

The Transcultural Curator: Translating Networked Curatorial Practices in the Chinese Context since 1980

Rachel Elizabeth Mary Marsden

09490080

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Birmingham City University

Arts, Design and Media (ADM)

In partnership with the Centre for Chinese Visual Arts (CCVA)

25 September 2017

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

Substantial material from Chapters Four and Five have been presented as conference papers in Lisbon, Portugal (Marsden 2015a), and Stoke-on-Trent, UK (Marsden 2015b), and within the recently published *The Temporary: 01* catalogue produced in conjunction with the practice-led outcome of this research (Marsden 2017).

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

The right of Rachel Elizabeth Mary Marsden to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

© 2017 Birmingham City University and Rachel Elizabeth Mary Marsden

Acknowledgements

To my academic family at Birmingham City University and those who have since moved onto to other institutions. To my supervisors, Joshua (Jiehong) Jiang and Darren Newbury (now at University of Brighton) - thank you for your advice, support and whole-hearted dedication to my journey both personally and professionally, no matter the timeframe, country or time zone. To Tim Wall, Bashir Makhoul, Lawrence Green, Sian Vaughan, David Durling (now at Coventry University), Yanyan Wang, Yvette Burn, Heather Connelly, Beccy Boydell, Sukhi Johal, Shelley Fray, Noel Alonso - thank you for underpinning my research with knowledge and structure to get my PhD thesis through to submission.

To those who were part of my fieldwork research adventure, and time of working and living in China (2009-12). A list too long to mention everyone by name - thank you for helping to establish my practice in the field and becoming my international family.

To the translators who helped me understand what I may have missed. To Yu Chen, Tan Wang, You Feng, Isabel Lu and Alex Yiu - thank you to you and your collective multilingual minds. To Julia Burdett and Mel Campbell for proof-reading my dense and over descriptive language because sometimes I just can't stop talking about the world sometimes.

To Adam Grüning for the original branding and design of *The Temporary* logo. To Andy Cooke, Chrish Dunne and Jon Fu at *Design by Weather* - thank you for designing 'The Temporary' website and *The Temporary: 01* catalogue.

To those in the academic field of curating and contemporary Chinese art who supported the development of this research, including its practice-led outcome 'The Temporary'. To Mona Casey (ARTicle Gallery), Sarah Fisher and Sally Lai (then Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art (CFCCA)), Katie Hill, Andrew Bracey, Su Fahy, Maggie Ayliffe, Marsha Meskimmon, Johanna Hällsten, Nixi Cura and et al.

To my new academic family at The University of Melbourne for giving me encouragement during the final push. To Rachel Fensham, Stephanie Trigg, Charles Green, Kate MacNeill, Alana Kushnir and Nur Shkembi - thank you. Most importantly to Christiaan De Beukelaer for making the final weeks of the puzzle "make sense".

To my "box of trust" friends (too many to mention) for always saying the things I often could not think, being there regardless of distance, and for your relentless motivation in real time and online - always appreciated and will never be forgotten.

Finally, to those I hold close. To the Marsdens, Pauline, my Godparents Richard and (the late) Ruth - thank you for the unconditional love and support night and day. To my late Grandpa, Poppa, for always asking what was next, and for feeding my creative mind at every step. To Nick Manasseh (Manaxi) for never questioning, always understanding and constantly dreaming between the mountains and the sea. Finally, to Momma Sooz - thank you for helping me be the best version of myself.

Here's to being a cultural nomad, "passport-ready". To the next chapter in the book of my academic career ... let's see what I write next.

- v -

在这一天

(On this day)

Dedicated to Helen, because if I can “cut it” this far, you can too.

To spoons and academia.

Abstract

Initiated from discussions of key curators and exhibitions at the end of the Cultural Revolution, this thesis explores cultural translation through networked curatorial practices in the Chinese context since 1980. In response to increasing local (Chinese) to global (international) exchange, termed as 'glocal', I examine different curatorial practices and strategies used to translate exhibitions of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art towards the development and definition of the role of the transcultural curator. A framework for translation is developed from Homi K. Bhabha's three-tiered, postcolonial methodology of 'Third Space' in parallel with Ray Oldenburg's theory of third place, whilst rooted in the development of social and cultural networks within Fei Xiaotong's concept of Chineseness. From these perspectives, it is argued that *guanxi* self-reflexively provides a basis through which networked curatorial practices can be understood.

As a non-Chinese curator and researcher, this thesis is crucially informed by a practice-led component to the research methodology. Responding to China's unique moment of "museumification", I establish *The Temporary* to actively and explicitly reflect on my curatorial practice in relation to research findings. This platform functions as a site of "research curating" (based on the construction of networks of practice) and "curating research" (mapping the action archive), to test and evaluate curatorial strategies, whilst revealing a new internal logic of cultural translation in the Chinese context.

This nexus of research explored through theory, concept and practice aims to create a unique set of definitions and arguments to define the role of the transcultural curator. In turn, it presents a series of considerations to be implemented when curating exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art in an international context whilst contributing to the ongoing debate in the field.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	vi
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures.....	ix
Preface	xv
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1 The Curator, the Critic and ‘Chineseness’	14
1.1 – The Rise of the Chinese Curator.....	18
1.2 – Li Xianting.....	21
1.3 – Gao Minglu	26
1.4 – (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung.....	29
1.5 – Defining ‘Chineseness’	33
1.6 – ‘Chineseness’ and Contemporary Chinese Art	37
Chapter 2 Translating China.....	45
2.1 – From Cross-cultural to Transcultural.....	48
2.2 – Translation to Translator	59
2.3 – A Postcolonial China?	69
2.4 – Translator as Curator	86
Chapter 3 From <i>Guanxi</i> to ‘Glocal’	90
3.1 – Defining Networks, Defining <i>Guanxi</i>	91
3.2 – Curating <i>Guanxi</i>	98
3.3 – A ‘Glocal’ China.....	105
3.4 – Curating ‘Glocal’	110
3.5 – Beyond Glocalisation?.....	118
Chapter 4 Curating ‘Chineseness’	123
4.1 – <i>Passaggio a Oriente (Passage to the East)</i> (1993).....	126
4.2 – <i>Inside Out: New Chinese Art</i> (1998).....	140
4.3 – <i>The Real Thing</i> (2007)	154
4.4 – Towards China’s ‘New Internationalism’	173
Chapter 5 A ‘Temporary’ China.....	176
5.1 – The “Museumification” of China	179
5.2 – Models of Transcultural Curating	186

5.3 – <i>The Temporary</i> as Ideogram	192
5.4 – Curating <i>The Temporary: 01</i>	202
5.5 – <i>The Temporary</i> Legacy	211
Conclusion	216
Translating the Transcultural	218
From Chineseness to <i>Guanxi</i>	221
Curating the Transcultural	224
<i>The Temporary</i> : Between Theory and Practice	228
Bibliography	232
Appendix 1 Glossary of Chinese Terms	255
Appendix 2 List of Interviewees	262
Appendix 3 Bilingual Interview Consent Form	264
Appendix 4 Chinese Art Exhibition Chronology	266
1970s	266
1980s	266
1990s	266
2000s	269
2010s	271
Appendix 5 Interview with Li Xianting (translators Yu Chen and You Feng) - 6 October 2010, Songzhuang Artists' Village, Beijing	273
Appendix 6 <i>The Temporary</i> - Online Links	287
Appendix 7 <i>The Temporary: 01</i> - Exhibition Topology	289
Appendix 8 Still Walking Blog - Exploring the city of Birmingham: Impermanent Collection - review of <i>The Temporary</i> at ARTicle Gallery - Ben Waddington	292

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Interview Li Xianting at his personal home, Songzhuang Artists' Village, part of fieldwork research in China (2009-12), 17 October 2010. Images © Rachel Marsden.....	4
Figure 2 - Interview with Gao Minglu at Gao Minglu Contemporary Art Center, part of fieldwork research in China (2009-12), 2 December 2010. Image © Rachel Marsden.	4
Figure 3 - Interview with (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung at Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Shanghai part of fieldwork research in China (2009-12), 9 November 2010. Image © Rachel Marsden.....	5
Figure 4 - Visits to 798 Art Zone, Beijing, as part of fieldwork research in China (2009-12), 27 September 2010. Images © Rachel Marsden.....	19
Figure 5 - Visits to 798 Art Zone, Beijing, as part of fieldwork research in China (2009-12), 27 September 2010. Images © Rachel Marsden.....	19
Figure 6 - The first <i>Stars Art Exhibition</i> (27 September 1979) in the park east of the National Gallery of Art, Beijing, China. Image courtesy of Zee Stone Gallery.....	22
Figure 7 - Li Xianting at his home in Songzhuang Artists' Village, 17 October 2010. Image © Rachel Marsden.....	26
Figure 8 - Chinese artist Xiao Lu firing two gunshots at the installation 'Dialogue'. A performance for the <i>China/Avant-Garde</i> exhibition, National Art Gallery, Beijing, 5 February 1989. Image © the artist.	28
Figure 9 - (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung (left) with artist Oscar Ho (middle) and Li Xianting (right) at the <i>China's New Art, Post-1989</i> exhibition, February 1993, Hong Kong Arts Centre. Image © Hanart TZ Gallery, Anthony Dickson, Dickson Lee.....	31
Figure 10 - Homi K. Bhabha's three-tiered methodology of 'Third Space'. Visualisation by Rachel Marsden.....	65
Figure 11 - Realm of the untranslatable within Bhabha's 'Third Space'. Visualisation by Rachel Marsden.....	66
Figure 12 - Four-dimensional methodology for a new catalytic 'Third Space'. Visualisation by Rachel Marsden.....	67
Figure 13 - <i>Farewell to Post-colonialism: The Third Guangzhou Triennial</i> at Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (6 September - 16 November 2008). Image © Danrong Zhang.	73

- Figure 14 - From left to right: Sarat Maharaj, Michael Chen (translator) and curator (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung. *West Heavens: India-China Summit on Social Thought* as part of the 2010 8th Shanghai Biennale— *Rehearsal Act V* at MOCA Shanghai, 29 October 2010. Image © Rachel Marsden.....77
- Figure 15 - *Farewell to Post-colonialism: The Third Guangzhou Triennial* at Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (6 September - 16 November 2008). Views of 'China Painters' (2007-08) by Christian Jankowski, various media, dimensions variable (right), and 'Faith on a Horse' (2008) by Liu Dahong, mixed-media video installation, dimensions variable (left). Image © (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung.78
- Figure 16 - After censorship – 'Springtimes of John and Yoko: Bed Inn' (2008) by Allan deSouza and Yong Soon Min. Installation with rugs, printed curtains, wood structures, fabric, video projection, sound, as part of *Farewell to Post-Colonialism, The Third Guangzhou Triennial*, Guangzhou, China (6 September - 16 November 2008). Image © Yong Soon Min.80
- Figure 17 - Front cover of 'Farewell to Post-colonialism: Querying the Guangzhou Triennial 2008', a special edition of *Printed Project*, N° 11, May 2009. Image © Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong.82
- Figure 18 - 'Censor's Note' (p. 66) in 'Farewell to Post-colonialism: Querying the Guangzhou Triennial 2008', a special edition of *Printed Project*, N° 11, May 2009. Image © Printed Project, with photographs © Peter John Mayers (top) and Dorothee Albrecht (bottom).83
- Figure 19 - 'A schematic presentation of self in the traditional Chinese social context' (2012) by Weining C. Chang and Lynn Lee. Image © Chang and Lee.92
- Figure 20 - Categories of 'Instrumental-Mixed-Emotional' relationship based on *Chaxu Geju* designed by Shen Yi combining Hwang Kwang-kuo and Yang Kuo-Shu's interpretations of *Chaxu Geju*. Cited in Zhang Jianghua 2010, 'Charisma, Publicity, and China Society: Rethinking of "Chaxu Geju"'. Translation by You Feng.....93
- Figure 21 - Diagram of Self, Culture and Society cited in Zhang Jianghua 2010, 'Charisma, Publicity, and China Society: Rethinking of "Chaxu Geju"'. Originally by Francis Hsu (1997). Translation by You Feng.95
- Figure 22 - Visual representations of 'Networking', West (left) and East (right) taken from Yang Liu: *East meets West* (2015). Image © Yang Liu.97
- Figure 23 - *Guanxi: The Art of Conversations* (2011) exhibition catalogue. Image courtesy of Asia Art Archive (AAA), Hong Kong.100

- Figure 24 - *Guanxi: A Collection of Letters with Twelve Artists* (2011) book. Image courtesy of Asia Art Archive (AAA), Hong Kong.100
- Figure 25 - *The A to Z of...*, introductory exhibition text installation view of *Guanxi: The Art of Conversations* (2011) at Today Art Museum, Beijing, China (10-23 October 2011). Image © Rachel Marsden, 14 October 2011.103
- Figure 26 - Examples of 'Chinglish': mistranslations of Mandarin Chinese on garden signage in the Beijing Olympic Park, China, on 5 October 2010. Images © Rachel Marsden.....108
- Figure 27 - View of Building No. 2, *Negotiations* (18 September - 24 October 2010) at Today Art Museum (Beijing, China) in association with the Ikon Gallery (Birmingham, UK). Image © Rachel Marsden.....111
- Figure 28 - Poster for *Negotiations* (18 September - 24 October 2010) at Today Art Museum (Beijing, China) in association with the Ikon Gallery (Birmingham, UK). Image © Today Art Museum.....112
- Figure 29 - 'MadeUpTheTranslocalmotion' (5 October 2008) by e-space lab. Composite images show links between am space, Shanghai, China (middle image) and the Bluecoat Hub, Liverpool, UK (bottom image). Video stills © Philip Courtenay of e-space lab.115
- Figure 30 - Poster for *The 8th Shanghai Biennale: Rehearsal*, Shanghai, China (24 October 2010 - 23 January 2011). Image © Shanghai Art Museum.....116
- Figure 31 - Cover of *Flash Art*, Vol. 25, N° 162 (January/February 1992), where Kong Chang'an published the article 'Ten Years of the Chinese Avant-Garde: Waiting for the Curtain to Fall', pp. 110-114. Image courtesy of *Flash Art*.130
- Figure 32 - Chinese artists and curators at *45th Venice Biennale: The Cardinal Points of Art* (1993). From left to right: Wang Youshen, Wang Guangyi, Xu Bing, Fang Lijun (standing, in white), Li Xianting (sitting, in brown shirt), Feng Mengbo, Wu Shanzhuan, Geng J Geng Jianyi, Liao Wen. Wang Guangyi, Xu, Fang, Feng and Geng participated in *Passaggio a Oriente (Passage to the East)* (1993); Wang Youshen and Wu participated in *Aperto '93: Emergency/Emergenza* (1993). Image courtesy of Wang Youshen.....133
- Figure 33 - View of *Great Criticism: Swatch + Great Criticism: Pop* (1992) by Wang Guangyi in *Passaggio a Oriente (Passage to the East)* (1993) as part of the *45th Venice Biennale: The Cardinal Points of Art* (1993). Image courtesy of Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong.....134

Figure 34 - Xu Bing (Chinese, born 1955), <i>Tianshu (Book from the Sky)</i> (1987–91) Installation with hand-painted books, 3.6m x 6.0m x 15.2m, on show as part of the exhibition <i>Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China</i> (2013) at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image © the artist.....	145
Figure 35 - Xu Bing (Chinese, born 1955), <i>Tianshu (Book from the Sky)</i> (1987-91), on show as part of <i>Inside Out: New Chinese Art</i> (1998) at SFMOMA. Image © Chris Stewart for the San Francisco Chronicle.....	145
Figure 36 - Wang Guangyi (Chinese, born 1957). <i>Great Castigation Series: Coca-Cola</i> (1993). Oil on canvas, 2m x 2m. Image © the artist.	151
Figure 37 - Zhang Huan, Chinese, born 1965. <i>To Raise the Water Level in a Fishpond</i> (1997). C-print on Fuji archival paper, 152.5cm x 228.5cm. Image © the artist.....	152
Figure 38 - Image of the publication cover for <i>Inside Out: New Chinese Art</i> (1998), published by the University of California Press.....	152
Figure 39 - Exhibition map for <i>The Real Thing</i> (2007), Tate Liverpool. Image courtesy of Tate.....	160
Figure 40 - Yangjiang Group (Zheng Guogu, Chinese, born 1970; Chen Zaiyan, Chinese, born 1971; Sun Qinglin, Chinese, born 1974). <i>If I knew the danger ahead, I'd have stayed well clear</i> (2007), Firework performance on the River Mersey, Liverpool, UK. Image courtesy of the artists. Photograph: © Phil Olson.	164
Figure 41 - Ai Weiwei (Chinese, born 1957). <i>Working Progress (Fountain of Light)</i> (2007), Mixed media light installation. Image courtesy of Tate.	166
Figure 42 - Ai Weiwei (Chinese, born 1957). <i>Working Progress (Fountain of Light)</i> (2007), Mixed media light installation. Image courtesy of Tate.	166
Figure 43 - Xu Zhen (Chinese, born 1977). <i>8,848 Minus 1.86</i> (2005), Video and mixed media installation. Image © the artist	169
Figure 44 - Front cover of the exhibition catalogue for <i>The Real Thing</i> (2007). Published by Tate Liverpool.	171
Figure 45 - Taken from the series <i>Ordos - A Failed Utopia</i> (2016) by photographer Raphael Olivier. Image © Raphael Olivier.	178
Figure 46 - Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing, China. Designed by Stephen Holl in 2013. Image © Sifang Art Museum.	181
Figure 47 - Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China. Designed by Sou Fujimoto in 2014. Image © Yuz Museum.....	182
Figure 48 - Visualisation of the proposed M+ Museum for visual culture as part of the West Kowloon Cultural District in Hong Kong by Herzog & de Meuron. Image © Herzog & de Meuron.....	182

Figure 49 - Initial shorthand logo for <i>The Temporary</i> (2014). Designed by Adam Grüning. Image © Rachel Marsden	194
Figure 50 - Initial design for <i>The Temporary</i> logo posted on Facebook. Image © Rachel Marsden.....	196
Figure 51 - Initial design for <i>The Temporary</i> logo posted on Instagram. Image © Rachel Marsden.....	197
Figure 52 - Initial design for <i>The Temporary</i> logo posted on Instagram. Image © Rachel Marsden.....	197
Figure 53 - Initial design for <i>The Temporary</i> logo posted on WeChat (<i>Weixin</i>). Image © Rachel Marsden.	198
Figure 54 - Initial design for <i>The Temporary</i> logo posted on WeChat (<i>Weixin</i>). Image © Rachel Marsden.	198
Figure 55 - Use of Ktdict C-E (Chinese-English Dictionary) app to trigger visual translation of <i>The Temporary</i> logo. Image © Rachel Marsden.....	199
Figure 56 - Final shorthand for <i>The Temporary</i> (2014). Designed by Adam Grüning. Image © Rachel Marsden.....	202
Figure 57 - Final main logos for <i>The Temporary</i> (2014). Designed by Adam Grüning. Image © Rachel Marsden.....	202
Figure 58 - Vinyl wallpaper, detail from <i>City DNA/London N° 2</i> (2012) by Lu Xinjian. Originally acrylic on canvas, 280cm x 800cm. Installed at ARTicle Gallery, Birmingham (6 March - 4 April 2014). Image © Rachel Marsden (pp. 10-11 of the catalogue).	206
Figure 59 - 'Small scale architecture' seating (2014) designed by Li-En Yeung. Fabrication by Tom Vousden. Plywood and pine. Dimensions variable. Images © Rachel Marsden (pp. 14- 15 of the catalogue in Appendix 6).	208
Figure 60 - Visual topologies. Photographic works included as part of <i>The Temporary: 01 - Architectures of Change</i> . Installed at ARTicle Gallery, Birmingham (6 March - 4 April 2014). Images © Rachel Marsden (pp. 102-103 of the catalogue, Appendix 6).	209
Figure 61 - Visual topologies. Photographic works included as part of <i>The Temporary: 01 - Architectures of Change</i> . Installed at ARTicle Gallery, Birmingham (6 March - 4 April 2014). Images © Rachel Marsden (pp. 102-103 of the catalogue, Appendix 6).	210
Figure 62 - <i>The Temporary: 01</i> Catalogue Cover	288
Figure 63 - <i>The Temporary: 01</i> - Exhibition Topology (1/3)	289
Figure 64 - <i>The Temporary: 01</i> - Exhibition Topology (2/3)	290
Figure 65 - <i>The Temporary: 01</i> - Exhibition Topology (3/3)	291

Figure 66 - <i>A Little Bit of Beijing</i> (2013) by Li Han & Hu Yan. Image © the artists.....	294
---	------------

Preface

The impetus for this research began in January 2008, when completing an internship at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, USA. Having recently completed my Masters in Art Museum and Gallery Studies at the University of Leicester in 2007, I wanted to gain international curatorial experience building on my knowledge of UK curatorial practices. Applying to the Guggenheim for a curatorial assistant post, unbeknownst to me, I was assigned to the newly initiated Asian art department, a division of the museum less than 18-months old. Gaining unprecedented experience in the field during its development phase, the first exhibition on which I worked was a retrospective of one of the most renowned Chinese artists, *Cai Guo-Qiang: I Want to Believe* (16 March - 19 September 2009). In awe of the ambitious nature and cultural contexts of the exhibition, I observed its public reception, which made me question how a museum of this scale, with one of the largest audiences in the world, translated China and contemporary Chinese art, and more so, what curatorial strategies they used to facilitate the process of translation.

Introduction

After the end of the Cultural Revolution, the beginning of the 1980s saw positive change in the history of China's cultural development (Bai 1983, p. 42). Cultural policy became more open, allowing for revived cultural traditions, diasporic developments and new and continued international cultural exchange. As artists and curators moved to, and from, the West to exhibit and interpret Chinese art on the global art stage, avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art became located in both Chinese and Western art history, developing in line with their international counterparts. During this period of dislocation and traversal, Chinese artists were trying to make sense of their past and history by negotiating and comprehending the changes to their society, where it became the responsibility of the curator to ultimately, translate these narratives - in this thesis, the role of the transcultural curator. It is important to state the research is largely framed through the lens of cultural progression in the China over the last thirty years, rather than the nation's unique socio-political conditions since the end of the Cultural Revolution. The latter will, when needed, be sensitively acknowledged as part of cultural translation. As such, the research will be contextualised within crucial moments in Chinese art history, including developments in the art market, artistic production and cultural infrastructures, attributed to China's rapid era of globalisation.

In order to approach an exploration of cultural translation through networked curatorial practices in the Chinese context, the research is framed by a specific set of aims. Firstly, to explore the hybrid and changing role of the curator after the end of the Cultural Revolution in China from first-hand perspectives. Fundamental in establishing the notion of curating in the Chinese context and contributing to the development of a Chinese art history, they will be analysed in relation to key artists' collectives and examples of the first exhibitions of avant-garde Chinese art. These perspectives will frame an initial discourse of curating in China to inform the

basis of translation of other exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art in the Chinese and international context, as examined throughout this thesis.

Secondly, to provide a concerted examination of the theoretical methodologies and conceptual frameworks, which underpin curating in the Chinese context and their complex relationships from, and within, local (Chinese) to global (international) contexts. They will be critiqued through the definition of a set of terms and languages and their application to the exhibition of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art. Also, further contextualised by a *Glossary of Chinese Terms* (Appendix 1), as many Chinese terms are not synonymous in English thus, are unable to be fully translated unless through thorough contextual examination. As such, to decipher the unique characteristics inherent to the role of the curator and curatorial strategies, to be taken into account when translating exhibitions of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art.

Thirdly, to explore different strategies of curating avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art over the last thirty years, articulated and implemented by key curators in the field. More specifically, to analyse exhibitions that were fundamental in raising the profile of contemporary Chinese art on the global art stage. The translational route of an artwork and artist's concept when it is moved from its cultural origin to a new local to local, or local to global context - its 'glocal' perception - will be examined. In turn, the influence of the curator's identity, cultural history and professional networks. These critical examinations will highlight key considerations and approaches, necessary to acknowledge when curating and thus, translating future exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art.

Finally, to present new discourses of "research curating" and "curating research" conceptualised as curatorial strategies during the analysis of previous exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art throughout this thesis. Developed in response to the recent prolific rise of art galleries, museums and cultural districts in China, including their internal cultural infrastructures,

these discourses will reveal the importance of understanding networked curatorial practices, including mapping topologies and archives, central to the role of the transcultural curator and strategies of transcultural curating. These will become key considerations used to inform the future curation and thus, translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art in an international context. More broadly, these aims will collectively present an in-depth examination of the different established and emerging curatorial practices and strategies used to translate exhibitions of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art, developed from first-hand perspectives and through multiple theoretical and conceptual frameworks in 'glocal' contexts.

Structured to address these aims, the research methodology takes a systematic approach through a nexus of four distinct interlinking strands, informing each other dialectically and dialogically. These comprise a comprehensive review of literature in the field, the collation and analysis of first-hand insights through primary research interviews, an examination of exhibitions of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art presented as case studies and a practice-led component to the research methodology - the implementation of my curatorial practice as a form of 'evaluation through practice'. Primary research was largely conducted through 27 interviews with an earlier generation of (mainly male) Chinese artists, curators, critics, gallerists and scholars in China and the UK (*List of Interviewees* - Appendix 2). These took place in people's homes, cafés, gallery restaurants, artists' studios and galleries, and at exhibition opening events, lunches and dinners. On reflection, relationships developed within a social structure and space, as shown in the following three images.¹ Although not always appropriate circumstances to document research, which may, in turn, have influenced the research process and impeded translation, it was always a personal and welcoming experience into both the public and private lives of these key people in the field of Chinese art.

¹ This notion of social structures and space underpins the practice-led component of the research methodology and will be examined in relation to Ray Oldenburg's theory of 'third places' (1989) in Chapter 5.



Figure 1 - Interview Li Xianting at his personal home, Songzhuang Artists' Village, part of fieldwork research in China (2009-12), 17 October 2010. Images © Rachel Marsden.



Figure 2 - Interview with Gao Minglu at Gao Minglu Contemporary Art Center, part of fieldwork research in China (2009-12), 2 December 2010. Image © Rachel Marsden.



Figure 3 - Interview with (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung at Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Shanghai part of fieldwork research in China (2009-12), 9 November 2010. Image © Rachel Marsden.

When I began the research, my position in the field was as a young British research student and emerging scholar, with minimal experience of, and prior engagement with China, having never visited the nation prior to undertaking fieldwork research in 2009. Due to China's contested and unpredictable political history, I had to be aware of, and assimilate, social, cultural and political sensitivities as part of my surroundings, the interviewees, their backgrounds and pre-existing relationships between each other. Within the thesis, interviews are cited within the bibliography as the interviewees make substantial claims, which are necessary to formally acknowledge within the research. Furthermore, it was important to respond to the ethical considerations raised when undertaking the primary research interviews in China, including acting in accordance with Birmingham City University's ethical guidelines, obtaining informed consent for the interviews completed, where possible using a *Bilingual Interview Consent Form* (Appendix 3). Many interviewees did not acknowledge its need in China and hence, did not complete the form, instead giving verbal agreement to

materials being used here in the thesis.² Also, my lack of knowledge of Mandarin, Chinese language became a further key ethical consideration, where translators were employed to mediate the process, often asked to double check previously translated transcriptions. To attempt and avoid the bias of translators, as translators and translations from Mandarin to English often varied in detail and accuracy, transcription materials would, where possible, be translated twice by different translators.

As an extension to the complex explorations of theoretical methodologies and conceptual frameworks, and examinations of past curatorial practices and strategies used to translate exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art, it is vital to implement a practice-led component to the research methodology. Framed as a live case study and process of 'evaluation through practice', it will test and self-reflexively analyse my curatorial practice. This aims to further strengthen the dialogic and dialectic relationships between theory, concept and practice in the research, where examinations of past examples of curatorial practices and strategies alone would not allow for such critical reflections. Furthermore, to precisely explore findings from the research aims by putting them into practice.

It is important to note former discrepancies in the contextual understanding of the thesis through its original titling 'The Transcultural Curator: Interpreting Contemporary Chinese Art in the West since 1980', and 'The Transcultural Curator: Local to Global Translations of Contemporary Chinese Art since 1980'. Initially, they implied the dichotomy of East-West then local-global, theoretical methodologies of interpretation rather than translation, whilst giving precedence to the translation of contemporary Chinese art as the core focus, rather than its exhibition and curation. These perspectives were made

² This highlights how formal, binding written agreements as part of cultural exchange in China were not commonplace. Value is placed on the verbal agreements made during the development of professional relationships and thus, networked curatorial practices, also relative to their unique socio-political context. This will be explored through the notion of an inherent cultural *guanxi* as examined in Chapter 3.

clear when sourcing secondary materials for the literature review, conducting formal interviews during fieldwork research in China (2009-12) and discussing the research informally with peers. Certain frameworks were identified as outdated or no longer contextually and/or conceptually appropriate. In response to these reflections, the title was reframed to communicate the true focus of the research - the translation of networked curatorial practices in the Chinese context. Furthermore, it was necessary to take ownership of a specific set of terms and languages, which are used to deconstruct the curatorial practices and strategies used to translate exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art, further contextualised by the *Glossary of Chinese Terms* (Appendix 1). A breakdown of these central terms and languages used to underpin this research will now be outlined, clarifying order of use, definitions and contextual associations between terms.

Beginning with 'Chineseness', it is a term and concept understood by Chinese curator Gao Minglu as 'what makes something or someone Chinese' (2007, p.17). A key focus for artists and curators in the last decade, it is inherent to identity and cultural history and relies on an understanding of what modernity and avant-garde means as part of Chinese art history. With complex and differing definitions, it was initially understood as everything from China being termed as Chinese. This often reductive perspective changed when Chinese intellectuals defined the term from a Sinocentric perspective (*zhongguo zhongxin zhuyi*), originally meaning the Chinese nation and its people (*huaxia*). In response to key moments of sociopolitical change, it moved beyond its original nationalist definition to encompass the sense, spirit and identity of what it means to be Chinese in a new cultural space and mobility.

No longer limited to geographic locality, these nationalist and diasporic understandings of Chineseness developed in line with the development of contemporary Chinese art acknowledged as part of postcolonial, transnational, cosmopolitan and global studies at the time. This encouraged

a global Chineseness specific to different temporal-spatial contexts - a multi-dimensional term unique to an individual or collective set of embodied experiences within, or of, China and Chinese culture. Furthermore, in China's era of globalisation, it is also used by Chinese artists as a questionable form of cultural capital and status within curatorial strategies to decentre Chineseness within new local-to-global ('glocal') contexts, whilst alluding to previous cultural assumptions of Chineseness defined within Chinese art history.

Avant-garde Chinese art can be attributed to key developments in cultural production post-Cultural Revolution and the influence of the 'Westernisation Movement' (*Yangwu Yundong*), when Western thinking was translated and assimilated into Chinese culture. More specifically, it was identified through the experimental artistic and curatorial practices of artists' collectives, seen to raise the international profile of Chinese art in the 1980s and early 1990s. As Chinese artists, curators and art historians gained greater cultural space and mobility, and hubs for cultural production were seen to develop in China beyond the renowned 'centres', definitions of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art were developing bilaterally - within China and outside of China.

Scholar Liu Yuedi (2008) defines this process of "becoming contemporary" within Chinese art history, largely discussed in line with the increasing profile of contemporary Chinese art post-millennium further encouraged by the art market boom from 2006 to 2007. Furthermore, the diversity of China's ethnic minority groups were being acknowledged as part of new modes of cultural production and growing local to international networks of cultural exchange, when China's national mission was re-envisioned 'from Made in China to Created/Designed in China' (Keane 2013, p. 149). Referring back to Chineseness, avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art are fundamentally related to its development, more specifically, through the evolution from 'de-Chineseness to re-Chineseness [...] from de-contextualisation to re-contextualisation (Liu 2011, p.59). The progression from avant-garde to contemporary Chinese art can therefore, be attributed to the changing

discourse of what it means to be Chinese, or non-Chinese, including decentralising Chinese, in today's 'glocal' context.

Transcultural relies on understanding the terms and concepts of "cross-cultural", "multicultural" and "intercultural". It is influenced by the binary and comparative relationship of cross-cultural, which attempts cultural synthesis and assimilation whilst reinforcing a reductive dichotomy of the 'self' and 'other', and the ethnographic, postcolonial, cosmopolitan, international, global and hybrid nature of the multicultural as theorised by Gayatri Spivak, Annie Coombes and Homi K. Bhabha. As the latter grapples with the conflicted territories of cultural difference versus cultural plurality and the dichotomy of 'difference' and 'other' as defined by Sarat Maharaj, it is intrinsically linked to intercultural's representation and dialogic relationships between multiple identities as a process of transformation. Transcultural is further developed from Fernando Ortiz's concept of transculturation as the site of "contact zones", encompassing, whilst addressing the successes and failures of, the formerly stated terms and concepts to function across, through and beyond cultures, as a mode of inquiry to promote networks of reciprocal exchange.

Intrinsic to the transcultural is *guanxi*, which, in turn, is reliant on Chineseness - this trio of theoretical methodologies and conceptual frameworks is fundamental to cultural translation. *Guanxi* is developed from Fei Xiatong's term and concept of *chaxu geju* to describe different modes of mutual association between the 'self' and 'other'. This is represented through the conceptual framework of 'concentric circles of Chineseness' (Chang and Lee 2012), where layers of identity and cultural history are isolated to examine social influence and interaction in both Chinese and Western contexts. The latter has more recently been appropriated by Scholar Prasenjit Duara to encompass diasporic interactive engagements through person-centred networks as a way of conceptualising artistic and curatorial relationships. This highlights a new form of cultural *guanxi* as a way of

seeing and being in an international context, where the role of 'glocal' is identified as key to its basis.

New readings of globalisation, and the influence of global on the local, has been identified as 'glocal' or 'glocalisation'. In the Chinese context, globalisation relates to China's economic and cultural progression over the last thirty years, more recently identified through the nation's rapid development of contemporary art galleries, museums and cultural districts, including their inherent cultural infrastructures. With Japanese origins, 'glocal' or 'glocalisation' is defined by sociologist Roland Robertson as meaning 'global localisation' (1995, p.28), adapted from understandings of cosmopolitanism to imply a new interconnectivity of the world to create a new local-global logic as part of cultural translation. 'Glocal' must acknowledge its reliance on developing inherent intercultural relationships therefore, how it is intrinsically linked to new ways of developing social and cultural *guanxi* and Chineseness. Furthermore, it becomes a tool to resist hegemonies of the art world, functioning as a site of cultural enquiry and experimentation, whilst informing new artistic and curatorial practices. It is as much a conceptual framework as it is a form of cultural practice, similarly to *guanxi*.

Throughout the thesis, two terms and languages are identified to define new curatorial strategies used to exhibit contemporary Chinese art in an international context - "research curating" and "curating research". The former relates to my position as a researcher and/as curator, reliant on extended networks, more specifically social *guanxi*, to create new personal and professional friendships and 'third spaces' of mediation. These attempt to avoid the influence of cultural identity by establishing social spaces and structures to cultivate new artistic and curatorial practices. This role is informed by "curating research", as such, the curator as researcher. Involving the investigation, collation, mapping and analysis of the complex networks and relationships between different types of artistic practices, it is represented through curatorial practice - as such, activating the archive in

practice, termed as the “action archive”. In this thesis, past curatorial practices inform current curatorial practices through this process of both “research curating” (based on the construction of networks of practice) and “curating research” (mapping the “action archive”). The interconnectedness of, and between, these different terms and languages are fundamental to understanding how theoretical methodologies and conceptual frameworks, and curatorial practices, inform cultural translation, now stated in order of use through an extended thesis chapter breakdown.

Chapter 1 will examine the development of artistic and curatorial practices in China since the end of the Cultural Revolution, including artists’ groups, artists’ villages, and modes of cultural production. More specifically, it will examine the rise of the Chinese curator and the hybrid phenomena of the curator as critic, and critic as curator, methodologically underpinned by the first-hand perspectives of renowned Chinese curators Li Xianting, Gao Minglu and (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung. Mapping the development and establishment of exhibitions of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art in the 1980s and 1990s, it will discuss the sociopolitical, ethical and cultural contexts inherent to the concept of ‘Chineseness’, prior to its application in the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art, whilst challenging Westerncentric chronologies of Chinese art history.

In Chapter 2, central and indexing terms and concepts, which underpin the research will be mapped and defined. Methodologically, it will develop from a literature review of secondary source material, and begin by defining the central term to this research - transcultural. The latter will be situated within the indexing terms cross-cultural, multicultural and intercultural using Sarat Maharaj’s theory of managerial multiculturalism and cultural pluralism, and Fernando Ortiz’s concept of transculturation and site of “contact zones”. At this point, understandings and theoretical methodologies of translation will be introduced through Gayatri Spivak’s understanding of the ‘translatese’; ‘hybridity’ within the ethnographic studies of Annie Coombes, and Homi K. Bhabha’s theory of ‘Third Space’. Furthermore, these theories within a contested Chinese postcolonialism will be examined through curatorial

strategies used to translate exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art and the role of curator as translator, specifically through the examination of *Farewell to Postcolonialism: The Third Guangzhou Triennial* (2008), Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou.

In Chapter 3, the notion of decentring Chineseness and how the relationship between the self and other, and its “centres” are self-reflexive concepts within Chinese culture and society will be examined in relation to the theoretical models of *chaxu geju* and ‘concentric circles of Chineseness’. This will form the basis of understanding for the conceptual frameworks of social and cultural *guanxi* and how this is adopted by artists and curators in China as both an artistic practice and curatorial strategy, specifically through the examination of *Guanxi: The Arts of Conversations* (2011), Today Art Museum, Beijing. This will be framed within the global’s new influence on the local, known as ‘glocal’ or ‘glocalisation’, further contextualised through the examination of *Negotiations* (2010) at Today Art Museum, Beijing; the work of e-space lab (2008-2010), and *The 8th Shanghai Biennale: Rehearsal* (2010).

These key theories, concepts and practices will then be further examined as part of the case study examinations in Chapter 4. Presenting three historically significant case studies, it will comparatively examine curatorial strategies used in the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art critiqued through primary research material (interviews) with the exhibitions’ associated artists and curators. This will be set alongside secondary research material (exhibition texts, catalogue essays and exhibition reviews), questioning the influence of Chineseness on the work of Chinese artists and curators, including curatorial and translational bias, the case studies include *Passaggio a Oriente (Passage to the East)* as part of the 45th Venice Biennale, Cardinal Points of the Arts in Venice, Italy (1993); *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* - Asia Society Galleries, New York (1998) and *The Real Thing: Contemporary Art from China* - Tate Liverpool (2007). These three large-scale, non-commercial group exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art in the West were selected for this research as they chronologically and collectively

mark a transition from avant-garde Chinese art and Chinese modernity in the early 1990s towards a contemporary Chinese art at the turn of the millennium. Group exhibitions, rather than solo exhibitions of Chinese artists, were selected due to their multidimensional curatorial strategies comprising multiple artistic, curatorial and institutional voices, and collaborative and bilingual relationships, influenced by local-to-global and glocal contexts.

Finally, Chapter 5, presents the notion of social structures and spaces as part of artistic and curatorial practices, specifically transcultural curatorial practices in 'glocal' terms. This will be critiqued through Ray Oldenburg's concept of 'third places', alongside artist Celine Condorelli's notion of social support structures and Zoe Butt's understanding of the temporal dimension of friendship as forms of cultural production. Furthermore, explored in relation to China's era of globalisation presented by the rapid development of contemporary art galleries, museums and cultural districts, including their inherent cultural infrastructures. These conceptual frameworks will underpin the practice-led component of the research methodology - establishing a new transcultural exchange platform and social intervention space, *The Temporary* and the development of its inaugural project *The Temporary: 01*, which responds to the nation's frenetic urban development, here framed as China's "architectures of change". Furthermore, they assist in conceptualising the new curatorial discourses of "research curating" and "curating research". Developed from the discussion and mapping of artistic and curatorial practices throughout (see *Chinese Art Exhibition Chronology* - Appendix 4), they contribute to the development and definition the role of the transcultural curator and strategies of transcultural curating towards the future translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art.

Chapter 1

The Curator, the Critic and 'Chineseness'

By the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the original features of China's socialist cultural policies were slowly being restored through the implementation of an Open Door policy, created in 1978 to bring economic, political and educational reform while responding to the changing identity of Chinese society. This plunged China into a new era of globalisation: by the early 1980s, it was seen to instigate progressive developments in China's art history and cultural production.³ Many key cultural events and movements can be attributed to this period, driven by the establishment of artists' collectives from 1979 including the Stars Painting Group (*Xingxing huahui*) - a collective of non-professional, self-trained artists who joined forces to 'make way for freedom of spirit and expression in a society that did not allow original thought or creativity' (Smith 2005, p. 471).⁴ Followed by the emergence of the New Art Movement in 1985 ('85 New Wave ('85 *Xinchao*)), which included the Northern Art Group. Known as the birth of avant-garde Chinese art, 'wave upon wave of artists came into the system', many of whom are still working today, presenting 'all these different styles, all these different groups, all these different generations' (Chinnery 2010, pers. comm., 11 September).⁵ In this context, artists were trying to make sense of their past and history, while negotiating and comprehending the contemporary changes to their society; it became an essential curatorial responsibility to translate this narrative.

³ Globalisation, more specifically cultural globalisation, is not examined in depth in this research, instead focusing on 'glocal' and 'glocalisation' in Chapter 3.

⁴ Founding members of the Stars Painting Group included Ma Desheng and Huang Rui. Other artists associated in the group included Qu Leilei, Wang Keping, Ai Weiwei, Bo Yun, Li Shuang, Mao Lizi, Zhong Ahcheng, Shao Fei, Qu Leilei, Wang Keping, Yan Li and Yang Yiping.

⁵ More recently, 'New Wave' has become a term used to define Chinese art, no longer specific to the 1980s and 1990s period. It has often been applied to new developments within contemporary Chinese art (Chinnery 2010, pers. comm., 11 September).

Since the early 1990s, renewed cultural policies and traditions resulted in Chinese artists and curators moving to and from the West to present, exhibit and translate avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art on the international art stage.⁶ Scholar Liu Yuedi defines this process of “becoming contemporary” in China as ‘a theory of social reflection’, which has ‘dominated Chinese aesthetics as well as art theory and practice for more than three decades’, most commonly defined through the four socio-cultural movements of Socialist Realism (1978-1984), Chinese avant-gardism (1985-1989), Chinese market and mass culture (1990-1998) and Chinese contemporary art (1999-2008) (2011, p. 60). Chinese scholar and curator Wu Hung identifies these chronological shifts in narratives of Chinese art history, whether logical and chronological, individual and collective, as based on ‘a “pattern of rupture” caused by violent intrusions of sociopolitical events’ (Wu 2005, p. 30). Each rupture forced artists, curators and intellectuals to reassess their current status, which became visible through their mutual practices as they opened up a new set of questions in a different time and space. However, these narratives of Chinese art history are rarely contested, bound by a logical and historical linearity within a Western-centrism where,

[...] although non-western modern and contemporary art is intimately connected to western modern and contemporary art, they have different origins, timing and logic of development (Ibid., p. 29).

Furthermore, these narratives of Chinese art history are often assumed rather than redefined, bound by ‘the “region” [which is] crudely understood

⁶ Cultural mobility from China to the West included to New York, USA (Ai Weiwei in 1981, Gu Wenda in 1987, Shao Fei in 1988 and Cai Guo-Qiang in 1995); Harvard University, USA (Wu Hung in 1980 and Gao Minglu in 1989); Paris, France (Wang Keping in 1984, Ma Dasheng in 1986 and Huang Yong Ping in 1989); Berlin, Germany (Zhu Jinshi in 1985); Hamburg, Germany, and Reykjavík, Iceland (Wu Shanzhuan in 1991); Switzerland (Qiu Jie in 1989) and London, UK (Qu Leilei in 1986). Cultural mobility from the West to China was happening more cautiously, focusing on China’s emerging cultural hub and ‘centre’ of Beijing (Karen Smith and Lorenz Helbling in 1992).

as an artist's ethnicity devoid of social, cultural and artistic contexts' (Ibid., p. 28).

At this stage, it is important to state the difference between 'contemporary Chinese art' and 'Chinese contemporary art'.⁷ The former refers to the conceptual development of the 'contemporary' within a Chinese art history, whereas the latter to contemporary art from, or related to, contexts of China.⁸ Therefore, it differentiates whether the concept of contemporary takes interpretative precedence over contexts of Chinese art, or contexts of 'Chineseness' over the concept of contemporary art. In this research, Chinese art becomes the dominant register over contemporary art, where Chinese art refers to artworks by mainland Chinese artists and the wider Chinese diaspora - artists of Chinese descent living outside China including Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. It must be noted, the latter is often complicated by the application and misuse of regional prefixes including American-born Chinese (ABC), Australian Born Chinese (AusBC) British-born Chinese (BBC) and Canadian Born Chinese (CBC) introduced in response to an 'urgent need to reconcile Chineseness' before the end of the 20th century (Ang 1998, p. 229). Collectively, these categorisations fail to acknowledge the influence of an individual's identity and history on translation including shifts in generation and migration, which are specific to discussions of the principal term and concept, 'Chineseness' - what it means to be Chinese or non-Chinese.

If I am inescapably Chinese by descent, I am only sometimes Chinese by consent. When and how is a matter of politics (Ang 2001, p. 18).

This contextual specificity versus a previously stated ambiguity in the definition of Chineseness contributes to 'deep-seated misunderstandings

⁷ Interestingly, when undertaking the literature review for this research, the wording 'Chinese contemporary art' was more prevalent than 'contemporary Chinese art', where its meaning did not seem to differ in the Chinese context.

⁸ Given more time, I would examine the development of 'contemporary' and 'contemporaneity' within Chinese art history.

about contemporary Chinese art' where 'cultural critics have had an especially difficult time with the concept trying to delineate, differentiate and defend Chineseness from other forms of postcolonial exoticisms' (Lee 2007, p. 2). Responding to this, the influence of an inherent Chineseness on being Chinese, or non-Chinese, will be defined more specifically in relation to the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were few Chinese curators in China as the role was emerging from other positions such as 'editor' and 'stationmaster'. Regularly invited to curate and write about Chinese and Asian art, regardless of their scholarship or experience, they were responsible for instigating a new phenomena and hybrid roles of the curator as critic, and critic as curator in China. (2005, p. 28). Methodologically, the rise of the Chinese art curator (section 1.1) will be underpinned in this chapter by first-hand perspectives from renowned Chinese curators Li Xianting (section 1.2), Gao Minglu (section 1.3) and (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung (section 1.4), who were pivotal in the development of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art in the 1980s and 1990s. Critical reflections on their individual and collaborative curatorial practices will build a contextual basis from which the concept of the transcultural curator, and transcultural curatorial practices, will be developed later in this research. Furthermore, sociopolitical, ethical and cultural contexts inherent to the concept of 'Chineseness' will be examined (section 1.5), prior to its application in the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art through the individual and collective experiences of Chinese artists, curators and critics (section 1.6). As such, this chapter aims to move beyond binding logical chronologies currently assumed within Chinese art history to offer new individual and collective narratives reflecting on individual artist's and curator's inherent relationship with, and to, China. As Wu states, 'must there be a single history of contemporary art that can be neatly folded into chronological order?' (2005, p. 28).

1.1 – The Rise of the Chinese Curator

In the wake of the Cultural Revolution, experimental artistic and curatorial practices and forms of cultural production rapidly emerged in China. Chinese artists and curators were largely trained in the art academies in mainland China; however, some were self-trained, including artists' groups.⁹ Regardless of whether an artist had completed formal training, a learning-by-experience - and from each other - mentality underpinned many of the cultural practices in China, becoming commonplace due to the fast pace of socio-economic and cultural change. This created a unique cultural freedom and detachment from the limitations of institutional control. In turn, this instigated a growing distrust within the Chinese government, who regularly and publicly implemented cultural control by censoring artworks and closing down exhibitions that were seen to subvert the ideologies of the nation-state. In response to this, Chinese artists and curators often withdrew and purposefully disengaged from the exhibition and discussion of their practices in what were considered official cultural settings, using the situation as the impetus to establish inventive, collective artistic and curatorial practices, and movements in art production. This included the development of alternative art spaces, such as 'Apartment Art' in the late 1970s, where artists retreated into private domestic spaces for them to become public platforms of display. As such, houses became studios and courtyards became galleries - and the regional migration of Chinese artists and curators led to the establishment of artists' villages and art districts, such as Songzhuang Artists' Village and 798 in Beijing.¹⁰ Described by Chinese curator Hou Hanru as "ideologic-centric' unofficial art', they responded to the local cultural ecology of the time by creating new social environments (Hou 1996, p. 42).

⁹ In China, contemporary art was not offered as a programme within the art academies until 2013. Called 'Experimental Art', it was established by Lv Shengzhong as part of the undergraduate programme directory at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), Beijing. Today, it is more broadly acknowledged as an important part of arts education across China.

¹⁰ Visited during fieldwork research trips to China (2009-12) to conduct primary research interviews with Li Xianting and Gao Minglu.



Figure 4 - Visits to 798 Art Zone, Beijing, as part of fieldwork research in China (2009-12), 27 September 2010. Images © Rachel Marsden



Figure 5 - Visits to 798 Art Zone, Beijing, as part of fieldwork research in China (2009-12), 27 September 2010. Images © Rachel Marsden

Functioning beyond the artistic genre of 'Socialist Realism', these methods of cultural production developed in line with 'Political Pop' and 'Cynical Realism' as coined by Li Xianting. Key to the early development of Chinese

art history (Wang 2015), they developed from previous dominant modes of realism to provide “post-realist” or “neo-realist” perspectives - critiques of the nationalist agenda and societal transformations in China. This was further identified through two strands of avant-garde Chinese art, which encompassed different sets of values and standards. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, most Chinese artists wanted to ‘join a group because they feel there is no power themselves visually, the group can give them more power and security’ (Gao 2010). Noteworthy groups included the No Name Painting Society (*Wuming Huahui*), Stars Group (*Xingxing Huahui*) and the Northern Art Group (*Beifang Yishu Qunti*) as part of the ‘85 New Wave (*’85 Xinchao*) whose collective momentum was identified as contributing to the birth of avant-garde Chinese art due to their ‘sense of improvisation and direct confrontation’ (Gao 1998, p. 48). The collective gravitas and power of Chinese artists functioned as a cultural catalyst towards the development of experimental artistic and curatorial practices in the 1990s.

However, the exposure of Chinese art was happening largely through print materials including art magazines, journals and newspapers; as such, print became ‘the ‘exhibition’ and curatorial platform’ (Chang 2016, p. 206). As there were no critics coming to China, nor a commercial market for Chinese art, Chinese scholars, curators and critics took on the responsibility of providing the platform and voice for Chinese artists and artist groups. This created local agency for Chinese artists while developing hybrid roles of the ‘curator as agent’ and the ‘curator as critic’.

Three pivotal figures, who were key in establishing these latter approaches, are Li Xianting (from and trained in mainland China), Gao Minglu (from China and trained in the USA) and (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung (from Hong Kong and trained in the USA). Although this research primarily examines curatorial practices from mainland China, it is important to understand the role of the Chinese curator in the Chinese region more broadly, here examined through three notable exhibitions from 1979, 1989 and 1993. They will explore the unique contextual backgrounds of the curators and exhibitions from an individual versus collective focus in the

broader development of artists' practices in mainland China and Hong Kong. By presenting Li's, Gao's and Chang's different approaches, these exhibitions will shape an authoritative basis for cultural translation and thus, curatorial practice in a Chinese context.

1.2 – Li Xianting

In September 1979, the Stars group organised the first *Stars Art Exhibition* (*Xingxing Meizhan*). Functioning outside the official art institution, the artworks were installed on railings and sculptures in a small garden to the east of the National Art Gallery, Beijing, and could be 'divided into two categories: those that delved into life, and those that explored form' where 'only by identifying with the fate of people can our art have any real vitality' (Li 2010 [1980], p. 11). Inevitably, due to the spontaneous nature of the exhibition and in part to the sociopolitical contexts of the works, within 24 hours the exhibition was deemed unofficial and formally closed by the government, and after 48 hours, it was called illegal and forbidden to reopen. Functioning as a temporary event, this exhibition can be understood as a silent performance of an artists' group manifesto such as the Stars Group ethos, which was stated in the opening paragraph of this chapter. After brief negotiations, the artists were given support from the Chinese Artists' Association and the Beijing Artists' Association, which enabled the exhibition to be re-displayed for nine days (23 November - 2 December 1979) at Huafang Studio in Beihai Park.

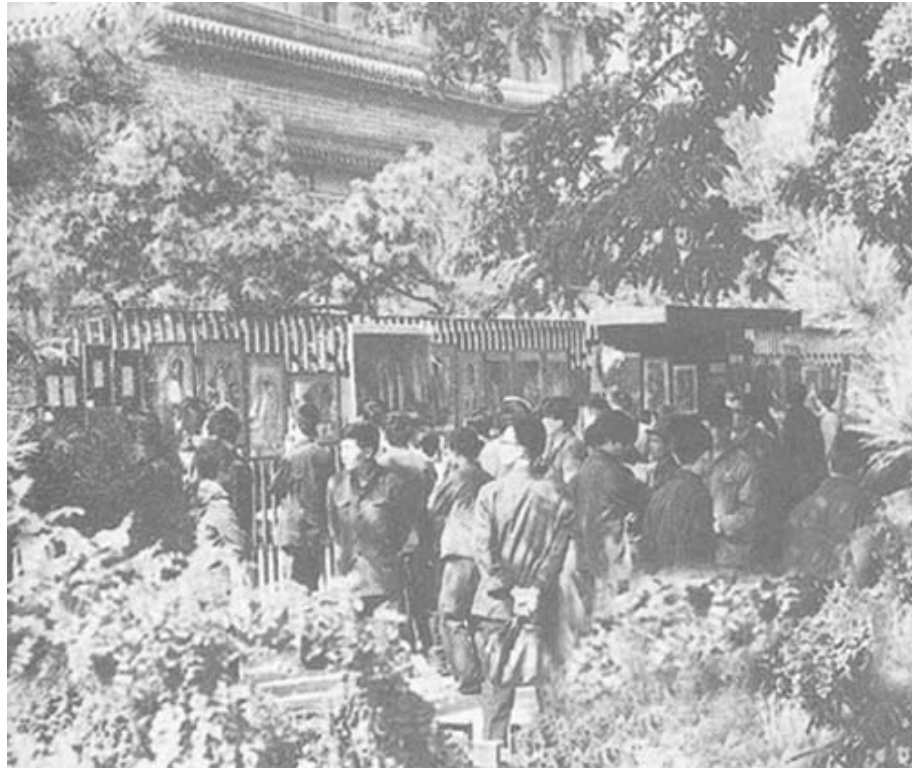


Figure 6 - The first *Stars Art Exhibition* (27 September 1979) in the park east of the National Gallery of Art, Beijing, China. Image courtesy of Zee Stone Gallery.

Although not the curator of the first *Stars Art Exhibition*, Li Xianting interpreted and promoted its official recognition in his role as editor for what was then one of China's only art magazines, *Meishu (Fine Art)* - a position he held from 1979 to 1983. Here, he introduced the notion of the "avant-garde exhibition", specifically in an article discussing the first *Stars Art Exhibition* (Ibid.). Published in March 1980, it critiqued the sympathetic versus oppositional opinions of audiences and the unique circumstances behind the exhibition, which rejected political representations and concepts central to 'Socialist Realism'.¹¹ Here, Li acknowledged the artists as 'young

¹¹ Li was editor of *Meishu (Fine Art)* from 1979 to 1983. This article was originally published as 'Guanyu Xingxing Meizhan', *Meishu (Fine Art)*, Vol. 147, N° 3, pp. 8-9. It was only recently translated from Mandarin Chinese into English, and republished by New York's Museum of Modern Art (Wu 2010, pp. 11-13). Gao (2010) notes much of the documentation and articles relating to exhibitions and artistic practices from the 1980s and early 1990s in China have never been translated into English. This lack of vital contextual information directly influences the translation of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art.

amateurs' motivated by personal interest due to their lack of formal training, and cited four artists' perspectives, which examined China's past and current cultural limitations, and a new era of cultural renewal based on Western developments in art and architecture (Li 2010, pers. comm., 6 October).

[...] since most of us have had no formal training in art, we must go through the process of learning something new; only then can we talk about finding some sort of Chinese identity (Li 2010, pers. comm., 6 October).

The pivotal European artists Käthe Kollwitz and Pablo Picasso were cited in this article as 'our banner' and 'our pioneer' respectively: people who did not avoid the complexities within society, instead manifesting these tensions through their work (Li 2010, pers. comm., 6 October). This clearly proves Chinese artists were looking directly to the West for affirmation of how to process their unique sociopolitical situation through their artistic practices. As Li stated, 'it is critical for us to be able to express the thoughts and feelings of the Chinese people in our art, even if the form we use is indiscriminately borrowed' (Li 2010 [1980], p. 11). However, this latter statement directly contradicts a comment by Li in a 2010 interview conducted at his home in Songzhuang, Beijing, in which he notes the influence of the 'Yangwu Movement' of the 1860s to 1890s on Chinese artists in the 1980s. Also known as the 'Westernisation Movement' (*Yangwu Yundong*), this was a translation and assimilation of Western thinking into Chinese culture. In the interview, Li identified this period as when,

[...] Chinese culture was attacked by Western people and the Chinese themselves tried to learn from the West, but just practical knowledge, not the system [...] since the early 1980s, we open our door and we learn from the Western countries of their technologies, of their sciences but we didn't learn their artists [...] we didn't learn from their modern art (Li 2010, pers. comm., 6 October).

These conflicting statements from Li highlight a confused logic in the development of an avant-garde Chinese art history. In turn, reflecting the changing individual and collective identities of artists - what it means to be

Chinese or non-Chinese to be discussed later in this chapter through the concept of 'Chineseness' (section 1.5).

It is important to note that Li's article was published three months prior to the Stars group's formal registration with the Beijing Artists' Association, in June 1980. After gaining this official recognition for their artistic practices, and in Li's art criticism, they were authorised to re-display their exhibition for a third time at the National Art Gallery, Beijing (24 August - 7 September 1980), where they received an exceptionally large audience of more than 200,000 visitors. This exhibition was translated through three platforms of display: it began as an unofficial and censored cultural intervention in the public realm, then hidden behind closed doors in the safe space of the artist's studio surrounded by peers, to conclude in the official and traditional art institution. Triggering debate for several years, it was understood by Li as one of few exhibitions marking the birth of avant-garde Chinese art (Li 2010 [1980], p. 116).

Li's pivotal influence demonstrated Chinese artists were one of the driving forces behind the shifts in perception of 'avant-garde' Chinese art. By the early 1990s, these shifts were defined by 'different kinds of openings and transformations as art found legal spaces in which to be shown' (Poshyananda 2015, p. 80). However, these 'transformations' often involved a great degree of personal, artistic and curatorial risk, which most artists and curators experienced first-hand, even if the exhibitions and spaces were considered 'legal' by the Chinese government. Noting these possibilities and using his newly established role and voice as a critic, in 1994 Li founded Songzhuang Artists' Village, a cultural environment dedicated to the cultivation of new and innovative artistic and curatorial practice and criticism. It provided a safe space for the professional development of Chinese artists - 'a new assembly' - away from the limitations and censorship of the Chinese cultural institution (Jiang 2008, p. 60). Li used these curatorial and art criticism platforms to speak for Chinese artists, and others, who did not have the right to freedom of speech. When interviewed, he defined his role as one of making connections,

[...] like a trans- [...] contactor [...] in charge of contacting different people and in charge of relationships [...] an editor (*bianji*) [...] a stationmaster (*jiaotong zhanzhang*) especially for the people “underground” [...] a squire (*xiangshen*) (Li 2010, pers. comm., 6 October).¹²

Without mentioning the term and concept of curator, he placed precedence on the meaning of ‘stationmaster’. Traditionally associated with the Communist Party, it was applied to the man in charge of organising revolutionaries to work, while protecting them from the enemy. This implies a view of Chinese artists in the 1980s as cultural soldiers, ready to go to “war” (in a real or metaphorical sense) with the Chinese government through their artistic, and Li’s innovative curatorial, practices. However, this was not Li’s understanding; rather, he described it as a personal process of working with artists as an ‘instigator of action’ and ‘community leader’.¹³ This was directly reflected through the establishment of Songzhuang Artists’ Village and further informed by his inherent understanding of artists and artistic practices as he was formally trained in Chinese Painting. However, he does not believe this influenced his role as a curator, stating ‘what matters is timing’, which for him was being in Beijing at the end of the Cultural Revolution ‘during a time of pivotal change for Chinese artists, whose collective voice was growing’ (Li 2010, pers. comm., 6 October).

