

中国美术学院亚洲当代艺术考察报告

Edges of the Earth

Migration of Contemporary Asian Art and Regional Politics

An Investigative Journey in Art by China Academy of Art

Report

许江 主编

地之缘

亚洲当代艺术的迁徙与地缘政治

Hybridity and Juxtaposition of the Calendars in modern Asian nations; the **Parallel Time** as a symptom of non-western contemporary culture; the organization of time and politics of daily life; immediacy, simultaneity and memory: the “bifurcating” history of local time in Asia; the shapes of time in **contemporary Asian art**; the superposition of the concepts and experiences of time in the daily life and artistic representations; the phenomenon of the variable speeds of time in visual culture and in writing about visual culture; the existence and meaning of repetition (both linear and cyclical) in the historical narratives.

几乎所有亚洲国家都同时存在着两种历法——本土历法和西历(基督纪年)。人们的劳作、息止和节日被纳入这两条平行的时间线索之中，这重叠的时间经验构成了亚洲各国平行、交叠着的时间组织形式和记忆形式。这**双重时间**的交叠是**亚洲**现代生活的一个值得深思的征候，体现出一种跨文化的异质形式对亚洲本土生活的改造。这种改造的后果和意义尚待深入反思。在此，“双重时间”可以被视为**亚洲现代性**的一个重要象征，我们以之作为在杭州举办的这个亚洲五国当代艺术邀请展的主题和学术框架，希望在当代艺术的平台上探讨亚洲自我表达的多种可能性，并试图追问：在亚洲现代化的过程中，在当代亚洲人的生活世界中，何者被压抑、被日渐消磨，以至于遗忘。

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导 论

大地之缘与天时之间

许 江

公元2003年11月22日,夏历癸未年十月廿九日,正值新校园落成之际,中国美术学院举办建校75周年庆典活动。美院校庆向在每年的早春四月。75年前,正是春雨绵绵,国立艺术院拉开了与中国美术现代教育共生共行的帷幕。今年,因校园整体改造工程历三年方成,校庆改在秋季,群楼新立,运营尚需时日,定下的日子就已秋深冬至。这春秋的迁徙,是否道出美院发展道路的辛劳和凝重呢?11月22日又是美院首任院长林风眠先生诞辰之日,林先生诞生在1900年,那个著名的庚子年,距今已整整一个甲子又四十三周年。以林先生诞辰之日设典,涵纪念创业先师之意,蕴共谋美院未来之机,诚然是今天努力着的一代人营造当代艺术发展机缘的一番特殊的心意。

“地之缘——亚洲当代艺术考察活动”的创意始于2001年冬,我受新加坡国家美术馆之邀做艺术讲座。在新加坡温暖冬季的一个上午,时任德国卡塞尔文献展策展人的阿克维·恩威佐(Okwui Enwezor)先生演讲全球性的命题;下午,由我演讲本土性和地域性的命题,并互为讲评人,进行了一番别开生面的对话。我当时演讲的题目是“当代艺术——一种想象和构建亚洲文化地图的方式”。去年春,吴美纯、高士明明确提出以校庆为契机进行文化亚洲考察活动的宗旨和详备的计划,其核心意向是跳出“西方—非西方”的定式,展开亚洲国家之间积极的对话。这个计划进行了较长时间的准备,得到学院和各方的重视和支持。时至今日,考察活动克服了“非典”和动荡时局的影响,实现了对曼谷、东京—京都、德黑兰、伊斯坦布尔四站的考察,加上我们所在的杭州,暂作五站之格局。现在我们把五站的考察经验展现在这里,并刊出各站参与活动的亚洲艺术家的参展计划。在梳理和编辑的过程中,我们深切地感受到:亚洲文化命题的研究如此富有挑战性,我们所做的还仅仅是个开始。

地之缘

当我们面向旋转的地球仪,开始对世界有了初步的认识,并渐渐产生兴趣的时候,在我们众多的问题中,一定有着这样的一个发问:地球真的是这样的吗?

赤道并不是一条天然的“线”,它是以地球之轴、以南北极的距离而计算出来的一条切分线,一条全球性的标志。由此地球有了纬线。经线的切分要难得多,而且晚得多。旧有的耶路撒冷的地球中心的观点并不能让各个国家信服,那0°的经线是靠海上的强力和强权——当然也包括航海学上的贡献——来确定的。1884年,英国伦敦东南,泰晤士河南岸的格林威治成为本初子午线的诞生地。在格林威治公园的子午馆里,一条镶嵌在大理石地面上的铜线,标志着这条本初子午线,线的端头的墙体上写着:“世界本初子午线,北纬51度28分38秒2,经度零度零分零秒。”作为特殊的经线,这条本初子午线将世界分为纵向的两部分:它的东边是东经,它的西边是西经。世界从此被确定在这个构架之中。

这个地球的故事远未结束。早期的航船沿海岸线小心翼翼地爬行,那高耸的教堂塔楼是大陆的召唤。现在,人们大胆地驶入远洋,这格林威治经线以东或以北的距离标志着他们的方位,指引着航程和方向。这种方位最早的确认,却是依据时间,依赖精确的计时器来区分当地时间与格林威治时间之间的距离,由此推算出航船在地球上的实际位置。也就是说,在这个框架中,时间是判断空间位置的基本依据和尺度。

