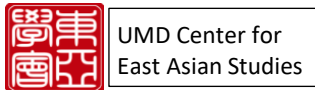


Rethinking the Curation of Chinese Contemporary Art toward “post-West” artworlds, political economies, spatial practices, and historiographies

A one-day online international symposium/scholarly gathering
jointly organized by the University of Maryland (UMD), College Park, MD, USA
and the University of New South Wales, Sydney (UNSW), Australia



April 28/29, 2021

Keynote Speaker:

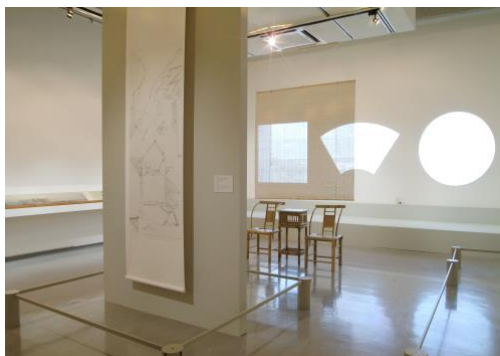
Chang Tsong-Zung (Johnson Chang), Director of the Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong

Conference Conveners:

**Prof. Paul Gladston (UNSW), Dr. Lynne Howarth-Gladston, Prof. Jason Kuo (UMD),
Prof. emeritus Alec Tzannes AM (UNSW)**



1. Cover of the catalogue accompanying the exhibition, *Contemporary Art and Architecture in a Chinese Space: A Yellow Box in Qingpu* (2009).
2. Entrance to the exhibition, *Contemporary Art and Architecture in a Chinese Space: A Yellow Box in Qingpu* (2009).



3. Installation shot, *The Yellow Box: Contemporary Calligraphy and Painting in Taiwan*, Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum (2005).
4. Installation shot, *Contemporary Art and Architecture in a Chinese Space: A Yellow Box in Qingpu* (2009).

Since the end of the 1980s, contemporary art produced by artists of Chinese cultural identity has been exhibited internationally in accordance with Western/ized) curatorial discourses and practices associated with the White Cube and its postmodernist/contemporary variants. This symposium will intervene critically with those discourses and practices by exploring the possibility of alternative approaches to the curation of a culturally Chinese contemporary art.

Prompting that intervention is the institutional critique posed by gallerist, curator and theorist Johnson Chang's conception of the "Yellow Box" as a critical supplement to the White Cube. The Yellow Box—the title of which refers to a symbolic distinction between a yellow earth and the blackness of heaven in the classic Daoist text, the *I Ching* (The Book or, Classic of Changes)—posits various modes of display intended as more conducive/culturally sensitive to the presentation of art produced with respect to the ideals and principles of syncretic, Daoist/Buddhist inflected, Confucianism. Those ideals and principles—which are characterized by a culturally distinctive, indeed, arguably civilization-specific, desire for harmonious reciprocity between opposites and a concomitant commingling of naturalistic representation and subjective expression—have been formative historically on the making, showing and reception of art within Chinese cultural contexts. Their durable traces also give definition to the alterity of contemporary art involving intersections between Western/ized and localized Chinese practices and aesthetics. Chang's conception of the Yellow Box can be understood to extend an existing postmodernist critique and adaptive diversification of the White Cube by looking to what he considers to be the particularity of a Chinese-Confucian artistic-cultural identity and its significance to a now globalized contemporary artworld.



Installation shots, *The Yellow Box: Contemporary Calligraphy and Painting in Taiwan*, Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum (2005).

Framing the symposium are recent debates related to the idea of "contemporaneity" and their vision of present times as being marked by an increasingly conspicuous plurality of socio-political and cultural outlooks, among them emphatic resistances to Euro-American post-Enlightenment thinking and practice. An acknowledgement of the conditionality of contemporaneity is taken as a starting position for critical reflections on established institutional allegiances to Western/ized curatorial discourses and practices. As a recent statement by the journal *Third Text* asserts, "Decades of liberal demands for 'diversity' have failed to change the artworld's devotion to the civilisational accomplishments of the West or undo [its] mechanisms of exclusion." The symposium is intended as a means of looking beyond such exclusory mechanisms toward differently 'grounded' approaches to the selection, organization and presentation of artworks, and, by extension, the active projection of "post-West" artworlds, political economies, spatial practices and historiographies.