As such, Li identifies his role as idiosyncratic and multi-dimensional, unique to his Chineseness and China’s cultural preoccupations and not specific to a single role. Instead, he responds to China’s changing sociopolitical, economic and cultural contexts. This highlights how Chinese curators were testing the parameters and responsibilities of their roles through ongoing

¹² This prefix of ‘trans’, which Li identifies as inherent to cultural roles in the 1980s, will be specifically examined in the next chapter when defining the use of the term ‘transcultural’ in this research. The interview with Li can be read in Appendix 5.

¹³ Today, Songzhuang Artists’ Village has a dedicated exhibition space, Songzhuang Art Museum, while providing funds for scholarly research and independent filmmaking.

experimentation and self-education, while trying to understand and meet the needs and expectations of artists. Li's 'rigorous analytical thought in difficult circumstances [...] championing individuality and freedom of spirit' (Jiang 2008, p. 57) awarded him the unique status of 'the "godfather" of Chinese artists' or 'Lao Li', translated as 'Elder Li' (Lee 2007, p. 5).



Figure 7 - Li Xianting at his home in Songzhuang Artists' Village, 17 October 2010.
Image © Rachel Marsden

1.3 – Gao Minglu

A decade after the first *Stars Art Exhibition*, the term and concept of curator was still not being used. Chinese curator Gao Minglu acknowledged this during the organisation of one of the most confrontational exhibitions in avant-garde Chinese art history, *China/Avant-Garde* (*Zhongguo Xiandai Yishuzhan*) at the National Art Gallery, Beijing (5 - 19 February 1989). The literal translation of the Chinese title is "Chinese Modern Art Exhibition", showings it's re-appropriation into English and a Western art history through *China/Avant-Garde* (1989). Open over a three-year period from 1986 to 1989, the exhibition used a collaborative approach driven by a select committee of 14 Chinese scholars, curators and critics, which included Gao and Li. Showcasing 293 works by 186 artists over three floors of the gallery,

it included painting, sculpture, photography, video and installation.¹⁴ This was the first large-scale national exhibition sponsored, organised and funded by non-academic groups, and the first exhibition curated by critics. During the extended planning discussions, the committee was not aware of the term curator; instead they saw the exhibition as a time 'for Chinese artists to become artists - that is artists of the world' (Poshyananda 2015, p. 89). However, as Gao explained in an interview at the Gao Minglu Contemporary Art Center, Beijing, 'to be a curator, it was really what the reality needed in the 1980s' in China (2010, pers. comm., 18 November). Initially, they did not understand their practice as curating. Instead, they were,

[...] merely temporary organisers. They have no money, no control over an art institution, no conscious and systematic plans to exercise political power, and even no security of their own lives. They practice this thing called "art exhibition" almost entirely based on their pitifully limited experience and their adventurous spirit (Lu 2000, p. 88).

The exhibition became an opportunity to question the sociopolitical and cultural situation at the time. However, as it was instigated two months prior to the Tiananmen Square movement and four months prior to the shutdown of the 4 June 1989 movement, it was influenced by a heightened political sensitivity. This fraught and unpredictable period for Chinese culture contributed to the censorship and closure of *China/Avant-Garde* within three hours of its opening. This was also attributed to the provocative nature of certain artworks, including the renowned "two gunshot" performance by Chinese artists Xiao Lu and Tang Song on the opening night. Although the exhibition was authorised to reopen within three days, it was forced to close for a second time after receiving a series of postal bomb threats (Leung & Sui 1998).

¹⁴ Participating artists included Fan Dian, Fei Dawei, Gan Yang, Kong Changan, Li Xianting, Liu Dong, Liu Xiaochun, Tang Qingnian, Wang Mingxian, Yang Lihua, Zhouyan, Zhang Yaojun and Zhang Zuying.



Figure 8 - Chinese artist Xiao Lu firing two gunshots at the installation 'Dialogue'. A performance for the *China/Avant-Garde* exhibition, National Art Gallery, Beijing, 5 February 1989. Image © the artist.

Reacting to these moments of ideological and political control, Gao noted the development of a 'fake social critique' (2009, p. 31). This was created by the government as a mode of first response to override the voice of the Chinese artists or curators whilst sensationalising and medatising their experimental and 'unofficial art' practices to the point of mistranslation. Luckily, this occurred at a time when the sociopolitical, economic and cultural developments in China were opening up the country, attracting European and American curators and critics who promoted and encouraged the art market value of Chinese artists on the global art stage. Although according to Gao (2010, pers. comm., 18 November) they were 'gallerists not curators and reporters not arts writers', their Western cultural voice was respected by audiences, which diverted the focus from the government's challenging public dialogues. This made Gao reaffirm his position in the field, referencing the importance of his inherent Chineseness. In the interview he stated,

If you ask me whether I like to be a writer, which is my priority to be a writer or curator, I like to be a writer because a writer can be direct about things and personal about history (Ibid.).

1.4 – (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung

(Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung came from a background in arts writing, developing his role as a curator in order to,

[...] give visibility to the artists I preferred, and to make issues related to my selections visible [...] art that represented local responses to current Western discourse [...] artists working outside the institutional system (Chang 2016, p. 206).

His initial interest in Chinese art began in the 1970s, more specifically in Hong Kong and Taiwanese art 'as they were 'making the most interesting new art at the time' (Ibid.). Interviewed at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Shanghai, he said that in the wake of the Cultural Revolution, he did not identify much of what he deemed modern art as coming from mainland China, and compared himself to curators in the West.

I'm hybrid. I started by writing about art, then I started to curate shows for art centres and small museums in Asia and Southeast Asia, then I opened a commercial gallery. All that has to do with the fact, it is about doing contemporary art in places where there is basically very limited and restricted space, openings and apertures for representing and talking about art (Chang 2010, pers. comm., 9 November).

Therefore, in 1983, Li established Hanart TZ Gallery in Hong Kong to introduce and promote contemporary Chinese art to the Asia region and internationally, away from the constraints of the sociopolitical situation in mainland China. In the 1970s and 1980s, he noted differences in the definition of curatorial approaches in Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China, stating,

[...] curators only existed in museums; otherwise, it was the amateur critics, writers and the occasional gallerist who made exhibitions. The roles of professional art critic and the curator, especially the independent curator, had not yet been defined [...] in mainland China, [where] the state had the exclusive power to make exhibitions, that an idea of the curator existed, which took

the form of academic art historians and professional theorists
(Chang 2016, p. 206).

This implies that the roles of the curator as critic, and critic as curator, only gained validity with the state if they were informed by scholarship; this is more recently understood as the role of the research curator.

By the early 1990s, these roles of curator as critic and scholar were well established in the field, visible in the exhibition *China's New Art, Post-1989* (*Hou baijiu Zhongguo xin yishu 1989*) (31 January - 14 February 1993) at the Exhibition Hall, Hong Kong City Hall and Hong Kong Arts Centre. Presented and supported by Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong Arts Centre and Hong Kong Arts Festival Society, it was the first large-scale exhibition of Chinese art to take place outside mainland China co-curated by (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung and Li Xianting. When discussing the development of his curatorial practice and art criticism in China in the 1980s, Chang noted, like Li, how 'an exhibition is often about timing' (Chang 2010, pers. comm., 9 November). Furthermore, he stated that 'exhibitions in the 1980s and 1990s were often grouped stylistically and in terms of "isms"', where 'it does not help you define the new [...] it does help define a new sensibility' (Ibid.).



Figure 9 - (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung (left) with artist Oscar Ho (middle) and Li Xianting (right) at the *China's New Art, Post-1989* exhibition, February 1993, Hong Kong Arts Centre. Image © Hanart TZ Gallery, Anthony Dickson, Dickson Lee.

This created friction during the co-curation of *China's New Art*, even though Chang described Li as,

[...] a very good connoisseur, one of the best connoisseurs of art, as he actually “feels” the art. However, the way he talks about art comes from this tradition of ideology, where everything has turned into an ‘ism’, which I find unsatisfactory. Exhibitions are about finding something new but you don’t want to find something new and turn it into an ‘ism’ [...] the way we deal with this tool and platform, is still open. I try to avoid using terminologies. To go to the root things [...] One has to keep the options open, because we are working on different territories. On this territory (in China), the soil is still soft. We should not talk about things in these terms that way you don’t get blinkered by the local situation (Ibid.).

As stated in the introduction of this chapter, the application of terms and concepts used to translate avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art, including their exhibition, is often assumed and rarely contested. Li identified that curators were responsible for this ‘narrowing of original meaning, where they have often been the centre of debates and arguments and disputes about art in China throughout recent decades’, seeing keywords in Chinese art history as ‘a huge misunderstanding of the time’ where ‘it’s not just the

process of translating words but the process of creating words' (Ibid.).¹⁵ Therefore, Li believes the translation of avant-garde Chinese art demands 'not only practice, but also art theory suitable for the Chinese context' (Liu 2011, p. 74). However, was there a need to categorise it so quickly?

As stated earlier in this chapter, 'what Chinese avant-garde art is, is questionably from a local perspective' (Gao 2007, p. 111). It has been demonstrated that Li, Gao and Chang curated for the art community and 'a broader societal environment' (Gao 2009b, p. 31). They were dedicated to supporting the local development of Chinese artists, rather than curating for the art market or art biennial on the global art stage. In turn, they were also responding to the growing mobility, dislocation and traversal of artists and curators to and from the West, as examined throughout this research. As Chinese curator Hou Hanru noted, 'one of the main dreams for us [as curators] was to one day become internationalised [...] an interesting kind of argument that distinguished some individuals from others within the 1980s-avant-garde movement' (Poshyananda 2015, p. 89).¹⁶ This can be attributed to 'the shift in reality through independent discourses and visual languages' (Hou 1996, p. 49), where interestingly, the three exhibitions were on show for no longer than a two-week period, restricted by the unpredictable sociopolitical conditions of the time.

From 1979 to 1993, Li, Gao and Chang used their hybrid curatorial practices to translate avant-garde Chinese art, and China, to local and international audiences through their personal lens of China - their inherent Chineseness. Gao stated a sense of responsibility to his multiple roles, where he should,

¹⁵ Li notes the appropriation of Western art terms into Chinese culture such as 'artist' and 'gallery' and more recently, the changing definitions of 'aesthetic' and 'beauty' (Li 2010, pers. comm., 9 November).

¹⁶ This relates to Hou Hanru's (1994) theory of 'New Internationalism'.

[...] offer an accurate articulation and interpretation of contemporary Chinese art, although there is always a limitation in perspective, knowledge and experience for any individual curator (Gao 2007, p. 107).

His ability to be self-reflective, acknowledging the limitations of his perspectives - such as the influence of his inherent Chineseness on his translations of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art - are vital to the role of the curator. They must implement,

[...] a questioning “Chineseness” and what makes something or someone Chinese becomes an exercise in identity formation and a major concern for today’s Chinese artists and art critics [...] affecting the way Chinese critics talk about art (Ibid., p. 107).

Individually and collectively, Li, Gao and Chang were key in establishing an avant-garde Chinese art history and role of the Chinese curator in China, whilst creating a foundation for the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art and the role of the transcultural curator on the global art stage. It can be questioned as to whether the local and regional context should play such an active role in the curatorial strategy as ‘the translator is one problem but to read the work is another problem [...] you need the context [...] the most important thing is the emotion of China’ (Li 2010, pers. comm., 6 October). As such, should a curator’s inherent Chineseness be acknowledged or ignored? To start examining the latter, Chineseness must now be examined as a term and concept, including in relation to the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art.

1.5 – Defining ‘Chineseness’

To define Chineseness in modern and contemporary art history is to define Chinese modernity and avant-garde (Gao 2007, p. 107).

In the 1950s and 1960s, Chineseness was applied as a concept to discuss the identity and heritage of China from a Westerncentric perspective, simultaneously linked to ‘history and experiences of minoritisation and marginalisation, of being “Other” outside China (Ang 2013, p. 17). As a term and concept, it developed from second-hand, mediated understandings of

China, portrayed through politics, tourism and mainstream media, into an externally imposed discriminatory practice based on difference and race. As such, it was 'coloured by multiregional and often-contradictory views of what it means to be Chinese' (Lee 2007, p. 1), marred by negative and veiled connotations creating an invisible border between China and the rest of the world. This was understood as 'the logic of the wound' due to the West's insistence on qualifying everything from China with the word Chinese (Chow 1998, p. 6).

It is the dominant culture's classificatory practice, operating as a territorializing power highly effective in marginalizing the other, that shapes the meaning of Chineseness here as a curse, as something to 'get used to' (Ang 1998, p. 224).

At the same time, Chinese intellectuals discussed Chineseness from a Sinocentric perspective, encouraging the 'Chinese dimension of Chineseness' (Chow 1998, p. 6).¹⁷ In Mandarin Chinese, the latter translates to '*Huaxia*', meaning the Chinese nation and its people; '*Xia*' is the name of the first-known dynasty more than three millennia ago, which later became known as China, and '*Hua*' encompasses both overseas as well as non-ethnic Chinese under the overarching umbrella of China. Today, this translation alludes to cultural space and mobility and to historical lineage rather than a geographic designation. Thus, it has emerged as a category of identification and analysis in Chinese diasporic studies, specifically as an embodied process encompassing the 'Chinese sense', 'Chinese spirit' and 'Chinese identity' (Berghuis 2016, pers. comm., 4 December). This unique way of understanding 'the nation and the diaspora within the Chinese frame' (Kuehn, Louie & Pomfret 2013, p. 12) ultimately, questioned the meaning of what it was to be Chinese in and outside of China. This occurred in response to key waves of diasporic movement triggered after the end of the Cultural

¹⁷ Sinocentrism (*zhongguo zhongxin zhuyi*) places China as the cultural centre of the world, therefore creating a sense of cultural superiority, especially in comparison to the West. Identified as coming to an end in the late 19th century, it is currently being reinterpreted through the concept of 'neo-Sinocentrism' to define China's cultural identity as part of globalisation. Although not focused on within this research, it is an area of further study.

Revolution in 1976, the crackdown and Tiananmen Square protest in 1989 and the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997. In the wake of these three key sociopolitical events, Chineseness was applied to a new reinforced sense of nationalism created by those who represented or served the interests of the Chinese state, enforcing 'self-protectionism as a kind of strategy of self-enforcement' (Poshyananda 2015, p. 90).

[...] We need to look at the perception of China [...] but also the reality of China, and perhaps realise that there are alternative realities to this nationalised discourse (Ibid., p. 73).

These nationalist and diasporic understandings began to map Chineseness as 'a dynamic formation' where Chinese identities were now 'produced simultaneously on local, state and transnational levels' (Louie 2004, p. 20). By the late 1990s, Chineseness became,

[...] an open signifier, a fluid and contested category that encompasses a diversity of political, racial and ethnic meanings within varied and shifting contexts [...] a dimension of identity that is contested and shaped within power relations and becomes salient in different ways in different contexts (Ibid., p. 21).

After the turn of the millennium, China gained international recognition on the world stage: the nation was accepted into the World Trade Organisation in 2001, won its bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games in 2003 and, in the same year, was given public access to the internet. Although many of these events and activities were monitored and restricted by the government, it encouraged a rapid increase in international physical and digital mobility from, and to China. This further raised the profile of contemporary Chinese art on the global art stage while contributing to the boom in the Chinese art market from 2006 to 2007. As such, Chineseness was acknowledged as part of postcolonial, transnational, cosmopolitan and global studies, 'to become an established critical category' (Kuehn, Louie and Pomfret 2013, p. 4). In turn, being part of the interconnected world 'encourage[d] the opposite effect of distancing cultures' to create 'a return to the concept of national identity' (Cuccioletta 2001/2002). Liu further identifies these shifts as,

[...] centred on Chineseness. In the first period, it continues to call for a unified national-art-form. From the second to the early part of the third period, Chinese art tends toward the West. Then it loses both its ethnic and cultural identities (from the late third to the early fourth periods), and begins the quest for a new Chineseness (from the late fourth period until now) (Liu 2011, p. 62).

Thus, there was a noted progression in line with the development of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art: from a nationalist Chineseness left in the wake of sociopolitical events in China, and a diasporic Chineseness created in response to this new global mobility, towards a 'residual Chineseness' created in the aftermath of diasporic dislocation and transversal, and what I define as a global Chineseness 'extending to Chinese everywhere' (Kuehn, Louie & Pomfret 2013, p. 4). It is understood that it is 'those diasporic identities who find themselves "truly on the periphery" who hang onto their Chineseness' (Ang 2013, p. 29). This emphasises that Chineseness is specific to temporal-spatial contexts.

However, these categorisations only partly map the development of Chineseness and must not act as a form of cultural essentialism or exist in isolation. Instead, they must function independently of and reactive to each other, as a multi-dimensional term and concept within the multiple contexts of Chineseness. Therefore, Chineseness becomes paradoxical in nature: it encompasses dualities of 'inclusive and exclusive' (Louie 2004, p. 21), expansive and reductive, essentialist and nationalist; yet it defines a unique set of individual or collective experiences within, or of, China and Chinese culture. At this stage in the history of Chinese art, it is necessary to understand the concept of Chineseness in relation to the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art.

More recently, Chineseness has become 'differently re-embedded in the process of diasporic relocation' where it is now concerned with the 'embedding of "culture" in local contexts of power that produces diverse expressions of Chineseness' (Kuehn, Louie & Pomfret 2013, pp. 7-8). This influence of the local context on a global China – which will be discussed in

Chapter Three as 'glocal' - means the concept is no longer limited to the diasporic study of those of Chinese origin. It is now appropriated by anyone who assimilates into China and Chinese culture through a diasporic dislocation and traversal - those who traverse international diasporic networks to create an external interconnectedness with China, including the curators and critics discussed in section 1.2 to 1.4 of this chapter. In turn, they construct a hybrid and displaced sense of self, akin to the role of curator, which has been called 'Chineseness abroad' as part of 'East West' studies (Ibid., p. 3).¹⁸ The latter encourages a reductive categorisation based on foreignness. Therefore, in order to reconfigure the meaning of Chineseness, the 'significance of locality and locatedness to diasporic cultural identity and politics' must be understood (Ibid., p. 16).

1.6 – 'Chineseness' and Contemporary Chinese Art

Continuing on from Liu's earlier stated perspectives on the periods of Chineseness from 1978 to 2008, he identifies the development of contemporary Chinese art as evolving 'along the path from de-Chineseness to re-Chineseness; in other words, it has undergone a historical process from de-contextualisation to re-contextualisation' in the age of globalisation (Liu 2011, p. 59). As I understand, this process represents two strands of Chineseness "in practice". The first is the work of Chinese artists and curators of contemporary Chinese art who invite an inferred Chineseness as part of the process of translation, encouraging a Chinese dimension to their artistic practices and curatorial strategies. Second is the work of Chinese artists and curators of contemporary Chinese art who attempt to escape from an inherent nationalist Chineseness by questioning the relevance of 'Chinese', or non-Chinese, in Chineseness, in today's changing local-to-

¹⁸ When undertaking this research, it can be said that I have embodied the 'Chinese sense' or 'Chinese spirit' to create an individual Chineseness specific to my dislocation and traversal, and unique set of experiences when researching, working and living in China from 2009 to 2012. This was further reinforced when working within Chinese contexts outside of China. Examples of these experiences are outlined in the preface and throughout this research.

global context. Therefore, is it possible to say no to one's inherent and multi-dimensional Chineseness?

In undertaking this research, the notion of 'Chineseness' has regularly emerged as a misappropriated concept used to translate exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art. It is clear that most curators and art critics 'do not support the opportunism engendered by Chineseness in art' in fear of it becoming a discriminatory practice (Lee 2007, p. 22). Instead of working in the conflicted dialogic spaces of Chineseness - the reactive spaces between each categorisation - to produce new translations of contemporary Chinese art, they instead limit discussions of Chineseness to the ways in which the term contributes to the cultural assumptions that often define Chinese art history. These examinations exemplify the importance of this research as a key contribution to new knowledge in the field.

One of the few critical discussions of Chineseness in relation to contemporary Chinese art was published in 2007 in a series of articles, representative of dialogues between Gao Minglu (2007) and British scholar Paul Gladston (2007). Here, Gao defined Chineseness as,

[...] a metaphor for certain characteristics (no matter whether it is mentality or habit, the spiritual or the physical) of Chinese people living in different historical periods in distinct ways from those from other cultural areas [...] Chineseness is always a specific and historical term. Furthermore, Chineseness in contemporary Chinese art means two things. One is its unique history, the other the discourse of critique which involves both local and international perspectives (Gao 2007, p. 110).

This reinforces Berghuis' (2016, pers. comm., 4 December) notion of Chineseness as an embodied process encompassing the 'Chinese sense' and 'Chinese spirit' where it is vital to acknowledge the complexities of its unique historical and temporal-spatial contexts. Conversely, Gao places the concept in a reductive binary relationship between the Chinese 'self' and the

‘other’, ignoring the individual and collective local-to-global interconnectedness of the concept,

Chineseness cannot be fully considered as a pure regional discourse, rather, it is a discourse of critique against oversimplification and dislocation of the Chinese context. That Chineseness is a representation of a unique history of contemporary Chinese art means we accept the concept of difference and misunderstanding in the negotiation between the Chinese and others. The misunderstanding cannot be full interpreted as a passive, negative force; rather, it is a positive force driving the art world toward dynamic and diverse forms. It is this misunderstanding that has shaped the vitality and complexity of the Chinese contemporary art scene (Gao 2007, p. 111).

As I understand, this ‘negotiation’ occurs in the conflicted dialogic and reactive spaces of Chineseness to which I previously referred. It also directly assimilates to Homi K. Bhabha’s theoretical methodology and rhetoric of ‘Third Space’ as it addresses how ‘cultures come to be represented by virtue of the processes of iteration and translation through which their meanings are vicariously addressed to - through - an Other’ (Bhabha 1994, p. 83).¹⁹ This can also be applied to Gladston’s perspective on how to avoid being trapped by Chineseness,

[...] we need to pay sufficient attention to the complex and potentially unresolvable discursive interaction between the two [the Chinese and ‘a Western cultural and intellectual standpoint’] that is played out in relation to the corpus of contemporary Chinese art (Gladston 2007, p. 31).

Gladston does not state the specifics of the ‘unresolvable discursive interaction’, or how one engages with it; instead he leaves this open to interpretation. However, I understand it as acting in the hybrid ‘Third Space’ where translation takes place, as examined in the next chapter.

¹⁹ This was used as a curatorial strategy for the exhibition *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (1998) by Gao, which is examined as a case study in Chapter 4, section 4.2.

Contradicting his initial perspective, Gladston continues to assert there is no such thing as Chineseness in contemporary Chinese art. He believes this is due to ‘the persistent interaction – “Westernised”, “hybrid” and “inescapably enmeshed” – between Western postmodernist discourse and contemporary Chinese art’ (Gladston cited in Gao 2007, p. 106).²⁰ This hybridity, which is different to Bhabha’s hybrid ‘Third Space’, implies that Chineseness is only valid when defined explicitly from a Sinocentric perspective, away from Westerncentric influence. From this Sinocentric perspective, Chineseness is ‘a certain essential embodiment of Chinese identity that has penetrated five thousand years of recorded Chinese history’ to give Chinese identity ‘an ideological meaning’ (Ibid., p. 110). This overarching concept condenses a vast historical timeframe and lacks an acknowledgement of the complex relationships between individual and collective Chinese identities, creating an essentialised embodiment of the concept within nationalist Chineseness. Furthermore, if Chineseness is to be discussed solely from this isolated Chinese perspective, it builds an immediate divide between East and West. Gladston’s reductive perspectives, framed purely within Chinese versus external Western intellectual discourse, directly disagrees with Gao’s critique of Chineseness as a metaphor characteristic of China’s unique history and local and international contexts.

An additional perspective, which further confuses a supposed logic of Chineseness, is provided by one of the world’s most prolific and contested contemporary Chinese artists, Ai Weiwei, who believes ‘Chineseness is the forced articulation of a “cultural colour” by contemporary Chinese artists extorted by the West’s fascination with the Other’ (Lee 2007, pp. 19-20).²¹ Contrary to Gao and Gladston’s perceptions of Chineseness as the

²⁰ Further intellectualised by scholar Geremie R. Barmé (1999, p. 262) within ‘pomo’ (postmodern) discourse. The latter is not a key focus within this research.

²¹ Ai Weiwei will also be discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.3, in relation to the case study *The Real Thing* (2007).

relationship between the Chinese 'self' and 'other', Ai identifies Chineseness as the relationship between the Western 'self' and Chinese 'other', further contributing to the confused logic of Chineseness created by Gao and Gladston.

This emphasises Chineseness as an imposed discriminatory practice from a Westerncentric perspective, which Liu describes as a process of demonisation 'in which Chinese art is impeded by perceptions or actual circumstances imposing limitations on its development' (2011, p. 63). Rooted within political ideology, the era of globalisation and cultural misunderstanding, demonisation can be seen to harm Chinese art, or any art form. However, if Chineseness wants 'to be internationally recognised, it undoubtedly has to come through the necessary phase of demonisation' (Ibid.). Ai has identified this within his artistic practice, which is repeatedly observed as demonised from both Sinocentric and Westerncentric perspectives. His attempt at an 'anti-Chineseness' creates an 'oppositional discursive logic' away from both Chinese and Western authority (Gladston 2014, p. 44). Oppositionality can be understood as the challenging process of decentring both China and the West, and as such becomes a new category of decentring Chineseness. In addition, it can be said that the confused logic of the development of Chineseness - and of, in turn, the three-decade-old development of contemporary Chinese art - is 'the outcome of Chinese "misunderstanding" (consciously or unconsciously)' (Gao 2007, p. 111).

Ai's critical position within contemporary Chinese art and on the global art stage means Chineseness is used as a form of cultural capital and status 'shaped through transnational discourses that are negotiated by social actors within various regimes of control' (Ong 1999, p. 6). Here, the social actors are Chinese artists, where this notion of capitalising on Chineseness occurs within the curatorial strategies used to translate contemporary Chinese art (Chapters 3 and 4). Therefore, Chineseness is,

[...] undone, negated, and cancelled out, whenever the boundaries between “Chinese” and “non-Chinese” become blurred or non-sensical [...] Not only does the moment of pure Chinese never strike, there are also moments in which the attribution of Chineseness does not make sense in the first place [...] this embrace of cosmopolitan hybridity provided important breathing space, opening up discursive wiggle room for modes of engagement, intellectual and cultural, that are not straightjacketed by the fraught legacy of past migration and diasporic heritage (Ang 2013, pp. 18-19).

This chapter demonstrated that concepts of Chineseness have developed in parallel with avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art, and more specifically, in line with the role of the Chinese curator throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In addition, the development of avant-garde Chinese art can be aligned to the shifts in nationalist and diasporic contexts of Chineseness, as it is as much about ‘escaping without leaving’ as it is ‘a sense of belonging’ or home (Ibid., p. 21). Gao has reiterated this, suggesting that ‘perhaps we all are the traveler – yet no one can escape from the invisible wall surrounding us’ (2007, p. 115). As such, one is inescapably defined by their inherent identity: in the case of this research, Chineseness.

For over three decades Li, Gao and Chang have translated avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art through their unique individual and collective roles as curators, critics and scholars, and hybrid roles of the ‘curator as critic’, ‘critic as curator’ and research curator. They are responsible for creating an identity, and therefore agency, for Chinese artists; in turn, they have contributed to the development of a Chinese art history. Contemporary Chinese art is,

[...] more than just an art category. It is a phenomenon. It is the outcome of forces and dynamics that come from within China, as well as from outside of China. What we are looking at is, in fact, a kind of art world phenomenon that is unprecedented because of the pressure of globalisation, of economic development and political dynamics [...] contemporary Chinese art is a kind of

reflection upon the art world, in making all the paradoxes of the art world apparent (Poshyananda 2015, p. 97).

It is within these paradoxes that mistranslation can occur, encouraged by the overuse and assumed definition of terms, concepts and 'isms', as discussed by Chang and Li. When Li was asked whether exhibitions by Western curators successfully interpreted and translated avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art, he stated, 'I always think that between cultures there is no possibility to interpret others, they are all misunderstood [...] but it doesn't matter, misunderstanding is okay' (Li 2010, pers. comm., 6 October).

In turn, Li, Gao and Chang are responsible for identifying both the influence of their individual Chineseness on their practice, and the influence of Chineseness of the artists whom they curate. As Li stated, 'Change in art is based on change in culture'; and it can be said that Li, Gao and Chang instigated the latter by decentralising and deconstructing Chinese avant-garde and 'being Chinese' as they worked towards a contemporary Chinese art (Ibid.).²² As part of this process,

Misunderstandings very often come from not seeing foreign influence in context [...] understanding where concepts come from help us to know how to use them effectively and when to avoid them. Having said that some of the most creative and stimulating contemporary art has been the result of misinterpretation. [...] it is the job of critics and cultural writers to clarify these multiple dimensions (Chang 2016, p. 208).

Thus, as Chineseness develops within new local-to-global contexts, it functions as an individual, collective and multidimensional concept, which is discursive and adaptive, 'rich yet inconsistent [...] characterised by plurality and openness' (Lee 2007, p. 22). It is specific to an individual, to who is translating; and in relation to this research, it emerges through transcultural curatorial strategies. Conversely, these complex narratives of Chineseness

²² Li understood this process of deconstruction (*jiegou*) as 'post-Chinese avant-garde art' rather than contemporary Chinese art (2010, pers. comm.. 6 October).

across diasporic and cultural studies, including a postcolonial China, create further conflict in the 'Third Space' of translation. As such, it becomes the responsibility of the transcultural curator to work in this complex and conflicted space, within its confused logic and misunderstandings, to try and 'overcome ideological - and perhaps even national - boundaries' (Ibid.) - which will now be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

Translating China

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, China was positioned as peripheral to the Western art world's "centres of power" just coming into view on the global art stage. As examined in the previous chapter, avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art were developing bilaterally – within China and outside of China – as Chinese artists, curators and art historians were emigrating to these 'centres'. These renowned hubs for cultural production (London, New York, Paris) were seen to produce defining artistic practices and curatorial strategies: through their established, respected and thriving cultural networks; through art markets; through galleries and museums; through arts schools and universities; through artist communities and studio complexes, and through platforms for art criticism. In turn, the diversity of China's provinces, comprising more than 55 minority ethnic groups, was beginning to be acknowledged within cultural contexts of globalisation; and a new global China was no longer understood as homogeneous and purely Chinese.²³ It was not until after the turn of the millennium, when other nations developed stable and growing economies, and there was reciprocal physical and contextual cultural exchange between Chinese and non-Chinese contexts, that these cultural hubs began to disperse more internationally.²⁴

Concurrently, Western literature on art and philosophy became available for the first time in China. Already established as points of reference in the development of Western art theory and criticism, these texts included

²³ These minority groups in China are often marginalised, defined by Spivak as 'subaltern' within postcolonial discourse (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2000, p. 218). This will be further examined in section 2.4 of this chapter.

²⁴ The global mobility of artists has already been discussed in Chapter 1. Today, Beijing and Shanghai are considered to be two of the world's most established and visionary cultural hubs globally, as will be further examined in Chapter 4.

theories by Roland Barthes, Ferdinand de Saussure, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Chinese intellectuals were now engaged 'in discussions of the question of globalisation in contrast to Western media's discussion of Chinese nationalism' (Wang 2006, p. 183). Chinese artists identified these as the defining Western philosophical standpoints they needed to subversively conceptualise their work, the texts were acquisitively consumed. This new phase of Chinese intellectualisation and availability of literature was interpreted by Chinese curator Pi Li as a period of 'Western impact-Chinese response' (2005). China was expected to subsume its history and identity, and place itself as the peripheral party in the Westerncentric dichotomy of 'the self' and 'others'. This 'Western aggression' was not only responsible for reinforcing a singular understanding of the West as the 'centre of power' (Pi 2005), particularly within the art world, but also immediately hindered, distorted and simplified translations of China and Chinese art by focusing on 'difference' as diversity fundamental to multicultural strategies of the time.

In the 1990s, we have come to see the international space as the meeting ground for a multiplicity of tongues, visual grammars and styles. These do not so much translate into one another as translate to produce difference (Maharaj 1994, p. 26).

Conversely, Chinese artists, curators and scholars further defined this period of intellectualisation from a Sinocentric standpoint - China as the cultural centre of the world and the basis of Chinese self-perception. As Pi states, 'no significant historical change in 20th-century China could have been anything other than the changes experienced by the West' (2005). This developed a belief that Western knowledge was derived from China, and already existed here – literally translated as 'Western knowledge has Chinese origins' (*xixuezhongyuan*) (*Sinocentrism* 2016).²⁵ It became an opportunity for those in the Chinese art world to reflect on their local

²⁵ The tensions between Westerncentric and Sinocentric understandings of the process of Chinese intellectualisation at this time is understood by scholar Daniel Vukovich as China's 'knowledge problem' within a postcolonial context (2013, p. xiii). This will be examined in section 2.3 of this chapter.

identities and education, and nurture new artistic and curatorial practices in different global contexts; they could rewrite pre-existing Chinese art histories, activate new ones, and thus, perform translations within and from the Western 'centres'. This contested point of translation for China, and the exhibition of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art, marked a new momentum in the development of local-to-global networks. In turn, curators had a new responsibility to translate in what were now transcultural terms.

Methodologically, this chapter has developed from a literature review of secondary source material, including the deconstruction of terms, languages and concepts used to underpin this research.²⁶ The latter will be applied to case studies examinations in Chapter 4 when critiquing curatorial strategies used to translate avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art. Beginning with definitions of "transcultural" - the central term to this research - this chapter will examine how the transcultural is understood. Firstly, the frames the indexing terms cross-cultural, multicultural and intercultural by using Sarat Maharaj's theory of managerial multiculturalism and cultural pluralism, and Fernando Ortiz's concept of transculturation, including the site of "contact zones" (section 2.1). From here, translation is understood through examinations of 'difference' and the 'other', encompassing Gayatri Spivak's understanding of the role of the translator and the 'translatee'; notions of 'hybrid' and 'hybridity' described within ethnographic studies by Annie Coombes, and Homi K. Bhabha's theory of 'Third Space' as the site for translation (section 2.2). The chapter explores the relationship between translation and the contested application of "postcolonialism" to China through Spivak's notion of 'subaltern'; the exhibition *Farewell to Post-colonialism: The Third Guangzhou Triennial*, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (6 September - 16 November 2008); Maharaj's theory of 'Asia Pandemonium' and Gao Shiming's 'post-colonial toolkit' (section 2.3). Together, these perspectives will present the idea of the curator as translator (section 2.4). It must be noted, this research is one of the first attempts to

²⁶ As Stuart Hall states, it is best to deconstruct a term before you use it, or at least explain what you do not intend it to mean (Hall & Maharaj 2001, p. 36).

apply transcultural to the role of the curator and curatorial strategies in the Chinese context. More specifically to the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art.

2.1 – From Cross-cultural to Transcultural

Comprising the prefix “trans”, the root word “culture” and the suffix “al”, this term and concept has evolved from indexing terms including “cross-cultural”, “multicultural” and “intercultural”. Here, it is necessary to define these indexing terms to understand how they have individually and collectively informed the idea of ‘the transcultural curator’ and been applied to the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art.

‘Cross’ signifies an intersection or passing from side to side (‘Cross’ 1989, pp. 385-386). Therefore, cross-cultural can be understood as a binary relationship - the comparison and connection of cultures, often through the lens of transition and border crossing. It attempts to resolve differing global points of view, including centres of power, between a dominant ‘we’ and other ‘they’. From a curatorial perspective, it is ‘collaboration between professionals with potentially diverse and diverging views but generally there is an assumption that the resulting ‘product’ will attain some form of overall coherence and unity’ (Chandler 2009). As such, cross-cultural signifies an attempt at cultural synthesis - the idea of borrowing from, and assimilating into, other cultures. However, being dialectical and dialogical in nature is not enough, as it needs to be uniformly and consistently used by curators to encourage the unity to which Chandler alludes.

The term ‘multicultural’ develops from this binary relationship of cultures to encompass a diversity and plurality of cultural histories and identities within narratives of Ethnocentrism (developed from colonial to postcolonial histories), Eurocentrism (developed from Western art histories) and global migration. It can be defined through the metaphor of ‘palimpsest’ - a parchment that has been inscribed upon two or three times, where previous text or texts have been imperfectly erased and thus remain visible. This

'physical piling up and erasing of marks' (Markonish 2000, p. 24) creates multiple strata of ideas, cultures, symbols and writings, and employs new international contemporary languages by acknowledging heritage while at the same time embracing globalisation. In this research, these languages can be understood as further indexing terms used to detail the multicultural: linguistic transference from other cultures, and visual representation through artistic and curatorial practice. The latter will be examined in the next chapter when discussing curatorial strategies used to translate contemporary Chinese art.

At the turn of the millennium, Maharaj coined the phrase 'multicultural managerialism' to disturb the logic of an 'official multiculturalism', which promoted cultural heritage and nationhood in a postcolonial context (Hall & Maharaj 2001, p. 5). During this process, he acknowledged that further definition of the term multicultural 'can become a kind of containment field which makes meaning and cultural difference static, essentialising identity and difference' (Fletcher & Maharaj 2000, p. 31). As such, multicultural becomes the site where cultures are in danger of being exoticised and 'alienated from the mainstream' (Cuccioletta 2001/2002) and risk definition through 'cultural ghettoization and extreme conflictuality' (Dagnino 2012). This 'tussle' with the polarities of 'the socio-lingo, inclusion/exclusion, globalisation, internationalism, postcolonialism, hybridity and cosmopolitanism' (Fletcher & Maharaj 2000, p.32) intended a move away from 'the primitive concept of a single identity' to 'foster the concept of interculturalism of multiple identities' (Cuccioletta 2001/2002). In order to have a new meaning, multicultural needed to assimilate 'not only their subject matter but their interpretive methodologies from the cultures they study' (Elkins 2007, p. 62) However, this 'tussle' can be understood as reducing multicultural into a binary relationship akin to cross-cultural, as it negotiates the paradoxical challenge of cultural difference versus cultural plurality.

'Inter' is used to signify between or among cultures ('Inter' 1989, p. 1098). Intercultural, often confused with cross-cultural, moves beyond a comparison and connection of cultures, cultural difference and cultural pluralism to become a dialogic interaction inside and between cultures. It recognises that,

[...] in a society of mixed ethnicities, cultures act in multiple directions. Host or majority cultures are influenced by immigrant or minority cultures and vice versa. Multiculturalism tends to preserve a cultural heritage, while interculturalism acknowledges and enables cultures to have currency, to be exchanged, to circulate, to be modified and evolve. Understanding how cultures move around in a society, introduce social changes, and facilitate cultural integration (Powell & Sze 2004, p. 1).

Acknowledged as a social phenomenon, it is based on effective communication in cross-cultural situations and the ability 'to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts' (Bennett & Bennett 2004, p. 149). In this relationship, it is about how each culture can be considered equal, where it is as much about 'learning the other' as it is 'changing together' (Lin 2012, p. 192). Therefore, intercultural is 'only valid when both parties to the cultural relationship transform each other' (Salvadori 1997, p. 186). As I understand, this intercultural transformation aims to break down cultural boundaries through reciprocal exchange to lead the way to the transcultural. In a sense, interculturalism becomes a process of cultural synthesis and thus, translation. Moving forward, it is important to acknowledge its difficulties,

[...] while we may well be inclined to be in solidarity with others, we are at the same time attached to our own culture and are likely to 'harbour a certain amount of misanthropy and a desire to distance ourselves from others' (Salvadori 1997, p. 186).

Therefore, cultures are seen to retreat from these new plural, integrative and transformative approaches to their safety net of cultural origin, in order to remain separate and isolated entities within binary relationships of the self and other, identity and difference. Furthermore, it can be said that as the indexing terms cross-cultural, multicultural and intercultural have all

developed within epistemological frameworks of Ethnocentrism, Eurocentrism and global migration. All cultures, when prefixed by these terms, will always be at risk of being essentialised - as the examinations of Chineseness in the previous chapter have discussed. As such, the transcultural has to move beyond these challenged terms towards a new 'mode of inquiry' (Dagnino 2012) responding to a new era of globalisation, and in relation to this research, a new global China.

In this research, transcultural is examined through a chronology of defining perspectives from 1940 to 2012, including by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz; Uruguayan literary critic and scholar Angel Rama; professor of Spanish and Portuguese languages and literatures, Mary Louise Pratt; Professor of Russian and cultural theory, Mikhail Epstein, and social history and global migration scholar Dirk Hoerder. The practical application of transcultural to the role of the curator and curatorial practice will be examined in Chapters 3 and 4. It is important to understand how these definitions within Latin American and European centres can be applied to Chinese contexts that developed from different cultural origins, as there are limited perspectives in the field on transcultural's relationship to Chinese contexts.

Trans implies more a radical approach, one that deliberately engages multiple agencies, perspectives and denotes a willingness to ignore, flout, subvert and transgress disciplinary protocols, assumptions and boundaries (Connelly 2015, p. 17).

It indicates movement across, through and beyond cultures. Evolutionary in nature, as with culture itself, it promotes a multiplicity of voices, reciprocal relationships, networks of exchange and transitive interactions. As a prefix, it 'underscores the processual, imperfective aspect of culture contact through mutability and an uprooting of cultures' (Pérez Firmat 1989, p. 23). As I understand, it works against the reductive idea of a historical, geographical or identity-based rootedness, which are key components of the other terms.

Coined in 1940 by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, transcultural originates from the concept of 'transculturation'. In his pioneering writing *Contrapunteo cubano del Tabaco y el azúcar* (1940), Ortiz used the term to articulate a way of identifying resistance to cultural dominance in Cuba by highlighting multicultural methodologies of hybridity, pluralism and difference within Afro-Cuban culture and Latin American studies.²⁷ Ortiz believed transculturation went beyond the unidirectional exchange of intercultural to be bidirectional not only from East to West but also from West to East or North-South and South-North, in 'the social life of things and people' (Mignolo & Schiwy 2003, p. 21).²⁸ He states,

[...] the Latinate word transcultural provides us with a term that does not suggest the idea of one culture having to lean towards another, but of a transition between two cultures, both active and participating parties, both contributing in their own ways, cooperating in the advent of a new civilisational reality (Ortiz 1995 cited in Onghena 2003, pp. 182-183).

Transculturation explores different phases within the process of transition from one culture to another through a variety and fluidity of movements – 'sporadic waves', 'continuous flows' of immigrant cultures, 'ever flowing and influential' – they are 'a critical moment of disjunction and realignment, of deculturation or exculturation and of acculturation or inculturation, and in sum, of transculturation' (Ortiz 1940, p. 93). Furthermore, it 'designates the fermentation process that precedes synthesis and denotes transition, passage, process, more than a comprehensive rubric for the sum or result of culture contact, transculturation is the name for the collision of cultures' (Pèrez Firmat 1989, p. 23). Ortiz favoured this transitive, shifting process of transculturation over the uprooting process of 'acculturation' as the latter solely focused on the acquisition of culture and implied the loss of a previous

²⁷ Ortiz, Fernando (1995) *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, trans. Harriet de Onís, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina. (Original Spanish edition published in 1940. Original translation by Onís published in 1947 by Knopf, New York.)

²⁸ Also see Appadurai, Arjun 1986, *The Social Life of Things*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

culture known as 'deculturation' (Ortiz 1947, p. 32). Throughout his exploration of the term, Ortiz does not question the potential irresolution, conflicted space or loss of culture during the collision of cultures or process of deculturation. He only states how the experience involves loss and gain of new cultural phenomena and not the creation of a complete new culture (Millington 1998, p. 219). This process of loss and gain, also inherent to the process of cultural translation, will be examined in the next section (2.2) of this chapter.

By 1947, Ortiz was already thinking beyond transculturation, stating the term would give way to the emergence of new cultural phenomena called neoculturation (Ortiz 1947, p. 32). However, unbeknownst to Ortiz, the term transculturation would remain dominant into the 21st century due to its broad and ambiguous definition, providing scope and flexibility when applied to the changing domain of globalisation. The transcultural encounter 'more than being an end result, was a project, a possibility' through which 'a new and complex reality emerges; a reality that is no mechanical mixture of characters, nor mosaic, but instead a new, original and independent phenomenon' (Ortiz cited in Onghena 2003, pp. 182-183). It acts as a process of transition to create new cultural phenomena - at this stage of the research, what I call a new "trans-change-culture".

In 1982, Angel Rama adopted the term transculturation in his book *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina*, narrowing its focus to the relationship between literature and Latin American cultures in the mid-20th century. In contrast to Ortiz's examination of the simultaneous introduction of multiple cultures to Cuba, Rama was concerned with national situations from within Latin America coming into contact with 'the external' to create 'new cultural forms' (Rama 1997, p. 157). He believed it would create 'a clearly delineated internal/external polarity' by 'acknowledging the effect of modernisation of the regional, leading to a 'reflective regionalism' and 'visible transformation' (Ibid.). Here, transculturation became a transformative

process of reflection and adaptation, building on Ortiz's understanding of the term as a transitive process to create new cultural forms.

By the early 1990s, the term developed from the action suffix 'tion' to the pertaining suffix 'al' as transculturation and transcultural permeated into sociopolitical examinations of Sino-Soviet, Russian and American borders and border crossing in line with globalisation. The term was re-interrogated in contemporary theories of anthropology, ethnography, sociology, politics and culture, decentralising the renowned hubs of cultural production by 'overcoming the ethnic, national, cultural, imperial or religious boundaries imposed by previous categorisations' (Dagnino 2012).

[...] while we are aware of our own practices within a global art infrastructure [...] we are here to decentre the quite obvious marks of the great homogeneous [and to] undertake the alarming and probably liberating steps towards viewing peoples on their own terms (Poshyananda 1993, pp. 47-48).

Reinforcing Ortiz's notion of the 'collision of cultures' as part of transculturation, Pratt defined the process of decentralising the centres of power through the phenomenon of 'contact zones' and the space of colonial encounters (Pratt 1992, p. 4). The definition of transcultural within colonial histories raises a pertinent question of whether the term can be applied to the examination of global China and the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art, as the nation was not understood as directly colonised by the West. This will be discussed in sections 2.2 and 2.4 of this chapter when defining translation and 'A Post-colonial China' respectively.

'Contact' implies the interactive elements of encounters and relationships, where contact zones are,

[...] social spaces where two or more disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, they represent often highly asymmetrical relations of dominance and subordination (Ibid.).²⁹

They create an opportunity for cultural knowledge, political agendas and self-determined representations of identity to be brought to the fore (Chandler 2009) by seeking out areas of contestation within cultures of the periphery (Millington 1998, p. 205). Here, geographical and historical junctures of culture intersect to establish new and on-going relationships (Pratt 1992, p. 7). In relation to this research, transcultural curatorial strategies, specifically the site of the exhibition, function as contact zones to create a new 'social imaginary' (Onghena 2003, p. 184) and a space to reconsider the processes and effects of cultural diversity within a new framework and language, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Thus, contact zones are a framework through which to explore 'the strangeness dispersed among cultural majorities, and the experiences that unite the vast majorities of people across their ethnic, racial, sexual and gender boundaries' (Epstein 1999, p. 103).

As with multicultural and intercultural, the use of the term transcultural must be careful not to homogenise and essentialise individual cultures. It demands that 'we account explicitly for our own taken-for-granted epistemological assumptions about ways of knowing' (Song & Cadman 2012, p.16). It is about 'viewing people on their own terms' (Poshyananda 1993, pp. 47-48) seeking 'to be read and to be readable' (Pratt 1992, p. 4) – and in turn, a 'pluralistic idea' of 'seeing oneself in the other' (Cuccioletta 2001) by,

[...] re-inventing a common culture based on the meeting and intermingling of the different people and cultures. In other words

²⁹ The notion of social spaces will be further discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.3, in relation to the transcultural curator and transcultural curatorial strategies used to translate exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art, specifically in relation to Ray Oldenburg's theory of 'Third Place' (1989), which underpins the practice-led component of the research examined in Chapter 5.

one's identity if not strictly one-dimensional (the self) but is now defined and more importantly recognized in rapport with the other. In other words one's identity is not singular but multiple (Ibid.).

Transcultural identities have the 'capacity to live and act in different cultural spaces and to create mixed or overlapping ways of life' to create a new collective culture (Urbansky 2014, p. 17). This ability to act outside of one's culture like an objective observer, identifying and decentralising the centres of power, asks: do curatorial strategies propose transcultural identities, or is transcultural a precondition to curatorial strategies?

'Transcultural' is not just a field of knowledge but also a mode of being, located at the crossroads of culture [...] It is the capacity [of "transculture"] to free humans from the determinations of culture itself...freedom and liberation from the "prison house of language" and the variety of artificial, self-imposed, and self-deified cultural identities (Epstein 1999, p. 25).

In response to Epstein's understanding of transcultural as a 'mode of being', the term is proposed here as a methodological approach used to translate global cultures through curatorial practice.

Transcultural is an 'endless interactive process between different cultural systems that is in opposition to unidirectional and hierarchical structures determined by the principle of origin that is always associated with claims for cultural authority' (Hernandez 2002, p. 17). It functions beyond 'monolithic, self-sufficient and totalising entities' to be 'metamorphic, confluent and intermingling' (Dagnino 2012). From this standpoint of uncanonical and decentralized power and geography, transcultural encourages multidirectional and democratic structures of reciprocal intercultural exchange to become 'the antithesis of the notion of acculturation, which implies the supremacy of one cultural system over another, hence the ultimate elimination of non-dominant cultures (Hernandez 2002, p. 17). Therefore, as a 'mode of being', it must be a conscious, personal and apolitical act, projecting 'a conscious ebb and flow of interculturality, emanating from the grass roots and not imposed and defined by

government' (Cuccioletta 2001/2002). Furthermore, transcultural becomes 'a transformation process connecting intercultural knowledge with competent practice' where this,

[...] culture-specific and ethnic-specific knowledge will yield a wealth of interaction skills that permit individuals to cross cultural boundaries flexibly and adaptively (Ting-Toomey 1999, p. 261).

These traits are applied within the practice of artists and curators, where they seek to 'circumvent national discourse altogether by living and working abroad, collaborating with peers internationally, and anchoring their practices within the new local contexts in which they find themselves (Gardner 2011, pp. 153-154). By maintaining roots in a specific local history, transcultural communicates 'out to other contexts and cultures through models of shared narration' (Ibid.), which can be further understood through more recent understandings of the roles of the transcultural reader and the transcultural writer.

Compared to the contemporary Chinese art audience and the transcultural curator respectively, transcultural writers are defined as those,

[...] who work at an international or transnational level with a manifested, transcultural penchant – that is a specific lens, a peculiar way of adopting cultures, interfering with them, letting themselves be transformed by them and, ultimately, imaginatively writing about them [...] It is a question of changing mindsets, different cultural approaches, heterogeneous identities, deterritorialising dynamics and, subsequently, of emerging new imaginaries that are being created in the process, through the active interaction between transcultural writers and transcultural readers (Dagnino 2012).

These multiple 'new imaginaries' acknowledge the need to engage with the spatial and temporal dimensions of the 'mode of being' transcultural, which include the 'transversal, the transactional, the translational, and the transgressive aspects of contemporary behaviour and imagination' (Ong 1999, p. 4). Therefore, to be transcultural or to act transculturally, on the one

hand, is part of the inherent subconscious and the human condition and cannot be learned; yet on the other hand, it is a conscious process acquired through experiential engagement with cultures and transcultural movement. It must be noted that movement, which includes global mobility and migration, cannot instil the transcultural alone. As such, it has to be interwoven into everyday life as a holistic, conscious and subconscious way of being that encourages a new cultural pluralism, social imaginary and “trans-change-culture”.

Furthermore, to be transcultural is to have transcultural competency, to be inclusive, catalytic, reflective and adaptive while being able to transition through changed and changing global cultures. As Hoerder states, ‘strategic transcultural competence involves conceptualisations of life projects in multiple contexts and informed choice between cultural options’ (2006, p. 91). However, the function of these components is contested within contexts of a global China due to that nation’s unique sociopolitical circumstances, which are seen to restrict, control and censor. If freedom of cultural exchange is not characteristic of a nation’s culture, how can China become transcultural? Is freedom of cultural exchange necessary to a transcultural methodology? Or is it by contesting this lack of freedom through the ‘collision of cultures’, ‘contact zones’ and social spaces that cultures can become transcultural? As such, transcultural ‘does not confront but oversteps, goes through, transcends’ the existing cultural conditions, ‘cultivating its gaps and voids’ (Epstein 1999, p. 36) and reclaims ‘an inclusive vision of culture/s, which stresses the power of confluences, overlappings and interactions rather than that of polarities’ (Dagnino 2012).

This exploration presents two clear conceptual distinctions. Firstly, the transcultural as a historical and cultural mode of being resulting from historical circumstances as defined by Ortiz and through the migration of Chinese arts and curators. Secondly, the transcultural curator as a self-reflexive agent responsible for developing and participating in transcultural movement. The tensions of this dichotomy - more specifically the role of the

second concept - are central to this research, and will be examined in practice in Chapter 5 in relation to current frameworks of cultural translation and curatorial strategies, including my own, that are used to translate exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art. Prior to the application of this concept in the chapters following, it is necessary to define translation in the context of this research and the translator as curator.

2.2 – Translation to Translator

Translation must recognize its dependence on historical circumstances [...] it brings about survival of the original, and it makes people aware of the differences between the ancient and the modern, or the strange (as well as foreign) and the known, familiar qualities. A translation thus furthers a greater awareness of one's own position, promoting an understanding both of one's own cultural identity and of the other (Müller 1985 1996, p. 65).

Historically, translation is framed through the three concepts of “text”, “language” and the act of “translation” itself (Robyns 1994, p. 405). In this research, the act of translation itself is set within the confines of cultural production that shape how artists, curators and artist-curators represent and interpret the visual, textual, spatial and temporal components of contemporary Chinese art in Chinese and non-Chinese contexts. It is a dialogic relationship that establishes an interpretive value, reliant on continued exchange with, and reflection on, the cultural, sociopolitical and economic contexts from which it developed.

Here, translation is not the literal analysis and transference of meaning from language to language, as in linguistic translation. However, the influence of text (the act of writing) and language (linguistic) translation is still an essential consideration in this research, as I have conducted interviews and analysed primary and secondary research material in English and Mandarin Chinese. As a translator, one is ‘obliged to construct meaning in the source language and then to figure and fashion it a second time round in the materials of language into which he or she is rendering it’ (Maharaj 1994, p.

32). One must be clear of the origin and accuracy of the interpretations from which the translation works, as each language has its own formation, system and manner of meaning. This became a key ethical consideration throughout this research as translators and translations from Mandarin to English often varied in detail and accuracy. To avoid a translator's bias, although impossible to ignore its influence, interviews conducted in Chinese were double or second translated.

The translator takes on the dual role of translator of interpretive value and translator of language. Although not explicitly examined as part of this study, the latter needs to be acknowledged in order to understand how the two roles are implicitly interlinked. To begin, the research and translations of Gayatri Spivak will be examined. Although not from a Chinese perspective, her examinations into translation are applicable to this research as a basis for the interpretation and construction of meaning of contemporary Chinese art. Spivak states that 'to decide whether you are prepared enough to start translating, it helps if you have graduated into speaking, by choice or preference, of intimate matters in the language of the original' (1993, p. 187). Unless the translator has earned the right to become the intimate reader, they cannot surrender or respond to the call of the text (Ibid., p. 183). In order to do this, a relationship with the text and language must already be established, as 'the history of the language, the history of the author's moment, the history of the language-in-and-as-translation, must figure in the weaving as well' (Ibid., p. 186). However, Spivak states that all translations, regardless of the language of the writer, end up as if they had been written in the English language influenced by the Western [feminist] gaze' - a process she calls the 'translatese' (Ibid., p. 182).

Although not explicit to this research, translation must identify with its visual identities - here, the difference between the alphabet of the English language and the Sinology and logographies of Mandarin Chinese characters. One must be able to ignore this visual form of representation and

‘discriminate on the terrain of the original’ (Ibid., p. 189).³⁰ Spivak goes on to rationalise this speaking, writing and translating into your own language, due to your knowledge, history and relationship to it. The translator must not see language as pivotal to translation - ‘It is only a vital clue to where the self loses its boundaries’ (Spivak 2004, p. 370). Therefore, the process of translation becomes an affirmation of one’s identity and ‘brings about a “new quality of consciousness” only possible when ‘the ‘old’ consciousness opens up to what is new, different and foreign’ (Müller 1995, p. 71).

The writer or translator cannot engage with or care for the rhetoric of the original as they are often as such written by their own language [...] a simple miming of the responsibility to the trace of the other in the self [...] Translation is the most intimate act of reading. I surrender to the text when I translate [...] Reading and surrendering take on new meanings in such a case (Spivak 1993, p. 179-180).

Translation becomes a process of mediating interpretations of identity of the conscious ‘self’ and unconscious ‘other’ where it cannot be discussed without talking about what it lacks, that of ‘difference’, and that this ‘difference’ is reliant on identity. Comparably, the unconscious ‘other’ is understood through the indexing terms of ‘foreign’ and ‘foreignness’, where translation often becomes,

[...] the “trial of the foreign.” But in a double sense. In the first place, it establishes a relationship between the Self-Same and the Foreign by aiming to open up to the foreign work to us in its utter foreignness...In the second place, translation is a trial *for the Foreign as well*, since the foreign is uprooted from its own language-ground (Berman 2000, p. 276).

The uprooting of a language-ground, or source language, implies that language comes from a pure origin. Hall’s conflicted standpoint on this

³⁰ This raises the question of how the curator as translator deals with “art as language”, also known as text art practice, during the process of translation. Given more time, the curation and translation of text art practices in China and Chinese text art would be an area of further research.

subject states that 'without a pure beginning or origin, identities and cultures can be understood as 'infinite, incomplete series of translations'' (Hall & Maharaj 2001, p. 5) yet at the same time, understands translation 'as never pure', as every identity has a pre-identity known as 'a before-text' (Ibid., p. 36). Cuccioletta (2001) further questions this, asking: 'If culture is defined by anthropologists and cultural historians as an evolutionary process, how can we still ask if in our contemporary societies, is there such a thing as a pure or unique culture?' These contradictory statements prove the translator has a responsibility to reflect on the unconscious 'other' and 'foreign', and embrace the 'before-text', from the beginning of the process of translation to avoid curatorial strategies becoming a 'trial of the foreign' (Berman 2000, p. 276).

In the early 1990s, ethnographers used 'hybridity' as a curatorial strategy to translate ethnographic objects, also known as 'objects from foreign lands' (Maharaj 1994, p. 33). This applied 'foreignness' began to address the perceived boundaries of the West and its 'others', encouraging an exploration of 'the *how* and *who* of the specific conditions of hybridity' (Coombes 1998, p. 497). It also began to focus on the difficulties of curating anthropological and ethnographic artefacts and historical objects from the East in the West in a museological context. As such, the exhibition as a site for statements, debate and experiments became the site for translation, seen as continuous 'interference between discourses and discursive structures and strategies' (Robyns 1994, p. 406). Seeing 'hybridity' as a prop to translation, Maharaj questioned whether there is 'a danger of 'hybridity' becoming the privileged, prime term' (Maharaj 1994, p. 29) - which Coombes has also noted – so that we are 'heading towards operating as a catch-all category where diverse artworks are grouped together for cultural plurality' (Ibid.), producing homogenised curatorial consequences.

Western institutions began to recognise, celebrate and reassert the visual aesthetic of hybridity and difference within the artworks as 'an instance of creative transactional transculturation' in order 'to accept a need for plurality

and cultural diversity within curatorial discourse' (Coombes 1998, p. 487-488). Thus, cultural objects were often presented through 'an uncritical celebration of hybridity in contemporary museum culture that was 'having an effect opposite to what might be intended by curators' (Ibid., p. 453). In a sense, it became a process of recoding of the international through 'the 'disappearing world' phenomenon' (Ibid., p. 491). As such, curators had to try and act objectively and not, as previously stated, enter into a 'trial of the foreign'. However, a cultural object

[...] can never be an empty vessel waiting to be filled with meaning, but rather is a repository replete with meanings that are never imminent but always contingent' (Ibid. 489).

Ethnographic examinations see all translations as pre-circumscribed by the 'self' and 'other', making any use of the terms 'foreign', 'hybridity' and 'difference' problematic.³¹ Bhabha's theories specifically address how 'cultures come to be represented by virtue of the processes of iteration and translation through which their meanings are very vicariously addressed to - through - an Other [...] where the colonial subject takes place' (Bhabha 1994, pp. 83-84),³²

[...] we cannot contextualise the emergent cultural form by locating it in terms of some pre-given discursive causality or origin. We must always keep open a supplementary space for the articulation of cultural knowledges that are adjacent and adjunct (Ibid., p. 234).

