

**An Account of Development  
of Performance Art in China  
from 1979-2010**

*Pui Yin Tong*  
*University of the Arts London*  
*PhD*

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## Abstract

The research study aims to raise questions about and gain new insights into the development of performance art in China.

The development of performance art in China is set out in a chronological account of the events and art works that illustrate the development of a permissive, open-ended medium with endless variables. The events and works included in this study are executed by Chinese artists impatient with the limitations of traditional or established forms and determined to take their performance art works directly to the public. Following the rapid socio-economic development that started in the late 1970's, soon after the end of the Cultural Revolution and the start of economic reform.

The chronological account of the development of Chinese performance art explains how Chinese artists, in creating their work, draw freely on a number of disciplines and media including literature, poetry, theatre, music, dance, architecture and painting, as well as video, film, slides and narrative. The account also illustrates how Chinese performance art has gradually moved away from the traditions of Chinese performance and how performance art works often promote interpretive individualism.

Research shows that Chinese artists choose performance art to break free from the dominant media and the constraints of working within the evolving social and political environment in China. Research further shows that artists use performance art as a provocation to respond to changes. Finally, performance art is gaining acceptance from the public in recent Chinese socio-economic development.

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# An Account of the Development of Performance Art in China from 1979 to 2010

## Introduction

### A Personal Note on the Research

I still recall vividly how the research idea was conceived in 2003.

As part of a documentary series aiming to show social, economic and artistic development in China, “Beijing Swings”<sup>1</sup> introduced the contemporary art scene in China. In addition to oil painting, installation and video art work, some performance art pieces, containing controversial content such as act of cannibalizing human flesh (“*Eating Foetus*” conducted by performance artist Zhu Yu)<sup>2</sup>, were shown. These thought-provoking performances stimulated my desire to conduct research into the reasons why artists express their creative ideas through these controversial means in a relatively conservative country like China (in 2003).

This is how the research journey began and is the question that has continued to inspire its progress.

### The Research

The research methodology for this study is different to that of more conventional academic studies. As performance art in China has been stereotyped and is typically believed to involve nudity, violence and other “anti-social” behaviours, there is very limited material available in the public domain i.e. in literature or on the internet. Thus, the research was conducted by means of interviews with a view to collecting the information necessary for the research. However, as the artists involved in performance art are not mainstream artists, attempts to contact these artists present difficulties. Given the sensitive nature of some of the work performed by these artists, the artists found it difficult to share their thoughts or material about their performance art works and projects. The most effective way to start the research was to visit and interview the artists in person. Consequently, a first research trip to Beijing was made in March 2004.

However, very limited preparation work for the research trip could be carried out because the contact details of the artists chosen for the interviews were not available. In fact, the only useful piece of

information I had gathered through word-of-mouth was that the artists I wanted to meet could be found in the 798 Art District. In 2004, the 798 Art District was far from undergoing its transformation into one of the most prestigious art areas in China. It was an underdeveloped area to which artists were attracted by the competitive rent and low operating costs and where artists chose to work and reside.) I visited the galleries and artists' studios in the 798 Art District one by one and explained the purpose of the research. However, these visits were fruitless as there was a strong sense that performance art was not a topic that artists were prepared to discuss openly before I met with Shu Yang, the artist, who is also a curator and performance art event organizer.<sup>3</sup> One of the early proponents of Chinese performance art and a well-respected performance art curator/event organizer, Shu Yang shared his views on performance art development in China. He also introduced and referred this researcher to a number of performance artists who were open to the idea of and willing to provide the first hand materials that form the foundation of this research.

After analyzing the materials collected from the first research trip and assessing the means by which the research materials needed to support the study could be gathered, it became apparent that regular research trips to China would need to be made as the information and records on Chinese performance art were very limited and not accessible. Due to the often sensitive nature of the messages performance artists wanted to deliver through their works and the (often) controversial means taken by the artist to execute their works or to deliver their ideas, the performance art works that are examined were neither recorded nor published in a fashion that would identify the processes adopted to convey the artists' thoughts or ideas clearly. The research demanded significant "Guanxi" i.e. relations or interpersonal network building, which could only be achieved by investing time talking with the performance artists in person. After a number of research trips made in 2004 and 2005, this researcher decided that this approach alone was insufficient due to the phenomenal growth of Chinese performance art that was fueled by the rapid socio-economic development in China at that time. I sensed the need to become and be part of the performance art community and I moved to Beijing to continue the research in June 2006.

