
- Aida-Yuen Wong, 'A New Life for Literati Painting in the Early Twentieth Century: Eastern Art and Modernity, a Transcultural Narrative', *Artibus Asiae*, 60.2 (2000), pp. 297-326 **WEBLEARN**
- David Der-wei Wang, 'In the Name of the Real', in Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith eds., *Chinese Art Modern Expressions* (New York, 2001), pp. 28-59
- Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, Zheng Shengtian, eds, *Shanghai Modern, 1919-1945* (Munich, 2004)

*The Art of Xu Beihong* (Hong Kong, 1988)

Wen Fong, 'The Modern Chinese Art Debate', *Artibus Asiae*, 53.1/2 (1993), pp. 290-305 **WEBLEARN**

John Clark, 'Open and Closed Discourses of Modernity in Asian Art', in John Clark ed., *Modernity in Asian Art* Broadway NSW, 1993), pp. 1-17

Kuiyi Shen, 'On the Reform of Chinese painting in Early Republican China', in Cao Yiqiang and Fan Jingzhong eds., *Chinese Painting in the Twentieth Century: Creativity in the Aftermath of Tradition* (Hangzhou, 1997), pp. 602-22

Julia Andrews, 'Let the Past Serve the Present; Modern Chinese Art and its Histories', *Orientalism* (February, 1998), pp. 62-70

John Clark *Modern Asian Art* (Honolulu, 1998), pp. 155-171

Wen C. Fong, *Between Two Cultures: Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Chinese Paintings from the Robert H. Ellsworth Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York and New Haven, 2001)

Ralph Croizier, *Art and Revolution in Modern China: The Lingnan (Cantonese) School of Painting, 1906-1951* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1988)

Julia Andrews, 'Traditional Chinese Painting in an Age of Revolution, 1911-1937', in Cao Yiqiang and Fan Jingzhong eds., *Chinese Painting in the Twentieth Century: Creativity in the Aftermath of Tradition* (Hangzhou, 1997), pp. 579-595

Aida Yuan Wong, *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China* (Honolulu, 2006)

### Week 2:

#### Mass Media and Visual Culture in the Republic 1911-1949

China in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a massive explosion in new forms of picturing practice, from the cinema to advertising. This session will look at some of these forms and ask how they related to new audiences for art and visual culture.

- Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, Zheng Shengtian, eds, *Shanghai Modern, 1919-1945* (Munich, 2004), pp. 298-347
- Scott Minick and Jiao Ping, *Chinese Graphic Design in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1990)
- Ellen Johnston Laing, *Selling happiness : calendar posters and visual culture in early-twentieth-century Shanghai*, (Honolulu, 2004)
- James A. Flath, *The cult of happiness : nianhua, art, and history in rural north China* (Vancouver, 2004)
- <http://www.ssc.uwo.ca/history/nianhua/> 'The Nianhua Gallery'

Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern* (Cambridge MA, 1999)

Carrie Warra, 'Invention, Industry, Art: The Commercialization of Culture In Republican Art Magazines', in Sherman Cochran ed., *Inventing Nanjing Road: Commercial Culture in Shanghai, 1900-1945* (Ithaca NY, 1999), pp. 61-90

Ng Chun Bong ed., *Chinese Woman and Modernity: Calendar posters of the 1910s-1930s* (Hong Kong, 1996)

### Week 3:

#### Art and politics in an age of war and revolution, 1927-1949

The visual arts were closely involved in Chinese resistance to Japanese invasion, and in the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century became intensely politicised. This session will look at one aspect of this process, through the writings on art of the Communist leader Mao Zedong.

- Mao Zedong, 'Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Art and Literature', in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Peking, 1965), Volume 3: 69-74: **WEBLEARN**  
[http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/classics/mao/sw3/mswv3\\_08.html](http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/classics/mao/sw3/mswv3_08.html) Text of Yan'an Forum in English
- B.S. McDougall, *Mao Zedong's `Talks at the Yan'an conference on literature and art'*, (Ann Arbor, 1980)
- Xiaobing Tang, *Origins of the Chinese Avant-Garde: The Modern Woodcut Movement* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 2008)

David Holm, *Art and Ideology in Revolutionary China* (Oxford, 1991)

Chang-tai Hung, *War and Popular Culture: Resistance in Modern China, 1937-1945* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1994)

### Week 4:

#### Ideology and institutions in the People's Republic, 1949-1964

The Communist victory in 1949 created a whole new set of artistic institutions in China, as well as a new political and cultural context for the arts; how did artists respond to the opportunities and threats of the new situation ?