It is important to discuss the experiential and temporal components of translation's dialogic and dialectical relationship, which are specific to each

³¹ In 1994, Hal Foster identified an 'ethnographic turn' in Western contemporary art, which included ethnocentric translations (existing) and hypertextual translations (rewritings). In turn, ethnographic curating 'lost its momentum when modernisation transformed (or destroyed) the traditional societies of their "field work" and also interrupted or exhausted the continuity of "ethnic" arts and crafts that nicely seemed to represent the behalf of Western colonies' (Belting 2009, p. 13).

³² Translation's relationship to colonialism and postcolonialism will be examined in the next section of this chapter.

reader. These components are seen as 'the hybrid standing before us with, beyond it, traces of the untranslatable left-overs [...] the untranslatable' (Maharaj 1994, p. 33). According to Maharaj, in order to recode translation and tackle 'the untranslatable' you must consider its 'limits', 'dead-ends' and 'blind spots' (Ibid., p. 34) and recognise 'there is no perfect transparency' (Hall & Maharaj 2001, p. 37). This should not be seen to hinder translation, instead open up a new 'scene of translations' to discuss and test its limitations and opacity by 'floundering in an opaque stickiness' (Ibid., p. 26). The 'scene of translations' (Ibid., p. 26) opens up a space to activate and cultivate new translations as 'a condition of being and becoming', inherent to this research as part of the transcultural (Ibid., p. 38). In the case of this research, the 'scene of translations' is the curatorial strategy and curatorial platforms used to translate contemporary Chinese art.

This can be further theorised through Bhabha's temporal dimension of a postcolonial 'Third Space'. Comprising 'a three-tiered methodology' of 'rhetoric, logic and silence [...] rhetoric is key, working in the silence between the words, which are connected by logic' as shown in the theoretical frameworks below (Bhabha 1994, p. 53).

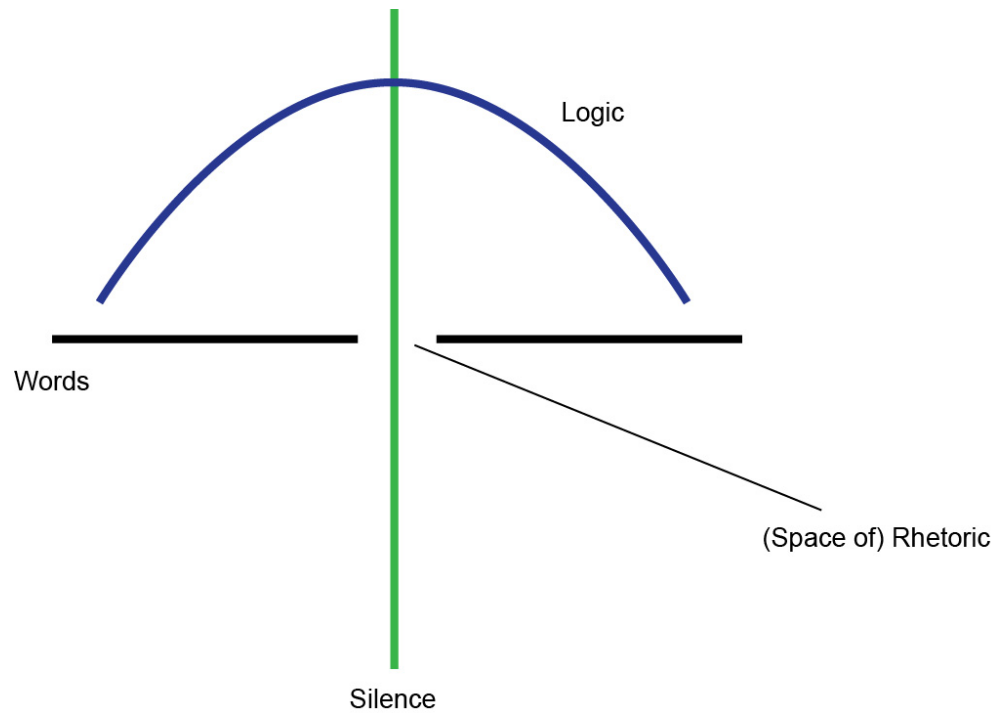


Figure 10 - Homi K. Bhabha's three-tiered methodology of 'Third Space'.
Visualisation by Rachel Marsden.

Functioning as a containment field for translation, Bhabha's 'Third Space' mobilises and denotes interpretive and linguistic difference through rhetoric. However, division of words, or in this research, cultures, intersects logic to create more silence as shown below. He articulates this as 'the burden of the meaning of culture' (Ibid., p. 56) entering the realm of the untranslatable.

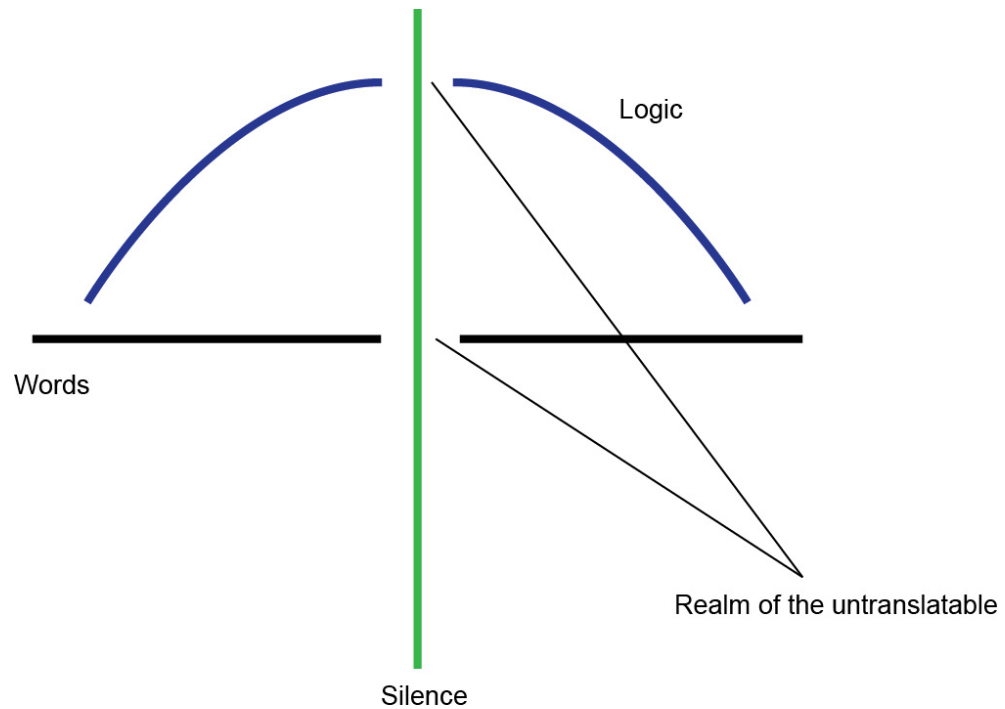


Figure 11 - Realm of the untranslatable within Bhabha's 'Third Space'. Visualisation by Rachel Marsden.

As previously stated, the latter opens up the 'scene of translations' where its opacity, including the differences and silences of rhetoric, are challenged to create new dialogic and dialectical relationships. This occurs not only in the silences of rhetoric between the words but also in the junctures of rhetoric when logic and silence intersect. These two visualisations of Bhabha's 'three-tiered methodology' can be developed into a new four-dimensional methodology to directly assimilate the concepts of cross-cultural, multicultural and transcultural.

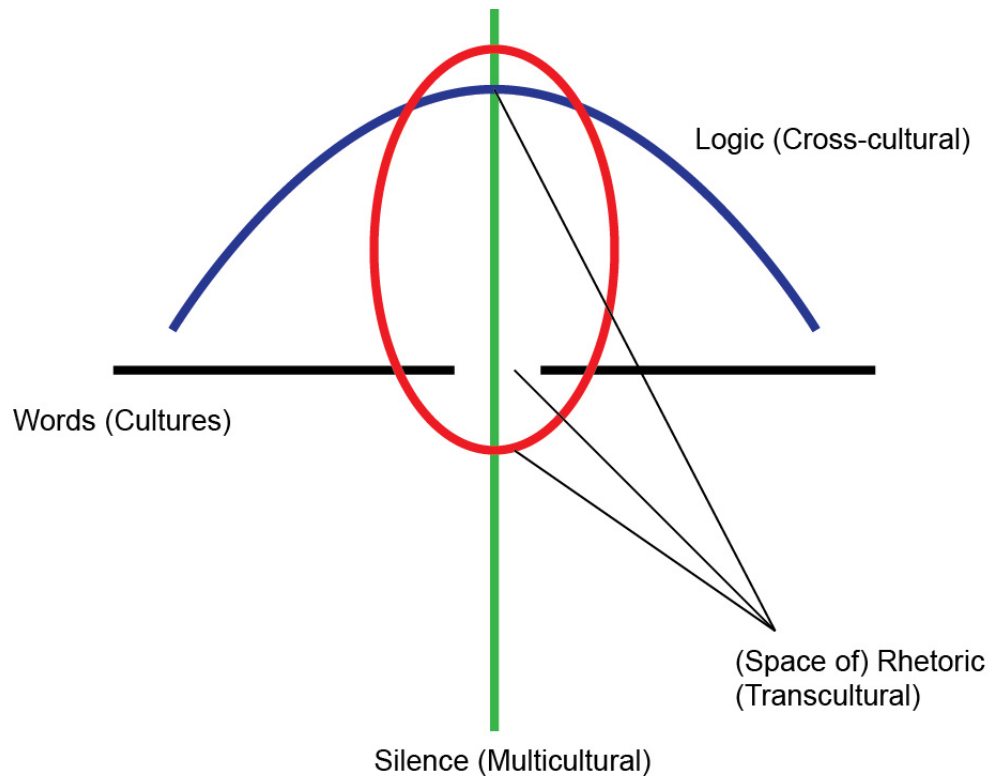


Figure 12 - Four-dimensional methodology for a new catalytic 'Third Space'.
Visualisation by Rachel Marsden.

Here, cultures are identified as the words trying to connect to create meaning while multicultural encourages difference and the disconnection of cultures through its silences. Multicultural is also not to disturb the logic of cross-cultural binary connection; however, it is seen to do so through these silences. Therefore, transcultural is the rhetoric activating and cultivating 'contact zones' in the differences, silences and spaces of translation – as such, creating a new catalytic Third Space and rhetoric as the 'mode of being' transcultural.

This four-dimensional reinterpretation of Bhabha's temporal three-tiered methodology of Third Space is vital to this research as it functions a theoretical lens through which to understand translation, in the case of this research, underpinning the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art. Even Bhabha himself states reinterpretations are needed in order to go beyond the horizontal critical gaze, if one is to give 'the nonsequential energy of lived historical memory and subjectivity its

appropriate narrative authority' (Bhabha 1994, p. 202). This is reinforced by Derrida, who states that the untranslatability of one's own identity 'can only be overcome by the other, i.e. by an opening of the system and an exchange with something outside that system, something different' (Müller 1995, p. 76). Thus, the translator must have,

[...] a willingness to descend into that alien territory [...] the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualising an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity (Bhabha 1994, p. 56).

In relation to this, it is interesting to note artist Marcel Duchamp's understanding of the transcultural encounter as 'a four-dimensional construct - 'in the infinitive' - a 'circum-hyper-hypo-translation' (Hall & Maharaj 2001, p. 56). This I understand as a multi-lingual, cyclical, all-encompassing process of translation; in other words, the experiential and temporal components of translation align to the four-dimensional methodology discussed above. Maharaj's research into this Duchampian perspective revealed it be a sublime event called of "crystalline transubstantiation" rather than translation' (Maharaj 1994, p. 32). It became a process of transformation looking at 'its skewed fidelities, its truer-than-true unfaithfulness to the original' and 'transparency against the opaque' and a 'transmutation, the sense of translation as a semiotic gear switch, a break from one systems of signs and images to another' (Duchamp 1960, cited in Maharaj 1994, p. 32).³³ As such, cultural translation can be understood as,

[...] an evolutionary process [...] where we are all the cultures [...] the eyeglasses through which we analyse, project and solution our problems. Culture therefore become all-encompassing, recognising the interaction without barriers among peoples as the basis of a world outlook (Cuccioletta 2001/2002).

³³ Marcel Duchamp expressed these ideas in an unpublished letter to British artist Richard Hamilton on 26 November 1960.

It is the ability to ‘transmogrify into object-lingo, film voicing, into enacting strategies rather than exclusively seeing itself as the business of ‘identifying and representing’ (Fletcher & Maharaj 2000, p. 31), as it is about a new ‘cultural metamorphosis’ (Dagnino 2012).

This chapter section marks a shift from binary and three-dimensional frameworks of translation such as hybridity, difference, logic and silences towards what Chinese curator Hou Hanru defines as a ‘New Internationalism’ - a pre-millennium era of cultural translation that reflects ‘the pluralisation and homogenisation of now global cultural, political and economic relationships as well as the contradictions and conflicts that have emerged in the process of pluralisation’ (Hou 1994, p. 79).³⁴ This duality of pluralism, inherent to rhetoric and thus, to the transcultural, aligns with more recent definitions of translation that are seen to conceptualise theoretical methodologies and frameworks within colonial and postcolonial discourse.³⁵

2.3 – A Postcolonial China?

Translation grounds a multiplicity of discourses, which feed into as well as emerge out of the colonial context [...] As a process, translation shapes, and takes shape, within asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism (Niranjana 1990, p. 773).

As previously stated in this chapter, the phenomenon of ‘contact zones’, as part of the process of transculturation, occurs within the space of the colonial encounter. Each translation within these ‘contact zones’ is unique and develops from a colonial modernity, within asymmetrical relations of power between the centre and periphery, towards a postcolonial contemporary that

³⁴ The notion of ‘New Internationalism’ will be further examined in Chapter 5.

³⁵ These are applied to curatorial practice and curatorial strategies - thus, to the role of the translator as curator - in section 2.4 of this chapter, and as concluding remarks in section 3.5 of the next chapter.

decentralises centres of power in ways specific to local conditions. In the early 1990s, China was analysing itself against discussions of Westerncentrism and colonialism through homogenised experiences of 'hybridity' and 'difference'. Concurrently, postcolonialism was expanding as a more widely acknowledged global discourse within which a direct history and experience of being colonised was no longer necessary.³⁶ It acted as a new signifier of the cultural, sociopolitical and economic experiences of nations no longer categorised by a European colonialism.

Here, translation is understood as a process developing from, and operating under, the control of a colonial history referencing 'the hidden, logical connection between modernity and tradition' of cultural interactions in literature, not art, as presented in section 1.1 of Chapter 1 (Mignolo 2011, p. 164). It is necessary to acknowledge this pure origin of translation, as China's relationship with colonialism is contested. Although not a former European colony, it has 'colonised itself first with communism and then with global capitalism' and assimilated to 'colonial subjects of Empire' (Maharaj 2009, p. 5).³⁷ Therefore, what is translation's relationship to postcolonialism in China?

Unlike hybridity, postcolonialism rejects the 'difference' and 'otherness' of and between cultures, instead recognising 'the ambivalent space' produced in the process of postcolonial's assimilation 'to the conceptual vocabulary

³⁶ First, in Gayatri Spivak 1990, *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, Routledge, London.

³⁷ In the 1980s and 1990s, the work of Spivak and Bhabha led colonial discourse theory (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2000, p. 186). This chapter will not explicitly examine the development of colonialism and application of postcolonialism to China; instead it aims to understand the latter through a curatorial strategy used to translate contemporary art in China. Edward Said's renowned text *Orientalism* (1978) was one of the few and earliest texts to deconstruct the Western vision of the 'Orient' and discuss a "colonial Orient". He stated, 'Orientalism is a political phenomenon that cannot be disassociated from European colonialism' (Said 1978, p. 264) where 'the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience' (Said 1978, pp. 1-2).

and values of the other cultures' (Rampley 2007, p. 196). Here, each 'post-colonial occasion' needs to be precisely located and analysed for its specific interplay with other cultures (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2000, p. 190), while acknowledging marginalised cultures, or subcultures, defined by Spivak as 'subaltern' (Ibid., p. 218). As such, postcolonialism 'allows for the subaltern voice to speak' and for 'the dominant language or mode of representation to be appropriated so that the marginal voice can be heard' (Ibid., p. 219). However, Spivak also describes postcolonialism 'as a foreclosure of active thinking and of thoughtful action' (Spivak 1998). In respect of the latter, multicultural and transcultural are both understood to exist within the space of colonial encounter, reinforcing the dominant colonial imagination of only one source of cultural authority – the West. As such, cultures in China were not given cultural value on their own terms; instead they were identified by the tropes of 'the other', 'foreignness' and 'exoticism'.³⁸ This reinforces the notion transcultural and translation are always at risk of creating a 'homogenising effect', which is further encouraged when presenting multiple subaltern voices and postcolonial experiences from a range of nations as it often disregards the differences between (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2000, p. 191). Responding to this historical discourse, scholar John Clark states,

Asia is no longer the fragmented collection of postcolonial states it may have appeared to be in the 1980s and early 1990s. Neither is it a closely-knit amalgam of interlinked cultural continua based on increasingly permeated nation-States, as it might rather crudely appear to some globalisation theorists [...] There are strong transnational linkages, which in part are mapped by the biennale system (Clark 2010, p. 102).

Such perspectives place Chinese culture in the dichotomy of colonial encounter and "postcolonial" occasion. This further illustrates the previous discussion of the role of the transcultural curator: as a self-reflexive agent grappling with China's inherent historical and cultural contexts, including its

³⁸ As colonial is compared to Orientalism, postcolonial has been compared to 'neo-Orientalism' and 'neo-colonialism' - ex-colonial powers and the role of the newly emerging superpowers (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2000, p. 163).

possibilities and constraints. In turn, it highlights a need to understand how curatorial strategies have presented translation's relationship to postcolonialism, specifically through the biennale system, as will now be examined in the discussion of *Farewell to Post-Colonialism: The Third Guangzhou Triennial* (6 September - 16 November 2008).³⁹

When Guangdong Museum of Art opened in 1997, it aimed to promote the research and presentation of avant-garde, modern and contemporary Chinese art.⁴⁰ In 2002, it initiated one of the first international survey exhibitions through the Western curatorial construct of the contemporary art triennial.⁴¹ Each triennial would exhibit what were considered to be the most significant works created in the last ten years, always grounding itself within a chosen context or theme. *Farewell to Post-Colonialism* was curated by three lead curators - Gao Shiming, Sarat Maharaj and (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung - and was 'an inquest into the 'postcolonial optic' rethinking multiculturalism and alternative modernities (Maharaj 2009, p. 5).

³⁹ This contributes a local context, from within China, to the multi-dimensional definition of the transcultural curator developed throughout this research, while creating a foundation for the next chapter's examinations of three historically defining case studies of the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art.

⁴⁰ It was one of the first art museums to open in China. An overview of the rapid development of art museums and galleries in China will be stated in the introduction to Chapter 5.

⁴¹ *Reinterpretation: A Decade of Experimental Chinese Art 1990-2002* (2002); *Beyond: An Extraordinary Space of Experimentation for Modernisation* (2005); *Farewell to Post-colonialism* (2008); and *The Unseen* (2012). Developed from Eurocentric authority and judgement, the first biennale was established in 1895 in Venice; the first in Asia was the Tokyo Biennale in 1952; the first in China was the Shanghai Biennale in 1996. Today, the Shanghai Biennale is still considered one of the most established survey exhibitions and biennales of contemporary art in China. The notion of the art biennial/biennale and triennial/triennale and its establishment in China, including the Shanghai Biennale, will be referenced in Chapters 3 and 4, however is not analysed in depth.



Figure 13 - *Farewell to Post-colonialism: The Third Guangzhou Triennial* at Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (6 September - 16 November 2008). Image © Danrong Zhang.

The triennial questioned whether postcolonialism was becoming restricted and institutionalised as an ideological concept through the development of contemporary curatorial discourse and whether this discourse can exist outside of the constraints of postcolonialism – a ‘dissent toward’, and transition beyond, postcolonialism (Gardner 2011, p. 142). This implies that curatorial strategy and, in turn, the transcultural curator are fundamentally bound by postcolonialism; or conversely, postcolonialism is one of many curatorial strategies that underpin translation.

In the exhibition catalogue, Gao defines postcolonialism as,

[...] not only an experience, but a discourse; not only a view, but a perspective; not only a discourse, but also an epistemological system and a form of spectatorship... As a system, it operates like a net; it grasps what it can and wants. Sometimes it even

becomes a creative system, infiltrating artists' minds [...] a discourse at a curatorial level, but as a context, it belongs to everyone (Gao 2008, p. 34).

Conversely, he acknowledges that 'it is post-colonialism's addiction to cultural politics that causes it to neglect the changes taking place in everyday life' (Ibid., p. 38).

Responding to these statements, the concept of *Farewell to Post-colonialism* was interrogated through a series of self-critiquing, experimental 'forums in motion' including a questionnaire that discussed art, curating and issues relating to the theme.⁴² This process, which I interpret as "research curating", helped to inform and realise the triennial by 'keeping the door open for spontaneous shifts' and 'unforeseen elements [...] built on a trial and error approach' (Maharaj 2009, p. 6). Defined by Gao as a 'self-imagining' and 'exercise of negotiation', the questionnaire reviewed the attitudes of artists and curators from within and outside China on their understanding of the art world, and artistic and curatorial practices in closed and open societies (Gao 2009a, p. 13). It aimed to 'clarify many false issues and presumptions embedded in art practices, thereby permitting fresh questions to surface' including 'Do you consider cultural identity important to your creative work?';

⁴² The 'forums in motion' were separated into seven stations: (1) a launch event at Tate Modern, London, UK (June 2007); (2) a conference entitled 'Farewell to Post-colonialism: Restarting from Asia' at Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (November 2007); (3) a travelling forum including a lecture by Sarat Maharaj on 'Thinking through the Visual' at China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, China (November 2007) and a workshop with the triennial lead curators at Qinghua University, Beijing, China (November 2007); (4) an Artists' Questionnaire session at BizArt, Shanghai, and Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (November 2007); (5) a workshop to discuss 'Unpacking Projects-in-Progress' at Huangshan Mountain, China (April 2008); (6) an international conference on 'Anxiety of Creativity and Possible Worlds' at Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong (July 2008) and a forum on 'Contemporary Art: Representation, Activism or Creation?' at Shile Boutique Lifestyle Centre, Shanghai, China (July 2008); and finally (7) an international conference and closing ceremony (in cooperation with the Goethe Institute) 'Farewell to Post-colonialism – Towards a Post-Western Society? Critical Reflection on the Third Guangzhou Triennial' (November 2008) which brought together artists, curators and experts to critically examine, and assess with in-depth and critical reflection, the multiple international exhibitions presented in Asia at that time.

'Are discourses on 'global-local' useful to your work?' and 'What does international mean to you?' (Gao 2009a, p. 13). These questions are significant as they mark Gao's research into a specific period of cultural transition, wayfinding the shift from multicultural to transcultural on local-to-global terms.

Conclusions from the transitory and transgressive 'forums in motion' informed another faction of the curatorial strategy for the triennial exhibition - four structured sections called 'Projects in Progress', 'Thinking Room', 'Free Radicals' and 'Independent Projects'. These banner titles allegedly 'possessed revolutionary critical force' to become a 'spectacle of discourse [...] in the name of 'political correctness' (Gao 2008, p. 34). Furthermore, building on these concerns, the triennial concept aimed to deconstruct Maharaj's concept of 'multicultural managerialism' through a new readymade 'post-colonial toolkit' (Ibid.).

These schismatic indexing terms, including 'self/other', 'N/S divisions', 'coloniser/colonised', 'authentic/derivative', 'authority/subordination', 'migrant/citizen' and 'centre/periphery' (Maharaj 2009, p. 5), immediately confuse and burden Gao's earlier interrogations and definition of postcolonialism. Furthermore, by imposing these terms, the triennial reinforced rather than decentralised centres of power within the contemporary art world, perpetuating 'highly abstract conceptions of identity and social inequality' thus, reducing the triennial into a binary mode of enquiry akin to multicultural (Gladston 2016, p. 18).

Initiating a triennial from such complex yet overarching notions of postcolonialism, encouraged artists 'to look at fresh issues in their work now that the tenets of the postcolonial period have themselves become institutionalised' (Batten 2008). In turn, creating restrictions imposed through the institutionalisation of postcolonial discourses, which were seen by Paul Gladston to,

[...] lead not only to the reproduction of simplistic conceptions of East-West/North-South relations of dominance, but also to highly scripted forms of artistic production and reception in strong conformity with well-established art-world regimes of financial support and curatorial gate-keeping (Gladston 2016, p. 18).

In October 2010, Maharaj discussed two conceptual attempts within *Farewell to Post-colonialism* (2008) to deconstruct his pre-existing notion of 'multicultural managerialism' alongside the 'abstract exposition' of 'Asia Pandemonium'.⁴³ By questioning, "What is Asia today?" he stated,

'Asia Pandemonium' conceptualises something positive and negative in one and the same term [...] representing the ecological disaster of the landscape we face across Asia [...] every one of the nation states we face suggest to use this condition of pandemonium [...] as a productive and creative force [...] modernity as a dialogic and linear development. The concept of pandemonium arises from a work of art [...] experience of turbulence and chaos [...] artists are not scared of interdisciplinary borders (Maharaj 2010).

⁴³ The notion of 'Asia Pandemonium' was originally discussed as part of the second 'forums in motion' station – the one-day conference 'Farewell to Post-colonialism: Restarting from Asia' at Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (November 2007).



Figure 14 - From left to right: Sarat Maharaj, Michael Chen (translator) and curator (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung. *West Heavens: India-China Summit on Social Thought* as part of the 2010 8th Shanghai Biennale— *Rehearsal Act V* at MOCA Shanghai, 29 October 2010. Image © Rachel Marsden.

He went on to question whether it represented 'a plethora of global modernities', 'entangled modernities' or 'multiple modernities of China' (Maharaj 2010). From these perspectives, and referencing Gao's initial definition of postcolonialism, 'Asia Pandemonium' could be understood as postcolonialism's all-encompassing term in Asia's then-new era of globalisation, presenting an 'institutionalised pluralistic landscape' (Gladston 2016, p. 25). However, by questioning the role of modernity in this indeterminate way, Maharaj automatically invalidated his earlier statement that 'Asia Pandemonium' occurs within a linear modernity. This clarified the 'turbulence and chaos' as representing 'entangled modernities' within local contexts of China, and globally. This can be further observed when interrogating the triennial's curatorial team, informed and supported by a further seven research curators whose collective expertise was supposedly global. In truth, the curatorial strategy,

[...] branches out spontaneously in a tangle of directions, resulting in a show featuring 178 artists that more closely resembles the

tumult of a bazaar than the clean structure of most museum exhibitions. It is precisely this lack of (world) order that allows the works to appear independent from the overarching concept (Draxler 2008).

This indicated that curators were endeavouring to achieve 'a greater plurality in the presentation of exhibitions of work from differing cultures' at that time (Chandler 2009, p. 74). However, was this achieved?



Figure 15 - *Farewell to Post-colonialism: The Third Guangzhou Triennial* at Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (6 September - 16 November 2008). Views of 'China Painters' (2007-08) by Christian Jankowski, various media, dimensions variable (right), and 'Faith on a Horse' (2008) by Liu Dahong, mixed-media video installation, dimensions variable (left). Image © (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung.

In a review, Hong Kong-based art critic and curator John Batten could not see an intrinsic postcolonialism within the triennial, even though it demonstrated a strong presence from African and Middle Eastern artists. The triennial's curators gave,

[...] elaborate explanations about the aim of the exhibition, but much of the art simply does not fit their intentions [...] the

theoretical notions should simply be ignored. It only gets in the way of the most excellent art on display (Batten 2008).

Although the works, which included pre-existing works, had an 'other-worldly air', dealing with issues relating to 'modern times', 'the metropolis' and the 'day-to-day lives of ordinary people in extraordinary situations', they had 'little in common' (Ibid.), turning the triennial into what can only be described as 'the "identity" show' (Gladston 2016, p. 18). These statements immediately refer to one of the starting points of the triennial - Gao's Questionnaire – and more specifically his enquiry, 'Do you consider cultural identity important to your creative work?' (Gao 2009a, p. 13). This clarified the triennial as a cyclical concept and curatorial strategy, escaping from (farewell to) yet returning back (the postcolonial) to identity. This paradox is highlighted in the title of Batten's review - 'Schizoid Spirit' (2008) - which implies an ambiguous schizophrenic attitude and passive aversion to form social relationships, further emphasising the triennial's 'turbulence and chaos', 'tangle' and 'tumult' (Batten 2008). The latter was further reflected in the display, or unexpected censorship, of artists' work.

In late September 2008, soon after the opening event of the triennial, Allan deSouza and Yong Soon Min wrote 'An Open Letter', a two-page document concerning the censorship of their work 'Springtimes for John and Yoko: Bed-Inn' (2008). It was digitally uploaded to deSouza's website for international access so audiences could be informed.



Figure 16 - After censorship – ‘Springtimes of John and Yoko: Bed Inn’ (2008) by Allan deSouza and Yong Soon Min. Installation with rugs, printed curtains, wood structures, fabric, video projection, sound, as part of *Farewell to Post-Colonialism, The Third Guangzhou Triennial*, Guangzhou, China (6 September - 16 November 2008). Image © Yong Soon Min.

The letter stated how the provocative installation, which used projected pornographic imagery to talk about the legacy of a Western sexual revolution influencing a rapidly changing China, was censored by Wang Huangsheng, the Director of Guangdong Museum of Art, even though the concept and content of the work was made explicit to the curatorial team and in the artists’ catalogue statement prior to the opening. At no point during the commissioning or screening process was it indicated that the project would be at risk from any potential problems. Unexpectedly, just days before the opening, the work was removed from the exhibition ‘without any attempt at dialogue or even without informing us about how, by whom or why such a decision was made’ (deSouza & Yong 2008).

Poignantly, the work was originally situated within the 'Free Radicals' section – as the artists stated, 'Not so free, presumably' (Ibid.). The artists, both from colonised nations, took the topic of *Farewell to Post-colonialism* seriously, wanting to create new forms of cultural and social engagement by representing,

[...] the throes of post- and neo-colonialism [...] belief that histories and geographical locations literally mark the human body [...] the body as marked by history and as carrier of infectious ideas and contagious action [...] the body's relationship to power [...] ironic that a work ruminating on historical memory has been switched off through an act of enforced amnesia (Ibid.).

This draws attention to Gao's curatorial strategy, which 'possessed revolutionary critical force' to become a 'spectacle of discourse [...] in the name of 'political correctness' (Gao 2008, p. 34). Here it is a more devious political correctness – 'one enacted by an autocratic institution that professes its liberal leanings' (deSouza & Yong 2008). At this stage, the artists questioned, 'what "tyranny of the Other" do we need to contend with when the institution shuts down a space of difference, thereby barring the mere entrance of the Other?' (Ibid.)

From the clear lack of acknowledgement and openness in communication from museum staff to the lack of emphasis on the restrictions inherent to China's unique local sociopolitical context, the triennial was reduced to an example of translation's failure on behalf of the institution and the curatorial strategy. The artists were ready for translation, inviting open dialogue, expecting to be involved in the decision-making process, even altering the aesthetics of the work after censorship so it could be shown. The only known platform for open dialogue was presented through a special edition of the curated contemporary art journal *Printed Project* entitled 'Farewell to Post-colonialism: Querying the Guangzhou Triennial 2008' (2009).



Figure 17 - Front cover of 'Farewell to Post-colonialism: Querying the Guangzhou Triennial 2008', a special edition of *Printed Project*, N° 11, May 2009. Image © Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong.

Curated and edited by Maharaj, it was published six months after the triennial finished in May 2009 and could be deemed an additional platform of enquiry versus a continuation of the “forums in motion”. A core section of the journal presented ‘Extensions, Reflections and Projections’ – statements, scholarly essays, provocations and visual documentation – by the triennial’s lead curators, research curators, artists and invited guest writers. Here would have been the most appropriate site for the diverse international voices to resolve some of the conceptual and curatorial issues previously discussed. Instead, the journal documented and re-interrogated the development of the triennial’s curatorial strategy, translation and audience reception. This included one page entitled ‘Censor’s Notice’, which

presented two captioned photographs depicting the censorship of deSouza and Yong's work, with no accompanying narrative. It was expected a reader could decipher the situation.



Figure 18 - 'Censor's Note' (p. 66) in 'Farewell to Post-colonialism: Querying the Guangzhou Triennial 2008', a special edition of *Printed Project*, N° 11, May 2009. Image © Printed Project, with photographs © Peter John Mayers (top) and Dorothee Albrecht (bottom).

These additional textual and visual attempts at justifying the triennial's logic presented multiple conflicting and paradoxical concepts again, making it even more difficult to understand the triennial's exact intention. In part, the cultural pluralism shown through the conceptual debates between the

curators themselves, the artists and audience was observed were overwhelmingly conflicted to the point of impossible delineation. It is interesting to note that in the exhibition catalogue, Maharaj admitted translations in the triennial involved ‘distortion’, where the gap between the original and the translation highlighted a sense of ‘impossibility’ resulting in ‘creative mistranslation’ and in some cases ‘over-translation’ (2008, p. 55) – as has been clearly highlighted in this section of the chapter. Maharaj went on to describe how curators ‘must escape the ‘curatorial turn’ that scripts them in advance’ (ibid., p. 54) when searching for appropriate representation. At this point, I question whether the multiple voices needed to be delineated. Or was the ‘Third Space’ – in other words, the rhetoric – that of ‘turbulence and chaos’? Simply, it felt like a case of too much “research curating” and not enough “curating research”. Thus, in order for the postcolonial to depart or advance, the translator as curator must research,

[...] different local histories, contexts and aesthetic modalities together within specific works as examples of the *transcultural*, or what we might even call the *translocal*, in contemporary art (Gardner 2011, p. 152).

In the case of the triennial, artists’ works were seen to stand alone, independent from other artists, yet consciously engage with each other and the audience to open up new dialogic relationships – discussing the departure from a postcolonial rhetoric, from both colonised and non-colonised perspectives. However, the curatorial strategy was conceptually unable to universally establish the notion of a postcolonial China, or a *Farewell to Post-colonialism*. Interviewed at the ShContemporary Art Fair in Shanghai, China, on 11 September 2010, artist and curator Colin Chinnery states that the triennial was referencing itself against the international phenomenon and culture of biennials and triennials at the time, as such contained by ‘a Western train of thinking’ where,

[...] there is no post-colonialism in China where the Guangzhou Triennial theme was a PR thing [...] as a peripheral triennial, it needed to get the attention from the Western art world (Chinnery 2010, pers. comm., 11 September).

As such, the triennial ended up surrendering to Spivak's notion of postcolonialism 'as a foreclosure of active thinking and of thoughtful action'. In turn, it can be said even though it denied a departure – the desired 'farewell' – the representation of postcolonialism from multiple identities, cultures and geographies within the triennial did challenge 'the landscape of global culture, offering non-Western societies a critical method whereby Western hegemony could be challenged' (Sim 2009, p. 119).

The analysis of *Farewell to Post-colonialism* (2008) led me to understand that the translator as curator should endeavour to work with and beyond the concept of postcolonialism as a shift into the global, through what Okwui Enwezor calls 'a transformation of the globe into a vast quilting of "postcolonial constellations"' (Enwezor 2003 cited in Gardner 2011, p. 142). More recently, there are signs that 'a critique of established post-colonialist discourse has begun to emerge from within the international art world that had previously embraced it as a focus of critical resistance to western colonialist/imperialist relations of dominance' (Gladston 2016, p. 24). The triennial demonstrated the application and assimilation of a postcolonial China and a wanted, if unsuccessful, relationship between translation and postcolonialism. China's cultural relationship with postcolonialism was no longer questionable but essential to the nation's new desire to disrupt established centres of power and rewrite the Western canons of art history. This suggests postcolonialism is culturally transferable and can function as a prefix to any non-colonialised nation or identity. If this were the case, it would further decentralise the centres of power inherent to cultural production. It is through more recent examinations of cultural pluralism in global contexts – through *Farewell to Post-colonialism* – that I see the process of translation being reframed, renegotiated and reapplied to curatorial strategies. Furthermore, in today's era of globalisation, it can be questioned whether everything is a translation, or a translation of a translation, akin to the metaphor of 'palimpsest' defining the multicultural. In turn, we can ask whether translation, like transcultural, is interwoven into everyday life as a holistic, conscious and subconscious way of being that encourages a new cultural pluralism, social imaginary and "trans-change-culture". In order to

understand this, the objectives of the translator as transcultural curator must be known.

2.4 – Translator as Curator

During the 1990s, “difference”, “identity”, “hybridity”, “foreignness”, “self” and “other” served as tropes to describe and decipher the process of translation. In an attempt to resolve and work beyond its “limits”, “dead ends” and “blind spots” the concepts ‘cultural pluralism’ and ‘New Internationalism’ were introduced. Their role to decentralise the centres of power and open up new lines of global and reciprocal dialogic exchange must be acknowledged, including a ‘multiplicity or balance so much as “neutrality”’ (Chandler 2009). If the latter is ignored, translation often becomes essentialised and homogenised, reduced to a one-dimensional concept assimilated to Spivak’s theory of the ‘translate’. As I grapple with both the ‘translate’ and ‘the untranslatable’, I believe it is the task of the translator as curator to facilitate ‘love between the original and its shadow’ (Spivak 1993, p. 181). To negotiate this linguistic, interpretive and transcultural landscape, the curator must be intimate with the process of translation, accept and surrender to the text through knowledge of the source language, and become part of its cultural and historical construct. As Chinese curator Gao Minglu states,

[...] the story has happened before the narrated event. We must seek, think and remember our way back, because the real risk is forgetting the way back before it takes place (2008, p. 41).

In turn, curators need to recognise the cultural, political and economic micro-dynamics and idiosyncrasies of the ‘self’ before examining the unknown ‘other’, thus acknowledging what already supports the artist or work on a local level before it can be transculturally translated on a global level. Curatorial strategies, which involve cultural pluralism, therefore require a curator to be self-reflexive and invest in process and collaboration. This further highlights the importance of the ‘contact zone’ as part of,

... transculturation, critique, collaboration, bilingualism, mediation, parody, denunciation, imaginary dialogue, vernacular expression
– these are some of the literate arts of the contact zone.

Miscomprehension, incomprehension, dead letters, unread masterpieces, absolute heterogeneity of meaning – these are some of the perils of writing in the contact zone (Pratt 1999).

This is echoed in the perspective of contemporary philosopher Rosi Braidotti, who interprets Deleuze's understanding of translation as a new "viral" or "parasitic" mode' of translation (2009, p. 151). She understands his notion of 'rhizomatic thinking' as,

[...] having the ability to provide some missing links between separated cultures [...] supports an idea of evolution of the non-deterministic, non-linear and non-teleological kind [...] it is connected to the processes of becoming-others, in the sense of relating, hence of affecting and being affected (Ibid., pp. 148-149).

This rhizomatic process I see as latching on to the rhetoric of Bhabha's 'Third Space' to become the point of action – the catalytic space to develop new dialogic and dialectical relationships and take risks by engaging, experiencing, reflecting and adapting to the micro-dynamics and idiosyncrasies of the unknown 'other' and 'the untranslatable'. In respect of this, it reinforces transcultural as a 'mode of being' in which the translator as curator must 'live with a multiple sense of belonging, made of plural affiliations and dispersed sense of allegiance [...] new direction of identity [...] a plural, flexible, metamorphical identity' and have 'the ability to "mutate" beyond any singular or bounded mode of cultural identity [...] on a daily basis, affecting their cultural dispositions and imaginations' towards 'cultural metamorphosis' (Dagnino 2012). This process has been identified as creating a new generation of curators whom Dagnino calls 'transcultural writers', which alludes to the conclusion of the previous chapter regarding the curator-critic and critic-curator (Ibid.). They are,

[...] imaginative writers who, by choice or by life circumstances, experience cultural dislocation, live transnational experiences, cultivate bilingual/pluri-lingual proficiency, physically immerse themselves in multiple cultures/geographies/territories, expose themselves to diversity and nurture plural, flexible identities [...] They become more apt in embracing the opportunities and

freedom that diversity and mobility bestow upon them [...] expressing an emerging transcultural sensitivity [...] highly sensitised towards the processes of cultural mediation, confluence and transformation, and whose readers are often marked by the same kind of cultural complexity and heterogeneity, seem to be living in a dimension without any fixed borders or whose geographic, cultural, national or homeland boundaries and allegiances are self-identified, self-chosen, and possibly impermanent, constantly recontextualised. In this regard, they might also be considered as dispatriate, postnational beings belonging to the community of 'global souls' or neonomadic people on the move across the planet or through the frontier-less digital realm of micro- and macro- (symbolic) communications (Ibid.).

The age of global interconnectedness and mobilities has developed new transcultural audiences - as such, transcultural readers - who are 'tuned into a different wavelength' and able 'to capture the first still embryonic, still incoherent, still mostly unexpressed or intercepted symptoms (signals) of a different emerging cultural mood/mode' (Ibid.). Transcultural writers - thus, transcultural curators - as agents are developing new and alternative curatorial strategies to meet these audiences' needs by decentralising the perceived and mainstream centres of power. In response to this, translation can be used as a theoretical framework to understand globalisation, or in the case of this research, the establishment of local-to-global dialogic and dialectical relationships, as will be examined in the next chapter.

Many of the terms, concepts and theoretical frameworks used to define the process of translation within this chapter function to support and inform curatorial strategies - what I define as indexing terms to support and refine cultural translation - and the transcultural. This leads me to understand the importance of their individual and collective roles, and how each needs to be respected during the process of translation. In turn, I question whether these terms have expired in their ability to index translation. Or are they still essential to acknowledge and test as part of the role of translator as curator? When the terms, concepts and theoretical frameworks are placed within

examinations of the colonial and postcolonial, the ethnographic curator and the contemporary art curator, they are transferable to this research, and re-readable in this context, when examining the role of the transcultural curator and the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art. Furthermore, the theoretical methodologies and frameworks used to represent the 'Third Space' and the transcultural are in practice today. In turn, they are appropriate to, and significant in, building a solid basis for curatorial strategies - the 'scenes' of translation'. This is one of many places where the possibilities of translation are opened up, where the indexing terms stated in the opening sentence to this chapter section are renegotiated, reframed and in themselves, retranslated, and binary modes of geographic hyphenation such as East-West are expanded into four-dimensional methodologies as transcultural represents 'a perspective in which all cultures look decentered in relation to all other cultures, including one's own' (Berry & Epstein 1999, p. 312). Thus, as part of cultural translation, the transcultural curator should 'be prepared for serendipities, for things to go haywire, to go off-beat, even 'mistranslation' of sorts' where the exhibition is 'less a machine for staging a rounded-off statement than it is about setting up an experiment, about triggering unfinishable visual and intellectual discussion and debate' (Fletcher & Maharaj 2000, p. 32). Furthermore, it is,

[...] an unfinishable process [...] a shifting, collision, coalescing of cultural continents – a mucking up of classificatory order [...] anticipating the unceasing misplacing of cultural translation: "semi-semitic serendip...you...Europansianised Afferyank!" [...] The creative possibilities thrown up in such moments of mismatch, mistranslation and melt-down [...] such moment of apparent slip-up or divergence from the pre-scripted' (Ibid., p. 33).

Therefore, curatorial strategies are about emergence, erosion and establishment, as 'nothing can be translated (or understood, or even noticed) when it is wholly outside and different from the translator's life' (Müller 1995, p. 70). The transcultural curator must engage directly with the subject they want to translate: negotiating, reflecting, compromising, and conflicting with themselves and the subject.

Chapter 3

From *Guanxi* to 'Glocal'

Deconstructing the global/local dichotomy is therefore a precondition for a new definition of any redefinition of any regional contemporary art (Wu 2005, p. 29).

In defining translation and transcultural in the previous chapter, I argued the transcultural curator needs to recognise the cultural, political and economic microdynamics and idiosyncrasies of the “self” before examining the “other”. In turn, they must develop and establish local to global, dialogic and dialectical relationships. In this research, the self is understood as both the curator and artist, who individually and comparatively need to reflect upon their positions in the field. As such, the self must lose its boundaries as a one-dimensional concept to reflect the multidimensional layers of identity, including Chineseness, that are characteristic of being transcultural.

To initiate this process, it has been argued in this thesis that curators must acknowledge the different local histories, contexts and aesthetic modalities of an artist and artwork before those can be translated on a global level. Furthermore, I identified the transition from a multicultural hybridity towards the cultural pluralism of a ‘New Internationalism’, highlighted by new readings of globalisation through a derivative phenomenon of the global’s influence on the local known as ‘glocal’ or ‘glocalisation’. Together, these understandings have prompted the formulation of what I identify as transcultural curatorial strategies, which incorporate a new cultural *guanxi* in glocal terms. Therefore, at the beginning of the process of translation, how does a curator begin to understand the self in the context of a new glocal China?

This chapter will first examine how the self and its “centres” are self-reflexive concepts within Chinese culture society through the theoretical frameworks

and models of *chaxu geju* and ‘concentric circles of Chineseness’, and how the latter created the basis of social relationships and cultural communities known as *guanxi* (section 3.1). I will then identify ways in which *guanxi* has been explicit as both a curatorial concept and curatorial strategy and in turn, how these processes have influenced the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art (section 3.2); including a discussion of local to global relationships and the global’s new influence on the local, known as ‘glocal’ or ‘glocalisation’ (section 3.3), and the examination of recent ‘glocal’ curatorial strategies (section 3.4). These concepts and methodologies are self-reflexively adopted and adapted by Chinese artists and curators as they develop their practices in local to global contexts. Furthermore, the primary materials collated in this research contribute methodologically to, and underpin, this chapter – specifically, the interviews conducted between 2010 and 2013, and fieldwork research trips to China (2009-12).

3.1 – Defining Networks, Defining *Guanxi*

Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong coined the term *chaxu geju* to describe the relationships and networks between the self (individual identity) and other (individual identity as part of groups in and beyond China) in Chinese society (1947).⁴⁴ Translated as ‘differential modes of association’, it is represented by an ever-expanding set of concentric circles (*tongxin yuan*) comprising an inner circle, outer circle and expanding circle of the self as centre, its kinship and distance respectively (Yan 2001, p. 242).⁴⁵ Here, ‘the self and culture are seen to constitute one another mutually’ (Chang & Lee 2012, p. 297).

⁴⁴ This is further examined in studies of Chinese communities through dichotomies of allocentricism and idiocentricism, collectivism and individualism, “true self” and “social self”, and *dawo* meaning collective greater self and *xiaowo* meaning small self/individual (Chang & Lee 2012).

⁴⁵ This can be compared to Sinocentrism as examined in Chapter 1.

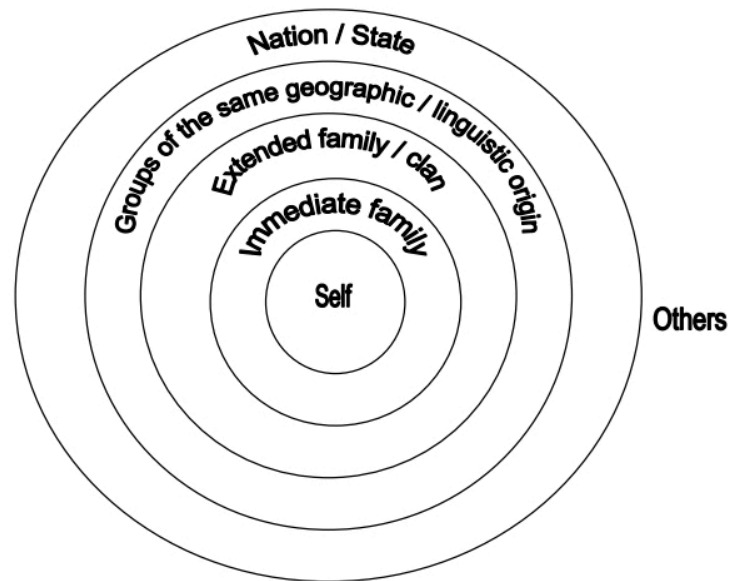


Figure 19 - 'A schematic presentation of self in the traditional Chinese social context' (2012) by Weining C. Chang and Lynn Lee. Image © Chang and Lee.

Everyone stands at the centre of circles produced by his or her own social influence. Everyone's circles are interrelated. One touches different times and places [...] In Chinese society, the most important relationship – kinship – is similar to the concentric circles formed when a stone is thrown into a lake (Fei [1947] 1992, pp. 62-63).

When an individual stands as the centre of the social influence, they initiate relationships when social objects and situations are contained within the expanding ripples, forming different circles in different positions and at different times (Guo & Chen 2009, p. 4). As such, Chinese society is identified as egocentric, based on power rather than being group-orientated, where the concentric circles are valued differently by each person, producing different social interactions and moral values (Yan 2001, p. 242). These relationships between local, native identity - including the subaltern - and a Chinese national identity highlight both difference between cultural identities and difference to those outside the circle, risking the collective simplification and homogenisation of cultural identity. Therefore, China and its concentric circles can be understood as living 'in a world with finely defined layers of relationships' (Hsu 1981), which carry more of a poetic meaning of 'circles of shared feeling' (Vickers & Jones 2005, p. 141). This establishes that there

are multiple different social identities as there are different relationships, as shown in the next diagram.

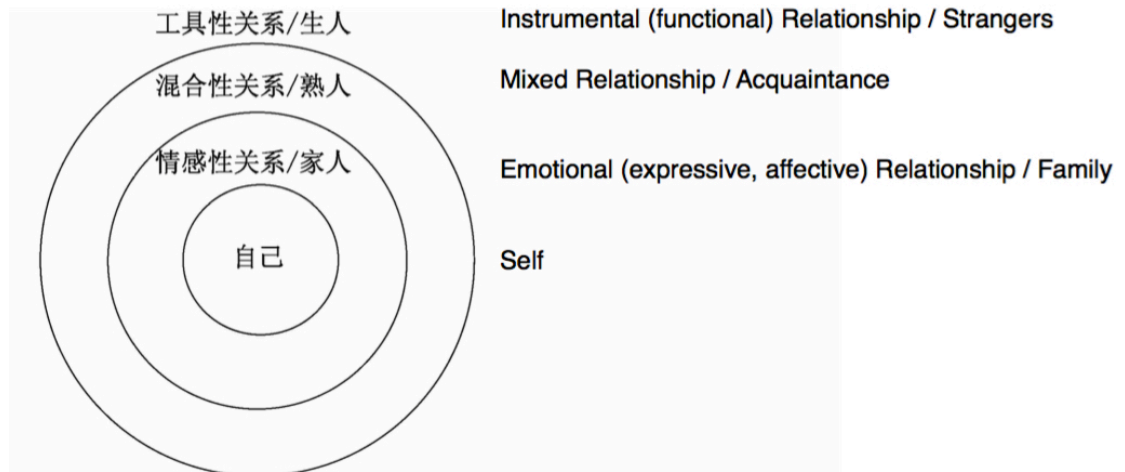


Figure 20 - Categories of 'Instrumental-Mixed-Emotional' relationship based on *Chaxu Geju* designed by Shen Yi combining Hwang Kwang-kuo and Yang Kuo-Shu's interpretations of *Chaxu Geju*. Cited in Zhang Jianghua 2010, 'Charisma, Publicity, and China Society: Rethinking of "Chaxu Geju"'. Translation by You Feng.

Furthermore, Fei identifies Western patterns of social relations as a form of 'solidarity', less willing to move across and between the different circles of identity, while the Chinese social relations 'based on differences and circle' are more willing to shift between layers of identity (Guo & Chen 2009, p. 4).⁴⁶ According to Fei, 'the Chinese, unlike Westerners, look at the world with fuzzy logic: the relations between family, society and state are always changing and evolving in accordance with instrumental needs' (Ibid.). I suggest this 'fuzzy logic' is comparable to definitions of translation and transcultural in the previous chapter, and of Chineseness in Chapter 1.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ The notion of 'solidarity' will be further examined in Chapter 5 in relation to models of transcultural curatorial strategies and Ray Oldenburg's theory of 'third place' (1989).

⁴⁷ This can be further examined through Ludwig Wittgenstein's theories of the logic and the philosophy of language.

Fei's notion of concentric circles was more recently applied to contemporary Chinese contexts in the 2010 lecture 'The Historical Roots of Secularism in China' by Prasenjit Duara at Fudan University, Shanghai 2010a), and the associated book, which contributed to *West Heavens*, an ongoing body of cultural research between China and India by curator Chang Tsong-zung.⁴⁸ In the chapter 'Historical Consciousness and National Identity', Duara discusses scholar Tu Wei-ming's theory of the 'concentric circles of Chineseness' (1991) - what Duara identifies as 'Chineseness across the world' in 'circles of "cultural China"' (2010b, p. 287).⁴⁹ Moving beyond the model of concentric circles within mainland China, it included what Tu called 'three symbolic universes' - 'China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan; 'the Chinese diaspora' or overseas Chinese known as *huaqiao* and 'all who empathise with Chinese culture' intellectually to create new international discourse (Ibid.). The notion of Chineseness as 'three symbolic universes' reinforces the multidimensional understandings of Chineseness provided in Chapter 1. Here, Chineseness now becomes a form of 'deterritorialised nationalism' cutting across national borders, attempting to counterbalance essentialised and homogenised perspectives of China that are inherent to cross-cultural and multicultural perspectives, and moving towards a new 'historical consciousness' (Ibid., p. 288).

Duara's notion signified a turning point in China's understanding of the self, its multi-dimensional identities and culture, and a need for the nation to establish a new international cultural identity. Simultaneously, the model of

⁴⁸ Established in 2010, *West Heavens* is an integrated cross-cultural exchange programme that looks to compare the different modernities of India and China to facilitate communication and promote interaction between the two countries, cultures and art circles through social thought and contemporary art. I was invited by curator Chang Tsong-zung to attend this event in relation to my research. Notes from the event are recorded on my research blog where I cited my discovery of 'concentric circles of Chineseness': <https://rachelmarsdenwords.wordpress.com/2010/12/06/china-i-bid-you-adieu/>

⁴⁹ Tu Wei-ming is Professor of Chinese philosophy and one of the most prominent overseas Chinese scholars.

concentric circles was developing in the West; thus, Fei's model could be reinterpreted and applied as a means of understanding cultural change in a new global era (Guo & Chen 2009). China's new affirmation of identity was to bring about a new consciousness of identity in both Chinese and Western contexts, as acknowledged as part of the process of translation in Chapter 2, section 2.2, and depicted in the diagram below.

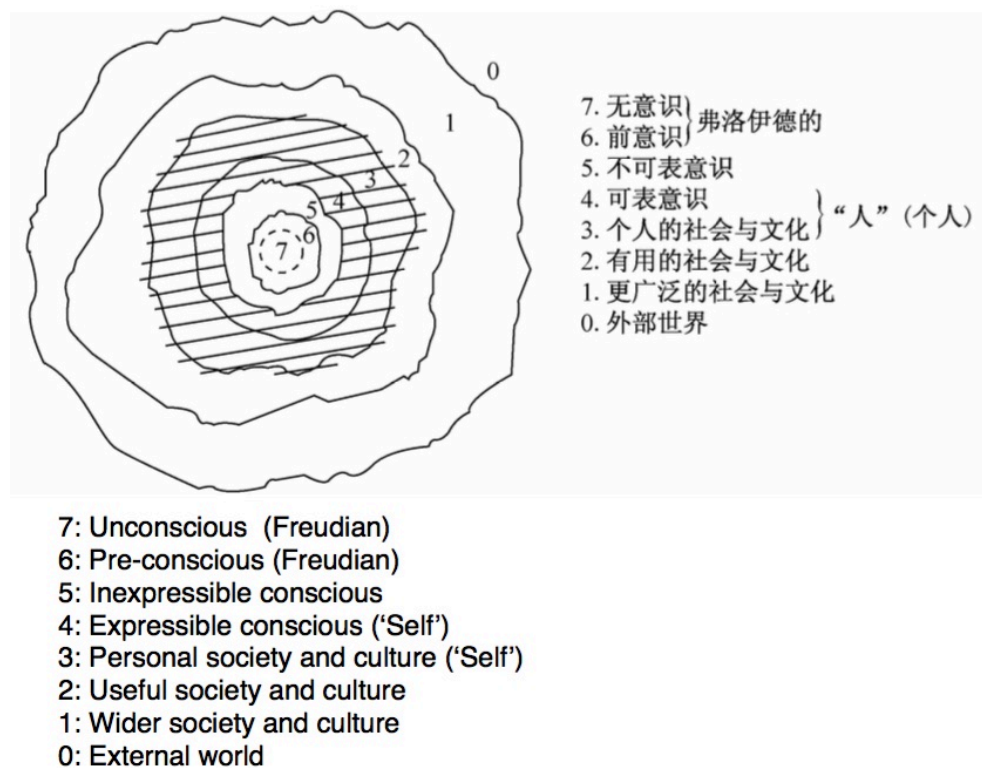


Figure 21 - Diagram of Self, Culture and Society cited in Zhang Jianghua 2010, 'Charisma, Publicity, and China Society: Rethinking of "Chaxu Geju"'. Originally by Francis Hsu (1997). Translation by You Feng.

In the 1990s, as the theory of *chaxu geju* and its concentric circles developed in Western contexts, the model no longer encompassed the internal relationships of the self and other, or the innovative and changing local-to-global artistic and curatorial relationships of the time (Ibid.). Criticised for its Sinocentricism (a Chinese layered centralism), hierarchical structure and focus on difference, it was superseded by more personal and

intimate experiences of *guanxi*. This term offered a different way of conceptualising artistic and curatorial relationships where there was an identifiable shift towards practice in the theoretical framework. As such, behaviours changed as it was self-consciously applied to the multiple types of relationships within everyday life to encompass a new set of core values.

Guanxi can be understood as,

[...] a relationship between two people who share a group status; two (or more) people's relationship to a common third party; a connection between people involving frequent contact; a connection between people involving little direct interaction, or friendship without a common background (Tsui et al. 2000, pp. 225-226).

Guanxi's conceptual 'elasticity' (Tsui & Fahr 1997, p. 60), highlights that there is no direct translation of the term. It has evolved from commonalities in the local context of Chinese society to encompass the personal and social lives of both kinship and community, and 'places great emphasis on personal, specific "guanxi" rather than on the impersonal generalised others' (Chang & Lee 2012, p. 301).

Guanxi exists only in the process of practice, and as such, can counterbalance the previous emphasis on the structural aspects of the kinship system of Chinese society' (Yan 2001, p. 242).

By focusing on person-centred networks, it is etiquette- and ethic-based and relies on cross-cultural, intercultural and transcultural interactive engagements - as shown in the right-hand infographic on the next page. Created by artist and designer Liu Yang, it is a self-reflexive visualisation of *guanxi*, demonstrating her bi-cultural experience of living in and between China and Europe in an East-West dichotomy.

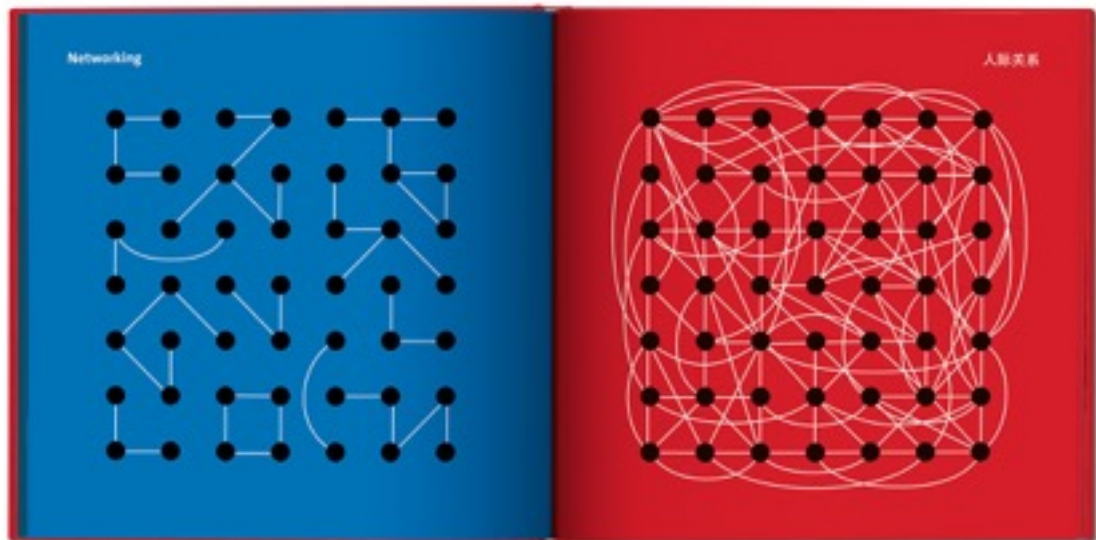


Figure 22 - Visual representations of 'Networking', West (left) and East (right) taken from Yang Liu: *East meets West* (2015). Image © Yang Liu.