这个并不浪漫的航海故事告诉我们两个基本的道理:第一,地球的观念是被建构起来的,是被人类的航海历史及其相关的世界发展史建构起来的。第二,地球的空间观念历来与时间相关。世与界、宙与宇所包含的时间与空间的交叠并存,现实地构成我们生活其中的天地。

现在,让我们再一次面向地球仪,将球体停在以爱琴海、达达尼亚海峡、马拉马拉海、博斯普鲁斯海峡、黑海、里海、乌拉尔河、乌拉尔山脉到东亚大半岛的尽头和波涛万顷的太平洋的位置,我们所面对的正是“亚洲”,是地球上人口最多、幅员最辽阔的洲。与人们对这个地球的认知相同,亚洲的观念同样也是建构起来的。“亚洲”的名称来自外部,是欧洲用以确立自我的一种设定,而非亚洲人自我表达而使用的概念。如果我们有机会站在亚

欧相交的博斯普鲁斯海峡的峡口,站在那座在各种潜潮和激流交织冲击下的贞女塔之上,看着朝阳如何从东岸的群峦上兴起、夕阳如何落入西岸的茫茫暮色,将会对东方与西方有一份真切的感受。但这种感受与亚洲辽阔的大地牵连在一起,与亚洲概念牵连在一起,却是19世纪以后的事情。据说,Asia这个词根中确有“光明”的含义。让我们回到这片生动的版图,这片巨大的陆地的北端是莽莽的西伯利亚大平原,从西缘的小亚细亚向着中亚高原,从东缘的华北平原和华东山地向着黄土高原、青藏高原,亚洲的大地向着这片大陆的深处不断隆起,仿佛两个地壳板块互相冲撞着,奔向同一个高点,最后褶皱而成巨擎般的帕米尔高原。从那里几座巨大的山脉辐射开去,喜马拉雅,这世界的屋脊正横亘在万山之上。这地缘上的“金字塔”,让我们想到了“亚”这个字的结构上的特点。这个特点显身在这个古陆架之上,呈现着“地之缘”的某种箴言般的特征。这“金字塔”的东坡上的江河向东流,远端是华北平原、长江中下游平原,那山山水水滋养着亘古常新的中国文明。南坡上的江河向南流,远端是恒河平原、印度河平原,那山山水水孕育了辉煌的印度文明。“金字塔”的北坡群峦叠嶂,那远端的小亚细亚平原之上,流淌着幼发拉底河和底格里斯河,正是著名的两河文明的诞生之地。这就是亚洲的大陆,就是被建构的却又有着内在姻缘的大陆,就是那片人类文明摇篮的古陆。今天,这些文明已经融进了世界的整个文明进程之中,孕育着各个历史时期的灿烂文化,其本身有些从整体上已经衰没,有些却仍然传承而日新。喜马拉雅仍在增高,这些文明古国今天的文化正面临怎样的境况呢?

我们的考察正是集中在这座古陆之上,并选择了这座地缘“金字塔”周边的相近纬度上的5座城市:南坡上的曼谷,东坡上的位于长江三角洲的杭州,北坡高原上的德黑兰,以及太平洋上的亚洲最东的东京—京都和地中海旁亚洲最西的亚欧之城伊斯坦布尔。

亚洲因素

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“地之缘——亚洲当代艺术考察活动”从2003年2月开始实施,第一站是泰国的曼谷;4月到日本,考察了东京—京都一路;6月西向伊朗的德黑兰;8月中旬在伊斯坦布尔考察10天。这座著名的古城横跨亚欧,我们曾经乘轮船渡过博斯普鲁斯海峡,以跨洋登岸的方式,来强化“回到亚洲”的感觉。那海峡的峡口更像一条河流的港湾,但当我们心里揣着亚欧陆架的版图,想着巴尔干与亚细亚之间错综复杂的关系,那征战不断的触目惊心的历史,并将这个布满潜流的洋面与地中海、印度洋、太平洋、北冰洋的万顷波涛联系在一起的时候,心情不由地像这海水一样鼓荡起来。

今天,亚洲的艺术界和文化界中,关于建构亚洲当代艺术形象的呼声日显强旺,但回应这一呼声的实质性力量还相当薄弱。实际的情况是亚洲当代艺术还处于一种策略性的思考,甚至更多的是来自于亚洲外部——来自西方对于他者的要求——的尖锐批评和督促。亚洲当代艺术的发展正面临两方面的基本困境:一方面,全球化的经济浪潮、消费文化以及由此形成的价值观深刻地影响着亚洲各国固有的文化价值,那种关于现代化、国际化的渴望普遍地塑造着人们——尤其是都市人群的文化需求。以西方为主导的知识体系与价值体系,长期以来形成了一种普世性话语,渗入亚洲各国的文化领域之中,对其中的开放界域影响尤深。在亚洲普遍的现代化热潮之中,这种价值标准又被功利性地转挪和取用。而所谓“后殖民”语境更往往使得这种取用发生错位,以至于或者一厢情愿地按西方中心框架和文化定势来自我思考,制造欧美文化在亚洲的翻版;或者虚拟一个西方之“非”的形象,将亚洲传统作为一种符号来简单地体现所谓的“亚洲形象”。

另一方面,广大非西方国家的知识界和艺术界由于强烈意识到传统文化在这个全球境域中所面临的冲击,往往过分夸大了它与西方文化之间的对比,而没有看清世界文化互融互动并在这种互融互动中体现各自创生力量的历史事实,甚至有的还产生狭隘的民族情绪,将传统视为僵化不变的既成事实,而忽略传统在今天所发生的深刻迁变,忽略传统本身在历史各个时期所体现出来的转换和创生的机能。

