

Entry Gate:

Chinese Aesthetics of
Heterogeneity



2006

上海当代艺术馆

文献展

MoCA ENVISAGE

美学

Entry Gate:

Chinese Aesthetics of
Heterogeneity





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2006 上海当代艺术文献展
MeCA ENVISAGE

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馆长序言——2006上海当代艺术馆文献展

在上海当代艺术馆开馆一周年之际，我们特地举办了属于我们自己的首届 MoCA 文献展，在以中国当代艺术为命题，迎接我馆周年庆的同时，也展现本馆为中国当代艺术家打造国际平台的决心。过去一年的岁月里，当代艺术馆承蒙各级政府领导、业界同行及广大社会公众的关心和支持，我们才得以有此宝贵机会，向大家倾心奉献这个经过精心准备的展览“入境：中国美学”。通过这次文献展，希望能够进一步贯彻我们的立馆方针：立足本土，服务大众，求新创新。

中国当代艺术今天在海内外备受瞩目，对于上海当代艺术馆来说，是我们的荣幸，我们有责任对这现象进行持续性的研究和探讨。我们将每两年推出研究的成果，因此上海当代艺术馆文献展定位为以两年为周期的学术研究展。首届的策展队伍是由四位负有盛名的策展人所组成，他们是中国著名的艺术家及独立策展人叶永青、对中国当代艺术起了巨大推动作用的乌里·希克 (Uli Sigg)、活跃于国际间的日本东京森美术馆的韩籍资深策展人金善姬 (Sunhee Kim) 和本馆创意总监陆蓉之。这支国际策展队伍，一方面期望对中国当代艺术能进行立体的观察和全方位的探索，而另一方面是在以中国当代艺术为主体的研究过程中，能在方法论上提供更多元化的思考和切入点。

诚如本届展览标题所指出的，在今天多元趋向的文化形态里，随着中国当代艺术在国际间的影响力日益壮大，从昔日出境取经的年代，发展到众多的国际队伍和方方面面的艺术界人士，纷纷大举入境中国，使得我们对自身的艺术环境进行更深刻的认识与研究已刻不容缓，特别是历史能够提供给我们的，不光是借鉴历史上传承的意义，更重要的是探索其内在的文化脉络中其交错、纠缠和彼此嫁接的关系，这些都是我们在这次展览里所着重探讨的课题。“入境：中国美学”分为三个部分：“中国新文人美学”、“手的踪迹”和“极度极致”。以上三个方向启发我们进行一种以艺术理论为基础的思考，由策展团队提出他们客观而且丰硕的阶段性调查结论，希望在学术研究领域里能抛砖引玉，引发更扎实而具体的研究。

此次“入境：中国美学”得以顺利展出，在此我和全体同仁对一年来关怀、指导我们的上海市政府和黄浦区政府各级领导以及赞助我们的企业：BMW 集团、HUGO BOSS，新加坡星展银行，凤凰卫视，明基，国巨基金会、人民公园以及一直以来支持我们的众位媒体朋友们，献上我们至深至诚的感谢。在开馆即将满一周年的此际，我还要向所有曾经关心和支持我们的艺术界人士和观众朋友们表达最衷心的感谢。人民大众的理解和帮助就像水、土壤和空气对植物那样重要，上海当代艺术馆只是艺术之林中的一棵幼苗，我们能够在众人的呵护下健康成长，携手建设繁荣又充满朝气的艺术生态环境，我和馆内同仁愿意持续贡献我们真挚但仍相当微薄的力量。

您的祝福，是我们不懈的动力。

上海当代艺术馆主席兼馆长
龚明光

Director's Preface: 2006 MoCA Envisage

On the occasion of the first anniversary of the opening of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai, we are proud to present the first "MoCA Envisage." Focusing on Chinese contemporary art, this exhibition celebrates not only the anniversary of the opening of the museum but also the determination of our museum to build an international stage for the exhibiting of Chinese contemporary art. The museum is much obliged to the care and support that government officials of all levels, representatives of various industries and the broader sectors of society have shown us over the course of the past year. It has only been with their support that we are now able to seize this precious opportunity to present "Entry Gate: Chinese Aesthetics of Heterogeneity," this exhibition that we have so painstakingly prepared. In mounting this exhibition, we seek to fulfill even further the foundational missions of our museum: to build a solid position within the local community, to serve the public, and to pursue and create the new.

Currently, Chinese contemporary art is finding great acclaim both at home and abroad. For MoCA Shanghai it truly is a great honor to have this responsibility to conduct sustained research and exploration of this phenomenon. Henceforth, we will present the results of our studies once every two years; thus, MoCA Envisage will become an academic, research-based biannual exhibition. The curatorial team of this year's exhibition is composed of four influential curators—Ye Yongqing, the well-known Chinese artist and independent curator; Uli Sigg, the collector, businessman and diplomat who has played an extremely important role in stimulating the development of Chinese contemporary art; Sunhee Kim, the internationally active curator of the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, Japan; and Victoria Lu, the Creative Director of MoCA Shanghai. On the one hand, this international curatorial team aspires to conduct a comprehensive observation and examination of Chinese contemporary art; on the other hand, in the course of researching Chinese contemporary art, the team hopes to put forth heterogeneous theories of and points of access to new methodologies.

