

## **Continental Divide: 10 Chinese Artists at Home and Abroad (Original Text)**

If the story of art in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in China is a story of the market, the 1990s is a story of experimenting with personal freedom and cultural identity in a post-Mao, post-Babel, transcultural world. Encompassing three decades, beginning with 1979, in which art went from being labeled as Avant-Garde, to Experimental and finally to a Global form of Contemporary in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, these ten works represent three distinct generations of artists who took very different pathways, and despite being held captive by certain times and places, unswervingly pursued, and in many cases continue to pursue, freedom of expression through their own unique artistic pathways. If artists became disillusioned with Chinese traditional culture and politics in the 80s, an equal number became disillusioned with Western culture and art history in the 90s and beyond, only to arrive full circle in a return to depicting Chinese culture and identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The question whether to remain or Westernize both abroad and within China remains today.

After the intense polemical debates that divided the post-Cultural Revolution (1966-76) China art scene of the 1980s, the decade of the 1990s was one in which the intellectual and artistic climate after the tragedy at Tiananmen in 1989 was dominated by freedom of expression and examination of personal liberties. Creatively, the 90s in China was a decade in which it was acceptable for an artist to take a multitude of directions, including the choice to move abroad for a fresh perspective or to distance oneself from domestic politics. Artists who remained in China encountered such rapid cultural, political and societal change condensed into three decades that by the 21<sup>st</sup> century the country they lived in was almost indistinguishable from the China of the Cultural Revolution period. Beginning in the 80s, many of these artists, including Li Shan, Yu Youhan, Feng Mengbo, Fang Lijun and later Qiu Zhijie, began to take various critical stances towards their personal relationship with art making, and to question whether art should serve politics and promote traditional culture, and whether or not to embrace the art traditions of the West. Until the 21<sup>st</sup> century, East and West were still divided from an aesthetic stance in the Chinese art world. Many of the ideas up for debate overlapped in the works of these 10 artists. The debate between East vs. West styles and modes of art-making was constant as was the examination of the social role of an artist and his relationship with political systems like communism and capitalism, especially in the work of Fang Lijun, Yu Youhan, Yang Jiechang, Huang Yong Ping, Zhang Huan and Li Shan. Artists also debated the relationship between contemporary thought and traditional Chinese philosophy in their practice and using both Daoism and Buddhism in their conceptual thought process, specifically in the work of Gu Wenda, Huang Yong Ping, Yang Jiechang and later Zhang Huan. The language of art making and role of language with respect to post-colonialism also became an obsession for some, like Gu Wenda, Qiu Zhijie, Yang Jiechang, Xu Bing and Huang Yong Ping. The polarities of realism vs. abstraction and socialist realism vs. surrealism came out in the works of Yang Jiechang, Fang Lijun, Gu Wenda, Yu Youhan and Li Shan, and the elemental process of creation, destruction and decay, emerged in the work of Zhang Huan, Huang Yong Ping and Yang Jiechang. Many of these artists also considered the body as art, in the work of Gu Wenda, Yang Jiechang and Zhang Huan. Artists were also influenced by the pop art of

the times in NY, like Tseng Kwon-chi, Yu Youhan and Li Shan. Whether at home or abroad, aspects of art and art-making began to be challenged in the 80s.

The roles of Art and the Artist were considered and debated in the 1980s but in the end there was no consensus over the role art should play either in the personal development of an artist, in the cultural development of a country or in the invention of a mass artistic language. The only thing that was clear was that as long as it was discussed and debated, it was fair. Chinese artists were at the forefront of bringing contemporary thought to their communities as well as bringing Chinese traditional thought abroad. Some artists withdrew themselves from these debates altogether, going abroad to encounter new debates and then only to find themselves returning to themes rooted in traditional Chinese culture and thought or revisiting China's domestic politics from a safe distance abroad. Artists in the exhibition like Yang Jiechang, Huang Yong Ping, Gu Wenda and Zhang Huan chose to leave China, whether it was for opportunities to study abroad or to free themselves from the burden of cultural politics, scattering themselves across the planet and fully embracing the historical continuum of art practices in their adopted cities such as Paris, New York, Berlin and Tokyo, raising the profile of their counterparts at home. Some may conjecture that the cultural changes experienced by the artists who remained in China were greater than the ones faced by those who worked abroad. The divisions were not only physical but also intellectual.