- Julia F. Andrews, 'Traditional Painting in New China: *Guohua* and the Anti-Rightist Campaign', *Journal of Asian Studies* 49.3 (Autumn 1990), pp. 555-86  
**WEBLEARN**
- John Clark *Modern Asian Art* (Honolulu, 1998), pp. 239-59
- Maria Galikowski, *Art and Politics in China, 1949-1984* (Hong Kong, 1998)
- Julia F. Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China 1949-1979* (Berkeley, 1994)

- Ellen Johnson Laing, *The Winking Owl: Art in the People's Republic of China* (Berkeley, 1988)
- Joan Lebold Cohen, *The New Chinese painting 1949-1986* (New York, 1987)
- Shao Dazhen, 'Chinese Art in the 1950s: An Avant Garde Undercurrent Beneath the Mainstream of Realism', in John Clark ed., *Modernity in Asian Art* (New South Wales, 1993), pp. 75-84

#### Week 5:

##### Cultural production and cultural revolution, 1964-1976

How was culture adapted in the period of intense politicisation now known as 'Maoism'? This session looks at the most prominent forms of cultural production during the 1960s and 1970s from a strictly political vision to one which was more . We look at political posters, model operas and see how representations of the utopian vision changed in the later Cultural Revolution and after Mao's death.

- Harriet Evans and Stephanie Donald (eds.), *Picturing Power in the People's Republic of China : Posters of the Cultural Revolution* (Oxford, 1999).
- Melissa Chiu and Zheng Shengtian eds., *Art and China's Revolution* (New York, 2008)
- <http://www.morningsun.org/> 'A Film and Website about Cultural Revolution'
- <http://www.iisg.nl/landsberger/> 'Stefan Landsberger's Chinese Propaganda Poster Pages'
- <http://hahn.zenfolio.com/f320124069/> 'Images from the Cultural Revolution'

Katie Hill ed., *The political body : posters from the People's Republic of China* (London, 2004)

Maria Galikowski, *Art and Politics in China, 1949-1984* (Hong Kong, 1998)

Julia F. Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China 1949-1979* (Berkeley, 1994)

Ellen Johnson Laing, *The Winking Owl: Art in the People's Republic of China* (Berkeley, 1988)

Joan Lebold Cohen, *The New Chinese Painting 1949-1986* (New York, 1987)

Anchee Min, Duo Duo, and Stefan R. Landsberger, eds. *Chinese Propaganda Posters: from Revolution to Modernization* (Köln, 2003)

#### Week 6:

##### Art in the Reform Era, 1976-1989

In this session we look at a neo-realist movement which developed in the 1970s, known as 'Scar art'. Paintings were produced which described the personal pain which the Cultural Revolution inflicted on individuals, emphasising emotions of empathy and pity. We look too at how painters responded to changed political and economic conditions as the era of reform got under way.

- Lin Xiaoping, 'Contemporary Chinese Painting: the Leading Masters and the Younger Generation', *Leonardo*, 20 (1987), pp. 47-55 **WEBLEARN**
- Richard Kraus, 'China's artists between plan and market', in Deborah S. Davis, et al eds, *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China* (Washington and Cambridge, 1995), pp. 173-92.
- Joan Lebold Cohen, *The New Chinese Painting 1949-1986* (New York, 1987)
- Julia F. Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China 1949-1979* (Berkeley, 1994)

- Richard Kurt Kraus, *The Party and the Arty in China: the New Politics of Culture* (Lanham, 2004)

Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-century China* (Berkeley, 1996)

Yuejin Wang, 'Anxiety of Portraiture: Quest for/Questioning Ancestral icons in Post-Mao China', in Liu Kang and Xiaobing Tang eds., *Politics, Ideology and Literary Discourse in Modern China* (Durham and London, 1993), pp. 243-72

<http://www.hefnercollection.com/index.asp> 'The Hefner Collection'

#### Week 7:

##### The Avant-garde, 1979-1993

The 1980s were years of rapid transformation in all forms of culture in China.

