

China's Avant-Garde, 1978–2018

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Introduction

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An introduction

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In 1987, Huang Yong Ping 黄永砵 (1954–2019) produced one of the most significant artworks to have come out of contemporary China – so significant, in fact, that leading historian of Chinese art Craig Clunas recently wondered whether it might have marked the end of Chinese painting.¹ The present volume, by contrast, takes Huang’s artwork as the point of departure for a transcultural history of the new avant-garde of postsocialist China.

Huang, the most prominent member of a group of artists who called themselves *Xiamen Dada* 厦门达达, took two books off his bookshelf at home, let them mix to a pulp inside a working washing machine, and then placed the product of this process back onto a bookshelf.² After the work became damaged in 1990, Huang remade it in 1993 and arranged the unreadable sludge into an installation which also incorporated a broken glass pane and a tea chest (Figure 0.1).

The books Huang chose to employ were a textbook on the history of Chinese painting by Wang Bomin 王伯敏 (1924–2013) and the Chinese translation of a history of modern Western art by Herbert Read (1893–1968), an English art historian and anarchist thinker. The latter volume had been published in Shanghai in 1979 and, as one of the few texts on Western art widely available at the time, had become well known by then in Chinese avant-garde circles.³ Huang’s ‘deconstructive “washing away” of printed histories of Chinese and Western art’⁴ – as Clunas describes it – constitutes the artist’s response to a question that ‘had preoccupied generations of modern Chinese intellectuals and artists: how to position oneself between tradition and modernity and between East and West?’⁵ ‘Instead of providing another idealistic solution’ to such a question, Wu Hung observes, Huang Yong Ping’s artwork challenges its very premise by ‘eliminating the binary concepts’ and erasing the ‘conventional dichotomy’ between East and West, tradition and modernity.⁶

As if inspired by Huang Yong Ping’s creative biblioclasy,⁷ the chapters in this volume offer critical perspectives on transcultural relations in China’s avant-garde literature and visual arts since the beginning of the Reform era in 1978. The concepts of ‘transculturality’ and ‘avant-garde’ frame the way this volume addresses its subject matter. For the present purpose, the avant-garde is defined by its desecratory experimentalism and a defiant attitude vis-à-vis sociopolitical norms and dominant tastes.⁸ The chapters in this volume explore innovative ways

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Figure 0.1 Huang Yong Ping 黄永砅, 'Zhongguo huihua shi' he 'Xiandai yishu jianshi' zai xiyiji jiaoban liang fen zhong 《中国绘画史》和《现代艺术简史》在洗衣机搅拌两分钟 (*The History of Chinese Art and A Concise History of Modern Painting* washed in a washing machine for two minutes), 1987/1993. Copyright: Archives of Huang Yong Ping. Courtesy of Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels.

of looking at the dynamics of transculturality in China's avant-garde art and literature. By moving beyond the East/West dichotomy, the chapters examine the connections and entanglements these dynamics weave across cultures within China and beyond. In contrast with studies of contemporary Chinese culture that focus on either the literary field or the visual arts, the unifying thread of transculturality allows this volume to shed light on connections between a range of literary and artistic phenomena that exist in China's vernacular culture, on the margins of the officially ordained culture.⁹

The volume draws the concept of 'transculturality' from Wolfgang Iser to acknowledge the inner differentiation and complexity of contemporary Chinese culture while also emphasising its permeability. Such a theoretical framework aims to accommodate the 'globalizing tendencies' as well as 'the desire for specificity and particularity'¹⁰ that have animated Chinese cultural life in the post-Reform era. Primarily, Iser's 'transculturality' reflects the observation that the culturally diverse and ideologically complex societies of today make it ever more dangerous and untenable to conceive of them as uniform and well delimited.¹¹