所有这两方面的现象,都源自一个基本的情结:在西方与非西方的比较定式中判定自身。其直接结果就是亚洲文化失去了对亚洲内部的互相关注,也使得亚洲各国对文化传统的根源性把握十分有限。而亚洲国家历史和现实的地域性紧张局势、民族和宗教的差异,也使得这种关注和把握以及文化亲和力的建立变得更为艰难。因此,在亚洲,简单地追问“亚洲是什么?”将引起许多相对的诘问。亚洲国家之间的差异性,尤其东亚与西亚之间地缘与历史上的距离如此明显,要将亚洲这些文化渊源十分不同的国家和区域拉在一起,给出一个解答和描述,这本身就蕴藏着危机。更重要的是,这种简单发问所引起的亚洲关注只是一种表面热潮,它并没有建构起亚洲当代

艺术与其多元文化母体之间、亚洲当代艺术互相之间的互动共生的关系：并没有建构起亚洲当代文化的内在机缘及其独特的自我表述和创生机能，潮汐过后，对亚洲当代艺术发展并没有形成实质性的影响。甚至，“亚洲是什么”之“什么”，将会虚拟出一个僵化的“亚洲”形象，将亚洲当代艺术限制在其表象的描述，限制在文化身份的界定之中。因此，深入亚洲各国各城市肌体的内部来认识亚洲多文化发展的实况，在彼此沟通交流中把握亚洲当代艺术与其社会母体之间的牵连的共相，由此把握那种既区别于亚洲各民族传统表象中的纯粹自我，又体现亚洲的内在精神的那些因素，即亚洲因素，这是亚洲当代艺术建构所应首先思考的整体性问题。

“地之缘”的考察活动，就是要通过亚洲国家之间的对话，感受各区域文化艺术的差异和特色，理出本土资源在当代艺术建构之中的意义，由此来寻求亚洲文化之间的亲和性，构造亚洲当代艺术的自我表述和创生机能。简单地说，就是要提出亚洲当代文化中所蕴含的亚洲因素以及这些因素如何在各个地区的当代艺术表达中现身。这种特性表达，来自于本土的传统，也来自于地域性的当代生活，它们彼此塑造（各地的当代生活本身受着全球境域的深刻塑造），并被一定的文化视域所建构。亚洲因素牵连着东西方或比东西方更为复杂的文化命题。在这次文化考察中，我们将这一命题表述为“双重时间”。亚洲国家都有着西元历法和本土历法并置共用的现象，正是这一“双重时间”的命题，描述着亚洲国家的文化共相。我们希望通过这一主题将两种历法如何交错地潜入每个社会、每个社群甚至每个人的生命刻度之中，如何共同支配人们的日常生活、悄然改变着亚洲当代文化的实况，拉入公共的视野，并让全球和本土的资源还原在活生生的“双重时间”的框架之中，从而赋予我们一种新的文化视野。在这种视野之中，我们得以审视亚洲国家或者亚洲文化在历史上被侵的事实，以及那不可见的“入侵”所带来的迁变，反思亚洲艺术家“身在其中”、身不由己的时间意识以及重叠并置的时间假相背后某些渐趋消逝的生存事实。

交错的共生与血腥

在近代历史上，亚洲国家大都有过殖民地、半殖民地或是附属国的历史。这个历史并不可能随着这些国家的独立而嘎然中止，它的根须已经深深地扎入这片土地之中，深刻地塑造了这些国家的现代形态。即使在泰国这个东南亚半岛上惟一没有被殖民历史、没有惨痛殖民记忆的国家，其社会形态依然呈现出交错的姿势和扑面而来的西化痕迹。泰国的近代史进程中并没有出现强烈的传统和现代化的对立，这传统和现代化的现象被交织在平民社会与宗教社会、世俗生活与僧侣生活的两条平行线之中，此隐彼伏，彼此守望，从而形成自持而又自足的空间。世俗与僧侣、民权与王权、消费与戒守、禁欲与纵欲……所有这些因素互相交错，东南亚半岛那丰沛的雨水、交织的水网、热带和亚热带的气候使之形成生动的感性和杂糅的创生力量。这种交错而又共生的状态成为曼谷当代艺术基本的精神背景，催生着艺术生态的多元化和彼此间的诘问。事实上，这种交错而又共生的状态也正在成为亚洲许多国家的文化共相，它消解着关于殖民历史的记忆，消解着相关的对立因素，并在现代都市的土壤上，迅速繁衍着都市新一代主体的自我表达的“快意恩仇”。在这个交错的格局之中，十分重要的是有着一一种相交却从不相“错”的、始终没有被改变的“壁垒”，一种毋庸置疑的归宗。它满足着关于精神家园的想象，满足着传统自持而又自足的需求，满足着这个深刻迁变中的自我根源的守望。在曼谷，这是僧侣和相关的宗教制度；在东京，是天皇皇权和以其为代表的神权以及各类神社、器物 and 仪式；在伊斯坦布尔，是高昂的清真寺和伊斯兰世界的信仰；在中国，也许是一种深刻的文化记忆及这种独特文化根源体系的自我认知和常在常新的自持。这些坚固的“壁垒”，经过不断的打量，渐渐变为一种路牌，依着这种路牌，我们得以潜入社会的深层，去把握地域的文化特性。更重要的是——正是这些“壁垒”在发散着巨大的精神能量，维持着根源性的因素，不断地形成某种自足的精神空间。它们有着某些“不变”的根性，因而使得其他的社会变迁染上了“有所不为”的色彩，那社会织体的各种因素在这里领受了现实而常在的精神粘膜，吸取了民族的、地域的生存基因，并有可能活化而成为某种变异和催生的机缘。正是在这里，亚洲国家所共同面对的两个老问题：西方的优势和国内的保守势力，被化解为一种互为牵制的组织形式。而在文化领域中，当代艺术虽往往受到这两方面的箭矢而腹背受敌，却仍然可能在传统的原生思想和当代艺术形态的大胆结合中寻找新的发展。

