

1 ☐ Speaking Truth to Power:

China's Artists, Poets and Netizens on the Russo-Ukrainian War, 2022-Present

Daria Berg & Qian Cui

University of St.Gallen, Switzerland

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2 ☐ INTRODUCTION:

Visual Art & Poetic Narratives

3 ☐ **Cao Fei 曹斐: Falling Matryoshka**

On February 25, 2022, 1 day after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Cao Fei posted on Instagram:

“Falling Matryoshka © Cao Fei 2022. Photo from the border of China and Russia. Project commissioned by @garagemca.”

Collaboration Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Jan 2022.

4 ☐ **Matryoshka in Russia & China**

- Russia: tradition since 1890
- Japan: Honshu doll, daruma doll (but not nested)
- China: traditional roly-poly toy: ‘tumbler’ (*budaoweng* 不倒翁)
 - Drinking game since Tang dynasty
- Cao Fei: The doll that cannot fall has fallen

11 ☐ **China's Geopolitics**

12 ☐ **Opening Beijing Winter Olympics**

4 Feb 2022: Beijing Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony,
Xi Jinping & Putin pledge ‘no limits’ friendship

13 ☐ **Joint Statement: No limits Friendship & Media Mirroring**

14 ☐ **National Radio & TV Administration 国家广播电视总局 (2018)**

- 2021 NRTA under Central Propaganda Dept of CCP
- secret agreement with Russia's Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media. Leaked: Chinese media to repeat & amplify Russian propaganda

- Since Feb 2022: converging media narratives Russia / China
- China amplifies Russia's fake news: Ukraine prepares biological warfare (cf. Hvistendahl & Kovalev, 2022)

21 ☐ **Official Discourse on China's Mediasphere**

- 'Glorious Russia! Glorious Putin! They have politicians in the West, but Putin, he is a great political player who will go down in history!'
- 'I support the disintegration of NATO! I support Russia, because when Russia falls, China is next!' (Weibo, 2 March 2022).
- 'Russia has done a beautiful job!'
- (Cf. Bandurski, 2022)

24 ☐

Sunflower Seeds (*Kuihuazi* 葵花籽)

- Tate Modern, 2010
- 'Readymades'
- Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)

25 ☐ **Parrhesia in East & West**

26 ☐ **Parrhesia in Western Culture**

- Greek παρρησία — first in Euripides (c.484-407 BC)
 - Literally: 'saying everything one has in mind'
 - Speaking truth to power, freedom of expression, transparency, duty, idle talk, gossip.

27 ☐ **Parrhesia in Western Culture**

- Foucault, 1983:
 - Condition: truth-tellers face risk or danger for them in telling truth
 - But they feel bound by duty to muster the courage and do so.
 - Foucault, Michel, 'Discourse and Truth: The Problematisation of Parrhesia', Six Lectures given at Berkeley, 1983.

28 ☐ **Parrhesia Tradition in China**

- Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r.685-643 BC) established office of 'admonition officers' (*jian guan* 諫官) to speak truth to power—until Liao dynasty (916-1125).
- Praised by Xi Jinping's e-government: He Jing 何靜, website of

Audit Bureau of Guilin City, Guangxi 广西壮族自治区桂林市审计局.

29 ☐ **Parrhesia Tradition as the Intellectuals' Mission**

- Roaming scholars *shi* 士 in pre-Qin China
 - Confucius 孔子
 - Mencius 孟子
- Roam from kingdom to kingdom
- offer advice on good government to the ruler

30 ☐ **Parrhesia Risks**

- Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c. 145-c. 86 BC) & Grand Historian to Emperor Han Wudi 漢武帝 (r. 141- 87 BC)
 - Sima Qian defended defeated general Li Ling 李陵 (d. 74 BC)
 - Death sentence
 - Commuted to castration and 3 years in prison after
- Tradition of *xiaoshuo* 小说 — idle talk, gossip — history rather than fiction
- Political critique — often indirect

31 ☐ **3 THEMES:**

Parrhesia in China's Mediasphere

32 ☐ **I.**

COLOURS OF UKRAINE

33 ☐ **Cao Fei 曹斐**

34 ☐ **Cao Fei on Instagram**

35 ☐ **Cao Fei**

- 1 • Februar/März 2022
 - “Found daily colours to support Ukraine”
 - Echoes of Ukraine found in China...

38 ☐ **Cao Fei**

- Born 1978, Guangzhou
- Lives in Beijing

- Photographer
- Film maker
- Video artist
- Script writer
- Composer
- Sculptor

39  **Multi-media artist CAO Fei 曹斐 (b. 1978)**

40  **Badiucao 巴丢草**

42 

- #StopWar
- #StandWithUkraine
- <https://www.badiucao.com/latest-adventure>

45  **Badiucao**

- Born c. 1986 in China
- Known by pseudonym only
- Lives in Australia
- Active on Sina Weibo, other Chinese social media,
- Twitter, Instagram
- Website: <https://www.badiucao.com/latest-adventure>

46  **Huang Rui 黄锐**

47  **Huang Rui 黄锐: 'Absence of Black Moon'**

- Art Basel
- 2022
- Oil on canvas, 88 x 99 cm

48  **Huang Rui 黄锐: 'Absence of Black Moon'**

- 'Together for Peace': Exhibition by Ukrainian & Polish Embassies, Beijing, 12 March 2022
- *Dao de jing* 道德经 inspiration
- *Yi jing* 易经 *Book of Changes*