Against this ‘traditional’ conception, Welsch argues that cultures – at the individual as well as the societal level – are increasingly characterised by inner differentiation, external interconnection and ‘hybridisation’.¹² In the avant-garde culture of postsocialist China, transculturality refers not only to entanglements between cultures defined according to geographical or ethnic belonging (e.g. China and Europe, Tibetan and Han, and so forth)¹³ but also to the after-lives or ‘residues’ of Chinese socialist culture into the post-Reform era.¹⁴ As a result, phenomena that mainstream culture views as marginal and transitional emerge as crucial in the investigation of cultural formations from a transcultural perspective.¹⁵

Before Welsch defined ‘transculturality’ to describe the form of culture in the rapidly (re-)globalising world of the early 1990s, anthropologist Fernando Ortiz had coined the term ‘transculturation’ in the 1940s and, in the 1970s, Ángel Rama had applied the concept to literary criticism.¹⁶ Writing on Indigenous cultures and societal change in Cuba, Ortiz employed ‘transculturation’ to conceptualise cultural transfer between colonial centres and imperial peripheries. With this term, he underscored how the cultures of oppressed and marginalised groups in the colonies reworked and transformed ideas and materials from the centre, rather than being merely substituted or homogenised by colonialism.¹⁷ The concept of transculturation – distinct from, but cognate with Welsch’s idea of transculturality – reminds us that relations of power and hegemony have a bearing on the cultural dynamics of hybridisation and entanglement. This fact is rarely lost on the artists, authors and intellectuals of postsocialist China.

A new transcultural framing for the study of contemporary China has been taking shape in recent years thanks also to fora such as the journals *Transtext(e)s Transcultures*¹⁸ and the *Journal of Transcultural Studies*.¹⁹ Brigit Hopfener, Franziska Koch, Jeong-hee Lee-Kalisch and Juliane Noth have pioneered a transcultural approach to the history of contemporary art from China. The theoretical framework of their scholarship draws on Derrida’s theory of *différance* and Homi K. Bhabha’s ‘Third Space’ to map contemporary Chinese art in a global context in an attempt to avoid essentialising its ‘Chinese identity’, or representing it as derivative of ‘Western’ notions of art.²⁰ As to literature, Tong King Lee and Jane Qian Liu have employed transculturality to address intertextuality, intersemioticity and translation in Chinese experimental literature and modern fiction, respectively,²¹ while Sy Ren Quah and Todd Coulter have explored ‘transculturalism’ in the plays of émigré author and artist Gao Xingjian 高行健 (b. 1940).²²

This volume interrogates transcultural trends to understand the transformation of Chinese culture in the age of globalisation. In twenty-first century China, new media and communication technologies have allowed for the tentative emergence of a public sphere that challenges the mechanisms of government censorship. Internet-based discourses traverse the borderlines between China’s officially sanctioned culture, the globalising world and Chinese vernacular cultures. Official discourse in the Xi Jinping 习近平 era (2012–present) promotes cultural nationalism and demands that creative expression in China embodies the essence of the ‘Chinese nation’.²³ By contrast, China’s avant-garde art and literature challenge and dissolve borders between cultures, genres and even fields of practice – in

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Bourdieu's sense²⁴ – such as art and activism. China's new generation of avant-garde writers and artists push the boundaries of vernacular culture, while creatively appropriating artistic and literary languages from post/modern Western avant-garde movements to reflect on China's postsocialist transformation and Maoist heritage. The chapters in this volume investigate such forms of transculturality in avant-garde Chinese literature and art, looking critically at past and current transcultural trends and the interpretation of avant-garde languages from non-Chinese traditions.

Outline of the book

Part I of this volume, 'The politics of transculturality', presents two studies that shed light on the political aspects of avant-garde culture in postsocialist China. These include the fusion between art and activism, the power dynamics of languages, and the tension between modernity and national identities. Both chapters highlight the intimate connection between transculturality and power, pointing at the subversive potential of the transcultural avant-garde.