As is suggested by the title of this exhibition, in today's cultural environment of heterogeneous tendencies, Chinese contemporary art has daily growth in strength and influence within the international art world. As this strength and influence have grown, a number of international groups and people of every vocation have flooded into China in droves, just as in times past, people would leave their natal place to seek knowledge from others. This phenomenon has, in turn, made it especially apparent and urgent that we must deepen our recognition and knowledge of our own artistic environment, especially of that which history can provide us; indeed, not only should we draw lessons from the meaning that history has passed down, but more importantly, we ought to explore the interlocking, entangling, grafting and other such relationships among the cultural arteries therein. These are exactly the topics that we most fervently seek to explore in this exhibition. "Entry Gate: Chinese Aesthetics of Heterogeneity" is divided into three sections: "Chinese Neo-Literati Aesthetics," "The Traces of the Hand," and "The Extremes." These three directions stimulated us to create a new art theory to serve as the exhibition's foundation, which is the conclusion of the rich and objective scientific examination that the curatorial team has pursued. In presenting this theory, the curatorial team hopes to offer some simple thoughts to stimulate academic debate and to spur deeper, more comprehensive research.

Having succeeded in mounting this exhibition "Entry Gate: Chinese Aesthetics of Heterogeneity," all of my colleagues and I would like to express here our deepest and most sincere thanks to all of the officials of every level of the Municipal Government of the City of Shanghai and of the Government of the Huangpu District who have aided and guided us. We also would like to express our sincere gratitude to the following companies who have supported us: BMW, Hugo Boss, DBS, Phoenix TV, BanQ, Yageo Foundation, People's Park, as well as all of our friends in the media who have always supported us. Here, at the end of our first year of operations, I would also like to express my personal, heartfelt thanks to all of the members of the art community and to all of the visitors who have nurtured and supported us. The understanding and help of the public are as important to us as water, soil and air are to a plant. MoCA Shanghai is but a sapling in the forest of the art world, but we hope that in the care of the public, we will grow to become healthy and strong. In order to cultivate a flourishing, stimulating environment for the creation of art, my colleagues and I are willing to continue to devote our wholehearted, yet meager, force to art and to the public.

Your support is the indefatigable force that propels us.

Chairman and Director, MoCA Shanghai
Samuel Kung

与当代艺术的缘起不灭

BMW 中国和上海当代艺术馆的缘起，是从彼此对生活美学的共识开始。

今天的中国是世界上最为活跃的地方，最大的亮点之一。上海当之无愧是中国经济与当代文化的领跑者。我们深感荣幸能与上海当代艺术馆（MoCA Shanghai）合作，希望通过艺术的共鸣，体现出丰饶的品味化生活。

自 1975 年开始，BMW 集团启动与杰出当代艺术家合作计划，将艺术融入制造和设计之间，在这超过三十年的历史里，我们和十五位在当代艺术史中占有重要地位的艺术家合作了意义非凡的项目，他们是：亚历山大·柯尔达（Alexander Calder）、弗兰克·史戴拉（Frank Stella）、罗伊·利希滕斯坦（Roy Lichtenstein）、安迪·沃霍尔（Andy Warhol）、欧内斯特·富克斯（Ernest Fuchs）、罗伯特·劳申伯格（Robert Rauschenberg）、肯·多恩（Ken Done）、迈克尔·贾格马拉·尼尔森（Michael Jagamara Nelson）、加山又造（Matazo Kayama）、恺撒·曼里克（Cesar Manrique）、艾斯特·玛朗古（Esther Mahlangu）、A.R. 彭克（A.R. Penk）、山德罗·基亚（Sandro Chia）、大卫·霍克尼（David Hockney）、珍妮·霍尔泽（Jenny Holzer）。与艺术家的合作不单只充实了人们生活中的美感经验，更是激励我们不断向前的动力。

BMW 素以高贵的品质、矫健的身姿和令人神往的速度誉满全球。在相当的程度上和今天中国经济文化的发展状态以及中国当代艺术备受瞩目的情形有着异曲同工之妙。怀着对中国当代艺术的憧憬，怀着对中国社会发展的期待，我们将倾尽全力予以奉献，希望集当代艺术华章于生活美学中。

BMW 中国

The Everlasting Serendipity with Contemporary Art

The designed relationship between BMW China and the Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai (MoCA Shanghai) began with the mutual appreciation for daily aesthetics.

Today, China is one of the most vibrant places in the world and Shanghai is undoubtedly a pioneer in the development of the Chinese economy and contemporary arts, therefore, it is our great honor to be able to cooperate with MoCA Shanghai. And we hope our dedication to contemporary art can be witnessed in our stylish outlook on life.