It's arguable that the true beginning of contemporary art as a self-conscious movement in China began not in 1979 with the end of the Cultural Revolution's stronghold on art-making, but with the "Youth Art Movement of '85" and the subsequent directions into which this movement fragmented. After this point of departure, each individual career is a unique amalgamation of artistic and cultural influences of diverse times and places, all radically different attempts to merge the history of contemporary Chinese art into the global history of contemporary art and to globalize the experience of the Chinese artist. The chronological story of the artistic liberties explored by Chinese artists in the 90s begins, at least for this exhibition, in a work made in 1985 in NYC by HK-born diaspora artist named Tseng Kwon-Chi. Tseng, born in HK in 1950 was already a fully functioning member of the downtown New York scene by 1985, making artworks alongside pop masters Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Andy Warhol with an East meets West theme and known in these circles as 'The Ambiguous Ambassador'. First immigrating to Canada, then studying in Paris and settling in NY in 1978, Tseng was exposed to a contemporary art scene in NY, a world of street and performance art firmly rooted in an experimental creative scene. One could argue that due to his birth outside of China without the baggage of the Cultural Revolution, Tseng quickly adopted the art-making practices of his chosen home in NY and was able to both travel the world and to navigate the downtown art scene of NY easily and freely under the protection of his performance artist identity, meanwhile humorously employing the concept of the globe-trotting artist as cultural tourist while maintaining his own individual identity.

Over a decade later, New York City had several Chinese artists building their careers within its art scene, including Ai Weiwei, Xu Bing, Cai Guo-qiang and Zhang Huan, whose performance piece “My America” tackles the process of assimilation from a more conceptual and less overtly humorous perspective than Tseng. Zhang began performance works in Beijing’s East Village amidst a climate of intense censorship and scrutiny of his often provocative use of religious ritual, nudity and veiled anti-authoritarian statements in his work. His early performances placed the artist in metaphoric prisons of both the mind and the body, even protesting China’s one-child policy as early as 1993 and continuing this day to subtly critique China’s occupation of Tibet. Through the inclusion of the audience in “My America”, Zhang builds cross-cultural awareness in his adopted country and invites critique from his new hand-selected audience in a type of pre-censorship or critique of his own performance, alluding to the self-criticism intellectuals were subject to during revolutionary times in China.

Zhang Huan returned to Shanghai in 2003 and Tseng Kwon-chi did not live past 1990, at which point the story of our other artists begins to emerge. Tseng’s generational compatriots born in the 1950s in China were exposed to an entirely different cultural world, at the height of communism’s hold on China, who graduated in the midst of the cultural revolution and left China because of connections and scholarship opportunities, including Gu Wenda, Yang Jiechang and Huang Yong Ping.

Gu Wenda, like Fang Lijun, studied woodblock printing and had dreams of becoming a red guard as a child and like Zhang Huan, returned to China in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to open a studio in Shanghai. He studied classical landscape painting at the China Academy of Art and made some of the first works of conceptual ink art before he left China. A scholarship brought him to Canada after which Gu moved to New York in 1987 at the age of 32 in order to seek a bigger audience for his work through the contemporary art scene there, and subsequently witnessed the Tiananmen massacre in 1989 from abroad. The perspective that this distance gave him on such tragic events led him to a new pre-occupation with the human body as a material object. He later made works in the 90s using human hair, blood, semen and placenta, shocking audiences with bodily fluids normally considered from a medicinal perspective in traditional Chinese culture. Gu began a work entitled “United Nations” in 1993, a piece that intended to serve as a gathering place for individuals from various nations, similar to a later work by his NY colleague Cai Guo-qiang entitled “Cultural Melting Bath”, further developing his preoccupation with integrating Chinese art history into the global contemporary art world. The 15-year long artwork, United Nations, would eventually involve over 1 million people on five continents contributing their own hair to the project. Gu’s work is grounded in humanism, considering all men equal due to their condition of being linked through the material world and common physical traits. His works eventually would fuse Chinese characters and human hair, even using hair powder as ink, ultimately preferring to use the human body for art rather than allow it to be used by politics or worse, wartime occupation, physical and mental oppression, or genocide. The 1996 work included in *Continental Divide* was part of his *United Nations* project and a return to his earlier obsession with pseudo-characters, the building blocks of his system of nonsensical

communication. The linguistic distance from traditional calligraphy and modern conceptual art language continues to be a theme in his work through the present as does his search for a post-Babel utopian world, a world apart from the social utopia driven by Mao's pseudo-communist ideals.

