



BOOK PRESENTATION

THE AVANT-GARDE IN POSTSOCIALIST CHINA, 1978-2018: THE ART OF TRANSCULTURALITY

EDITED BY

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- Critical perspectives on the relations between modernity and tradition and between the cultures emerging from avant-garde literature and visual arts in postsocialist China.



Huang Yong Ping, The History of Chinese Art and A Concise History of Modern Painting Washed in a Washing Machine for Two Minutes, 1987/1993



Poet and editor Zhai Yongming

- This book analyses the “Avant-garde” as desecratory experimentalism and a defiant attitude towards norms and dominant tastes.
- **Eleven essays explore innovative ways of looking at transculturality in China’s avant-garde art and literature.**
- The book examines connections and entanglements across cultures within China and beyond.
- The book focuses on literary and artistic phenomena of China’s vernacular culture, on the margins of the officially ordained culture.

- Wolfgang Welsch: **'transculturality'** — **inner differentiation, complexity, and permeability of contemporary culture.**
- The concept commodates globalising tendencies and desire for specificity in Chinese cultural life since 1978.
- The book analyses not only entanglements between cultures e.g. China and Europe, Tibetan and Han cultures etc., but also the **after-lives or 'residues' of Chinese socialist culture in the postsocialist era.**



Yang Yongliang 杨咏梁, Yueguang – Wang 月光一望 (The Moonlight: Full Moon), 2012. Courtesy of Yang Yongliang Studio, New York.

THE POLITICS OF TRANSCULTURALITY

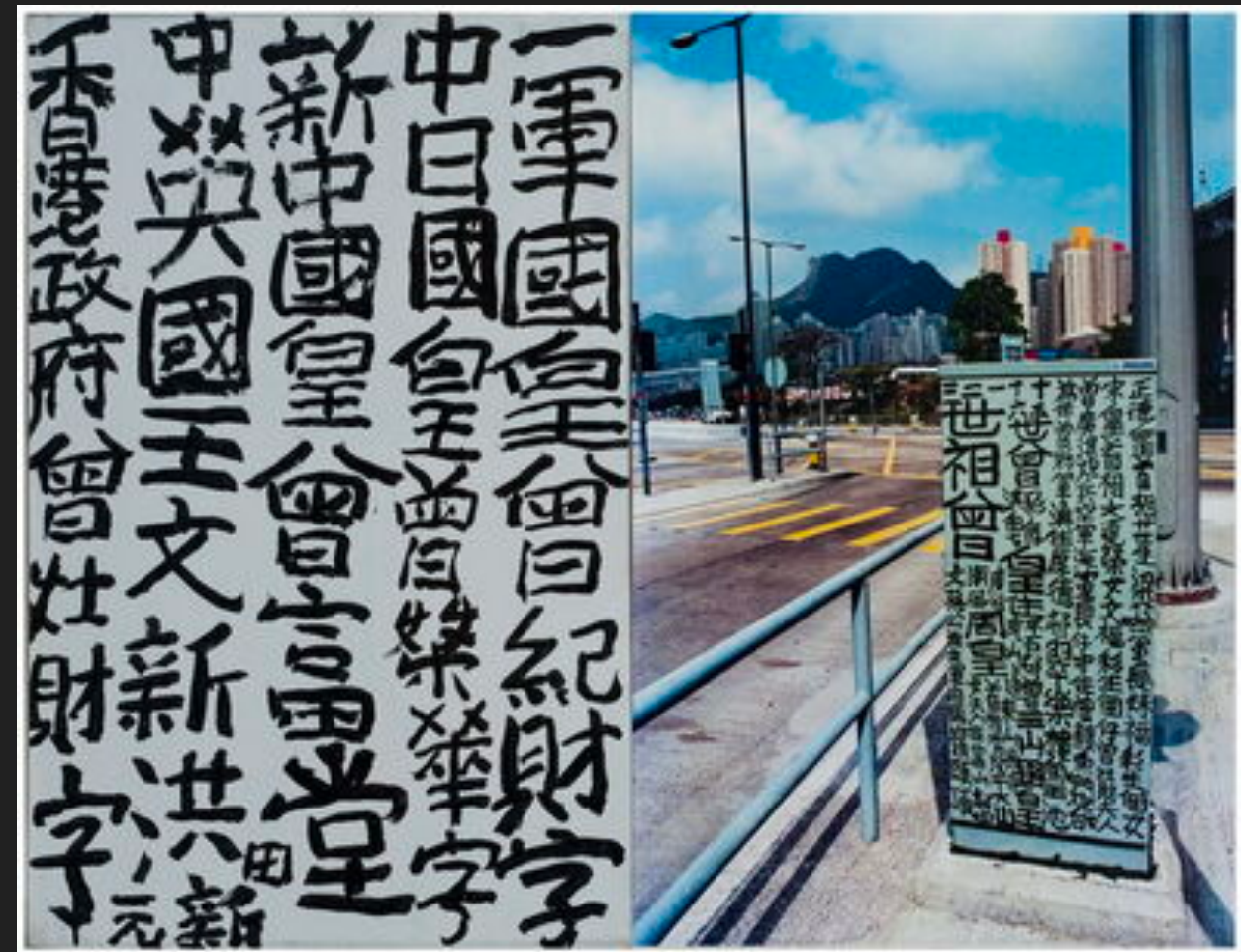
Xu Bing, Book from the Ground, 2012

1. *Andrea Riemenschneider*
(University of Zurich,
Switzerland)