Since 1975 BMW Group has launched projects that work together with talented contemporary artists in order to incorporate art into design and manufacturing. Over the past 30 years we have worked on significant projects with 15 artists, each of who are major figures in the contemporary art world. These are Alexander Calder, Frank Stella, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Ernest Fuchs, Rober Rauschenberg, Ken Done, Michael Jagamara Nelson, Matazo Kayama, Cesar Manrique, Esther Mahlangu, A.R. Penk, Sandro Chia, David Hockney and Jenny Holzer. This co-operation with artists not only enhanced the aesthetic experience of people's daily lives, but also served as a motivation for us to move forward.

BMW is recognized around the world as a brand of superior quality and elegant yet modern design. Our emphasis on excellency is in tune with the rapid development of the Chinese economy and contemporary arts. With high prospects for the development of Chinese urban society and contemporary art, we will strive to make our contribution—to input the essence of contemporary art into the daily aesthetics of everyday life.

BMW China

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Entry Gate: Chinese Aesthetics of Heterogeneity

2006 上海当代艺术馆文献展
MoCA ENVISAGE

起身去漫游世界并远离自己的家乡，离开一个没有现、当代美术馆、画廊、艺术机构和收藏家的地方，简言之，没有当代艺术体制的国度，“出境中国”是当代中国艺术家由上世纪90年代以来已经习以为常的经历。而“入境中国”则是新近呈现出的中国在国际当代艺术格局中走向的情境和课题。发端于中国大陆的时空和场域的艺术现状的改变，反映了中国当代文化这个转型期巨大的丰富性和复杂性。尤其是本世纪以来，这种复杂性不仅表现在它对艺术传统方法论和风格方式的突破，还表现为以观念主义的方式更加全面、深入地接触到中国文化历史和社会现实的多重层面。相对于其他媒介的当代文化，当代艺术已成为当代文化建设和社会批判的有机力量。今天，中国当代艺术不仅为中国当代文化赢得了越来越广泛的国际声誉，事实上，它的存在还有力地向自身证明了中国当代文化的开放性，以及向世界展示出独特的杂异文化现象和多元可依的美学特质。

正在发生的社会转型是中国历史上最深刻也是最具影响力的社会变革。同样，作为转型时代的一种精神载体，当代艺术也表现出深刻的变化和迅猛的发展，在中国历史上还没有哪个时期的艺术能像今天这样具有如此丰富的多样面貌，这种多样面貌既体现在各种混杂和异质的作品风格形式上，也体现在艺术家所选择的文化切入点和他们从艺术联系到文化所思考的课题上。变革时代所引发的社会思想意识的衍变，在艺术家那里集中表现为感觉方式与表达方式的变化，在这个过程中，中国当代艺术的新创作态势形成了与众不同的，却又能对应亚洲和中国高速发展阶段所特有的杂异、多元和消费社会的社会现实表达方式。艺术家经历了全球化和现代化所带来的中国社会思潮对艺术的影响，更突出也更集中地经历着文化混杂和物质消费的过程。以入选这个展览的艺术家为例，他们的知识结构与新的社会文化动态之间的关系更加紧密，他们的个性和心理敏感于外部世界的变化，他们也有机会较多地体验国际艺术潮流的变化并审视自身的文化属性和传统。虽然，他们的艺术方式还需要从不同角度进行审视，对他们的评价也还有待时日，但他们在当代艺术这个领域里新的探索精神和对应文化挑战的姿态，却反映出时代艺术的特点，由此成为讨论今天中国艺术走向的不可忽视的现象。

艺术的变革发生在中国社会变迁的土壤上，与整个社会持续的经济生活变化和思想文化演进有着密切的关系，艺术家的感觉前所未有地成为文化嬗变的晴雨表。与西方国家从传统形态走向现代形态的基本规律相同，中国艺术新的出发点也同样建立在对原有思想观念和艺术模式的叛离与修正上，这就出现了过去中国艺术“潮流”几乎是持续不断的，艺术家个体必须依赖“潮流”才能找到自己的位置，也需要依赖“潮流”赢得社会的注目。在这里，“潮流”具有双重的含义，一是它代表了整个艺术动态的变革特征，是艺术与社会互动的表现，二是它突出地以艺术的“流派”、“团体”、“主义”等具体的面貌出现。可以说大部分艺术家为人所识，都在某种“潮流”之中，其中以上世纪70年代末的“乡土艺术”、80年代的“新潮美术”和90年代早期的“政治波普”、“新生代”、“玩世写实主义”为代表。各种“潮流”的命名，既来自艺术批评家对现象的概括，也来自艺术家群体自己的标榜，在某种程度上，“潮流”成为艺术家出台的最有效的背景，也在他们的艺术发展中成为标志性的“身份”。发生于上世纪七八十年代的艺术运动实质是一个寻求艺术表达的自由和实现艺术的社会变革中的启蒙作用两

者彼此交融，双向并进的文化运动。作为思想启蒙的成果，艺术家成了社会中的精神探险者，他们尝试着各种风格，探索着各种可能性，极大地丰富了艺术创作；另一方面，随着艺术资源的增加，艺术思考和实践探索开始越来越深入，到了80年代末期，在一般意义上关于艺术的意义与价值的纷争已尘埃落定，剩下的是艺术家如何将艺术表达推向精深与个性这种个体的任务。