The symposium will bring together scholars as well as critics, artists, curators, and architects/designers who will be invited to respond critically to the symposium's theme with reference to their particular professional experiences and concerns. In addition to presentations by the symposium's convenors and invited speakers, ample time will be given for collective discussion and responses to audience questions. The convenors will seek to publish a peer-reviewed edited collection related to the theme of the symposium.

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Schedule

Wednesday 28 April, 2021 EDT (US)

Thursday 29 April, 2021 AEST (AUS), HKT (Hong Kong)

Wed 28-29 April, 2021 BST (UK)

<https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converted.html?iso=20210428T00&p1=4728&p2=136&p3=263>

Welcome and introduction: <u>3.00pm EDT</u> <u>5.00am AEST</u> 3.00am HKT 8.00pm BST	Jason KUO and Paul GLADSTON, with Lynne HOWARTH-GLADSTON and Alec TZANNES
Keynote address	三才的展示：天地人

<p>3.15pm EDT</p> <p>5.15am AEST</p> <p><u>3.15am HKT</u></p> <p>8.15pm BST</p>	<p>Heaven Human Earth: Chinese Display in the Three Cosmological Realms</p> <p>CHANG Tsong-Zung (Johnson CHANG), Director, Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong</p> <p>The following reflections on China’s traditional modes of display are an attempt to seek from historical precedents inspiration for a fresh re-imagining to reframe and inform contemporary curatorship, connoisseurship, and art-making. Based on previous research into China’s culture of ‘elegant gatherings in the garden’ (known traditionally as <i>yaji</i>), in which an idealized corner of ‘mountain and water’ (<i>shanshui</i>), created in a literati garden retreat, provides the setting for the connoisseurship of painting, calligraphy, and literary performances. The current paper looks at a wider range of Chinese traditional ‘display’ framed within the classical cosmological triumvirate of Heaven, Human, and Earth. This paper is based on researches pioneered by diverse scholars, and makes an attempt to reinterpret key elements of their findings from the perspective of contemporary art.</p> <p>The Human Realm includes what I term as the <i>yaji-garden</i>, to refer to this form of garden party that emphasises connoisseurship and aesthetic exchange. Before the era of public exhibitions, this was a principal site for the display, exchange, and occasionally the creation of art. The Heavenly Realm refers to art displayed outdoors for worship and for historical memorials. One remarkable example of this is the dramatic path winding up to the Temple of Mount Tai in Shandong. This is a veritable ‘gallery display’ flanked on either side by writings carved on massive boulders, created across a span of two millennia. The Earthly Realm refers to artworks made for the benefit of the dead. Special sculptural forms used at burial sites, as well as funerary goods, have been a significant part of traditional material cultural production since pre-historic times. What this material production intends to achieve provides insight into what ‘art’ signifies in China’s pre-modern world, and illuminates our current discussions.</p> <p>This paper explores themes revealed by examining art and display from the Three Realms. The first relates to physical and spiritual ‘transformation,’ (<i>hua</i> 化), as engendered through the effects of an aesthetics that attempts to achieve different kinds of liberation, or ‘unfettered existence’ (<i>wu dai</i> 無待). The idea of movement, in terms of roaming, exploring, and passage are captured in the concept of ‘journeying’ (<i>you</i> 游). The all-embracing Confucian concept of <i>li</i> 禮, usually translated as ‘rites and etiquette,’ (although <i>li</i> is in fact fundamental to the constitution of the Chinese world order), appears in these examples as performances that make possible the ‘transformations’ under discussion. Lastly, there are the themes of ‘art object’ and ‘collection’ that are central to the discussion of ‘art’ as we know it today. The object medium of ‘art’ facilitates ‘transformation,’ which can be manifest through ‘wares’ or visual information embodied in diverse media. The concept of ‘collecting,’ which in the Chinese word <i>cang</i> (藏) also carries connotations of ‘conserve’ and ‘hide,’ may add a dimension to the practice of contemporary collecting. With these alternative modes of art production, and different uses of art, the position of the art recipient varies widely. Very often they are neither spectator nor consumer; rather, they are required to respond in manners very different to those of a museum visitor, or an internet browser, for example. Faced with these pre-modern examples, we are bound to ask: today, with the vast proliferation of image production and increasingly wide-</p>
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	spread demands for art ‘experiences,’ what can these historical models tell us that can be of use to both artists and art recipients?
<p>Panel 1</p> <p>Trans-cultural Discourses</p> <p>Moderator: Jane DeBEVOISE, Chair of the Board of Directors of Asia Art Archive in Hong Kong and New York</p>	
<p>Paper 1</p> <p><u>4.00pm EDT</u></p> <p>6.00am AEST</p> <p>4.00am HKT</p> <p>9.00pm BST</p>	<p>“World-Making: Staging Contemporary Chinese Art in a Global Context”</p> <p>Alexandra MUNROE, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, UAE</p> <p>This presentation focuses on recent exhibition projects organized by the Guggenheim Museum’s Asian Art Initiative. It will review and critically assess the curators’ stated aspirations to position works by Chinese-born artists in expanded art-historical, theoretical, and philosophical frameworks. These projects are the historical survey <i>Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World</i>, co-curated by Alexandra Munroe, Phillip Tinari, and Hou Hanru (2017) and <i>One Hand Clapping</i>, a contemporary show presented under the auspices of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Chinese Art Initiative co-curated by Xiaoyu Weng and Hou Hanru (2018).</p> <p>Bracketed by the end of the Cold War and the Beijing Olympics in 2008, <i>Art and China after 1989</i> considered the power of artistic experimentation in a period characterized by the onset of globalization and the rise of a newly powerful China on the world stage. Its subtitle comes from a key work by Huang Yong Ping: a cage-like structure housing a live arena of insects and reptiles, evoking the raw competition and symbiotic influences of an uncomfortably connected world. From inception, the exhibition and catalogue sought to reposition an emerging narrative about the development of art in China from a strictly Sinocentric to a global worldview, linking artistic practice to the wider contexts of both advanced cultural practices across disciplines in China during this period, and to the cultural, intellectual, and historic developments unfolding outside of China at the time. In the process, it has challenged the contested framework of “contemporary Chinese art” altogether. <i>ARTnews</i> selected this show as one of the decade’s most influential shows, citing “The history of contemporary Chinese art was rewritten by this survey.”</p> <p><i>One Hand Clapping</i> (2018) featured new commissions by five younger artists. Featuring the work of Cao Fei, Samson Young, Wong Ping and others, the show explored the ways in which globalization affects our understanding of the future. Together, these works challenge a universal, homogeneous, and</p>

