

## Chinese Contemporary Art in the Global Context (Berlin, 22-24 Oct 09)

Juliane Noth

in the Global Context" (Berlin, Oct. 22-24, 2009)

Call for Papers:

International Graduate Conference

NEGOTIATING DIFFERENCE

CONTEMPORARY CHINESE ART IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Institution: Department of East Asian Art History, Institute of Art  
History,

Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

Date: October 22-24, 2009

Venue: House of World Culture, Berlin, Germany

Head: Prof. Dr. Jeong-hee Lee-Kalisch

Concept: Birgit Hopfener and Franziska Koch

Organization: Dr. Juliane Noth and Ronald Kiwitt

DEADLINE FOR ABSTRACTS: APRIL 6, 2009

Contemporary Chinese art has lately become a topic of in-depth academic research. The international graduate conference Negotiating Difference looks

at contemporary Chinese art in a global context and focuses on questions of methodology.

Whether considered from a discursive, institutional or object-centered perspective, contemporary Chinese art always involves aspects of a globally informed locality and a locally affected globality. To account for the complexity of this phenomenon, the analysis of contemporary Chinese art requires a transcultural perspective.

Consequently, the conference attempts to challenge prevailing research approaches that either stress global similarities based on a mainly 'Western' notion of art or attempt to discern a 'Chinese identity'.

Negotiating Difference will question these ontological essentialist views as

well as generalizing relativist ones. Alternatively, contemporary Chinese

art can be conceived as evolving out of processes of negotiated difference, continuous acts of translation in the 'Third Space'.

In this perspective, Chinese art needs to be (re-)contextualized, taking into account its spatial relations (locally, nationally and globally) as well as its temporal conditions from a contemporary and historical perspective.

In general, contemporary Chinese art lends itself to current art historical debates as an ideal object of research.

Since postmodern art theories in the 1970/80s, art research has not only increasingly turned to the contemporary artistic production, but also to 'non-Western' art due to the interdisciplinary 'post-colonial turn'.

Following this heightened awareness of the Eurocentric foundations of art history as a discipline, the conference is taking Chinese art as a showcase in order to confront the controversial question

'Is art (history) global?'

This international graduate conference is specifically designed to meet the needs of young scholars (Ph.D. candidates and Postdoctoral fellows) in this fast growing field of research. The conference aims at providing a platform for the discussion of methodological questions and to enhance future networking internationally.

The workshop nature of the program facilitates bringing together young scholars and distinguished experts of academic research and artistic practice.

In addition to the senior speakers' keynotes, the program consists of six thematic sections with talks by junior speakers. Each section is headed by an expert, who will respond to the talks at the end of the section.

The conference will be concluded by a panel discussion concerning the current state of research and future perspectives.

Keynote speakers:

Prof. John Clark (Sydney, Australia)

Prof. Hans Belting (Karlsruhe, Germany) (tbc)

Thematic sections:

I. Contemporary Chinese art in the transnational and transcultural context.

Questions of the aesthetic and discursive practice

The global production of contemporary art seems determined by discourses of (post-) modernity. This section questions their relevance for contemporary Chinese art. It will analyze the relation between 'Western', 'Chinese' and 'hybrid' notions of art in this context and will ask how Chinese art reflects itself and is reflected in a global discourse.

II. Contemporary Chinese art in an Asian context

Given the recent widespread tendency to highlight the notion of "Asia"<sup>1</sup>, this section is concerned with culturally specific 'Asian' tendencies in contemporary art. What can be gained by a perspective that takes Asia into account while looking at the contemporary artistic production in China? The focus is on papers linking the development of contemporary Chinese art to the artistic development in other (East) Asian countries. Furthermore, those comparing artworks, discourses or practices are of particular interest.

### III. Contemporary Chinese art between past and future. Transitions, fractions and the negotiation of tradition

This section examines the role of Chinese art traditions within contemporary artistic production. In addition to the examination of motifs, themes and styles, the aim is to investigate to what extent traditional notions of art, their different structural and functional definitions still inform today's production and reflection of art in China.

### IV. Gender, Urbanism, and Politics. Contemporary Chinese art from specific thematic perspectives

This section will provide a forum for speakers with very specific thematic approaches, which stand out in the field as important discourses in their own right. Papers reflecting on gender, the urban and political implications of contemporary Chinese art and methodological challenges in these realms of research are encouraged to apply.

### V. Contemporary Chinese art and its spaces of production

The impact of academy, studio, and 'factory' as paradigmatic spaces of production are at the heart of this section. It deals with various impacts that institutions and sites of artistic formation, individual practice and industrialized production have on contemporary Chinese art. Papers analyzing the history or structures of Chinese academic training, studio-related practices or the recent rapid transformation of the studio into a factory-like site of industrialized production are preferred.

### VI. Contemporary Chinese art and its spaces of reception: museum, market, and meaning

#### a) Contemporary Chinese art 'on display'

This sub-section seeks to examine and expound the problems of curatorial

concepts and exhibition strategies involved with contemporary Chinese art. In addition, its increasing institutionalization and considerable integration in public museums and private collections will be questioned.

b) Structures of the distribution of contemporary Chinese art

The topic of this sub-section is the discussion of economic (art market) and ideological (art criticism) structures of distribution concerned with, and vital for, the (historical) development of contemporary Chinese art.

The conference will be held in the House of World Cultures during the 7th Asia-Pacific Weeks in Berlin providing a framework with additional Asia-related events. During the time of the conference the HWC will exhibit parts of Qiu Zhijie's ongoing art project "A Suicidology of the Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge".

APPLICATION:

Papers should relate to one of the sections described above and should not exceed a length of 20 minutes (max. 3500 words). The conference language is English.

Travel expenses and accommodation costs during the conference will be covered for the speakers.

Please send an abstract (max. 400 words) in English and a short CV (1-2 pages) explaining your interest in the topic and giving your institutional affiliation, a list of publications (if applicable), as well as the full mail and email addresses including a telephone number.

The deadline for abstracts is April 6, 2009.

Please send your application to

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