市场经济体制的确立，使得中国社会生活的内涵发生了更为本质的变化。在上世纪80年代，社会生活水平的提高只是一种量上的变化。而从90年代开始，中国社会每一次生活水平的物质性提高都更多地与精神层面相关并导致了社会心理的裂变。通讯业的发展使人们的交流流于表面化，私人汽车的发展使人们的日常生活被打上了明显的等级烙印，房地产业的发展则打破了旧有的集体居住方式和交往方式，使得私密空间的存在成为物质化的事实。经济开放的直接后果是大量的外国商品涌入市场。由于这些商品的进入往往伴随着大量的广告宣传，对于国人而言，所接受的往往不仅是物质产品本身，而是一种生活方式和感觉世界的方式。互联网和流行文化的发展，改变了人的知识结构和接受知识的途径，也使得人们的视听神经在日常生活中处于饱和的状态。上世纪90年代以后的艺术面临的外部环境与80年代几乎有着根本的差别。一方面社会景观和生活内涵的变化不断要求艺术在当代社会中找到自己的位置；另一方面，这种变化又不再是一个单纯“中国问题”，而是和“全球化”纠葛在一起。中西关系一直是本世纪以来中国艺术的中心问题。在上世纪七八十年代，特定历史和文化环境使中国当代艺术将文化课题设定为对传统的批判与对政治性艺术的反思，而使中西关系的深层次问题一度被掩盖。在思想启蒙和寻求艺术表达自由的过程中，中国艺术家几乎一直是在用西方艺术的经验作为解决本土问题的工具，从80年代种种艺术风格和潮流的各种艺术宣言和活动中，我们可以明显地感觉到这一点。而进入90年代，在市场经济的背景下，伴随着文化和经济交流的国际化，中西关系再次浮现出来，并让所有的艺术家无法回避。在全球化背景下，发生的社会景观和生活内涵的变化开始逐渐超溢出“中国问题”的倾向，而具有“国际”与“当代”文化共同问题的色彩。但是全球化的问题并不一定只有一个全球化的答案，全球化也不是解决文化问题的良方。因为全球化的实质并不是像它看起来的那样是一个“天下大同”的局面，而是新一轮的不同文化之间的整合与被整合的关系，而和全球化相伴随的“多元化”在很大程度上并不是现实存在的，只是一个由“中心”强视“边缘”，以“边缘”烘托“中心”的舞台。有时候，它还被文化上的殖民主义披上美丽的外衣。90年代以后，许多国际的重要展览都向中国艺术敞开了大门，这为中国艺术进入国际舞台空间提供了机遇。中国艺术的国际关系在20世纪最后十年出现了戏剧性的变化，那就是从原来被动地在本土遭受西方艺术和西方文化的围裹，转变为有机会进入国际范围的艺术交流平台参与当代文化的对话。促成这种转变的原因不外乎有两个：一是在世界性的“全球化”进程中，中国社会出现了更宽阔的开放和更深刻的转型，在本土发生的艺术现象无论在文化含义上还是在艺术方式上，都有了今日全球艺术发展的一般特征，也具备了国际艺术界对话的能力；二是国际文化上的“西方中心主义”观念逐渐失去市场，与之相对的“多元主义”主张成为新的主流。在这种文化观的视野中，包括了非西方国家的艺术，具有大国文化背景，又在变革中发展的中国新艺术以其生机勃勃的面貌特别地受到了注意。90年代中

