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The theme for the Fourth China Fine Art-Chang'an Forum in Xi'an invites the participants to focus on the spirit of the Han Dynasty (206 BC and 220 AD) and the Tang Dynasty 9618-907 AD). Each of these dynasties is remembered for the major advancements in their respective cultures. For example, Han civilization, grounded in Confucian education and a desire to bring national unification to China, embraced a global vision being confident that China was the cultural center of the world. The Tang dynasty is described as "a time of unprecedented material prosperity, of institutional growth, of new departures in thought and religion, of creativity in all the arts."<sup>1</sup>

Hence, the invitation extended by this conference, "China Fine Arts – Chang'an Forum 2014," as I understood it invites us to both celebrate the achievements of these two high moments in China's cultural history, Han and Tang dynasties, while at the same time reflecting on the continuation of important cultural achievements in the present. Thus, we need not follow the Late Tang poets in their often melancholic laments at living in an age worse than had previously existed. Nor need we consider this occasion necessarily as a means to reflect critically on the current state of Chinese arts and culture. Rather, the occasion of this celebration offers an opportunity to consider the spirit of these historical moments as embedded in the Han and Tang eras, and draw from the exercise understanding useful to advancing the arts and culture in contemporary Chinese life. From reflecting on the spirit that guided the achievements of these earlier dynasties, we hope to point to new paths of innovation that will further enrich the current and future contributions of the arts and culture in China. This approach of course does not exclude taking note of problems that require being addressed in order to achieve such aims.

The topic that I will focus on here then concerns the contemporary significance of the spirit of Han and Tang dynasties. The problem of how to understand the relation between the past history and the present is not a new one. In fact this problem arose even prior to the beginning of the Han dynasty, during the reign of Emperor Qin Shih Huang Ti toward the middle point of the Qin dynasty in a very dramatic scene. During this time, concern arose over scholars' uses of antiquities to denigrate the then current leadership. This matter

resulted in a 213 B.C. book burning incident aimed at suppressing criticism of the Emperor's policies by the contemporary scholars who preferred more traditional Confucian and feudal values. The Emperor's ban of books and documents extended to collecting and melting down bronze sculptures carrying historic inscriptions. The specific concern that emerged was whether scholars' debates and public comments comparing a golden age of antiquities to the present contributed to undermining of the present Emperor's leadership and receptiveness to new ideas.

As recorded in Sima Qian (145-86 B. C.) in his *Records of the Historian* (Shiji), Qin Minister Li Si proposed the burning of certain books on the grounds that scholars' views based on their studies of the past with references to a "golden age of antiquity," when peace and prosperity reigned in the world under the leadership of the sage-kings, who governed by virtue rather than force." It was feared that such views would undermine then current efforts of the leaders to effect changes. Apparently, the proposal was in part to offset criticism of the Emperor's effort to unify the empire by installing a radically different system under a banner of Chineseness grounded in the Emperor's court and in opposition to historic times when the feudal lords ruled jointly.

As a result of this concern, drastic actions occurred. It was decided to undertake a massive book burning with the aim to obliterate all official histories except the memoirs of Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi (260-210 B.C.) the first Emperor of China. An exception was made for books on medicine, pharmacy, agriculture, arboriculture, and divination by tortoise and yarrow. Reinforcement procedures included threats of forced labor and even death to those who failed to obey the order to burn their books.<sup>2</sup>

A look at Tang poetry as suggested by Hans Frankel offers other possibilities for understanding the past. Frankl proposes that Tang poets' approach to history differs from the approach of a historian. Poets, he argues "are not interested in the past for its own sake but in relation to the present and to the problem of time in general."<sup>3</sup> A poem

by Zhang Zai (Third Century A.D.) offers a Han poet's approach to history.

"The Desecration of the Han Tombs"

At Pei-mang how they rise to Heaven,  
Those high mounds, four or five in the fields!  
What men lie buried under these tombs?  
All of them were Lords of the Han world.  
"Kung" and "Wen" gaze across at each other:  
The Yüan mound is all grown over with weeds.  
When the dynasty was falling, tumult and disorder arose,  
Thieves and robbers roamed like wild beasts.  
Of earth they have carried away more than one handful,  
They have gone into vaults and opened the secret doors.  
Jewellèd scabbards lie twisted and defaced:  
The stones that were set in them, thieves have carried away,  
The ancestral temples are hummocks in the ground:  
The walls that went round them are all leveled flat.  
Over everything the tangled thorns are growing:  
A herd-boy pushes through them up the path.  
Down in the thorns rabbits have made their burrows:  
The weeds and thistles will never be cleared away.  
Over the tombs the ploughshare will be driven  
And peasants will have their fields and orchards there.  
They that were once lords of a thousand hosts  
Are now become the dust of the hills and ridges.  
I think of what Yün-mēn said  
And I am sorely grieved at the thought of "then" and "now".<sup>4</sup>

According to the poet's view, the past is both similar to the present and also dissimilar. Similarities between the past and the present offer the possibility that reflections on the past may help to address contemporary issues by offering a wider frame of understanding. Differences between the past and the present may be used to accent deterioration in the present age from a past golden age, as was feared by those who preferred to erase the past by burning books which showed the past in a more favorable light. On the other hand

differences open up opportunities for innovation and change and the possibilities for creating a new golden age with its own litany of cultural achievements.

### **III.**

Any effort to condense the rich heritage of the Han and Tang dynasties into a brief synthesis must necessarily be selective and ultimately only able to shine a very narrow beam on the evolving complexities of these extra-ordinary times in China's history. As a guide to our approach here, I will propose that we look selectively at each from the perspective of vision, ideas and factual conditions that reflect key aspects of the two civilizations. The **vision** sets forth the hopes and the possibilities for a new golden age. Then it is necessary to create the **ideas** necessary to articulate the vision. Following this comes the **factual conditions** necessary for implementation in accordance with the greater good of the people. Applying these three elements respectively will give us a guidepost for understanding our brief glimpse into the main features respectively of the Han and Tang dynasties in the present context.

#### *Han Dynasty*

The initial **vision** for the Han Dynasty is grounded in the Yin Yang theory and the theory of the Five Phases which embraced an immanent world-order which held that heaven, earth, and human beings are integrally linked. This arrangement calls for a cyclical world view acknowledging such values as totality, rhythm, integration, harmony, and centrality. Responsibility for the system lay with human beings, and especially with the Emperor who is held accountable for imbalance or error in the cosmic and or earthly domains.

