

## Politics and Identity: Tradition and Origin (Beijing, 15–22 Sep 16)

Beijing, Sep 15–22, 2015

Deadline: Jun 30, 2015

Sophie McIntyre, University of Queensland

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Session 6: Politics of Identity: Tradition and Origin

Chairs of the Session:

Dr. Sophie McIntyre, Australian National University

mcintyre\_sophie@yahoo.com.au

SHAN Jixiang(Mr.), the Palace Museum, Beijing, China

gaoliangzhou@163.com

(Secretary: Zhou Gaoliang)

TIE Zheng (Junior Chair, Ms.), the Palace Museum, Beijing, China

tiezhengt@163.com

Please submit the abstract of your paper for this session to the chairs before June 30, 2015.

Notwithstanding the intensification of globalization, increased mobility and transcultural dialogue and exchange, questions of identity – of how we envision, represent and perceive ourselves as a people, community, and country – continue to generate significant cultural, intellectual, and political debate internationally. In recent years, we have witnessed the rise and spread of new and renewed nationalisms, and territorial disputes, in which national boundaries and identities have been contested and re-defined. Against this backdrop, it could be argued that the desire and need to express and assert one's identity, and to protect and promote local and indigenous cultural practices and traditions are stronger than they have been for decades. In Asia, for example, the meaning and value of cultural heritage, as a signifier of national identity, collective memory, and as a vehicle for cultural diplomacy has been gaining increasing political and cultural attention. In the visual arts, artists, curators and scholars are also turning to the past for inspiration, and they are re-examining and re-inscribing notions of tradition and authenticity which are compelling markers of identity (the popular revival of Chinese ink art may be considered part of this phenomenon).

Based on the proposition that identities are imagined and heterogeneous, in this panel we aim to critically examine the role of the visual arts and the significance of tradition in the processes of identity formation. We seek papers that question and critique the relationship between art, identity and tradition, and which open up the field of enquiry to new and alternative ways of thinking about

this subject. We especially welcome papers that analyze the ways artists, curators and museums imagine, re-interpret and re-present notions of identity and tradition through the visual image, and through exhibitions and collections. The panel will take a three-pronged approach, focusing on the production, as well as the museological representation and reception of art. This can be examined within a regional, national, local community, and/or individual context, and we welcome comparative as well as historical and contemporary perspectives.

This panel will bring together young and established scholars and it will offer a platform for discussion on the changing role and relationship between art, identity, and the significance of tradition in identity construction. Papers may include a history of the issue, critical questions, philosophical reflections and theoretical positions, examples of artists, exhibits, programs or initiatives that address these issues. Some of the key questions and topics explored in this panel discussion include:

1. What roles do artists, curators, museums, and government agencies play in the processes of identity formation and how might these have changed?
2. The relationship between art, nationalism, propaganda, and political and social activism.
3. Art as a form of soft power and vehicle for cultural diplomacy.
4. The roles of history and cultural tradition in the construction and representation of identity in art, and the relevance of notions of cultural authenticity.
5. The role of the diaspora in identity formation in art.
6. The role of subjectivity, gender and ethnicity in identity formation in art.
7. Future developments and the changing role and agency of the artist in identity construction.

Reference:

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