与喜马拉雅这巨大的“金字塔”的东坡和南坡相比，西坡的历史要复杂得多。那亚欧相接的犬牙交错的地缘，那种族和宗教之间多少世纪以来往复争战的历史，使得那里的许多国家和城市经受着多种文化的冲击，也经受着这些文化的养育。在地中海和阿拉伯海之间的阿拉伯半岛上，耶路撒冷这座古城，是犹太教、基督教和伊斯兰教

三大宗教的圣地，是犹太教的哭墙所在之地、基督受难和升天之地、穆罕默德“夜行和登霄”之所。这些根源性的记忆将整个世界的神经钉牢在这座城。直至今日，这座城的血腥争战又使之成为地球上的火药库。即使在伊斯兰世界内部，由于历史上波斯帝国、阿拉伯帝国和奥斯曼帝国的交错争伐的历史影响，教派与教派之间、学派与学派之间、宗派与宗派之间也充满了对宗教信仰理解和阐释的差异以及政治态度的差异，这种观念差异甚至造成了互相间的仇视和杀戮。

八月夏季的地中海，我们在伊斯坦布尔又真切感受到这样一种历史的交错。在影响世界历史的几条主要的线索之中，我们总可以触摸到这样一根轴：拜占庭、君士坦丁堡、突厥民族、十字军东征、奥斯曼帝国。这根轴关联着世界历史的基本走向，关联着东西之间、宗教之间的争霸历史，这轴的原点就在伊斯坦布尔。带着沉重的铁马金戈，带着惨烈的血光剑气，历史一次又一次交迭地在这里投入浓浓的身影。这座城的历史身份那样的错综复杂，绝不是博斯普鲁斯海峡所能轻易分开的。欧洲的快车在这里成了终点，那西方的东方却又从这里开启肇端。这里是东方和西方的错体、东西方的征战和文明共同塑造了这座城。这里的文化就像被世界历史浸染透了的布帷，要找出它的底色是困难的。因此，在这里出现对西方、对现代化的仰慕和热情的普遍情绪就不足为奇了。但这种脱亚入欧的渴望总是遭遇“欧洲属性”、宗教信仰和民主人权等“欧洲标准”的障碍，伊斯坦布尔总被作为一种“非欧”风情在地中海上飘荡。在这种情形之下，伊斯兰世界根深蒂固的地缘政治的焦虑和意识形态化的倾向被迅速激活。与亚洲其他国家的当代艺术相比，这里的当代艺术乃至整个中亚、西亚的当代艺术都有着更多冲突和血腥的滋味，更多的不同宗教教义的苍莽而殷切的呼唤，更多的关于地缘政治的关注和焦虑。这种焦虑甚至成为当代艺术突起的一种策略，渐渐渗入城市肌体的内部，转而成为新一代创作主体在国际格局中自我表述的基本姿态。今年的第八届伊斯坦布尔双年展的主题为“诗学的公正”（或译为“理想的赏罚”），以“诗性”与“公正”两个看似矛盾的概念，直指文化深层的交错状态，直指这个交错状态中的精神本质。获得今年IMPAL都柏林文学奖的名著《我的名字是红色》，更带着深刻的地缘政治的挑衅性，揭示着这种交错状态的血腥历史。

如果说伊斯坦布尔是伊斯兰世界中倾向两世吉庆、渴望世俗生活现代化的文化代表，体现了共和政体国家的特色；那么德黑兰则是强调伊斯兰复兴、开展伊斯兰文化革命的精神代表，它体现了神权政体的特色。在霍梅尼提出的“不要西方，不要东方，只要伊斯兰”的口号指引下，伊斯兰革命将整个意识形态伊斯兰化，视所有非伊斯兰因素为异端。但即使在这里，巴列维的“白色革命”与霍梅尼的伊斯兰革命之间的历史缝隙中，依然留下文化发展的奇特的空间，伊朗电影正是这奇特空间中的代表。那延伸百米的电影院街，那作为伊斯兰复兴而输出、却又不失动人力量的电影制作，带着“黑色长袍”之后的严厉训示，带着非资本主义和非共产主义的第三条道路的神化讯息，带着对安拉的热忱、强烈、浓郁、虔诚的宗教气氛，成为奇特的文化交错的产物，成为不可忽视的、具有强烈的自我纯化的战斗气息的当代艺术潮流。文化的交错在这里呈现出另一番深义。

双重时间 —— 亚洲时间

时间是历史的刻度，也是生命的刻度。中国传统称纪时纪年之法为“历法”。以时间的刻度为基本的法度，足见“时”对于传统中国的天文、地理和人事的重要性。中国人对造“历”至为重视，可以说，一部造历的历史，就是一部民族的文明史。