The momentum of the end of the Maoist era brought about a boost of creative energies in a group of young intellectuals who had grown up in an environment of revolutionary violence, idealism, and spiritual as well as material deprivation. The watershed of 1978–1979 inaugurated a decade of vigorously renewed interest in global cultural flows and exchanges, during which the time seemed ripe to pursue different aesthetic approaches. Leaving behind the official doctrines and developing alternative ways of writing the modern Chinese experience, those young intellectuals, authors and artists created an atmosphere of bohemian camaraderie and artistic sensitivity. Hope for change, grief on account of the revolutionary terror's damage to both individuals and society as a whole, and nostalgia for the abandoned traditional aesthetic forms and principles permitted them to explore the affective intensities for their experimental appropriations of world literary *topoi* and aesthetic forms. Critics chose terms such as 'avant-garde' and 'postmodernism' to define the literary achievements of this group and epoch, while at the same time cautioning on behalf of a lingering socialist aesthetic consciousness and the concomitant return of the immaturely ousted modernisms of the late Qing (1644–1911) and Republican (1912–1949) eras.

In Chapter 1, 'Interrogating transculturality: From avant-garde literature to street art', Andrea Riemenschmitter addresses the contemporary production – especially the changed perspective on Chinese modernity's coming of age – of leading authors from that cultural milieu, thirty years on. By doing so, Riemenschmitter critically interrogates the concept of transculturality with respect to its capacity to capture the convergences and divisions between the early post-Maoist experiences and more recent experiments.

In Chapter 2, "'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*', Wenny Teo focuses on the work of a major contemporary art figure, Xu Bing 徐冰 (b. 1955). Xu's *Book from the Sky* (1987–1991) is widely regarded as

one of the most important artworks in the global contemporary art canon: a spectacular installation comprised of an invented lexicon of 4,000 pseudo-Chinese characters laboriously hand-carved and printed onto rice paper scrolls that is utterly illegible. Some two decades after realising that artwork, Xu published *Book from the Ground: From Point to Point* (2014), a 112-page ‘graphic novel’ written entirely in the international visual vernacular of emoji, icons and symbols culled from the internet, which according to the artist ‘virtually anyone can read’. Teo explores how Xu Bing’s long-standing preoccupation with visual over verbal forms of communication plays to the idealisation of the Chinese logograph as a model for a ‘new media literacy’ in the global imaginary, while also reflecting the culturally coded anxieties centred on both the murky politics of language and the language of politics in modern and contemporary China. Reading between the lines of what is touted as an ‘open book’, Teo considers the degree to which the banal panoply of utterly conventional signs that constitute the *Book from the Ground* might be encrypted with a subversive subtext – one that is in dialogue with grassroots forms of online resistance that similarly play on the visual-verbal properties of the Chinese logograph to subvert the limitations placed on the ‘seeable’ and ‘sayable’ in contemporary China. Teo’s analysis reveals how this artwork, behind an apparent avoidance of cultural and national inflections in favour of simplicity and legibility, might encrypt a culturally specific subtext that is in dialogue with new forms of *underground* resistance to the rhetoric of the state.²⁵

In Part II, ‘Collecting the art of transculturality’, Chapters 3 and 4 introduce us to the method and philosophy of Uli Sigg, the world’s most important collector of avant-garde art from post-1978 China. Chapter 3, ‘How people collect contemporary art: My typology of collecting styles’, delineates a typology of art collection methods and contains a reflection on Sigg’s own method. Chapter 4, ‘Confusionism’, represents Sigg’s personal appreciation of Ai Weiwei 艾未未 (b. 1957, ‘WW’ in the chapter), whose friendship and collaboration with the author over many years is closely linked to both Ai’s artistic and curatorial practices and also to Sigg’s activity as a collector. In 2006, Ai Weiwei described Uli Sigg as ‘an important participant and an incorruptible witness’ to China’s process of Reform and Opening up, one who possessed a ‘tremendous influence on political, economic, and cultural understanding, communication, and cooperation between East and West’.²⁶

More than an art collector, Uli Sigg merges in one individual no less than four key figures in the encounter between Reform-era China and ‘the West’, namely: the legal-economic expert overseeing the plan-to-market conversion of the Chinese economy; the diplomat with a first-hand understanding of the country’s sociopolitical transformation; the journalist and media editor; and the cultural entrepreneur.²⁷ Since the very concept of ‘contemporary Chinese art’ has arguably emerged from the transcultural flows that traverse its production, curation and exhibition, the role of an exceptional collector like Uli Sigg in shaping what is considered ‘contemporary Chinese art’ cannot be underestimated. Alongside Sigg’s roles on the advisory committees of museums such as the MoMA in New York and the Tate Gallery in London, exhibitions of art from his collection such