We examine two key turning points in Chinese art production during these years which led to the development of diverse and radical work by the end of the decade, the '1985 movement' and the 1989 'China/Avantgarde' exhibition, held at the National Art Gallery in Beijing.

- Julia F. Andrews and Gao Minglu, 'The avant-garde's challenge to official art', in Deborah S. Davis, et al eds, *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China* Washington and Cambridge, 1995), pp. 221-78
- Claire Huot, *China's New Cultural Scene* (Durham and London, 2000), Chapter 5, 'China's Avant-Garde Art: Differences in the Family', pp. 126-155
- Gao Minglu, ed. *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (Berkeley, 1998)
- Wu Hung, *Transience: Chinese Experimental Art at the End of the Century* (Chicago, 1999)
- Martina Koeppel-Yang, *Semiotic Warfare . The Chinese Avant-Garde: 1979-1989* (Hong Kong, 2003)

Jochen Noth et al. eds. *China Avant-Garde: Counter-Currents in Art and Culture*. (Berlin, 1993).

#### Week 8:

##### Globalisation and the global market for 'contemporary Chinese art'

In 1993, contemporary art from China came to be exhibited in international exhibitions around the world. This week we look at the ways in which Chinese art came to be 'packaged' and defined as a novel addition to Western exotica.

What effect does globalisation have on the production of art from China?

How does one unravel the complex relationships between artist, consumer and global capital?

- Stanley K. Abe, 'No Questions, No Answers: China and *A Book from the Sky*', in Rey Chow ed., *Modern Chinese Literary and Cultural Studies in the Age of Theory* (Durham and London, 2000), pp. 227-50 Also published as 'Reading the Sky', in Wen-hsin Yeh ed., *Cross-Cultural Readings of Chineseness: Narratives, Images and Interpretations of the 1990s*, China Research Monograph 51 (Berkeley, 2000), pp. 53-79
- Wu Hung, *Chinese Art at the Crossroads* (London, 2001)
- Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 29-72, 'New World Order'
- Gao Minglu, 'The Great Wall in Contemporary Chinese Art', *positions: east asia cultures critique*, 12.3 (2004), pp. 773-86 **WEBLEARN**

- Wu Hung, *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space* (London, 2005), pp. 165-234, 'Art of the Square: From Subject to Site'

Hou Hanru, 'Beyond the 'Chinese'', in Clark (ed.) *Chinese Art at the End of the Millennium*, (Hong Kong, 2000) pp.34-45.

Geremie R. Barmé, *In the Red: On Contemporary Chinese Culture* (New York, 1999), Chapter 8, 'Artful Marketing', pp. 201-34

Jonathan Hay, "Ambivalent Icons: Works by Five Chinese Artists Based in the United States." *Orientations*, vol. 23, no. 7 (July 1992), pp. 37-43.

Alice Yang, *Why Asia? Contemporary Asian and Asian American Art*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

Erickson, Britta. *The Art of Xu Bing: Words Without Meaning, Meaning Without Words*. Washington, DC: Arthur Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institute, 2001.

Wu Hung and Christopher Phillips eds., *Between past and future : new photography and video from China* (Chicago, 2004)

*The Real Thing: Contemporary Art from China*, Tate Liverpool (Liverpool, 2007)

*The Revolution Continues*, Saatchi Gallery (London, 2008)

Christopher Noe, Xenia Piech, Cordelia Steiner, *Young Chinese Artists: the Next Generation* (Munich, 2008)

Richard Vine, *New China, New Art* (New York, 2008)

Artists websites:

<http://www.caiguoqiang.com/> Cai Guo-qiang

<http://www.caofei.com/> Cao Fei

<http://www.zhanghuan.com/> Zhang Huan

