

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2016
From Monet to Ai Weiwei: How We Got Here
Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art

**Extreme Reverberations & the Existing Real:
The Birth of Contemporary Chinese Art**
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Suggested Reading

Chiu, Melissa. *Contemporary Chinese Art 7 Things You Should Know*. New York: AW Asia, 2008.

Brief Overview

The history of Chinese art represents 5,000 years of illustrious uninterrupted artistic creation and expression. China has given to the world some of the most venerable art forms known to humanity, including calligraphy (shū fǎ, 书法) and ancient Chinese painting (guó huà, 国画). The extensive chronology of art production in China suggests that avant-garde Chinese art was born in 1979. Since then the field of contemporary Chinese art (zhōng guó xiàndài yìshù, 中国现代艺术) has emerged as one of the most compelling and provocative areas in the sphere of international art. The diversified work of contemporary Chinese artists references the ancient aesthetic traditions of China while reflecting the remarkable transformations happening in all facets of Chinese society today.

Historical Periods

Wu Hung, a distinguished scholar and leading authority on both traditional and contemporary Chinese art, classifies four distinct phases in the development of Chinese art post-Cultural Revolution (1966-1976):

1979 – 1984 | the emergence of unofficial art around China

1985 – 1989 | the '85 Art New Wave movement & “China/Avant-Garde” exhibition of 1989

1990 – 1993 | post '89 period and the internationalization of Chinese art

1994 – late 1990's and beyond | strong domestic turn, widespread changes in Chinese society, art as a social and cultural critique

Select Resources

Yishu (Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art) <http://yishu-online.com/>

LEAP (international art magazine of contemporary China) <http://www.leapleapleap.com/>

Randian (promotes independent cultural and artistic debate in China) <http://www.randian-online.com/>

Asia Art Archive (extensive material archive that reflects contemporary artistic practice and developments of Asia) <http://www.aaa.org.hk/>

Artshare (global online platform dedicated to the exhibition and sale of contemporary Chinese art) <http://www.artshare.com/>

ChinaFile (online magazine published by the Center on U.S.-China Relations at Asia Society dedicated to promoting the conversation about China) <http://www.chinafile.com/>

Further Reading

Decrop, Jean-Marc and Jérôme Sans. *China The New Generation*. Milan: Skira Editore, 2014.

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- Hou, Hanru. *On The Mid-Ground*. Hong Kong: Timezone 8 Limited, 2002.
- Köppel-Yang, Martina. *Semiotic Warfare: The Chinese Avant-Garde, 1979-1989. A Semiotic Analysis*. Hong Kong: Timezone 8 Limited, 2003.
- Pollack, Barbara and Li Zhenhua. *My Generation Young Chinese Artists*. London: Giles, 2014.
- Smith, Karen. *Nine Lives: The Birth of Avant-Garde Art in New China*. Zurich: Scalo Verlag AG, 2005.
- Vine, Richard. *New China New Art*. New York: Prestel Verlag, 2008.
- Wu, Hung, ed. *Contemporary Chinese Art Primary Documents*. New York: Department of Publications, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2010.
- Wu, Hung. *Transience: Chinese Experimental Art at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.