At the same time, across the ocean, other diaspora artists Yang Jiechang and Huang Yong Ping, both born in Southern China in the mid 50s, emigrating to Germany and France in the late 80s respectively, were developing their own conceptual language, inspired by Western artists like Marcel Duchamp, Kazimir Malevich, Joseph Beuys and even John Cage, an artist who was influenced as much by Eastern philosophy as the Chinese diaspora artists who looked to him for inspiration. Huang Yong Ping is one of the artists who most fully embraced Western art traditions, having left China at age 35 in 1989 and rebelling early in his career against social realism. Like Gu, Huang was in Paris when the massacre at Tiananmen Square happened, watching the event from abroad. He was a founder of the artist collective Xiamen Dada in the 80s, a group of artists who injected Chinese traditional philosophy with modern Western thought through performance, even burning their works as an ironic protest at the powerless of art to change society or to alter the process of thought itself. Huang went on to represent France at the Venice Biennale in 1999 and stayed in Paris where he continued to constantly question both the society in which he lived and his cultural background. Concerned with art as a process of experimentation, as well as the residual evidence of thought and the traces which the artist's hand and mind leave behind, Huang creates art in a post-linguistic world, using both French and Chinese in his creations, always juxtaposing Eastern and Western thought traditions against each other. In the work *Trois Pas, Neuf Traces*, the ghostlike footstep imprints represent an enlightenment which was possibly attained and then lost, not possible to fully actualize, or interrupted by a violent act of cultural terrorism. Huang's performance maps are in some ways more important than the finished product in his ontological system as for him the idea behind an artwork is usually better than its actuality, and the godlike almost prophetic process of creation is more important than the final artwork, itself an impossibility and an eventual disappointment due to its limitations. The contrasting divide between contemporary Western time marked by linear events and the historical continuum of Eastern thought is evident in his work in particular.

Yang Jiechang, the son of a revolutionary who became a Red Guard as a youth, studied traditional painting at the Guangdong Institute of Folk Art. He moved to Paris by way of Germany where, from a distance, he developed a personalized abstract language combining traditional Chinese thought with Western art language, like John Cage before him. Through abstraction, Yang creates a conceptual language open to interpretation, constantly in transition between cultures. In Yang's *Vast Square Numbers 1 and 2* we find embodiments of the artist's career-long occupation with Zen Buddhism and Daoism, grounded in an academic knowledge of Russian Constructivism with a subtle nod to Western abstract art history. In title reminiscent of Malevich's Black Square, but in its process strictly concerned with the meditative qualities of balancing ying and yang, these repetitive layers and layers of black ink form voids which remind us of the vast spaces of Tiananmen. These particular works took 4 years to complete, a testament to the impossible process of finishing an artwork

which is in itself both an open-ended performance and a memorial to a lost generation. Through this obsession with repetition, Yang was able to distance himself from his own cultural politics through art-making.

Returning to China and the artists who did not have the opportunity to study and work abroad, we examine the careers of Li Shan and Yu Youhan, both artists born in the 40s, educated in Russian realism, American modernism and Chinese traditional art and who were the earliest artists to be included in the Political Pop movement as well as Feng Mengbo, Qiu Zhijie and Fang Lijun, all born in the 60s and all taking radically different pathways through the field of contemporary art. Feng Mengbo utilizes video and new media to explore the world of online gaming and the aesthetics of the future, Fang Lijun, paints in the style of cynical realism, remaining firmly rooted in the political pop movement while preserving an ironically safe distance from cultural politics, and Qiu Zhijie, arguably the most important multimedia artist of the younger generation who has influenced an entire future generation of Chinese new media artists.

Li Shan, born in Northern China in 1942 was employed by the government earlier in his career to paint portraits of Mao during the cultural revolution and eventually rejected social realism, the popular art of his generation. His later apolitical works, including his famous Rouge Mao Series in which he reworks popular images of Mao into cultural icons were misinterpreted by Western critics to be political and he went on to adopt a more personal approach in the 90s to explore the influence of genetic modification on the natural world. The work chosen for Continental Divide is a pivotal example of work signifying the artists shift from his works of political pop to a later series in which he genetically morphs humans with animals, freeing himself from the ideologies of the past through surrealism and introspection.