期开始，国际上许多大型展览无不向中国艺术打开大门，需要中国艺术家参加。艺术家们就是在这样的背景下，走向国际的舞台。

但同时，中国艺术也面临着被西方文化眼光所“选择”的命运，甚至还有被后殖民文化意识扭曲的现实，这不能不是一种新的挑战。这种挑战实际上也是一种历史积淀，近现代中国残酷的落后现实，使中国的有识之士将寻求文化变革与发展动力的眼光投向了外部，在吸收西方先进技术的同时也充分吸收西方文化成果，并试图以此作为改造中国的武器，与之相关的文化认识模式也就出现了。人们通常用“传统——现代”模式或者“冲击——回应”模式来解释中国现代的历史。两种方式在本质上都认为西方近代开始的工业化是历史的必然，而中国社会的内部无法产生以工业化开端的现代化前提，因此中国所可能经历的一切有历史意义的变化只能是西方化，似乎中国只有在西方的冲击下才能展开这种变化。经过一个世纪的风风雨雨，现在人们已经较清晰地看到，在“现代化”的进程中要特别警惕和防止“西方化”，在文化艺术上更应该坚持中国的文化价值和特色。有意思的是，在相当晚近的时期，中国当代艺术呈现出一系列意味深长的变化：首先是一系列中国当代艺术创作环境，国际国内的当代艺术的展览渐次正式出现包括国家级美术馆在内的公共文化空间中，以双年展为城市发展的标志的观念受到认同；其次，是伴随着经济的勃兴和社会的开放，以画廊和市场的繁荣以及各个城市兴起的艺术主题社区成为新的都市日常生活的一部分，当代艺术由“地下艺术”转变成为拥有一席之地社会生活方式。中国当代艺术的作品开始改变长期被海外收藏和领养的历史，出走和离家的艺术重新入境，在中国本土重新获得发展和生存的土壤。此起彼伏的展览热潮和繁荣为更高层次和更广范围的国际间当代艺术交流进入中国提供了可能。本次展览的艺术家的创作走向，充分反映出这种丰富变化中的深刻性和复杂性，作为上世纪90年代以来中国艺术的一个重要成果，不少艺术家开始重新站在新的立场审视中国文化自身的传统和价值，在“精神性”与“方法论”层面上形成中国方式，以回应当代国际艺术中的共同问题。本展的构成，分为三大系统：一是和中国文人艺术情境有关的生活美学创作；二是追踪艺术家手工创作的痕迹；三是极度的表现，包括极大、极小、极多、极少等超越现实人生境遇的创作形式。这次由当代艺术馆主办的“入境：中国美学——2006上海当代艺术馆文献展”，除了邀请海内外的华人艺术家、设计师以外，还有少数国际艺术家参展。他们以创作来体现他们在审美经验和起居生活之中的感受，表达他们对新世纪国际间文化环境大规模交流互动的新美学现象。以中国文化的特色，提供一场数字时代的视觉盛宴，发挥中国特殊的美感经验，以新折中主义（Neo-Eclecticism）的路线，纵横古今中外艺术风貌，以中国文化的历史景深，和国际当代艺术的现况为视野，进行比较和对话。

“中国语境”与“全球化”两种机制相互激荡，相互制衡，是今日中国艺术所处的特定条件。多元美学是指艺术家取用中国本土文化道山慧海深处的灵气，在语言的转换中体现出智慧、敏锐和才能，打造的是一把当代艺术的双刃剑，它既指向那个仍然扩散着强势力量的西方文化肌体，也指向我们自己在社会转型期所伴生的文化矛盾。因此，可以在不同的空间条件下建立起作品内涵与观众心理间的恰当关系，甚至表现出一种具有包容性的散发性的文化张力。以今天的

视野看，“多元美学”终是一个相对的表述，更何况其将经受历史的检验，也需要其自身的省思。进入21世纪，中国艺术还会面对一些基本问题，具有独特历史传统和社会背景的中国当代艺术如何在纷繁芜杂的社会变化中获得自己的立足之地？在国际艺坛对中国的关注中，它如何实现自己对于本土文化的建设，同时又和国际艺术的语言对话？最后，在这种以全球化为背景的文化对话和交流中，它又如何在以西方为主导的当代文化的事实格局中确立自己独特的方式和文化价值？这些问题实际上是一环扣一环，互为表里，层层递进的，因此经常的讨论将有助于具体的实践，本次展览本身也是一种讨论。

叶永青

2006年8月5日于云南弥勒

The Chinese Context

—Leaving and Entering the Heterogeneous Aesthetics of Contemporary China

To set off and wander the world far away from one's home, and leave a country that has no modern or contemporary art museum, gallery, art organization or collector – in short, a country that has no contemporary art system – has since the 1990s been a common experience for contemporary Chinese artists "leaving China." Yet "entering China" is a phenomenon that has appeared only recently. It is a phenomenon that speaks directly of China's position within the international contemporary art community. It is a phenomenon born of changes within the art world that exists both within the physical territory, as well as the broader context, of mainland China, and it reflects the great richness and complexity of this period of incessant change in Chinese contemporary culture. It has been in this century, in particular, that this sort of complexity has been displayed not only in Chinese culture's rejection of traditional art methods, theories, and styles, but also through its use of conceptualism to touch upon the multiple layers of Chinese cultural history and social reality in a more profound and more comprehensive manner. When we view contemporary art in comparison with other contemporary media, we can easily see that contemporary art has already become a great force in constructing contemporary culture and in critiquing contemporary society. Today, not only is Chinese contemporary art acquiring ever-broader international acclaim for contemporary Chinese culture, but in truth, its very existence also serves as proof of the openness of Chinese contemporary culture. Moreover, Chinese contemporary art acts as an important indication of the unique plurality of the country's cultural phenomena and heterogeneous aesthetics.

The transformations that are currently reshaping Chinese society are the most profound and most influential in Chinese history. As representative of the spirit of this revolutionary, world-changing era, contemporary art similarly gives expression to great changes and to quick, violent developments. The art of no other period in Chinese history can compare with the richness and diversity of today's art. This richness and diversity can be seen in the variety or heterogeneity of styles and forms of many works. It can further be seen in the cultural references that the artists choose as points of departure for their works and in the range of questions, both artistic and cultural, that they consider. The transformations that a revolutionary era triggers in a society's manner of thinking and in its knowledge are concentrated and given expression by means of the transformations in artists' manners of feeling and expression. Over the course of these transformations, the new creative situations that have emerged within the Chinese contemporary art world have resulted in an extraordinary heterogeneity, which reflects the diverse, unbounded forms of expression of social realities in this consumerist society that is currently undergoing such high-speed development. Artists have already experienced the impact that globalization and modernism have exerted upon Chinese society's views of art. They have experienced even more intensely the mixing of cultures and the consumerization of society. In studying some of the artists who are included in this exhibition, we find that the relationship between the structure of artists' knowledge and new developments in culture and society is even more intimate. Artists' personalities and psyches are sensitive to