	<p>technocratic future determined by economic growth and technological advancement. In this exhibition, “one hand clapping” served as a metaphor for the ways in which meaning is destabilized in a globalized world. The artists in <i>One Hand Clapping</i> are connected by their deep involvement in specific places, namely, Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and New York; their critical examination of our systems of exchange, communication, and production; and their imagination of multiple futures, as a form of poetic revolution.</p>
<p>Paper 2</p> <p>4.30pm EDT</p> <p><u>6.30am AEST</u></p> <p>4.30am HKT</p> <p>9.30pm BST</p>	<p>“Thinking (and Practice In-/) Outside the (Yellow) Box: toward the curation of an artistic-cultural poly/cacophony”</p> <p>Lynne HOWARTH-GLADSTON, independent artist and curator, and Paul GLADSTON, Judith Neilson Professor of Contemporary Art, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia</p> <p>The Yellow Box project, developed by Johnson Chang and others since the early 2000s, proposes and enacts modes of display intended as conducive to the curation of contemporary art produced with respect to the aesthetic ideals and principles of syncretic Daoist/Buddhist inflected Confucianism. Key to the project are critical interventions with the internationally dominant mode of museum/gallery display known as the White Cube, and its related rationalist/spectacular discourses that draw on the example of amateur-intimist engagements with cultural objects and performances within traditional literati-Confucian gatherings known as <i>yaji</i>. As such, the Yellow Box project can be understood to extend an existing diversifying postmodernist critique of the White Cube in relation to the pronounced differences/deferrals of cultural outlook and attendant parallaxes characteristic of an emerging “post-West” contemporaneity. This paper situates the Yellow Box project as part of a wider trans-cultural genealogy of artistic display inclusive of the White Cube’s existing translation of (nominally) Euro-American and East Asian cultural thinking and practice. In doing so, it draws attention to a constellation of other polyvalent modes of cultural display and related discourses—contemporary and historical—that can be understood to diffractively intervene not only with the <i>prima facie</i> rationalism/spectacularism of the White Cube, but also the globally dominant western(ized) artworld’s managerialist containment of cultural-artistic poly/cacophony.</p>
<p>5.00-5.15pm EDT</p> <p>7.00-7.15am AEST</p> <p>5.00-5.15am HKT</p> <p>10.00-10.15 BST</p>	<p>Audience Q&A</p>
<p>Panel 2</p> <p>Spatial Practices</p>	