The main **ideas** aimed at establishing cosmic harmony and maintaining integration and harmony during the Han dynasty get codified in the orthodox Confucian pedagogy under the custody of the Grand School of scholars. Confucian thought embraced ethical and social values including filial piety and respect for the authority of the state. The five classics which included the *Book of Changes* (Yijing),

*The Book of Documents (Shujing), The Book of Odes (Shijing), The Book of Rites (Liji) and Spring and Autumn Annals (Chunqiu)* formed the basis of education under the guidance of scholars.<sup>5</sup> Concerning art, reportedly Confucius greatly valued art "for its beneficent influence on human nature" but not for its own sake.<sup>6</sup>

**Factual conditions** for implementing the vision included establishment of a national examination system extending educational opportunities and access to government offices to the most talented individuals, in principle at least, irrespective of family connections. Despite the Han introduction of the Civil Service examination system, these examinations elevated only a few to official positions. The appointments remained primarily based on recommendations and connections to the prominent families. Cosmology, ritual and magic, regional traditions, as well as alternative philosophical views such as Taoism and subsequently Buddhism from India were factored into the vision for Han culture alongside Confucian beliefs.<sup>7</sup>

Globalization resulting in the welcoming of intercultural ideas, goods, and artifacts into China took place through connections established in Central Asia. As trade and exchange occurred along the Silk Route, for example, links were established with Greek, Iranian, and Indian cultures among others. These connections offered a widening world view and a variety of exotic material goods including woolen cloth, grape wine, jewellery, new plants, etc., as well as music and dancing, offered additional means of realizing, perhaps altering, the vision during the Han era.

Of particular interest for our purposes is the place of the fine arts and aesthetics in implementing the vision. A primary source of information concerning the fine arts during the Han dynasty for subsequent generations consists of the archaeological excavations of burial tombs. For example, symbols found on painted coffins and banners from the Mawangdui tomb reference cosmological traditions connecting the life of the deceased to the cycle connecting heaven and earth. Paintings from the Han era featured bright colors and rhythmic designs with motifs including dragons and fish. (Painting on silk Mawangdui Tomb No. 1). Poetry such as that of the Han Poet Sima Xiangru (c. 170-117

BC) was often linked to the courts of the nobility including the Emperor. A Bureau of Music was responsible for providing music for rituals and other official ceremonies. Orchestras, choirs and choreography, with collaboration between poets and musicians, were an integral part of official ceremonies and for the entertainment of the court.<sup>8</sup> Decorative arts featuring gilding of gold and silver with inlays of precious stones applied to bronzes, jades, lacquer ware and ceramics representing very high standards of workmanship adorned the palaces and homes of the prosperous Hans. Such items often featured symbols invoking belief systems of the time connected to the pursuit of the ultimate vision linking life on earth with the demands of cosmic order and harmony. Sculpture, including bronzes and granite stone works also occupy a Place in Han arts. Refined calligraphy from this era is preserved in monumental inscriptions in stone as well as in the poetry.

Not the least important of the contributions of the Han Dynasty arts is its architecture. Urban architecture embraced a well formed city planning as in the Western Han capital city of Changan. Imperial palaces, Changlegong and Weiyanggong, constructed under the Han Emperor Gao Zu occupied more than half of the city. Robust city walls built of rammed yellow earth over 12 meters in height and 12 to 16 meters in width and incorporating 12 gates, which controlled communications and access to and from the external world. An armory well stocked with weaponry located between the two major palaces contributed to the security of the city.

Royal Parks built by the pervious Qin dynasty (221-206 B. C/) were incorporated by the Han dynasty into palace parks, populated with birds and animals as well as exotic botanicals, waterways, natural rock formations, and architecture.<sup>9</sup> These garden spaces provided the emperor and guests with aesthetic spaces intended for pleasure and relaxation, contemplation, and the entertainment of official guests. Some nine markets where commerce took place were positioned near the gates of Changan apart from the areas where the palaces were located.

An extension of the "art of living" during the Han dynasties are the extravagant underground dwelling places adorned and furnished with



aspects of the material life including burial tombs with architectural models replicating artifacts and structures of the decedent's life conditions and possible needs beyond.<sup>10</sup> The tombs were adorned with fine art images and equipped with both practical and aesthetic items dignifying the social status and wealth of the deceased.

Ritual structures known as Ming Tang (hall of light) acknowledged the importance of Confucian rituals and Taoist principles where the emperor performed certain rituals and received feudal lords were also a part of the city structure. Other ritual sites, such as a Pi Yong where the emperor performed rituals, were adorned with artistically conceived tile decorations featuring Green Dragon, White Tiger, Red Bird, and Black Turtle designs representing the four deities.

Lyuoyang, the capital city of Eastern Han, experienced similar cultural developments as it served as the capitol through various later stages of Han culture. Of particular note is the establishment of the imperial academy Tai Xue in AD 29 where reportedly some 30,000 students were active by AD 32.

Although little in the way of key philosophical ideas that remained grounded in Confucian values seem to have changed, life style exchanges appears to have taken place as a result of contacts between the far away Roman world and Han China. The Silk Route trade especially, provided the basis for material exchange in the form of silk from China and various items of luxury goods from the west. Over time, however, foreign influences including Buddhism entered into Han life.<sup>11</sup> The influx diverse cultures led to an increasingly cosmopolitan society where fashions from abroad including woolen cloth, pearls, and ivory as well as alternative music and dance helped to bring diversity to the urban culture of Han China. These developments however did not likely enter into the extensive rural village life where traditional folk cultures continued.

## *Tang Dynasty*

The Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.) succeeds the historic Han Dynasty after an interval of some four hundred years. Confucian philosophy continues to serve as a core focus in education as well as a basis for

the norms for good government and ethical conduct with respect to both family and state. Confucianism thus remains the dominant socio-political structure. Traditional cosmological beliefs remained grounded in Confucian ritual, viewed as being essential to preserving universal harmony. Classical Confucianism ideals remain a matter of interest to the scholars, though their influence on the leadership of Tang society appears to have lessened as a result of the increasing influence of Taoism and Buddhism, which focused on personal salvation through faith and good works. Even the Emperor's court, at times favored Buddhist and Taoist philosophies.