中国的古人仰观天象，太阳的出没、昼夜交替为“日”；月相变化、月轮盈亏为“月”；禾谷成熟的物候、寒来暑往的周期为“年”。中国古代的历法是阴阳合历，很早就知道并重视“置闰”。《左传·文公六年》说：“闰以正时，时以作事，事以厚生，生民之道于是乎在矣。”古人不仅把一年分为春夏秋冬四季，在长期的生产实践中还逐步认识到季节更替和气候变化的规律，把周岁365又 $1/4$ 日平分为二十四个节气，以反映四季、气温、降雨、物候等方面的变化。二十四个节气系统体现了农事季节的经验总结，是我国传统历法特有的重要组成部分。二十四节气由太阳的不同视位而定，因而与天文天象相通，逐渐发展为“天人合一”思想之中的一个重要体系。以天为镜为象，朗照地上万物变迁，中国历法就成为了集天文、历法、人事为一体的“大到成为上古帝王之头等大事，甚至是惟一要事的地步”（江晓原，《天鉴外史》，上海人民出版社）的根源之学。

中国历即夏历的另一特点在于以干支纪日、纪月与纪年。十天干，十二地支，组合成六十甲子，这是十分具有中国特性的数字系统，这个系统牵连着中国传统的自然观和生命观。以十二时辰的十二进制配地，以百刻的十进制配天，使人类生活于天地交谐的时间场中。甲子之历，正是以干支之数来树立天地合一的思想，来镌刻人

的生命刻度。

今天,不仅我国,亚洲各国几乎都在同时使用两种历法,都在经验着两种关于时间和人事的刻度。一种是各国都通用的西元纪年,实际上这是基督纪年,以基督耶稣的诞生之日为始端。基督纪年由恺撒规定的居鲁士历发展出来,几经改动,在1582年由教皇格里高利八世完全固定下来。1912年正式传入中国,与中国本土历法并行。另一种历法则是各国、各民族或各种宗教的传统历法。在日本是天皇纪年,天皇纪年有两个含义,其一是皇道纪年,今年为皇纪2663年。其二是年号纪年,今年为平成15年。对于星期的表述,日本按五行系统称之,曰火日、水日等。佛历目前仍为泰国、缅甸等东南亚国家所用,自释迦证法起,至今2546年。伊斯兰则以太阳历为纪元,以先知穆罕默德由麦加出走为肇端。在伊朗,现用的教历分为太阳历和改良过的太阳历。西元2003年7月4日,当赴德黑兰考察小组登上这座高原之城的时候,正是当地教历太阳历的1382年4月13日和改良太阳历的1424年5月3日。

两种历法同时使用,并行不悖,形成一种常常被人们忽略却又发人思索的亚洲文化风景。这一文化现象指向亚洲每个民族国家的日常生活和时间记忆的深处,带出某种传统与现代、区域与全球的思维定势。西历与各国的社会生活密切相关,它支配着人们的日常生活,尤其是都市化的日常生活。它像一只只标准的笼子,将各种社会生活规范地捆装在一起:生日、入学、上班、放假、婚嫁、签约、展览、比赛、刑期、战争等等。各民族之间的交流与这个历法分不开,全球化的经济和政治与这个历法分不开,这个历法正成为全球共时性的最基本和生动的征候。

传统历法在各个国家的遭遇并不相同,但有一点是一致的,那就是它在现实生活中的意义正在渐渐地衰微和削弱。夏历的重要特征在于将节令化入其中,道出日子,就已道出这节气的天象地气,风冷水暖。这是农耕社会的特征,所以夏历在中国又被称为农历。在今天,在我们如此习惯和依赖西历的今天,节令的意义正在淡去,农历之中所包含的人天相谐的思想随之发生着迁徙,节令渐渐转变为节庆。中国历的干支之数越来越让人们陌生,渐成书画家和诗词家在画角文末点缀风雅的简便方式。整个夏历越来越失去日常现实的意义,越来越从人们的现实生活中抽离出来,而成为传统记忆中渐渐远去的模糊框架,成为被习惯所遮蔽的吉庆佳节的载体。

实质上,传统历与西历并用的时间框架是当代亚洲各国的一种共同的精神框架,它描绘着全球境域与本土资源交错互动的亚洲共相,承载着迁变中的亚洲社会的基本定势,揭示着亚洲各国传统面临挑战和沦失的危机,以及以转换和迁徙作为化解和创生方法的不同国家的精神特点。“双重时间”也刻写出了那种看不见的文化“入侵”对传统文化消蚀的实况,使我们在基本的共时架构中,反思传统时间中所包蕴的内涵,不断地自省亚洲当代文化自我表述和自我阐释的精神诉求。所以我们说:“双重时间”的共相,是文化上的亚洲因素之一。“双重时间”是文化精神上的亚洲时间。

“地之缘——亚洲当代艺术考察活动”的研究仅是开始。我们都希望用那红、黄、蓝、绿、灰交织着的时间之轴,作为展现亚洲当代文化的无限延展的地平线。那大地之缘与天时之间深厚而博大的脉动,一再令我们怦然心动而又由衷敬畏。