Almost in contrast to Li Shan, Yu Youhan was indelibly influenced by his experience during the Cultural Revolution. Yu, born a year later in 1943, is from a generation more influenced by Western Impressionism and Abstract Constructivism than by new media conceptual art. Yu deliberately used the language of Western modernism to extract Mao's image from the world of political propaganda and elevate him into the world of non-symbolic abstract art, framing Mao's image with the geometric grid of a Mondrian painting, including the language of Modernism within Mao's iconography while simultaneously inserting the pop cultural image of Mao into the cannon of Western art. Mao and Mondrian become equals in the march of cultural history in Foreign Mao (Mondrian) from 1999. Yu succeeds in re-empowering Chinese cultural icons and reviving the traditional notion that art should integrate a philosophical world-view with the existing political order into a newly harmonized world order.

Fang Lijun, stuck in the middle of the class struggle during childhood and having come of age during Tiananmen Square two generations later during a period of post-80s disillusionment that was a return to the restrictions on freedoms attained in the previous decade, never went along with the establishment. Fang's aesthetic is that of the self-styled avant-garde reflecting his background from an agrarian, albeit landed, past. His woodcuts, evocative of the aesthetic of the peasant class, express a cynicism common to the Lost

Generation who eschewed the possibility of using art to influence the masses.

Qiu Zhijie, born in 1969, graduated from the Hangzhou Academy of Fine Arts in 1992, the first university in China to incorporate New Media Art into its curriculum. Qiu embraced both new media art and the academic world at the same time, indicative of the new freedoms for artists born into the generation that followed the lost generation. By the time Qiu graduated, he was living in a new China that was recovering from the shock of Tiananmen and regaining its belief in institutions and in social mobility. Qiu is truly an artist of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, curating, writing and making art around the world, a member of the new literati, making contemporary art which references both recent and ancient Chinese cultural history.

Feng Mengbo is another artist born in the 1960s who has taken Chinese traditions and traditional painting on a virtual and aesthetic journey to the west and back. Feng, after early radical experimentation with video games in the 1980s, has returned as of late to a more traditional narrative of Chinese landscape painting in this particular work from 2007, using the graphic styles and colors of video games and the internet to depict traditional scenes. Feng uses the cultural power created by mass media on a global scale, challenging the relationship between media and propaganda while at the same time recognizing the power of ideology to direct the history of art.

Many of these artists whose careers emerged and fully formed in the 90s were included the seminal exhibits of the '80s and '90s, such as the China/Avant-Garde show in Beijing in 1989 and the first Guangzhou Triennial. The defining show at the beginning of the 1990s was called "I Don't Want to Play Cards with Cezanne" which included none of these artists, but whose anti-Western stance fueled many debates among these same artists. Many more artworks could have been included by artists such as Xu Bing, Cai Guo-qiang, Wang Du, Chen Zhen, Yan Pei-Ming, Ai Weiwei and Wu Shanzhuan, all of whom left China in the 80s and 90s along with countless others who remained in China such as Wang Guangyi, Zhang Xiaogang, Zeng Fanzhi, Zhang Peili, Gu Dexin, Zhou Tiehai and Xu Tan alongside the artists featured in *Continental Divide*. These important names continually appear in similarly themed exhibitions throughout the 90s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century such as the *In Between Limits* show at Sonje Art Center in Seoul curated by Fei Dawei, *Inside/Out: New Chinese Art* in 1998 at PS1, '85 *New Wave* show at UCCA, *China's New Art, Post-1989* curated by Johnson Chang in Hong Kong and the *Transience* show at the University of Chicago curated by Wu Hung.