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as *Mahjong* – curated in 2005 by Bernhard Fibicher and Ai Weiwei – and more recently *Chinese Whispers* (2016, curated by Kathleen Bühler) have defined and re-defined the understanding of experimental art from China, especially among Western audiences. The donation in 2012 of 1,450 artworks from the Sigg collection to the M+ Museum in Hong Kong has established a new dialogue between Uli Sigg's work as a collector and audiences both inside and outside the country. In this sense, the chapters in Part II represent primary documents of the transcultural history of the Chinese avant-garde.

Part III, 'The topography of transculturality', focuses on the spatial dimension of avant-garde art and literature, looking in particular at transcultural encounters in the peripheries, at the edges and across the borders of China's land and culture. In Chapter 5, 'Transculturality in Hong Kong artist Annie Wan's conceptual ceramic art', Silvia Fok examines the notion of disappearance as a form of existence and finds it exemplified in the conceptual ceramic art by Hong Kong artist Annie Wan 尹麗娟 (b. 1961). After an exploration of the history of modern ceramic art in Hong Kong that highlights its transcultural elements, Fok's chapter shows how the notion of transculturality can take the interpretation of Wan's conceptual ceramic artworks beyond the ideas of multiculturalism and interculturality. By examining the ways in which Annie Wan's continuous and repetitive moulding and firing contribute to our understanding of disappearance as existence, 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.

In Chapter 6, 'Tibetan stories with transcultural perspectives and experimental styles: Chinese avant-garde fiction as an example', Xi Liu explores two Tibetan-themed experimental novels from the 1980s. Liu argues that Chinese avant-garde fiction writers stood at the vanguard of literary representation of cross-cultural subject matters, i.e. between China's ethnic majority and minorities. Such authors focused not only on subject matter such as encounters between Han and non-Han cultures, and between 'traditional' and 'modern' cultures, but also on narrative techniques to represent China's marginalised cultures. They transformed critical attitudes towards history and culture into experiments with literary forms and narrative strategies. Xi Liu analyses two fictional works by Ma Yuan 马原 (b. 1953) and Tashi Dawa (or Zhaxi Dawa 扎西达娃, b. 1959) to investigate how experimental narrative techniques contest the dominant, normative and essentialised way of seeing and narrating 'minority' cultures. Liu argues that such 'transcultural' literary experiments by Ma Yuan as a reflective outsider and by Tashi Dawa as a reflective insider of Tibet are informed by both Western modernist literary practices and actual Tibetan experiences. The postmodernist literary techniques help them problematise the othered, objectified way of representation that embodies the perspective of a 'rational', normative, Han-Chinese narrating subject. The transcultural element of these works therefore lies in their contestation and deconstruction of binary oppositions within the hegemonic discourses of Han-centrism and modernity.

Chapter 7, 'Burning words: Deng Dafei's *Dark Utopia 2*' by Cosima Bruno, discusses a piece of language art by Utopia Group's Deng Dafei 邓大非 (b. 1975)

entitled *Dark Utopia 2*. As an example of avant-garde creativity that abolishes any distinction between literature and visual arts, this piece consists of a video-recorded installation based on a poem written by the artist in 2014. Bruno examines this piece against the backdrop of China's neoliberal transformation in the Reform era, and within the emerging contestation of this process from a number of critical artists who have come together under collective projects such as the Utopia Group and Asia Scene. In an increasingly burnt-out world that is the summation of irreversible neoliberalism, ecological disasters and social fragmentation, Deng Dafei, the Utopia Group and Asia Scene propose a vision of art that is transcultural, crossing not only China's geographical but also social borders, pursuing in situ interventions and community-based projects. The principal theoretical references for Bruno's interpretation of Deng Dafei's *Dark Utopia 2* are provided by site-specific approaches to art, from Buren to Krauss and Lefebvre.