Guanxi identifies social obligation, capital and power through an individual's local, national and international networks, at which point it becomes aligned to the cultural capital inherent to Chineseness, as examined in Chapter 1. As such, *guanxi* works beyond the site of connection within the concentric circles of *chaxu geju* to create new emotional, reciprocal or dialogic exchanges inherent to any social encounter - the 'concentric circles of Chineseness'. These processes can be compared to cross-cultural and transcultural respectively, as defined in Chapter 2 section 2.1.

Chaxu geju, its concentric circles and *guanxi* are vital to discuss in this research as they are unique in establishing and building cultural relationships in, and when working with, Chinese contexts. As such, they collectively inform the basis of how curatorial strategies function and in turn, act as a methodology for the development of *guanxi*. During a research trip to China, a group exhibition of contemporary Chinese art explicitly examined *guanxi* as a process of everyday life, and of artistic and curatorial practices. This exhibition will now be examined in order to understand how the methodology and concept of *guanxi* underpins cultural translation and thus, the role of the transcultural curator.

3.2 – Curating *Guanxi*

Guanxi: The Art of Conversations (2011) was a group exhibition of twelve contemporary Chinese artists on show at Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou (16 April - 19 June 2011) and Today Art Museum, Beijing (10-23 October 2011). Curated by Chinese-born and UK-based curator and scholar Jiang Jiehong, it aimed to explore the deep-rooted Chinese origins and all-encompassing nature of the term *guanxi*, while acknowledging the inadequacy of any direct translation of the term, as examined in the previous section. Currently, being reshaped by social and ideological changes taking place in a new global China, *guanxi* is seen as an 'intangible complexity that pervades our daily existence' (Jiang 2011, p. 15), constructed through 'an intricate web' (Ibid., p. 17). As the analysis will show, these understandings were used as the basis for the exhibition, in addition to establishing a clear narrative for cultural translation as part of the curatorial strategy.

When *Guanxi* was in planning, Jiang was based in the UK, more than five thousand miles away from the artists in China. This prompted him to set up a regular and ongoing individual email exchange with each artist. More instant than letter writing, but more engaged and permanent than SMS text or instant messaging, Jiang described this exchange as,

[...] a reflective process to explore, initiate and evaluate the new form of *guanxi* between artist and curator [...] designed as a bridge between them to keep them informed [...] to be an effective approach to allow the curating to engage with art practice and in return, to encourage artists to offer a substantial contribution to the curatorial framework (Ibid., p. 19).

In a conversation at Ikon Gallery Café, Birmingham, on 4 September 2016, Jiang explained, originally, he wanted to publish only a catalogue of these conversations with no visuals, as an 'exhibition with no artworks', to complement and unpack the complexities of the exhibition's concept. However, he had to compromise with the expectations of the museum, culminating in a catalogue of two volumes - first, the more conventional and expected catalogue, which visualised the concept and physicality of the

artworks and exhibition; and second, a text-only catalogue of more than 12,000 words of conversations.⁵⁰ The latter discussed the social and cultural contexts of *guanxi* and the artworks as they were proposed and developed, including a critique of conversations as they unfolded, which lead to 'mutual agreement' (Ibid., p. 41). As such, artworks were all new commissions, where artistic and curatorial practices developed in parallel with the email conversations - considered raw materials from the artistic research process. This demonstrated the theoretical and practical research-led process of the artistic works, at the same time exposing it for critical and reflexive analysis. It can be suggested, these "conversations as writing" presented alongside the exhibition of new works, function collectively as an interactive platform of enquiry to translate *guanxi* and its relationship to the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art through multiple narratives of cultural translation. In turn, this openness, fluidity and transparency in the development of the exhibition's concept from the beginning of the curatorial strategy encouraged experimentation within the process of *guanxi* between artworks and exhibition, artistic and curatorial practices.

⁵⁰ Jiang Jiehong (ed.) 2011, *Guanxi: A Collection of Letters with Twelve Artists*, Shanghai Literature and Arts Publishing Group, Shanghai.

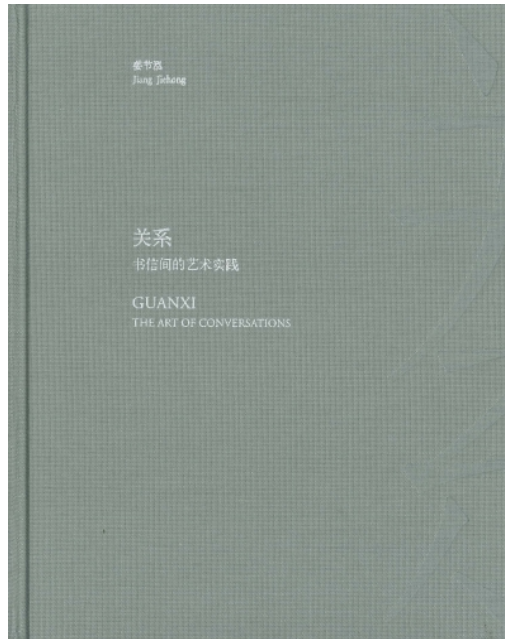


Figure 23 - *Guanxi: The Art of Conversations* (2011) exhibition catalogue. Image courtesy of Asia Art Archive (AAA), Hong Kong.



Figure 24 - *Guanxi: A Collection of Letters with Twelve Artists* (2011) book. Image courtesy of Asia Art Archive (AAA), Hong Kong.

Within the main exhibition catalogue, selected excerpts from the email conversations are cited alongside images of works. Although these contextually reinforce the visual and aesthetic interpretations of *guanxi* through a highly reflexive process of engagement, each artist is discussed in

isolation, specific to their history, set of experiences and relationships. Limited to binary discussions between the artist and curator, the artworks are not critically analysed from a collective point of view. Hence, further meta-analysis needs to take place; instead, it is left to the visual and aesthetic components of the exhibition and the curation of artwork to provide this additional translation. As artist Yang Zhenzhong stated in his exchange, 'Words can sometimes act as a double-edged sword - they can offer a useful interpretation but by doing so also limit understanding' (Yang cited in Hong 2011, p. 69). Therefore, further critical meta-analysis of the email conversations was needed in order for the curatorial strategy to build a multi-dimensional view of *guanxi* from the both the perspective of the curator and artist. In response to this, some key perspectives from the catalogue excerpts will now be analysed.

I believe such *guanxi* brings sensation. A certain 'relationship' or 'connection' isn't generated or kept in consciousness; it cannot be acknowledged, and is very difficult – sometimes, impossible – to be changed by consciousness (Ibid., p. 189).

Here, *guanxi* is seen as primarily experiential, where it cannot always be identified as a conscious process due to its inherent emotional condition. This links to artist Qiu Zhijie's understanding of *guanxi* as 'subtle, with the ambiguous quality of being neither "positive" or "negative", "love" or "hate", "black" or "white", "friend" or "enemy". It may be public but can still contain its quality of privacy' (Qiu cited in Hong 2011, p. 119). His vague definition emphasises the term's ambiguity, and also links back to the notion of 'concentric circles of Chineseness' as Qiu states, 'those farthest away from you as having "zero *guanxi*" and can even become negative relationships' (Ibid., p. 117). This highlights that negativity is not conducive to the process of *guanxi*. Jiang reiterates this when he states, in response to artist Shao Yinong,

In China, without *guanxi*, one can only get half the result with twice the effort, or even with no achievement at all [but with] *guanxi*, one is able to gain advantage from different sides to work miracles' (Jiang 2011, p. 159).

Few of the artists' definitions connected *guanxi* to peripheral or international contexts beyond China. Those who examined more global understandings placed *guanxi* within Western literature or technological developments. Artist Xiang Jing sees *guanxi* as *Ways of Seeing*, citing text from John Berger's popular book of the same name: 'we never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves [...] to look is an act of choice' (Xiang cited in Hong 2011, p. 39). This relates to Jiang's correspondence with artist Yan Xinguang, who also understands looking as 'a way to build up *guanxi* [...] "looking" is not just a function of the human body, but a reflection on the relationship between the human body and nature so we can confirm our existence' (Jiang cited in Hong 2011, p. 135).

Furthermore, artists Zhuang Hui and Da'er identify two different realities they see as inherent to *guanxi*. Between an individual and society 'the first space of reality' has 'transformed into one between personal and public in the second space of reality'. In this process of transformation, 'although individual experience has been detached from the collective memory, it is still trapped in a different, and even more complicated *guanxi*' (Zhuang & Da'er cited in Hong 2011, p. 171). Such an experience is familiar to many of the artists and curators included as part of this research. When in conversation with the artists, Jiang discussed this 'second space of reality' as,

[...] the new, rapidly developing digital dimension of everyday life' that provides us with a 'different daily experience, with a new *guanxi* [...] Digital technology has created an 'edgeless reality', within which we are happily bound up to adore the virtual 'freedom' that it offers (Jiang cited in Hong 2011, p. 173).

Here, the artists only highlight the visual and spatial dimensions of *guanxi*, which in turn need further contextualising within a globalised artistic practice.

Another translational narrative as part of the curatorial strategy was identified when attending the exhibition's opening at Today Art Museum. On entering the gallery space, the visitor was confronted by twelve large-scale

text panels in Mandarin, Chinese. Titled A-L, each letter represented one of the twelve Chinese artists on show.

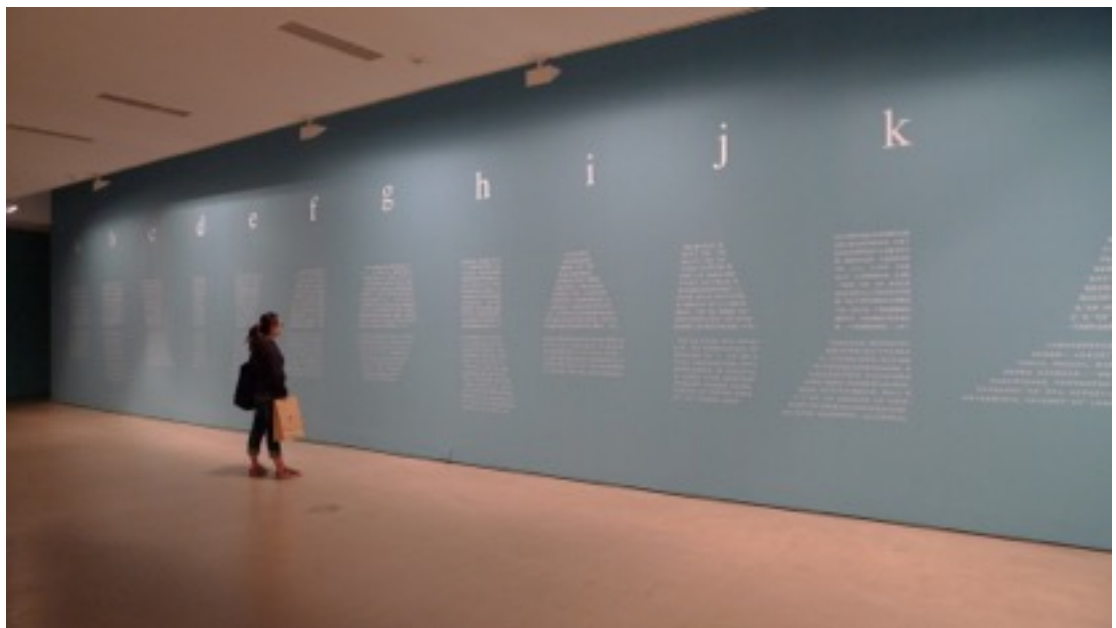
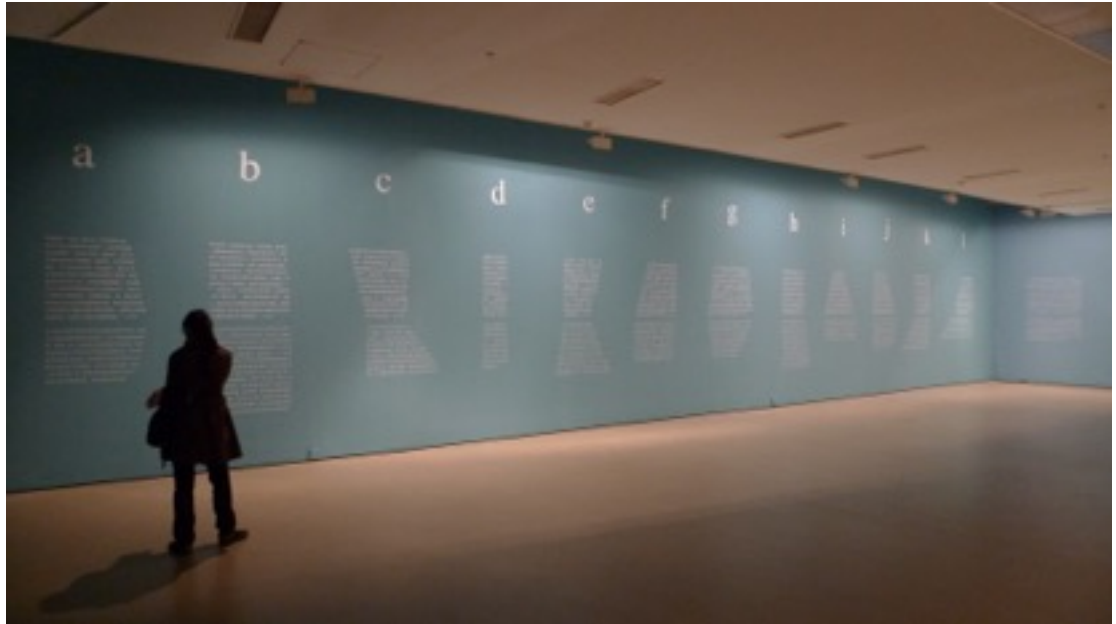


Figure 25 - *The A to Z of...*, introductory exhibition text installation view of *Guanxi: The Art of Conversations* (2011) at Today Art Museum, Beijing, China (10-23 October 2011). Image © Rachel Marsden, 14 October 2011.

Again, this was an attempt by Jiang to break free from another curatorial convention of the overarching introductory text panel by presenting short paragraphs and excerpts from the email conversations between the artists

and Jiang. When the exhibition moved from Guangdong Museum of Art to Today Art Museum, literal text translation of the panels was encouraged; however Jiang explained when interviewed in 2016 that this was ‘almost impossible’ as ‘the content and logic was difficult to translate’ (pers. comm., 4 September). Therefore, the majority of translational insight in the physical exhibition was provided through an internal logic privy only to Chinese audiences. Jiang stated that, as the discussions between artists and curator, and between the exhibitions, were ‘rooted closely within Chinese culture’, not the West, there was no reason to translate the exhibition ‘in its entirety for a different cultural perception’ (Ibid.).

In this examination of *Guanxi*, the notion is rooted in Chinese culture, presented from a Sinocentric perspective underpinning its concept, which becomes problematic in the process of translation by reinforcing a sense of self and other as part of a multicultural understanding of China. However, by translating multiple narratives of *guanxi* between the curator, artists and institution, in addition to commissioning new works by Chinese artists, the exhibition highlighted a new dimension of artistic and curatorial practices in and beyond China. Here, identified as a dual role of the transcultural curator - what it means to curate *guanxi* by both identifying the globalised networks of Chinese artists and relationships within contemporary Chinese artistic and curatorial practices, and by being self-reflexive of the influence of one’s personal *guanxi*. It develops beyond a methodological framework from which a curatorial strategy can be created, and can now be applied in local and global contexts. This has been a key consideration when examining the three case studies in the next chapter.⁵¹

⁵¹ This is acknowledged throughout the development of this research as a fundamental part of the research methodology, specifically when collating primary research materials during fieldwork research trips in China (2009-12). The mapping and analysing of how *guanxi* has developed throughout, and influenced, the past seven years of the research would be another research project in itself.

3.3 – A ‘Glocal’ China

A picture emerges in which globalisation and localisation happen simultaneously and intertwine, becoming the cause of one and the result of one another. In such a picture, globalisation might mean the movement of a form, or a practice from one locality to another. [or a translation of an embodied practice into a set of abstract concepts]; and localisation might mean a ‘construction of a distinct identity’ according to global prescription or an opposition to the forces of globalisation via a defense of a local tradition (Czarniawska 2002, p. 14).

‘Glocal’ is a portmanteau word of the terms global and local, and ‘glocalisation’ that of global and localisation. Referring to the simultaneous local impact of the forces of globalisation and the global significance of what happens at a local level, it is not just a coming together of these forces. Rather, it forces movement in both directions as if in transfer or reciprocal exchange. The origin of the term has been adapted from the 18th-century, Eurocentric word of ‘cosmopolitanism’ meaning ‘cosmos’, world, and ‘polis’, city (de Duve 2007, p. 683).⁵² More recently, glocal was applied to visual aesthetics inherent to mass culture and communication. The phrase ‘Think global, act local’, now used by global brands Sony and Coca-Cola (Stephen 2004), was first coined by Scottish sociologist and town planner Patrick Geddes and by conservationist and founder of Friends of the Earth, David Brower, in the charity’s 1969 advertising tagline ‘Think Globally, Act Locally’ (‘David Brower’ 2000). As such, identified as ‘the interconnectivity in the world at the end of the 20th century [...] can potentially provide any locality with a prismatic access to global cultural thoughts’ (Gee 2010, p. 53).

⁵² Theoretically, cosmopolitanism is understood through the Westerncentric notion of Immanuel Kant’s political Ninth Thesis, ‘Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View’ (1784), translated by Lewis White Beck, in Immanuel Kant 1963, *On History*, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis and New York. In this research, it is necessary to acknowledge but not examine the relationship of cosmopolitanism to glocalisation, instead the relationship between transcultural and glocal.

In addition to these Westerncentric origins of cosmopolitanism, glocalisation also developed from the linguistic translation of the Japanese word 'dochakuka', derived from 'dochaku', meaning 'living on one's own land' or 'indigenous', understood as 'the agricultural principle of adapting one's farming techniques to local conditions' (Robertson 1995, p. 28). Introduced by Japanese economists as a marketing strategy and buzzword in the 1980s, it was only popularised in Western contexts in the mid-1990s. One definition comes from British sociologist Roland Robertson, who translated 'dochakuka' as meaning 'global localisation' to conceptualise,

[...] a global view and outlook of the market but adjusted to local considerations [...] Formed by telescoping global and local to make a blend (Robertson 1995, p. 28).

Robertson saw these interlinking – blended – dualities between the word's origins in Eurocentric and East Asian, commercial and non-commercial, international and domestic contexts, as intrinsic to cultural development. These dualities I identify not in opposition with each other but the opportunity for comparative cultural analysis on an integrated personal, individual level and global, collective level. As such, glocal implies,

[...] the integration of the local into the global (the optimist's view) or hegemonic appropriation of the local by the global (the pessimist's view) [...] the bridging of a hiatus from the particular to the general, a conceptual jump across a discontinuity formulated in geo-political terms: the city, the world (de Duve 2007, pp. 682-683).

However, the duality and interlinking qualities of glocal highlight the lack of acknowledgement of the spatial dimensions in between the global and local. The glocal bypasses 'the persistent role of regional and national scales, as well as international scales [...] thus neglecting the inter-scales-relations' (Gee 2010, p. 49). The transcultural curator must not ignore these internal relationships; otherwise glocal can be compared to cross-cultural engagement as examined in the previous chapter. At this point, it is important to note that, even though the term is deeply rooted within East Asian culture, it has only within the last five years been named explicitly

within Chinese contexts, applied to studies of business relationships and media and communications, and more recently examined in contexts of Chinese cultural identity including language and cinema. More so, there are few examinations of glocalisation within contemporary artistic and curatorial practices; therefore it is vital to understand how it is applied in relation to these contexts, to see what further perspectives it can provide to the research.

In Chinese business, glocalisation was coined to explain the 'global-local nexus': specifically, the connectivity between 'the globalisation of a product or service efficiently adapted for a local market' (Jianming & Lancaster 2013, p. 27). In studies of media and communications, it is specifically the narratives and languages used in Chinese international news that were examined to reveal which aspects of Chinese news reporting have become globalised and which have remained local. China is now adopting Asian and non-Western methods of journalism by giving more attention to local and regional developments,

[...] capturing the global media production of the local and the local media production of the global [...] Media as cultural or commercial products move globally, but are constantly domesticated in ways that create links of meaning between the media and the history, culture, politics, society, etc. of local viewers (Wu & Ng 2011, p. 77).

This assimilates to studies of Chinese cultural identity, specifically the role of languages in the process of cultural globalisation and glocalisation. One of the first stages of cultural glocalisation is learning a foreign language, which is seen as 'the adaptation of incoming dominant foreign cultural identities to suit local needs' (Ho & Lin 2011, p. 55).

As language is a cultural identity, and a carrier of other cultural identities, learning a foreign language is not only studying its language systems, but also adopting its cultural identities [...] In this learning process, it is common for learners to compare

cultural identities of the foreign language with their local languages (Ibid., p.60).

These glocal languages were observed first-hand during fieldwork research trips, when working and living in China: for example, 'Chinglish', when English language is influenced by the Chinese language to create ungrammatical and poetic sentences in Chinese contexts.



Figure 26 - Examples of 'Chinglish': mistranslations of Mandarin Chinese on garden signage in the Beijing Olympic Park, China, on 5 October 2010. Images © Rachel Marsden.

These glocalisations of Chinese cultural identities may also evolve beyond the local-to-global understanding of glocal, as with Chinglish, to create a new local-glocal logic – one in which pre-existing local Chinese cultural identities are influenced by other incoming glocal Chinese cultural identities. As such, today glocal signifies that,

[...] labels can no longer be safely positioned along the former scale, stretching, by successive extensions, from the most local to

the most universal. Instead of subtracting one another, conflicting identities keep being added. And yet they remain in conflict and thus have to be sorted out, since no one can belong to all of them at once (Latour 2004).

Another definition of glocal comes from Chinese cinema studies. Here, it is compared to 'translocality', which 'prefers place-based imagination and reveals dynamic processes of the local/global – processes that involve not just the traffic of capital and people but that of ideas, images, styles and technologies across places in polylocality' (Zhang Yingjin 2010a, p.136).⁵³ Therefore, in today's rapidly evolving technological and digital environments, which artists Zhuang Hui and Da'er acknowledged in the previous section of this chapter, there is an increased accessibility to information, and in turn, a want and need from the public to engage with the world through digital platforms. People are now creating,

[...] new 'localisms' even faster than globalization is supposed to destroy them. Traditions are invented daily, entire cultures are coming into existence, languages are being made up [...] It's as if the metaphor of 'roots' had been turned upside down: the more 'uprooted' by the forces of modernization, the farther down identities are attaching themselves. Modernization, with its clear frontlines, has become as confusing as a game of Go at mid-play (Latour 2004).

Now that all grand narratives, whether classical or avant-garde, have lost their currency, the art community seems to have found a new legitimisation in glocal ethics, based on the free and fair trade

⁵³ Polylocality 'recognises the existence of multiple, diverse localities and therefore contains the possibility of a translocality that could connect these localities, it differs from translocality in that it does not guarantee the realization of this transnational potential. In other words, polylocality acknowledges that identification and connection between localities can be denied or prohibited, that not all polylocality is brought into translocality in the same way; and that inequality or unevenness exists in polylocality because of different access to translocality' (Yingjin 2010, pp. 9-10). Given more time, a comparison between transcultural and polylocality could be examined and applied to curatorial strategies of contemporary Chinese art.

of cultural goods under the umbrella of art (de Duve 2007, p. 683).

These initial understandings of the processes of glocal and glocalisation interact with Pratt's notion of 'contact zones' inherent to transculturation, as examined in Chapter 2, section 2.1, and Spivak's perspective of being intimate with the language of the original as examined in Chapter 2, section 2.2. Thus, highlighting clear similarities between glocal and transcultural. However, there are few examples of curatorial strategies that implement a glocal context more specifically in relation to the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art, which further emphasises the unique nature of this research.

3.4 – Curating 'Glocal'

Contemporary visual art [...] houses experiments of all sorts ranging from the performing arts to documentary cinema to music and sound. It allows political statements of all stripes, anti-social behaviours, eccentric sexual practices and outrageous opinions to find forms of expression that would not be tolerated elsewhere. It thrives on cultural differences and confrontations and on individual and group idiosyncrasies to the point where dissent, not consensus, is the norm (de Duve 2007, p. 682).

Biennials, triennials and large-scale group exhibitions from peripheral or subaltern positions, such as *Farewell to Post-colonialism* (2008), *Guanxi: The Art of Conversations* (2011) and *The Real Thing* (2007) (see next chapter), allow new cultural identities to be tested on the global art stage. Their proliferation has 'taken attention away from the dominant cultural centres of power towards periphery and subaltern nations to create a more 'democratic distribution of cultural power' (de Duve 2007, p. 681). Conversely, as they all take place in cultural centres of power in the art world, they look to reconcile this position and isolated identity by looking to the local. As such, glocalisation becomes 'a manner of resistance to the hegemonic world culture, which is controlled by and exported from the hegemonic centres' (de Duve 2007, p. 687).

In September 2010, during fieldwork in China, I assisted with the installation of *Negotiations* (2010), the second articulation of the 'Today's Documents' exhibition series, on display at the Today Art Museum and other periphery venues in Beijing, China. Explicitly examining the defining power of glocal, it exhibited over seventy artists; more than forty artists from Mainland China and others from Palestine, Cuba, India, Thailand, Mexico and Algeria. The exhibition served as an opportunity to examine how relationships develop between contemporary Chinese art in the local, with its international counterparts in the global. Thus, it was an opportunity to translate the 'glocal'. As curator Huang Du stated during an interview at Eudora Station, Beijing, China, on 10 October 2010,

We can't analyze China only through our own Chinese experience [...] we have to connect with the outside world [...] we should have universal ideas (Huang 2010, pers. comm., 10 October).



Figure 27 - View of Building No. 2, *Negotiations* (18 September - 24 October 2010) at Today Art Museum (Beijing, China) in association with the Ikon Gallery (Birmingham, UK). Image © Rachel Marsden.

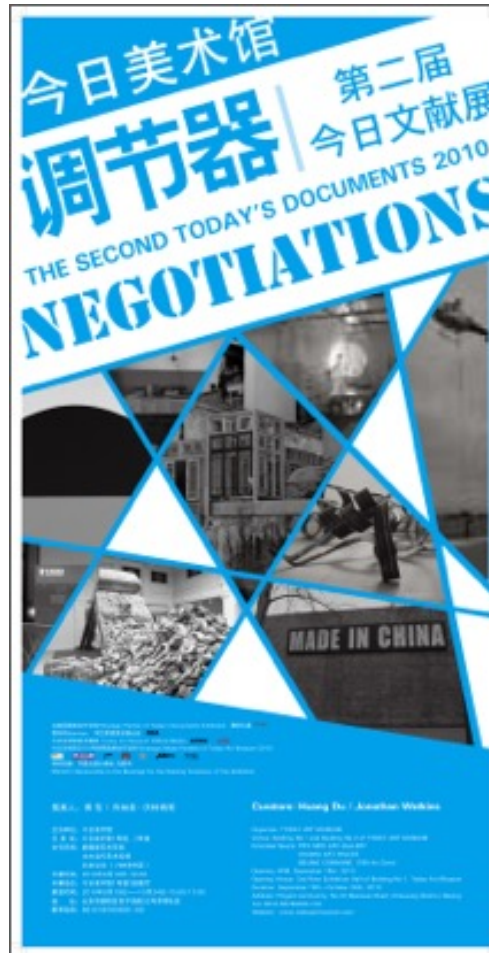


Figure 28 - Poster for *Negotiations* (18 September - 24 October 2010) at Today Art Museum (Beijing, China) in association with the Ikon Gallery (Birmingham, UK). Image © Today Art Museum.

Negotiations articulated a clear curatorial concept: to reflect and analyse the latest propositions and trends of contemporary art and cultural issues by referencing new artistic languages, concepts, styles and interventions through artistic dialogue and discussion. This method of constructing reflection through a glocal lens was conceived through a unique *guanxi*: a collaborative curatorial partnership between Jonathan Watkins, director of the British art gallery Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, and Huang Du, the Chinese, Beijing-based independent curator. Watkins and Huang have connected over curatorial platforms since 1997, including at the 1998 Sydney Biennial and the 2006 Shanghai Biennale, where their ongoing professional relationship is seen as a vital part of fluid translation. However, bringing thinkers with different cultural identities closer to China, to exchange in different situations, settings and environments, invites unknown and

possible mistranslations. In his interview, Huang reflects positively on this potential risk: 'in China we have the phrase "there is a me inside you" [...] you will find yourself inside me [...] you are part of me. It's "inside out"' (Ibid.). And in this case, this provides the ability to act transculturally.

When curating *Negotiations*, Huang applied the term 'glocalism' as an overarching concept. Directly influenced by the history of the term, as previously examined, the exhibition and artworks aimed to demonstrate that 'no platform can resist the impact of globalisation',

[...] every region is absorbing and assimilating other cultures, there are efforts to preserve the uniqueness of one's own culture thereby creating a complementary relationship between the global and regional. This is manifested through the merging of economics, politics and culture, thus producing a new cultural spectacle - 'glocalism' (Huang & Watkins 2010, p. 16) .

This 'merging' makes reference to Hou's (1994) previously cited theory of 'New Internationalism' and cultural pluralisation, which are both key considerations as part of transcultural curatorial strategies.

In the interview with Huang, he isolated one limitation of the glocal - the increasing pace of communication, due to the growing intensity and frequency of both changing space and time, which is responsible for creating misunderstandings and mistranslations (Huang 2010, pers. comm., 10 October). Specific curatorial strategies were implemented to avoid, and if not, cultivate the mistranslations in order to make the exhibition, what Huang called, 'reasonable' (Ibid.). This included: having freedom from the institution, and the use of peripheral venues to explore and test concepts; the importance of vision, such as installing artworks in alternative, non-traditional and unexpected spaces such as stairwells, building exteriors and entrance hallways; first-hand engagement with artists as to how to realise their projects; and regular discussion and exchange between Huang and Watkins, back and forth between China and the UK. The curators hoped the exhibition would have,

[...] a rhythm like music, for things to have reason, and the visitors to always have a surprise in order to match people's psychological needs [...] taking visitors on an adventure (Ibid.).

Here, the curators' application of the term glocal focused attention on the relationship between the individual and the world, whether they are a curator, artist or visitor to the exhibition. As previously stated, an individual should not be evaluated by their identity of 'the self', in this research in the Chinese context, but by their cultural identity in a wider glocal context.

It is clear the use of transcultural and glocal in the concept of the curatorial strategy is necessary to the translation of *Negotiations* (2010), directly facilitating the deconstruction and interpretation of the artistic practices and artworks on display in relation to the changing local to global domain. This is first exemplified by the ongoing process of *guanxi* between curators Watkins and Huang, then replicated through first-hand engagements with artists and between cultures. The use of the translocal and glocal is further echoed in the curatorial concept and strategy, and when uniting both Chinese and international contemporary artists for comparative visual evaluation and thus, translation by the public. By focusing on the glocal, the curatorial strategy creates a unique curatorial language that can be compared to the earlier examination of *guanxi*, which helps to minimise problems of translation by acknowledging multi-dimensional cultural identities.

Another example of glocal practice comes from a planned periphery project to *The 8th Shanghai Biennale: Rehearsal*, Shanghai, China (24 October 2010 - 23 January 2011) proposed in conjunction with the *Liverpool Biennial 2010: Touched*, Liverpool, UK (18 September - 28 November 2010). Entitled *International Art in the Cities and X-positions* by e-space lab, it encouraged global "local-to-local" cultural exchange.⁵⁴ e-space lab are a collaborative

⁵⁴ This project was unable to be put into practice due to financial constraints; however I felt it necessary to examine in this chapter as it presents the possibility of the glocal through the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art.

group of artists, curators and scholars who use commonplace digital technology, including live video streaming, to connect cities and urban contexts worldwide as a curatorial framework and site for transcultural exchange. The exchanges build diverse networks of association, which are constituted by that association and as such, can be seen as a process of *guanxi*. Continuing on from their previous projects of bringing new dialogues into galleries and public spaces, Courtenay's new project was intended to work as a "Biennales dialogue" - an online conversational exchange and collaboration between artists, curators, designers and architects examining each of the themes relating to *Rehearsal* and *Touched*.



Figure 29 - 'MadeUpTheTranslocalmotion' (5 October 2008) by e-space lab. Composite images show links between am space, Shanghai, China (middle image) and the Bluecoat Hub, Liverpool, UK (bottom image). Video stills © Philip Courtenay of e-space lab.

Rehearsal defined itself as a reflective space for performance, production and discursive practice.⁵⁵ As a term, 'rehearsal' was understood 'not only a

⁵⁵ Planned as a collateral event to *Rehearsal* (2010), *West Heavens* organised the group exhibition and series of events *Place*Time*Play: India-China*

strategy or a special form of exhibition, it is travelling art, open to all the audience, focusing on the full process of the exhibition and on creativity itself' (Fan et al. 2010, p. 35). The claim of the curators was to differentiate, organise and then mobilise through the examination of the venue, narration and social participation to become 'a self-performative act by the art world, a wake-up call to itself and an attempt at self-liberation' (Ibid.). This can be identified as an attempt at both glocal and transcultural practice.



Figure 30 - Poster for *The 8th Shanghai Biennale: Rehearsal*, Shanghai, China (24 October 2010 - 23 January 2011). Image © Shanghai Art Museum.

The proposed *International Art in the Cities and X-positions* was to take a critical position on commonality between Shanghai and Liverpool, which co-founder of e-space lab, Philip Courtenay, described in a Skype interview on 13 November 2010 as 'the local to local, rather than the local to global'. Courtenay's comments directly relate to Gee's understanding of the glocal

Contemporary Art Exhibition (30 October - 20 December 2010) at 128 West Nanjing Road and 79/107 South Suzhou Road, Shanghai, China. Although a peripheral project, it aimed to support the Biennale's curatorial concepts. As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3.

(2010, p. 49), which must acknowledge the 'inter-scales-relations' in section 3.3 of this chapter (Courtenay 2010, pers. comm., 13 November).

The project's aim was to use artists' studios as nodal points in both cities, building immediate relationships and cultural exchanges by directly bringing the conceptualising and making phase of contemporary art into new public spaces. This would be achieved by hosting live, 24-7 webcasts between contemporary Chinese and UK artists' studios - a chance to visit them virtually. The curators wanted to connect what was happening in the studios, the artists' works and the location outside in the urban fabric, the private and public spaces. The project would highlight the physical and material nature of the spaces and how they are managed and used, showing movement and physical interactions, while being able to listen to what was being said from either side. The web cameras and links to the studio spaces were to remain live even when the studio spaces were empty. This live streaming was to be shared in accessible spaces for "local to local" public engagement and was not to be seen as an overall event but as a conversation that you could respond to at any time. Furthermore, scheduled events through a Skype connection were to be staged as another opportunity to more specifically and directly engage and converse. In addition to this video streaming, e-space lab uses disparate blogs - a blog for each different project, with its own identity - always orientated around the specific users related to the project rather than the public as a whole. In this case *International Art in the Cities and X-positions* would have had its own blog, acting as another platform for "local to local" exchange specific to *Rehearsal* and *Touched* audiences.⁵⁶

In Courtenay's Skype interview, he described how the "local to local" art discourse was developing,

⁵⁶ To document the development of my research, more specifically fieldwork research in China (2009-12), I established the blog *Rachel Marsden's Words* (<http://rachelmarsdenwords.wordpress.com>).

[...] spontaneously through new media, where if you have connections that are not just about art but about location and space, then you begin to see how everyday life connects to art and how the various assumptions about that environment fall away, then you become part of more of an exploring mode rather than a receiving mode. When this doesn't happen, it becomes one of the big misunderstandings (Courtenay 2010, pers. comm., 13 November).

In this unquestionable 'second space of reality', e-space lab aimed to create a space for the practice of *guanxi* and the transcultural. Through talking with Courtenay, it became obvious that exchange and engagement between strangers in new and unfamiliar local-to-local, thus glocal, territories makes certain concepts become more tenuous, bringing to the forefront the capacity for misunderstanding and mistranslation. Yet, at the same time, it is important to question and cultivate this misunderstanding and mistranslation. As Courtenay states,

When you become aware of the problem, or of misunderstanding, you suddenly wake up and begin to think about what assumptions you are making about the language, about the art, about the space and situation, then new ideas happen (Ibid.).

3.5 – Beyond Glocalisation?

This chapter has examined the development of social and cultural relationships in China since the late 20th century, specifically contextualised within exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art. As a starting point, the model of concentric circles was used, developed from a one-dimensional concept of identity between the self and the other, building on examinations of translation by Spivak and Cuccioletta in the previous chapter. It presents a hierarchical construction of social relationships, where the self is central within Westerncentric or Sinocentric bases of power and cultural capital. This model is further refined into the model of concentric circles of Chineseness representing 'Chineseness across the world' and 'circles of "cultural China"' by acknowledging the conscious and subconscious emotion and 'shared feeling' inherent to any relationship. Although both models are

ever-expanding, they declare two fixed logics through the layered 'solidarity' of social relationships and the 'fuzzy logic' of cultural relationships.

However, there comes a point when the concentric circles break away from these logics under the pressures of a new globalised *guanxi*. This marks a departure from Yang Liu's visual representation of networking in an East-West dichotomy: multicultural interaction gives way to a transcultural possibility, which accommodates new, changing and evolving relationships. Enabling such relationships is a key role for the transcultural curator, who must also attempt to delineate as much as decentralise the models of concentric circles. In turn, they must acknowledge how *guanxi* is constructed through an intricate and elastic web that responds to new emotional, reciprocal and dialogic exchanges inherent to any social encounter.

No longer limited to theoretical understandings of relationships in China, *guanxi* has been applied more globally to relationships inherent to people's everyday lives as a way of seeing, living and ultimately, being – as such, *guanxi* in practice. It has evolved from commonalities in the local towards new engagements in the local-global, which is known as glocal. It is important to identify the individual and collective social identities as part of *guanxi*; however, it must not become a reductive process returning to an examination of the self and other, as first presented through the internal relationships of concentric circles. Furthermore, the fast pace of digital change in the 'openness' of 'a glocalised world' (Gee 2010, p. 53), including online through social media, has introduced new ways of developing social and cultural *guanxi*. This shatters the fixed logics of concentric circles, as networks and relationships are created and experienced across, between and within multiple locations and platforms at the same time, both in physical and virtual spaces, to which Courtenay alluded in his Skype interview. It is important to reflect upon how these relationships and understandings of *guanxi* in theory and practice, and in the glocal terms, influence the role of the transcultural curator, as this, in turn, influences translation.

Glocalism initially provided 'insight into the artistic production and diffusion within the art world at the end of the 20th century' as a form of resistance to the hegemonic world culture and the hegemonic centres (Ibid., p. 45). Although developed from a duality of local and global and can be compared to concentric-circular identity that 'can both help localize and internationalize China' (Guo & Chen 2009, p.16), it comprises 'micro, meso and macro cultural units' (Gee 2010, p. 53) and is now applied to artistic and curatorial practices of the post-millennium.

Artistic strategies within glocalisation processes convey [...] the interaction between actors of the art world (artists, curators, museum directors, gallerists etc.) (Ibid.).

As such, these glocal practices come to reflect the social and cultural *guanxi* in the art world while functioning as a site of cultural enquiry and experimentation - in the case of this research, as part of the curatorial strategies used to translate exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art.

In order to study and explore the dimensions of these platforms, art historians, critics, theorists and curators should work in the same way as artists. Only in this way, the meaning of contemporary [Chinese] art can be constructed in both local sense and global vision, or the 'Glocal' (Hsu 2004, p. 11).

In this chapter, the exhibitions aimed to provide critical insights into the complex definitions and applications of *guanxi* and glocal as artistic and curatorial languages, and how these languages carry their own unique cultural identity as part of translation. They were seen to exemplify a new assertion of Chinese cultural identity through new developments in social and cultural *guanxi* between China and the West, in turn encouraging new glocal artistic and curatorial practices. As these practices are no longer seen as unique to one culture, due to its new globalised application, it raises questions as to whether contemporary Chinese art, and its curation, has fallen victim to another generalised and popularised term where it is used to brand, rather than test and challenge, translation. Or has the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art already moved on from glocal practices to

something else? A suggestion is to redefine our cultural roles instead of the terms we apply, as will be examined in Chapter 5.

Guanxi applied a curatorial strategy that emphasised the becoming of a more culturally networked and relationship-centred world, referencing *Farewell to Post-colonialism* (2008) - which was examined in the previous chapter. Together, these exhibitions show how curatorial concepts and strategies are context-specific: it is vital to be critically reflective of the self through examinations of *Ways of Seeing* and ways of being; and the exhibitions also highlighted the importance of China creating local (mainland China), peripheral (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore) and international identities for themselves. Furthermore, unique to two of the exhibitions were more internal examinations of glocal exchange that acknowledged the role of the 'inter-scales-relations' of the regional, national and international – which are usually ignored as part of glocalism. *Negotiations* investigated the relationship between global and regional, and *International Art in the Cities and X-positions* investigated the relationship between global local-to-local cultural exchange. This meta-analysis of the glocal questioned each artist's social and cultural function as part of the curatorial strategy, where to think globally was easy, but to act locally and regionally was much harder.

A line of enquiry understated throughout the exhibition examinations in this chapter is the use of theoretical and practical research-led processes as part of the curatorial strategies.⁵⁷ However, as stated in the previous chapter, it may still be a case of too much "research curating" and not enough "curating research". Here, the exhibitions attempt to function as platforms of open enquiry to enable and encourage multiple - rather than seemingly finite and complete - translations through the exhibition contemporary Chinese art. This includes a process of meta-analysis as part of the curatorial strategy, creating the space for social and cultural *guanxi* to develop in glocal contexts

⁵⁷ This will be examined in the live case study, framed as 'evaluation through practice' - a practice-led component to the research methodology - in Chapter 5.

- which again can be cultivated into artistic and curatorial practices in themselves. In this chapter, the space of meta-analysis becomes the space for translation. It is the role of the transcultural curator to activate these spaces by being self-reflexive of the dualities of the self and the other, fixed logics of concentric circles and inherent cultural identities, which requires *guanxi* as a way of being and self-reflexive glocal insight. As Huang states, the ability to act transculturally is the ability to be 'inside out' (2010, pers. comm., 10 October).

Chapter 4

Curating 'Chineseness'

From the late 1980s to the turn of the millennium, the West feared the over-immersion and loss of its culture and heritage, looking beyond its borders for a new fragile exoticism, a foreign world yet unrepresented through 'difference' (Coombes 1992, p. 491). In turn, the West identified a need to conserve these foreign cultures, referred to as 'the "disappearing world" phenomenon' (Ibid.). This interaction between an investigation into the exotic and ethnographic and a preservation of its foreignness began to be reflected in exhibitions, which regularly framed avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art through the curatorial lens of spectacle - as 'Chineseness' (Chapter 1, section 1.5). These exhibitions were used as testing grounds for new curatorial strategies to question China's relationship to its new global self-image.

In Chapter 1, Chineseness was defined within Westerncentrism as a multidimensional term, unique to an individual's or a collective's historical, sociopolitical and personal cultural contexts in national, diasporic, residual or global terms. However, it is most commonly used and understood as an ambiguous, conflicted and discriminatory space of representation – and thus, translation. Through this continuing redefinition, Chineseness has become another act of pluralisation, potentially encouraging a new form of cultural essentialism and risking the further homogenisation of China and contemporary Chinese art, as was discussed regarding the terms multicultural and hybridity in Chapter 2. Conversely, Chapter 3 defined Chineseness within Sinocentrism as 'Chineseness across the world' within 'circles of "cultural China"' (Duara 2010b, p. 287). No longer just applied to those of Chinese descent, it is now a form of cultural capital appropriated by those who assimilate into China and Chinese culture. Through a diasporic dislocation and traversal, they bring a new consciousness of identity in both Chinese and non-Chinese contexts, and as part of translation.

Here, the curator acts as a reflexive cultural agent of Chineseness and the transcultural curator as a self-reflexive analytical register to identify new conscious levels of translation. Together, they are faced with a twofold problem. First, the curator must act objectively towards a culture's "difference" and "otherness" by acknowledging its unique cultural, socio-political and economic circumstances, as examined in Chapter 2's discussions of the transcultural, cultural hybridity and a post-colonial China. However, in doing this, the curator inherently creates 'a catch-all category where artworks are grouped together for cultural plurality' (Maharaj 1994, p. 29), producing homogenised curatorial consequences that impede translation. This chapter examines the ways in which curators self-consciously own and present these concepts of ethnographic foreignness and Chineseness as part of curatorial strategies used to translate contemporary Chinese art.

Second, transcultural curators must look beyond an inherent curatorial bias produced by a combination of their sociohistorical background, pre-existing knowledge of the field, professional glocal networks and personal *guanxi*. These elements of curatorial bias - which were discussed in the previous chapter - are seen to directly influence the selection of artists, artworks, institution and place, and are in turn responsible for opening up the realm of the untranslatable. Fundamental to this, is the acknowledgment of glocal context, where curators must develop new dialogic relationships by translating on a local level, before translating on a global level.

This chapter presents three historically significant case studies to examine how this twofold problem of the transcultural curator can be resolved or counterbalanced during the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art.⁵⁸ Concurrently, it questions whether the influence of a

⁵⁸ All case studies are critiqued through primary research material (interviews) with the exhibitions' associated artists and curators, set alongside secondary research material (exhibition texts, catalogue essays and exhibition reviews).

Westerncentric Chineseness, including curatorial bias, is unavoidable as part of curatorial strategies. The case studies are,

- *Passaggio a Oriente (Passage to the East)* as part of the 45th Venice Biennale, *Cardinal Points of the Arts* in Venice, Italy (14 June - 10 October 1993). Curated by Achille Bonito Oliva with Helena Kontova. This exhibition was one of the first representations of contemporary Chinese art on the global art stage framed within an ethnographic foreignness and Chineseness;
- *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* - Asia Society Galleries, New York (15 September 1998 - 3 January 1999) and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) (26 February - 1 June 1999). Curated by Gao Minglu. This exhibition was one of the first exhibitions to trace the transition from avant-garde to contemporary Chinese art on the global art stage;
- *The Real Thing: Contemporary Art from China* - Tate Liverpool (30 March - 10 June 2007). Curated by Karen Smith, Simon Groom and Xu Zhen. This exhibition was one of the first group exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art to take place in the UK, defining itself within globalised artistic and curatorial practices of a 'new internationalism'.

Spanning a period of nearly 15 years (1993-2007), the exhibitions' different locations, institutional frameworks and curatorial relationships provide a unique opportunity for broad and diverse critiques into the possible components of, and influences on, the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art towards the transcultural curator. As such, each case study identifies a crucial moment in the global mobility and reception of contemporary Chinese art and their critical position in the development of a

contemporary Chinese art history.⁵⁹ Conclusions from this chapter directly inform the curatorial strategy implemented as part of the live case study presented in Chapter 5 framed as 'evaluation through practice' - a practice-led component to the research methodology.

4.1 – *Passaggio a Oriente (Passage to the East)* (1993)

From 1989 to the early 1990s the first wave of group exhibitions of avant-garde Chinese art occurred on the global art stage, identified as responsible for raising the international profile of a select number of Chinese artists.⁶⁰ These exhibitions fundamentally contributed to avant-garde Chinese art's debut in two of Europe's longstanding, world-renowned and trend-defining international art festivals: Documenta and the Venice Biennale.⁶¹

Passaggio a Oriente (Passage to the East) (1993) was part of the 45th Venice Biennale: *The Cardinal Points of Art*, curated by Helena Kontova and Achille Bonito Oliva.⁶² At this stage, China was not represented through a national pavilion. Presenting 14 Chinese artists, the survey exhibition of painting depicted canonical imagery of the Cultural Revolution and ideological representations of the nation-state. In 2014, the curatorial strategy for this exhibition was called into question as new findings were published in an attempt to clarify its origins. It is now known to have

⁵⁹ More recent group exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art on the global art stage from the last 10 years were not examined, as their curatorial strategies were seen to apply curatorial bias derived from institutional, personal and commercial interest, and were also constrained by the fixed curatorial strategies of the survey or collection exhibition model. Examples are cited in the *Chinese Art Exhibition Chronology* in Appendix 4.

⁶⁰ A list of the first wave of exhibitions, including artists, is provided in the *Chinese Art Exhibition Chronology* in Appendix 4.

⁶¹ *Encountering the Others - Projektgruppe Stoffwechsel* (1992) as part of *Documenta IX* was not selected for examination as it placed seven Chinese artists within a group exhibition of contemporary art from Africa, Asia and Latin America, whereas *Passaggio a Oriente* as part of the 45th Venice Biennale was explicitly an exhibition of 14 Chinese artists.

⁶² This only occurred in 2005 as part of the 51st Venice Biennale, albeit through a temporary site.

developed from a complex series of curatorial connections rather than through a curatorial invitation, as had been previously believed (Andrews 2014).

The curatorial concept for *Passaggio a Oriente* was initially developed by Francesca Dal Lago, a former student of Chinese language and Chinese history of art, who had been working for the Italian Embassy in Beijing since 1989. Having a keen interest in avant-garde Chinese art and strong personal connections with Chinese artists, Dal Lago recognised a unique quality within their practice and wanted audiences outside of China, specifically in Europe, to see their artworks. She proposed an exhibition of their work to potential sponsors, and it was only through connections and good timing that this proposal developed into *Passaggio a Oriente*.

The pivotal curatorial connection for Dal Lago was an intermediary – a businessman who regularly visited China and knew the curator Oliva. Becoming aware of Dal Lago's exhibition in Italy, the intermediary introduced the proposal to Oliva, who had just been nominated as the curator of the 45th Venice Biennale. Interested in expanding the artistic scope of the exhibition, he sent the intermediary to meet with Dal Lago through her work at the embassy.⁶³ Therefore, timing and Oliva's authoritative dictatorial role as 'the commissioner', 'the person in charge' became the key factors in instigating the curatorial strategy' (Andrews 2014, p. 53). The same intermediary then raised funds for Oliva to visit China in September 1992 for a short research trip on which Dal Lago was responsible for providing curatorial consultation, including visits to artists' studios and introductions to artists; and on which she invited support from her friend, Chinese curator Li Xianting, who was well known for his specialist knowledge of Political Pop and Cynical Realism. Together, Dal Lago and Li developed their mutual knowledge and support of Chinese artists and contemporary Chinese art, which provided Oliva with access to Western and Eastern contexts and understanding of the field, and

⁶³ It must be noted that her role at the embassy was not related in any way to the Venice Biennale or the exhibition.

most importantly to their *guanxi* - their ever-expanding network of connections in the art world (Ibid., p. 50).

During the late 1980s and 1990s, curatorial consultation of this kind was commonly provided for curators who were proposing the presentation of group exhibitions of Chinese art on the global art stage. It is understood the consultants were employed to represent the Chinese position with the intention of providing cultural balance to the curatorial strategy. Often little time was spent reflecting on their individual and collective position in the field, their prior knowledge and professional networks; hence consultants were not recognised as holding key positions or providing key perspectives in the field of Chinese art. Therefore, exhibitions including *Passaggio a Oriente* often began from a point of mistranslation.

Dal Lago and Li generously advocated a comprehensive introduction to avant-garde Chinese art. However, Oliva ignored their attempt at providing an unbiased approach at the beginning of the curatorial strategy: as Dal Lago later stated, 'he did not care about what the art was about. He just needed a flashy element to fulfil his curatorial argument' (Ibid., p. 61). Oliva chose to exhibit *his* interests in canonical Chinese politicised imagery, which went against his curatorial strategy to create a Biennale with a multicultural approach that 'would transcend difference and illustrate "cultural nomadism"' (Hughes 1993), stemming from an extreme artistic pluralism as well as a great critical pluralism (Oliva 1993, p. 15).

Responding to the latter, Oliva invited Chinese art historian and curator Kong Chang'an, then writer for the Milan-based international art magazine *Flash Art*, to curate one of the 12 sections of the *Aperto '93: Emergency/Emergenza* (1993), the independent section of the 45th Venice Biennale that showcased emerging artists.⁶⁴ Although Kong was not

⁶⁴ Kong Chang'an published his arts writing under the pseudonym Chan Lauk'ung from the early 1990s in order to protect his identity and relationships with artists.

involved in the curatorial strategy for *Passaggio a Oriente*, it is important to mention his involvement, as it was the first time a Chinese critic was invited to curate an exhibition of international artists at the Venice Biennale. Here, it is relevant to discuss the possible reasons as to why this curator was connected to the exhibition, where it demonstrates a unique case of the influential role of *guanxi* on curatorial strategies. Furthermore, how networked curatorial practices began to develop in, and beyond, the Chinese context.

First, Kong studied in Italy through an opportunity provided by the Italian Embassy, where Dal Lago was working at the time. Second, Oliva may have received advice from Giancarlo Politi, who was then Chief Editor of *Flash Art* and was also the husband of Oliva's co-curator Helena Kontova. Finally, Oliva may have read (or been advised to read by Kontova or Politi) Kong's four-page article in *Flash Art*, published the year before, focusing on the last ten years of avant-garde Chinese art. It is clear Dal Lago's relationship with Kong had been established prior to the 45th Venice Biennale; the two further statements I have made are provocations not yet proven, yet I believe are vital to suggest as an example of the potential influence of multiple curatorial connections - accidental engagements, personal connections and friendships - that I would call "curatorial happenstance".



Figure 31 - Cover of *Flash Art*, Vol. 25, N° 162 (January/February 1992), where Kong Chang'an published the article 'Ten Years of the Chinese Avant-Garde: Waiting for the Curtain to Fall', pp. 110-114. Image courtesy of *Flash Art*.

Kong's curatorial invitation for *Aperto '93: Emergency/Emergenza* alongside Dal Lago and Li's curatorial consultation for *Passaggio a Oriente* clearly implies that Oliva wanted to achieve a 'multicultural approach' to the Biennale, more specifically to represent a new avant-garde Chinese art by engaging leading curators and critics in the field.⁶⁵ Kong even stated that all curators were asked to create 'a multicultural environment' (Andrews 2014, p. 56). However, the selective control Oliva imposed throughout the exhibitions' development prevented Kong's, Dal Lago's and Li's knowledge

⁶⁵ Kong's selection included two Chinese artists - Wu Shanzhuan and Wang Youshen - taking the total number of avant-garde Chinese artists on show across the *45th Venice Biennale: The Cardinal Points of Art* (1993) to 16.

of Chinese art and curatorial experience from being applied. Oliva and Kontova always had the final say on Kong's artist selections, then sought secondary reassurance from art market consultants (Ibid.). Oliva's hierarchical role as "the commissioner" was becoming very clear, making one ask why he invited guest curators to collaborate if he was to impose such strict curatorial control.

Other influencing factors on the curatorial strategy included financial budget cuts for the entire *45th Venice Biennale* due to bribery scandals in Italy, which reduced the available exhibition space initially outlined, and issues of artwork sizing. Only three of the 14 Chinese artists had ever left China, and the majority had no idea about what constituted an art biennale; therefore they created large-scale canvases ready to hang, rather than producing works in response to the constraints of the space. This factor had never been communicated to the artists, and was detrimental to translation as the artistic connection to physical space from which to build context - a key responsibility of the curator - was completely overlooked.

When reflecting on this, Dal Lago acknowledged that a complete lack of necessary communication was part of the curatorial strategy. Therefore, she did not consider the exhibition a professional activity as it came together through accidental engagements, personal connections and friendships, articulated by what Dal Lago called 'serendipity' (Ibid., p. 49) and what I have previously described as curatorial happenstance. This raises questions as to how much curatorial bias was present from the start of the curatorial strategy, immediately impeding translation, and whether the exhibition was even curated. Can this case study be considered a key contribution to the development of contemporary Chinese art history?

Other components often overlooked as part of the curatorial strategy are the physical and conceptual constraints applied to Chinese artists and artworks, specifically when they are seen to question or implicate highly sociopolitical contexts of China. Enforced by China's Ministry of Culture, these include

restrictions on the global mobility of artists, export of artworks, censorship of artwork content and its display. As the paintings exhibited in *Passaggio a Oriente* represented contexts of Political Pop and Cynical Realism, the works had to be shipped under 'a disguised status' (Ibid.): unofficially, with no certification or sponsorship from the government, which was a commonplace practice in the early 1990s. As outlined earlier in this discussion of the exhibition's development, nothing had been straightforward or planned. This continued throughout the exhibition's installation, where there was no exhibition plan or established, reciprocal line of communication with artists as to how works were to be arranged in the space, or even which works were going to be shown.

Dal Lago arrived in Venice a few days prior to the opening to meet the artists. Disenchanted, due to a lack of communication from the start, they were further displeased because many of the artists had had to pay their airfare to Venice, as the Venice Biennale did not provide any financial support. Unaware of Western and international art world conventions, the Chinese artists expected the same level of hospitality and respect they received at government-organised exhibitions in China, where they were treated as distinguished guests. These artistic and curatorial expectations were immediately shattered as none of this was planned or executed.



Figure 32 - Chinese artists and curators at 45th Venice Biennale: *The Cardinal Points of Art* (1993). From left to right: Wang Youshen, Wang Guangyi, Xu Bing, Fang Lijun (standing, in white), Li Xianting (sitting, in brown shirt), Feng Mengbo, Wu Shanzhuan, Geng J Geng Jianyi, Liao Wen. Wang Guangyi, Xu, Fang, Feng and Geng participated in *Passaggio a Oriente (Passage to the East)* (1993); Wang Youshen and Wu participated in *Aperto '93: Emergency/Emergenza* (1993). Image courtesy of Wang Youshen.

The exhibition was placed in the main area of the Venice Biennale in the historic Giardini area of Venice, in a curved, semicircular building between the white-cube structure of the Italian pavilion and the Venetian shipbuilding warehouses of the Arsenale. Oliva decided to group the Chinese artworks alongside Japanese artists and the French avant-garde movement *Lettrisme*

in a crowded, hanging format. This contrast of formal and industrial spaces allowed the paintings to engage with different spatial contexts and should have provided the opportunity for potential new translations. However, the defining curatorial decision to create a split in the display of artworks, together with the large-scale format of many of the Chinese paintings, restricted the number of artworks on show. This factor, alongside growing tensions between the official and unofficial pavilions and exhibitions, made space difficult to negotiate and share, forcing Dal Lago to reframe her original curatorial strategy within the reality of the spaces, where she also had to install the works herself with limited technical support. These many problems caused friction between Dal Lago and the artists, many of whom were her friends.



Figure 33 - View of *Great Criticism: Swatch + Great Criticism: Pop* (1992) by Wang Guangyi in *Passaggio a Oriente (Passage to the East)* (1993) as part of the *45th Venice Biennale: The Cardinal Points of Art* (1993). Image courtesy of Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong.

Exhibiting artist Wang Guangyi's first idea was to hang *Great Criticism: Art and Politics* (1992) on the exterior wall of the Italian pavilion.⁶⁶ However, the 45th Venice Biennale sponsors considered the politicised contexts and visual representation of Western brand names in the painting to be inappropriate global advertising, at which point it was not shown and thus, ignored by the Western press. The artwork's concept was never openly discussed in relation to the artist's sociopolitical background and individual, Sinocentric understanding of Chineseness, or the 45th Venice Biennale. Wang acknowledged this as the beginning of a breakdown in translation between Oliva and the Western audience, a contextual misunderstanding, adding another layer of mistranslation to the literal language barrier he was already negotiating (Dal Lago 2000, p. 158). This was on top of ongoing conflict over wall space, which affected personal relationships, causing him to become estranged from fellow artist and friend Zhang Peili, damaging more of his confidence in a professional and personal capacity. Wang's experiences are representative of many of the artists who participated, which collectively did not reflect Oliva's stated curatorial strategy to 'transcend difference'. Rather, Oliva enforced national and artistic difference - his discriminatory and marginalised understanding of Chineseness from a Westerncentric perspective - through multiple levels of verbal and visual forms of communication, further reinforcing the invisible border between China and the rest of the world, as mentioned in Chapter 1 (Lee 2007). As curatorial consultant Li stated, 'We have no choice, we need to adapt to their rules because this is a Western exhibition' (cited in Wang 1993, p. 366). This suggests Chinese curators were more open to the idea of cross-cultural curatorial collaboration at that time than Western curators who, although presenting a greater sense of curatorial confidence, were then constrained by Eurocentric standards of artistic evaluation and lacked an integral global perspective.

⁶⁶ In 1993, Wang Guangyi was an emerging avant-garde painter and faced increasing marginalisation from his home audience in China as he gained kudos in European contexts - this is identified as one of the changing dimensions of his Chineseness.