Applying our three-fold structure: **vision, ideas and factual conditions**, to the Tang era, it is necessary to inquire first about the vision. Has the vision changed for the Tang era? Does the belief in an immanent world-order where heaven, earth, and human beings are integrally linked still apply in the Tang society? Or has a new vision emerged? Judging from recent historical and literary sources consulted recounting life in Tang China, it would appear that the concept of human affairs' intimate connections with the universe remains in force in the natural world and human society, at least as an ideal.<sup>12</sup> Yet it seems clear that the vision has shifted in part to a greater focus on the affairs of earthly life.<sup>13</sup>

Modeled after the Han emphasis on a unified Chinese empire, one of the central aims of the Tang Emperors was to regain the central authority over the state in the face of increasing challenges of provincial leaders. The An Lushan rebellion of 755-763, initiated by an ambitious military leader with strong political skills, resulted in An Lushan (703-757) declaring himself as Emperor and consequently a weakening of the Tang dynasty. Although the An Lushan rebellion ending in 763 was relatively short lived, it accelerated political, military, and economic challenges resulting in part from the on-going ambitions of provincial leaders and threats of revolt against the central governing powers seated in the restored Tang Emperor.

Accommodating the diversity of competing political, and economic, and philosophical interests, as well as accommodating changes in the artistic practices, thus would occupy a major portion of resources

during the remainder of the Tang dynasty. Encroaching foreign cultures especially from the Middle East added further complexities to the already demanding internal challenges, both enriching and arguably posing a threat of displacement to aspects of Chinese traditional culture including Confucian beliefs and practices.

Hence, among the dominating **ideas** for the Tang civilization were these: reestablishing the Emperor's court as the center of political power, managing the effects of globalizing forces, the incorporation of foreign ideas and populations into Chinese culture, and the development of a flourishing arts culture as a part of the national resources.

The **factual structure** for realizing the vision of Tang culture included establishing a hierarchy of schools. Some schools focused on Confucian classics and the arts including the symbolism of court ceremonies with a view toward success in the examination system. This system aimed at identifying the most talented and enabling persons of ability, irrespective of social standing, to participate in the system of administration. Other schools throughout the prefectures were devoted to applied subjects such as mathematics, medicine, law, and practical calligraphy.<sup>14</sup>

A poem by the Tang poet and official Bai Juyi (772-846) titled "After Passing the Examination," (AD 800) offers insight into the role of the examination system.

For ten years I never left my books;  
I went up...and won unmerited praise.  
My *high* place I do not much prize;  
The joy of my parents will first make me proud.  
Fellow students, six or seven men,  
See me off at the City gate....<sup>15</sup>

Bai Juyi's career subsequent to his successful completion of the examination exemplifies the uncertain path of life after the completing the examination. He is seen first as scholar of the Han Lin Academy (807-811), followed by banishment from the Court in 815, with reprieve and return to the Court in 820, and later appointments as

Governor of Hangzhou 822, Governor of Suzhou 825, and Governor of Henan 831. Bai's career, illustrates how changing political conditions might determine an official's career in the dynamic Tang civilization.

In general the period known as Mid-Tang witnessed extraordinary transitions marked by highest cultural achievements and the encroachment of non-hereditary families upon the influence previously held by the reigning hereditary families. Luxurious life styles and a flourishing intellectual life signaled a state of prosperity.<sup>16</sup> There was, it appears, in this opening up of the Examination System, recognition that "the common people" had a stake in the future of the country. At the same time, a strong, competitive military force was deemed necessary to mitigate amongst the competing interests of the Emperor's court and the regional lords.

Among other key **factual conditions** important to realizing the now increasingly secular Tang vision were these: harvesting the benefits of globalization and managing distribution of economic resources more equitably among the population. Also important was the need to address the rivalry among Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist belief systems for influence among the leadership and the people during the Tang dynasty. It was during this era (690-715) that a female, Empress Wu Zhou, established a new dynasty declaring herself "Emperor." Empress Wu Zhou was one of several women who rose to positions of power and influence in the era of the Tang civilization.<sup>17</sup>

For our purposes the Tang achievements in the arts are again of particular interest. The era of Emperor Tang Xuanzong (713-756) is noted as a particularly significant period of flourishing for all of the arts. This Emperor reportedly especially enjoyed the company of painting, poetry, and music as well as horses, perhaps to the neglect of his official duties as Emperor, as the An Lushan revolt took place during his reign.

Creativity in all the arts including poetry, painting, sculpture, music and dancing were considered as important marks of cultural achievement for Tang civilization. Landscape paintings of the early Tang era featured sparse mountain-water themes in monochromatic tones, with rhythmic strokes and atmospheric mood. Buddhist and

Taoist artists and “artists of the people” contributed to the developing artistic landscape. Toward the end of the Tang dynasty, evidence of paintings emphasizing more of “real life” over some imaginary paradise appeared in mural paintings. Luxurious colors and stories based on everyday life toward the end of the Tang dynasty emphasizing the secularization of Tang society. “Heaven was in the human world, all joys were in the present.”<sup>18</sup>

Poetry of this era, linked with calligraphy and painting, ranged from traditional “regulated” styles to more free form styles. Themes of the poetry might vary from fantasy journeys found in the works of the poet Li Bai to the frontier campaign verse of Cen Shen, to contemplative nature poems of Wang Wei and poetry with social criticism of Yuan Jie.<sup>19</sup> In general, the poetry reflected the conditions of society, from two different perspectives: that of the Emperor and the government and that of the people, with poets reflecting both perspectives. Given the often-tumultuous political conditions, it is not unexpected that poets commenting on contemporary life might find themselves on the wrong political side, as did the poet Li Bai (712-770) who experienced commuted death sentences and exile in a time of revolution and change.<sup>20</sup>

How might we account for the vitality of Tang culture? One effort to explain the successes of the Tang civilization is offered by the historians Denis Twitchett and Arthur F. Wright. Their words will suffice to succinctly make this point:

First, was its eclecticism—the way that the T’ang drew together the many cultural strands from the tumultuous history of the preceding four hundred years. Second was its cosmopolitanism—its openness to foreign influences of all kinds....Buddhist monks from Korea and Japan; tribal leaders and warriors from among the Turks, the Khitans the Uighurs; emissaries, artists and musicians from ...central Asia; merchants from Samarkand, Bokhara, India , Persia, Syria and Arabia among others.<sup>21</sup>

Before moving to the final section of the paper, which will attempt to view the fine arts of today with an eye on what insights Han and Tang

cultures might offer to our understanding of the state of the fine arts and culture today, we can conclude our view of the Han and Tang dynasties with brief summary remarks. Any in depth study of prior historical epochs, including the Han and Tan eras that are the focus here, will show that these periods of history celebrated for their glorious achievements were not immune from dealing with the complex issues that continue to challenge the emergence of Post-revolutionary China in the twenty-first century.