Finally, Part IV of this volume, 'The frontiers of transculturality', explores the frontiers of avant-garde experimentation in contemporary Chinese art and literature. In distinct ways, the three chapters in this section question the limits of what constitutes the avant-garde of the postsocialist era. In Chapter 8, 'Avant-garde "boys love": Female fantasy and the new queer discourse in China', Xi Tian analyses 'boys love' (BL) fiction to argue that this popular genre of online literature constitutes an avant-garde queer space. Originating in Japan, BL literature focuses on romantic or homoerotic relationships between men and has found a substantial international audience, the majority of whom are young heterosexual women. Since the early 2000s BL fiction has flourished on the Chinese internet, where it is known as *danmei* 耽美. This chapter examines several themes that dominate BL fiction, such as rape and sexual violence, the idea that true love transcends gender, and aggressive/passive binary roles in sex. Xi Tian compares such themes with those of heterosexual romance and suggests that, while BL fiction may contribute to hetero-centrism even as it partially upends traditional gender roles, its adoption and distortion of literary conventions function as a form of literary reflexivity. This differentiates the subversive BL fiction from popular literature that offers a false reconciliation in an imaginary world. As a result, Xi Tian argues, BL displays a keen awareness of the literary and social conventions surrounding literary production and consumption which characterised the historical avant-garde. BL and its subculture grapple with the logic of the market to create a queer discourse that celebrates the autonomy of concealed female fantasies while raising anti-homophobic consciousness, thus challenging mainstream discourses and ideas of 'normality'. Xi Tian also reveals how postmodernist avant-garde discourses in contemporary China often reflect a combination of popular culture and aesthetic radicalism, commercial appeal and ideological subversion.

In Chapter 9, 'Avant-garde women's poetry from China: Zhai Yongming and the poetry journal *Wings*', Justyna Jaguścik discusses the emergence of avant-garde poetry in mainland China during the twilight years of the Maoist era. She explores how, within a short time, this literary phenomenon became almost synonymous with everything worth reading in contemporary Chinese poetry. Chinese avant-garde poetry from that era is viewed not only as being rooted in

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aesthetic experiments but also as occupying a politicised space associated with historical events such as the Beijing Spring of 1978. Emerging on the frontline of such experimentation, women's poetry constituted an important component of that eclectic mishmash, and Jaguścik aims to fill a gap in scholarship by discussing women's poetry from China as avant-garde poetry. While doing so, she traces transcultural traffic in poetic imagination. She also facilitates an inquiry into cutting-edge features of women's poetry by discussing some institutional aspects of its functioning within the literary field, as well as its contributions to the metatextual discourse on the poetical genre.

The last chapter, 'Stealing the art of pain: Body art and Zhao Yue's *Lattice*' by Giorgio Strafella and Daria Berg, examines the emergence and reception in China of 'body art' (*shenti yishu* 身体艺术 or *routi yishu* 肉体艺术) – one of the most extreme and controversial artistic trends of the postsocialist era – as a transcultural phenomenon. This chapter conceptualises 'body art' based on the use of the human body as the primary material of artistic creation and the performance of actions of cruelty, modification and endangerment on the artist's body. It points to the connection between literary and artistic reflections on the experience of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and artistic experimentation in China during the 1980s, a connection already explored in Chapter 1 with reference to the literary avant-garde. Chapter 10 frames 'body art' in China from the 1990s to the 2000s within the atmosphere of cynicism which prevailed in the years after the events of 1989 and the heightened role of the market in the cultural sphere. The chapter argues that the notion that it behoves the Party-state to protect the bodies and minds of the people from harmful cultural spectacles represents a residue of Mao-era socialism in the postsocialist era. To investigate the reception of 'body art' by the Chinese art world, this chapter analyses a performance by woman artist Zhao Yue 赵跃 (b. 1981) entitled *Gezi* 格子 (*Lattice*, or *Grids*, 2007) and discusses the debate this work elicited among Chinese art critics. This analysis reveals body art from China as a cultural trend where postsocialist biopolitics and gendered cultural identities intersect with transcultural flows of artistic experimentation, thus highlighting key tensions that animate the intellectual life of contemporary China.