The resulting selection of artworks produced during the post-modern 1990s both in China and abroad shows the dramatic stylistic and thematic possibilities found in the work of three generations of artists born in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. The artworks provide windows into career-defining themes that remained with these artists well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Whatever choices these artists made, whether it was to remain in China and tackle the difficult questions such as the relationship between culture and politics, or to leave home and raise questions about personal and cultural identity and the artist's role in and responsibility toward society and to history, the works selected demonstrate, despite the drastic divisions created in the art community by the

county's ten year cultural revolution, how fully global Chinese artists already were by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 大陸漂移：國內外十位中國畫家

如果 21 世界的中國藝術故事是關於市場的，那麼九十年代的故事就是後毛澤東、後巴比塔的跨文化世界形成後，一場對個人自由、文化身份的實驗。這場實驗橫跨三十年，始於 1979 年藝術被標籤為前衛主義開始，到被稱為實驗藝術品，再到二十一世紀被定性為帶有世界性色彩的現代藝術。展出的時間作品代表三個年代的藝術家，他們分別選擇了三條非常不同的創作路途。雖然他們都對不同的時間和地方非常著迷，但他們同樣在創作途上頑強地爭取創作自由，一直到今天。如果說，藝術家曾經在八十年代迷失於大中國的傳統文化與政治中，於九十年代沉浸在西方藝術與歷史的不敗神話裡，那麼直到二十一世紀，藝術家才經歷了完整的創作歷程，重新傳譯中國文化與身份。到底應該繼續西化與否，成為國內外的熱門議題。

八零年代文革（1966-76）後的中國藝術界出現激烈的辯論，可是到了九十年代八九天安門屠殺後，學術和藝術氛圍卻帶有濃厚的個人自由色彩。就創作而言，九零年代是一個容許藝術家選擇不同創作方向的時期，他們甚至可以移居外地，以獲取新的視野，或從國內政治中解放出來。選擇留在中國的藝術家則面對非常快速的文化、政治和社會性改變，濃縮在三十年間發生。到了 21 世紀，他們所處的中國已經跟文革時代的中國不可分割。自八十年代開始，很多藝術家，包括李山、余友涵、馮夢波、方力鈞和邱志傑開始了一系列問題，包括質疑自身與藝術創作的關係，以及藝術應否為政治服務，應否推廣傳統藝術，以及應否遵從西方藝術傳統等。直到二十一世紀，中國藝術界在東西方在美學問題上，依然存在很大分野，當中很多常被討論到的問題也在這十位藝術家的作品中清晰可見。人們經常就東西方藝術創作的特色和模式的分歧進行討論，也論及藝術家的社會地位，以及他們和政制間的關係，例如共產主義和資本主義。包括方力鈞、余友涵、楊詰蒼、黃永砫、黃永砫、張洄和李山等藝術家也常就現代藝術概念與傳統中國哲學在他們創作中的角色進行辯論，並把道家 and 佛家的概念套用到他們的創作過程中，尤其是谷文達、黃永砫、楊詰蒼和後來的張洄。藝術創作的語言和語言在後殖民主義中的角色也變成一些藝術家非常感興趣的課題，尤其是谷文達、邱志傑、楊詰蒼、徐冰和黃永砫。寫實主義和抽象主義，以及社會真實主義和超現實主義之間的對立也在也在楊詰蒼、方力鈞、谷文達、余友涵和李山的作品中清晰可見。創造、毀滅、腐朽等自然過程則在張洄、黃永砫和楊詰蒼和後期的張洄作品中可見。同時，很多藝術家也把身體看成藝術，例如谷文達、楊詰蒼和張洄。藝術家也同時受當代紐約藝術的影響，例如曾廣志、余友涵和李山。無論是在中國還是國外，藝術和藝術創作的不同層面上也受到衝擊。

八零年代，社會上掀起了關於藝術和藝術家的角色的辯論。這些辯論最後沒有就藝術在畫家的個人發展、國家文化發展，或藝術普及化中應有的角色達成共識。不過，可以肯定的是，有辯論是值得開心的。中國藝術家積極把現代藝術理念帶進他們原屬的社區，或者是把傳統中國概念帶到外國。有些藝術家則完全不參與這些辯論，而是去到外國，把自己浸淫在新環境的辯論裡面。可是最後，他們還是無法避免在安全情況下思考傳統中國文化和思想，以及重新檢視中國政治。這個展覽中的一些藝術家，楊詰蒼、黃永砫和谷文達，基於留學機會或文化包袱，選擇離開中國。他們的足跡遍布世界各地，並在他們選擇定居的城市，例如巴黎、紐約、柏林和東京，充分吸收當地藝術創作的氛圍，從而提升國內藝術