51  **Huang Rui 黄锐: 'Absence of Black Moon'**

- *1952, Beijing

- 1978 co-published Jintian 今天 Today literary magazine
- 1980s Co-founder & member of Stars Group 星星画会
- Exhibitions in China, Europe, USA

52  **Deng Kangyan 邓康延**

53  **'Echoes from the Ukrainian Trenches' ('Wukelan zhanhao de huixiang' 乌克兰战壕的回响), Deng Kangyan 邓康延**

乌克兰兄弟

听到你战壕的笛声离死亡很近

我们揪心

看到你故乡的旋律离太阳很近

我们开心

我们也有过梅花和青天血染的清晨

知道恨与爱的山高海深

请接受遥远东方的和音

比炮弹更响的共鸣

比履带更快的前进

54  **'Echoes from the Ukrainian Trenches' ('Wukelan zhanhao de huixiang' 乌克兰战壕的回响), Deng Kangyan 邓康延**

当你的笛声和我们的琴声共振

那是母亲和孩子的声音

那是自由与和平的声音

那是地球山崩地裂的声音

你笛孔里有乌克兰的花黄天蓝

你旋律里回荡着向死而生的国运

没有谁能打败一场心灵的合奏

苍天护佑热爱自由的人民

55 **Deng Kangyan 邓康延**

- Poem:
 - mixes colours of Ukraine's flag with colour of blood
- b. Kunming
- Geological engineer
- Poet
- Author &
- Documentary filmmaker

56 **II.**

SUNFLOWERS

57 **Badiucao 巴丢草**

59 **Ukrainian woman confronts Russian soldiers**

Henichesk, sea of Asov
25 February 2022

Viral on social media

60

1/6 series: Six-piece NFT (non-fungible tokens/cryptocurrency) collection
dedicated to the brave Ukrainians fighting against the Russian invasion, inspiring the world
All proceeds to go to Ukrainian government

62 **Xi Yongjun 席永君**

63 **Microblog Poem: 'Ukraine: Homeland of Sunflowers (Poetry Series): Sunflowers', Xi Yongjun 席永君, 2022**

向日葵

更无柳絮因风起，

惟有葵花向日倾。

——【宋】司马光《客中初夏》

在乌克兰港口城市亨尼切斯克
一位大妈当街怒怼俄罗斯士兵
她大声质问：你们为什么要来
我们这里？你们是侵略者
你们是乌克兰人的敌人
从这一刻起，你们被诅咒了
你们应该把这些葵花籽
放进你们的口袋里，这样
等你们死后，它们就会
在乌克兰的土地上自由生长
那光明，那沉默的爱……
大妈深爱向日葵
向日葵是乌克兰的国花

66 **Xi Yongjun 席永君 (b. 1963)**

- b. 1963 Qionglai 邛崃, Sichuan
- Lives in Chengdu
- Poet, with international recognition
- Editor-in-chief of
 - literary magazines
 - Chengdu Evening News, etc.

67 **III.**

BLACK & RED

68 **Badiuca 巴丢草**

70 **STOP 3/6**

71 **STOP 3/6**

‘In my view, if you open the dazzling neon jacket, China’s

complexion is nothing more than black and red.

Red is blood, fear and violence.

Black is iron, freezing nights, depression, despair, and the silent corners. It's the cloth gag covering the screams.

The country is like a giant meat grinder, a layer of fresh blood covering a layer of despair, new despair covering the layer of fresh blood, over and over again.'

<https://chinadigitaltimes.net/2013/12/ten-question-badiuca-%E5%B7%B4%E4%B8%A2%E8%8D%89/>, accessed 20 Jan 2024.

72 **Red/Black: Colour of Anarchists**

- Anarchy: 'doctrine of no government' 無政府主義 *wúzhèngfǔ zhǔyì*
- Against oppressive government
- Popular variant of socialism
- Russian Revolution 1917
- May Fourth Movement 1919

73 **Badiuca 巴丢草**

- Composite Portrait:
- Xi Jinping & Putin, 2022
- Badiuca's first solo show
- DOX, Prague, Czechia, May-August 2022

82 **Qi Shaoting 齐少婷**

84 **Qi Shaoting**

85 **Qi Shaoting**

2022 Qi and her child fled to Dusseldorf

'The idea of the project arose because of the restriction of access to materials when we were fleeing at the outbreak of war. I didn't have paint or rice paper, which are hard to find even in peacetime. If an artist has a passion for art, they can paint with anything: toothpaste, fingers. The first works of art were made in such conditions, in the conditions of war.'

Interview 27 April 2022, Ukrainian Association of Sinologists

86 ☐ **Li Qiang 李强**

89 ☐ **Li Qiang**

- Li Qiang, 21 March 2022, ink and red stamp. 'Ukrainians sheltering during a Russian bomb attack'

91 ☐ **Li Qiang**

- Li Qiang, 5 April 2022, ink and red stamp. 'Bucha'

94 ☐ **Li Qiang 李强**

- b. 1963, Qingdao
- Studied in USA, lives in Qingdao
- Qingdao Artists Association
- Executive director of Pen Painting Association

97 ☐ **Concluding Remarks**

- 4.3.2022
- <https://www.badiuca.com/latest-adventure>

98 ☐ **Concluding Remarks**

- 4.3.2022; <https://www.badiuca.com/latest-adventure>

99 ☐ **Thank you!**

- 4.3.2022
- <https://www.badiuca.com/latest-adventure>