The decision to live in China and become/be part of the performance art community turned out to be the correct one. Through the networks and relationships built from 2004, as well as having the advantage of the identity of an overseas researcher, I was strategically involved in series of performance art events and works:

*Manchester Chinese Art Center Performance Art Event, 2004*  
*Showing Your Weakness Exhibition, 2005*

*The Third DaDao Live Art Festival, 2005*  
*The Sixth Open International Performance Art Festival, 2005*  
*China Live Performance Art Event, V&A Museum, 2006*  
*The Fourth DaDao Live Art Festival, 2006*  
*Informal European Theatre Meeting ("IETM"), 2006*  
*Asia Art Archive ("AAA") forum, 2006*  
*Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum ("ACCF"), 2006*  
*The Seventh Open International Performance Art Festival, 2006*  
*October Exhibition Beijing, 2006*  
*Hong Kong on the Move Performance Art Project, 2006*  
*Macao Museum of Art Performance Art Archive, meeting, 2006*  
*Starting from the Southwest Exhibition of Contemporary Art in Southwest China, 2007*  
*"Eight Directions": Sichuan-Beijing-Shanxi-Hunan-Chongqing-Hong Kong-Macao-Taiwan Performance Art Exchange Exhibition 2007*  
*The Communication Campaign of China Live Festival, June-Alliance, 2007*  
*The Eighth Open International Performance Art Festival, 2007*  
*The Fifth DaDao Live Art Festival, 2007*  
*China Art Performance Platform ("CAPP") forum, 2007*  
*The Ninth Open International Performance Art Festival, 2008*  
*The Sixth DaDao Live Art Festival, 2008*  
*The Tenth Open International Performance Art Festival, 2010*  
*Action Script: Symposium on Performance Art Practice and Documentation in Asia, 2010*  
*In addition to the above events, 51 individual interviews with performance artists were conducted between 2004 and 2010.*

This personal involvement facilitated opportunities to obtain first-hand information and exclusive records such as artist statements about their work, pictures and videos of some of the works put on by the performance artists. I believe this unique information and exclusive records will form a comprehensive account of the development of performance art in China.

### **Uniqueness and exclusivity of some of the performance art materials included in the research**

Although performance art has been more widely recognized in recent years as China has become more open economically and socially, performance art and performance artists have not yet been

widely considered a mainstream art form in China. Given the social and political atmosphere at the time when the performances were made, performance artists, especially those who started in the 80s, would not, typically, make plans to record their performances as the artists could be placed under surveillance for their work. Very often the underlining message the artists wanted to deliver involved thoughts that could be considered politically sensitive. Consequently, the artists often preferred to take measures to manage reduce avoid media exposure. Sometimes they chose not to maintain a detailed record of the performance. Some performance artists take the view that the theme or message of the performance or even the audiences' perception of their performances would be too politically sensitive. Thus, these artists were unwilling to share their art work records for this research.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, as some of the performance artists could not predict the value of their work artistically academically economically and had not made arrangements for their work to be recorded and archived in a sophisticated fashion. Technically, few performance artists in the 80s could afford had access to video cameras. Consequently, the performance art works were mainly recorded in photographs, and not all the photographs taken met the level of quality required for this research. For some performances and art works, the photographs were not kept by the performing artists themselves but were taken recorded archived by other performing artists.

In the light of this background, significant efforts have been made to collect the information records for the performance art works included in this research. The uniqueness and exclusivity of the materials warranted these efforts.