Even a cursory look at these two dynasties will reveal struggles with fundamental issues: power struggles among competing interest groups for example. The palace bureaucracy of Eunuchs and the Scholars at the imperial court were in competition for the attention of The Emperor throughout these dynasties. Feudal aristocracy, land owners, manufacturers, and the military each represented important and often competing interests. The needy working peasant farmers and slaves struggled against more powerful groups to maintain necessary life conditions with little avail. As well, external political threats from border neighbors posed a continuing challenge to the developing cultures of both the Han and Tang dynasties. Perseverance in spite of these obstacles, singly or collectively, nevertheless allowed for significant creative achievements that established for these two dynasties a special place in China's history.

While both the Han and Tang leaders believed their respective civilizations to be superior to others, both realized the importance of benefitting from globalizing efforts. A healthy exchange with foreign nations brought valuable opportunities for trade and for the opportunities to enrich their own culture with fresh ideas, exotic varieties of material goods, and contacts with persons of diverse cultural origins.

As we have seen, an integral part of the Han and Tang dynasties' successes was a commitment to value centered activities. Their values reflected differing philosophical views as defined first by Confucian philosophy emphasizing the centrality of the community and family, and Taoism which focused more on the development of individual. Later on, Buddhism from India posed another option for life centering

beliefs and social organization. The symbolic expressions of meaning as understood by these competing philosophical views appear in the poetry, paintings, music and dancing of the Han and Tang eras, as well as in the various forms of decorative arts including lacquer, jade, bronze, and iron sculptures and elegantly designed artifacts used in ritual ceremonies.

Nowhere is the importance of the questions of meaning and the celebration of life of the Han and Tang people more effectively expressed than in the sculptural representations of life recorded in the burial tombs whose excavations continue to reveal otherwise hidden aspect of life in these two eras. The successful role that the arts served for the Han and Tang civilizations will serve as a useful reference as we move to consider the place of the fine arts in China of the twenty-first century.

## **V. Chinese Fine Arts today**

In order to discern the possible lessons from the Han and Tang eras, I will focus on the current state of the visual arts in China today. First, it is necessary to briefly characterize contemporary Chinese art and culture. China in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has undergone monumental changes including the end of the Emperor as head of state, civil war, foreign invasion, and its own Cultural Revolution. These event have shaped and reshaped the possibilities for arts and culture in China today. In these respects the state of Chinese culture today shares with the cultures of Han and Tang the need to respond to the challenges brought about by dynamic cultural and societal changes.

At the present time, the arts function on a variety of levels including traditional Chinese arts, official art, academic arts, folk as well as experimental arts, and art made for the international art markets. Artists working in China today thus face many challenges resulting from the robust transitions internally that contemporary Chinese society is currently undergoing. The two principal sources underlying these challenges derive from the forces of urbanization and globalization. Urbanization is the central internal issue internally, while

globalization focuses on China's interrelations with the external world. These challenges result in part from modifications in a Socialist structure attempting to incorporate elements of Capitalism in support of economic expansion.

The consequences of these developments for society as a whole, let alone for artists who seek to participate in the changes, remain in transition. Among the considerations arising from urbanization and globalization is the rise of commercialization of society with increased access to consumer products versus previous tighter controls and limited supply. Also important is the rise of social class distinctions with increased availability of discretionary wealth and a corresponding shift in attitudes toward money, pointing to a new cultural materialism perhaps reminiscent of the Tang. As well, social and geographic mobility and the influences of western and other eastern cultures on contemporary Chinese culture each have an important roles in defining Chinese life today, especially in its urban forms.<sup>22</sup>

A profound psychological shift with respect to the attitudes toward art in Chinese society, and the approaches that artists choose to pursue is currently in process. These changes result in conflicting thoughts and actions. Among the notable shifts observed by art historian Michael Sullivan is the questioning or abandonment by contemporary artists and the society in which they live of the view that "the purposes of art were to express the ideal of harmony between man and nature, to uphold tradition, and to give pleasure."<sup>23</sup> Not all Chinese artists or theorists agree that abandonment of traditional aims of Chinese art is a positive development.

Nor is there agreement on what changes might best serve Chinese society, or the artists themselves for that matter. Among the existing choices are these: to participate in official art aimed at state sponsorship, academic art focusing on technical and aesthetic achievements, art directed to a popular urban taste, art aimed at the global international art market, art aimed at social change, or independently experimental art that seeks to advance the development of art and ideas analogously to pure research in the



sciences through experimentation irrespective of the broader social or commercial implications.<sup>24</sup>

None of these developments in the contemporary Chinese arts can be understood apart from the urbanization taking place in the current Chinese society as a whole. At this time, for example, artists in Beijing and urban centers elsewhere in China face a major threat from the push for economic expansion of real estate markets in the areas where art zones have developed in recent years. The situation for the development of urban art zones, especially in Beijing, once perceived as favorable to the advancement of Chinese contemporary artists, both in terms of economic and artistic development, has changed rapidly even during the most recent seasons. For example, during my visit to Chinese art zones and studios little more than five years ago, the art zone 798 as well as in Songzhang Village and elsewhere across Beijing, appeared to be thriving centers for galleries and individual artists' studios. Today the scene in these particular art zones is barely recognizable as new construction encroaches upon the spaces formerly held by artists' studios, and commercial shops are replacing the galleries dedicated to artists' works in Beijing's art zone 798. Government and developers' interests now seem to favor a policy that places artists' spaces under threat of demolition. These changes seem not to bode well for artists and the value placed on the work of the artists.

It is worth noting, however, that what is happening to artists' spaces is not addressed particularly to artists alone. The move to demolish and replace the spaces recently developed for artists is rather part of the consequences of urbanization with its focus on the evolution of the "rich commercial landscape of today's Chinese city."<sup>25</sup> Since 1978 this development has resulted in the birth of numerous new cities. Most of these new cities, as well as renovated older cities where massive demolition has taken place (such as Beijing), are populated with cityscapes increasingly dominated with visual clutter from commercial advertisement billboards. According to the Beijing Environmental Bureau, in Beijing alone, some 7.5 million square meters of urban properties were demolished between 2005 and 2007.<sup>26</sup> And this does not account for the accelerated demolition that took place throughout

Beijing just prior to the Beijing Olympics of 2008 and continuing today. High rise commercial and residential buildings and shopping malls have replaced the traditional low rise lane buildings with their individual shops and dwellings. With these developments the positioning of the arts shifts from the studio to the large scale, often international commercial gallery system. Along with this development, access to art is often shifted to the international art fairs and biennales where art from China appears alongside that of other nations.