Notes

- 1 Craig Clunas, *Chinese Painting and Its Audiences*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017, 5–6 and 225.
- 2 Wu Hung, *Making History: Wu Hung on Contemporary Art*, Hong Kong: Timezone 8, 2008, 70. On Xiamen Dada and this artwork see also Yang Shiyong 杨世膺, 'Yuanqi "Dada": sumiao Huang Yong Ping' 缘起"达达"——素描黄永砅, *Yiyuan* 2, 2005, 13–5 and Ruth E Iskin, 'Introduction: Re-envisioning the Canon: Are Pluriversal Canons Possible?', in Ruth E Iskin, ed., *Re-envisioning the Contemporary Art Canon: Perspectives in a Global World*, London: Routledge, 2017, 4–6.
- 3 Wu, *Making History*, 68–71.
- 4 Craig Clunas, 'The Politics of Inscription in Modern Chinese Art', *Art History* 41.1, 2018, 135.
- 5 Wu, *Making History*, 69.

- 6 Wu, *Making History*, 69. With regard to textbooks on Western art, Huang Yong Ping later stated that when he was a student reading textbooks on Western art history, ‘the teachers didn’t even bother to instruct you on how to make sense of that particular history, also the preface of these books would actually have some kind of statement criticizing the content that you were about to read – almost like a disclaimer for all students. Definitely at the time it was still very conservative. Against this particular background the students became very rebellious and wanted to subvert’. In Alessandra Henderson, ‘Creative Abstract: Frank Stella and Huang Yong Ping’, *LEAP* 4, 2011, 52.
- 7 On ‘biblioclasy’ see Umberto Eco, ‘Desear, poseer y enloquecer’, *el malpensante* 31, 2001, available at: https://www.elmalpensante.com/articulo/2480/desear_poseer_y_enloquecer, accessed 20 June 2020. Huang Yong Ping responded to the critics’ accusation that he had ‘destroyed culture’ to realise this work by pointing out that paper pulp can be used to repair objects, and therefore his artwork could be read both as cultural destruction and as a metaphor for the supremacy of culture (in Yang, ‘Yuanqi’, 15).
- 8 See Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-garde*. Trans. Gerald Fitzgerald, Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968.
- 9 On China’s vernacular cultures, see Glen Dudbridge, *Books, Tales and Vernacular Culture: Selected Papers on China*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005; Daria Berg, *Women and the Literary World in Early Modern China, 1580–1700*, London: Routledge, 2013, 2–3.
- 10 Welsch, ‘Transculturality’, 205.
- 11 Welsch, ‘Transculturality’, 195. For more on the origins and limitations of Welsch’s theory of transculturality, see Andrea Riemenschnitter’s chapter in this volume.
- 12 Welsch, ‘Transculturality’, 197–8. For a theorisation of hybridity in postsocialist China that draws on the work of Homi K Bhabha (b. 1949), see Gregory B Lee, ‘The “East Is Red” Goes Pop: Commodification, Hybridity and Nationalism in Chinese Popular Song and its Televisual Performance’, *Popular Music* 14.1, 1995, 103–7.
- 13 On such entanglements, see in particular Part III in this volume.
- 14 On the cultural characteristics of postsocialist China, see e.g. Michel Hockx, *Internet Literature in China*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2015, 2 and 12–8; Daria Berg, ‘A New Spectacle in China’s Mediasphere: A Cultural Reading of a Web-Based Reality Show from Shanghai’, *China Quarterly* 205, 2011, 133–51.
- 15 See, e.g., David Blake Willis and Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, ‘Transcultural Japan: Metamorphosis in the Cultural Borderlands and Beyond’, in David Blake Willis and Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, eds., *Transcultural Japan: At the Borderlands of Race, Gender, and Identity*, London: Routledge, 2008, 5–6.
- 16 See Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. Trans. Harriet de Onís, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995; Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London: Routledge, 2007, 7–8; Miguel Arnedo-Gómez, ‘Notes on the Evaluation of Ángel Rama’s Concept of Narrative Transculturation and Fernando Ortiz’s Definition of the Term “Transculturation”’, *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 17.2, 2008, 185–91.
- 17 Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint*, 98. See also Alice Ming Wai Jim, ‘Transculturalism in Asian Diasporic Art’, *Grove Art Online*, 22 September 2005, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T097962>, accessed 10 June 2019.
- 18 See, e.g., Wang Bin, ‘“Chinese Identity” as a Problem’, *Transtext(e)s Transcultures* 2, 2007, available at: <http://journals.openedition.org/transtexts/70>, accessed 20 April 2019; and Gregory B Lee, ‘Dirty, Diseased and Demented: The Irish, the Chinese, and Racist Representation’, *Transtext(e)s Transcultures* 12, 2017, available at: <http://journals.openedition.org/transtexts/1011>, accessed 20 April 2019.
- 19 See, in particular, Altehenger, Abu-Er-Rub and Gehrig, ‘The Transcultural Travels of Trends’, on transculturality as an analytical approach to the study of global trends as well as a characteristic of such trends.