家的聲譽。有些人認為，留在國內的藝術家經歷的文化轉變比到海外的藝術家多。這個分野不單是物質上的，也是學術上的。

有些人認為，當代藝術作為一場有意識的運動，並不是始於 1979 年文革結束，而是始於 85 年青年藝術運動，以及它的餘波。在這個分水嶺以後，所有個體的藝術生涯也在嘗試把不同時地的藝術文化影響合併，也把中國當代藝術史和世界當代藝術史聯繫起來，同時替中國當代藝術家增添國際視野。至少在這個展覽中，我們可以從香港旅居藝術家曾廣志的作品中，看到九十年代中國藝術家的創作自由。曾廣志 1950 年出生於香港。1985 年，他已經是紐約藝術界獨當一面的藝術家，和凱斯·哈林、尚·米榭·巴斯奇亞和安迪·沃荷等大師同時創作。他的作品帶有東西融合的色彩，行內人稱他為“含糊大使”。曾廣志先移民到加拿大，其後在巴黎唸書，再於 1978 年到紐約定居。他身處紐約的當代藝術是一個植根街頭表演藝術為主的文化，深深植根於實驗式創作中。有人說，由於曾廣志並不在中國出生，沒有文化大革命的包袱，他可以很快適應紐約大都會的藝術生態，並可以表演藝術家身份遊歷世界，同時自由進出紐約藝術圈，並幽默地運用漂流藝術家作為文化遊客的身份，同時保留自己的獨立性。

差不多十年以後，幾個中國藝術家先後在紐約藝術界打響名堂，其中包括艾未未、徐冰、蔡國強和張洄，相對曾廣志的幽默，張洄的作品——我的美國——從一個概念性的角度解讀文化融入的問題。曾廣志的表演藝術最早在北京東村開始，那時候，政府嚴謹審查他作品中展示的激化宗教儀式、裸體，和對反權威的暗喻。他早期的表演把藝術家放在身體和腦袋的模擬牢獄中，甚至早在 1993 年公開反對中國的一孩政策。直到今天，他的作品依然巧妙地批評中國佔領西藏的做法。透過邀請觀眾參與作品《我的美國》的表演，張洄在他的旅居地中培養跨文化意識，並邀請觀眾對他的作品進行審查前批判，暗諷文革是遭批鬥的知識分子。

2003 年，張洄回到上海；曾廣志則在 1990 年離開人世。這個時候，我們其他藝術家的故事正式開始。生於 50 年代、與曾廣志同期的藝術家在非常不同的文化氛圍中成長。那時候共產黨對中國的控制正盛。一些藝術家，如谷文達、楊詰蒼、黃永砫等在文革期間畢業，並因為獎學金和其他人事關係，離開中國。

像方力鈞一樣，谷文達也學過版印，小時候也夢想當紅衛兵。跟張洄一樣，他在 21 世紀回到中國，在上海開設了自己的畫廊。他在中央美術學院修讀古典山水畫，並在離開中國前畫過一些印象水墨畫。他先獲獎學金到加拿大讀書，隨後在 32 歲時搬到紐約，希望在當地的藝術圈中尋找更大的觀眾。這樣，他在國外目擊 1989 年天安門屠殺。由於他從遠距離觀察一連串悲劇發生，他對人類身體作為物質世界的組件有了新的傳譯。九零年代，他以人類的身體、血液、精液和胎盤進行創作，這些在中國傳統文化經常從藥物看的體液，給予觀眾很大衝擊。1993 年，谷文達開始了名為《聯合國》的作品，旨在為來自不同國家的人提供集中地。其後他的紐約同工蔡國強創作的《文化溶鍋》也套用了相似概念創作，進一步把中國藝術歷史融入世界藝術界。長達十五年的作品聯合國最終用上來自五大洲的一百萬人提供的頭髮。谷文達的作品圍繞人道主義，他認為所有人都是平等的，因為他們都跟物質世界有相同的聯繫，並有相同的表徵。他的作品最後把中國文字和人的頭髮聯繫起來，甚至把頭髮磨成粉狀，當作墨水。他的最終目的是寧可把人的身體用於藝術創作上，也不要用在政治，或其他更差的事情，例如戰爭，生理和心理壓逼，或屠殺上。他的 1996 年作品《大陸漂移》是《聯合國》的其中一部分。在這件作品的創作上，他回歸早期著迷