Exhibiting artist Zhang Peili stated the exhibition ‘appeared as if Chinese artists were talking to each other, as in an internal dialogue [with] the usual “endangered species” attitude [...] as special cases’ (Zhang in Dal Lago 2000, pp. 241-242). Furthermore, Dal Lago stated the exhibition gathered artworks in a generalised and ‘typical Orientalist format of “national grouping [...] stifling each individual voice within the stereotypical images generally associated with that place’s identity”’ (Ibid., p. 162). Clearly, it reinforced a sense of nationalist Chineseness with limited glocal perspective.

Later that year, after the exhibition had taken place, documentary filmmaker Wen Pulin brought together a select group of the exhibiting artists, including Wang, to discuss their experiences on an informal basis at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), Beijing. He wanted to document the artists’ responses to what was presented in the media as a prolific, ‘historic juncture in China’s new art’ (Smith 2005, p. 71). The apparently dynamic six-hour long meeting saw Wang, at the head of the table, disengaged from the group, quiet and non-responsive, with no desire to articulate and share his perspectives like the other artists. His only statement was that it was ‘an unexpectedly traumatic event’ (Ibid.).

In truth, the exhibition never represented the ‘multicultural approach’ that would ‘transcend difference’ as Oliva intended,

Multiculturalism, when unified under a concrete guideline, requires you to choose from different perspectives. In this respect, what you present is how you present, and everything is judged by the final presentation you have created (Andrews 2014, p. 56).

In presenting this case study, my view is that difference was limited to examinations of national identity, directly conforming to Maharaj’s understanding of curatorial strategies that create a catchall category where artworks are grouped together for cultural plurality (Maharaj 1994, p. 29).⁶⁷

⁶⁷ It is important to note that this exhibition only included one female Chinese artist. During the early 1990s, many exhibitions of avant-garde Chinese art were

As a starting point, Oliva used the notion of 'cultural pluralism', specifically artistic and critical pluralism. In fact, it was a diluted pluralism, due to the dismissal of local Chinese cultural knowledge, a lack of engagement with artists and their artworks' concepts, control over the export of artworks from China, constraints on installation and display, contextual misunderstanding of artworks from curators and the media, Oliva's hierarchical role as "the commissioner" and a lack of open and positive communication between curators and artists. Collectively, these elements contributed to an immediate weakening and hindering of the process of translation. In an attempt to mask these problems, Oliva introduced new interpretive terminologies, describing the artworks as 'trans-avant-garde', alongside investigations of 'trans-actions', which provided additional confusion as to what the curatorial strategy was trying to achieve, especially for the Western media. As Dal Lago stated, 'such a label, which indexes both style and content of a certain artistic production with a culturally specific format, should be abandoned because of profound misunderstandings it only helps to create' (2000, p. 164).

Overall, the 45th *Venice Biennale* and *Passaggio a Oriente* received both positive and negative art criticism from the general and art-informed, specialist media in Chinese and Western contexts. The exhibition was seen as 'a landmark in the crusade to conquer all aesthetic heights' (Smith 2005, p. 71), where 'no one had done anything like this before in the framework of the biennial' (Andrews 2014, pp. 50-51) and it was sensationalised as being about 'political sexiness' (Ibid., p. 59). Conversely, it was seen a curatorial 'failure [...] incoherent and achieves the near impossible feat of making what still passes for "radical" creation look even weaker than it actually is [...] a jumble of works [...] one of the worst-hung shows in memory' (Hughes

curated exclusively of male Chinese artists because of ongoing gender inequalities leading to limited cultural opportunities for female artists. It could be said that this lack of acknowledgement of gender, or obscuring of gender through representation of national identity as part of the curatorial strategy for *Passaggio a Oriente*, may have contributed to further mistranslations. Gender within Chinese art is not a focus of this research, its questions and aims, but could be an area of potential future research.

1993). These severe and unforgiving perspectives were reiterated in further reviews, reminding readers the artworks on display had already been seen on the international art circuit.⁶⁸ The many reviews indicated that the international art press was not ready to critique Chinese art, yet Dal Lago still believed *Passaggio a Oriente* was a site of production for the history of contemporary Chinese art (Andrews 2014, p. 49). The latter statement will now be questioned.

It is clear that Oliva's curatorial strategy was not a strategy at all, to the extent it can be questioned whether the exhibition was even curatorially researched. If anything, it was nothing more than a basic categorisation of avant-garde Chinese art organised through the model of a survey exhibition, based on a series of accidental engagements and personal connections, introductions to artists, and friendships - the *guanxi* of Li and Dal Lago's curatorial consultancy. Dal Lago was even aware of this, citing the notion of an applied 'serendipity' to methodologically underpin the curatorial strategy, done with 'no consciousness' (Ibid.). In knowing this, I do not think translation can be founded on curatorial happenstance and serendipity alone, or that these offer a valid means to ascribe an art historical value to avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art. It is the curatorial strategy where translation takes place and on which the development of an art history relies. As Dal Lago states, 'only a consistent pattern of showing and viewing can provide a work with an audience, a context and therefore a series of meanings' (2000, p. 158).

As this case study suggests, since the late 1980s and early 1990s, curators in the West were seen to use the homogenising curatorial strategies of

⁶⁸ It is not documented as to whether Oliva viewed the group exhibitions *Encountering the Others – Projektgruppe Stoffwechsel at Documenta IX* (1992) or *China Avant-Garde: Counter Currents in Art and Culture* (1993) held concurrently and opened before *Passaggio e Oriente*. It would be interesting to examine whether his attendance at these exhibitions would have influenced his selection of artists, although at that time, the selection of Chinese artists was somewhat limited and often resulted in unavoidable and repeated engagement with the same names.

multiculturalism and nationalist Chineseness to translate avant-garde Chinese art on the global art stage. *Passaggio a Oriente* was a notable early example of this. Instead of trying to establish a true cultural pluralism within local-to-global contexts and pursue the new Chinese art of that time, the curator was still concerned with the historical demarcation of East and West through categorisation, referencing national identity as part of “difference”, “otherness” and “ethnographic foreignness”. It can be said, Oliva used these curatorial strategies in the hope of providing what can be called a failsafe translation of avant-garde Chinese art, while capitalising on the value, investment and support that came with curatorial happenstance. In reality, the exhibition was a subjective mistranslation of avant-garde Chinese art, creating ‘a discourse which ultimately does not acquire any specific “meaning”, either in “China” or in the “West”’ (Ibid., p. 164).

By the late 1990s, international curators started to take note of these problems, attempting translations of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art through a lens of ‘New Internationalism’, represented in large-scale group exhibitions at established contemporary art institutions on the global art stage. At the same time, there was a shift from avant-garde Chinese art and Chinese modernity towards contemporary Chinese art, as shown in the following case study.

Regardless of the positive and negative criticism *Passaggio a Oriente* received, it was still responsible, and must be acclaimed, for raising the profile of avant-garde Chinese art. According to Kong, it had a strong impact on China as well as the Chinese art world, which saw it as “winning” and instigating the start of Asian biennial activities (Andrews 2014, pp. 60-61) - a new wave of exhibitions, art biennials and triennials in the global art world, predicted by Hong Kong-based curator Chang Tsong-zung as ‘the dawn of a new era for Chinese art’ (Ibid., p. 50). Simply, the exhibition was a moment of recognition for Chinese art to become part of a then-developing globalised art world - a ‘New Internationalism’, as will be examined in the next chapter.

4.2 – *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (1998)

Inside Out: New Chinese Art (1998) was part of the first wave of exhibitions since 1993 to show a transition from avant-garde towards contemporary Chinese art. Initiated by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, in early 1994, the exhibition developed from a basic concept of a group exhibition of contemporary Chinese art. After extended discussion with the Asia Society, New York, it was agreed that the exhibition would become a collaborative project between the two institutions. In late 1994, Vishakha N. Desai, Vice-President for Cultural Programs and Director of Galleries for the Asia Society, formally invited the established Chinese writer and critic Gao Minglu to be the exhibition's curator. Gao had only immigrated to the USA three years previously. This was a formative moment in the development of his curatorial career and an opportunity to make a key contribution towards a Chinese art history. In the 1990s, Chinese curators had limited opportunity to curate exhibitions of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art as outlined in Chapter 1. As with *Passaggio a Oriente*, they were usually invited to provide curatorial consultation rather than undertake a curatorial role with principal decision-making power.

Shortly after the exhibition's initial development, the Guggenheim decided to change the exhibition's concept and curate a "blockbuster" group exhibition and survey show of historical Chinese art entitled *China: 5,000 Years* (6 February - 3 June 1998). This shift towards a more historical review of Chinese art stood apart from the Guggenheim's usual contemporary-minded programming and was decided upon without any prior consultation from Desai or Gao. Planned to open a few months prior to *Inside Out: New Chinese Art*, the exhibition planned to include a section dedicated to the exploration of modern Chinese art up until the late 1970s, shown in the museum's downtown Manhattan space, Guggenheim Museum SoHo (6 February - 25 May 1998). Other parts of the exhibition were again confirmed without any prior consultation. It was near impossible for the Asia Society to compete with this new large-scale proposal, to the extent the organisation considered dismissing any existing exhibition plans until Desai discovered the Guggenheim had abandoned its idea of an expanded examination into

avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art and was now only going to focus on modern Chinese art before the late 1970s. This gave Desai a renewed impetus to plan an exhibition solely of contemporary Chinese art, and to form a new partnership with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Titled *Inside Out: New Chinese Art*, the exhibition's new concept was to critique the transition from avant-garde Chinese art towards contemporary Chinese art through a focus on installation, new media and performance art practice, and to translate these practices to audiences beyond China. In simple terms, it wanted to show the "inside" to the "outside". The exhibition took place in an institutional, museum and gallery context, in two different North American locations - New York and San Francisco - displaying more than 80 works by 42 artists from mainland China, including Chinese expatriate artists who were now living in Western cities such as Paris and New York, alongside six artists from Hong Kong and 12 from Taiwan.⁶⁹ This diverse selection of artists from mainland China and the Chinese region, including Hong Kong and Taiwan, and the exhibition's concept, marked a turning point towards the development of a transcultural curatorial practice, focusing on the local-to-global development of the Chinese diaspora. With this came a new set of problems as part of cultural translation.

Interviewed at the Gao Minglu Contemporary Art Center, Beijing, on 18 November 2010, Gao recounted that Desai began with great vision for the exhibition and gave him complete curatorial freedom with additional curatorial assistance provided by Gary Garrels, Chief Curator and Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), and Caron Smith and Colin Mackenzie, Curator and Assistant Director of Galleries of the Asia Society.⁷⁰ During long debates regarding the

⁶⁹ Continuing on from footnote 67, *Inside Out* exhibited seven female Chinese artists (one-sixth of the overall exhibiting artists), indicating a growing international recognition of female artists from the region.

⁷⁰ Colin Mackenzie took over the role of Curator and Assistant Director of Galleries of the Asia Society from Caron Smith who worked at Asia Society from 1995-1996.

curatorial strategy and artist selection for the exhibition, there was one key problem. Initially, Garrels was preoccupied with Political Pop - then still considered a 'hot topic' - and conceptual works, which made it harder to convince the museum of the relevance of including early historical works from mainland China from the 1980s (Gao 2010, pers. comm, 18 November). Eventually, the historical and social contexts were acknowledged as integral to the success of presenting a survey exhibition of 1980s and 1990s Chinese art. This also included the acknowledgment of a developing Chinese identity within new local-to-global Chinese diasporas. As international engagement and exchange increased in China, the nation continued to open up economically and politically, attracting more foreign - largely American - gallerists and curators to undertake research in China and to curate from these cross-cultural experiences. In turn, Chinese artists, curators, scholars and art historians were establishing themselves more and more in North America.⁷¹

The exhibition focused on a phenomenon for which Gao coined the term 'transnational modernity' - crossing boundaries between mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the West. For Asia Society, it was fundamental to include regions beyond mainland China in order to provide a balanced contextualisation and thus, translation of the transition from avant-garde towards contemporary Chinese art. However, Gao identified this as a problem, seeing the investigation of these multiple cultural contexts as an experimental testing ground in curatorial terms, bringing with it the opportunity for mistranslations. Furthermore, in the mid-1990s, it was difficult to develop new relationships with artists from Taiwan as the relationship between China and Taiwan was at a low point.⁷² Gao recalls negotiating with

⁷¹ Including Ai Weiwei, Gu Wenda, Cai Guo-Qiang, Wu Hung, Xu Bing, and Gao Minglu. *Inside Out* was seen to temporarily affect the art market as it raised the profile, and thus value, of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art and, more broadly, objects from the Chinese region. This indicated a growing Western interest in the art history of China.

⁷² Lee Teng-hui, then President of the Republic of China (ROC) now known as Taiwan, visited Cornell University in the USA in June 1995 to give a talk on 'Taiwan's Democratization Experience'. He was trying to diplomatically isolate

artists as bombs were being set off in the Taiwan Strait (2010, pers. comm, 18 November). These political circumstances should have been more explicitly translated within the exhibition's curatorial strategy. However, Gao was forced to process the unpredictable and changeable reality as it unfolded. This period of unrest between China and Taiwan would end up signifying a turning point in the relationship between the two nations through artistic and curatorial exchange, encouraging the development of a new and sustained transcultural artistic and curatorial practice.

The two exhibition venues in New York - Asia Society and Museum of Modern Art's offsite space PS1 - divided works by region into three key sections:

1. 'From Idealism to Cultural Cynicism', focusing primarily on oil painting from mainland China and the shift away from Socialist Realism towards painting styles such as Political Pop and Cynical Realism;
2. 'Taiwan: Identity and Transcendence', showing the most diverse range of artistic practices in the exhibition from scrolls to ink paintings, installations to video and film; and,
3. 'Hong Kong's Moment of Transition', a display of four works in a small yet organised format.

At PS1, there was an additional section entitled 'Conceptual Art in Mainland China', which focused on more experimental works by artists from mainland China and reflected on cutting-edge artistic practice in China from the past decade including conceptual, performance and 'apartment art'. Within this clearly defined categorisation, works were then further grouped into

the ROC by moving its foreign policy away from the One-China policy. From this, the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland saw Lee as a traitor who was attempting to split China, and condemned the US for giving Lee a visa and ruining Sino-British relations. In response, the PRC conducted a series of missile tests in the waters surrounding the Taiwan Strait and instigated what was called the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis from 21 July 1995 to 23 March 1996.

conceptual themes, such as physical borders, cultural differences in Taiwan, perspectives on consumerism, the role of language and the contemporary use of ink painting, entitled under 'From Utopian Dreams to Double Kitsch', 'Rationalist Painting' and From Different to Indifferent'. Knowing the main audience was unfamiliar with Chinese cultural nuances and not necessarily art-informed, Gao implemented this heavily constructed curatorial strategy, as he felt viewers needed to be educated before they could be led into the exhibition space (Goodman 1999, p. 28). I see this as Gao's attempt to provide a "translational bridge" to break down and decode the art on show in a contextually logical format, which also functions to inform audiences of multiple levels of China and the Chinese diaspora including location and identity, sociopolitical and cultural relationships, art forms and media, trends in art history past and future. However, this can also be seen as over-informing audiences, spoon-feeding them translations rather than providing them with a space for reflection and interpretation to create their own translations.

Critics noted differences between the displays in the two New York venues, seeing Asia Society as having more thematic coherence, whereas PS1, where most works from Taiwan and Hong Kong were shown, was viewed as unbalanced (Yee 1999, p.32). In other words, the works on show at PS1 were not contextualised in relation to the works on show at Asia Society. Therefore, they were seen as isolated nations reinforcing a nationalist Chineseness rather than diasporic Chineseness, creating invisible borders between each of the Chinese regions and the rest of the world. This could have been avoided if further curators with specific experience of these other Chinese nations had been employed, much as Gao was for mainland China. Although this would have provided more first-hand cultural knowledge to assist with translation, Gao did make strong attempts to make cultural links through the use of certain artists and works – a key component of his curatorial strategy. This included *Tianshu (Book from the Sky)* (1987–91) by the world-renowned Chinese artist Xu Bing who immigrated to New York one year before Gao.



Figure 34 - Xu Bing (Chinese, born 1955), *Tianshu (Book from the Sky)* (1987–91) Installation with hand-painted books, 3.6m x 6.0m x 15.2m, on show as part of the exhibition *Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China* (2013) at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image © the artist.



Figure 35 - Xu Bing (Chinese, born 1955), *Tianshu (Book from the Sky)* (1987-91), on show as part of *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (1998) at SFMOMA. Image © Chris Stewart for the San Francisco Chronicle.

This large-scale installation helped to define the avant-garde period for Chinese art in China.⁷³ It was displayed in the large central gallery of the South Wing in PS1. Constructed from traditional scrolls, Chinese calligraphy and bookbinding styles, it incorporated four books, composed of more than 4,000 invented characters. To a non-Chinese audience, unfamiliar with the Chinese language, the characters were at first glance believable as a readable language. In fact, they were completely illegible, a form of “non-writing”, reflecting Xu’s obsession with the transformation of language. The work highlighted the ‘abuse of language’, its political and linguistic implications and how easy it was to make cultural assumptions between East and West. The latter East-West cultural debate was defined by Gao as beginning in China around the turn of the decade in the late 1990s, articulating three major issues,

[...] the differences and similarities between China and the West (zhongxiyitong); comparisons of the respective merits and flaws of Chinese and Western cultures (zhongxiyoulue) and the future of Chinese and western cultures (zhongxiqushi). For almost all Chinese cultural pioneers, cultural conflicts such as traditional vs. modern or East vs. West were based on the notion that these were monolithic entities (Gao 1998, p. 40).

As argued earlier in this thesis, examinations of East-West are part of the curatorial strategies of multiculturalism and nationalist Chineseness. It was important for Gao to question his understanding of this East-West duality against his curatorial strategy for *Inside Out*. He wanted to try to change audiences’ reductive preconceptions of a discriminatory and marginalised Chineseness towards his preferred understanding of ‘transnational modernity’ and contemporary Chinese art.

In addition, Gao used the concept of ‘Third Space’ as another key component of his curatorial strategy. Appropriating the postcolonial theory of

⁷³ As it was exhibited as part of the exhibition *Zhongguo Xiandai Yishuzhan (China/Avant-Garde)* (1989) at the National Gallery of Art, Beijing. The exhibition was repeatedly closed, and is renowned for being shut down on its opening day due to the infamous “gunshot incident” as discussed in Chapter 1.

hybridity by Homi K. Bhabha, it addresses how 'cultures come to be represented by virtue of the processes of iteration and translation through which their meanings are vicariously addressed to - through - an Other' (Bhabha 1994, p. 83). This temporal dimension challenges pre-existing cultural identities - that of an other - by destroying the reflective mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is constructed (Ibid., p. 54), as previously discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.2. This disrupts and rehistoricises Western narratives, allowing for the production of meaning in a new ambivalent space - the space for translation. Here,

[...] we cannot contextualise the emergent cultural form by locating it in terms of some pre-given discursive causality or origin. We must always keep open a supplementary space for the articulation of cultural knowledges that are adjacent and adjunct (Ibid., p. 234).

Here, Gao defines the 'Third Space' in relation to the then newly globalised position of mainland Chinese artists and curators living overseas. While they faced new challenges in mainstream Western culture, the artists adopted a strategy of neither emphasising cultural characteristics of nationalism to play the role of exotic or minority, nor overtly underplaying their Chinese identity in order to become international. They realised their cultural differences and hybridity only appeared in situations of negotiation, such as when curating exhibitions, as a material language, and as bridges over which different interpretations can cross (Gao 1998, p. 33). For *Inside Out*, artists such as Xu Bing were to act as these bridges, to create a 'Third Space' for translation. However, Gao's use of what can be called "translational containment" - the categorisation and grouping of artists and artworks - as an overriding component in the curatorial strategy created tension with the ambivalence of the 'Third Space' curatorial strategy, and complicated others' understandings of what Gao's curatorial strategy was trying to achieve. Responding to these findings, research into the observations of critics and audiences highlighted how the exhibition was translated through other curatorial strategies that were certainly not intended by Gao.

In an interview in 2010, Gao recalled how people talked about *Inside Out* in America, hailed as 'the first show to give a general view about what is Chinese contemporary art', but Western audiences also questioned how Chinese the exhibition was, as if they were demanding to see cultural stereotypes of ethnographic foreignness, and discriminatory and marginalised representations of Chineseness (Gao 2010, pers. comm, 18 November). Visually, works were not seen to distinguish themselves from those artists of the Western avant-garde, often being viewed as derivative and provincial, as Chinese artists were developing concepts no longer bound to Chinese culture. This made it difficult for Western audiences to separate concepts, highlighting how, as part of avant-garde Chinese art and Chinese modernity, China had directly - and apparently uncritically (Liu 1999) - reappropriated the construct of Westerncentric art historical discourse, as visually represented within Political Pop and Cynical Realism.

In 2005, gallerist Pi Li stated that most exhibitions of the late 1990s were organised according to two different modes of curatorial practice, both explicitly based on the canons of Westerncentric art history.⁷⁴ The first mode, 'impact versus response', articulates that Western aggression was the leading factor in the development of modern Chinese culture, and that changes could only be interpreted in terms of the Western impact and the Chinese response. Pi saw *Inside Out* as a clear example of this, presenting politicised perspectives of Chinese experimental art that still remained within Chinese culture, therefore demanding a Chinese response. The second mode, 'tradition versus modernity', is placed within modern and contemporary Western society to provide a universal model in the world and China, and aims to make fluid transitions from the traditional to modern contexts (Pi 2005). This mode had more affinity with Gao's intended

⁷⁴ Pi Li is a key figure, gallerist, scholar and curator from the mainland Chinese art scene. He is co-founder and owner of the Beijing-based gallery Boers-Li, Head of the Arts Management course at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), Beijing, and was, in May 2012, appointed as the Senior Curator for Hong Kong's developing M+, West Kowloon Cultural District.

curatorial strategy, trying to break free from articulations of nationalist Chineseness that are deeply embedded within Westerncentrism.

Indeed, the exhibition recognised the development of globalised artistic and curatorial practice in the 'Third Space', including the anxious political conditions between Taiwan and China. However, in turn it created additional tensions and conflicts between the undercurrent of nationalist Chineseness, the influence of the Westerncentric canons of art history, Pi's curatorial strategies of 'impact versus response' and 'transitional versus modernity', and the use of 'translational containment', even though this was critiqued as 'a didacticism, weakening much of the work in "Inside Out"' (Baker 1999).

Jonathan Goodman's review of the exhibition notes a perspective from a Shanghai friend and cultural critic who observed that the West was intent on emphasising cultural difference within this exhibition, identifying disparities through time rather than culture, 'while the Chinese do not concern themselves so much with distinctions and are creating a truly global language through their practice' (Goodman 1999, p. 30). Critic Kenneth Baker acknowledged this further in his review of the SFMOMA show, stating 'even though the post-pop paintings may be the most accessible things in "Inside Out", the most sophisticated work is the absurdist strain of conceptual and performance work' which 'in Western art often appears preachy and ephemeral. But on the evidence of "Inside Out," it is the nearest thing to an international language of contemporary art' (1999). From this, I question whether it is the West that is directly responsible for creating mistranslations, even more so after the evidence revealed in the first case study *Passaggio a Oriente*.

The only opportunity for these views to be disputed was within the accompanying catalogue for *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (1998), which was considered one of the first seminal American publications on contemporary Chinese art. It aimed to address the issue of how information regarding artists and artistic production in China was relatively inaccessible at that time. With additional consultation from scholar David Clarke, curator and

gallerist Chang Tsong-zung, and curator Victoria Y. Lu, it included significant texts by, and dialogues between, art critics, scholars and curators. All were instrumental figures in the field of contemporary Chinese art. They responded to the exhibited artworks in relation to recent Chinese and global art trends during the late 1990s, including what Gao had termed 'apartment art'.⁷⁵ It is still seen as a key historical document in the early understanding, and thus, translation of contemporary Chinese art, and its curation, acting as a guide and resource to the development and place of contemporary Chinese art in mainland China, the Chinese region, Asia and internationally. The inclusion of a catalogue, to further extrapolate concepts from the curatorial strategy, is another fundamental component of Gao's curatorial strategy. It established a critical debate, which at that time was severely lacking, aiming to address the issue of accessibility to information from China.⁷⁶ However, it was criticised for providing 'limited extensive contextual analysis to the confines of the exhibition's intention' (Chiu 2006, p. 19). In other words, it failed to justify the curatorial strategy. Furthermore, the isolation of works through region contradicted the catalogue texts, which examined the more discursive relationships between different Chinese nations and Asian cultures. This contradiction to encourage selective engagement with specific cultural contexts in the exhibition versus the thorough and critical textual interpretations in the catalogue, immediately created omissions, and thus, misunderstandings within the process of translation. Again, this raises the question of what Gao's curatorial strategy was trying to actually achieve.

Another contextual problem arose from Garrels' initial selection of the cover image for the publication. Gao claims Garrels wanted to use Wang Guangyi's iconic Political Pop painting *Great Castigation Series: Coca-Cola* (1993), as shown on the following page.

⁷⁵ Including Gao Minglu, Norman Bryson, Chang Tsong-zung, David Clarke, Hou Hanru, Le Ou-Fan Lee, Victoria Y. Lu and Wu Hung.

⁷⁶ This will be examined in the next chapter.



Figure 36 - Wang Guangyi (Chinese, born 1957). *Great Castigation Series: Coca-Cola* (1993). Oil on canvas, 2m x 2m. Image © the artist.

This dispute over the signature image to be used on the catalogue provides an insight into the understanding of the exhibition on the part of the two key curatorial figures in exhibition's production. Gao felt this artwork was not representative of all the artists and works on display and would not articulate visually the curatorial strategy of 'transnational modernity'. Wang's work would immediately present more nationalist, political and commercial connotations, rather than the notion of the transition from the avant-garde to contemporary Chinese art. For Wang, this rejection and reasoning was a familiar situation, as highlighted in the first study, *Passaggio a Oriente*. To resolve the issue, Garrels took the issue to Desai, who then advised him that he had to fall in with Gao's opinion. In the end, the exhibition catalogue used a still from Zhang Huan's performance at Nanmofang Fishpond, Beijing, on 15 August 1997, *To Raise the Water Level in a Fishpond* (1997).



Figure 37 - Zhang Huan, Chinese, born 1965. *To Raise the Water Level in a Fishpond* (1997). C-print on Fuji archival paper, 152.5cm x 228.5cm. Image © the artist.

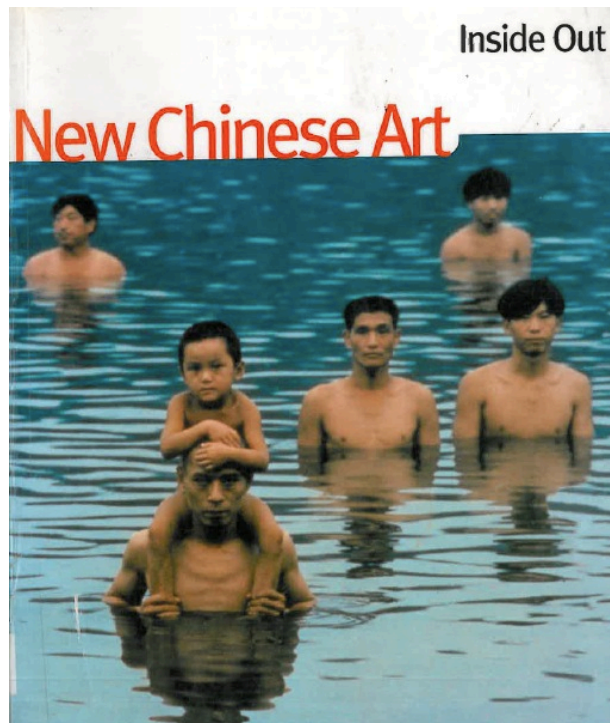


Figure 38 - Image of the publication cover for *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (1998), published by the University of California Press.

In this performance, Zhang asked village labourers, who had moved to major Chinese cities within the 1990s because of the boom in economic exchange, to stand in Beijing's shallow Nanmofang Fishpond in order to raise its overall water level. This was to draw attention to the rapid change in urbanisation and globalisation of some of China's villages, towns and cities, which was causing immense social crisis including a lack of public resources, pressure on educational infrastructures, issues of environmental and ecological sustainability, and an increase in crime. This work was far more representative of Gao's curatorial strategy of 'transnational modernity' as it commented on the "here-and-now" of China.

Gao's curatorial strategy implemented a specific set of curatorial components including a clearly defined exhibition design and installation of works through 'translational containment', the creation of a 'Third Space' through the process of translation, and the translation of contentious contextual material through the exhibition's catalogue. This unique curatorial strategy created a new international language for Chinese art (also cited in exhibition reviews), defining a new Chineseness - a transition away from preoccupations of nationalism and political rebellion, the appropriation of Western art history and radical experimentation as part of avant-garde Chinese art and Chinese modernity. It clearly focused on the experience of diasporic Chineseness while trying to identify what the Chinese artists left behind in the wake of migration, dislocation and traversal: the residual Chineseness that was discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.5 and 1.6. Therefore, *Inside Out* exemplified new investigations of Chinese identity in relation to the West's self-image, and artists' relationships to anxious sociopolitical contexts, all in local-to-global terms. It presented a new contemporary Chinese art, which 'for all the cultural specificity of its origins, was easily translated across culture, time and place' (Goodman 1999, p. 30).

In the exhibition's opening week, Gao predicted how Chinese culture would develop in the next decade, referencing the work of Samuel P. Huntington who suggested in 1996 that the next century would witness a "cultural war" – a cultural (not economic or political) challenge to Western culture coming

from such places as China (Dal Lago 1998, p. 42). Unbeknownst to Gao and Huntington, they were already debating the new discourse of the exhibition, and thus, curation of contemporary Chinese art - the prolific urban construction of art museums, galleries and districts, cited as 'the "museumification" of China' (Johnson & Florence 2013), and China's desire to meet the cultural infrastructures of its global competitors through the presentation and integration of contemporary Chinese art as part of the global art stage. This will now be examined in the final case study.

4.3 – *The Real Thing* (2007)

The most recent case study, *The Real Thing* (2007) at Tate Liverpool, UK, occurred at a pivotal time in the development of a contemporary Chinese art history, where globalised artistic and curatorial practice was prevalent, defining a 'New Internationalism' in the art world. Of the three case studies discussed in this chapter, this exhibition gained the most press coverage and critical attention from the public and arts media, including from established critics in the field of contemporary art in China and internationally, largely encouraged by the boom of the contemporary Chinese art market in 2006 and 2007.⁷⁷

At that time, the press and media considered *The Real Thing* to be one of the first exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art worth reviewing as it presented art that was not fundamentally different from the contemporary art seen in the West (Dorment 2007). Articulating a clear curatorial strategy, it aimed to demonstrate the range and depth of contemporary Chinese art - a search for authenticity in China - by presenting a selection of significant artworks made since the year 2000, the vision of 18 highly renowned and younger, emerging contemporary Chinese artists, including 12 new

⁷⁷ Including reviews by Philip Tinari, Waldemar Januszczak, Laura Cumming, Nav Haq, Alfred Hickling and Richard Dorment. In terms of press coverage, this exhibition has now been superseded by others as shown in the *Chinese Art Exhibition Chronology* in Appendix 4.

commissions.⁷⁸ The year 2000 was chosen as the starting point for the timeline of this exhibition, as the millennium indicated a key turning point and change for China when its government started to acknowledge the political importance and the social and economic potential of contemporary Chinese art and culture on the global art stage. This instigated a radical shift in status for the contemporary Chinese artist, offering them greater opportunities for international engagement.

The impetus and concept for the exhibition was the result of the coming together of an international group of curatorial minds: Simon Groom, the then Exhibitions and Displays Curator at Tate Liverpool based in the UK; Karen Smith, known as one of the earliest “foreign pushing hands” (*guojituishou*) for contemporary Chinese art; and Xu Zhen, an established contemporary Chinese artist based in Shanghai.⁷⁹ However, it was Dr Christoph Grunenberg, Director of Tate Liverpool, who had initially recognised the need to engage with contemporary Chinese art after seeing the exhibition *Alors, La Chine?/What about China?* (2003) at the Centre Pompidou, Paris. One of the earliest major exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art shown in Europe, it was harshly criticised by audiences, including by Grunenberg, as the exhibition presented not the curator’s vision but the Centre Pompidou’s formalised partnership with the Chinese Ministry of Culture (CMC).⁸⁰ The CMC had begun to formally endorse contemporary Chinese art and its exhibition in the global domain, organising an annual series of China festivals in different international cities where contemporary Chinese art was presented alongside traditional Chinese arts and crafts,

⁷⁸ The participating artists were He An, Gu Dexin, Cao Fei, Yang Fudong, Wang Gongxin, Zhuang Hui, Geng Jianyi, Wang Peng, Yang Shaobin, Zhou Tiehai, Wang Wei, Ai Weiwei, Zhou Xiaohu, Qiu Xiaofei, Yangjiang Group, Li Yongbin, Xu Zhen and Qiu Zhijie.

⁷⁹ “Foreign pushing hand” (*guojituishou*) was coined by the Chinese print media in relation to the development of contemporary Chinese art in Beijing, since 1992 (Beijing Olympic Development Association 2008).

⁸⁰ This was one of the first cultural partnerships the People’s Republic of China engaged in with Europe involving contemporary Chinese art.

music, dancing and food, playing on cultural stereotypes, clearly implementing a curatorial strategy of ethnographic foreignness and Chineseness. For *Alors, La Chine?*, the works were presented alongside a collection of Cultural Revolution memorabilia, donated by one of the trustees of the Centre Pompidou. Interviewed at her studio complex in Beijing on Saturday 2 October 2010, Karen Smith stated that this caused the exhibition to have,

[...] no sort of visual logic when you looked at what was included in the show, and also the way it was presented it didn't try and help you make a transition from one work to the next because of the way they used a space [...] for visitors it was very confusing to see what this exhibition trying to present about China. It just said chaos. It didn't say anything that felt like it was an intelligent view of what was happening (Smith 2010, pers. comm., 2 October).

In 2002, Grunenberg discussed these problems inherent to the curatorial strategy with Smith, telling her he was put off curating projects of this kind, because 'if that's what Chinese art was, then that's not what he wanted at Tate' (Ibid.). It was not until 2004, when Smith first met Groom during his first research visit to China, that a possible curatorial strategy for an exhibition was discussed in relation to the institutional constraints of Tate Liverpool. Smith's meeting with Groom was arranged independently of Grunenberg, and could be deemed as a moment of "serendipity" or "curatorial happenstance" as with *Passaggio a Oriente*. Groom was already in dialogue with other artists, curators and critics based in China as Shanghai and Liverpool were twinned through cultural union in 1999. Therefore, cultural relationships between the two cities were already firmly established, making the exhibition easier to initiate.⁸¹

Through these experiences, Groom quickly became aware of the difficulties of working transculturally in what was, and still is, a constantly changing

⁸¹ It is also noteworthy that Liverpool has the oldest established Chinese community in the UK.

political and cultural environment. He believed 'fragmented knowledge is where the stereotypes come from' (Groom, Haq & Smith 2007, p. 57), thus, representations of a discriminatory and marginalised Chineseness. He noted one particular issue in his experiences of contemporary Chinese art: a sense of urgency and turnover in exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art in the global domain, to the extent where this fast-paced approach created a sense of blindness to the bigger picture of what the exhibitions were actually trying to achieve contextually and conceptually, and ultimately, translate to audiences.

Another issue was the sense of competition between Chinese curators and Chinese artists, and their insular negotiations within finite social circles or cliques - the curatorial bias previously highlighted in the first case study - which would directly hinder the clear-minded selection of artists and artworks. Furthermore, Groom felt that by stepping into the art museum or gallery, the exhibition became less about the singular curatorial voice and more about the institutional voice as part of a global art world. Therefore, this created an added responsibility to make sure the exhibition was engaged in multiple modes of translation. He considered that all these factors directly affected the process of translation, as they invited unknown outcomes, creating omissions and, therefore, the potential for mistranslations.

Taking this all into consideration, Groom invited Beijing-based curator Karen Smith along with the Chinese, Shanghai-based contemporary artist Xu Zhen, to work collaboratively and co-curate *The Real Thing* in an attempt 'to avoid criticisms of a parochial Western institutional perspective' (James 2007, p. 153). Furthermore, by inviting an artist, Xu, to take part as both a co-curator and an exhibiting artist, the exhibition added an additional role of the artist-curator or artist-as-curator paradigm to its curatorial strategy, while highlighting how international artistic and curatorial practices were developing at that time. This allowed Groom and Smith to gain an insider's approach to the translation of artistic process from a Chinese to glocal context, identified as a vital component to the curatorial strategy that was lacking in the two previously examined case studies.

The exhibition's title, *The Real Thing*, was influenced by the final selection of artists rather than the exhibition's concept, due to their ambitious artistic vision, their commentary on the "here-and-now" of China and their relationship to the rest of the world. The artists articulated a clear commitment to the development of a contemporary Chinese art ecology and a search for authenticity by questioning what was, and was not, real in China at that time. Thus, the exhibition aimed to showcase these personal and sincere reflections of contemporary art in China since the turn of the millennium. Furthermore, the title appropriated the Coca-Cola marketing slogan, directly reflecting the tongue-in-cheek personalities of the three curators, and was further used to mock the mass-produced, commercially driven contemporary Chinese art that Western audiences were buying so indiscriminately at that time, in a hope to bring an end to this discriminatory and marginalised view of contemporary Chinese art, comparable to the recognition of an international brand.

Another perspective, provided by Groom, states that the title reflected Umberto Eco's views on postmodernity: that 'what we thought was genuine always turns out to be fake.⁸² Every single value is changing' (Groom, Haq & Smith 2007, p. 55). As Smith understood,

[...] you cannot ever present the absolute total real image. I had people tell me that a lot, that I couldn't really know what was happening in China because I lived here, because everything that we see is fake here, in terms of the television, news, the government propaganda [...] that we would never be able to see the truth [...] but your presence does bear witness to something (Smith 2010, pers. comm., 2 October).

As such, the title was used as a starting point, embedded within the concept of the exhibition, to be perceived differently from other exhibitions of

⁸² As referenced earlier in this thesis in footnote 20, p. 40.

contemporary Chinese art, including the two previously examined case studies. It attempted to convey the variety of assertions by Chinese artists to have the key to “the real thing”, a visual representation of the “real” China, which I call here, and has been previously cited as, China’s ‘New Internationalism’.

The Real Thing claimed to be ‘the first comprehensive exhibition of contemporary Chinese art by Chinese artists in the UK’ (Groom, Smith & Xu 2007), even though *China Power Station - Part I* (2006) had taken place a year before.⁸³ Groom was correct in articulating this statement, as unlike *China Power Station - Part I*, *The Real Thing* invited contemporary Chinese artists to submit proposals so they could be given immediate freedom from art market considerations and ‘to avoid any accusation that the show was simply another Western exhibition of Chinese art that would conform to what a Western audience would expect to see’ (Ibid., p. 12). This said, the exhibition was never intended to be a criticism of other exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art on the global art stage. From this process, artists were then selected only if their current agendas had not been influenced by commercial incentives. These were artists who confronted the chaotic reality of navigating China’s situation at that time, including the complex political, economic and social change, the pace of this change, the widening gap between the rich and poor, the lack of truth and freedom in China’s public arena, the restrictive governmental undercurrents and the relationship between the old and the new. Referred to by some critics as the ‘post-Cynical Realism generation’ (Cumming 2007), this ambitious cultural pluralism of artistic practice was shown for the first time outside of China

⁸³ This exhibition was originally selected as a case study in the research methodology to be examined in this chapter; however, due to limited secondary research materials and interview access to the exhibition’s curators, I decided to substitute *Passaggio a Oriente (Passage to the East)* (1993). It is important to note *The Real Thing* opened in the same month as *Aftershock: Contemporary British Art 1990-2006* (15 December 2006 - 4 February 2007) at the then newly opened Capital Museum Beijing, China. This exhibition further proves China’s growing international cross-cultural exchange at that time, specifically with the UK, and an acknowledgement from the Chinese Ministry of Culture of the cultural and socioeconomic value it brings.

and, in some instances, specially commissioned for the exhibition.⁸⁴ Thus, this exhibition used the artists' vision to drive the curatorial strategy forward.

When interviewing Smith, it became clear that the curatorial strategy for *The Real Thing* used further components to avoid creating mistranslations. These included an openness and flexibility within the institution and surrounding urban locations in the city of Liverpool to explore and test the artists' ambitious concepts, and the importance of visual context, such as installing artworks in alternative, non-traditional and unexpected spaces, such as in the Albert Dock and River Mersey waters, building exteriors and entrance hallways.

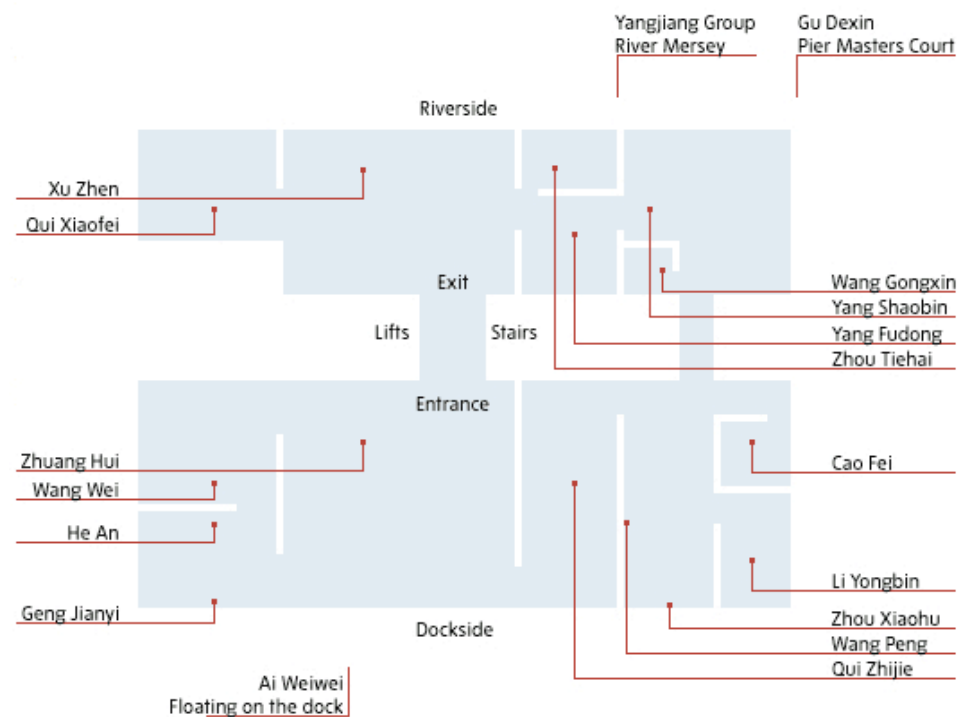


Figure 39 - Exhibition map for *The Real Thing* (2007), Tate Liverpool. Image courtesy of Tate.

⁸⁴ It should be noted that some of these artists also exhibited as part of the two previously examined case studies. However, for *The Real Thing* they largely created new works for new cultural contexts.

This first-hand engagement with artists as to how to realise their projects presented site-specific, logistical limitations, which had again to be factored into proposals and artworks. This also highlighted the processes by which artworks are constructed in China and the West: artists in China take advantage of the speed and price of Chinese labour to fabricate artworks on a scale unimaginable in the West, and Western artists are now turning to China for the production of their work for these reasons. This also influenced the installation of *The Real Thing*. The exhibition came together at the eleventh hour, some artworks having only arrived two days before the opening, which actually reflected the fast-paced and temporary nature of exhibition production in China.⁸⁵ This fast-paced approach to artistic production in China comes from a struggle to achieve and exercise independent thought due to changeable and restrictive government infrastructures, as clearly outlined in the first chapter of this thesis. Through this uncertainty, artists 'have become accustomed to conserving their energies until the last moment when there is no doubt the event *will* take place. It is a habit that is hard to break' (Smith 2005, p. 22).

These fundamental planning, costing, labour and artistic production differences between China and the West had a great impact on the development of *The Real Thing*. For the more established artists, it was part of a learning curve, but for some of the younger artists, those kinds of considerations 'were less easy to take on board' (Smith 2010, pers. comm., 2 October). Therefore, regular discussion and exchange between the three curators and the 18 artists, back and forth between China and the UK, was key. It is interesting to note that Xu never travelled to Liverpool, UK, due to a fear of flying. Thus, he became more responsible for the China side of the exhibition and a key point of contact for the Chinese artists, the majority of whom knew each other prior to the exhibition. Although open and fluid lines of communication were already well established between the artists and

⁸⁵ This will be examined as part of the live case study presented in Chapter 5, framed as 'evaluation through practice' - a practice-led component to the research methodology.

Smith, this was not the case between artists, curators and the institution. Groom's role within Tate Liverpool gave him confidential access to internal dialogues and decisions - a strategic decision with a clear agenda to keep Smith and Xu separate from conversations regarding funding issues, acquisition of artworks from or to support the exhibition, and the institution's future focus on China. As they were not privy to these conversations, which were to influence the production of artists' works and the profile of specific artists, this separation of dialogues and discussions reinforced the institutional voice Groom was trying so hard to avoid. As previously stated, artists were selected for the exhibition only if their current agendas had not been influenced by commercial incentives. However, this was immediately contradicted and not considered as part of the curatorial strategy as artworks were commissioned and supported in part by private investment, which was directly responding to the current art market interest in Chinese art.⁸⁶ As such, Groom had a difficult yet integral position as institutional and cultural mediator in the curatorial collaboration working between the bureaucracy of the institution, often kept behind the scenes, and the open and transparent intentions of the Chinese artists and Smith and Xu. Therefore, *The Real Thing* involved an unusual degree of collaboration, creating continually developing relationships between Smith, Groom and Xu, and the artists - which was vital to the exhibition's translation. However, it must be noted, by bringing thinkers from different global regions, including China, closer together in unknown environments and locations for exchange and engagement, it invites unknown outcomes of translation, as shown in the previous two case studies.

⁸⁶ This included an acquisition by Tate of an artwork by Chinese artist Zheng Guogu (on show in *The Real Thing* as part of the Yangjiang Group) from UK collector Frank Cohen in exchange for financial support to commission new artworks for the exhibition. Furthermore, after the exhibition had taken place, Tate asked the curators to write reports on Chinese art to inform future acquisitions; however their perspectives were largely ignored and the Tate collected artists whose prominence was dictated by the market, such as Ai Weiwei.

The translation of *The Real Thing* could not avoid the influence of two other art-world events. First, critical attention was still being given to *China Power Station: Part I* (2006). *The Real Thing* was placed in direct comparison to this show, influencing its translation as it could not be seen in isolation.⁸⁷ Furthermore, the boom of the Chinese art market from 2006 to 2007 caused an unintentional theme to pervade the exhibition: that of the growing global value and commodification of contemporary Chinese art. The curators deliberately tried to distance themselves from this by avoiding the visual clichés of Political Pop and Cynical Realism, Maoist and Social Realist representations as previously discussed in this chapter, which then dominated the art market. However, by commissioning artists to create new, ambitious works, with a total budget of £250,000, the exhibition clearly articulated the commercial value and status of contemporary Chinese art.⁸⁸ Many artworks exemplified this notion, including the six-minute fireworks performance *If I knew the danger ahead, I'd have stayed well clear* (2007) by artist collective the Yangjiang Group.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ It is standard critical practice for exhibitions to be referenced comparatively against previous examples of curatorial practice to provide additional perspectives on translation.

⁸⁸ Donated by the Tate with contributions from private collectors and galleries.

⁸⁹ Artists Zheng Guogu, Chen Zaiyan and Sun Qinglin.



Figure 40 - Yangjiang Group (Zheng Guogu, Chinese, born 1970; Chen Zaiyan, Chinese, born 1971; Sun Qinglin, Chinese, born 1974). *If I knew the danger ahead, I'd have stayed well clear* (2007), Firework performance on the River Mersey, Liverpool, UK. Image courtesy of the artists. Photograph: © Phil Olson.

Costing £50,000, it was commissioned for the opening event.⁹⁰ A combined sound and laser display comprising 20,000 rockets, which fired into the sky from two different barges on the River Mersey adjacent to the Tate Liverpool gallery, it represented a battle in six phases - Battle Stations, Intelligence Gathering, War at Sea, Sea-to-Air Missile Interceptors, Air Raid, Sea-to-Ground-to-Air: The Final Battle. At the end of the event, the words "If I knew the danger ahead, I'd have stayed well clear" were ignited across the River Mersey as if it were a battlefield. This can be interpreted metaphorically as the battlefield between the public and the government in China or the battlefield of the art world between artists and the art market. Here, the Yangjiang Group wanted to make a bold statement to unsettle and

⁹⁰ This was part-financed by UK collectors Frank Cohen and Nicolai Frahm, with additional support from Tate.

appropriate the older generation of artists - delineating a battlefield between emerging and established artists - by making reference through their practice to the gunpowder explosion series works of the distinguished Chinese artist Cai Guo-Qiang.⁹¹ For the remainder of the exhibition period, the performance was displayed within the gallery as a film, a documentary of the event, further projecting its message.

Another artwork that reiterated the unintentional thematic of global cultural value and art as commodification was *Working Progress (Fountain of Light)* (2007) by Ai Weiwei, one of the world's most prolific and controversial contemporary Chinese artists - the work was commissioned by Tate for £100,000.⁹²

⁹¹ Cai was the first Chinese artist with whom I worked as Curatorial Assistant at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 2008. He initially emigrated from China in 1986 to live in Japan, before moving to New York in 1995.

⁹² In 2007, Ai Weiwei was still relatively unknown on the global art stage. Within the last decade, his career has soared, raising his profile to be one of the most prominent figures in Chinese art, and one of the most well-known international artists. *Working Progress (Fountain of Light)* (2007) was part-financed by Urs Meile Galerie, Lucerne and Beijing, and the Northwest Regional Development Agency, in addition to support from Tate.



Figure 41 - Ai Weiwei (Chinese, born 1957). *Working Progress (Fountain of Light)* (2007), Mixed media light installation. Image courtesy of Tate.



Figure 42 - Ai Weiwei (Chinese, born 1957). *Working Progress (Fountain of Light)* (2007), Mixed media light installation. Image courtesy of Tate.

For *The Real Thing*, Ai was inspired by 'Tatlin's Tower', also known as *The Monument to the Third International* (1919), a proposed Constructivist building envisioned by Russian artist and architect Vladimir Tatlin, but which never passed the planning stage due to structural engineering difficulties. With a twin helix structure spiralling up to 400 metres in height, made out of glass, steel and iron, and taller than the Eiffel Tower, it was to have been built in St Petersburg after the Bolshevik Revolution (1917) as a monument to the Comintern (the Third International). It was to have been a symbol of Soviet progress, a product of the era of industrialisation, representing the utopian ambition of a brave new world as part of modernity. Ai's homage to this concept was a mixed-media light installation consisting of a 26-foot-high, four-tonne spiralling iron and crystal glass chandelier with 800 bulbs that floated on the waters of the Albert Dock, again adjacent to the Tate Liverpool gallery. Ai, like Tatlin, encountered engineering difficulties that were successfully resolved during the artwork's short four-month fabrication period. Through referencing Tatlin's iconic architectural design, Ai wanted to remind audiences of the Constructivists' utopian cultural ideals as to how architectural structures can become symbols of radical change - change that is currently taking place in both China and the UK.⁹³ Ai is also highlighting the beauty of ideas before reality stops them from being created. The cost of fabrication to create such grandeur in visual display, and the performative elements of these two artworks, in addition to the fact they were both destroyed during or by the end of the exhibition period, further reiterated the unintended exhibition theme of temporary and changing value, and the commodification of contemporary Chinese art in the global art market.⁹⁴

⁹³ This was to influence the live case study presented in Chapter 5, framed as 'evaluation through practice' - a practice-led component to the research methodology.

⁹⁴ Ai Weiwei's *Fountain of Light* (2007) was destroyed due to the climatic conditions of corrosive water and sea winds within which it was placed whereas Yangjiang Group's *If I knew the danger ahead, I'd have stayed well clear* (2007) was a one-off performance.

Other artists provided a supposed antidote to this art market perspective, in line with the desired curatorial strategy of providing a personal, sincere reflection of contemporary Chinese art in China at that time. They presented an appetite for ruthless humour and freedom of expression in their artistic practices. A key example of this was provided by Xu, the exhibition's co-curator and one of the rising stars of contemporary Chinese art, once referred to as 'the Chinese Damien Hirst' (Hickling 2007). Xu is renowned for his controversial and provocative artistic concepts that have, on many occasions, been censored by the Chinese authorities. His initial proposals for *The Real Thing* included arranging for a group of people to burst in on someone residing in the gallery space, to pounce on them and strip them of their clothing before running away; to gather a drunk from a local bar each night and lock them up in the gallery space while asleep, and for viewers to watch what happens the next day as the detainee wakes up in a new environment; and finally, to give a burglar a number of disposable cameras and have them photograph the interiors of the homes they rob and display the resulting images in the gallery (Groom, Smith & Xu 2007, p. 141). Although Groom and Smith saw these proposals as thorough and critical interpretations of the thematic of "the real thing", they were logistically unfeasible and would have caused severe health and safety issues while crossing legal and acceptable social boundaries. Eventually, Xu proposed two other works including the video installation *8,848 Minus 1.86* (2005), which was finally accepted for the exhibition.



Figure 43 - Xu Zhen (Chinese, born 1977). *8,848 Minus 1.86* (2005), Video and mixed media installation. Image © the artist

8,848 Minus 1.86 (2005) combined similar elements to his other proposed artworks in terms of ambition, provocation and examinations into what Xu saw as “the real thing”. In China, it is believed the height of Mount Everest is 8,848 metres; however, in 1999, an American reading placed it at 8,850 metres.⁹⁵ In response to this, Xu formed a Chinese expedition team that on 22 May 2005 ascended Everest, measuring the mountain’s height again. The team, also in protest at the new measurement, brought back the mountain’s peak equivalent to Xu’s height of 1.86 metres, to display in Shanghai in order to return the mountain to its “real” height. The pinnacle of Everest was placed in a refrigerated cabinet like a souvenir and trophy,

⁹⁵ Since the height of Mount Everest was first recorded in 1856 by the British surveyor-general of India, Sir George Everest, it has constantly been disputed, most recently between Nepal and China in 2010, when it was finally recognised as being 8,848 metres tall. This includes the snowcap on top of the mountain’s rock formation, without which it would otherwise measure 8,844 metres.

presented alongside expedition equipment, maps, and a video that documented Everest before and after, showing the team's success.

When it was first shown in Shanghai, the work provoked outrage among international correspondents based in China who believed the story. They saw it as a crime against nature. What was unknown to the media at that time was the expedition was a simulation and had not taken place. The video digitally manipulated the experience and the peak was sculpted from a papier-mâché-like material. It was a witty, elaborate hoax that aimed to make the viewer question the global reality within which they lived and the truth within the information that is fed to us daily through the media. The interpretive text panel was key, giving a factual and historical account of the artwork. This included information on the Himalayas where Mount Everest is the highest peak, how the mountain's height was measured and recorded, whilst outlining Xu's concept, which was integral to the artwork's understanding. This artwork powerfully asserted the Western influences on China and the contemporary Chinese artists around Xu, and clearly articulated the curatorial strategy of seeking out what was "real" in China at that time. To further push the provocative boundaries of his artistic practice, Xu decided to take an alternative approach to his obligatory curatorial text included as part of the exhibition's catalogue.

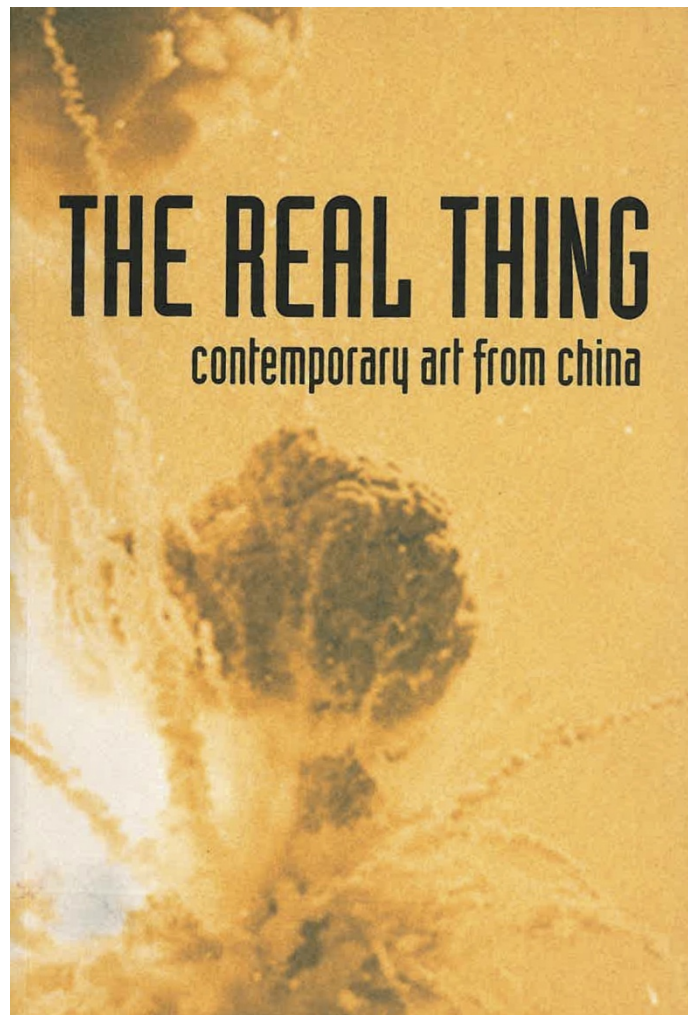


Figure 44 - Front cover of the exhibition catalogue for *The Real Thing* (2007). Published by Tate Liverpool.

Instead of writing a standardised, personal explanation of the reasoning behind the curatorial strategy, like Groom and Smith, he wanted to provide a more complicated standpoint by making 55 statements voicing 'Elementary and all-pervasive information concerning contemporary Chinese art', the majority of which were sourced from the Chinese online contemporary art community and platform called 'heyshehui.com' (Groom, Smith & Xu 2007, p. 24).⁹⁶ Key phrases, emblematic of the curatorial strategy for the exhibition,

⁹⁶ Note, '*hei shehui*' in Chinese carries a double meaning. '*hei*' means black but also sounds like '*hi*'. '*shehui*' means society but when paired with '*hei*' it means

included '009 We've made a profession of doing things unprofessionally', '013 I really think that there hasn't been much advance in the last few years, other than an increasing number of individuals learning how to make their works fulfil the appearance of 'good artworks', '018 To a real extent, it says everything about the problems with the professional curators, where exhibitions organised by artists themselves are better than the ones put together by a curator', '025 China should not be a term', '044 We should put artists first, China second', '046 Art criticism right now is developing at an incredibly slow pace, and lacks any real sphere of influence' (Ibid., p. 24-27). This text functions as an additional curatorial platform and an artwork in its own right and part of the exhibition's translation from Chinese to international contexts, as it not only reinforced the title of the exhibition but it also gave a real, personal insight into the viewpoints of contemporary Chinese artists, referencing the process of glocal artistic production and infrastructures in China at that time. These perspectives would usually have been difficult to access in a Western context, as the information was previously only presented in Mandarin Chinese.

What made Groom, Smith and Xu's curatorial strategy distinct from the previous two case studies were three unique curatorial components: investment in the creation of a curatorial strategy that was directly informed by the artists' practice and concepts through the submission of proposals for new work, presented in both interpretive and visual terms, rather than from a singular curatorial voice; a sensitivity to, and acknowledgement of, the influence of the art market, its commodification and value, both in literal and aesthetic terms; and an openness and flexibility in the exhibition design process and installation of works in the institution and peripheral locations to

mafia or gangster. When spoken, it sounds like "hello society" unless you are making specific reference to gang contexts. This website was set up by a group of contemporary Chinese artists including Xu Zhen in 2006. It is the predecessor to Art-Ba-Ba (<http://www.art-ba-ba.com>), a contemporary Chinese community now explicitly run by Xu's more recent collective the Madeln Company. It is the most active internet forum on contemporary Chinese art, providing an open discursive platform for artists, art critics and the art audience.

test new artistic and curatorial practices. By representing what was “the real thing” in China at that time, it was the moment when contemporary Chinese art, and its exhibition and curation, finally became glocal, and the curator a transcultural agent, on the global art stage.