这是一份谜一般神秘而又充满生机的案卷,它让我们追溯历史那沉厚而跌宕起伏的踪迹,追赶时代紧张而不安的步履,从那交错繁复的变幻中判定当代民族国家和亚洲的文化归宗。这是一份自省中的不断的警醒,它让我们在全球境域与本土资源之间静思,并借此审视当代艺术与现实政治之间深沉而常在的联系,反思它在民族发展格局中所起的作用,从一个新的层面上思考传统的执守和拓新的问题。这是一个生机勃勃的文化视野,它使我们得以在审视整体文化生态深刻迁变的同时,把握与时俱进的时之所宜的机缘,瞻望当代民族文化的发展。这是一份深厚而殷切的呼唤,它希望亚洲当代艺术在积极面对各自命题的时候,加强彼此的对话,建立共同的创生机制,强化当代亚洲艺术整体上的自我表述能力。这是一份交织而又多彩的图卷,亚洲艺术家以一种特殊方式走在了一起,在故乡与他乡的遭遇中,进行一次直观互动的融合,并努力地展现当代艺术构建亚洲文化地图的想象力。

诚然,这还只是一个处于亢奋和勉力之中的起步,是一个朝向理想的小小的起步。我们希望这小小的起步能够带出“地之缘”的深沉讯息,以引起人们广泛的关注。值此机会,我们向为这次考察活动提供资助的浙江绿城集团和所有关心、支持考察活动的朋友们致以深切的敬意。

2003.9.30 即癸未年九月初五
于西湖南山

Introduction

Earth Link and Cosmic Time

Xu Jiang

President of China Academy of Art

In the international calendar year 2003, 22 November, the Chinese year of *kuiwei*, on the twenty-ninth day of the tenth moon, China Art Academy inaugurates its new campus and celebrates its seventy-fifth anniversary. Seventy-five years ago, the founding of the National Art Academy, as we were formerly named, marked the dawn of the modern history of national Chinese art education. Annually we have always celebrated our anniversary in April, in spring; this year the date has been moved to autumn to coincide with the extensive building program of the academy, and with the moving to and fro of departmental sites. Perhaps the labor of the past three years of building and planning is symbolized by this shift in anniversary date; after all, in Chinese, "spring and autumn" is another word for history. We have selected the opening date of 22 November to remember the birthday of our founding director, painter Lin Fengmian, who was born in year 1900, that famous *gengzi* year of the Boxer Rebellion, now a full 60-year cycle plus 43 years ago. In remembering our founding director, the Academy looks forward to fresh beginnings for Chinese art today.

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The idea for 'Edges of the Earth: An Investigative Journey' originated in winter 2001, when I was invited by the National Museum of Singapore to give a lecture there. The lecture program opened in the morning with Mr. Okwui Enwezor's presentation on the topic of globalism, and concluded with mine in the afternoon on regionalism. We moderated each other's talk and engaged in a lively dialogue. The title of my talk was "Contemporary Art: A Proposal to Imagine and Construct the Cultural Map of Asia". In the following spring, preparing the program of this inauguration, Gao Shiming and Wu Meichun formally proposed the development of this idea in the form of a dialogue within Asia, in order to depart from the formula of West versus non-West, and to embark on an actual investigative journey. This proposal was met with wide support in the academy and, in spite of the plague of SARS, team members have completed four journeys: Bangkok, Tokyo-Kyoto, Teheran and Istanbul. Together with the host city of Hangzhou, we have now five centers to hinge our reflections upon. This exhibition presents the result of our work, listing detailed information on the people and organizations we met, illustrating themes and structures that have surfaced from our investigations. Give the richness of the materials and what remains to be done, we are finally left with the buoyant feeling that this is just the beginning of the beginning.

Earth Link

When we spin the globe on its axis, the one question that inevitably comes up is: is the world really like this? The Equator is not a line, it is just an abstract deduction based on the distance between Poles, North and South. Thus we have the latitude. The longitudinal line is a trickier matter. Earlier, the zero degree line was made to pass through Jerusalem, but it did not convince the world, and it took British naval power and nautical knowledge for it to be positioned over the south bank of the Thames at

Greenwich. The special point is now marked by a brass line set in marble, complete with the note: latitude north 51 degrees 28 minutes 38.2 seconds, longitude degree zero. East and West were thus determined geographically in 1884.

This is not the end of the story. Early navigators clung to the shore, drawn forward by the tip of distant steeples. After 1884, ships sailed into uncharted seas with imagined links to Greenwich. Calculations of global position were made by time, in relation to the time at Greenwich. That is to say, time is here the measure of spatial orientation. We know from this unromantic story that the concept of the globe is an artificially constructed one, and that space on earth is tied to time. Orientation and layering of time and space, history and geography, constitute our living world.

Poring over the globe again, starting with the Aegean Sea, going round to the Bosphorus, Black Sea, Ural River, Ural Ranges all the way down to the peninsula of East Asia until one reaches the Pacific: this is "Asia", the densest, broadest stretch of land on earth. Like the lines dissecting the globe, "Asia" is also an abstract construction. Asia was named from the outside by Europeans. If one stands at the edge of Europe and Asia, at the gap of the Bosphorus, overlooking cross currents underneath, and watches the sun rise from the east and slowly spin to set in the west, then one will physically experience the expanse linking East and West. However, this emotional link with Asia, together with the concept of Asia, only came about in the 19th century.