<p>Moderator: Dr. Yung-Wen YAO, Tatung University, Taipei, Taiwan</p>	
<p>Paper 1 5.15pm EDT <u>7.15am AEST</u> 5.15am HKT 10.15pm BST</p>	<p>“Exploring Dangrove: what does the design and use of a storage facility for contemporary Chinese art suggest for future curatorial practice?”</p> <p>Alec TZANNES Professor Emeritus of the Built Environment, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia</p> <p>“Dangrove” is the name given by the gallerist and philanthropist, Judith Neilson to a building situated in Sydney, Australia and completed in 2018 that has been purpose designed and built to store, curate and experience Neilson’s substantial collection of Chinese contemporary art. Dangrove supports the operation of the White Rabbit Gallery, a free-entry public gallery in Sydney showcasing Neilson’s collection, as well as the management of loans from the collection to museums and galleries world-wide. This paper presents a case study exploring the creation of Dangrove and its diverse uses. Dangrove was designed by the Sydney-based architects, Tzannes of which the speaker, Alec Tzannes is the founding director. The building’s operations include support for the commissioning of original artworks and private viewings of exploratory exhibitions and performances across a wide range of artistic disciplines. The design of Dangrove is strongly informed by Harald Szeemann’s curation of an exhibition in Australia in 1971 giving prominence to environmental, ephemeral and other non-material forms of artistic endeavour. The evolution of Dangrove’s design is traced from an initial brief that rejected conventional art storage typologies in favour of a comprehensive integration of additional functions enabling interdisciplinary cultural activities sensitive to the complexity and diversity of the collection it houses. Dangrove’s building typology is explained in detail through drawings, 3-D models, and images of the facility in use. Innovative technical aspects of the building’s design are discussed, including indoor climate control and the organization of sound and light, both artificial and natural. This case study argues that Dangrove challenges existing art storage, gallery and museum design conventions, enabling greater curatorial and experiential opportunities across a wide range of potentially integrated or disparate cultural activities.</p>
<p>Paper 2 5.45pm EDT <u>7.45am AEST</u> 5.45am HKY 10.45pm BST</p>	<p>“Curating East Asian Art and Artefacts: cultural symbiosis and translation, past and present”</p> <p>Jackie MENZIES, Curator Emerita of Asian Art, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia</p> <p>Artists, architects, and museum professionals have created spaces that translate East Asia’s cultural heritage into contemporary global terms. The contemporary Chinese artist Xu Bing’s “square word” calligraphy—in which letters of the Roman alphabet are restructured to resemble Chinese characters—has, for example, opened up spaces for non-Sinophone audiences to gain insights into calligraphy as the most esteemed form of Chinese cultural expression. Dedicated spaces have been constructed within museums world-wide for the</p>

	<p>displaying of East Asian art and artefacts, as well as the conveying of information about the contexts of their making. Many of those spaces use stylings and methods of construction redolent of traditional East Asian interiors and gardens. Interventions of this sort include the New York Metropolitan Museum’s construction of a traditional Chinese garden, the Astor Court, alongside its China collection, to emphasise the centrality of nature to Chinese literati culture. This recreation of a gentleman’s room (<i>sarangbang</i>) of the Joseon period (1392-1910), as part of the British Museum’s dedicated Korea Gallery, now represents the widespread incorporation of traditional Japanese tea ceremony spaces within museum interiors. One of these interiors is to be found in the Asian galleries of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. Moreover, developments in technology are enabling the virtual recreation of culturally significant East Asian spaces, such as the reconstruction of Cave 220 of the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, using augmented reality technologies. This paper reflects on the development of spaces within museums dedicated to the curation of East Asian art and artefacts. It explores the culturally symbiotic nature of those spaces as locations of cultural translation, seen in counterpoint to the wider institutional contexts within which they are housed. Considered among other things will be the practical as well as intellectual constraints imposed by museums on the curating of East Asian art.</p>
<p>6.15-6.30pm EDT 8.15-8.30am AEST 6.15-6.30am HKT 11.15-11.30pm BST</p>	<p>Audience Q&A – followed by a 15-minute break</p>
<p>Panel 3 Social Engagements Moderator: Hongwei BAO, University of Nottingham, UK</p>	
<p>Paper 1 <u>6.45pm EDT</u> 8.45am AEST 6.45am HKT <u>6.45am Taiwan</u></p>	<p>“Curating Human Togetherness: activism and the remaking of people and place in contemporary mainland China” Meiqin WANG, California State University, Northridge, CA, US As part of the development of socially engaged art in mainland China during the last two decades, curators and art collectives have advanced a curatorial agenda that strives to expand the relevance of art to the lives of ordinary people, addressing especially problems and challenges brought about by China’s GDP-driven and urbanization-oriented developmental discourse. This paper</p>