Although, the curatorial strategy for *The Real Thing* can be seen as the commercial sensationalism of China and contemporary Chinese art referenced against the boom of the Chinese art market, this can be said of all the case studies in this Chapter - they each represent a unique time in the development of Chinese art’s cultural economy. *The Real Thing* attempted a transition from these underlying economic pressures, showing a new self-confidence and maturity in the work of Chinese artists and curators that came from a personal understanding of what ‘New Internationalism’ was to China, to the extent ‘You could put *The Real Thing* on today and it would still be relevant’ (Smith 2016, pers. comm, 18 September).⁹⁷

4.4 – Towards China’s ‘New Internationalism’

Recent frenzied interest - economic for the most part - that has been aroused by the explosion of the “China phenomenon”, has to some degree completely disoriented the West (Dal Lago 2008, p. 38).

Through the examination of these unique and complex curatorial strategies, each case study attempts to reflect on past translations of the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art, whilst endeavouring to implement new modes of translation. This is to ensure China and contemporary Chinese art is understood away from the commercial implications of commodification of the art market, not as a brand where artworks are simply “Made in China”. The case studies presented exhibitions within internationally renowned art festivals and contemporary art institutions, situated in the global cultural hubs and centres of Venice and New York, alongside cultural cities of San

⁹⁷ The exhibition also portrayed a personal understanding of what ‘New Internationalism’ was to Liverpool, as the following year, the city became Europe’s Capital of Culture (2008).

Francisco and Liverpool. These events and venues were then, and are still now, influential in predicting global trends within contemporary art, not just limited to contemporary Chinese art. However, as Gao predicted in 1998, China would begin to challenge these Western and international cultural hubs, through a new cultural Sinocentrism developed in the wake of the Chinese art market boom from 2006 to 2007. Integral to China's 'New Internationalism', it was responsible for 'the "museumification" of China', as will be discussed in the introduction to the next chapter (Johnson & Florence 2013).

Individually and collectively, the three case studies have been identified as being instrumental in raising the profile of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art through its curation and exhibition over a fourteen period from 1993 to 2007. Thus, making a significant contribution to a Chinese art history. This included the development of new international languages and keywords used to translate curatorial strategies and the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art. Although largely constructed from a Western perspective, the languages have been underpinned by Sinocentric and Westerncentric understandings of Chineseness - where specificity of Chineseness is key - developed in line with new globalised Chinese artistic and curatorial practices. These international languages have provided insight into the unique standpoint of each curator - including their origin, sociopolitical position, *guanxi*, and cultural responsibility - which comes to define their curatorial practice and influence the ways in which they translate. This curatorial standpoint has been further influenced by a curator's first-hand experiences of nationalistic, diasporic and residual Chineseness (Chapter 1, section 1.5): an existence of dislocation and traversal between different Chinese and international locations and cultural hubs.⁹⁸ As such, the curators became bearers of what Bhabha calls 'a hybrid

⁹⁸ Gao and Smith fought hard to gain respect in their new mutual international locations of New York and Beijing respectively, to negotiate and translate their unique understandings of Chineseness in both personal and professional contexts beyond their long-standing expatriate status. Gao Minglu was

identity that initiates cultural change', where it is about cultural adaptation rather than 'cultural pluralism' (1994, p. 55).

In a recent conversation with Smith at Nuo Hotel, Beijing, she reflected on her experiences of curating contemporary Chinese art in the late 1990s and early 2000s, including *The Real Thing*. She stated, curating was 'based on looking at others, on feedback, on wayfinding [...] curating without art theory in mind [...] curating without scholarship' (Smith 2016, pers. comm., 18 September). Similarly, to the first exhibitions of avant-garde Chinese art curated in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Chapter 1, section 1.1). As stated throughout the case studies examinations, curating avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art was often developed from a point of "serendipity" or "curatorial happenstance" and based on an individual and collective social and cultural *guanxi*. Curatorial strategies cannot develop from this point of engagement alone; instead such serendipities must be embedded as a vital part of the process of translation. In order to question how the transcultural curator can implement this knowledge, including the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used to translate exhibitions of avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art in China's 'New Internationalism', it was vital to develop a practice-led component to the research methodology. This live case study, framed as a process of 'evaluation through practice, will now be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

A 'Temporary' China

Our city has become an even more complex organisation of skin and blood vessels. There are countless categories and systems of materials, production, products, circulation, order, emotion, exchange, belief, individual, family, organisations and society [...] I believe that if emotions, organisms and rationality are interwoven in urban life for a long period of time, you will feel its presence [...] research as a synthetic, interdisciplinary, newly established branch of learning is still maturing (Huang 2010, pers. comm., 10 October).

In 2009, the art market boom of 2006 and 2007 for contemporary Chinese art came to an end due to the financial crises in Europe and America. This period of recession did not hinder the development of contemporary Chinese art and its exhibition. Instead, through prolific involvement in art fairs, art festivals including biennials and triennials, and solo and group exhibitions, it established a clear international presence on the global art stage. As the nation embraced 'the notion of contemporary Chinese art officially and on a very widespread level' (Poshyananda et al. 2015, p. 80), there was a new local confidence and investment in the collection of contemporary Chinese art, which fuelled the rise of art galleries and museums in China. Attracting growing support from the Chinese government and Ministry of Culture on a glocal level, this positioned the nation, more specifically the first-tier cities of Beijing and Shanghai, as key cultural hubs and centres on the global art stage. As discussed in Chapter 1, rather than decentralising its inherent Chineseness, it was forcing a Sinocentrism. This was acknowledged by curator and critic Philip Tinari as ironically 'having a conversation about decentring China at a moment precisely when China is becoming increasingly globally central and when power in China is becoming increasingly centralised' (Ibid., p. 79). This paradox in the development of China's cultural infrastructures became a time of "decentring China" versus

“rebalancing China” (Ibid., p. 95).⁹⁹ Renowned Chinese artist Qiu Zhijie frames this recent period within three complementary yet conflicting reimaginings of China.

The first is Chinatown China [...] it's about kung fu and calligraphy, tai chi, feng shui, or dragon dancing. Another China is about Red China, with Chairman Mao poetry, the panda, maybe, and Tian'anmen, of course. And then the third China is under construction, the so-called reform of China or opening of China [...] decentralising of China is already done. It is already finished [...] re-centralising China, is about re-centralising these three aspects, or imaginings, of China (Ibid., p. 83).

The notion of ‘rebalancing’ and ‘re-centralised’ China can be attributed to the election of Xi Jinping as President of the People’s Republic of China in 2013. This period instigated political, economic, social and cultural growth at an unprecedented rate to develop the nation into world leaders in ‘all fields of human endeavour’ (Kuhn 2013). Xi introduced prolific reforms to achieve ‘the great rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation’ and ‘The Chinese Dream’, consolidating power relations by developing ‘the “Two 100s”’ - China as a significantly well-off society by 2021 (the centenary of the Communist Party) and a fully developed nation by 2049 (the centenary of the People’s Republic) (Ibid.).¹⁰⁰ ‘This period of the “Two 100s”’ has also been compared to the rapid intellectual consumption of Western literature further defined by the slogans “Two hundred years in two days” (Smith 2005, p. 13) and the previously mentioned period of ‘Western impact-Chinese response’ (Pi 2005).

These propositions encouraged a new affordability in the production, installation and exhibition of contemporary art in China, while instigating the

⁹⁹ This can be attributed to development of digital, online and networked spaces, which although encourage the decentralisation of global cultural hubs, at the same time, counter decentralisation by reinforcing communities of focus.

¹⁰⁰ ‘The Chinese Dream’ refers comparatively to the American ideology of ‘The American Dream’.

frenetic urbanisation of China, recently identified as China's "building boom" where if 'economic development continues on its current trajectory, it could build a new Chicago every year until 2030' (Foster 2011). China's skylines are changing almost instantaneously; simultaneously, urban and rural neighbourhoods are being regenerated, destroyed or abandoned, creating what have been dubbed 'ghost cities', such as the city of Ordos, left empty in the wake of China's over-zealous urbanisation (Sterbenz 2014).



Figure 45 - Taken from the series *Ordos - A Failed Utopia* (2016) by photographer Raphael Olivier. Image © Raphael Olivier.

This chapter aims to analyse a new critical consciousness regarding the development of cultural infrastructures, including contemporary art galleries, museums and cultural districts, in China, in glocal terms (section 5.1). This will be examined through social spaces and structures of transcultural curating through Ray Oldenburg's methodology of 'third places', artist Celine Condorelli's notion of cultural production through social support structures, and curator Zoe Butt's understanding of the temporal dimension of friendship (section 5.2). These non-Chinese perspectives are vital to discuss alongside the previous chapters' findings, as they directly inform my curatorial practice,

here discussed in the first person - the practice-led component of the research methodology, implemented as a live case study and form of 'evaluation through practice' (section 5.3). Conceived as *The Temporary*, in response to China's temporary cultural sustainability, it functions as a transcultural exchange platform and social intervention space. The platform's inaugural project *The Temporary: 01* critically reflects on what I have described as China's 'architectures of change' (section 5.4); and this chapter concludes by mapping the legacy and future of *The Temporary* (section 5.5).

5.1 – The “Museumification” of China

The Chinese and international media relay many statistics relating to this rapid urbanisation, including President Xi Jinping's unachievable benchmark of building 'one hundred model cities, two hundred model counties, one thousand model districts and ten thousand model towns' by 2015 (Johnson 2013, p. 24), including art galleries, museums and cultural districts to meet the cultural infrastructures of their international counterparts. Guo Xiaoling, Director of the Capital Museum in Beijing, stated, 'China would need to create at least 43,000 museums in the future [...] more than double the amount that currently exists in the US' (Johnson & Florence 2013). Jeffrey Johnson, Director of the China Megacities Lab at Columbia University, New York, stated in 2011 that 386 museums were built in China with inaugurations nearly every day, in comparison to America's museum boom in the 1990s and early 2000s, where only 20 to 40 museums were built annually (Ibid.).

Since 2013, more than one hundred museums were built annually contributing to 'over 3,400 museums in total, equivalent to about one museum for every 380,000 people' where today, the first-tier cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen are in the process of building one museum for every 100,000 to 200,000 people with dedicated "museum zones" (Ibid.). In 2012, Melissa Chiu, then Director of the Asia Society Museum, New York, stated that 'more than 450 museums opened in China

that year, and some estimates projects as many 3,000 more over the next decade' (2014, p. 63). Furthermore, in *ArtAsiaPacific* magazine's *Almanac* editions there were 30 museums exhibiting contemporary art, 316 commercial art galleries and 20 non-profit contemporary art spaces in 2009 (Maerkle 2009, p. 154), rising during the seven-year period of this research to 185 museums exhibiting contemporary art, 830 commercial art galleries and 97 non-profit contemporary art spaces in 2016 (Chu & Xingyu 2016, p. 109). Although AAP's statistical data is considered "non-official", largely sourced from the Ministry of Commerce, it puts a spotlight on the "active footprint" of contemporary arts in all countries in the Asia-Pacific region and is considered a go-to reference, indicative of the developing cultural ecology in China, and in a global context.¹⁰¹

These multiple independent sources make consistent claims about the growth of art galleries and museums in China but the exact numbers differ. Together, they demonstrate mainland China is experiencing a significant shift in the prolific development of new art galleries and museums where there is a clear trend towards what has been called 'the "museumification" of China' (Johnson & Florence 2013) and the start of a Chinese 'museographic practice' (Ha Thuc 2014, p. 46). As understood by Chinese curator, critic and scholar Gao Minglu, China's interest has shifted towards '*Wenhua Chanye*' translated as 'Cultural Industry' (2009, p. 30). Acknowledging that cultural value could no longer come from manufacturing and production alone, Xi began to recognise the importance of artistic innovations in contemporary art, design and architecture. 'The Chinese Dream' was used as an attempt to build new civic identity through new cultural growth, re-envisioning China's national mission 'from Made in China to Created/Designed in China' (Keane 2013, p. 149). As such, China became one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, reclaiming financial status since the recession to become 'the largest art market globally' (Artprice 2016, p. 3). However, the artistic

¹⁰¹ This museumification was witnessed first-hand during fieldwork research in China (2009-12), recorded through my blog *Rachel Marsden's Words* (<http://rachelmarsdenwords.wordpress.com>).

innovations and cultural infrastructures to which Xi alludes were often limited to the over-zealous construction of art galleries and museums.

With a short history of only 15 years, contemporary art galleries and museums make up only two per cent of all art galleries and museums in China. In an attempt to draw focus away from their international counterparts, most are designed by renowned Chinese and international “starchitects” (star-architects), where first-tier cities want to ‘attract designers who can present utopian visions’ (Keane 2013, p. 154). Recent examples include Sifang Art Museum (2013) in Nanjing by Steven Holl, OTC Contemporary Art Terminal (OCAT) (2013) in Xi’an - part of Xian’s concept of being a “Museum City” - Yuz Museum (2014) in Shanghai by Sou Fujimoto, and the forthcoming M+ Museum for visual culture by Herzog & de Meuron, as part of the West Kowloon Cultural District in Hong Kong.



Figure 46 - Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing, China. Designed by Stephen Holl in 2013.
Image © Sifang Art Museum.



Figure 47 - Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China. Designed by Sou Fujimoto in 2014.
Image © Yuz Museum.

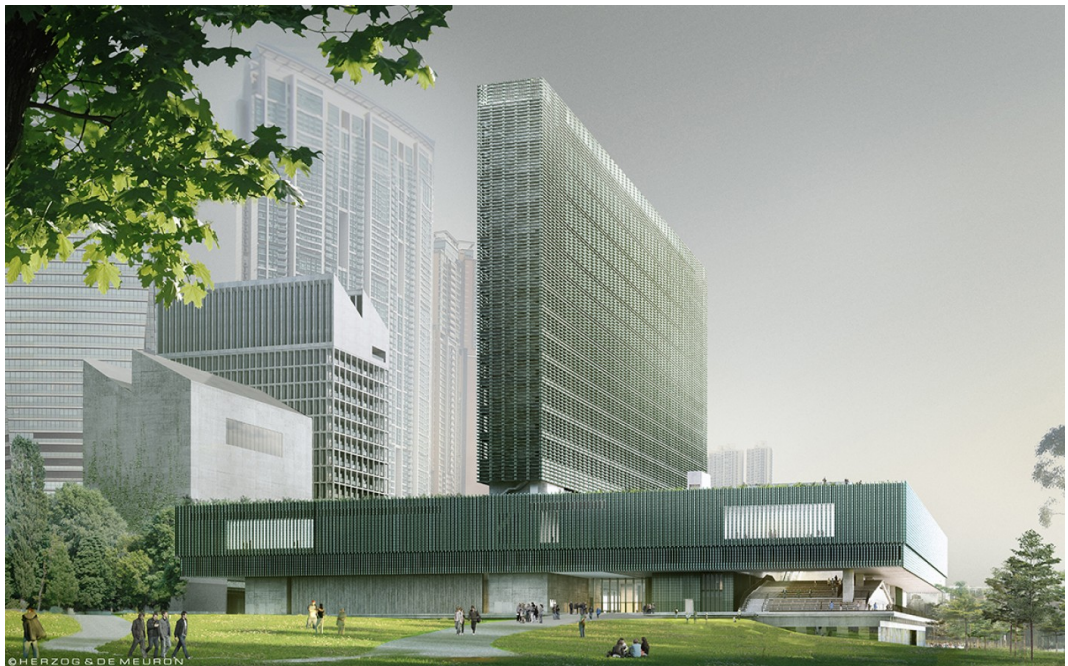


Figure 48 - Visualisation of the proposed M+ Museum for visual culture as part of the West Kowloon Cultural District in Hong Kong by Herzog & de Meuron.
Image © Herzog & de Meuron.

Promoting ‘notoriety and cache [*sic*]’ (Johnson & Florence 2013), cutting-edge design and civic pride, they are often based on Western modernist buildings, seen as ‘mimicking international influences, sometimes to the

point of parody' (Keane 2013, p. 154). Politically motivated as much as they are vanity projects, they are largely funded by collectors, business owners and philanthropists, and often instigated from happenstance - a case of "why not" and "who-knows-who" comparable to the 'curatorial happenstance' that was discussed in the previous chapter. Gao defines this as "Jianghu" (the market) holding hands with 'Guanchang' (the government)' (2012, p. 214). As such, art galleries and museums are seen as a commodity: a purchasable form of cultural kudos that also buys power within the state. By 2014, there were 'nearly 4,000 museums in China, with about 2,560 of them owned by the state' (Chiu 2014, p. 77). State-owned and state-supported art galleries and museums are still a relatively new phenomenon where there are no complete public collections of contemporary art.¹⁰² As Yang Chao, Director of Xi'an Art Museum, states, collections of contemporary Chinese art currently resemble 'random displays of produce in a grocery store with no focus, consistency or management' (2014, p. 38). In addition, there is a noticeable void in the archive of contemporary Chinese art, including its presentation, in mainland China.¹⁰³ As Shanghai-based curator, Biljana Ciric states,

An understanding of the museum as an exhibiting space, rather than as a research-based organisation, has led to the current lack in China of institutions tasked with archiving and making art documentation public [...] no institution in China is currently charged with archiving and making art-related documentation public, as an important part of its mission (2014, p. 10).

¹⁰² Given more time, this would be examined in relation to Arjun Appadurai's (1988) notion that commodities, like people, have social lives or social potential within political systems of exchange. These power plays, limitations and lack of foresight in development, where sustainability is a key issue, are now the impetus for further research into China's cultural infrastructures, ecologies and policies.

¹⁰³ In China, there are no archives, libraries or research centres for use by artists, curators, scholars and researchers. However, there are disparate and specialised archives within specific galleries (largely commercial), artists' studios and people's homes such as the Gao Minglu Contemporary Art Center, Beijing, the latter visited during fieldwork research in China (2009-12). Hong Kong houses the largest contemporary art archive for the region, Asia Art Archive, again visited during fieldwork research in China (2009-12).

Conceived too quickly, up against the constraints of censorship, they are rife with scandal and growing debt with little or no in-house collection or collector affiliation, archive or archival practice, institutional mission, curatorial strategies, established human resources, management or leadership. This creates a potential loss of cultural value, when set in comparison to China's museumification. In turn, this contributes to ongoing problems in the development of their inherent cultural infrastructures and are key contributing factors to the closure of many museums and galleries in China.

Therefore, the cultural infrastructures to which Xi commits to achieving as part of 'The Chinese Dream' are rarely questioned and clearly lack acknowledgment of the socioeconomic and cultural implications for the cities in which the art galleries and museums are being built, on a global level. In addition, the individual and collective identities of their communities - and therefore, their levels of inherent Chineseness - are rarely assimilated. Thus, cultural infrastructures in China often lack the requisite frameworks to develop, conceptualise, run and establish new contemporary art galleries and museums on the global art stage, in comparison to their international counterparts. As Hong Kong curator Caroline Ha Thuc states, they need to be driven by 'a strong curatorial "think tank"' and 'offer cutting-edge artists and curators the opportunity 'to escape mainstream conceptions and to search for their own path' (2014, p. 47). This moment was articulated by Chinese curator Hou Hanru as 'a third way' for cultural infrastructures in China and Asia, evolving from the proliferation of 'globally significant artistic communities' (Hou 2012). Functioning as an 'in-between system, between the state-dominated models of the previous century and the capitalist-dominated models of today', he questions how this model, which I understand as a model of transcultural curating, can be built and sustained (Ibid.). Here, the role of independent organisations and transcultural curators are key in,

[...] the production of intellectual cultural criticism. Curating is not about organising fancy events; it is about stimulating or preserving debate within a creative, dynamic space, one that is

political and even contains the possibility for chaos. It is about trying to materialise an agenda, about producing difference or disruptions in the order (Ibid.).

Instead, they seemingly represent a unique form of temporary cultural sustainability as part of 'The Chinese Dream' - "how many museums can we build and at what pace?" rather than 'what content will be shown?' (Ha Thuc 2014, p. 46).¹⁰⁴ This raises further questions, including: how is this changing cultural and urban landscape in China translated through artistic and curatorial practices? Concurrently, how do we begin to map its temporary dimension and future impact on a glocal level?

The theoretical trope for contemporary Chinese art post-2008 has not yet been "grouped stylistically" and "in terms of 'isms'", or placed within the chronologies and narratives of Chinese art history, as discussed throughout this research. It can be questioned whether this period remains undefined due to the ongoing development of cultural infrastructures in China, or whether it even must be defined. As Hong Kong curator (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung states, it is often 'a compulsion of academics to categorise or define modernity, turning it into a contemporary now, rather than taking a step back' (2010, pers. comm., 9 November). In turn, Gao Minglu calls for 'more advanced methodologies and perspectives for the creation of both art and art criticism' in China (2009, p. 32). This lack of definition within the rhetoric of a new catalytic 'Third Space' (as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.2) creates an opportunity for new and unknown translations through the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art, in turn cultivating a space for new artistic and curatorial practices where,

¹⁰⁴ An example comes from the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University which, in 2008, initiated *China Megacities Lab* - an experimental research laboratory and design studio focusing on the 'Future of the Museum in China'. The lab uses a research methodology of 'interdisciplinary practice' and 'global conversation' to identify trends in how museums are defined, the new social, cultural and political roles the museum plays, and the new 'architectural forms and spatial organisations' (SLAB Architecture PLLC 2008). I believe research of this kind is vital in providing insight into how galleries and museums' in China function towards a networked future sustainability.

Contemporary Chinese art should have the potential to 'grow', through public exhibitions and, more specifically, the ways in which it is read or misread. Its 'variability' will not necessarily lead the audience to a single destination of understanding. Instead, it stimulates our curiosities and creativity, which live not only in the process of art practice, but also that of viewing and reading, and indeed releases art itself from artists' studios (Jiang 2011, p.17).

5.2 – Models of Transcultural Curating

Curatorship as a practice typically involves structuring relationships and imposing organisational frameworks on works displayed within an exhibition through various forms of classification including monographic, chronological, geographical, cultural, material or medium and thematic groupings [...] Beyond this meta-level, curators play a more specific role in constructing meanings around works, including those from differing cultures (Chandler 2009).

Gao Minglu believes that to lay the foundation for new cultural examinations, and thus, translations, through the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art in the future, 'is about re-establishing a new "Third Space"' (2009, p. 32). This is further identified by Chang Tsong-zung as 'a public platform where people want to congregate' where 'you need to have the tools and instruments of empowerment, the intellectual machinery, the intellectual resources to do this (Chang 2010, pers. comm., 9 November). As presented in Chapter 2, this new catalytic 'Third Space' aims to activate and cultivate 'contact zones' between the differences, silences and spaces of translation to become a transcultural 'mode of being'. Functioning as a temporal dimension, it provides social spaces and structures for cultures to meet, exchange and explore contradictory knowledges, practices and experiences through dialogic and dialectical relationships. This can be directly assimilated to urban sociologist, Ray Oldenburg's methodology of 'third place', described as,

[...] the core settings of informal public life [...] a generic designation for a great variety of public places that host the

regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work (Oldenburg 1989, p. 16).

In contrast to these first and second places of home and work, third places including bars, coffee shops and supermarkets are central to local democracy and a community's social life. As such, third place 'isn't home, and isn't work - it's more like the living room of society at large (Hickey cited in CAM 2012). These gathering places are essential to the development of public life - people can interact regardless of their differences where 'conversation is the primary activity' (Oldenburg 1989, p. 42).¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, these places are inclusive, neutral and on level ground, and aim to 'counter the tendency to be restrictive in the enjoyment of others by being open to all and by laying emphasis on qualities not confined to status distinctions in current society' (Ibid., p. 24).

Oldenburg's concept is further underpinned by the terms 'agora' (Greek) meaning central public gathering space, and 'forum' (Roman) meaning public square, where these definitions 'both form the basis of community and the celebration of it' producing social and psychological, rather than socioeconomic and political, consequences, which inform everyday public life and changes in society (Ibid., p. 14). Therefore, art galleries and museums can be defined as third places, as can transcultural curatorial strategies and their multidimensional platforms, within and beyond cultural institutions. They attempt to acknowledge yet avoid the influence of cultural identity - in the case of this research, inherent Chineseness and Sinocentrism - to become decentralised, open platforms of enquiry to encourage multiple rather than seemingly finite and complete translations through the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art. Thus, third places function as 'institutions of mediation between the individual and larger society' (Ibid., p. xv). Regardless of geographical or cultural context, third

¹⁰⁵ These conversations also exist digitally, online through virtual environments, creating a forum between the real and virtual, virtual and real. They actively immerse global audiences in new artistic and curatorial practices.

places 'the world over share common and essential features' (Ibid., p. 20) to become a universal idea.

Although it is a near-impossible task due to the inherent complexity of third places, they attempt to counter the influence of social class and cultural identity, therefore deconstructing hierarchies of power - in the case of this research, Chineseness and Chinese sociopolitical control. People come together for the freedom third places provide to meet, integrate, engage and experience without judgement, encouraging a collective 'belongingness' that Oldenburg defines as a 'reliable form of friendship' (Ibid., p. 64). Oldenburg even cites the Chinese proverb 'a humble friend in the same village is better than 16 influential brothers in the Royal Palace' (Ibid.), which has been demonstrated in the discussions of the development of artists' villages in Chapter 1 and case studies examinations in Chapter 4. These third places are about affiliation, allegiance and harmony. However, they do not guarantee reliability or dependability, 'against loneliness' or the creation of "instant communities"; therefore, a fundamental effect of third places is 'the "paradox of sociability"' - how one chooses with whom to have, and how to sustain, friendships (Ibid., p. 61).¹⁰⁶ Reinforcing the previous chapters' examinations of the development of social and cultural *guanxi*, including from a point of individual or collective "serendipity" or "curatorial happenstance", the third place establishes social spaces and structures, which includes the notion of friendship, as vital to transcultural curation – a current trend among artists and curators in Europe that will now be examined.

UK artist Celine Condorelli considers that social support structures are essential to cultural production, where friendship is fundamental to this as a

¹⁰⁶ In Chinese, the term and concept of 'harmony (*hexie*)' has a dual meaning. An ideological buzzword of the current sociopolitical regime in China, it is, on the one hand, a literal understanding of harmony as balance. On the other, it used ironically by Chinese internet users to reference the "harmonising" of Chinese people through censorship and control. Ultimately, it is a term and concept used to discuss harmony within a Chinese and global ideology.

curatorial practice in itself. Akin to Oldenburg's third place, friendships 'claims to be the true form of the universal' functioning on multiple and simultaneous levels of friendship including 'mutual support', 'shared loneliness rather than over explicit togetherness' and 'solidarity' (Condoirelli 2013, p. 71). They create close linkages and connections between people, things and experiences; therefore, it is not just a relationship but also a process, much like translation, which is 'productive and cooperative', 'pragmatic', 'beyond sameness' and involving 'affinity without finality' (Ibid., pp. 72-73). Reinforcing the notion of the transcultural as a 'mode of being', it is 'a way of acting in the world' (Ibid., p. 32), leading towards the building of a common space, the 'in common', or to 'a form of communing' (Ibid., p. 69). This is achieved by,

[...] putting fragments in relationship to each other, so that the cumulative sum of these things – words, ideas – somehow propose something that each part alone could not; through this I speak, not so much through an individual authorial voice, but through a multiplicity of voices (Ibid., p. 64).

This latter remark has been previously discussed through Maharaj's understanding of the international space in the 1990s (Chapter 2) as 'the meeting ground for the multiplicity of tongues, visual grammars and styles' (Hall & Maharaj 2001, p. 26). In this chapter, Condoirelli's 'multiplicity of voices' functions within the universal and decentralised transcultural space, rather than within the difference and otherness of the conflicted multicultural space. Curator, writer and educator Maria Lind, Director of Tensta Konsthall in Stockholm, deconstructs the notion of 'the curatorial' as emerging 'in the multiplicity of connections and layers' (Lind 2012), where it is,

[...] not so much the product of curators as it is the fruit of the labor of a network of agents [...] a viral presence that strives to create friction and push new ideas [...] a temporary frisson (Lind 2009, p. 103).

This chapter largely focuses on the collective voice of artists and curators within social spaces and structures rather than individual voices as temporary agents, mediators and intermediaries. However, in China, third

space is understood as '*Yi Pai*' - an individual space where 'artists must have an independent identity, independent mind and independent personality' (Gao 2012, p. 216). It does not define artistic styles or movements; rather, its theories are concerned with the epistemology of art encompassing 'culture first', 'the state of life', 'openness in the language between East and West', and 'art itself' (Ibid.). As such, third space as *Yi Pai* is already a common characteristic of contemporary Chinese artists and curators today, but what about within China's cultural infrastructures? As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, the art gallery and museum model is changing in China. Chinese curator, writer and artist Ou Ning identifies one part of this shift, where 'contemporary art museums appear more and more like shopping malls, as the bustling of art bookstores and cafes almost takes over the existence of exhibitions' (2014, p. 126). Clearly third spaces, underpinned by *Yi Pai*, they are transformed into public platforms, which function 'as a social network, supported by a local community' (Chiu 2014, p. 77).

This is reflected in curator Zoe Butt's observations of the curatorial terrain of China and Vietnam. In 2016, she identified how significant the 'domestic environments' of friendship are to 'sustaining the development of artistic languages and forms' (Butt 2016, p. 207), similarly to the discussions of social and cultural *guanxi* in Chapter Two. She prefers the use of the term 'friendship' as opposed to 'professional appointments', as 'friendship demands a respect for time, a deference for the long-term in building social forms of knowledge, a respect for the role of honour in failure while searching for success' (Ibid., p. 209). Again, highlighting the multiple and simultaneous levels of friendship means it functions in a temporal dimension, similarly to 'Third Space'. More specifically, friendship is about the,

[...] dialogic intertextuality of engaging artists and their art to create encounters between aesthetics and politics – it's about facilitating time, performing time, imprinting time and producing time [...] Time that only in those in friendship can truly critically understand (Ibid., p. 208).

Social spaces and structures of transcultural curating are unique to the communities of people and time in which their friendships are constructed, where all friendships require continued investment and commitment, mutual recognition, respect and trust, and openness and transparency – similarly to translation. As such, transcultural friendships ‘have a breadth and variety typically greater than that found in other forms of friendship’ (Oldenburg 1989, p. 63). In relation to this, it can be interpreted that translation can only occur when true friendships are established. Furthermore, when friendships are harder to foster, break apart or fail, it reflects the difficulties of mistranslation and the realm of the untranslatable. This rather literal comparison of the development of friendships to translation is not necessary to examine further in this research. Instead, it is more important to note the influence of cultural mobility on the development of friendships, social spaces and structures.

Today, the transcultural curator, or ‘nomadic curator’, is becoming ‘increasingly responsible for finding the new in far-off places’ (O’Neill 2012, p. 74). Regularly travelling to develop new social spaces and structures in glocal terms, they are cultural nomads who are “passport ready” as ‘travel is one of the predetermining conditions for the production of art, its circulation and primary experience’ (Ibid., p. 73). Their curatorial practices and research specialities become largely defined by their diasporic dislocation and traversal, regardless of the friendships – true or broken – they have created. In turn, their practices function beyond the notion of ‘curating-as-exhibition-making’ and ‘curating-as-production’, as,

[...] modes of becoming - research-based, dialogical practices in which the processual and serendipitous overlap with speculative actions and open-ended forms of production (Ibid.).

This reflects on previous discussions of curatorial strategies that often involve too much “research curating” and not enough “curating research” (Chapters 2 and 3). These examinations of social spaces and structures of transcultural curating can be seen to contribute to the former through relationships, yet at the same time, contribute to the latter through process.

Here, transcultural curating becomes a constant renegotiation of curatorial convention. Granted, there is still the space for historical and conceptual exhibition narratives and chronologies, as have been examined in previous chapters; however, they are now supplementary to a wider, glocal set of artistic and curatorial practices, as will now be examined through the practice-led component of the research methodology, *The Temporary*.

5.3 – *The Temporary as Ideogram*

It seems that all those modern buildings you see from the hilltop shouldn't be there, but they've suddenly emerged before your eyes, like a mirage in the ocean or desert. I use the phrase *hǎishìshènlóu* (mirage) to indicate the seemingly surreal feeling of such modern architecture in the East (Wu 2005, p. 73).

A conceptual undercurrent throughout this chapter is the “temporary”, as referenced through the temporary cultural sustainability of China’s rapid museumification, the temporal dimension of a new catalytic ‘Third Space’ and friendship, and the notion of the curatorial as “a temporary frisson”.¹⁰⁷ These transitory and momentary happenings in which buildings and architecture, art, exhibitions, events, performances, spaces and places are produced and developed, opened and closed, created and destroyed, and only in part documented for the future, have defined China’s century. When negotiating this first-hand, seeing the city as platform - as a set of social spaces and structures - I tried to understand and accept their changing presence and my place within them, including an appropriated embodied Chineseness. This instigated a want and need to translate my temporary experiences through practice, as such through a process of “research curating” and “curating research”.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, in January 2014, *The*

¹⁰⁷ Interestingly, in Mandarin, there is no direct translation of ‘temporary’. The closest word is ‘*linshi*’ meaning the instant something happens.

¹⁰⁸ Reflecting on my experiences of living, working and researching in China, largely Shanghai (2009-12), in addition to other Chinese cities including Beijing, Tianjin, Shenzhen, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Nanjing, Chongqing, Xi’an, Guangzhou and Hong Kong (2009-16).

Temporary was conceived as the practice-led component of the research methodology - a live case study and form of 'evaluation through practice'.

The Temporary is a transcultural exchange platform and social intervention space created to examine temporary experiences of China's urban, sociopolitical and cultural change in a glocal context through visual arts, architecture, design, music, sound and performance. Here, space is not fixed to a place, city, cultural hub or centre; instead it functions as temporary space in a (third) place relevant to the project's contexts, transitory and nomadic in nature, similarly to the role of the transcultural curator. Prior to the development of the inaugural project *The Temporary: 01 (tt_01)*, it was important to create a brand for *The Temporary*, which was integral to visually and publicly communicate the platform's concept. For this and when needed, it was appropriate to collaborate with other creative professionals who had the requisite skills to complete the tasks I was not qualified to undertake.

The branding was created by a local freelance graphic designer, Adam Grüning, whom I have known for five years and since the platform's outset. This pre-existing relationship with Grüning and understanding of his creative practice enabled more fluid communication of *The Temporary's* concept and visual aims. It was to be seen as an ideogram – a graphic symbol that represents an idea or concept where every part of its form is assigned a value – and as such, intrinsically linked to the key aims and examinations of *The Temporary*. Initially, Grüning proposed the logo below, presented as a shorthand version of the full title, simply communicating the visual idea of connecting and bridging cultures, where the bridge over the top of the two letter t's implied a finite and direct connection between the two different cultures.



Figure 49 - Initial shorthand logo for *The Temporary* (2014). Designed by Adam Grüning. Image © Rachel Marsden

As I understand, this logo as ideogram can be viewed as a Chinese character.¹⁰⁹ A logical step, incorporated as part of the design process, was to make a visual comparison between the logo and Chinese characters through a process of public research and response to see if there was generative potential in its translation. As outlined in the introduction to this research, English is my mother tongue while my written and spoken knowledge of Mandarin, Chinese is basic; therefore, it was essential to source responses from native Chinese speakers or those who have advanced knowledge of the language.

To gain a broad, diverse and global set of responses, the logo was shared via personal social media accounts, specifically Facebook, Instagram and WeChat (*Weixin*). At the time of the logo's creation, Facebook was the world's number one social network with 1.28 billion active users, where I had 1,542 friends; Instagram was the fastest growing social media platform – greater than Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest combined, with more 200 million users sharing over 20 billion images globally – where I had 604 followers, and WeChat, the most powerful phone application in China, had 396 million active users, where I had 109 contacts. This demonstrated a

¹⁰⁹ This notion of ideogram as Chinese character is central to the artistic practices of Xu Bing (Chapter 4) and his preoccupation with the transformation of language, cultural assumptions and linguistic translation between Chinese and non-Chinese contexts.

combined potential audience of 2,255 people from whom I attempted to gain responses about the visual comparison of the draft logo to Mandarin Chinese characters.

Instantaneous in nature through their speed of information sharing, these three social media platforms were chosen for different reasons. The first was to make sure content was accessible to large audiences in Chinese and non-Chinese contexts, as state restrictions in China censor social media platforms such as Facebook, although it is still accessible with the use of a VPN (Virtual Private Network). Second, Instagram is solely an image-sharing app. Finally, WeChat is the most powerful app in China with 396 million users. It was hoped those responding to the logo would suggest Chinese characters instinctively, giving as close a visual comparative translation as possible.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, the online exercise aimed to identify whether the logo could be further underpinned in a conceptual and contextual sense by the translation and thus, meaning of the Chinese characters. An image of the logo was posted twice online (27 January 2014 and 8 June 2014) with the question 'In an ideogram/pictogram sense, what does this logo for *The Temporary* translate to in Mandarin Chinese?' Screenshots of this process are shown on the following pages.

¹¹⁰ Here, translation is stated in a semiotic context - meaning-making through the study of signs - which is different to how translation is understood in relation to this research, as discussed in Chapter 2.



Figure 50 - Initial design for *The Temporary* logo posted on Facebook. Image © Rachel Marsden.



Figure 51 - Initial design for *The Temporary* logo posted on Instagram. Image © Rachel Marsden.

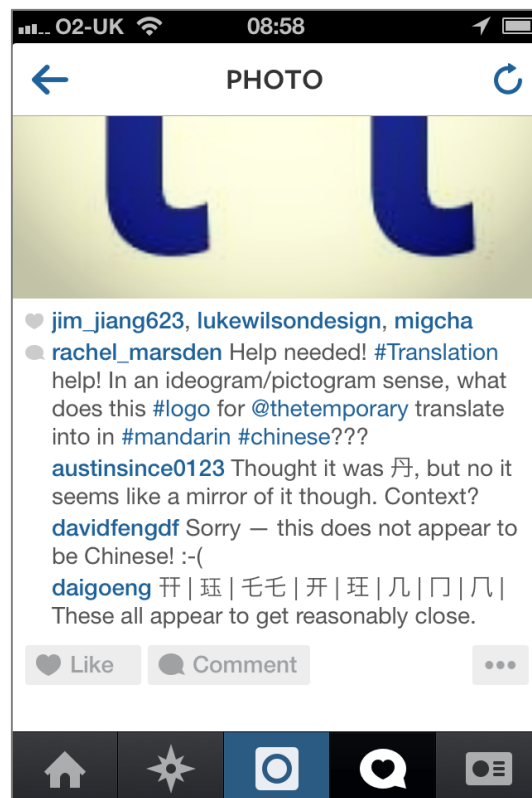


Figure 52 - Initial design for *The Temporary* logo posted on Instagram. Image © Rachel Marsden.

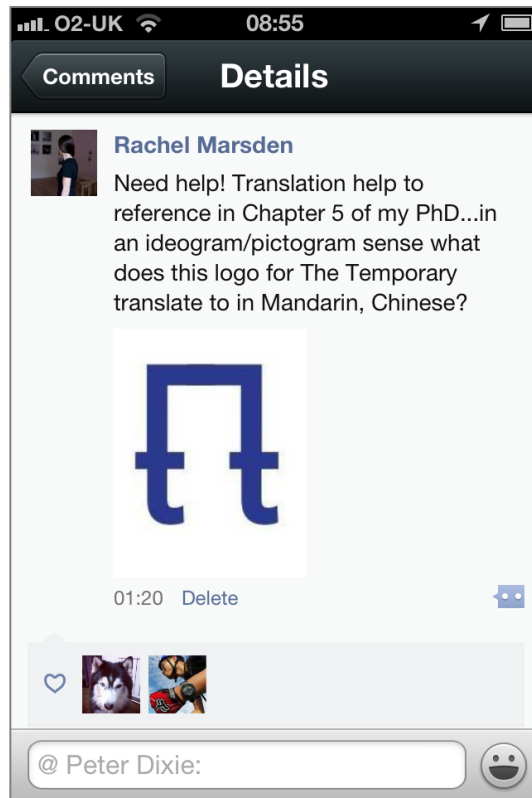


Figure 53 - Initial design for *The Temporary* logo posted on WeChat (*Weixin*).
Image © Rachel Marsden.



Figure 54 - Initial design for *The Temporary* logo posted on WeChat (*Weixin*).
Image © Rachel Marsden.

Furthermore, using the Chinese dictionary mobile phone application, *Ktdict C-E (Chinese-English Dictionary)*, I began to repeatedly draw the logo with my fingertip, as if a Chinese character with five-stroke order, to see if it would trigger another set of visual translations and thus, meanings.



Figure 55 - Use of Ktdict C-E (Chinese-English Dictionary) app to trigger visual translation of *The Temporary* logo. Image © Rachel Marsden

This collaborative process of research and response suggested the logo had multiple translations in its structural parts and as a full character.¹¹¹ These included,

¹¹¹ It is interesting to note the backgrounds of some of the respondents. Many were friends and colleagues from Shanghai, China, where some statements also came from artists who were included as *The Temporary* 's inaugural project.

- 北(*bei*) – North or to be defeated;
- 门(*men*) – door or field of endeavour;
- 氏(*shi*) – maiden name or family;
- 七(*qi*) – the number seven 一(*yi*) meaning the number one, where 七七 would mean the number 717;
- 匕(*bi*) – dagger;
- 卅(*kuang*) – pig tail hair style;
- 卜(*bo*) – to forecast or estimate;
- 丹(*dan*) meaning red or 比(*bi*) meaning compare/contrast;
- 网(*wang*) meaning network (Yung Ma, Assistant Curator of M+, Hong Kong, China-born);
- 时 时 (*shi shi shi*) meaning time plus time, with 士(*shi*) ‘a designer could make it look a bit like a plus/minus sign, if you know what I mean, so adding to the concept of “temporary” as being time plus/minus time, and 士 adds the scholarly aspect’ (Christopher Paul Gill, artist, UK-born, based in China);
- 冉(*ran*) meaning slowly, gradual passing of time (Peng Zuqiang, artist and filmmaker as part of *The Temporary: 01*, China-born, based in London, UK);
- If visually in English of the two t’s (in other words “tt”) then 啼(*ti ti*) meaning sob (from 哭啼 (*kukutiti*) meaning sobbing) (Amanda Pateman, UK-born, based in Shanghai, China);
- 冊(*ce*) (with an additional central line) meaning book or volume; 朋(*peng*) (again with an additional central line) meaning friends or two moons; 廿(*nian*) (seen as tt upside down) meaning the number 20; 月(*yue*) (missing one stroke) meaning moon or month/monthly. Strangely enough, the icon is a mirror image of all the Chinese words (the tick at the bottom always points to the other side, to the left) (Enoch Cheng, artist and writer, previous Programmes Manager at Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong, Hong Kong-born);
- A mirror of 丹(*dan*) meaning red (Austin Li, PhD research student, China-born, based in the UK);

- 开(*qian*) meaning of even level; 𠂇(*zhe zhe*) meaning, as a singular character, to depend on or entrust with, 开(*kai*) meaning to open or start, 玨(*Jue*) meaning gems mounted together, 几(*ji*) meaning how many, almost or small table, 冂(*jiong*) meaning wide. These are reasonably close visually (Paul Jones (AKA HIGE), musician and sound artist as part of 'The Temporary: 01', UK-born, based in the UK);
- 门 (*men*) meaning door or field of endeavour (Peter Dixie, photographer as part of 'The Temporary: 01', UK-born, based in Shanghai, China);
- 氏(*shi*) meaning family or maiden name (Fan Shi San, photographer as part of 'The Temporary: 01', China-born, based in Shanghai, China);
- 𠂇(*dan*) (additional stroke) meaning tender, weak, gradually altering, or 冂(*jiong*) (without the crossing 't' strokes) meaning out of town, the border (Zoénie Deng, Master's student studying at Goldsmiths London, China-born, based in the UK).

From this extensive list of responses, the Chinese characters that collectively epitomised the conceptual meaning of *The Temporary* were:

- 比 (*bi*) – compare/contrast (most similar visually);
- 门 (*men*) – door or field of endeavour;
- 冂 (*jiong*) – out of town, the border;
- 网 (*wang*) – network;
- 𠂇 (*dan*) – gradually altering; and
- 𠂇 (*zhe*) – to depend on or entrust.

Due to the complex narrative and metanarrative of the logo's meaning, it was decided that the logo should be monochromatic to provide greater visual impact.

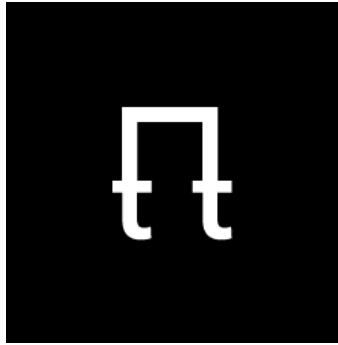


Figure 56 - Final shorthand for *The Temporary* (2014). Designed by Adam Grüning. Image © Rachel Marsden



Figure 57 - Final main logos for *The Temporary* (2014). Designed by Adam Grüning. Image © Rachel Marsden

5.4 – Curating *The Temporary: 01*

Developed alongside the branding for *The Temporary* was the concept for *The Temporary: 01 (tt_01)*, the platform's inaugural project - a collaboration with 44 Chinese and international artists examining their individual and collective experiences and memories of what has been described in this chapter as China's 'architectures of change'.¹¹² As such, the project questioned how identity is constructed through diasporic dislocation and traversal "in the transculture" when living in or between Chinese and non-Chinese contexts. In addition to these personal interpretations and translations of the project's theme, *tt_01* questioned the sustainability of China's urban development, museumification and cultural infrastructures,

¹¹² See Appendix 6, digital link to the exhibition catalogue for *The Temporary: 01 - Architectures of Change*, for a more in-depth presentation of the project, artists and works (http://www.thetemporary.org.uk/uploads/publications/tt_01.pdf).

and how this critique is translated in an international context through different artistic practices. Therefore, *tt_01* aimed to present a universal understanding of China's 'architectures of change'.¹¹³

A key consideration as part of the curatorial strategy for *tt_01* was where to place the project - more specifically, in which arts and cultural organisation(s) or venue(s). It had to be contextually specific to either the academic and Chinese context or to independent artistic and curatorial practices in a glocal context, while being situated in UK cities, which were not considered the obvious cultural hubs or centres of the global art world. Initially, the project was planned for a derelict warehouse space at Minerva Works, Digbeth, Birmingham, UK - a unique industrial area of the city with a growing number of artist and curator-led initiatives, and artists' studios including VIVID Projects, Centrala and Grand Union. Going through a period of regeneration, *tt_01* was to reflect upon this period of change for the area while feeding from its pre-existing third spaces, yet complementing them through further support, introducing new communities of practice and thus, friendships.

However, due to unsuccessful external funding applications for the project, costs of renting the space, overheads and insurance could not be met, and other venues had to be sourced that did not request this financial commitment. This forced the project into a more limited timeframe; therefore, a decision was made to propose the project to venues that were locally accessible through institutional or professional affiliation. As such, ARTicle Gallery (6 March - 4 April 2014), a university-run contemporary art space at the School of Art, Birmingham City University (BCU), UK, and the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art (CFCCA) (17 April - 11 May 2014) in Manchester, the only UK agency for Chinese art in the UK, were selected.

¹¹³ In this section, there is no need for extensive reflexive engagement with the artists and their practices, as this chapter critically reflects on the development of the curatorial strategy for *The Temporary: 01*, rather than the artistic practices curated.

Both venues were easy to secure due to pre-existing affiliations (research student status at BCU since 2009 and Research Curator at CFCCA from 2012-14) and although this was not essential to the curatorial strategy, they also allowed for greater flexibility in terms of access, installation of artworks and experimentation with space, based on familiar and open, fluid lines of communication with gallery staff from when the project was initially proposed.

Originally, *tt_01* was conceived as a sound art project, evolving into four areas of examination of China's "architectures of change" - space (venue, installation, architecture, listening docks and seating), sound (sound works), image (photography, resource materials, project documentation, catalogue and 'The Temporary' legacy online) and experience (films, listening docks and seating, audience feedback and public programming).¹¹⁴ The 44 selected artists comprised visual artists, architects, photographers, musicians and music producers, filmmakers, designers, scholars and arts writers from cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Tokyo, New York, London, Birmingham, Manchester, Los Angeles, Wolverhampton, Stoke-on-Trent, Bristol, Rimini, Berlin and Amsterdam. Of these artists, seventeen were friends or colleagues from the UK or met in China, and the rest were sourced through extended research and studio visits in China and the UK, and through dialogues with those already involved - thus, through a process of "research curating" through their extended networks and social *guanxi*, which in turn created new personal and professional friendships. This instilled a great degree of trust between myself and the artists, as most works were produced "on-site" rather than being pre-prepared and shipped, and were largely installed without the artists' presence.

A key priority as part of the curatorial strategy for *tt_01* was to give artists the freedom to interpret and translate the project's theme through their mutual

¹¹⁴ Online links to *The Temporary* legacy are provided in Appendix 6.

artistic practices: if possible, they were invited to create new works through a process of commission. This included a one-off wallpaper installation by Shanghai-based artist Lu Xinjian, whom I approached to appropriate and commodify one of his pre-existing paintings, *City DNA/London N° 2* (2012). Dominating the gallery space, it was to function as a metaphor and map of how we negotiate and decode cities and spaces as they change and develop. It also directly referenced Mandarin Chinese characters as if a set of abstracted ideograms, similarly to *The Temporary* logo. The wallpaper reminded Birmingham resident and Director of the *Still Walking* festival, Ben Waddington, of,

[...] an urban planner's figure ground map - the rendering of buildings as silhouettes and the removal of all other visual map information. The familiarity and character of the city map is changed utterly when see this. Other patterns can then present themselves and the results can be hypnotic, as is the case on this epic scale. Eventually, junctions, roads, rivers and contours present themselves from the seeming chaos and you might even guess which city this is (Waddington 2014).¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ This was the only formal written review and reflexive account of *The Temporary: 01*, here, it is critiqued alongside the informal audience feedback cards.



Figure 58 - Vinyl wallpaper, detail from *City DNA/London N° 2* (2012) by Lu Xinjian. Originally acrylic on canvas, 280cm x 800cm. Installed at ARTicle Gallery, Birmingham (6 March - 4 April 2014). Image © Rachel Marsden (pp. 10-11 of the catalogue).

UK furniture designers Li-En Yeung and Tom Vousden were commissioned to design and produce seating to be used in conjunction with three listening docks.¹¹⁶ After an extended email exchange to discuss the design process and document fabrication, the outcome was a collection of physical structures - pieces of furniture defined only by their size - that can be described most pertinently as “small-scale architectures”. Concerned with their changing physical use and social interactions, their functionality is not to be immediately understood. The angular two-legged seating structures can be connected, parted, moved and rearranged in endless formations, to be engaged with and changed by the user. Unable to stand alone, they can

¹¹⁶ The docks played thirteen commissioned sound works, also produced on a limited-edition CD, by Aka Hige, WordySoulspeak, Eyebrow, Paul Manasseh, thruoutin, Part Wild Horses Mane on Both Sides, Yan Jun, Yuri Suzuki, Hong Qile (Loga), Dead J (Shao Yanpeng), Wei Wei and Li Jianhong, Ma Haiping, and Roberto Paci Dalò. The CD was produced in a limited edition run of 150 by Ryan Hughes of [RHP] CDRs, available for digital download (<https://rhpcdrs.bandcamp.com/album/the-temporary-01>).

only function when joined together. Then they provide stability to perch, with the goal of encouraging co-operation between strangers - an opportunity and place to meet, talk and exchange ideas, thus, to create new social spaces. Waddington saw the modular furniture,

[...] scattered around the room and you are invited to reassemble it to suit your needs (as happened during the live act). It can be a precarious undertaking and you need to become part structural engineer to make sure your design doesn't topple (Ibid.).

This experience was strengthened through an audience feedback card, which stated 'Loved the seating, made for some interesting conversations and changed things up!' The seats' direct function was to allow audiences to see the project from a different viewpoint, where it was hoped that as more and more people interacted with the small-scale architectures, a larger, more random seating structure would emerge and grow organically. The seating also reflected on China's rapid urban development, where the place of new architecture is not always considered in relation to its neighbours, and where they must be thought of in relation to the city, and its inhabitants, as a whole.



Figure 59 - 'Small scale architecture' seating (2014) designed by Li-En Yeung. Fabrication by Tom Vousden. Plywood and pine. Dimensions variable. Images © Rachel Marsden (pp. 14-15 of the catalogue in Appendix 6).

Works by ten photographers were displayed in digital and print formats portraying abstract, partly unidentifiable 'architectures of change' - architectural, urban and social factions of China and the UK.¹¹⁷ These were displayed through a series of visual topologies, grouping the works to collectively map a fundamental overview of China's 'architectures of change'. Rather than individually presenting and labelling the works, each topology was assigned a key (Appendix 7). This encouraged audiences to view the works without descriptors, which could have influenced the process of interpretive translation.

The photographers' work, scrambling and reassembling sizes, locations and even the photographers themselves, better revealing the themes of the exhibition. Some are apparent for their meaning, such as the former Shanghai residents returning to

¹¹⁷ The photographers were Liz Hingley, Daniels Langeberg, Phillip and Anthony Reed, Peter Dixie, Mengxi Zhang, Xie Jiankun, Xiaoxiao Xu, Fan Shi San, and Li Hui.

their homes, now rubble, being dwarfed by a wall of tower blocks behind them. Other images are more personal reflections; snapshots of disorientation (Ibid.).

Therefore, audiences questioned where the works were from and who they were by, while synthesising their own connections and assemblages between each photography or topology.



Figure 60 - Visual topologies. Photographic works included as part of *The Temporary: 01 - Architectures of Change*. Installed at ARTicle Gallery, Birmingham (6 March - 4 April 2014). Images © Rachel Marsden (pp. 102-103 of the catalogue, Appendix 6).



Figure 61 - Visual topologies. Photographic works included as part of *The Temporary: 01 - Architectures of Change*. Installed at ARTicle Gallery, Birmingham (6 March - 4 April 2014). Images © Rachel Marsden (pp. 102-103 of the catalogue, Appendix 6).

This was acknowledged by the public where one audience feedback card stated 'I like the range of media used in this project. The curator has clearly explored the issues of her culture and the response to city life. It is colourful, imaginative and nostalgic as it tackles journeys through the urban environment of Japan (If I have this wrong I apologise).' This statement reflects in part what was to be achieved through the visual topologies – for the photographic works to be translated as universal, rather than being defined by their geographic specificity. Recently, this notion was discussed in a conference paper on urban photographic practices in China, which have since resonated in my reflections of *tt_01*,

There is a flattening as a result of topographical realities - this flattening brings contrasting spaces into close proximity. As they *are* in the space. No long lenses are needed to force these things together, they clash like tectonic plates in a geological cataclysm (Brake & Aitken 2016).

I believe this is represented through the visual topologies in *tt_01* and alludes to the rapid and frenetic urban development and museumification of China today. Also, the tectonic metaphor aligns with the notion of 'contact zones' as created in the new catalytic 'Third Space' of translation.

5.5 – *The Temporary Legacy*

By experimenting with social spaces and structures, formal and discursive models of transcultural curating as part of the curatorial strategy, *tt_01* presented an opportunity to become immersed in the artists' works and thus, their experiences of China's 'architectures of change'. This was explicitly demonstrated through the 'small scale architectures', visual topologies and listening docks where experiences of the latter were provided through audience feedback: the 'music was mesmeric and gave me no end of images in my head. Felt like a fugue state.' This implies a loss of one's identity when experiencing the sound works. Other audience feedback directly questioned the context of the project, stating: 'China is cool, but it scares me' and 'Will this fast-paced lifestyle spin out of control?' Such responses align with one of the key aims of the *tt_01* project, as they question how identity is constructed through diasporic dislocation and traversal "in the transculture" when living in or between Chinese and non-Chinese contexts and the future sustainability of China's architectures of change.

Waddington's review began by framing *tt_01* alongside a series of exhibitions on walking, which were happening across Birmingham at the same time, therefore contextualising the project within the broader context of the Birmingham art scene. Calling the project 'concise', covering themes of 'moving through a city, looking for patterns and weighing up how we feel about our surroundings', while noting the influence of the gallery's history, a space 'often overlooked, itself in a jewel of a building', his article unfolded as a comparative analysis between Birmingham and Shanghai (Waddington 2014). 'Being constantly being [*sic*] wrong-footed by one's own city is an experience much closer to home', observed Waddington, acknowledging

that urban development in Shanghai is not dissimilar to Birmingham as they both experience unsentimental associations with their existing architectural histories, watch the demolition of high-rises and fight to save iconic buildings,

Rachel knows she won't be able to find her way round once familiar streets in Shanghai after just one year away [...] That exploration feels like it should be heavy, dispiriting and pessimistic but it is curiously liberating, spiritual and certainly sublime (Waddington 2014).

Acknowledging 'a far east focus' developed from my personal connections in Shanghai within an 'international phenomenon' (Ibid.), he describes his understanding of China through the exhibition as an 'overwhelming, incomprehensible and uncontrollable "Ultrametropolis" that leaves its citizens baffled, blitzed and bamboozled, spluttering in its own dust cloud' (Waddington 2014). Immediately reciprocating personal feelings of what it means to negotiate China's architectures of change, he further stated, 'if your exploration is to be genuine, then it needs to be done across a variety of scales and media, as was represented throughout the exhibition (Ibid.).

It must be noted, *tt_01* was entirely self-funded: many of the artists dedicated their time, energies and work without payment, or only for a small fee to cover the production costs and delivery of their work.¹¹⁸ As such, this greatly limited the ambition and scope of the project; looking back, more engagement and collaborative practices between the artists involved would have been encouraged and supported, rather than the presentation of individual works, to further reinforce the "multiplicity of voices" and encourage the development of new social support structures and friendships. Although *tt_01* was presented formally in two parts – as an exhibition at ARTicle Gallery, then reframed through a research residency at CFCCA - this was only one facet of the curatorial strategy. Therefore, it was

¹¹⁸ This lack of funding also influenced when the publication for *The Temporary: 01* was produced (February 2017).

vital to create other third spaces and levels of accessibility, interaction and engagement with the project and its audiences, in order to further examine the glocal contexts of China's architectures of change. This was facilitated through public programming – music performances, curator's talks, an "In Conversation" event and a film screening.

Another key consideration as part of the curatorial strategy for *tt_01* was how the artistic and curatorial practices would be documented, in respect of them being saved (or not) for the future. In turn, how would networks of exchange between China and the UK be constructed, established and sustained, with legacy? Throughout *tt_01*, feedback was invited from the artists involved, audiences and the online public to encourage a multiplicity of voices in response to the project, as already discussed and demonstrated through the project's catalogue (Appendix 6).¹¹⁹ Thinking back to my discussions with Hong Kong curator (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung, he stated,

[...] publications are structured curatorially [...] the exhibition gives the public something visceral [...] both contributing to a collaging that cannot be justified with logic (Chang 2010, pers. comm., 9 November).

Therefore, the publication for *tt_01* aimed to act as a visual narrative, documenting the transcultural exchange process between the artists involved, while also depicting the artists' understanding of the project theme of transcultural experiences within China's architectures of change in a glocal context. To create an additional contextual metanarrative within the project, akin to the logo design, four critical perspectives were commissioned, each focused on one of the four areas of examination: space, sound, image and experience.¹²⁰ In addition to this, it was necessary

¹¹⁹ The exhibition catalogue is available for download from *The Temporary* website (http://www.thetemporary.org.uk/uploads/publications/tt_01.pdf).

¹²⁰ These perspectives were by Edward Sanderson, Michelle Proksell, Jacob Dreyer, Marine Cabos in interview with photographer Peter Dixie, and a conversation between Rachel Marsden and artists Xiaoxiao Xu and Fenmei

to create a digital, online presence for global accessibility.¹²¹ This provided an additional platform through which the work of the *tt_01* artists could be shared and promoted beyond the timespan of the project, and aims to function as an ongoing social support structure to foster friendships developed throughout *tt_01*.

tt_01 articulates the development of my transcultural curatorial practice, to be identified as a reciprocal process of “research curating” and “curating research”. More specifically, inherent to the latter, it was a presentation of the “action archive” - a research mapping exercise and activation of an archive of practice through the exploration of contemporary art in the Chinese context.¹²² This was acknowledged in the audience feedback for *tt_01* as ‘A strange and beautifully indirect archive’ and a ‘Beautiful space, engaging work, nicely displayed’ where ‘the exhibition contributes to the intercultural knowledge about China and Britain’. As stated in section 5.1 of this chapter, there is a lack of investment into the development and establishment of the archive and archiving practices of contemporary Chinese art, which further exemplifies the importance of this research, and more so the practice-led component to the research methodology, as a key contribution to new knowledge in the field. Ultimately, *tt_01* and ‘The Temporary’ “connects the dots that people can’t see”,¹²³ by bridging global cultures and communities through universal ideas. It establishes new

Hu. See pages 8-9, 16-17, 28-31, 66-67 and 72-75 of the exhibition catalogue in Appendix 6 (http://www.thetemporary.org.uk/uploads/publications/tt_01.pdf)

¹²¹ When the platform was established in 2014, social media platforms were simultaneously created on Facebook, Instagram (@thetemporary) and Twitter (@thetemporary_). In February 2017, ‘The Temporary’ website was launched, including project archives for *tt_01* and *tt_02* (www.thetemporary.org.uk).