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- 20 Brigit Hopfener and Franziska Koch, 'Introduction', in Brigit Hopfener, Franziska Koch, Jeong-hee Lee-Kalisch and Juliane Noth, eds., *Negotiating Difference: Contemporary Chinese Art in the Global Context*, Weimar: VDG, 2012, 15. See also Franziska Koch, "'China" on Display for European Audiences? The Making of an Early Travelling Exhibition of Contemporary Chinese Art – China Avantgarde (Berlin/1993)', *Transcultural Studies* 2, 2011, available at: <http://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de/journals/index.php/transcultural/article/view/9129/3103>, accessed 20 January 2021. On transculturality and Chinese art, it is worth mentioning the conference 'Displacements: Transcultural Encounters in Contemporary Chinese Art' (Stanford University, 2005), documented in Vol. 4 No. 2 (June 2005) of the journal *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*.
- 21 Tong King Lee, *Experimental Chinese Literature: Translation, Technology, Poetics*, Leiden: Brill, 2015; Jane Qian Liu, *Transcultural Lyricism: Translation, Intertextuality, and the Rise of Emotion in Modern Chinese Love Fiction, 1899–1925*, Leiden: Brill, 2017.
- 22 Sy Ren Quah, *Gao Xingjian and Transcultural Chinese Theater*, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004; Todd J Coulter, *Transcultural Aesthetics in the Plays of Gao Xingjian*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- 23 See Giorgio Strafella and Daria Berg, 'Roots and Prospects of Xi's Cultural Policy', *The Asia Dialogue*, 23 December 2016, available at: <https://theasiadialogue.com/2016/12/23/roots-and-prospects-of-xis-cultural-policy/>, accessed 18 May 2020.
- 24 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- 25 An earlier version of this study appeared as a research article in the *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, Vol. 5 No. 1 (March 2018).
- 26 In Ai Weiwei, 'Chinese Contemporary Art in Dilemma and Transition', 4 February 2006, in *Ai Weiwei's Blog: Writings, Interviews, and Digital Rants, 2006–2009*, ed. and trans. Lee Ambrozy, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011, 17. On Ai Weiwei's art and politics, see also Giorgio Strafella and Daria Berg, "'Twitter Bodhisattva": Ai Weiwei's Media Politics', *Asian Studies Review* 39.1, 2015, 138–57; and Giorgio Strafella and Daria Berg, 'Ai Weiwei's #Refugees: A Transcultural and Transmedia Journey', *Made in China* 2.3, 2017, 73–7.
- 27 On Uli Sigg as cultural entrepreneur, see Diana Betzler and Rachel Camina, 'Cultural Entrepreneurship Using the Example of Uli Sigg as Patron and Mediator of Contemporary Chinese Art', *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 50.1, 2020, 1–15.