Returning to Asia, to the north lies the endless stretch of the plains of Siberia, from the west Asia Minor leads to Central Asia, from the east the Huabei plains and Huadong ranges sweep toward central China's yellow loess plains. East meets west at the end of two vast geographical movements in the Tibetan highlands, where the Himalayas loom atop the Pamir highland like a pagoda. Flowing forth eastwards from here are the main rivers of China; flowing southwards the rivers of India. This is continental Asia, a conceptual construction of relations that also underlies intrinsic connections. It is the cradle of ancient civilizations, some of which are still today prospering. The Himalayas continues to rise in height; what about Asian civilizations as a whole?

The Asian Factor

The first investigative journey of 'Edges of the Earth' embarked in February 2003 for Bangkok. In April we visited Tokyo and Kyoto; in June we went west to Teheran, and finally we spent ten days in Istanbul. In Istanbul we ferried across the Bosphorus especially, just for the sensation of returning to Asia, to reflect on the complex web of trade and war over numerous centuries which came to bring the water of this strait together with that of the Mediterranean, the India Ocean, the Pacific and the northern seas.

In contemporary art today we hear recurrent calls for developing the image of Asian art, but actual responses to this call, in terms of building constructive programs, have been feeble. In reality Asian contemporary art needs strategic planning, it can do with more, and sharper, criticism from the outside — from the West and others. Asian contemporary art faces two basic challenges: the first is the global tide of economic consumerism and its attendant values that are eroding traditional cultural values.

The urge to modernize, to be international, shapes the new value of Asia populations, especially in urban areas. In the heat of modernization new economic values have been borrowed and incorporated wholesale. Under the post-colonial discourse within which such borrowings take place, intellectual reflection tends to be confined to a misplaced imitation of Western frameworks and foreign cultural trends, creating copies of the West; or it easily prompts a simple adversarial position against the West that makes Asian traditions superficial signs of cultural identity.

Another challenge is to cultivate a situation wherein foreign cultural influences may interact on a creative level as cultural exchanges have done for centuries. It is too easy to exaggerate the threat to traditional culture under the global wave, and to arrive at an exaggerated sense of cultural uniqueness against the West. Traditional culture is undergoing deep transformation today, perhaps more so than previous eras, but one should not underestimate its power to regenerate itself.

Both of these phenomena came about from one obsession, and that is defining oneself under the neat formula of West versus non-West. One significant loss resulting from this obsession is the loss of interest in cultures within Asia itself, so that Asian cultures cannot come to grasp the full picture of the root of their regional cultures. Compounding the difficulty are political realities, religious differences and historical animosities that add to the division. Therefore, bringing up in Asia the question "What is Asia?" raises more questions than answers. There is also the obvious danger of simplification, when so many complex and altogether dissimilar cultures are being grouped into one concept. Importantly we don't want such queries to evaporate as a passing fad; we hope to establish interactive, co-existing creative possibilities between the different contemporary Asian arts, as well as connections between a national contemporary art and its multi-faceted cultural sources. We hope to uncover internal links that can build up lasting structures for Asia's contemporary arts, so as to bring about unique articulations and creative possibilities.

Perhaps the descriptive question "What is" is also dangerous, as it seems to call for a phantom definition of Asia that merely defines and thereby limits. Therefore it is important to investigate the actual cultural developments within Asian cities, to understand its bones and sinews by communicating and exchanging knowledge of how art and the local social body support each other. In this manner it is hoped we can avoid the traditional hermetic self-identity of individual Asian cultures, while bringing forth the spirit of their cultural characteristics.

'Edges of the Earth' is an investigation based on dialogue between Asian countries. The purpose is to feel the cultural character of and differences between each other, so as to discover the regional resources available for contemporary art. It is hoped that a community of Asian cultures may be established, which can come together for the sake of regional self expression and creative life. Putting it simply: we hope to distill from these exchanges "Asian Factors", and to understand how such factors surface in the arts of the region. These factors come from the local traditions, from local contemporary life under global influence, and are shaped by its particular cultural vision. Asian factors also relate to issues about cultures, east and west, and to issue even more complex. One issue of particular concern to us is what we have termed "Parallel Time", referring to the use of multiple calendars in all Asian countries. How a dual or multiple calendars fit into each society, and into each person's life, shows how

contemporary culture in Asia is changing. To fit the global and regional vision within the framework of "parallel time" may help us to open up to a new cultural vision, through which Asians may examine both visible and invisible "invasion" into their histories and cultures. For artists to reflect on this issue may help them to gauge the ebb and flow of existential truths about their situation, which have previously been taken for granted, and to examine the complexities of their own awareness.

Hybrid Co-existence and the Smell of Blood

Modern history in Asia is shaped by the experience of colonialism. Even for countries that have been fortunate enough to escape the fate of subjugation, such as the Kingdom of Thailand, its society exhibits an interwoven texture of foreign cultures and the scars of frontal invasion of global values. Thailand's modern history has not suffered a showdown between tradition and the modern as has many others countries. Both strands of the tradition and the modern have been woven into the dual webs of civic life and religious life, so that the parallel developments of secular and spiritual, democracy and monarchy, consumerism and abstention, asceticism and libertinism are woven together under the tropical sun and the geography and regional politics of southeast Asia.