The transformation of the urban landscape today in some respects might parallel the construction of cities during the Han and Tang dynasties. One important difference is the scale of the changes, witnessed by the recent creation of some multiple new cities with populations extending into the millions. The development of new construction technologies and along with them the means of rapid mass demolition accelerates the possibilities for rapid change unimaginable in either of these two eras.

One of the important questions for understanding contemporary Chinese art is the extent to which the influences of western art have altered the direction of contemporary Chinese art. The availability of Western approaches to art in China, as it has accelerated since the 1980s, is likely greater than any foreign intervention available in the Han or Tang dynasties. Indeed, several of the leading art academies in China such as the National Academy and the Central Academy of Fine Art in Beijing now offer two lines of art educations: one featuring traditional Chinese art, the other offering training in western art practices.

Some have argued that Chinese art today has become dominated by western art influences. However, I would propose that, despite the opening of China to western economic and artistic cultures through the processes of globalization, Chinese art has not succumbed to hegemonic dominance from the West. Rather, taking their model from the Han and Tang dynasties who were able to apply lessons from other cultures while maintaining a distinctive Chinese identity, contemporary Chinese artists for the most part have been able to learn from western art practices in advancing their art without surrendering their Chinese

artistic identities. The reasons for this development lies in part in the respect of Chinese artists for the long, and highly developed tradition of Chinese art practices, most notably in the Han and Tang dynasties and also in subsequent dynasties. Of course, this stream of traditional Chinese art is enriched continuously with the shared inventions of an endless stream of new paradigms for creating art now available worldwide through travel and media communications.<sup>27</sup>

Hence the argument for the continuing identity of a distinctive Chinese aesthetic does not mean that the flow of Chinese art, either in these earlier times or in the present generation, does not appropriate external influences from time to time. In the words of the art historian Silcock, "Under the Tang, the readiness to receive abundant influences from abroad was evident from the beginning.... Travelers and artists came from India and Central Asia to China, and Chinese journeyed to these distant lands bringing back ideas and objets d'art which affected (but never diverted) the course of tradition."<sup>28</sup> For example, the Sancai porcelains made in the Tang dynasty of the seventh and eighth centuries, although Chinese in origin, featuring tri-colored raised figures may have gathered foreign influences as they travelled along the Silk route.<sup>29</sup> And for a brief time during Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution, the Socialist Realism borrowed from the Soviet Union became a dominant force in Chinese art. Similarly the influences of western modern and contemporary art are for sure an important influence in Chinese art beginning in the second half of the twentieth century. Despite these interventions, I will argue that the dominant strengths of Chinese art both in the past and the present reflect a shared culturally-embodied Chinese aesthetic.

Nowhere are the sustained efforts of Chinese contemporary artists to retain their connections to Chinese traditional arts more evident than in the efforts of the artists to relate their art to the tradition of ink painting and calligraphy. Numerous exhibitions by some of the most able artists of today attest to the role of the consciousness of ink paintings in the creative minds of Chinese contemporary artists. Among these is the exhibition, "Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China" that took place December 2013-April, 2014 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.<sup>30</sup> This exhibition includes

some 35 contemporary experimental artists employing painting, print, video and mixed media in reference to ink painting and calligraphy. The works of leading experimental artists including Gu Wenda, Xu Bing, Wang Tiande, Zhang Tuan, Liu Dan, Duan Jianyu, Yang Fudong, Wang Doongling, among others. When considering the question of what constitutes contemporary Chinese ink art in contemporary terms, the curator of "Ink Art Past as Present" offered these comments:

I began with works that adhered quite literally to the media (ink and paper), formats (scrolls and albums), and techniques (brushwork) that have long been characterized Chinese ink painting. But as my search continued, I encountered works of art that resonate powerfully with ancient traditions while making use of more recently developed and globalized media (oil on canvas, photography, and video among others) and forms of expression (including abstraction, installation, and performance).<sup>31</sup>

This exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum is but the latest of a growing list of important exhibitions in China and world-wide recognizing the efforts of contemporary Chinese artists to relate their work to ink painting and calligraphy. I have chosen to cite this particular exhibition because it documents the importance of the historic traditions of the arts as they were developed in the Han and Tang dynasties and carried on through the centuries to the present. At the same time the artists represented in this exhibition reflect the spirit of invention and change that were so important to the Han and Tang cultures.

## **VI. Strategies for Developing the Fine Arts Today**

In order to bring some closure to our discussion of the relevance of accomplishments in the historic Han and Tang dynasties I propose that we consider the possible connections using these three concepts:

### **Inspiration, Consolation and Deviation.**

The term **Inspiration** carries a variety of meanings. It can mean for example, to influence, to encourage, to awaken, to energize. In a sense each of these nuances of inspiration can suggest various ways in

which the achievements of the artists of the Han and Tang Dynasties. One influence useful for planning the future of art in China can be drawn from the importance given to the arts in these dynasties. For it is evident even from our brief look at these earlier periods that the arts held a significant role in the high achievements of these cultures. Hence, it is incumbent upon both the artists and those responsible for the overall development of Chinese culture today to give due accord to the place of the arts among other societal priorities. As a prominent Chinese leader in cultural affairs once remarked, a great nation requires more than one leg to stand on. Economic success offers only one leg, while a nation of first rank in the world additionally requires a high level of artistic achievement to support its place of prominence.

**Consolation** or solace as intended here aims at providing support and encouragement to the artists and others who often struggle to get their voices heard in an increasingly complex society where increasingly even the arts are being valued more or as means for propagating ideology or as commodities in the market place than for their contributions to human understanding and the celebration of life. Our brief look at the important place that the arts held in the historical memories of the Han and Tang dynasties reminds us of another way for approaching the arts today. We have only to think of the seeming genuine appreciation for the poetry, calligraphy, music, and dancing as expressions of an essential dimension of human activity in the Han and Tang life styles as witnessed in the priorities given to art in the Emperor's court. This appreciation for the arts is carried forth even into the burial chambers where elaborate burial tombs, carvings, calligraphy were carried forward in the hope that the values of these elements of their culture might retain their role even beyond life in its present form.

## **Deviation**

It is one thing to look to the past as a source of inspiration or consolations as we have suggested here. Yet for an art culture to remain vital and relevant to its own age, deviation from the past is a necessary path. As we look at the art of the present age and the efforts of our artists working today to invent meaningful ways to

respond to life today, it is necessary to expect that their understanding and their practices will necessarily deviate from the past eras such as the Han and Tang Dynasties. We can continue to appreciate the remarkable achievements of the past while remaining open to the on-going efforts of artists in the present.