### **Introduction of the performance information record collection process**

As the research covers 30 years of Chinese performance art, it involved a significant number of artists and the work performed by them. With the aim of completing the research systematically, the information collected in this catalogue was gathered and compiled through three key channels:

- *Socializing with the performance artists*
- *Interviewing the performance artists*
- *Curating and participating in performance art festivals/ shows*

An account of the processes taken to collect information about and records of performances is set out below

### **Socializing with the performance artists**

The performance art community is a unique community in China. As performance art is yet to be widely accepted as a mainstream art form and many performance art works involve sensitive, i.e. political and or social content, many performance artists tend to stay low profile in order to avoid unnecessary media exposure or attention. For reasons of public stability, it is not uncommon for performance artists to be requested encouraged not to perform certain works around sensitive times such as the anniversaries of certain social events or when overseas political leaders are visiting China. In fact, records show some performance artists being detained or imprisoned for their works. This threat of detention has inevitability demotivated the performance artist community and discouraged them from proactively or voluntarily exchanging thoughts or making performance art work related information available in the public domain.

This has created difficulties throughout the period of which the research was conducted. To facilitate efficient collection of performance art work information or materials, a strong and trusting relationship needed to be built with performance artists. Examples of actions undertaken are:

- *Multiple visits to selected leading artists in the field of performance art to explain the objectives of the research:*
- *Sharing of overseas performance art information and materials*
- *Leading discussions in performance art symposium organized by performance artists*
- *Curating performance art festivals*
- *Assisting performance artists from an administration perspective*
- *Seeking funding for certain performance art events*

Once a trusting relationship had been built with the performance artist network and this research was recognized as an effort to promote Chinese performance art and systematically to record the development of Chinese performance art, the information gathering gained momentum and made satisfactory progress.

### **Interviewing the performance artists**

- *Identify the artists and the performance work conducted by them*
- Research was conducted into Chinese art history with a view to understanding the various eras of Chinese art. The research identified periods during which Chinese performance art developed its*

unique features, and, subsequently, identified the leading artists/ artistic groups together with their representative art work. A list of the names of the artists and their works was compiled and this forms part of the foundation for this research:

- *Undertake background research on the performance art work and the artists*

*Better understanding of the artists ensures a better appreciation of the artwork; it also helps build a sound working relationship with the artists, which is crucial to successful interviews, even before the first meeting with the artists*

- *Establish contacts with the artists directly or indirectly*

*As some of the listed performance artists have already left China or relocated to places that cannot be easily accessed, meetings and conference calls were conducted to gather telephone and/or email contacts for the artists selected for this research*

- *Approach the artists and convince the artists to undertake interviews*

*Some of the artists have been imprisoned due to the sensitive politic messages conveyed by their work. Consequently, given the artists' personal histories, some artists are less than keen to be interviewed and/or would not want to contribute to the research. Some of the artists who had, at first, agreed to be interviewed, subsequently turned down the interview; consequently, the information of certain listed artists and their work needed to be collected indirectly through connections with other artists or by making repeated invitations*

- *Planning for the interview*

*A set of interview questions were tailored for the interview and a consent form, in both Chinese and English, was designed to ensure the smooth running of the structured interviews and, more importantly, arrangements were made for the participating artists would be arranged to read, agree to and sign the consent form. Shortly before the interview, the artists to be interviewed were to be contacted to confirm precise interview date, time and venue. Interview dialogues and discussions were planned by revisiting the records of the performance as well as the interview questionnaires.*

- *Meet and interview the artists*

*As some of the performances included in this research were undertaken close to 20 years ago, the records, including the video, photograph and other archive materials of the performance were often not available for the first interview. In fact, some of the artists interviewed had difficulties providing accurate account of the performance. For instance, the time and date provided by one of*

*the participating artists of a group performance would be different from the dates given for the same performance by another participating artist. In this respect, more than one interview with the same artist(s) and multiple-artists needed to be organized in order to verify the accuracy of the records and details of the performance.*

*Post interview supplementary information follow up telephone discussion and meetings*

*As many artists do not have readily available materials or detailed records for their performance, especially for performances in the early 90s, follow up work was needed to ensure there was sufficient accurate information for the performances included in this research.*