In fact, the example of hybrid cultural co-existence in Thailand is typical of most Asian countries, where the memory of colonization is rapidly dissolving within such parallel frameworks. The autonomous expression of new urban culture is satisfied with this hybrid state of co-existence, keeping ground with both its stable roots and fluid changes. Roots that anchor Bangkok in modern life appear to be the everyday presence of religious life; the Japanese have the dynastic order of the emperor, as well as widely observed rituals and cultural artifacts; in the Islamic world religion provides the anchor. In China, it is perhaps only by deep cultural memories and constant struggles for renewal that a balance has been maintained. These anchors act as guides, road signs; along them we find the path to the self-sufficient spiritual heart of each society. Societal changes and new realities find inspiration here. We find ourselves again confronted by the old problem: that of the superior presence of western influence meeting the staying power of tradition, the two interlocked in structural dependence. In the cultural realm, however, contemporary art finds itself being attacked by both of these forces, when in fact its mission is to find a confluence that would rise above both.

Central Asia is a much more complex territory than the Far East. Wars and religious strife have formed the historical memory of this region. Until today political struggles here attract the focus of international news. Istanbul is a city located on the axis of one of the main historical lineages of world history, and the city has had its share of political upheavals. Here ancient Constantinople, Byzantium, Turkey, the Crusades, the Ottomans, have all left their mark, and their memory is etched into the hills and coastlines of Istanbul. Here the East and the West have both conquered and retreated, creating a legacy of unrest and of geographical politics in anxious tension. Contemporary art has been sensitive to the special character of this city, and a strategy of unstable anxiety has proven successful for artists and seems to have seeped into the sinews of the urban structure. This year, the theme of the 8th Istanbul Biennial is "Poetic Justice", bringing to mind the complicated, often bloody, cultural political affairs of this area.

While Istanbul embodies the secular face of the Islamic world with its republican politics, Teheran represents the spirit of religion seeking revival through worldly powers. Though echoes of Khomeini's slogan against the outside world still reverberate, the historical gap left open between King Pahlavi's "White Revolution" and the Islamic revolution gives shelter to a special space of fantasy. This is the space of Iranian film. Along an alley of a hundred meters in the old cinema district one finds a contemporary cultural world that seeks purification. Passionate, devoted, neither anti-capitalist nor communist in its spiritual calling, this cultural production in the interest of Islamic revival is an enigma that refuses to be dismissed.

Parallel Time, Asian Time

Time is marker of history, and of life. In traditional China the year is divided into twenty-four sections (*jie-qi*), paced in tempo with the agricultural season. Each *jie-qi* is calibrated to the movement of the sun, and the correspondence between human activity and planetary movement eventually evolves into the complicated astrological system upon which fortunes of empires depended. China's cyclical sixty-year calendar is created by matching two sets of numbers; one set representing the heaven and the other the earth. The renewal of each cycle marks the renewal of the cosmos, as well as the full cycle of a human life.

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Today, not only in China but in almost every Asian country, people continue to observe at least two calendars, to mark time and to commemorate human activities. The international calendar is based on Christian years, which was first adopted for use in China in 1912, to be used concurrently with China's dynastic reign (by then republican) calendar. In Japan the Emperor's reign year is still currently used. The Buddhist calendar is observed in Buddhist countries like Thailand and Burma, this year being the 2543rd since the Lord Buddha's Enlightenment. Iran has two calendars, both Islamic but one is an adjusted calendar, and they mark the departure of Prophet Mohammad from Mecca. This year is identified as 1382 and 1424 respectively.

Parallel systems of time form an often neglected but provoking cultural phenomenon of Asia; it points to memories of time oriented by local cultural history and the modern era. The dual system guides daily, especially urban, life, regimenting birthdays, school terms, working days and holidays. The levels of communication between nations relate to the common calendars between them, marking concerted rhythms and shared histories.

Traditional calendars in each country meet different fates, although their significance in daily life appears to be weakening universally. In China, where the dependence on the international calendar is national policy, the cosmic dimension of *jie-qi*, along with its implication of harmony with nature, is fading. This phenomenon illustrates the corrosion of traditional values on account of new cultural invasion, urging us to reflect on our own cultural position. Therefore we have identified "parallel time" as an "Asian Factor", and "parallel time" as the Asian time of cultural spirit.

'Edges of the Earth: An Investigative Journey of Asian Art' has just begun. We would like to extend

to the edge of space the temporal horizon of Asian contemporary cultures now marked on our drawing board in five colors. The links of the earth and the boundless depth of the heavens humble us and make us shudder with awe.

This project has given us pause, making us reflect upon the role culture plays in the meeting between global condition and native resources. We have been led to examine the undercurrents connecting contemporary art and real-politics, and study the effect it may have in developing national culture, thereby taking a new stance with regards the conservative resilience of tradition and cultural innovation. This project has opened a vital cultural vista, and it urges us to take hold of fleeting opportunities even as we are observing the swift changes overtaking the ecology of the overall cultural field. This project is also a sincere beckoning to dialogue, to create symbiotic structure in order to strengthen the expressive possibilities of Asian contemporary art as a whole, while each culture continues to pursue its own special mission. This series of journeys has been a confluence of many happy chance meetings, and it is a celebration of common efforts in imagining Asia's cultural map.

This is only the first step forward, and we expect it not to be the last. We hope the message of this earth link will draw the attention it deserves, and lead to broader visions. On this happy occasion I wish to congratulate and thank all our friends who have supported us, in particular to our generous sponsor the Zhejiang Green City Group.

Written at Nanshan, West Lake, on 30 September 2003, which is also the fifth day of the ninth moon, *kuiwei* year.

[Translated by Chang Tsong-zung]

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