changes in the outside world. Moreover, they have a relatively great number of opportunities to experience personally the transformations of international art trends and to examine carefully the characteristics and traditions of their own culture. Although time is still needed to justify their work by considering and criticizing it from various exterior angles, it can be said that in their adoption both of contemporary art's new spirit of exploration and of its attitude of corresponding to cultural challenges, these artists unequivocally embody the unique characteristics of the art of the times. Because of this, they have become a phenomenon that cannot be overlooked in any discussion of the Chinese art of today.

Transformations in art occur upon the same soil as societal changes. These transformations hold an intimate relationship with revolutions in the economic life of the whole society and with evolutions in philosophical culture. In an unprecedented manner, the artist has become the barometer of cultural transformation. As in those Western countries that have left behind traditional forms to pursue the foundational disciplines of modern forms, this new threshold of Chinese art has been established upon the betrayal and revision of former philosophical outlooks and art styles; and this has, in turn, made it appear as though the Chinese art "trends" of the past are being perpetuated without interruption. Only by relying on these trends are artists able to find their own place, and only by relying on these trends are they able to gain the attention of society. Here, "trend" has a double meaning. First, it represents the characteristics of the whole evolution of art; it is an expression of the interaction between art and society. Second, it denotes the myriad "styles," "groups," "-isms" and other labels used to classify and compartmentalize art. It could be said that the majority of well-known artists have participated in trends, among which the "Regional Art" of the late 1970s, the "New Wave" of the 1980s, and the "Political Pop," "New Generation" and "Cynical Realism" of the 1990s are all representative examples. The appellations given to these various trends are born of the generalizations that art critics create from their observations of real phenomena, yet they also come from artists' self-assessment and self-praise. Indeed, under any circumstance, participating in a "trend" becomes the most effective means for an artist to begin his career. Further, these trends become important indicators by which to measure the evolution of their art.

The art movements that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s were a mixture of two primary pursuits—namely, a search for freedom of artistic expression, and an attempt to realize an art imprinted with the enlightenment of the social revolutions. Both pursuits not only tended toward but also became major components of cultural movements. As the products of a search for philosophical enlightenment, artists have become the spiritual explorers of society. They try myriad styles, pursue myriad possibilities and attempt to broaden and diversify artistic production as much as possible. Moreover, as the most basic resources or knowledge of art have become richer and richer, the pursuits of artistic thought and practice have become ever more profound. By the end of the 1980s, disputes regarding the meaning and value of art had, in general, already been

resolved. What remained was the personal question of how each artist would push artistic expression toward profundity and toward individuality.

The establishment of the market-economy system in China has caused essential transformations in the core of Chinese social life. The rise in the standard of living during the 1980s was merely a modification in the quality of life. Beginning in the 1990s, however, each change in the material standard of living in China was connected to planes of consciousness; moreover, these changes resulted in the fragmentation of social psychology. The development of the telecommunications industry has created a superficial intimacy among the public. The development of private cars has penetrated people's daily lives, creating a penchant for brands. The development of the real estate industry has eradicated the collective living and communication styles of the past, thereby materializing personal space into a commodity. The direct result of the opening of the economy has been the entry of foreign goods into the marketplace, and the entry of these goods has, more often than not, been accompanied by mass advertising. The people of this country often do not merely absorb the material goods themselves but indeed absorb a whole sort of lifestyle and worldview. The development of the Internet and popular culture has changed the structure of humankind's knowledge and its channels of reception, and it saturates our daily life with images and sounds.

There exists a basic difference between the external environment that art faced in the 1980s and that which it has faced since the 1990s. On the one hand, the changes that have affected the societal landscape and the significance of life require, unceasingly, that art find its own place within contemporary society. On the other hand, this sort of change is certainly not a purely "Chinese question"; indeed, it is a question inextricably entangled in a web of "globalization." Issues of the relationship between China and the West have been the central point of concern for Chinese art of this century. In the 1970s and 1980s, the specific historical and cultural climate of those decades resulted in Chinese contemporary artists' using cultural issues as a means of criticizing tradition and of reflecting back on political art. Yet these same circumstances also caused important questions of China's relationship with the West to be temporarily covered up and put aside. In the process of seeking enlightenment and of pursuing free artistic expression, Chinese artists have almost always used Western art models as tools to resolve local artistic matters. Proof of this is found in analyzing the myriad activities and manifestos of the many art movements and trends of the 1980s. Against the background of the market economy of the 1990s, just as cultural and economic exchanges became more and more internationalized, the issue of Sino-occidental relations resurfaced, leaving artists with no choice but to face this quandary. Against the background of globalization, the changes in the societal landscape and in the quality of life that have occurred have begun to move beyond the tendency toward the "Chinese question" and have instead been colored by common questions of "international" and "contemporary" culture. This question of globalization, however, does not necessarily find an answer in globaliza-

