

The World of Art Museums in China

Preface

The *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art* (JCCA) was established in 2014 at Intellect as the only peer-reviewed journal worldwide in this emerging field of studies. Envisaging the increasing visibility of Chinese contemporary art in the international arena through frequent participations in the world's important art events since the 1993 Venice Biennale¹, this timely development aims to invite scholarly articles and reviews internationally to share, debate and celebrate the most recent original research on the topic.

The JCCA is now hosted by the Centre for Chinese Visual Arts (CCVA) at Birmingham City University, which was initiated in 2007 through an international academic network with leading art institutions in China. During its first decade, CCVA has established a unique position in the UK to pioneer the research of Chinese contemporary arts, design, and visual culture, and to foster transcultural dialogues, new ways of thinking and modes of knowledge in relation to today's global-China situation. JCCA is a gift for its 10th anniversary, a gift to treasure and a gift for us to grow with.

In the past three years, JCCA has laid a solid foundation for the studies on Chinese contemporary art. Through a series of consultation with members of our updated Editorial Board and the International Advisory Board, we will continue our academic rigour in the process of knowledge production with four renewed highlights of the Journal. First, under our editorship from 2017 on, all future issues of the JCCA will be themed. This pivotal transformation will allow us to draw more academic attentions in such a niche (but important and growing) area, encouraging contributions with sharpened focuses. The themes will be initiated, discussed and reviewed collaboratively between the JCCA Boards' members and myself as Principal Editor, and at the same time, we welcome proposals of guest editing. Secondly, with our primary interests in 'Chinese' (and) 'contemporary' art, we anticipate scholarships that are developed beyond any defined spatial or temporal boundaries, not on the art *in* or *from* 'China' (here as a cultural term), but that *of* and *on* 'China'. We study not only the contemporary that one day, will become historical, but also the historical which indeed can return 'contemporary' in an innovative context. Thirdly, we construct interdisciplinary perspectives to develop new understandings of Chinese arts and culture today and to re-examine and redefine the notion of Chinese contemporary art in a global context. And finally, we have been aware of the paradox, where

¹ Passaggio a Oriente (*Passage to the East*) at the 45th Venice Biennale (14 June to 10 October 1993), curated by Achille Bonito Oliva with Helena Kontova, was one of the first representations of Chinese contemporary art on the global art stage

such an internationally peer-reviewed Journal on Chinese contemporary art could only provide limited accessibility to Chinese readers.² To explore the possibility to extend the scholarships of our contributors to a wider audience, the future JCCA issues will be translated and edited as book series to be co-published between the Intellect and the People's Fine Arts Publishing House (*renmin meishu chubanshe*) in Shanghai.

As a new departure, in 2017, we are developing two themed issues, a single edition (4.1) in the spring and a double edition (4.2&3) in the autumn. Since the beginning of the new millennium, China's rapid urbanisation and the anxiety to develop cultural and creative industries in line with its triumph of becoming the world's second largest economic power have stimulated a revolutionary development of art museums in China. It is our great pleasure to invite Karen Smith, one of the leading curator in the field of Chinese contemporary art, who has extensive experience working in various art museums in China, to guest edit this spring issue, which will be introduced in more details in her editorial. The issues to be published in the autumn are predominantly based on the international conference that we convened as the 9th annual conference of CCVA, *Making The New World: the Arts of China's Cultural Revolution*.³ Mark the 50th anniversary of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), the conference invited researchers, artists, curators and scholars to reassess the significance of the arts and culture of the Cultural Revolution, and to reflect upon their impacts on everyday life in China within socio-political, cultural and global contexts.

Lastly, I must express my gratitude to a number of people for the realisation of the new JCCA. I am most grateful to Paul Gladston, JCCA's Founding Editor, whose generosity, encouragement, guidance and trust have been fundamental for me to inherit this editorship. We are very much in debt of all the contributors, writers, editors, reviewers and the members of the Editorial and International Advisory Boards, for their continued commitments to the JCCA. Thanks also owe to the professional team at Intellect, in particular Bethan Ball, Jelena Stanovnik and Richard Kerr, for their support toward this editorial transition. We would also like to thank Gu Wei, Bao Chenhui and Zheng Shujia from the People's Fine Arts Publishing House for their enthusiasm to open the JCCA back to the Chinese audience. Last but not least, I am very thankful to my colleagues at Birmingham City University, Tim Wall and Jonathan Harris, who allow my time and encourage me to take this scholarly adventure.

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² Previous JCCA issues started to include abstracts of the articles in Chinese.

³ In collaboration with the Whitechapel Gallery in London, CCVA organised the two-day conference at its Zilkha Auditorium on 11 and 12 November 2016. This international conference invited two keynote speakers, Richard King (University of Vitoria) and Shen Jiawei (artist, Sydney), and presented 13 papers in four panels chaired by the leading scholars in the field of study, including Chris Berry (Kings College London), Craig Clunas (University of Oxford) and Harriet Evans (University of Westminster).