The term **Deviation** has many nuances, among them are these: change, shift of direction, departure, anomaly, curiosity or simply losing one's way. And depending on one's understanding and appreciation of particular examples, it would be possible to find instances of contemporary art that tempts us to apply any one of these meanings to the vast range of art being pursued by artists today.

Strategies for advancing the fine arts in the Post-revolutionary era of China today will necessarily take a different path in their particular form, even while commanding an important place. Fine Arts since 1979 have faced numerous changes in the practices introduced into the arts in response to changing societal conditions. Among these are certain deviations necessitated by notable changes during this era. One of these is the move beyond Socialist Realism which served as the dominant art form from 1949 thru the revolutionary era of Mao Zedong.

Another factor has been the opportunity for Chinese artists to view first hand western modern and contemporary art. Looking back again, to discover other possibly forgotten moments in the development of Contemporary Chinese art, it is useful to remember the pioneering 1981-1982 exhibition, "Important Original Works from the American Paintings Collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts." This exhibition was conceived under the watchful eye of the American government agency USIA in the shadow of protests by the Star Group and other Chinese artists in 1979 and thereafter. The 70 masterpieces from Boston included works of the 18 to the 20th century by John Singleton Copley, John Singer Sargent, Winslow Homer, Marsden Hartley, and Edward Hopper, as well as 12 abstract works by Franz Kline, Jackson Pollock, Helen Frankenthaler, Hans Hoffman, and others. The exhibition took place at the Zhongguo Meishuguan, now

known as the National Art Museum of China. According to reports of the Chinese bureau of cultural affairs, the exhibition was a resounding success marked by daily attendance of some six to seven thousand visitors. The first run of 30,000 catalogues sold out the first week of the month long run in Beijing, followed by a month in the Shanghai museum.<sup>32</sup>

The significance of the Boston exhibition for the future of Chinese art is of considerable weight, given that it offered many Chinese artists their first opportunity to see original modern abstract from the West, and to contemplate its relevance for the future of Chinese art. For better or for worse concerning the future influences of Western art on Chinese independent artists, this exhibition was an important point of departure for the intervention of non-Social Realist Western art into China after the Cultural Revolution. A photograph of students at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing posed in front of a Jackson Pollock painting, "Number 10," 1949, from this exhibition no doubt conveys the excitement generated by a first sighting of the painting in the Boston Museum exhibition.<sup>33</sup>

A third important element in shaping the efforts of changes in contemporary Chinese art is the emergence of the experimental arts as is reflected in the current exhibition of Contemporary Chinese at the Metropolitan Museum in New York noted earlier and a growing panorama of continuing exhibitions both in China, the USA and elsewhere. Among the leading experimental artists are Xu Bing and Xu Wenda, to mention a few, whose experiments with language explore the changing role of calligraphy in the life of contemporary China, raising thought provoking issues concerning the place of traditional understanding of language in Chinese life. Among these Xu Bing has probed deeply into the symbolic powers of ink painting to articulate important themes in contemporary culture as articulated in his "Book from the Sky," 1987-1988, which confounded Chinese viewers when they discovered the characters to be unreadable.

Other experiments with photography and video, installation, performance, and conceptual art together with the strategies of appropriation and deconstruction have brought the experimental arts



to the forefront of the arts of today.<sup>34</sup> For example, artists such as Yang Jiechang, (b. 1956) and Qiu Anixong, (b. 1972) respectively, using traditional ink and paper (Yang) and multi-media video (Xing), focus their images on the contemporary environmental concerns. Yang's "Crying Landscapes" 2002 show images of Yangzi Dam, a nuclear power plant, and various urban landscapes. Yang's photographs comment on the changing urban landscape. Both artists employ means that link their art traditional Chinese painting, but with changes to allow addressing the contemporary environmental concerns. In new media. Trained in traditional Chinese art, Yang's aim has been to "implant Chinese traditional painting, traditional Chinese aesthetics and thought into a contemporary context."<sup>35</sup> Qiu's career involves study in both China and the West, culminating in his return to Chinese art, literature and philosophy. His videos, *In the Sky*, (2005) *New Classic of Mountain and Seas* (2006) offer a commentary on the effects of "explosive urbanization" on the contemporary landscape.<sup>36</sup>

Philip Tinau, Ullen Centre Art Director in Beijing describes the current generation as a "schizophrenic generation" with a multiplicity of concerns and resonances in their art, perhaps offering a direct reflection of how the country changes from day to day. For example, Li Zhangang's "Rent," 2007 is a farcical recasting of a Socialist Realist sculpture, "Rent Collection Courtyard" 1965. The 1965 sculpture in Szechuan tell the story of Chinese feudal landlords' exploitation of peasant farmers before Communist rule, while Li Zhangang's "Rent" portrays characters of the contemporary art world.<sup>37</sup> "Rent" consist of some 34 life sized colored fiberglass figures representing Chinese and Western artists, art dealers, curators, collector and others offers a none too flattering satire on the dynamics of the contemporary international art world figures. One of his numerous groupings in the installation shows artist Joseph Beuys alongside a seated sculptural representation of Chairman Mao Zedong as if these two were presiding over the scene from their privileged positions, Beuys as a star in the contemporary art world, Mao as recurring figure in the art of the period we are examining. Li Zhangang's "Rent" carries a double critical wallop as it challenges the political viability of the original sculpture "Rent Collection Courtyard" 1965, which was intended to celebrate the Cultural Revolution's accomplishments, while also directing a



humorous, skeptical look at the pretentiousness of the international art world. It is as if the art world figures had replaced the tyrannical landlords of the 1965 Socialist Realist work.

The references to the problem of exploitation of the peasants by powerful landlords is a theme that might have had currency in the Han and Tang dynasties as well as in the Post-Revolutionary era of mid-twentieth century China. Only it is unlikely that such a subject would have appeared in the art of the time, except perhaps in the musings of the poets, who were given greater leeway to lament on societal inequities. These examples from contemporary art practices show that the artists are responding to and interpreting the life issues of the people as the culture has changed with respect to urban structures and global complexities, while maintaining a conscious effort to retain a core semblance of Chinese spirit and heritage in the works.