tion, nor is globalization an anathema to cultural questions. Because globalization does not appear to establish a utopian "Great Harmony" but is instead a new cycle of relationships among different cultures that integrate and are integrated, the "diversity" that accompanies globalization is not always present; instead, globalization is only a platform upon which mainstream culture is viewed by its surrounding subcultures, the margins of which are emphasized by their contrast with the center. At times, it is disguised in a beautiful exterior of cultural colonialism. After the 1990s many important international exhibitions opened their doors to Chinese art, which provided a valuable opportunity for Chinese art to take its place on the international stage. In the last decade of the twentieth century, the relationships between Chinese art and the international community underwent dramatic change, which took Chinese art from its original, passive state of being encircled by Western art and culture to its having an opportunity to enter international art exchanges actively and to participate in contemporary cultural dialogues. There are no more than two factors that facilitated this sort of change. First, in the course of globalization, Chinese society has witnessed broader liberalization and profound transformation. In China, art phenomena take on the common traits characteristic of the global art developments of today both in their physical form and cultural meaning; furthermore, they possess the ability to engage in dialogue with the global art community. Secondly, the marketplace has gradually abandoned the tendency to view the West as the mono-culture. "Pluralism," which exists as a counterpoint to such mono-centrism, has become the new dominant cultural current. In this field of "cultural vision", which includes the art of non-Western nations, the new, developing art of China—a nation that, though in the middle of a period of profound transformation, is a traditional center of culture—has found particular attention because of its thriving, dynamic exterior. Beginning in the mid-1990s, many important international exhibitions opened their doors to Chinese art, demanding the participation of Chinese artists. It was under such conditions that Chinese artists appeared on the international stage.

At the same time, however, Chinese art also risks being subjected to the fate chosen by the vision of Western culture, and it especially risks being subjected to the reality warped by post-colonial cultural knowledge. This undoubtedly represents a new sort of challenge. This kind of challenge is actually a sort of accumulation of the sediments of history. The cruel reality of the backwardness of modern China has caused the country's intellectuals to direct their visions of long-sought cultural transformations and dynamic developments toward the exterior. While absorbing Western advanced technology, they also fully absorb the accomplishments of Western culture and attempt to use them as a weapon to transform China. Thus, this manner of recognizing cultural inter-relations has emerged. People often use the diametrical pairs "traditional-modern" or "attack-response" to describe the course of the history of modern China. Both descriptions are essentially based on the belief that the industrial revolution, which began in the West, was historically inevitable. Yet Chinese society had no means of independently producing the modern conditions necessary for beginning

Westernization. It is as though China could only begin such transformation by being subjected to the attacks of the West. Having survived the vagaries of one century, today's people are already able to see more clearly that in the course of "modernization," one must be especially alert towards taking precautions against "Westernization" and must, to an even greater extent, uphold the value and uniqueness of Chinese culture and art. Of particular interest is that in recent years, a series of deep, broad changes have been produced within Chinese contemporary art. First is a series of new creative situations for Chinese contemporary art. Local and international contemporary art exhibitions have gradually appeared, including some that have been organized in the public cultural spaces of national-level art museums. In addition, the concept of an art biennial as a symbol of a city's development has found approval. Secondly, in conjunction with the sudden economic growth and the liberalization of society in China, the proliferation of art galleries and markets and the development of art districts in various cities have become new components of everyday, metropolitan life. Indeed, "underground art" has become a lifestyle that has its own specific place within society. Chinese contemporary artworks have started to revise the long history of artworks' being collected or adopted by foreigners. Art that once left China is now returning and is again finding a place to exist and evolve in China. The uninterrupted proliferation of exhibitions has provided the possibility for China to enter into international contemporary artistic exchanges on a higher level and in broader contexts. The tendencies traced by the work of the artists included in this exhibition fully reflect the profundity and complexity of these abundant transformations. As an important consequence of Chinese art in the 1990s, many artists again began to take a new standpoint from which to examine carefully the traditions and values of Chinese culture. On the levels of "spirituality" and of a "discussion of methods," they created a Chinese style of responding to common questions of contemporary international art. This exhibition is composed of three large systems. The first centers upon quotidian aesthetic creations related to the condition of Chinese literati art; the second treats the traces and vestiges of the artist's hand; the third deals with the so-called extremes of expression, including the extremely large, the extremely small, the extremely numerous, the extremely few, and other such creative forms that surpass the conditions of real life. Besides including Chinese artists and designers working both in China and abroad, the curators of this first MoCA Envisage have also invited European, American and artists from throughout Asia who live or work in China to participate in this exhibition. Through the creation of art, these artists give expression to their sense of aesthetics, as well as to their experience of the intricacies of daily life. Moreover, they express their sense of the neo-aesthetics of this new century's international cultural environment of mass communication and interactivity. This exhibition highlights the uniqueness of Chinese culture, providing a visual feast that brings into full play China's special sense of aesthetics. Following the path of neo-eclecticism, the exhibition examines the styles and features of art both old and new, Chinese and foreign, ultimately allowing comparison of and dialogue between the historical depth of Chinese culture and the current

condition of international contemporary art.