的新造字，以及非感官溝通上。傳統書法和現代抽象藝術語言間的距離繼續貫徹他的作品。同樣，他對毛澤東偽共產理想社會主義以外烏托邦的尋找也從沒停止。

與此同時，一海之隔，兩位於五十年代出生於南中國，其後於八十年代移居德國和法國的散居藝術家楊詰蒼、黃永砅開始發展他們的概念框架。這些框架受西方藝術家如馬塞爾·杜象、卡濟米爾·謝韋里諾維奇·馬列維奇、約瑟夫·博伊斯和約翰·凱奇。約翰·凱奇所受的東方哲學影響，絕不比他對向他學習的中國散居藝術家的影響少。黃永砅是其中一位最擁護西方藝術傳統的藝術家。1989年，35歲的他離開中國，在他藝術生涯的早期反抗社會真實主義。像谷文達一樣，天安門屠殺發生時，他身處巴黎，從國外看事情。他是八十年代藝術團體廈門達達的創辦人。廈門達達由一班藝術家組成。他們的表演糅合中國傳統哲學，和現代西方思想。他們甚至焚燒自己的作品，以表達對藝術無力改變社會和思想的無奈。黃永砅在1999年代表法國參加威尼斯雙年展，並一直留在巴黎，經常批判身處的社會，以及他的祖國。他著重藝術作為一個實驗過程，也是藝術家思想的沉澱。因此，他的作品在後語言學的時代用上法文和中文，並經常對比東西方的思想傳統。《三步九腳印》有如鬼魅的腳印代表一種啟發。這種啟發剛剛獲得，但隨即又失去；或者根本沒辦法變成事實，甚至被文化恐怖攻擊強行中斷了。相對於成品，黃永砅更着重作品的本質。他認為一件作品背後的意義比作品本身來得完美；近乎神聖而帶有預言色彩的創作過程比成品重要。相對於過程，成品是一個「不可能」，因為受到不同的限制，注定讓人失望。他的作品同時對比西方把歷史事件割裂理解、順序排列的傾向，跟東方把歷史看成一個完整延續的觀點。

楊詰蒼是一個革命軍的兒子，年少時當過紅衛兵，並在廣東民族美術學院修讀傳統水墨畫。隨後，他經德國到達巴黎。他發展出一套個人而抽象的藝術語言，融合中國傳統思想和西方藝術語言，例如在他以前的john cage。通過抽象化，他創造了一套可以開放給大家傳譯的概念語言，遊走於文化間。在他的作品《廣場一、二》裡面，我們可以發現藝術家對佛教禪學和道家思想的研究，加上俄國建構主語的學術根基，還有對西方抽象藝術歷史的部分認同。作品的名稱清晰指示了馬列維奇的《黑廣場》，不過，創作過程卻明顯表達陰陽的概念。層層黑墨構成的空間，象徵廣闊的天安門。這間作品用了四年完成，標誌着沒有一件作品可以同時是開放式表演藝術，同時紀念迷失一代。透過重複，楊詰蒼用藝術把自己從自己的文化政治中釋放出來。

話說回來，在中國，那些沒有機會出國讀書工作的藝術家，我們來看看李山和余友涵的藝術生涯。兩位藝術家也生於四十年代，受俄國寫實主義，美國現代主義和中國傳統熏陶。他們和六十年代出生的馮夢波、邱志傑和方力鈞等人是政治波譜的先鋒。他們都在當代藝術創作上選上很不同的道路。馮夢波利用錄像與新媒體發掘網上遊戲世界，和未來美學。方力鈞則以憤世嫉俗的筆觸繪畫，同時諷刺地跟文化政治保持一段安全距離。邱志傑則被認為新一代中是最重要的多媒體藝術家，他的作品影響了未來一代新媒體藝術家。

生於北方的李山，在創作早期受聘於政府，在文革期間繪畫毛澤東畫像。他後來放棄社會真實主義——他的年代最普及的藝術形態。他後來的政治中立藝術創作，例如重塑毛澤東畫像的作品rouge mao series，卻被西方藝評人評為政治化。自此，他在九十年代採用了比較個人的風格創作，探索改造自然的方法。這個展覽中選用的畫作，大都標誌著藝術家從政治流行畫作，過度到人類和動物為主題的作品。通過抽象主義和內省過程，他把自己從過去的理念中解放出來。