¹²² Given more time, this notion of “curating research” would be an area of further area of research - to include an expanded exploration of the role of archives in exhibition-making and curatorial strategies in the Chinese context.

¹²³ In 2012, Richard Hsu, Creative Director and Curator of TEDxShanghai, cultural producer and brand innovator based in China, stated I was someone who “connects the dots that people can’t see” through the communities of practice I create through my curatorial practice. This phrase has resonated with me since, and come to define the concept of *The Temporary*.

transcultural artistic and curatorial practices through friendships and social spaces and structures, while fostering and premiering new works to new international audiences.

Conclusion

Spanning three decades Chinese art history, this research focussed on the development of the role of the curator, artistic and curatorial practices, and curatorial strategies during China's rapid pace of socio-political and cultural change since the end of the Cultural Revolution to the present day. This period observed a new interest and research into non-Western art, specifically the frenetic development of art galleries and museums, known as the museumification of China, including the economic development of the art market and rapid urbanisation in Chinese cities. In turn, this instigated greater cultural exchange between Chinese and non-Chinese contexts, including new centres and cultural hubs of the art world, which has become,

[...] a central metaphor for the museum in the twenty-first century.

It may be physically grounded in one place, but its interested and activities radiate out, intersect with, and are changed by what's going on elsewhere in the world (Chiu 2014, p. 71).

For many of the artists, curators, critics and scholars engaged in these exchanges, and discussed throughout this research (including myself), it is a life lived between cities, cultural hubs, centres of the art world and their cultural infrastructures - what can be defined as in the transculture, the space across and between different global cultures. This process of cultural translation is not 'a 'journey without maps'', to which scholar Lisa Chandler alludes (2009). Rather, it is the opportunity to develop pre-existing, and establish new, maps, in this research networked curatorial practices inherent to the role of the transcultural curator and transcultural curatorial practices.

Explored through first-hand perspectives of artistic and curatorial practices, fundamental in establishing the role of the curator and strategies of curating avant-garde and contemporary Chinese art, this included China's moment of "becoming contemporary" on the global art stage. These understandings

created a basis for the examination of, and were applied to, a nexus of theoretical methodologies and conceptual frameworks, which underpin curating and the development of its complex local (Chinese) to global (international) cultural relationships. Furthermore, analysed through a specific set of tropes and movements of art history and production in China, including the application of terms and concepts, in Chinese and non-Chinese contexts. Together, they were used to provide a new language to understand the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art towards the definition of the role of the transcultural curator and transcultural curatorial practices.

Here, transcultural and the process of cultural translation occurs in the contact zone, third places, including its social spaces and structures, and friendships, encompassing,

[...] transculturation, critique, collaboration, bilingualism, mediation, parody, denunciation, imaginary dialogue, vernacular expression - these are some of the literate arts of the contact zone. Miscomprehension, incomprehension, dead letters, unread masterpieces, absolute heterogeneity of meaning - these are some of the perils of writing in the contact zone. They all live among us today in the transnationalized metropolis and are becoming more widely visible, more pressing, and, more decipherable to those who once would have ignored them in defence of a stable, centred sense of knowledge and reality (Pratt 1999).

It is established as a field of curatorial practice through dialectical and dialogical relationships, informed by an individual and collective understanding of inherent Chineseness, underpinned by social and cultural *guanxi*, to create a networked sense of identity and multiplicity of voices in glocal terms.

This conclusion outlines new and unique contributions to the theories and concepts from which the research has developed. Rather than constructing

the narrative of this conclusion through a chronological discussion of the thesis, I will draw abstract yet linear connections between the chapters to select the key theories, concepts and curatorial practices, which underpin this research. This includes critical reflections on the practice-led component to the research methodology, *The Temporary*, implemented to test and evaluate my research. I acknowledge my critical discussion throughout the thesis has often been dense, in part reflective of China's complex cultural history, also of my personal and professional journey, living, working and researching in China. As such, my engagement with contemporary Chinese art, its exhibition and curation, is understood through a self-reflexive approach.

Translating the Transcultural

To introduce the research, Chapter 1 presented multiple perspectives on the rise and establishment of the Chinese art curator since the end of the Cultural Revolution. Seen to provide a collective voice for Chinese artists, only valid when informed by scholarship, they blurred the boundaries between, and took on the hybrid roles of, the 'curator as agent' and 'curator as critic'. Here, Chineseness is discussed as a conceptual framework seen to underpin the entire thesis as a way of understanding the influence of identity on translation and the role of the transcultural curator. Chapter 2 framed China within discourses of Sinocentrism and Westerncentrism, defining the processes of the transcultural and translation beyond their postcolonial roots to create a new four-dimensional methodology of cultural translation. Chapter 3 further indexes the conceptual frameworks of Chineseness and transcultural through the development of social and cultural *guanxi* in a glocal context. Although these theoretical methodologies and conceptual frameworks, are rationalised through examinations of curatorial practice in each chapter, they are applied more in-depth to three historically significant case studies in Chapter 4, to mark their use in the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art whilst the role of the transcultural curator is established in the field. In Chapter 5, social spaces and structures of modes of transcultural curating are developed from Ray Oldenburg's theory of third place, where I established my research in parallel

to my curatorial practice, in order to offer a grounded conceptualisation of what it means to curate and thus, translate exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art from Chinese and non-Chinese cultures, in a local to global context.

In order to comment on the role and development of the transcultural curator and transcultural curating within the field of contemporary Chinese art, I questioned and defined the theoretical frameworks used to understand its exhibition, interpretation, and translation when moved from its cultural origin in a local to global context. I began by mapping the construction of identity through an inherent Chineseness, what it means to be Chinese or non-Chinese, to inform my understanding of translation decoded through a revisioning of Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial, three-tiered methodology of 'Third Space'. This was aligned to Ray Oldenburg's theory of third place to create social spaces and structures, and friendships, underpinned through social and cultural *guanxi* self-reflexively developed beyond Fei Xiaotong's model of concentric circles of Chineseness within new local-to-global contexts, defined here as glocal.

From the literature review, there were clear gaps that I have tried to resolve through examinations of the role of the transcultural curator and the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art. In China, engagement in the field of curating and curatorial practice within academia is limited, often taught under a different guise, such as arts administration or arts management. These practices have often been taught in an applied rather than a reflexive manner, which has created a particular gap in the understandings and practices of curating contemporary Chinese art. This has occurred both historically throughout the development of a Chinese art history since 1980, and more recently within the new, undefined trope of contemporary Chinese art since 2008. More significantly, there is no academic discussion, nor curatorial reflection on the transcultural in this field. Therefore, this research explicitly worked towards those objectives through theoretical revisionings and conceptual frameworks alongside the establishment of curatorial and translational languages.

In parallel, I used findings from the interviews with artists, curators, critics, gallerists and scholars alongside case studies of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art to contextualise my own curatorial practice. From the 27 interviews, I completed for this research in China and the UK (Appendix 2), only 9 were cited within the thesis. However, all the connections made and narratives discussed influenced my understandings of the field. More so, the interviews helped to expand my social and cultural *guanxi* and networks of practice, although it would have been beneficial to invest more time in their comparative analysis and the qualitative analysis of the networks created, to see if and how they influenced my curatorial practice and thus, translations of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art. These initial networks, unique to my identity and *The Temporary*, could have been further analysed alongside the networks presented within the case studies and exhibition examinations underpinning the theoretical and conceptual frameworks throughout this research. As the interviews were completed in 2010, I would, in the future, like to initiate new dialogues with the 27 curators, artists, critics, gallerists and scholars to comparatively analyse the similarities and differences in their perspectives and curatorial practices towards new definitions of models of transcultural curating.

Thus, through a nexus of practice, where theory informs practice, and practice informs theory, I examined which models of curating have been used to translate exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art from local to global contexts, and how they directly influence translation. Therefore, it was essential I tested these frameworks through a practice-led component to the research methodology to directly assimilate and experience the process of transcultural curating first-hand, whilst also applying the set of languages used through this thesis as part of translation. The key methodological frameworks through which I have analysed these generative discussions of my curatorial practice are self-reflexive curatorial practice, a live case study and exhibition-as-outcome. The self-reflexive critique of my past curatorial practices was analysed through the theoretical methodologies and conceptual frameworks established in this research, alongside the

assessment of current translational and curatorial strategies for contemporary Chinese art. Collectively, these methodologies informed the conceptual development of the live case study *The Temporary*, implemented as a site of development, testing and evaluating potential new translational and curatorial strategies for contemporary Chinese art. This was achieved more specifically through the exhibition-as-outcome, *The Temporary: 01* (2014), which reflected on a unique moment of China's museumification. As such, past curatorial practice informed current curatorial practice through a process of both "research curating" (based on the construction of networks of practice) and "curating research" (mapping the action archive). Reflections of these practices, and how they informed each other, helped to define the role of the transcultural curator and models of transcultural curating.

From Chineseness to *Guanxi*

Overall, my research, and more specifically my understanding of the dialogic relationship of translation, is grounded in the notion of an inherent and questioning Chineseness (*Huaxia*) - what it means to be Chinese or non-Chinese and how this becomes an exercise in identity formation towards the development of the transcultural. Framed within postcolonial, transnational and global studies, the validity of Chineseness as a concept is predicated on its definition being explicitly rooted in a Sinocentric understanding, away from its Westerncentric interpretation, and specific to temporal-spatial conditions. It must not act in isolation as a form of cultural essentialism, and must function independently of and reactive to each other, as a multi-dimensional term and concept within the dynamic formation of Chineseness (nationalist, diasporic, residual and global).

When introducing the concept of Chineseness to discuss the identity and heritage of China, a developing 'neo-Sinocentrism' was referenced. Placing China as the cultural centre of the world in the context of globalisation. It is a concept currently under researched in relation to China's current urban trend of museumification to understand how, together, they map an alternative cultural identity for China, including its cultural infrastructures. In relation to

the development of the latter, as an area of further research, it would be interesting to understand how curating, arts administration and arts management and curating is taught in Higher Education Institutions in China. Furthermore, whether there are differences in the curricula between Chinese and non-Chinese contexts and if teaching initiatives between the two can be developed through theoretical and practice-led teaching and learning opportunities.

Today, Chineseness is appropriated by those who travel international diasporic networks to create an interconnectedness with China. It constructs a hybrid and displaced sense of self akin to the role of the transcultural curator. So, when applied to the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art through different curatorial practices, informed by the rise and hybrid role of the Chinese curator, it works in the conflicted dialogic spaces of Chineseness. In these reactive spaces between each categorisation, it becomes a process of negotiation from de-contextualisation to re-contextualisation in the age of globalisation. A further theoretical undercurrent within this, is the notion of a unique Chinese logic, more specifically a confused logic of Chineseness as the outcome of Chinese misunderstanding, caused by 'a "pattern of rupture" caused by violent intrusions of sociopolitical events' (Wu 2005, p. 30). Specific to contemporary Chinese art, it develops within new local-to-global contexts as an individual, collective and multidimensional concept which is discursive and adaptive characterised by plurality and openness. Moreover, it was implied Chineseness is only valid when defined explicitly from a Sinocentric perspective away from Westerncentric influence within Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial methodology of 'Third Space'.

In response to this, the research offered a theoretical revisioning of Homi K. Bhabha's three-tiered methodology of 'Third Space' to challenge its purpose as a containment field of translation. Contesting its multicultural limitations and postcolonial languages, including the dichotomy of 'self' and 'other', 'difference' and 'hybridity', inherent opacity and the realm of the untranslatable, it reinterprets the silences and junctures of rhetoric when

logic and silence intersect in the transcultural context. Re-examining the active space of 'the scene of translations', including its words, silence, logic and space of rhetoric, it is aligned with cultures, multicultural, cross-cultural and transcultural respectively (Maharaj 2001, p. 26). Here, rhetoric activates and cultivates Fernando Ortiz's concept of transculturation as contact zones to mobilise and denote its interpretive and linguistic differences, most importantly, explicitly discussing the usually overlooked experiential and temporal components of translation. This opening-up of the possibilities of translation, I define as a four-dimensional methodology of a new catalytic 'Third Space' and as the 'mode of being' transcultural. This functions as a theoretical lens through which to understand and recode cultural translation, here, specific to the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art, whilst highlighting the role of the transcultural curator as translator.

Later in the research, this theoretical methodology was aligned to Oldenburg's theory of 'third place', to conceptualise the interactive elements of encounters through the use of physical spaces to further understand the experiential and temporal components of translation. Assimilating this notion to discussions of the prolific rise of art galleries and museums in China, more specifically to the nation's rapid museumification, it demonstrates their value as gathering spaces essential to the development of public life, forming the basis of cultural communities of practice and a new social imaginary. Functioning as a temporal dimension, these social spaces and structures provide a space for cultures to meet, exchange and explore contradictory knowledges, without judgement or influence of their cultural identities, practices and experiences through dialogic and dialectical relationships and friendships.

From this theoretical grounding of my research in Chineseness, the revised methodology of Bhabha's 'Third Space' and the conceptual application of Oldenburg's third space, it helped to define three key conceptual frameworks - transcultural, social and cultural *guanxi*, and glocal. I highlight how these terms and their usage as part of curatorial strategies used to translate exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art, differs from, whilst filling the gaps

of, current understandings when applied to new cultural contexts. Beginning with transcultural, it works beyond the limitations of the binary relationship and cultural synthesis of the cross-cultural; the tussle of the paradoxical challenge of cultural difference versus cultural plurality within the multicultural, and of the social dialogic interaction inside and between cultures of the intercultural, transcultural becomes a 'mode of being' (Epstein 1999, p. 25). As Hong Kong curator (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung states, 'there is no art, which is not transcultural' (Chang 2010, pers. comm., 9 November).

Curating the Transcultural

Developed from the notion of contact zones, transcultural is a process of transition as part of a "trans-change-culture" indicating movement across, through and beyond cultures. Reflexive and adaptive, it works beyond cultural dichotomies of East and West, and North and South, towards unidirectional cultural exchange in the 'social life of things and people' (Mignolo & Schiwy 2013, p.21). Evolutionary in nature, it promotes a multiplicity of voices, reciprocal relationships, networks of exchange and transitive interactions representative of diasporic dislocation and traversal. As demonstrated, these contact zones create the space of translation, decentralising cultures and centres of power, where it does not question the collision of cultures as a conflicted space, instead takes a radical approach to reinvent common cultures to create new social and cultural phenomena. As such, transcultural is part of the human condition, a subconscious act, which cannot be learned; yet a conscious process acquired through experiential engagement. It is the ability to act outside one's own culture, like an objective observer, identifying and decentralising the centres of power to propose new transcultural identities and fields of knowledge. This creates what is defined as two conceptual distinctions of the transcultural - as a historical and cultural mode of being, and as a self-reflexive agent participating in a new transcultural movement.

The latter is fundamentally underpinned by the concept of social and cultural *guanxi*, reworked from Fei Xiaotong's understanding of *guanxi* within the model of the concentric circles of Chineseness specific to networks between the self and other relating to individual identity, framed. Noticing the limitation of its internal relationships and the need to highlight the difference between cultural identities towards the collective oversimplification and homogenisation of cultural identity itself, there was a need to reframe the concept in a contemporary context within translations of contemporary Chinese art, its exhibition and curation. More specifically, it was to represent the multiple different social identities and relationships, as such, the Chinese diaspora and those who empathise with Chinese culture. Also, in response to the multidimensional nature of Chineseness and China's new consciousness as an international cultural identity, *guanxi* can only exist as a process of reflexive practice, working beyond the site of connection within the concentric circles of Chineseness to create new emotional, reciprocal and dialogic exchanges inherent to any social encounter. Thus, encompassing the personal and social lives of friendship and community, akin to third place, it focusses on the development of person-centred networks where, as behaviours change the construct of *guanxi* changes. Discussed within the exhibitions and curatorial strategies used to translate contemporary Chinese art, it develops beyond a methodological framework within new local-to-global contexts, defined within this research as glocal.

Although seen to interact with the notion of contact zones, glocal is rarely applied within cultural contexts. Acknowledging this lack of examination as a gap in conceptual discourse, I examined its role as part of two curatorial strategies in and between the UK and China. Functioning on both local-to-local and local-to-global levels of transcultural exchange, they encompassed interlinking dualities of artistic practice whilst demonstrating a resistance to the cultural centres of the art world. As such, looking at the simultaneous local impact of the forces of globalisation, these visual evaluations on cultural production in and between these regions created a unique curatorial language, similarly to *guanxi*, which contributed to the process of translation, in turn fundamental to transcultural curating.

Together, these theoretical and conceptual frameworks highlighted the multidimensional role of the transcultural curator as curator-as-translator, curator-as-critic, critic-as-curator, curator-as-agent all underpinned by scholarship, furthermore by their identity and inherent Chineseness. In addition, they have been framed within this thesis through practice, to understand their practical application in the field. Transcultural curating must be seen as unending, where over time, *The Temporary*, its projects, catalogues and online archive, aim to reframe the translation of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art by continuing to map and document the topology of China's internal logic, as in *The Temporary: 01* (2014). More directly, it has the potential to contribute to future conceptual tropes of contemporary Chinese art since 2008, which are yet to be defined.

Other contributors to the development of these future conceptual tropes, who can be identified as transcultural curators implementing transcultural curatorial strategies, include artist, Liu Ding, and curator and art critic, Carol Yinghua Lu. Based in Beijing, China, they have collaborated beyond their relationship as husband and wife, to establish what they define as a "research practice", which aims to,

[...] search and establish new methodologies, challenging and stretching conventional understanding, definition and the very order of discourses that shape the dominant histories and narratives of contemporary art. The concerned practices, transformations, inventions, reinventions and decisions are not about fulfilling institutional requirements or general expectations of the art industry but are triggered by a commitment to art and experience of first-hand engagements in practice (Lu 2017).

By examining the 'exhibition of practices' and the 'conditions of art making', they attempt to move beyond the power positions inherent to the cultural centres and hubs of the global art stage, to create 'constellations of equal ideas and visions' (Ibid.). As such, an equality within artistic and curatorial practices. This is exemplified through their on-going research, discussion,

exhibition, publishing and education project *Little Movements*, which commenced in 2011.¹²⁴ Their collaboration is not just about emerging art practices in a present China, but also to revisit art practices from historic periods, such as the 1970s and 1980s in China.

Similarly to Liu and Lu, independent curator and writer Victor Wang, coins his projects as “constellations” (Wang 2017).¹²⁵ Based between Shanghai and London, his process of “exhibition-making” is a chance to provide alternative models to facilitate, and create new possibilities for, global art practices, and new perspectives on decentralising the art world. Focusing on ‘display, object and audience relationships, curation, interpretation, and archiving’, he frames his on-going research through the specific conceptual frameworks of ‘global cubing, transverse waves, global modernity, transitional publics, the crisis of identity age and future institutions’ (Wang 2014). Most recently, investigating the ecology of self-organised artistic and curatorial practices as part of the *Gwangju Biennale International Curators Course* (30th August 2016). Together, through their mutual practices and projects, which hold a clear “research curating” and “curating research” focus, they are dedicated to developing autonomous networks of practice in a glocal context, between Chinese and non-Chinese contexts, vital to the role of the transcultural curator.

¹²⁴ The first two iterations are *Little Movements: Self-practice in Contemporary Art* at OCAT Shenzhen (10 September - 10 November 2011) and *Little Movements II: Self-practice in Contemporary Art* at USEION of Modern and Contemporary Art, Bolzano (29 June - 3 November 2013).

¹²⁵ Victor Wang’s most recent exhibition was *Zhongguo 2185 (China 2185)* at Sadie Coles, London (21 September – 04 November 2017). This group exhibition of ten young artists from China addresses the shifting cultural contexts of China - past, present, and future. Featuring Lu Yang, Tianzhou Chen, Yu Ji, Zhang Ruyi, Sun Xun, Nabuqi, Chen Zhe, Xu Qu, Tang Dixin and Lu Pingyuan.

The Temporary: Between Theory and Practice

[...] perhaps we are all the traveller - yet no one can escape from the invisible wall surrounding us' (Gao 2007, p. 115).

The transcultural curator is subconsciously influenced by their identity and inherent Chineseness, creating communities of practice unique to their mode of being, ways of seeing, house of dialogic exchange between, with and in multiple cultures. This was demonstrated through *The Temporary: 01* (2014), which aimed to put research into practice first-hand by developing pre-existing, and establishing new, networked curatorial practices in the Chinese context. The curatorial strategy conceptually applied mapping, topology and networks to reveal an internal logic to cultural translation, and thus, the exhibition of contemporary art in the Chinese context.

As part *The Temporary: 01* (2014), thirteen artists were invited to reflect on the international experience of living in, having lived in, or living in between different Chinese contexts - the experience of existing transculturally in the Chinese context. Responding intimately and inventively, they produced tracks incorporating a wealth of sounds, noises, styles and narratives, including field recordings and recorded dialogues, polyrhythms and fusions, random glitches and data-bending, archival and historical media, vibrations and movements. From a sonic reverberation recorded on a train journey in China to a hybrid pop track styled as Asian-style disco, it is clear the artists have also responded to China's era of rapid socio-political, economic and cultural change in a glocal context. Researcher Michelle Proksell reflected on her experiences of listening to these works and of living transculturally in the Chinese context, stating,

[...] we tend to interpret every given moment in terms of cultural rhythms. As more cultures influence other cultures, the more transcultural experiences (such as our surrounding soundscapes) become hybrid forms of interpretations and translations, blending and melding the past and present, East and West, and forming new experiences that continue to influence us collectively [...] as a growing and globalizing world, we are inherently experiencing

similar levels of transcultural experiences through modernization in converging forms, or perhaps rather in overlapping noises (Proksell 2017, p. 75).

These sound works, and *The Temporary: 01* (2014) as a whole, can be seen as clearly elucidating the nexus of theory, concept and practice implemented throughout this research. Through this, a unique set of arguments and definitions were established in order to contribute to the ongoing debate on the cultural translation, specific to the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art and contemporary art in the Chinese art. However, a limitation of the curatorial strategy used for *The Temporary: 01* (2014) was the limited collation and analysis of audience and peer-to-peer feedback, which also contradicts the oversaturated qualitative research accumulated during the 27 interviews. Therefore, in addition to the audience feedback (cards were received alongside one formal (online) review - Appendix 8), wider engagement would have contributed to a greater critique of the project and platform thus, informing scholarship, as stated vital to underpinning the role of the transcultural curator.

This is further discussed through empirical and self-reflexive engagement with my curatorial practice, as such, methodologically framing the interplay between theory and practice. The originality of these practice-led and practice-oriented theoretical and conceptual perspectives lies in its ability to “connect the dots that people can’t see” by bridging cultures and communities of practice, specific to China, in an international context. An indirect objective of the research was to increase accessibility to contemporary Chinese art through transcultural curating, more specifically through the establishment of *The Temporary*. In itself, this thesis functions as an archive of a specific period of contemporary Chinese art and Chinese art history, which reveals an internal logic, unique to my identity and Chineseness. In turn, the ongoing practices of *The Temporary* can be seen as another action archive, again of a specific period of contemporary Chinese art, unique to social and cultural *guanxi*, in glocal contexts. However, I identified the following limitations within this internal logic.

In a self-referential capacity, when undertaking primary research interviews in China, this can be understood as my lack of knowledge of Mandarin, Chinese. Somewhat ironically, while my research focused on transcultural translation rather than literal language to language translation, my lack of understanding Mandarin, Chinese was seen to limit the primary and secondary resource materials I could access. In part, I was reliant on mediation through translators and translations where they often varied in detail and accuracy, and where many texts were translated twice. This sits directly alongside other problematics of translation, as drawn from previous chapters, such as cultural feuds, translator's bias, censorship, restrictions of Bhabha's methodology of 'Third Space' and the realm of the untranslatable. As such, this further contributes to the lack of critical attention given to the influence of networks, as previously articulated. This is difficult to analyse without understanding the complex nuances of spoken Mandarin, Chinese language. The latter is inherent to social and cultural *guanxi*, and thus, to cultivating social spaces and structures for new artistic and curatorial practices and communities of practice in Chinese contexts.

To conclude, it is important to frame a series of considerations the transcultural curator must implement when curating exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art. Here, the role of the transcultural curator must be idiosyncratic and multidimensional, self-reflexive and universal. Instigators of individual, collective and collaborative action, they must initiate dialogues, which challenge the contact zones of a new catalytic 'Third Space' whilst forming new friendships in the social spaces and structures of third place. In this temporal dimension, they must provide a safe space and freedom away from the limitations of the institution, functioning as cultural catalysts towards the development of new experimental artistic and curatorial practices. Their networks are built on a foundation of happenstance and serendipity, friendship and social and cultural *guanxi*, where timing is vital as much as the ability to be culturally nomadic. Therefore, these considerations can be applied to the transcultural curator within any given culture, and are not

explicit to all translations of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art. A singular audience feedback card from *The Temporary: 01* (2014) at ARTicle Gallery resonated with me since the project, emphasising the overall temporary nature of artistic and curatorial practices, and in a sense this research, in today's frenetically changing, glocal cultural environments. Artists and curators are driven,

[...] to create that which is eternal for fear of being temporary,
pointless and irrelevant but, we all move on and make way for the
next round.

What is the next round for the exhibition and curation of contemporary Chinese art and the role of the transcultural curator?

Bibliography

Andrews, Julia 2014, 'Exhibition as site – extended case study (China 1993)', *Yishu Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, vol. 13, no. 3, May/June, pp. 23-65.

Ang, Ien 1998, 'Can one say no to Chineseness? Pushing the limits of the diasporic paradigm', *boundary 2*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 223-242.

Ang, Ien 2001, *On not speaking Chinese: living between Asia and the West*, Routledge, London.

Ang, Ien 2013. 'No longer Chinese? Residual Chineseness after the rise of China', in Julia Kuehn, Kam Louie & David M. Pomfret (eds.), *Diasporic Chineseness after the Rise of China: Communities and Cultural Production*, UBC Press, Vancouver, pp. 17-31.

Appadurai, Arjun 1988, *The social life of things: commodities in a cultural perspective*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Artprice 2016, The art market in 2015, e-book, Artprice.com, Lyon. viewed 19 June 2016, http://imgpublic.artprice.com/pdf/rama2016_en.pdf

Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth & Tiffin, Helen 2000, *Post-colonial studies: the key concepts*, Routledge, London.

Bai, Liu 1983, *Cultural Policy in the People's Republic of China*, Paris: United Nations Educational.

Baker, Kenneth 1999. 'Signs of west in works from the east', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 February, viewed 11 December 2013, <http://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/article/Signs-of-West-in-Works-From-the-East-2945185.php>

Barmé, Geremie R. 1999, *In the red: on contemporary Chinese culture*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Batten, John 2008, 'Schizoid spirit', *South China Morning Post*, 14 September, viewed 18 August 2013, <http://www.scmp.com/portal/site/SCMP/menuitem.2c913216495213d5df646910cba0a0a0/?vgnextoid=f49fb21ae065c110VgnVCM100000360a0a0aRCRD&vgnextfmt=teaser&ss=Arts&s=Life>

Beijing Olympic Development Association 2008, 'Interview with Karen Smith – China through my eyes', *Beijing Olympic Development Association*, viewed 27 June 2009, <http://en.beijing2008.cn/live/expats/n214343899.shtml>

Belting, Hans 2009, 'Contemporary art as global Art : a critical estimate'. In Hans Belting & Andrea Buddensieg (eds), *The global art world: audiences, markets, and museums*, Hatje Cantz Verlag, Germany, pp. 1-26.

Bennett, Janet M. & Bennett, Milton J. 2004, 'Developing intercultural sensitivity: an integrative approach to global and domestic diversity, in Dan Landis, Janet M Bennett & Milton J. Bennett (eds.), *Handbook of intercultural training*, Sage, California, pp. 147-165.

Berghuis, Thomas 2016, *Personal Interview with Rachel Marsden online*, 4 December.

Berman, Antoine 2000, 'Translation and the trials of the foreign', in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *The translation studies reader*, 2nd edn, Routledge, London, pp. 276-289.

Berry, Ellen & Epstein, Mikhail 1999, *Transcultural experiments: Russian and American models of creative communication*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Bhabha, Homi K. 1994, *The location of culture*, Routledge, London.

Braidotti, Rosi 2009, 'Are bugs to nature as chips to culture? On becoming-insect with Deleuze & Guattari', in Hanjo Berressem (ed.) *Deleuzian events: writing history*, LIT, Berlin, pp. 148-168.

Brake, Jane & Aitken, John 2016, 'Developing frontiers: photographs as border work in the case of Xian urban village Guangzhou', paper presented to *Visualising Chinese Borders* Conference, Manchester School of Art, 6 April, viewed 5 May 2016, <http://clock.uclan.ac.uk/15505/2/DevFrontiers%20070416-final.pdf>

Butt, Zoe 2016, 'Practicing friendship: respecting time as a curator', in Ute Meta Bauer & Brigitte Oetker (eds.) *SouthEastAsia spaces of the curatorial*, Sternberg Press, Berlin, pp. 207-212.

California Association of Museums (CAM) 2012 *Foresight research report: museums as third place*, viewed 1 August 2016, http://art.ucsc.edu/sites/default/files/CAMLF_Third_Place_Baseline_Final.pdf

Chandler, Lisa 2009, “‘Journey without maps’: unsettling curatorship in cross-cultural contexts’, *Museum and Society*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 74-91.

Chang, Tsong-zung 2010, *Personal Interview with Rachel Marsden at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Shanghai*, 9 November.

Chang, Tsong-zung 2016, ‘Chang Tsong-zung: West Heavens [2010-]’, In Natasha Hoare (ed.), *The New Curator*, Lawrence King Publishing, London, pp. 204-209.

Chang, Weining C. & Lee, Lynn 2012, ‘The concentric circle revisited: allocentricism and self in a contemporary Chinese community’, *Psychology*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 297-303.

Chinnery, Colin 2010, *Personal Interview with Rachel Marsden at the ShContemporary Art Fair 2010, Shanghai, China*, 11 September.

Chiu, Melissa 2006, *Breakout: Chinese art outside China*, Edizioni Charta, Milan.

Chiu, Melissa 2014, *Making a museum in the 21st century*, Asia Society, New York.

Chow, Rey 1998, ‘On Chineseness as a theoretical problem’, *boundary 2*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 223-242.

Chu, Denise & Xhingyu, Chen 2016, ‘China’, *Almanac 2016: ArtAsiaPacific*, vol. 11, pp. 109-115.

Ciric, Biljana 2014, 'Building archives through curatorial practice', *Art Libraries Journal*, Volume 39, Number 2, pp. 10-13.

Clark, John 2010, 'The intractable wall and Asia', *Contemporary Visual Art + Culture: Broadsheet*, vol. 39, no. 2, pp. 102-105.

Condorelli, Celine 2013, 'Too close to see: notes on friendship, a conversation with Johan Frederik Hartle', in Stine Herbert & Anne Szefer Karlsen (eds.), *Self-Organised*, Open Editions, Bergen, pp. 62-73.

Connelly, Heather 2015, *Speaking through the voice of another: how can art practice be used to provoke new ways of thinking about the transformations and transitions that happen in linguistic translation?*, Doctoral thesis, Loughborough University.

Coombes, Annie 1998, 'Inventing the 'postcolonial': hybridity and constituency in contemporary curating', in Donald Preziosi (ed.), *The art of art history: a critical anthology*, Oxford University Press Oxford, pp. 486-497.

Courtenay, Philip 2010, *Personal Interview with Rachel Marsden online via Skype*, 13 November.

'Cross' 1989, Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 385-386.

Cuccioletta, Donald 2001/2002, 'Multiculturalism or transculturalism: towards a cosmopolitan citizenship', *London Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 17, pp. 1-11.

Cumming, Laura 2007, 'The dragon dreams of dancing', *The Observer*, 1 April.

Czarniawska, Barbara 2002, *A tale of three cities, or the glocalisation of city management*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Dagnino, Arianna 2012, 'Transcultural writers and transcultural literature in the age of global modernity', *Transnational Literature*, vol. 4 no. 2, May, viewed 2 December 2013
http://dspace.flinders.edu.au/jspui/bitstream/2328/25881/3/Transcultural_Writers.pdf

Dal Lago, Francesca 1998, 'Inside out: Chinese avant-garde art. A conversation with Gao Minglu', *Art AsiaPacific*, no. 20, pp. 42-29

Dal Lago, Francesca 2000, 'Chinese Art at the Venice Biennale: 1. The Virtual Reality of Chinese Contemporary Art'. In *Chinese Art at the End of the Millennium*, Hong Kong: New Art Media Limited. pp. 158-166.

Dal Lago, Francesca 2008, 'China is so far away', in *China China China!!!: Chinese contemporary art and the global market*, SilvanaEditoriale, Milan, pp. 34-41.

'David Brower (Obituary)' 2000, *The Daily Telegraph* [UK], 8 November, viewed 18 August 2011,
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1373616/David-Brower.html>

de Duve, Thierry 2007, 'The glocal and singuniversal: reflections on art and culture in the global world', *Third Text*, no. 6, pp. 681-688.

deSouza, Allan & Yong Soon Min 2008, *An open letter concerning censorship at the 3rd Guangzhou Triennial*, viewed 2 April 2014, <http://allandesouza.com/files/an-open-letter.pdf>

Dorment, Richard 2007, 'New light on modern China', *The Telegraph*, 24 April, viewed 18 August 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/3664666/New-light-on-modern-China.html>

Draxler, Saskia 2008, '3rd Guangzhou Triennial', trans. Nicholas Grindell, *Frieze Magazine*, no. 119.

Duara, Prasenjit 2010a, 'The historical roots of secularism in China', lecture presented at *West Heavens: India China Summit on Social Thought* [recording], 22 November, Fudan University.

Duara, Prasenjit 2010b, Prasenjit Duara reader, *Nanjing Daily Press*, Nanjing.

Elkins, James (ed.) 2007, *Is art history global?*, Routledge, New York.

Epstein, Mikhail 1999, *Transcultural experiments: Russian and American models of creative communication*, Palgrave, New York.

Fan, Di'an, Li, Lei, Gao, Shiming & Hua, Yi 2010, 'What is rehearsal? A curatorial thinking of the 8th Shanghai Biennale', in *Rehearsal – 2010 Shanghai Biennale*, Culture and Art Publishing House, China, pp. 35-36.

Fei Xiatong, Hamilton, Gary & Zheng Wang, 1992, *From the Soil, the Foundation of Chinese Society*, University of California Press, USA.

Fletcher, Annie & Maharaj, Sarat (2000) 'Dislocutions: on cultural translation', *CIRCA*, no. 91, pp. 31-33.

Foster, Peter 2011, 'China to get a new skyscraper every five days for three years', *The Telegraph*, 8 June, viewed 11 December 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/8562782/China-to-get-new-skyscraper-every-five-days-for-three-years.html>

Gao, Minglu 1998, *Inside out: new Chinese art*, University of California Press, Oakland, USA.

Gao, Minglu 2007, 'Who is pounding the wall? A response to Paul Gladston's "Writing on the wall (and entry gate): a critical response to recent curatorial mediations on the 'Chineseness' of contemporary Chinese visual art"', *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 106-115.

Gao, Minglu 2009b, 'The intellectual's voice: the third space in contemporary Chinese art', *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 30-32.

Gao, Minglu 2010, *Personal Interview by Rachel Marsden at the Gao Minglu Contemporary Art Center*, Beijing, Thursday 18 November.

Gao, Minglu 2012, 'Changing motivations of Chinese contemporary art since the mid 1990s', *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, vol. 11, no. 2 & 3, pp. 209-219.

Gao Shiming 2008, 'Observations and presentiments after post-colonialism', in *Farewell to post-colonialism: the third Guangzhou Triennial*, Guangdong Museum of Art, China, pp. 34-43.

Gao Shiming 2009b, 'The self imagining of Guangzhou Triennial 2008: an exercise in negotiation', *Printed Project*, no. 11, p. 13.

Gardner, Anthony 2011, 'Whither the postcolonial?', in Hans Belting, Jacob Birken, Andrea Buddensieg & Peter Weibel (eds.), *Global studies: mapping contemporary art and culture*, Hatje Cantz, Kahrsluhl, pp. 142-157.

Gee, Gabriel 2010, 'Artistic strategies within glocalisation in the United Kingdom', *PIED-A-TERRE*, no. 1, pp. 45-53.

Gladston, Paul 2007, 'Writing on the wall (and entry gate): a critical response to recent curatorial mediations on the 'Chineseness' of contemporary Chinese visual art', *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 26-33.

Gladston, Paul 2014, 'The (continuing) story of Ai: from tragedy to farce', *Contemporary Visual Art + Culture Broadsheet*, vol. 43, no. 4, pp. 44-47.

Gladston, Paul 2016, *Deconstructing contemporary Chinese art*, Springer-Verlag, Berlin.

Goodman, Jonathan 1999, 'From the outside in', *ArtAsiaPacific*, no. 24, pp. 28-30.

Groom, Simon, Haq, Nav & Smith, Karen 2007, 'Yes again and this time it's for real', *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 52-61.

Groom, Simon, Smith, Karen & Xu, Zhen 2007, *The Real Thing: contemporary art from China*, Tate, Liverpool.

Guo, Shuyong & Chen Jianjun 2009, *On the concentric-circle identity in traditional Chinese culture* [PDF], viewed 12 April 2015, <http://ir.lis.nsysu.edu.tw:8080/handle/987654321/39977>

Ha Thuc, Caroline 2014, 'Museums: last bastion of western culture', *DSL Collection dslmagazine*, no. 6, pp. 46-47.

Hall, Stuart & Maharaj, Sarat 2001, *Modernity and Difference* (Annotations 6), Iniva, London.

Hernandez, Felipe M. 2002, *Dynamic identities and the construction of transcultural architectures*, PhD thesis, University of Nottingham.

Hickling, Alfred 2007, 'Great leap forward', *The Guardian*, 28 March, viewed 18 August 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2007/mar/28/art.china>

Ho, Kin Tong & Lin, Hong Cheung 2011, 'Cultural identity and language: A proposed framework for cultural globalisation and glocalisation', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 55-69.

Hoerder, Dirk 2006 'Historians and their data: the complex shift from nation-state approaches to the study of people's transcultural lives', *Journal of American Ethnic History*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 85-96.

Hong, Yan (ed.) 2011, *Guanxi: the art of conversations*, Xiyuan Chubanshe, Beijing.

Hou, Hanru 1994, 'Entropy; Chinese artists, Western art Institutions, A New Internationalism' in Jean Fisher (ed.), *Global visions: towards a new internationalism in the visual arts*, Kala Press, London, pp. 79-88.

Hou, Hanru 1996, 'Towards an un-unofficial art: de-ideologicalisation of China's contemporary art in the 1990s', *Third Text*, vol. 10, no. 34, pp. 37-52.

Hou, Hanru 2012, 'A third way', *ArtAsiaPacific*, September/October, no. 80, viewed 9 March 2013 <http://artasiapacific.com/Magazine/80/AThirdWay>

Hsu, Francis 1981, *Americans and Chinese: Passage to differences*, 3rd edn, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu.

Hsu, Manray 2004, 'The "glocal" in contemporary art', in Siu-Kee Ho (ed.), *Residency project for international renowned visual arts*, Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong, pp. 10-11.

Huang Du, 2010, *Personal Interview with Rachel Marsden at Eudora Station Bar and Restaurant, Beijing, China*, 10 October.

Huang, Du & Watkins, Jonathan 2010, *Negotiations: the second today's documents 2010*, Culture and Art Publishing House, China.

Hughes, Robert 1993, 'A shambles in Venice', *TIME*, 28 June, viewed 25 May 2012, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,978758,00.html>

'Inter' 1989, Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 1098.

James, Sarah 2007, 'The real thing: contemporary art from China', *ArtReview*, no. 12, p. 153.

Jiaming, Sun & Lancaster, Scott 2013, *Chinese globalisation: a profile of people-based connections in China*, Routledge, London.

Jiang, Jiehong 2008, 'China's "art squire"', in Fariba De Bruin-Derakhshani and Barbara Murray (eds), *Culture and the human body: Prince Claus awards 2008*, Prince Calus Fund, Amsterdam.

Jiang, Jiehong 2011, 'Guanxi: the art of conversations', in Yan Hong (ed.), *Guanxi: the art of conversations*, Xiyuan Chubanshe, Beijing.

Jiang, Jiehong 2016, *Personal interview with Rachel Marsden at IKON Gallery Café*, 4 September.

Johnson, Jeffrey & Florence, Zoe Alexandra 2013, 'The museumification of China', *LEAP*, no. 8, 10 May, viewed 25 May 2014, <http://leapleapleap.com/2013/05/the-museumification-of-china>

Johnson, Leo 2013, 'Petropolis now: Are cities getting too big?', *New Statesman*, 14 November, viewed 11 December 2013, <http://www.newstatesman.com/2013/11/petropolis-now>

Keane, Michael 2013, *Creative industries in China: art, design and media*, Polity Press, London.

Kuehn, Julia, Louie, Kam & Pomfret, David M. (eds.) 2013, *Diasporic Chineseness after the rise of China: communities and cultural production*, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver.

Kuhn, Robert Lawrence 2013, 'Xi Jinping's Chinese dream', *The New York Times*, 4 June.

Latour, Bruno 2004, 'On the difficulty of being glocal', *DOMUS*, March, viewed 4 May 2013 http://artefact.mi2.hr/_a04/lang_en/theory_latour_en.htm

Lee, Elizabeth 2007, 'Chineseness in contemporary Chinese art criticism', *Journal of Undergraduate Research: University of Notre Dame*, vol. 1, no. 3, viewed 14 May 2015, http://www3.nd.edu/~ujournal/wp-content/uploads/Lee_07-08.pdf

Leung, Irene S. & Siu, Michael S. K., 1998, 'New Chinese Art: Inside Out: Chronologies', *Asia Society*, viewed 4 April 2014, <http://sites.asiasociety.org/arts/insideout/chronologies.html>

Li, Xianting 2010, Personal Interview with Rachel Marsden at Li Xianting's home, Songzhuang, Beijing, China, 6 October.

Li, Xianting 2010 [1980], 'Guangyu xingxing meizhan'. In Wu Hung (ed. & trans.), *Contemporary Chinese art: primary documents*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, pp. 11-13.

Li, Xianting 2010 [1989], 'Confessions of a China/Avant-Garde Curator (1989)'. In Wu Hung (ed. & trans.), *Contemporary Chinese art: primary documents*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, pp. 116-120.

Lin, Delia 2012, 'Increasing cultural flexibility', in Xianlin Song & Kate Cadman (eds.) *Bridging transcultural divides: Asian languages and cultures in global higher education*, University of Adelaide Press, Adelaide, pp. 191-208.

Lind, Maria 2009, 'Maria Lind on the curatorial', *ArtForum*, vol. 68, no. 2, p. 103.

Lind, Maria 2012, *Performing the curatorial within and beyond art*, Sternburg Press, Berlin.

Liu, Jenny 1999, 'Inside out: new Chinese art', *Frieze*, no. 44, January – February.

Liu, Yuedi 2011, 'Chinese contemporary art: from de-Chineseness to re-Chineseness', in Mary Wiseman & Liu Yuedi, *Subversive Strategies in Contemporary Chinese Art*, BRILL, Leiden, pp. 59-76.

Louie, Andrea 2004, *Chineseness across borders*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina.

Lu, Carol 2017, 'Revisits and Thick Description: Understanding the Legacy of Socialist Realism in the Historical Process of Contemporary Practice in China through Exhibition Making', *Bard Grad Center*, 28 August, viewed 20 September 2017 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GDQMtwCHJo>

Lu Peng 2000, 'Zhongguo dangdai yishu shi 1990-1999 (Chinese Contemporary Art History, 1990-1999)', in Wu Hung, *Exhibiting Experimental Art in China*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 88.

Maerkele, Andrew 2009, 'China', *Almanac 2009: ArtAsiaPacific*, vol. 4, pp. 154-161.

Maharaj, Sarat 1994, 'Perfidious fidelity: the untranslatability of the other', in Jean Fisher (ed.), *Global visions: towards in the visual arts*, Kala Press in association with The Institute of International Visual Arts London, pp. 28-35.

Maharaj, Sarat (ed.) 2009, 'Farewell to Post-colonialism: querying the Guangzhou Triennial 2008', *Printed Project*, no. 11.

Maharaj, Sarat 2010, *West heavens: India-China summit on social thought (8th Shanghai Biennale 2010)*, MOCA Shanghai, 29 October 2010, viewed 4 July 2016, <https://rachelmarsdenwords.wordpress.com/2010/10/29/china-the-power-of-whos-who/>

Markonish, Denise 2000, 'Defining a new cultural language', *Art New England*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 24-25.

Marsden, Rachel (2015a) 'Curating "Chineseness" - Translating China in the 45th Venice Biennale', paper presented at *(In)Direct Speech. "Chineseness" in Contemporary Art Discourse and Practice Art Market, Curatorial Practices*

and Creative Processes conference at Faculdade de Belas-Arte, University of Lisbon, 17 March, viewed 20 March 2015, https://www.academia.edu/11798789/Curating_Chineseness_-_Translating_China_in_the_45th_Venice_Biennale

Marsden, Rachel (2015b) 'China's New Museums - An "Architecture of Design"', paper presented to "*New china from China*": *Contemporary Chinese Ceramics and Glass* symposium at Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, 17 April, viewed 21 May 2015, <http://museums.bristol.gov.uk/narratives.php?irn=12940>

Marsden, Rachel (2017) *The Temporary: 01 - Architectures of Change*, Stoke-on-Trent: The Temporary.

Mignolo, Walter & Schiwy, F. 2003, 'Double translation: transculturation and the colonial difference', in Tullio Maranhão & Bernhard Streck (eds), *Translation and ethnography: the anthropological challenge of intercultural understanding*, University of Arizona Press, Tucson, Arizona.

Mignolo, Walter 2011, *The darker side of western modernity*, Duke University Press London.

Millington, Mark 1998, 'Transculturation: taking stock', in Iain Borden, Felipe Hernández & Mark Millington (eds.), *Transculturation: cities, spaces and architectures in Latin America*, Editions Rodopi BV, Netherlands, pp. 204-234.

Müller, Klaus Peter 1995, 'Transferring cultures in translation – modern and postmodern options', *TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 65-83.

Niranjana, Tejaswini 1990, 'Translation, colonialism and rise of English', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 25, no. 15, pp. 773-779.

O'Neill, Paul 2012, *The culture of curating and the curating of culture(s)*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Oldenburg, Ray 1989, *The great good place*, Paragon House Publishers, New York.

Oliva, Achille Bonito & Kontova, Helena 1993, *Aperto '93: emergency/emergenza*, Giancarlo Politi Editore, Milan.

Ong, Aihwa 1999, *Flexible citizenship: the cultural logics of transnationality*, Duke University Press, Durham.

Onghena, Yolanda 2003, 'Transculturalism and relation identity', in *Intercultural dialogue between Europe and the Mediterranean, consortium of the European Institute of the Mediterranean*, IEMed, Barcelona, pp. 181-184.

Ortiz, Fernando 1947, *Cuban counterpoint: tobacco and sugar*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

Ortiz, Fernando 1995 [1940], *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, trans. Harriet de Onís. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.

Ou, Ning 2014 'Shrine of knowledge, palace of aesthetics, or theatre of history: museum design in China', in Melissa Chiu (ed.), *Making a museum in the 21st century*, Asia Society, New York, pp. 119-126.

Pérez Firmat, Gustavo 1989, *The Cuban condition: translation and identity in modern Cuban literature*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Pi Li 2005, 'Between Scylla and Charybdis: The new context of Chinese contemporary art and its creation since 2000', in *Mahjong: Contemporary Chinese Art from the Sigg Collection*, Hatje Cantz Verlag, Germany, pp. 35-36.

Poshyananda, Apinan 1993, 'The future: cold-war, postmodernism, postmarginalia (playing with slippery lubricants)'. In Caroline Turner (ed.) *Tradition and change: contemporary art of Asia and the Pacific*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, pp. 3-24.

Poshyananda, Apinan, Qiu, Zhijie, Hou, Hanru, Tinari, Philip, Kataoka, Mami & Kim, Hongnam 2015, 'Asian Art Council roundtable 4: decentering China', *Yishu; Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 72-107.

Powell, Diane & Sze, Fiona (eds.) 2004, *Interculturalism: exploring difficult issues*, Inter-Disciplinary Press, Oxford.

Pratt, Mary Louise 1992, *Imperial eyes: travel writing and transculturation*, Routledge, London.

Pratt, Mary Louise 1999, 'Arts of the contact zone', in David Bartholomae & Anthony Petrofsky (eds.), *Ways of reading*, 5th edn, Bedford/St. Martin's, New York.

Proksell, Michelle 2017, 'Overlapping Noises', *The Temporary: 01 - Architectures of Change*, The Temporary, UK, pp. 74-75. Available at http://www.thetemporary.org.uk/uploads/publications/tt_01.pdf

Rama, Angel 1997, 'Processes of transculturation in Latin American narrative', *The Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 155-171.

Rampley, Matthew 2007, 'From big art challenge to a spiritual vision: what "global art history" might really mean', in James Elkins (ed.), *Is art history global?*, Routledge, New York, pp. 188-202.

Robertson, Roland 1995, 'Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity', in Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash & Roland Robertson (eds.), *Global modernities*, Sage Publications, London, pp. 25-44.

Robyns, Clem 1994, 'Translation and discursive identity', *Poetics Today*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 405-428.

Said, Edward 1978, *Orientalism*, Pantheon Books, New York.

Salvadori, Roberto G. 1997, 'The difficulties of interculturalism', *European Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 8 no. 2, pp. 185-191.

Sim, Stuart 2009, 'After modernity: towards a post-western modernity', in *Printed Project*, no. 11, pp. 119-123.

Sinocentrism 2016. *Wikipedia*, wiki article, viewed 10 December 2016, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinocentrism>

SLAB Architecture PLLC 2008, *China megacities lab*, viewed 11 December 2013, <http://www.slab-a.net/china-megacities-lab>

Smith, Karen 2005, *Nine lives: the birth of avant-garde art in new China*, Timezone 8, China.

Smith, Karen 2010, Personal Interview with Rachel Marsden at Karen Smith's studio, Beijing, China, 2 October.

Song, Xianlin & Cadman, Kate (eds.) 2012. *Bridging transcultural divides: Asian languages and cultures in global higher education*, University of Adelaide Press, Adelaide.

Spivak, Gayatri 1993, *Outside in the teaching machine*, Routledge, New York.

Spivak, Gayatri 1998, *A critique of postcolonial reason: towards a history of the vanishing present*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA.

Spivak, Gayatri 2004, 'The politics of translation', in Lawrence Venuti (ed.) *The translation studies reader*, 2nd edn, Routledge, London, pp. 369-388.

Stephen, Walter M. 2004, *Think global, act local: the life and legacy of Patrick Geddes*, Luath Press Limited, Edinburgh.

Sterbenz, Christina 2014, 'These GIFs of rapidly expanding Chinese cities will blow your mind', *Business Insider Australia*, 22 March 2014, viewed 5

April 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com/gifs-of-chinese-city-growth-2014-3>

Ting-Toomey, Stella 2012, *Communicating across cultures*, Guilford Press, New York.

Tsui, Anne & Farh, Jiing-Lih 1997, 'Where guanxi matters: relational demography and guanxi in the Chinese context', *Work and Occupation*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 56-79.

Tsui, Anne, Farh, Jiing-Lih & Xin, Katherine 2000, 'Guanxi in the Chinese context', in JT Li, Anne Tsui & Elizabeth Weldon (eds.), *Management and organisation in the Chinese context*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 225-244.

Tu, Wei-ming 2005, 'Cultural China: the periphery as the center', *Daedalus*, vol. 134, no. 4, pp. 145-167.

Urbansky, Soren 2014, "'Vasily" of China and his Russian friends: smugglers and their transcultural identities'. In Dan Ben-Canaan, Frank Grüner & Ines Prodöhl (eds.), *Entangled histories*, Springer International Publishing, New York, pp. 15-33.

Vickers, Edward & Jones, Alisa (eds.) 2005, *History education and national identity in East Asia*, Routledge, London.

Vukovich, Daniel 2013, *China and orientalism: western knowledge production and the PRC*, Routledge, London.

Waddington, Ben 2014, 'Impermanent collection – review of The Temporary at ARTicle Gallery', *Still Walking Blog*, web log post, 12 March, viewed 15 March 2014, <https://stillwalkingblog.com/2014/03/12/impermanent-collection-review-of-the-temporary-at-article-gallery/>

Wang, Hui, 2006, *China's new order*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Wang, Lin 1993, 'Questions about the "international identity" of contemporary Chinese art', in Hung Wu (ed.) *Contemporary Chinese art: primary documents*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, pp. 366-368.

Wang, Peggy 2015, 'New audiences, new energy: producing and exhibiting contemporary Chinese art in 1993', *POST: Notes on Modern and Contemporary Art around the globe*, 19 August, viewed 25 April 2016, http://post.at.moma.org/content_items/612-new-audiences-new-energy-producing-and-exhibiting-contemporary-chinese-art-in-1993

Wang, Victor 2014, 'Future Institutions in the Age of Global Art History', *RCA*, viewed 20 September 2017, <https://www.rca.ac.uk/students/victor-wang>

Wang, Victor 2017 'Constellations and Current Research', *Viktor Wang*, viewed 20 September 2017, <http://www.viktorwang.com/Constellations-and-Current-Research>

Wu, Doreen & Ng, Patrick 2011, 'Becoming global, remaining local', *Critical Arts*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 73-87.

Wu, Hung 2005, 'Reflections on "regional" approaches of contemporary art', in Hamdi el Attar, [et al] (2005) *Exhibition Curating and City Promotion in Cultural Activities Under Globalisation*, Taipei Shi: Dian cang yi shu jia ting gu fen you xian gong si, pp. 28-37.

Wu, Hung 2010, *Contemporary Chinese art: primary documents*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Yan, Yunxiang 2001, 'Practicing kinship in rural north China', In Sarah Franklin & Susan McKinnon (eds.) *Relative values: reconfiguring kinship studies*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, pp. 224-245.

Yang, Chao 2014, 'A new model exemplifies the art museum boom in China: Yang Chao in conversation with Zheng Shengtian', *Yishu Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, vol. 13, no. 5, pp. 29-42.

Yee, Lydia 1999, 'A third space', *ArtAsiaPacific*, no. 24, pp. 31-33.

Zhang, Jianghua 2010, 'Charisma, publicity, and China society: rethinking of "chaxu geju"', *Chinese Journal of Sociology*, vol. 30, no. 5, pp. 1-24.

Zhang, Yingjin 2010a, 'Transnationalism and translocality in Chinese cinema', *Cinema Journal*, vol. 49, no. 3, pp. 135-139.

Appendix 1

Glossary of Chinese Terms

'85 *Xinchao* - '85 New Wave. A movement of artists and artists' collective identified as contributing to the birth of avant-garde Chinese art due to their 'sense of improvisation and direct confrontation' (Gao 1998, p. 48). (Chapter 1, section 1.1, p. 20)

Beifang Yishu Qunti - Northern Art Group. A noteworthy artist collective key to the '85 *Xinchao* ('85 New Wave) movement with the No Name Painting Society (*Wuming Huahui*) and Stars Group (*Xingxing Huahui*). Also, fundamental to the development of avant-garde Chinese art and a Chinese art history. (Chapter 1, section 1.1, p. 20).

bianji – 'editor'. One of many terms Li Xianting used to describe his cultural role in the 1980s and 1990s in China. (Chapter 1, section 1.2, p. 25).

chaxu geju - the relationships and networks between the self (individual identity) and other (individual identity as part of groups in and beyond China) in Chinese society. Further understood through the dichotomy of *dawo* meaning collective greater self and *xiaowo* meaning small self/individual (Chang & Lee 2012). (Chapter 3, section 3.1, p. 91).

dawo - collective greater self. See *chaxu geju*. (Chapter 3, section 3.1, footnote 44, p. 91).

Guanchang - the government (Chapter 5, section 5.1, p. 183). Stated in Gao's reference to China's "Jianguhu" (the market) holding hands with 'Guanchang' (the government)' (2012, p. 214).

guanxi - The development of social obligation, capital and power through an individual's local, national and international networks - 'a relationship between two people who share a group status; two (or more) people's relationship to a common third party; a connection between people involving frequent contact; a connection between people involving little direct interaction, or friendship without a common background' (Tsui et al. 2000, pp. 225-226). It works beyond the concentric circles of *chaxu geju*. In this research, it is defined as a new globalized *guanxi* inherent to artistic and curatorial practices and everyday life, identified through both curatorial concepts and strategies. (Chapter 3, section 3.1, p. 91).

guojituishou - "Foreign pushing hands". Associated with curator Karen Smith, this term was coined by the Chinese print media regarding contemporary Chinese art based in Beijing since 1992 (Beijing Olympic Development Association 2008). (Chapter 4, section 4.3, footnote 79, p. 155).

hei shehui - Carries a double meaning. *Hei* means black but also sounds like "hi". *shehui* means society but when paired with *hei* it means mafia or gangster. When spoken, it sounds like "hello society" unless you are making specific reference to gang contexts. In this research, it comes from the Chinese online contemporary art community and platform called 'heyshehui.com' set up by a group of contemporary Chinese artists including artist Xu Zhen in 2006. (Chapter 4, section 4.3, footnote 96, p. 171-172).

hexie - Simply understood as 'harmony', this term carries double meaning. An ideological buzzword of the current sociopolitical regime in China, it is, on the one hand, a literal understanding of harmony as balance. On the other, it used ironically by Chinese internet users to reference the "harmonising" of Chinese people through censorship and control. Ultimately, it is a term and concept used to discuss harmony within a Chinese and global ideology. (Chapter 5, section 5.2, footnote 106, p. 188).

Hou baji Zhongguo xin yishu 1989 - *China's New Art, Post-1989*. The first large-scale exhibition of Chinese art to take place outside mainland China co-curated (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung by and Li Xianting. On show 31 January to 14 February 1993 at the Exhibition Hall, Hong Kong City Hall and Hong Kong Arts Centre, it was presented and supported by Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong Arts Centre and Hong Kong Arts Festival Society. (Chapter 1, section 1.4, p. 30).

huaqiao - The Chinese diaspora or overseas Chinese, in other words, 'all who empathise with Chinese culture' intellectually to create new international discourse (Duara 2010b, p. 287). Used when discussing Tu Wei-ming's theory of the 'concentric circles of Chineseness' (1991). (Chapter 3, section 3.1, p. 94).

Huaxia - Chineseness from a Sinocentric perspective, also understood as the Chinese nation and its people. *Xia* is the name of the first-known dynasty more than three millennia ago, which later became known as China, and *Hua* encompasses both overseas as well as non-ethnic Chinese under the overarching umbrella of China. Today, this translation also alludes to cultural space and mobility and to historical lineage rather than a geographic designation, emerging as a category of identification and analysis in Chinese diasporic studies, specifically as an embodied process encompassing the 'Chinese sense', 'Chinese spirit' and 'Chinese identity' (Berghuis 2016, pers. comm., 4 December). (Chapter 1, section 1.5, p. 34).

Jianghu - the market (Chapter 5, section 5.1, p. 184). Stated in Gao's reference to China's "Jianghu' (the market) holding hands with 'Guanchang' (the government)' (2012, p. 214).

jiaotong zhanzhang - A stationmaster. One of many terms Li Xianting used to describe his cultural role in the 1980s and 1990s. Traditionally associated with the Communist Party, it was applied to the man in charge of organising

revolutionaries to work, while protecting them from the enemy. (Chapter 1, section 1.2, p. 25).

jiegou - The process of deconstruction of avant-garde Chinese art and 'being Chinese' towards the development of contemporary Chinese art understood by Li Xianting (2010, pers. comm., 6 October). (Chapter 1, section 1.6, p. 43).

linshi - The translation of the word and meaning of 'temporary', the instant something happens. Stated in relation to the translation of *The Temporary*, the practice-led component of the research methodology - a live case study and form of 'evaluation through practice'. (Chapter 5, section 5.3, p. 192).

meishu - Fine Art. Stated in relation to *Meishu (Art)*, one of China's only art magazines. Li Xianting was editor of *Meishu* from 1979 to 1983. (Chapter 1, section 1.2, p. 22).

tongxin yuan - An ever-expanding set of concentric circles, comprising an inner circle, outer circle and expanding circle of the self as centre, its kinship and distance respectively (Yan 2001, p. 242). This is fundamental to the representation and understanding of *chaxu geju* and can be compared to *zhongguo zhongxin zhuyi* (Sinocentrism). (Chapter 3, section 3.1, p. 91).