In January 2013, *The Economist* published an informative review of the exhibition "On/Off: China's Young Artists in Concept and Practice," discussing the works of artists born after the death of Mao Zedong. The article pointed out that in contrast to "old guard contemporary artists who lived thru or in the shadow of the Cultural Revolution, the new generation represents "art more rooted in everyday competition of urban life, and the rapid changes that China has gone through as they grew up."<sup>38</sup> For example the artist Li Liao created a work focused on his experience as a factory worker in a Fox Conn plant where he worked inspecting circuits for Apple products, and used his pay to purchase an iPad. The resulting art work, "Consumption," 2013 as displayed in the exhibition "On/Off" included his uniform, security badge, and contract and the iPad placed on a pedestal beside the other items.<sup>39</sup>

Among the issues advancing in current discussions of Chinese independent artists is an increasing self-reflection of women artists on their role in independent Chinese art.<sup>40</sup> Moving beyond the history of male hegemony and the problem of how to distinguish art with reference to gender, the women artists of the 1990s and thereafter increasingly choose to explore their own spiritual world and personal experiences. In fact, themes such as striving for freedom, artistic or

personal self-discovery, or “feelings of ‘alienation, anxiety, fear, insecurity’” or distrust of men, do not suffice to differentiate art on the basis of gender. Instead, women artists today may choose to focus the value of the individual in everyday life. For example, the painter Yu Hong uses personal images taken from shopping, swimming, and family photos as subjects for her art.<sup>41</sup> This trend points increasingly toward the necessity of moving beyond the search for women artists who create a particular gender based grounding for their art.

The facility of women artists in creating art with the new artistic vocabularies offered by performance art, installation art, and new media arts such as video, internet, and everyday life, as well as traditional art media, is evidenced in a quietly growing number of exhibitions perhaps more outside of China than inside, dedicated to women artists. For example, the 2011 exhibition “Half the Sky: Women in the New Art of China,” co-curated by the National Art Museum of China and the Leonard Pearlstein Gallery at Drexel University in the USA, offered a look at some of the leading Chinese women artists of today.<sup>42</sup> Among the growing populations of experimental women artists in China are these artists tagged in a 2008 article by Holland Cotter in the *New York Times*, “China’s Female Artists Quietly Emerge.”<sup>43</sup> Lin Tianmiao who initially created works in her apartment from used household utensils such as teapots, woks, scissors wrapped in white cloth later escalated her creative productions to include floor to ceiling self-portraits with braids of yarn. The installation artist Xin Xiuzhen made art from unraveling yarn from second hand men’s and women’s sweaters, and reconstructing it into gender-neutral garments. Lu Qing applies marks on 82-foot bolts of silk with reference to the tradition of scroll making.

## **VII. What should be the role of the fine arts in the new China of the Twenty-First Century?**

Thus far in this essay we have considered the conditions of the arts in the Han and Tang dynasties, followed by a look at the state of the arts in today’s China. So we end this discussion with the question, what can contemporary artists and others responsible for charting the course for the arts in today’s culture learn from the Han and Tang

societies with respect to the role that the arts have in contemporary society?

To respond to this question it is useful to think more inclusively and look at the matter from the broad perspective of Chinese aesthetics as a framework in which to see the current developments in Chinese art. Our reference to aesthetics here must necessarily be brief as it will represent a coda to the consideration of the relevance of Han and Tang dynasties to the present. Any historic perspective of Chinese aesthetics must begin with the ideas of Confucian philosophy and extensions and modifications introduced by competing philosophies of Daoism and Buddhism. All of these roots of Chinese aesthetics were well established in the Han and Tang dynasties and have carried forth unto today, even as Chinese aesthetics explores historical and current discussions in western aesthetics.<sup>44</sup>

An important point to note here is that the aesthetic heritage from the Han and Tang dynasties is already pluralistic in that it admits understanding from a variety of perspectives. Hence one of the lessons from the Han and Tang dynasties is that a strong culture must make provision for embracing a variety of strands of understanding to be expressed in its arts and other forms of life. The progression during which differences of ideas and artistic forms emerge, as we have seen in the Han and Tang civilizations, may not take place without struggle as the proponents of each vision vie for power and influence. It is important to note that in each of these dynamic civilizations, the arts did not remain static. There was a steady stream of energy poured into the development of new artistic forms including those incorporating of ideas from non-Chinese cultures. Hence, it will come as no surprise to discover that the struggle for competing views in the arts and culture continues into our own times.

For us, the rich heritage found in the ideas of Confucianism, Daoism, and Chan Buddhism are carried forth in part in the poetry, paintings, and other forms of art gathered in our museums and literary traditions from then until now. From the Han and Tang civilizations we see that artistic and literary creations have always taken place in the context of the prevailing views of society including political and educational

objectives, social critique, and life style of the people including the intellectuals and painters, poets and musicians of the time. In today's China where Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist philosophies must compete with or give way. Marxist ideals, and now Capitalist aims, informed by a consumer driven culture have become increasingly the dominant forces in contemporary Chinese culture. These changes invite an inclusive aesthetics reflecting the interests of a broader range of the people than would have claimed access to participation in forming the artistic aims of Han and Tang civilizations.

Given the driving forces of contemporary life in China, the opportunities available to the Han and Tang artists and poets positioned in the Emperor's Court, or even to the Emperor himself, to withdraw from public life and contemplate nature at large, or enjoy life as miniaturized in a personal garden adorned with rare foliage, natural rocks, and architectural treasures remains in the past. Similarly, the luxury for the pursuit of poetry and mastery of artful calligraphy is less likely to be an option for life of most Chinese persons today. Still this situation has not prevented contemporary artists and the people at large from pursuit of the aesthetic in everyday life experiences. Perhaps indeed the societal conditions of life today have inspired the artists to experiment with new ideas, resulting in a pluralism in the wide variety of explorations among experimental artists today. Even the most radical of these explorations, as we have seen in the examples cited in the previous sections of the paper show genuine desire to ground their art in some aspect of their Chinese heritage.

As it was then and it is the case now, the strategies for the advancement of the arts in any period depend largely upon conditions that prevail in the political, societal, economic, scientific, technological, philosophical and religious components that shape a culture in a particular stage of its development.

Of course, the advancement of the arts depends as well on the availability and support of those gifted individuals and creative teams to invent new forms of art that inform, challenge, and enrich our lives. We can take pleasure in knowing that China today is gifted with perhaps the most talented cadre of artists of any nation across the

world. The legend of a commitment of the state to a strong education system to support leadership begun in the Han dynasty and extending through to Tang, not only in the state officials, but also for artists needed to sustain artistic production is echoed to day in an impressive list of high quality arts academies such as the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing and the National Academy of Arts in Beijing and others throughout the nation. Their efforts will undoubtedly contribute to a future judgment that, like the Han and Tang dynasties of the past, the current generation of artists too will contribute to the future acclaim of the present age of Chinese art as one of high significance.