Considered from today's viewpoint, "heterogenous aesthetics" ultimately is an expression of relativity. It is an examination that will endure through history, yet it also demands examination of itself. Having entered into the 21st century, Chinese art still faces several basic questions: How will contemporary China, a country that has unique historical traditions and a unique societal background, earn its place in the middle of these numerous, complicated social questions? Under the scrutiny of the international art community, how will Chinese contemporary art construct a position with regard to local culture and at the same time enter into a dialogue with the language of international art? Finally, in the middle of this cultural exchange that takes globalization as its background, how will Chinese contemporary art construct its own unique style and cultural value in this environment that insists on the predominance of Western culture? In reality, these questions are closely linked to one another in that aspects of each pertain to the others. Therefore, only frequent discussion will ultimately be helpful in bringing about concrete responses. And this exhibition is just that sort of discussion.

Ye Yongqing
Mi Le, Yunnan
August 5, 2006

亲爱的蓉之：

我既然是一个名副其实的非专业联合策展人，便可使用平白简单的文句，所以容我献出这封信，给为文献展日夜不停努力的您。

仍记得我们首次见面，您讲述了您的想法并邀请我参加策展。但为何是我？因为您读遍了那本厚厚的《麻将：希克的收藏作品》，而您心情激动。在我看来您之所以激动是因为下面这些原因，当然您尽可提出反对意见。其一，是作品的选择：您认为所选作品不是过度表现了政治艺术，就是倾向于只符合西方眼中的“前卫”，全然脱离了中国丰富的历史文化传统。您觉得在作品的选择中忽略了中国美学，而当下的作品应继承丰富的历史传统，而非一味质疑及破坏；其二，是我对“中国性”的重视，正如在书中，我个人及其他人用尽方法从中国当代艺术家身上提炼出这种气质。

而您锐意回应这些挑战。您用展览来证明当代中国艺术，证明它比西方所见的更多，证明它当中的中国美学，证明它丰富、与众不同而毫不逊色的一面。而您如此宽容地邀我加入这策展队伍——我就是那个想对了问题，却错过了正确答案的人。此举是您的智慧，亦是您的亲切。

于是我细读策展序言，愈读愈觉得有趣。文章是以差别为基本，道出了中国当代艺术与西方观点的不同，指出了一条通过彻底研究，或者说出色的艺术，来发现中国新美学的道路。中国完全可以成为世上最大的单一文化空间，但她也面临着被全球的主流文化冲淡其日常生活和文化。我本人也是这一过程的积极参与者。我创立的首间中西合资公司是以西方经营模式为基础的。若我们细看当代艺术，亦可见到相同的对抗：在中国的近二十五年，我看到她由开始时的富有中国特色发展成现在的样子。同时，全球的主流艺术都围绕着艺术世界之外的机制和收藏家发展。今天我们看到很多中国艺术在主题、语言和造型上，都是朝这种方向发展。事实上，可以预见一切都在未来被同化。当代中国艺术是濒临灭绝的物种吗？它是否会被吸纳吞噬，还是有力地与主流抗衡？我们可以向马里或哥伦比亚的艺术问相同的问题，可它们或者是任何的西方文化体系，都没有达到中国文化的博大精深，也没有在将来发展成超级大国的潜力。

幸好，决定这场比赛的不只是艺术理论家、作家、生意人、观众或其他，最重要的还是取决于出色的艺术家和他们的作品，而他们的舞台是更为宽广的。一些艺术家有意选择有关中国的主题，一些则相反。二流或三流的艺术家会难以决定自己的位置，而一流的艺术家则可以更深入地探究他的主题且能层出不穷。很多艺术家都不太愿意接受一个过于特定的文化身份，如“中国当代艺术”，可如此的身份的确存在。或者，以全球最主流的艺术家之一理查德·普林斯(Richard Prince)为例，他能否在美国文化身份这一语境之外创作出他的艺术？他的幸运在于全球主流艺术正是与他同属一类或是他所熟识的——但他们必定不熟悉中国的文化语境。

假设我们可定义“中国新美学”，那是否只有中国文化才能创造？中国新美学又能否反过来在全球主流艺术的洪流中占有一席之地？现在中国当代艺术在市场上的热潮，掩盖了全球主流艺术的把关者(肯定不是中国人)对“中国新美学”的忽略。那“中国新美学”对这些把关者来说，是否很有新鲜感和创意？是否正是如此？

您真的把我们这几位联合策展人，都推到了一个对中国当代艺术极为重要的关口，这不仅值得占据MoCA 文献展的中央舞台，同时也值得之后的持续研究。

所以我们从您这里得到了一篇很好的策展序言，那假设让我着迷。我们的这个展览是否能实现这假设？至少我们进行了有效的努力，而您在种种的时间和沟通限制下把我们的队伍团结得这么好！俗语云聚沙成塔，我们既已堆积了一个相当大的沙丘，也一定能建成一座巨塔。

以我们策展队伍之名祝愿。

乌里·希克