Wenhua Chanye - Cultural Industry. Gao Minglu acknowledged in recent years China's interest has now shifted towards *Wenhua Chanye* in line with the "museumification" of China' (Johnson & Florence 2013). (Chapter 5, section 5.1, p. 180).

Wuming Huahui - No Name Painting Society. A noteworthy artist collective key to the '85 *Xinchao* ('85 New Wave) movement with the Stars Group (*Xingxing Huahui*) and the Northern Art Group (*Beifang Yishu Qunti*). Also,

fundamental to the development of avant-garde Chinese art and a Chinese art history. (Chapter 1, section 1.1, p. 20)

xiangshen - A squire. One of many terms Li Xianting used to describe his cultural role in the 1980s and 1990s. (Chapter 1, section 1.2, p. 25).

xiaowo - small self/individual. See *chaxu geju*. (Chapter 3, section 3.1, p. 91).

Xingxing Huahui - Stars Painting Group. A noteworthy artist collective key to the '85 *Xinchao* ('85 New Wave) movement with the No Name Painting Society (*Wuming Huahui*) and Northern Art Group (*Beifang Yishu Qunti*). Also, fundamental to the development of avant-garde Chinese art and a Chinese art history. (Chapter 1, section 1.1, p. 14). Established in 1979 in Beijing, China, they were one of the first collectives of non-professional, self-trained artists who joined forces to 'make way for freedom of spirit and expression in a society that did not allow original thought or creativity' (Smith 2005, p. 471).

Xingxing Meizhan - *Stars Art Exhibition*. In September 1979, the Stars group organised the first *Stars Art Exhibition (Xingxing Meizhan)*. Works could be 'divided into two categories: those that delved into life, and those that explored form' where 'only by identifying with the fate of people can our art have any real vitality' (Li 2008). (Chapter 1, section 1.2, p. 21).

xixuezhongyuan - A belief that Western knowledge was derived from China, in other words, 'Western knowledge has Chinese origins' (*Sinocentrism* 2016). Discussed in relation to China's period of intellectualisation in the 1990s. (Chapter 2, introduction, p. 46).

Yangwu Yundong - The Westernisation Movement of 1860s to 1890s understood as the translation and assimilation of Western thinking into Chinese culture. Noted by Li Xianting as being influential on Chinese artists in the 1980s. (Chapter 1, section 1.2, p. 23).

Yi Pai - Third Space. This is discussed in relation to Ray Oldenburg's methodology of 'third place' (1989). *Yi Pai* is understood by Gao Minglu as an individual space where 'artists must have an independent identity, independent mind and independent personality' (2012, p. 216). Today, it is a common characteristic of contemporary Chinese artists and curators, and fundamental to public platforms which function 'as a social network, supported by a local community' (Chiu 2014, p. 77). (Chapter 5, section 5.2, p. 190).

Zhongguo Xiandai Yishuzhan - Literally translated as "Chinese Modern Art Exhibition", it was re-interpreted for the English exhibition title as *China/Avant-Garde* (1989). One of the most confrontational exhibitions in avant-garde Chinese art history taking place a decade after the first *Xingxing Meizhan* (*Stars Art Exhibition*). Showcasing 293 works by 186 artists over three floors of the gallery, it included painting, sculpture, photography, video and installation over three floors of the National Art Gallery, Beijing (5 to 19 February 1989). It was open over a three-year period from 1986 to 1989 and used a collaborative approach driven by a select committee of 14 Chinese scholars, curators and critics, which included Gao Minglu and Li Xianting. It was the first large-scale national exhibition sponsored, organised and funded by non-academic groups, and the first exhibition curated by critics. (Chapter 1, section 1.3, p. 26).

zhongguo zhongxin zhuyi - Sinocentrism. China as the cultural centre of the world, therefore creating a sense of cultural superiority, especially in comparison to the West. Identified as coming to an end in the late 19th century. (Chapter 1, section 1.5, footnote 17, p. 34).

zhongxiqushi - The future of Chinese and Western cultures. Defined by Gao Minglu as one of three major issues as part of discussions into the debate surrounding cultural assumptions made between East and West in the late 1990s (1998, p. 40). Also see *zhongxiyitong* and *zhongxiyoulue*. (Chapter 4, section 4.2, p. 146).

zhongxiyitong - The differences and similarities between China and the West. Defined by Gao Minglu as one of three major issues as part of discussions into the debate surrounding cultural assumptions made between East and West in the late 1990s (1998, p. 40). Also see *zhongxiqushi* and *zhongxiyoulue*. (Chapter 4, section 4.2, p. 146).

zhongxiyoulue - Making comparisons between the respective merits and flaws of Chinese and Western cultures. Defined by Gao Minglu as one of three major issues as part of discussions into the debate surrounding cultural assumptions made between East and West in the late 1990s (1998, p. 40). Also see *zhongxiqushi* and *zhongxiyitong*. (Chapter 4, section 4.2, p. 146).

Appendix 2

List of Interviewees

- Colin Chinnery (Artist and curator), 11 September 2010, ShContemporary 2010 Art Fair, Shanghai, China
- Davide Quadrio (Director Arthub Asia), 11 September 2010, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China
- Claudia Albertini (Curator, Platform China), 29 September 2010, Platform China, Beijing, China
- Karen Smith (Curator), 2 October 2010, Personal Studio, Beijing, China
- Li Xianting (Curator, critic and scholar), 6 October 2010, Songzhuang Artists' Village, Beijing, China
- Simon Kirby (Director, Chambers Fine Art), 7 October 2010, Chambers Fine Art, Caochangdi, Beijing, China
- Huang Du (Curator), 10 October 2010, Eudora Station Bar and Restaurant, Beijing, China
- Wenda Gu (Artist), 9 November 2010, Artist's Studio, M50 Art District, Shanghai, China
- (Johnson) Chang Tsong-zung (Curator), 9 November 2010, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Shanghai, China
- Victoria Lu (Curator and Actress), 9 November 2010, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Shanghai, China
- Chen Hangfeng (Artist), 11 November 2010, Artist's Studio, Shanghai, China
- Philip Courtenay (Founder of *e-space lab* and scholar), 13 November 2010, via Skype
- Rebecca Catching (Director, *OV Gallery*), 14 November 2010, OV Gallery, Shanghai, China
- Lorenz Helbling (Director, ShanghART), 15 November 2010, ShanghART, Tapou District, Shanghai, China

- Xu Zhen (Artist and cultural producer), 15 November 2010 and 11 January 2010, MadIn Company, Tapou District, Shanghai, China
- Gao Minglu (Curator, critic and scholar), 18 November 2010, Gao Minglu Contemporary Art Center, Beijing, China
- Philip Tinari (Curator and Founder of LEAP magazine), 18 November 2010, café, Beijing, China
- Biljana Ciric (Curator), 25 November 2010, café, Shanghai, China
- Michael Murray (Scholar), 29 November 2010, hotel lobby, Shanghai, China
- Robin Peckham (Curator and critic), 14 December 2010, café, Hong Kong
- David Clarke (Scholar), 15 December 2010, Hong Kong University, Hong Kong
- David Thorp (Curator), 31 March 2011, Initial Access, Wolverhampton, UK
- Carol Lu (Curator and scholar), 15 June 2011, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK
- Lewis Biggs (Director, Liverpool Biennial (2000-2011)), 14 July 2011, Tabac Café, Liverpool, UK
- Paul Gladston (Scholar), 1 August 2011, personal home, Stafford, UK
- Robert Ceresia (Founder and Director, AIKE DELLARCO), 7 December 2011, AIKE DELLARCO, M50, Shanghai, China
- Barbara Pollack (Curator and critic), 13 May 2012, China

Appendix 3

Bilingual Interview Consent Form

Interview Consent Form

Project Title: The Transcultural Curator: Interpreting Contemporary Chinese Art in the West since 1980
跨文化

Researcher: Rachel Marsden (Birmingham Institute of Art and Design, UK)

Interviewee:

-
- I agree to be interviewed for the above research project.
我同意接受以上研究课题的访谈。
 - As present owner of the contributor content, I hereby authorise the researcher, Rachel Marsden, to refer to the content of the interview(s).
作为被采访者，我同意研究员 Rachel Marsden 采用访谈内容。
 - I understand the contributor content will not be used in a derogatory manner and that I, the interviewee, will be correctly identified and credited through quotation when published.
我理解访谈内容将不会被滥用，引用谈话会清楚注明出处。
 - I understand the researcher will ensure all quotations are accurate, and respect any restrictions I, the interviewee, wish to place on parts of the interview(s) that I do not wish to be quoted.
我理解研究会力求引言的正确性，并尊重我作为被采访人对某些谈话的私密性的要求。
 - I understand that no payment is due to me for this interview(s) and consent.
我理解访谈不支付费用。
 - I agree to giving the researcher, Rachel Marsden, the right to use, make available and publish the contributor content of the recorded interview(s), available to the public, and for the outcomes of this interview to be disseminated and published under her name as an author and co-author, within material including:
我同意研究员 Rachel Marsden 在以下出版物中采用访谈内容，出版物以研究员或其合作者冠名。

PhD thesis	博士论文	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journal Articles/Reviews	期刊文章	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publications	出版物	<input type="checkbox"/>

Conference proceedings, papers and lectures 研讨会文集或讲课材料 ☐

Exhibitions and displays 展览 ☐

Online (personal blog/website/twitter) 网络 (个人博客或其他个人网站) ☐

Audio (radio, television, online) 其他媒介 (广播, 电视, 网络等) ☐

(Any of the above may involve the use of editing or digital manipulation of the recorded material).

(访谈内容经编辑可能会在以上所提形式中被采用)

I agree to the content being published in the above sources, however, I wish to remain anonymous. ☐

我同意采访内容在以上所提形式中被使用, 但要求对被采访者采用匿名。

I agree to the use of recorded and documentary images and photographs of the interview(s). ☐

我同意采访录音和影像被使用。

I would like to see the text/transcript to proof and edit before any information is printed and published. ☐

在采访内容出版前, 我希望所引用材料经我编辑与同意。

Signature of Interviewee:

Signature of Researcher:

Date Completed:

If you wish the researcher, Rachel Marsden, to provide copies of the final published text(s), please leave appropriate contact details below.

Contact Information:

Address.....

E-mail

Tel/Fax

Ref:

Loc:

Appendix 4

Chinese Art Exhibition Chronology

1970s

- *Stars Art Exhibition* (27 September 1979), park east of the National Gallery of Art, Beijing, China; Huafang Studio, Beihai Park (23 November - 2 December 1979); National Art Gallery, Beijing (24 August - 7 September 1980). Curated by the Stars Group. Founding members of the Stars Painting Group included Ma Desheng and Huang Rui. Other artists associated with the group included Qu Leilei, Wang Keping, Ai Weiwei, Bo Yun, Li Shuang, Mao Lizi, Zhong Ahcheng, Shao Fei, Qu Leilei, Wang Keping, Yan Li and Yang Yiping.

1980s

- *China/Avant-Garde*, National Art Gallery, Beijing (5 - 19 February 1989). Organised by fourteen Chinese scholars, curators and critics, which included Gao Minglu and Li Xianting.
- *Magiciens de la Terre* (1989), Centre George Pompidou, Paris, France. Curated by Jean-Hubert Martin with curatorial consultation by Fei Dawei. Including artists Huang Yong Ping, Gu Dexin and Yang Jiechang.

1990s

- *Art Chinois 1990 - Chine Demain Pour Hier* (1990), Association Français d'Action Artistique. Curatorial consultation from Hou Hanru and Fei Dawei. Including artists Cai Guo-Qiang, Yang Jiechang, Yang Pei Ming, Wenda Gu, Huang Yong Ping and Chen Zhen.
- *"I Don't Want to Play Cards with Cezanne" and Other Works:*

Selections from the Chinese "New Wave" and "Avant-Garde" Art of the Eighties (1991), Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, California. Curated by Richard E. Strassberg. Including artists Geng Jianyi, Lu Shengzhong, Mao Xuhui, Xu Bing, Ye Yongqing, Yu Hong, Zhang Peili, Zhang Xiaogang, and Zeng Xiaofeng et al.

- *Encountering the Others - Projektgruppe Stoffwechsel* (1992) as part of *Documenta IX*, Kassel, Germany. With participating Chinese artists Li Shan, Lu Shengzhong, Ni Hafeng, Sun Liang, Cai Guo-Qiang, Qiu Deshu, and Wang Youshen.
- *China's New Art, Post-1989* (31 January - 14 February 1993), Exhibition Hall, Hong Kong City Hall and Hong Kong Arts Centre. Presented and supported by Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong Arts Centre and Hong Kong Arts Festival Society, co-curated by Chang and Li Xianting.
- *Passaggio a Oriente* (1993) as part of the 45th Venice Biennale: *The Cardinal Points of Art*, Venice, Italy (14 June - 10 October 1993). Curated by Achille Bonito Oliva with Helena Kontova with curatorial consultation by Li Xianting and Francesca Dal Lago. Including artists Ding Yi, Zhang Peili, Yu Youhan, Yu Hong, Xu Bing, Wang Ziwei, Wang Guangyi, Sun Liang, Song Haidong, Liu Wei, Li Shan, Geng Jianyi, Feng Mengbo, and Fang Lijun.
- *China Avant-Garde: Counter Currents in Art and Culture* (1993) on display at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (30 January - 16 May 1993), later traveling to the Kunsthal Rotterdam, the Netherlands (29 May - 22 Aug 1993); Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, UK (4 September - 24 October 1993); and Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik, Odense, Denmark (12 November 1993 - 6 February 1994) and Roermuseum Hildesheim, Germany (17 June - 27 November 1994). Curated by Hans Van Dijk. Including sixteen artists

Ding Yi, Fang Lijun, Lin Yilin, Gu Dexin, Huang Yong Ping, Geng Jianyi, Yu Hong, Wu Shanzhuan, Wang Guangyi, Zhang Peili, Yu Youhan, Yan Peiming, Wang Jinsong, Ni Haifeng, Zhao Bandi and Zhao Jianren.

- *The First Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art* (1993) on display at Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia. Including artists Ding Yi, Li Lei, Shen Haopeng, Shi Hui, Sun Liang, Xu Jiang, Yu Youhan and Zhou Changjiang.
- *The First Shanghai Biennale* (1996), Shanghai Art Museum.
- *The Fourth Biennale d'Art Contemporain de Lyon* (1997). Curated by Harald Szeemann. Including artists An Hong, Chen Zhen, Feng Mengbo, Pu Jie, Wang Xing wei, Xu Yihui, Yan Pei Ming, and Zhang Peili.
- *Cities on the Move* (1997-1999). Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Hou Hanru. Exhibiting over seventy artists and architects working in and around Asia.
- *China: 5,000 Years* (6 February - 3 June 1998). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Exploration of modern Chinese art up until the late 1970s, shown in their downtown Manhattan SoHo space, Guggenheim Museum SoHo (6 February - 25 May 1998).
- *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (1998) at Asia Society Galleries and PS1, New York (15 September 1998 - 3 January 1999) and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (26 Feb - 1 Jun 1999). Curated by Gao Minglu. Including artists Cai Guo-Qiang, Cao Yong, Chen Hui-Chiao, Chen Sun-Chu, Chu Chiahua, Fang Lijun, Fang Tu, Fang Weiwen, Geng Jianyi, Wenda Gu, Ho Siu-Kee, Hong Hao, Hou Chun-

Ming, Huang Chih-Yang, Huang Yong Ping, Kum Chi-Keung, Li Shan, Shu-Min Lin, Lin Tiao- Miao, Liu Wei, Liu Xiangdong, Ma Liuming, Phoebe Man (Man Ching Ying), Mao Xu hui, Mao Xu hui, New Analysis Group (Wang Luyan, Chen Shaoping, Gu Dexin), Pan Xing Lei, To Weun, Tim Yu, Ma Jian, Qiu Zhijie, Ren Jian, Shu Qun, Song Dong, Song Yongping, Song Yonghong, Song Yongping, Southern Artists Salon (Wang Du, Lin Yilin, Chen Shaoxiang, Liang Juhui), Su Xinping, Tsong Pu, Wang Gongxin, Wang Guangyi, Wang Jin, Wang Jinsong, Wang Jun Jieh, Wang Peng, Wang Tiande, Wen Puilin, Wu Shan Zhuan, Wu Tien-Chang, Xiao Lu, Tang Song, Xu Bing, Yan Binghui, Yin Xiuzhen, Yuan Jai, Danny Ning Tsun Yung, Zhang Huan, Zhang Peili, Zhang Xiaogang and Zhang Yu.

- *Transcience: Experimental Chinese Art at the End of the Twentieth Century* (1999) at the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, Illinois, USA. Travelled onto the University of Oregon Museum of Art, Eugene, USA, and the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, USA. Curated by Wu Hung. Exhibiting twenty-one artists including Wenda Gu, Sui Jianguo, Cai Jin, Wang Jin, Xing Danwen, Xu Bing, Yin Xiuzhen, Zhan Wang, and Zhu Fading.

2000s

- *Reinterpretation: A Decade of Experimental Chinese Art 1990-2002: The First Guangzhou Triennial* (2002). Curated by Wu Hung. Including artists Ding Yi, Feng Mengbo, Geng Jianyi, Hu Jieming, KAN Xuan, Lu Chunsheng, Lu Lei, Li Shan, Wei Guangqing, Wang Guangyi, Wang Youshen, Xu Zhen, Yang Fudong, Yang Zhenzhong, Zhao Bandi, Zeng Fanzhi and Zhou Tiehai.
- *Alors, La Chine?/What about China?* (25 June - 13 October 2003) at Centre Pompidou, Paris. Curated by Fan Dian, Laurent Le Bon, Sayag Alain, Pi Li, Chantal Beret, Marion Bertagna, Alfred Pacquement. Including artists Bai Yiluo, Song Dong, Wang Guangyi,

Wang Jianwei, Weng Fen, Xiao Yu, Xing Danwen, Xu Tan, Yan Lei, Yang Fudong, Liu Jianhua, Shi Hui, Fang Lijun, Yang Maoyuan, Zhou Tiehai, Zhao Lin, Zhou Chunya, Zhang Peili, Hong Lei, Ciu Xiuwen, Zhuang Hui, Geng Jianyi, Li Yongbin, Yang Zhenzhong, Feng Mengbo, Liu Xiaodong, Kan Xuan, Zhu Jia, Chen Lingyang, Lu Qing, LU Hao, Shi Jinsong, Shao Yinong, Muchen and Zhang Yonghe.

- *Beyond: An Extraordinary Space of Experimentation for Modernisation - The Second Guangzhou Triennial* (2005). Curated by Hou Hanru, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Guo Xiaoyan.
- *China Power Station: Part I* (8 October - 5 November 2006) at Battersea Power Station, London. Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Julia Peyton-Jones and Gunnar B Kvaran. Including artists Ai Weiwei, Cao Fei, Chen Liaoyu, Chen Shaoxiong, Gu Dexin, Huang Yong Ping, Jia Zhang-ke, Kan Xuan, Liang Yue, Liang Wei, Liu Ding, Lu Chunsheng, Qiu Anxiong, Song Tao, Wang Jian Wei, Xu Tan, Xu Zhen, Yang Fudong, Yang Zhenzhong, Zhang Pei Li; architects Ma Qingyun and Yung Ho Chang; and curators Ou Ning and Pi Li.
- *Aftershock: Contemporary British Art 1990-2006* (15 December 2006 - 4 February 2007), a group exhibition of Young British Artists (YBAs) shown at the then newly opened Capital Museum Beijing, China. This exhibition was organized by Guo Xiaoyan, Director Curatorial Department, Guangdong Art Museum, Guangzhou; Pi Li, independent curator and Co-Director of Universal Studios, Beijing, and Colin Chinnery, then Creative Director, Ullens Foundation, Beijing.
- *The Real Thing* (2007) at Tate Liverpool (30 March - 10 June 2007). Curated by Simon Groom, Karen Smith and Xu Zhen. Exhibiting artists He An, Gu Dexin, Cao Fei, Yang Fudong, Wang Gongxin, Zhuang Hui, Geng Jianyi, Wang Peng, Yang Shaobin, Zhou Tiehai, Wang Wei, Ai Weiwei, Zhou Xiaohu, Qiu Xiaofei, Yangjiang Group, Li

Yongbin, Xu Zhen and Qiu Zhijie.

- *Farewell to Post-colonialism: The Third Guangzhou Triennial* at Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (6 September - 16 November 2008). Curated by Gao Shiming, Sarat Maharaj, Chang Tsong-zung, with research Curators Dorothee Albrecht, Sopawan Boonnimitra, Stina Edblom, Tamar Guimaraes, Guo Xiaoyan, Steven Lam, Khaled D. Ramadan.

2010s

- *The Revolution Continues: New Chinese Art* (2008) at Saatchi Gallery, London (9 October 2009 – 8 January 2009). Curated by Jiang Jiehong.
- *Negotiations: The Second Today's Document* (2010) at Today Art Museum, Beijing in partnership with Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (18 September – 24 October 2010). Curated by Huang Du and Jonathan Watkins.
- *The 8th Shanghai Biennale: Rehearsal*, Shanghai, China (24 October 2010 – 23 January 2011), proposed in conjunction with the *Liverpool Biennial 2010: Touched*, Liverpool, UK (18 September 2010 – 28 November 2010). Curated by Fan Di'an, Hua Yi, Li Lei and Gao Shiming. Including artists Andrew Byrne + Tom Nicholson, Delphine Balley, Homi K. Bhabha, Blagojević Boško, Noah Brehmer, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Partha Chatterjee, Chen Chieh-Jen, Nikhil Chopra, Anna Colin, Raqs Media Collective, Prasenjit Duara, Botto E Bruno, Nadja Frank, Gernot Faber, Tim Griffin, Guan Wei, Chourouk Hriech, JR, Issac Julien, Nguyen-Hatsushiba Jun, Yeondoo Jung, Geeta Kapur, Shama Khanna, Michael Lee, Ouka Leele, Liane Lefavre + Li Kaisheng, Tsai Ming Liang, Liu Xiaodong, Liu Wei, Liu Qingyuan, Lv Shanchuan, Ma Maleonn, Madeln, Sarat Maharaj, Maleonn, Carlos Garaicoa Manso, Marlene Mocquet, Mou Boyan, Boyan Mu, Ashis

Nandy, Tejaswini Niranjana, Vincent Olinet, Yuki Onodera, Qiu Zhijie, Shuddhabrata Sengupta, Shen Ligong, SO-SO-LIMITED, Sosolimited, Superflex + The Propeller, Superflex + The Propeller Group, SvalaThórsdóttir Inga, Tang Hui, Josef Trattner, Tsai Mingliang, Danna Vajda, Verdenstatret, Verdensteatret, Wang Jianwei, Wang Xiaoshuai, Wang Mai, WHW, Wu Shanzhuan, Xia Yang, Hsia Yan, Yang Fudong, Yves Bernard + Yannick Antoine, Zhang Hui, Zhang Huan, Zhou Yi.

- *Guanxi: The Art of Conversations* (2011) was a group exhibition of twelve contemporary Chinese artists on show at Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (16 April 2011 – 19 June 2011) and Today Art Museum, Beijing, China (10 October 2011 - 23 October 2011). Curated by Jiang Jiehong. Including artists Jiang Zhi, Qiu Zhijie, Shao Yinong, Shi Jinsong, Shi Qing, Xiang Jing, Xiao Yu, Yang Xinguang, Yang Zhenzhong, Zhang Dali, Zhang Enli, Zhuang Hui & Dan'er.
- *The Unseen: The Fourth Guangzhou Triennial* (2012). Curated by Jiang Jiehong and Jonathan Watkins. Including artists Ignasi Aballi, Giovanni Anselmo, Vladimir Arkhipov, Angie Atmadjaja, Felice Beato, Thomas Bewick, Alice Cattaneo, Chen Chieh-Jen, Ruth Claxton, Michael Craig-Martin, Du Yun, Marcel Dzama, Harold Edgerton, Dan Flavin, Ceal Floyer, Yukio Fujimoto, Gao Shiqiang, Franz Gertsch, Graham Gussin, Ham Jin, Ham Kyungah, Han Kyung Woo, Hu Yun, Huang Ran, Sofia Hulten, Ann Veronica Janssens, Jiang Zhi, Tim Johnson, Kan Xuan, On Kawara, Lee Seungae, Leung Chiwo, Liu Wei, Li Wei, Vladimir Logutov, Lu Yang, Lutz and Guggisberg, Madein Company, Miao Xiaochun, Francois Morellet, Kingsley Ng, Timur Novikov, Trevor Paglen, Cornelia Parker, Katie Paterson, Giuseppe Penone, Susan Philipsz, The Propeller Group, Josef Robakowski, Jadwiga Sawicka, Jonathan Schipper, Shen Shaomin, Shi Jinsong, Dayanita Singh, Sui Jianguo, Tan Ping, Ron Terada, Amikam Toren, Tu Weizheng, Rikuo Ueda, Wang Yuyang, Xiao Yu, Zhang Dali, Zhuang Hui.

Appendix 5

Interview with Li Xianting (translators Yu Chen and You Feng) - 6 October 2010, Songzhuang Artists' Village, Beijing

RM: My research is about the idea of a transcultural curator looking at the interpretation of contemporary Chinese art (CCA), I specifically looking at the time period after 1980 and obviously you've been involved in the development of CCA, you are really important to talk to...so I wanted to talk to you about the development of your curatorial practice and whether you see a difference between how the East and the West curate CCA? Does the West have a different curatorial strategy to the East?

LX: He says he doesn't know what others think, he only knows how himself doing this curating practice.

RM: How have you found curating in the West? The Western curators...

LX: I can only read about this exhibition based on some documents...the foreign exhibition I can remember is 'Post-Human Being' by a German girl.

(Translator: I think you want to ask about CCA, curated by the foreign curators?)

LX: It is very obvious that foreign curator likes the obvious icons of China. There is a lot of this kind of exhibition. They prefer red as a colour. A lot of these kind of books with a red cover. In his opinion, China is just getting out of the red colour.

RM: Does he think these shows successfully interpret and translate CCA?

LX: I always think that between cultures there is no possibility to interpret others, they are all misunderstood.

RM: Is there any way we can make it easier, either through spending time in China or having cultural interaction in China to make interpretation happen? Are there methods that we can use?

LX: I don't know. I am already disappointed by this issue. It is the same when we look at Western artists work but maybe the misunderstanding is a curatorial way, the right way...like since the early 80s years, we open our door and we learn from West countries of their technologies, of their sciences but we didn't learn their artists, we learn their classic artists like Asian types in architecture, in dance, in music, we didn't learn from them in their modern art.

RM: Do you think that interpretation and translation could be helped through using events programming or more cross-disciplinary communication methods to get the artist to talk or involved in the process of curating in the West to make translation happen?

LX: The translator is one problem but to read the work is another problem...you need the context, but it doesn't matter...misunderstanding is ok.

RM: Do you think in order to learn the context you need to understand China and the culture of China?

LX: Beside history, and culture things the most important thing is the emotion here, the mood of the Chinese.

RM: Can the West get that same kind of emotion or do we put our own mood and construct...our Western ideals onto it? Will we ever be able to get the same emotion coming from a Western background?

LX: It is possible.

RM: You came from a painting background, does this influence your work as a curator because you have a better understanding of the artist?

LX: I was a major in Chinese traditional painting but it doesn't matter, what matters is timing because I was there when there was a lot of voice coming from, he wanted to speak for those people that don't have a right to speak and the timing when the cultural revolution was just over and new things come at that time.

RM: Can I ask about your need to be this voice for the artists and if this is the case in his curating too...is this always an opportunity to give a voice and freedom to the artists he exhibits, so whether writing links to his curating...is it part of who he is to give a voice to the artists? Is your writing a type of interpretation? Is your curating a type of interpretation? Do they both give a voice to the artist?

LX: The exhibition is an expansion of the writing. If I don't have a thought, I don't have things to say...I want to curate exhibitions.

[展览是写作的延续 - exhibition is the extension of writing]

RM: Is that because you can't find anything interesting to curate?

LX: Because now I have other works to do, I have helped to construct a cultural area here. I haven't been a curator for over 10 years and my roles

have been changed into Songzhuang. I help the native government to help to improve the relationship between the artists and the farmers here, how the artists live here as they are becoming more and more, and this has become my key point to become a social worker.

Chinese people used to learn from the Western like they have the Western people as an artist or as somebody who has a lot of knowledge...you need to critique about the government, about the social, and you don't do something for yourself, but in China it is quite difficult because first you cannot publish those critical ideas...second thing is it won't make sense, it won't help. So as a Chinese tradition in ancient time, so people have a lot of knowledge they will enter this social directly they will do some specific things to change, to improve.

I have been working on this for about six years and the foundation and financial aid of independent movies. (Li Xianting Film Fund)

RM: Is this all to give artists more freedom and more of a home for their art, or is it about, what is it for?

LX: I focus on the part of the artists' freedom but also on the artists' promotion. I care about how they survive in society because in Western countries they can be free and be supported by some foundation but here in China if you don't have work you cannot live. So I have build this area to try and give them a place to communicate, to survive, to support themselves but mostly for the film maker, especially the documentary film maker. Their films are very hard to be published and they live a very hard life so I try to help them.

RM: Do you see that there are more galleries than artists at the moment, maybe in Beijing? And whether galleries are being selective about whom they choose so it is very hard for artists to start on that career?

LX: It is the same way in the whole world. I am trying to establish a new system about the third level of the market. If the first level is the gallery, the second is the sale to the collectors, the third is the market that you price it relatively lower like 1000 rmb for the normal citizens they can buy it and also this process is a way to communicate with the local people...because the Western society have the galleries that the people all can see the art, but in China the whole process of contemporary art have illuminate lots of people, not only lots of artists but lots of audience. So if I can establish this kind of market, which I am trying in Shanghai and Chengdu, it can make it possible to involve more people in this kind of process.

YC: 艺术市场三级制 - Three-tier system for the art market based on 1. Gallery, 2. Collection, 3. Market for ordinary people, which he is trying to establish.

RM: Is this a case of getting the local, Chinese audience to understand and become involved in the arts...building relationships between art and the people? Is it still elitist and divided in that way? Is art still seen as inaccessible?

LX: Yes, especially in a financial way. Because we don't get support from the government or foundation, I am trying to do it independently from them.

RM: How do you define contemporary Chinese art today? You've explained it as 'hard to be a pioneer' and he has related it to the Yang Wu movement and in relation to the exhibition 'Import and Exit'...

LX: Change in art is based on the change in culture, so when I talk about the Yang Wu movement, it was when Chinese culture was ... [incomprehensible at 32.52 minutes] by the Western people and the Chinese themselves tried to learn from the Western, but just learn the practical knowledge, but not the

system, not the thought but after that in the 90s people started to learn from the system...so why the change happens, I am thinking about at the moment.

This last 100 years of Chinese is about change themselves encountered with Western culture, we receive that influence, we just refuse to take it for example when the first time the western paintings they just copy the truth and the nature, in song dynasty give up to copy the nature. They want to build their world inside, they want to express their own feelings but when Qing dynasty arrived we were fight by the western culture and people see the drawbacks of this kind of thought and they want to face the truth, nature and outside world again. So we are learning from the Western cultures but we are in a point of need, we need to face the outside world again. So its very hard to translate to communicate in between the cultures because Chinese is the only country that has traditional art created by people who work for the government, this is a very special classic so when they were feeling that they were too week, we encounter the western shift they start engaging with the outside world. [Book handed to me].

RM: From that development, does he see CCA as pioneering or is it hard to be this? Is it taking on its own voice now rather than say learning from the West or learning from history?

LX: I am questioning the “pioneer”, the concept itself as I think it is a problem for the whole world not only for China. Is it important to find new media to express your feelings? Is that necessary? Because people always think that pioneers means new media.

RM: Maybe not to do with new media, but a new approach, a new concept even though so much has been done before...almost creating a new identity for what art is...the new breed of artists...how do you see it?

LX: In my curatorial system, if the artwork is a pioneer it doesn't matter. The things I care about is how is it valued in this context, in this environment. My curating is about two things – 1. I have feeling about this work, this work can reflect the people's mood, peoples psychological status and the second thing is language...is it pop? Is it readymade?...it is a different language. If the work has something original about this kind of language...if it successful for these two then I think it is good artwork, it doesn't matter if it is contemporary or not.

RM: Does contemporary Chinese art have its own language different to Western art?

LX: The message in this an artwork is from Duchamp, when he put a toilet in the museum it is very important in art history but cannot touch the heart of Chinese. This work uses colour to represent the Chinese party, of the communist party. This artwork can really touch Chinese people's heart.

Maybe we cannot create a brand new one, maybe we change it a little, maybe we now have a relationship with our own life. When Duchamp put a toilet into the museum, it is very important the art history but for the people not in this field cannot be touched by this artwork but for this one, it is not pioneer in art language but it has a lot of meaning in life, so it makes our chest shake a little bit. The artist is Mao Tong Qiang.

[In the work of Mao Tong Qiang, the tools are hammers and sickles, which are the icon of communities' flag. like this. so even though the language of "ready-made" is created by western artists, Mao Tong Qiang was using it in a very creative way, which is quite touching for the audience all over the world because the red wave has shaken the whole world but the icons, in that picture, are apparently abandoned now.]

RM: Can the West understand this presentation of language...can it make our chests shake?

LX: It can make Western people feel the same way because first, the artwork is a large one, the second thing is the communist movement influenced the whole world not just China. It can be seen in Russia, German, almost the whole world.

RM: Does it help to have interpretation through text and books to help viewers to understand the artwork? Or can it stand-alone?

LX: Yes. I think that might be the problem between generations not areas...because it was a very influential movement back in the Communist era.

RM: Do you think the younger generation won't understand it as well as the older generations so we need to interpret it further?

LX: He thinks reading books or contexts are necessary.

RM: Do you think contemporary Chinese art has its own terminology that we can't "literally" translate?

LX: It is possible that when we translate a Western word we mistranslate it and then when we translate it back into English it happens.

RM: You have so many different words for the term artists...whereas we just say "artist"...the same for gallery somehow.

LX: Maybe that's because of the system.

RM: Well maybe the system creates different words and terminologies.

LX: I am thinking this issue over the past few years that the words have been changing in the process of being used. The word you say like “artist” and “gallery” both come from Western culture but we change it in this environment. I’m thinking about writing an article about some important word and how they change after we import them...like aesthetic, “mei xue” 美学, a subject that we study about what is beauty? What is beautiful but actually it was a word translated by Japanese to Western, the word itself was talking about the sins, the science of sins, but the Japanese translate it into a subject about what is beauty. So there is a lot of argument in China about this kind of thing.

[YC: 美学 - aesthetics (when Li talked about the misunderstanding happened when we imported those words from Western at the first place.) Aesthetic is basically, it's theory about human's sense and feeling. However, at the early of 20th century, when Chinese scholars tried to translate a batch of books that were classified as aesthetics literature by western scholars, they failed to find a accurate word. And they just borrow the way how Japanese scholars had translated since Chinese and Japanese have so much in common and back then a lot of Chinese intellectuals had been influenced by Japan profoundly.

美 beauty for example, 美人 beautiful person; 学 disciplinary for example, 哲学. 哲 means philosophical, while 学 means (some kind of) disciplinary.]

According to Li, you see, it was a mistake. Or more precisely, this way of translation just emphasized a narrow part of the original meaning. However, Chinese artists and critics have been using this word for so many years and it has aroused and been involved in most of the debates, arguments and disputes about art in China at that time.

I assume that Li himself has been part of these kind of debates for a long time, and he feels ironically now because there was a huge misunderstanding of this keyword of the time.

LX: How do you define the word artist in the West? Do you have contemporary artist or traditional artist?

RM: Artist...if you say you are an artist it covers everything so you have to have a prefix which will define it specifically as to what it is. Is that how it works here?

LX: People introduce themselves as contemporary or traditional....I am a painter, I am a sculptor...

RM: What do you think of the future artists coming out of art school here? Do you think there are more younger people wanting to be creative and wanting to be in the arts more than there ever has been? And what do you think of those artists? What are they trying to achieve?

LX: Ask the translator! It's a pretty small proportion because it's very hard to be an artist here unless your family is very rich.

RM: Do you see the younger artists now trying to do things off their own back? Are they trying to curate exhibitions and shows because those opportunities are not there?

LX: It is normal. When there is no element of commercial art it was pure but now everything is commercial so I don't want to do this anymore.

RM: Do you see more of an international exchange with the younger artists now? Do you see more going over to the West and being exhibited in the West? Do you see more galleries and curators in China trying to encourage international exchange and dialogue and are the artists doing that as well?

LX: The phenomenon you mention is normal, it will happen, I am thinking about translation as we said before like the word “artist”, maybe using the word artist is just the name of the occupation but maybe “yishu jia”, “jia” means professional, master, so it's a very serious word here but in ancient china we don't have this term we just say I'm a painter, I'm a sculptor, I do this kind of work it does not mean I am a master. So the word “yishu jia” is quite serious for the ordinary people.

[YC: 艺术 art; 艺术家 originally “master of art”, normally “artist”. 家 means home, and it's a idiomatic usage to describe somebody is really really good and professional in some area. You can perceive it as you're so good at writing that writing become your home, and you're the home of writing.....does it make sense?]

RM: Can you speak more specifically about your relationship with artists...how you choose artists? How you support and build knowledge with them?

LX: Relationship between artists and I are close for many years, and that is the same for curating as I mentioned before for two point...the first is I have a feeling about this artwork, the second is this kind of art language, does it have anything original or creative.

RM: How do you define yourself? People have called you the “godfather” of Chinese art...

LX: At first I was an editor, then I became like a trans...this word was used in the fight with the Japanese...a contactor, I was in charge of contact different people and in charge of relationships. Now I describe myself as a..shun shen...shun countryside and shen means this is an ancient word from

Chinese...someone retired but with power, some influence on society, so now he uses his influences between the government and the artist.

[YF: 编辑-交通站长-乡绅 means editor-stationmaster (especially for the people "underground")-squire (when he talked about the roles he has played). When he used the terms like Three-tier system, stationmaster, and squire, the unique Chinese characters embraced in these words make it humorous as well as accurate. The stationmaster here specifically means that, during war time, the man who in charge of arranging the revolutionists came from different places, organizing them to work and helping them to hide against the enemy, so basically, it's a word created by the Communist Party.]

RM: A social worker? As you said before.

LX: Yes.

RM: Can you talk of your work with other curators and examples of projects and exhibition?

LX: There are a lot...in 1989, a group show curated by a lot of people.

RM: Are you looking outside of China for artists? And for influence?

LX: Because I'm aging I don't have the time to focus on things far away. I only have time to focus on the things around me. I have become more and more negative since aging. When I was young I know something's impossible I still had the passion to do it. Now I don't have the passion.

RM: I think you become more critical as you get older.

LX: Normally I don't critique others. I just say the part I like, that is traditional Chinese style of schools and now in China there are a lot of people standing in the high point and judge others, I don't want to be one of them.

Minsheng was the first gallery not run and managed by the government, run by the rich people.

RM: Do institutions influence the way an exhibition is curated? Do they have power over how something is shown or curated?

LX: Sure they have a lot of power. We have been influenced since we are very young.

RM: Is that getting easier today?

LX: It is getting better in a superficial sense...yet when I hold the Tibet exhibition there were a lot of people there. If you touch the line they will show up.

The important thing is we communicate and stimulate ideas. The question about the word "artist" is very interesting as "ist" only mean that you are a person doing this kind of work but when we translate it into "yishu jia" it means it is very high classical level, that you are really a master, but in Taiwan they translate this word in a different way, they translate it into art person. This is a normal translation, but we mis-translate it into "yishu jia" so we gain far more than we actually deserve.

It is like the example of the composition, by a foreign linguist Derrida, it means that in analysing this you break it, you want to change it, it is very revolutionary, but it is totally misunderstood of the original.

There is another is realism was only talking about the nature itself, but we translate it into ... [incomprehensible at 1.26.38] it was create, it means writing originally, or compose here, when you put them together it is not only

the truth in nature but it is the truth in the artist, in the self. In the process of translation we just change the meaning of itself.

RM: Do you have an interest in language then?

LX: Because his experience of this, I have used this word a lot in the past but now I find there are a lot of problems in the word itself, but when we use it the problems will be larger so I am coming back to see the distance between the things we really want to say and the word.

It's not just the process of translating words but the process of creating words...it is partly yes and partly no because it happened within the process of globalisation, so it does change our lives and creating other words.

The word economy "jing ji" used to be a verb ... [incomprehensible at 1.30.39] manage your country, improve your home town, but now it has become a noun term meaning economy.

I am curious about how the change in meanings is happening and I am researching these kinds of words and I'm going to write an article about it.

RM: We have trouble in the West that more words are being created at the same time as not understanding what older terms mean. We are making hybrid words, "isms" or "ists" to describe something...we are having trouble not understanding what our creative language is yet at the same time creating new words.

[YF: 解构 – deconstruction - another example of misunderstanding.]

Appendix 6

***The Temporary* - Online Links**

- *The Temporary* - website
<http://thetemporary.org.uk>
- *The Temporary: 01* - catalogue (low resolution file (7.2MB))
http://www.thetemporary.org.uk/uploads/publications/tt_01.pdf
- *The Temporary: 01* - catalogue (high resolution file (56.9MB))
http://www.thetemporary.org.uk/uploads/publications/tt_01_hr.pdf
- *The Temporary: 01* - CD
<https://rhpcdrs.bandcamp.com/album/the-temporary-01>

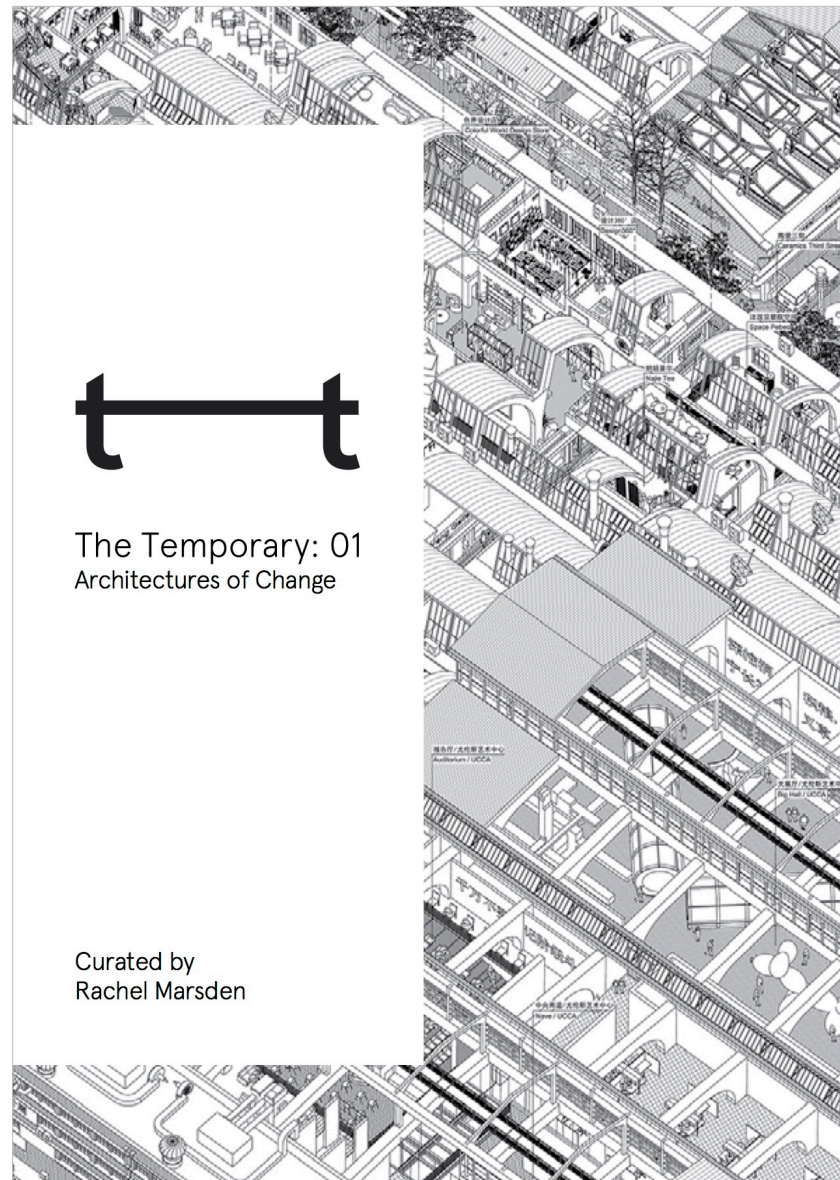
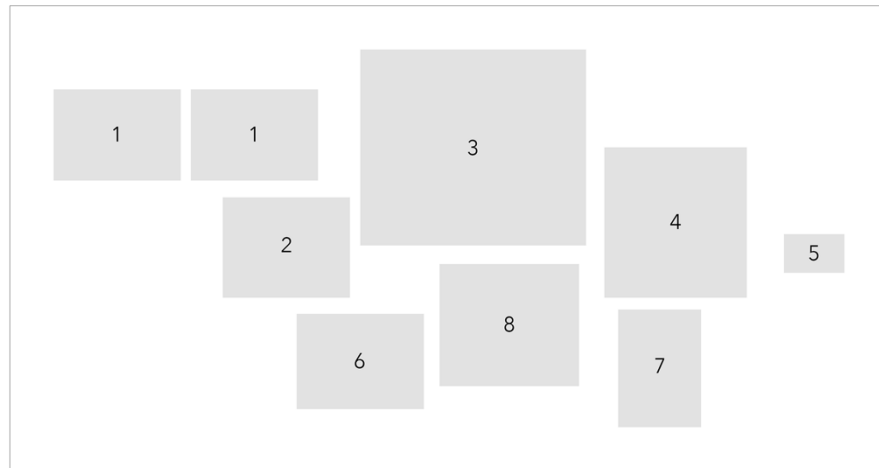


Figure 62 - *The Temporary: 01* Catalogue Cover

Appendix 7

The Temporary: 01 - Exhibition Topology



01:
In Between (2013)
Phillip and Anthony Reed (London, UK & Shanghai, China)
C-type on Fuji Archival paper

02:
Guangzhou Edge (2013)
Mengxi Zhang (London, UK)
C-type on Fuji Archival paper

03:
SKIN: Nowhere in Somewhere (2006 - present)
Xie Jiankun (China/USA)
C-type on Fuji Archival paper

04:
Taken from 'Wenzhou' (2009)
& 'The Sequel - The Way to the Golden Mountain'
Xiaoxiao Xu (Holland)
C-type on Fuji Archival paper

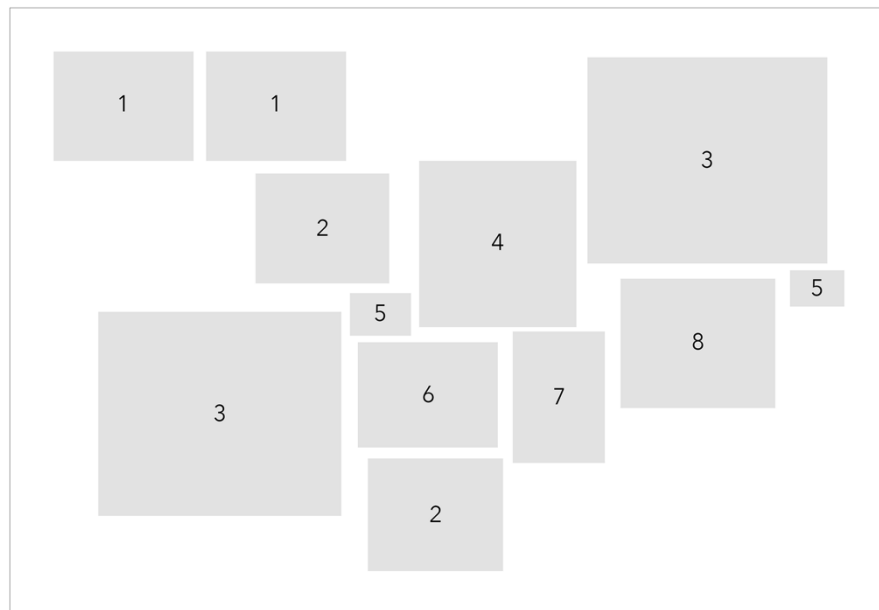
05:
'Untitled' (2013)
Li Hui (Hangzhou, China)
C-type on card

06:
From the series 'Wu Kan' (2012) & 'People Square' (2011-12)
Fan Shi San (Shanghai, China)C-type on Fuji Archival paper

07:
Taken from the 'SOONTOBEFORGOTTEN' (2013)
Daniels Langeberg (Shanghai, China)
C-type on Fuji archival paper

08:
'上海Hinterland: A Photographic Exploration of an Expanding City' (2009-11)
Peter Dixie (Shanghai, China)
C-type on Fuji Archival paper

Figure 63 - *The Temporary: 01 - Exhibition Topology (1/3)*



01:

In Between (2013)

Phillip and Anthony Reed (London, UK & Shanghai, China)

C-type on Fuji Archival paper

02:

Guangzhou Edge (2013)

Mengxi Zhang (London, UK)

C-type on Fuji Archival paper

03:

SKIN: Nowhere in Somewhere (2006 - present)

Xie Jiankun (China/USA)

C-type on Fuji Archival paper

04:

Taken from 'Wenzhou' (2009)

& 'The Sequel - The Way to the Golden Mountain'

Xiaoxiao Xu (Holland)

C-type on Fuji Archival paper

05:

'Untitled' (2013)

Li Hui (Hangzhou, China)

C-type on card

06:

From the series 'Wu Kan' (2012) & 'People Square' (2011-12)

Fan Shi San (Shanghai, China) C-type on Fuji Archival paper

07:

Taken from the 'SOONTOBEFORGOTTEN' (2013)

Daniels Langeberg (Shanghai, China)

C-type on Fuji archival paper

08:

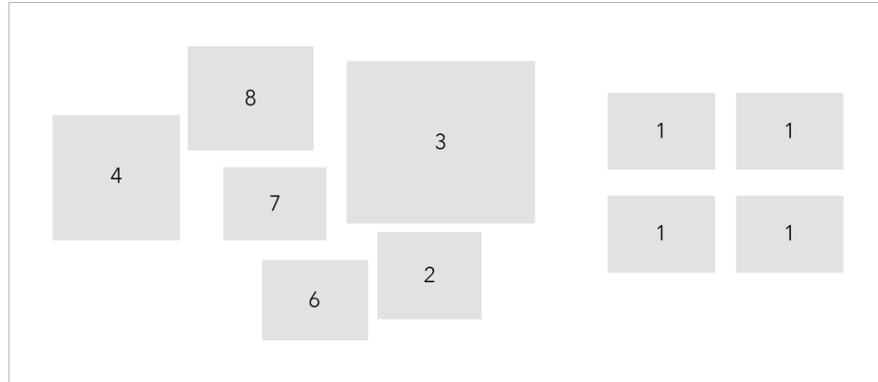
'上海Hinterland: A Photographic

Exploration of an Expanding City' (2009-11)

Peter Dixie (Shanghai, China)

C-type on Fuji Archival paper

Figure 64 - *The Temporary: 01* - Exhibition Topology (2/3)



01:

In Between (2013)

Phillip and Anthony Reed (London, UK & Shanghai, China)

C-type on Fuji Archival paper

02:

Guangzhou Edge (2013)

Mengxi Zhang (London, UK)

C-type on Fuji Archival paper

03:

SKIN: Nowhere in Somewhere (2006 - present)

Xie Jiankun (China/USA)

C-type on Fuji Archival paper

04:

Taken from 'Wenzhou' (2009)

& 'The Sequel - The Way to the Golden Mountain'

Xiaoxiao Xu (Holland)

C-type on Fuji Archival paper

06:

From the series 'Wu Kan' (2012) & 'People Square' (2011-12)

Fan Shi San (Shanghai, China) C-type on Fuji Archival paper

07:

Taken from the 'SOONTOBEFORGOTTEN' (2013)

Daniels Langeberg (Shanghai, China)

C-type on Fuji archival paper

08:

'上海Hinterland: A Photographic

Exploration of an Expanding City' (2009-11)

Peter Dixie (Shanghai, China)

C-type on Fuji Archival paper

Figure 65 - *The Temporary*: 01 - Exhibition Topology (3/3)

Appendix 8
Still Walking Blog - Exploring the city of Birmingham:
Impermanent Collection - review of *The Temporary* at
ARTicle Gallery - Ben Waddington

12 March 2014

The Temporary is an cross-media exhibition curated by Rachel Marsden at ARTicle Gallery that explores the notion of temporality and the transitory – particularly in an urban context.

The Midlands has seen a cluster of walking art exhibitions recently that seem to have been put on for the benefit of Still Walking: among them *Walk On* at Mac, *Land Art* at Mead Gallery and *Walking Encyclopedia* at AirSpace gallery. A recent addition to this growing collection is Rachel Marsden's concise exhibition at ARTicle (in Margaret Street School of Art). While not specifically about walking, it certainly covers my favourite themes of moving through a city, looking for patterns and weighing up how we feel about our surroundings. It's also being held in an often-overlooked public gallery, itself in a jewel of a building that many seem to forget about when characterising Birmingham's architecture.

A first sense of the exhibition is of an overwhelming, incomprehensible and uncontrollable Ultrametropolis that leaves its citizens baffled, blitzed and bamboozled, spluttering in its own dust cloud. What initially appears to be a far eastern focus (and knowing Rachel's Shanghai connections) proves on closer inspection to be international phenomenon. Being constantly being wrong-footed by one's own city is an experience much closer to home. Birmingham's long-term unsentimental adhesion to its motto of 'Forward!'

has variously left in its wake huge, useless viaducts, the demolition of unfinished high rises and campaigns to save iconic buildings scheduled to be razed less than 40 years after their creation. By now, we are used to it: right or wrong, that's the character of the city. People know that if they return to Birmingham after several years' absence, they won't be able to find their way around – not even out of the station. But it's not quite the same: Rachel knows she won't be able to find her way round once familiar streets in Shanghai after just one year away. Something has gone wrong, or is at least worth examining. That exploration feels like it should be heavy, dispiriting and pessimistic but it is curiously liberating, spiritual and certainly sublime.

The exhibition is dominated by a large scale work occupying the entire width of the far wall: Lu Xinjian's *City DNA* is a dense grid of symbols and shapes that reminds me of an urban planner's figure ground map – the rendering of buildings as silhouettes and the removal of all other visual map information. The familiarity and character of the city map is changed utterly when you see this. Other patterns can then present themselves and the results can be hypnotic, as is the case on this epic scale. Eventually, junctions, roads, rivers and contours present themselves from the seeming chaos and you might even guess which city this is. The exhibition is not wholly about visual art, and if your exploration is to be genuine, then it needs to be done across a variety of scales and media. iPods mounted on top of *City DNA* play you a selection of further musical and sounds that work as further investigations, and naturally there is a remix to download. Manchester band Part Wild Horses performed a newly commissioned work in the space on the opening night. Modular furniture by Li-En Yeung and Tom Vousden is scattered around the room and you are invited to reassemble it to suit your needs (as happened during the live act). It can be a precarious undertaking and you need to become part structural engineer to make sure your design doesn't topple.

The remaining walls display the photographers' work, scrambling and reassembling sizes, locations and even the photographers themselves,

better revealing the themes of the exhibition. Some are apparent for their meaning, such as the former Shanghai residents returning to their homes, now rubble, being dwarfed by a wall of tower blocks behind them. Other images are more personal reflections; snapshots of disorientation. Elsewhere, in Cyril Galmiche's *'Pudong, Summer'* projection splits Shanghai's business district into vertical strips, dividing the day up into equal but remixed zones. From nowhere, a boat floats across a band then disappears into another time wormhole. I'm reminded of the installations in last Spring's mesmerising *Metropolis* at BM&G and want to see this piece at room height, and with a beanbag.

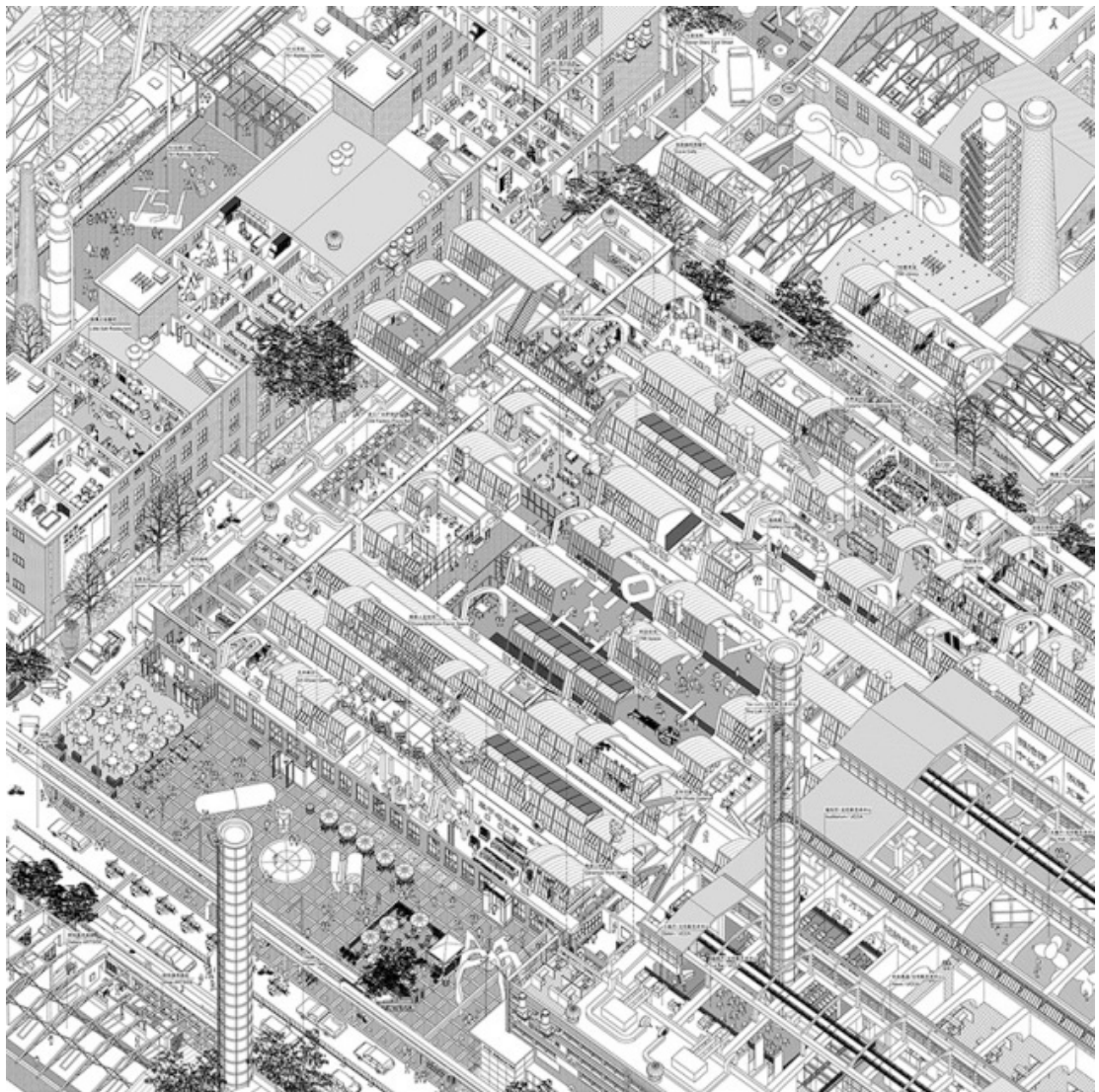


Figure 66 - *A Little Bit of Beijing* (2013) by Li Han & Hu Yan. Image © the artists.

The most affecting works are those by Li Han and Hu Yan, whose incredible work appears on the poster for the exhibition. Their intense, technical, isometric renderings cover not only the poster but page after page of what looks like a whole series of graphic novels. Every railing, pane of glass, brick, twig and leaf in the city is given the same minute scrutiny. After living with this reality for a few minutes, staggered by its precision and sheer bewildering scale, it becomes apparent that the scenes are populated by humans too, nearly invisible amongst the endless rows and grids of...*stuff*.

I bought the badge set and took home two of the beautiful posters. They were short lived, alas: I spilt tea over the first then mistakenly tore up the other to use as a shield for an iron on transfer.

The Temporary is on at ARTicle Gallery until 4 April then at the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art, Manchester from 17 April – 11 May 2014

www.thetemporary.org.uk

Source:

<https://stillwalkingblog.com/2014/03/12/impermanent-collection-review-of-the-temporary-at-article-gallery/>

<https://stillwalkingblog.com/2014/03/12/impermanent-collection-review-of-the-temporary-at-article-gallery/>