## Endnotes

- 1) Denis Twitchett and Arthur F. Wright, *Perspectives on the T'ang*, editors Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 1.
- 2) Michele Pirazzoli-t 'Serstevens, *The Han Dynasty*, translator, Janet Seligman, (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), 14.
- 3) Arthur F. Wright, "The Contemplation of the Past in T'ang Poetry," in *Perspectives on the T'ang*, editors Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 363.
- 4) Chang Tsai (third century A. D.), "The Desecration of Han Tombs," in Arthur Waley, *Translations from the Chinese* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf: Mcmxli), 76. Note: "In the early days of the dynasty a man stole a handful of earth from the imperial tombs, and was executed by the police. The emperor was furious at the lightness of the punishment."
- 5) Michele Pirazzoli-t 'Serstevens, *The Han Dynasty*, translator, Janet Seligman, (New York: Rizzoli), 63.
- 6) Arnold Silcock, *Introduction to Chinese Art and History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), 49.
- 7) Michele Pirazzoli-t 'Serstevens, *The Han Dynasty*, translator, Janet Seligman, (New York: Rizzoli), 204.
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- 10) Michele Pirazzoli-t 'Serstevens, *The Han Dynasty*, translator, Janet Seligman, (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), 166-178.
- 11) Michele Pirazzoli-t 'Serstevens, *The Han Dynasty*, translator, Janet Seligman, (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), 164.
- 12) David McMullen, "Historical and Literary Theory in the Mid-Eighth Century," in *Perspectives on the T'ang*, editors Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 322.
- 13) Li Zehou, *The Path of Beauty: A Study of Chinese Aesthetics*, translated by Gong Lizeng, (Beijing: Morning glory Publishers. 1988), 156.
- 14) Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett editors, "Introduction," *Perspectives on the T'ang*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 16.
- 15) Po Chü-I, "After Passing the Examination," in Arthur Waley, *Translations from the Chinese* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf: Mcmxli), 138.
- 16) Li Zehou, *The Path of Beauty: A Study of Chinese Aesthetics*, translated by Gong Lizeng, (Beijing: Morning glory Publishers. 1988), 190-192.

- 17) Among them Yang Kuei-Fei concubine to Emperor Hsüan-tsung involved in political intrigues during the Emperor's reign, eventually put to death for her role in various plots.
- 18) Li Zehou, *The Path of Beauty: A Study of Chinese Aesthetics*, translated by Gong Lizeng, (Beijing: Morning glory Publishers. 1988), 157.
- 19) David McMullen, "Historical and Literary Theory in the Mid-Eighth Century," in *Perspectives on the T'ang*, editors Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 315.
- 20) Li Bai cited in Wikipedia, February, 10, 2014. Citation from John C. H. Wu, *The Four Seasons of Tang Poetry* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1972).
- 21) Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett editors, "Introduction," *Perspectives on the T'ang*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 1.
- 22) Matthieu Borysevicz, *Learning From Hangzhou* (Hong Kong: Time Zone 8 Limited, 2009).
- 23) Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth Century China* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1966), 26.
- 24) For further thoughts on the notion of Chinese experimental art see Wu Hung, *Transcience: Chinese Experimental Art and the End of the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: David Smart Museum of Art, 1999) 13-16.
- 25) Borysevicz, *Learning from Hangzhou*, 9.
- 26) Pan Jiahua, "Building a Frugal Society," *China Dialogue*, 5 November 2007. Cited in Borysevicz, *Learning from Hangzhou*, 35.
- 27) For further discussion of hegemony in contemporary Chinese art see Curtis L. Carter, "Globalization, Hegemony, and the Influences of Western Art in China," 2009.
- 28) Arnold Silcock, *Introduction to Chinese Art and History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948) 138, 139.
- 29) Professor Daniel Meissner, who read a draft of this paper, pointed out that the Sancai porcelains of the Tang differ from "typical Chinese" porcelains in both depiction and subject matter.
- 30) Maxwell Hearn, Preface, *Past as Present in Contemporary Chinese Art*, in conjunction with the exhibition, December 11, 2013 -April 6, 2014, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Yale University Press New Haven and London, 2013.)
- 31) Maxwell Hearn, Preface, *Past as Present in Contemporary Chinese Art*, in conjunction with the exhibition, December 11, 2013 -April 6, 2014, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Yale University Press New Haven and London, 2013), 8.



- 32) Nancy Berliner, "Not so Abstract: Reconsidering the 1981 Exhibition of Masterpieces from the Museum of Fine Art Boston," *The China Story*, posted March 8, 2013.
- 33) Photograph reproduced in Nancy Berliner, "Not so Abstract: Reconsidering the 1981 Exhibition of Masterpieces from the Museum of Fine Art Boston," *The China Story*, Posted March 8, 2013.
- 34) Wu Hung, "Transcending the East/West Dichotomy: A Short History of Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting," in *Past as Present in Contemporary Chinese Art*, in conjunction with the exhibition, December 11, 2013 -April 6, 2014, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Yale University Press New Haven and London, 2013), 19.
- 35) Zhang Yu in *World Art* No 112 (April-May, 2012), 34. Works by Zhang cited in *Past as Present in Contemporary Chinese Art*, in conjunction with the exhibition, December 11, 2013 -April 6, 2014, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Yale University Press New Haven and London, 2013), 89-93.
- 36) Works by Qiu Anixong cited in *Past as Present in Contemporary Chinese Art*, in conjunction with the exhibition, December 11, 2013 -April 6, 2014, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Yale University Press New Haven and London, 2013), 119-124.
- 37) Nataline Colonnello, "'Rent'—Rent Collection Yard," Asia Archive, Internet, May 8, 2013. See also Chuan Tan, "Li Zhanyang in Beijing," *Blouin Artinfo*, August 8, 2008.
- 38) A.A., "On/off: China's Young Artists in Concept and Production," *The Economist*, January 21, 2013.
- 39) Evan Osnos, "What is an iPad doing on a Pedestal at a Chinese Art Museum?" *The New Yorker*, January, 18, 2013.
- 40) "Artistic Questions of Women's Art," in Lu Peng et al, editors, *Thirty Years of Adventures: Art and Artists From 1979* (Hong Kong: Timezone, Blue Kingfisher Limited, 2011), 123-129.
- 41) Yu Hong, "A Woman's Life," Exhibition, 2003, Halsley Institute.
- 42) Sue Wang, "Half the Sky: Women in the New Art of China," *Cafa Art Info* October 9, 2011.
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