<p>11.45pm BST</p>	<p>articulates that curatorial agenda through a brief overview of works from a number of curators who embrace social engagement and community intervention as the core of their artistic and creative practices, including Wang Nanming, Zuo Jing, Zheng Dazhen, Lin Zhenglu, Zheng Hongbin, and the art collective Handshake 302. Accentuating the experimental and interdisciplinary nature of contemporary art, these curators have ventured into fields of community building, personal development, and placemaking, via artistic and cultural activities as a means of enabling the remaking of people and place. Instead of presenting art as “being” unique and special, the curators in question focus on art as “doing” in order to activate its power to raise awareness, foster collaborations, make changes, and solve problems in real life situations. By exploring the power of art to “do,” they engage in what has been referred to as “artivism.” The curating of an art of doing demands a processual approach that becomes transdisciplinary, people-oriented, and place-specific, since it shifts the focus from presenting art to creatively re/inventing new possibilities of human togetherness: encounters, communications, and collective actions among citizens from all walks of life.</p>
<p>Paper 2</p> <p>7.15pm EDT</p> <p>9.15am AEST</p> <p><u>7.15am HKT</u></p> <p><u>12.15am BST</u></p>	<p>“Socially-engaged Contemporary Art in Rural Hong Kong”</p> <p>Frank VIGNERON, Chairperson and Professor, Fine Arts Department, Chinese University of Hong Kong, HK, with the artists Natalie LO Lai LAI and Monti LAI</p> <p>Mainland China is experiencing a renewal of art education in rural settings, thanks to official policies developed as part of the ‘Beautiful Countryside’ initiative. This top-down initiative has seen, for instance, the establishment of brand-new teaching centers set up by major universities with financial support from the highest echelons of local government. By contrast, in Hong Kong, rural art projects have been initiated mainly due to grassroots initiatives. Even though some of those projects have been funded by branches of the local government of the Hong Kong SAR, most have been led by independent artists and activists eager to explore local sociocultural identities as well as develop alternative artistic lifestyles. Emerging from these are new, regionally-grounded communities of engagement with aestheticized thinking and practice. Several of the projects in question are described in this paper. At a time of heightened uncertainty in the Hong Kong SAR, brought about by the imposition of new national security laws, artists/activists involved in such grass roots initiatives are no longer sure of the freedoms previously guaranteed by China’s “one country, two systems” framework. This paper will take stock of socially-engaged art practices in rural Hong Kong, and how they might be taken forward artistically and curatorially under changed circumstances.</p>
<p>7.45-8.00pm EDT</p> <p>9.45-10am AEST</p> <p>7.45-8.00am HKT</p> <p>12.45-1.00am BST</p>	<p>Audience Q&A</p>

<p>Concluding Paper</p> <p><u>8.00pm EDT</u></p> <p>10.00am AEST</p> <p>8.00am HKT</p> <p>1.00am BST</p>	<p>“Curated Cultures”</p> <p>David JOSELIT, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, US</p> <p>This paper is drawn from the fourth chapter of my book <i>Heritage and Debt: Art in Globalization</i>, also titled “Curated Cultures.” <i>Heritage and Debt</i> is a comparative study of global contemporary art that addresses artworks from around the world without falling into a survey of successive regions as most art-historical accounts of globalization do. It claims that art’s globalization has the capacity to redress Western modernism’s cultural dispossession of non-Western art. Global contemporary art confronts this history of dispossession in its counter-appropriation of cultural heritage as a <i>contemporary</i> resource. Since the 1980s, artists from around the world have reanimated local traditions to challenge the predominance of Euro-American contemporary art. Likewise, under global conditions, the development of heritage has become an effective, even a necessary, resource for localities in competing for investment, tourist dollars, and also indirectly, diplomatic or soft power. Heritage is thus both a symbolic and an economic asset, as marked by the worldwide proliferation of new museums, often devoted to modern and contemporary art. In this lecture I will track how this mobilization of heritage has provoked new and newly prominent tactics of curation.</p>
<p>Plenary</p> <p>8.30pm EDT</p> <p>10.30am AEST</p> <p>8.30am HKT</p> <p>1.30am BST</p>	
<p>Close</p> <p>9.00pm EDT</p> <p>11.00am AEST</p> <p>9.00am HKT</p> <p>2.00am BST</p>	