Interrogating Transculturality: From Avant-garde Literature to Street Art

Chapter 1 analyses literary experimentation and the “avant-garde school” of the early post-Maoist period (1978-1989).

It critically interrogates the concept of transculturality and its capacity to capture the convergences and divisions between that experience and more recent experiments.



2. *Ros Holmes*
(University of St. Andrews,
UK)

Is That Leg Loaded? Ai Weiwei, Instagram and the Politics of Networked Images

Chapter 2 examines the meanings and readings of an image posted by Ai Weiwei on Instagram in 2014.

Leg Gun bears witness to a transformation of the digital artwork — entangled with circuits of replication, recombination, dissemination, and endless potentials for productive mutation.



3. Wenny Teo (The Courtauld, UK)

“Words Divide, Images Connect”: The Politics of Language and the Language of Politics in Xu Bing’s *Book from the Sky* and *Book from the Ground*

- Chapter 3 explores Xu Bing’s long-standing preoccupation with visual over verbal forms of communication.
- It argues that behind an apparent avoidance of cultural and national inflections, there is a culturally specific sub-text in dialogue with new forms of underground resistance to the rhetoric of the state.





PART 2:

**COLLECTING THE ART OF
TRANSCULTURALITY**

4. Uli Sigg
**How People
Collect
Contemporary Art:
My Typology of
Collecting Styles**

5. Uli Sigg
Confusionism

Chapters 4 & 5 look at Chinese art from the personal perspective of famous Swiss art collector, business man and diplomat Uli Sigg.



PART 3:

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF TRANSCULTURALITY

Annie Wan, *The Tides of Time*, 2016

6. *Silvia Fok*

Transculturality in Hong Kong: Artist Annie Wan's Conceptual Ceramic Art

Chapter 6 examines the notion of disappearance as a form of existence in the conceptual ceramic art by Hong Kong artist Annie Wan (b. 1961).

Fok argues that the new ceramic form of existence emerging from the vanishing of the original object can be regarded as a metaphor for transculturality.



7. *Liu Xi*

Tibetan Stories with Transcultural Perspectives and Experimental Styles: Chinese Avant-garde Fiction as Example

Chapter 7 analyses two Tibetan-themed experimental novels from the 1980s by Ma Yuan and Tashi Dawa.

Liu Xi shows that the transcultural element of these works lies in their contestation and deconstruction of binary oppositions within the hegemonic discourses of Han-centrism and modernity.



8. *Cosima Bruno*

**Burning Words: Deng
Dafei's *Dark Utopia 2***

Chapter 8 looks at an example of avant-garde creativity that abolishes any distinction between literature and visual arts.

It shows how Deng Dafei, the Utopia Group and Asia Scene propose a transcultural vision of art that crosses China's social as well as geographical borders.





PART 4:

THE FRONTIERS OF TRANSCULTURALITY

9. *Xi Tian*

Avant-garde “Boys Love”: Female Fantasy and the New Queer Discourse in China

Chapter 9 analyses ‘boys love’ (BL) fiction to argue that this popular genre of online literature constitutes an avant-garde queer space.

It argues that postmodernist avant-garde discourses in today’s China often reflect a combination of popular culture and aesthetic radicalism, commercial appeal and ideological subversion.



10. *Justyna Jaguścik*

**Avant-garde Women's Poetry
from China: Zhai Yongming
and the Poetry Journal *Wings***

Chapter 10 argues that women's poetry constituted an important component of avant-garde poetry in mainland China in the early Reform era.

Examines cutting-edge features of women's poetry, highlights institutional aspects of its functioning within the literary field, and sheds light on its contribution to the meta-textual discourse on poetry.



11. *Giorgio Strafella and Daria Berg*
**Stealing the Art of Pain: Body
Art and Zhao Yue's *Lattice***

Chapter 11 examines the emergence and reception in China of 'body art' as a cultural phenomenon where postsocialist biopolitics and gendered cultural identities intersect with transcultural flows of artistic experimentation.

It analyses a performance by woman artist Zhao Yue entitled, *Lattice* (2007) and the debate this artwork elicited among Chinese art critics.



THANK YOU

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