相反，余友涵很大程度上受文革的經歷影響。在 1943 年後出生的他屬於受西方印象派和抽象建構主義影響的一代，多於新媒體概念藝術。他特意用西方現代主義的語言把毛澤東的形象從政治宣傳中解放出來，把他提升到一個抽象藝術的層面，用蒙德里安式的幾何圖案重新傳譯，包括在毛澤東的標誌中加入現代主義特色，同時把他的流行畫像加到西方藝術的系統中。1999 年起，毛澤東和蒙德里安在他的著作《毛主席的西方美術簡史》中有著同樣地位。他成功令中國文化標誌得到重視，同時表達藝術應該表達對現行政治的哲學理解，以及嘗試把作品融入更廣泛的世界政治中的思想。

方力鈞在階級鬥爭中度過童年，差不多二十年後的天安門屠殺時，他正值少年，目睹十年前辛苦獲得的自由逐步收縮。因此，他從未向制度妥協。方力鈞的美學是自創的前衛藝術，反映他的農業背景。他的木雕是一個農民階級的鮮明標誌，代表玩世不恭的迷失一代希望逃避藉著藝術影響群眾的心態。

生於 1969 年的邱志傑 1992 年畢業於杭州美術學院 – 中國第一所把新媒體藝術納入課程的大學。邱志傑同時擁抱新媒體藝術和學術領域，代表迷失一代之後的一代擁有的自由。邱志傑畢業時，新中國正從天安門屠殺的創傷中復完，重新肯定制度與社會流動性。邱志傑確實是屬於 21 世紀的藝術家，他在世界各地策展、書寫、創作，他是新藝術知識分子的一員，從近代到遠古中國文化歷史中獲取靈感。

馮夢波是另外一位生於六零年代的藝術家。他把中國傳統和傳統畫作跟西方傳統進行了一次美學交流。他在八零年代利用電玩進行了前衛的實驗，但最近已經回歸比較傳統的中國山水畫。在這幅繪於 2007 年的中國山水畫用上幾何設計和電玩的色彩，也用上互聯網描繪傳統自然景觀。馮夢波用全球化媒體做成的文化力量挑戰媒體與宣傳的關係，同時肯定理念對於書寫藝術歷史的重要性。

很多在 90 年代冒起，或成名的藝術家也或邀參加八、九十年代重要的展覽，例如 1989 年在北京舉行的中國/前衛藝術展，以及第一屆廣州三年展。90 年代最具代表性的展覽叫 “I don’t want to play cards with Cezanne”。這個展覽雖然沒有展出這些藝術家的作品，不過它的反西方立場刺激了這些藝術家之間很多熱烈討論。這些展覽本來可以展出更多藝術家的作品，例如在八、九十年代離開中國的徐冰、蔡國強、王都、陳箴、嚴培明、艾未未和吳山專，或者是留下來的王廣義、張曉剛、曾梵之、張培力、顧德新、周鐵海和徐坦，還有大陸漂移中展出的藝術家。這些名字在 90 年代到 21 世紀類似的展覽中不停出現，例如由費大為策展，在首爾 Sonje 藝術中心展出的 In Between Limits、1998 年在 PS1 展出的 *Inside/Out: New Chinese Art*、由 Johnson Chang 策展，在尤倫斯當代藝術中心展出的 ’85 New Wave show，在香港展出的 *China’s New Art, Post-1989*，以及由巫鴻策展，芝加哥大學展出的 *Transience* show。

我們最後決定展出的藝術品都是在九零年代後，後現代主義時期誕生的。它們展示了四零、五零、六零年代出生的三代藝術家的作品在技巧和意義上的可能性。這些藝術品成為藝術家藝術生涯中的經常檢視的課題，到 21 世紀依然如是。無論藝術家選擇留在中國，面對例如文化與政治的棘手課題；還是離開中國，重新質問個人和文化身份，或者解構藝術家對社會和歷史背負的責任和扮演的角色，這些展品都展示了一個共同特質：即使藝術圈在文革十年的影響下存在很大的分化，中國藝術家在二十一世紀初已經非常具國際視野。

