

Aesthetics in contemporary China (Nanjing, 9–10 Nov 24)

Nanjing University of the Arts, China, Nov 9–10, 2024

Deadline: Mar 1, 2024

Federica Mirra

(Extra)Ordinary Living: Aesthetics in Contemporary China.

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The 17th Annual Conference, the Centre for Chinese Visual Arts (CCVA), Birmingham City University in collaboration with Nanjing University of the Arts.

From pre-dynastic rites and music to literati art and volumes on the pleasures of life, the notion of living has long inspired Chinese works of art and objects of design, which, in turn, document and inform diverse modes of society and culture, broadly conceived. More recently, an interest in everydayness re-gained momentum between the 19th and early 20th century. Later, during the Maoist era, life in the countryside and the labour of the masses was brought to the fore with the collective production of paintings, woodblock prints and propaganda posters. Throughout the 1980s, Chinese artists still drew inspiration from living, as suggested by the pioneering work by artist collectives such as the Pond Society (Chishe) and the Polit-Sheer-Form Office (Zheng chun ban), or the early works by contemporary artists in the 1990s, e.g., Geng Jianyi, Song Dong, Yin Xiuzhen, and Zhuang Hui.

Today in China the ordinariness of living remains a key source of inspiration not only for artists, but also for designers, particularly, in the area of product design, fashion design and interior design. Following the evolving socio-cultural and economic circumstances in the Reform and Opening Up era, the products of visual and performing arts, as well as design have inevitably changed along with ordinary life. At present, we live in a technologically advanced, and interconnected world that is, nevertheless, getting more fragmented, conflict prone and facing global challenges. The visual and performative arts and design can neither prevent nor provide solutions to current and future concerns. However, their extraordinary power is they contain implicit cues on our modes of living, which need unpacking to get more complex, nuanced and comprehensive understandings of society and culture.

In our Society of the Spectacle (Debord 1967), where extravagance and novelty are visually consumed and celebrated, artworks taking ordinary living as their focus or inspiration, and privileging other senses (e.g., smell, sound, kinetic and tactile experiences) are more important than ever to multiply and diversify the ways we approach, experience, and represent reality. This conference welcomes papers that can advance critical analysis and broaden multidisciplinary perspectives on the living and the ordinary in the field of visual arts, performing arts, and design. Possible per-

spectives include but are not limited to:

- The living and the ordinary in contemporary arts;
- Design and innovations that redefine the living;
- New methods and strategies to approach the living in contemporary China, including experimental works that privilege sound, smell, tactile and kinetic experience;
- Theoretical and art-historical explorations of living in China;
- Artworks and design objects that examine living in rural contexts;
- Representations of living in underrepresented social groups, ethnic minorities, borderlands and other organisms.

Please submit one single document (in English) with subject 'CCVA Conference 2024', containing 1) an abstract of up to 300 words; 2) a 100-word biography, contact information and any institutional affiliation by 1 March 2024 to ccva@bcu.ac.uk, Dr. Federica Mirra (federica.mirra@bcu.ac.uk) and Professor Jiang Jiehong (joshua.jiang@bcu.ac.uk). Participants from all career stages are most welcome.

Nanjing University of the Arts will kindly cover 3 nights of accommodation in Nanjing (4 nights for international travellers) and provide meals for all delegates.

Following the conference, selected papers will be invited for peer-reviewed publication in the Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art (indexed by Scopus), to be published by Intellect (Bristol) in the UK, in English only. Due to the nature of the special journal issue, as the output of the conference, presentations in English will be prioritised by the selection panel. Please note this is an in-person conference, with simultaneous interpretation provided.

Reference:

CFP: Aesthetics in contemporary China (Nanjing, 9-10 Nov 24). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 26, 2024 (accessed Dec 24, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/41316>>.