## **Curating and participating performance art festivals/ events**

From 2006, in conjunction with the accelerated growth of the art districts in Beijing like the 798 Art District and the Beijing Olympic phenomenon, performance arts have aroused significant interest both in China and internationally. This has led to Chinese performance artists becoming more active. There has been strongly voiced desire to host joint China and overseas performance art festivals as well as larger scale multiple locations performance art events. With an aim to strengthening relationships with some of the performance artists included in the research and to gaining first hand access to research materials, the researcher took active steps to be part of performance art festivals or to assist in the design and execution of the performance art events. A list of the festivals and events is set out below:

### **Participation in the role of photographer**

- *The Third DaDao Live Art Festival, 2005*
- *The Sixth Open International Performance Art Festival, 2005*
- *China Live Performance Art Event, V&A Museum, 2006*
- *The Seventh Open International Performance Art Festival, 2006*
- *The Communication Campaign of China Live Festival, June-Alliance, 2007*
- *The Ninth Open International Performance Art Festival, 2008*
- *The Eighth Open International Performance Art Festival, 2007*

### **Participation in the role of Curator**

- *The Fourth DaDao Live Art Festival, 2006*
- *October Exhibition Beijing, 2006*
- *The Fifth DaDao Live Art Festival, 2007*

- *Xiamen Live Art Festival, Xiamen 2007*
- *Hong Kong On the Move, Hong Kong, 2007*
- *Shenzhen Live Art Festival, Shenzhen, 2007*
- *Hangzhou Live Art Festival, Hangzhou, 2007*
- *Macao Live Art Festival, Macao, 2007*
- *“Learning Curves” performance event, Beijing, 2007*

**Participation as Guest speaker:**

- *Informal European Theatre Meeting (“IETM”), 2006 (Speaker for Chinese Performance Art Development)*
- *Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum (“ACCF”), 2006*
- *China Art Performance Platform (“CAPP”) forum, 2007*
- *Seminar “BEYOND-China project” the Emio Greco Dance Group (artistic core of the International Choreographic Arts Centre in Amsterdam), Beijing 2009*
- *A4 Contemporary Art Center Performance Art Forum, 2010*
- *Fudan University Performance Art Forum, 2010*

**Participation in the role of Performance Art Researcher:**

- *Asia Art Archive (“AAA”) forum, 2006*
- *Hong Kong on the Move Performance Art Project, 2006*
- *Macao Museum of Art Performance Art Archive, meeting, 2006*
- *Starting from the Southwest Exhibition of Contemporary Art in Southwest China, 2007*
- *The Tenth Open International Performance Art Festival, 2010*
- *Action Script: Symposium on Performance Art Practice and Documentation in Asia, 2010*

**Participation offering Academic Support:**

- *“Eight Directions”: Sichuan-Beijing-Shanxi-Hunan-Chongqing-Hong Kong-Macao-Taiwan Performance Art Exchange Exhibition 2007*

**Selection, classification and editing process and procedures**

Over the course of the thesis preparation, a significant amount of information was collected for the purpose of this research. The information collected can be categorized as follows:

Type of information	Source of information
Photographs	Provided by artists (typically for performances before mid 90s)
Video footages	Taken by the researcher (typically for performances after 2006) Video footages are edited by researcher
Academic records/News papers/ Books/ Internet Articles	Archive in London (Live Art Development Agency), Manchester, (Manchester Chinese Art Center), Hong Kong (Asia Art Archive), Beijing (Asia Art Warehouse), Macao (Macao Art Museum)
Public records	Library in China, Hong Kong Chinese University Library, British Library. SOAS University London Library

The quality of some of the photographic and video documentary records had deteriorated over time. This could make part of the tasks of collecting a full archive on the Chinese performance art development difficult.

As part of the research process, in case the materials gathered covered a very important event or represented a specific era of the development of the performance art history, the artist would be approached again for better quality materials. Some of the photos collected could be “digital repaired” while some video footage would be converted from video tape format to digital format, which has enhanced flexibility for editing.

After the quality recovery process, the recovered information and material was organized according to the chronological sequence of the events. In some circumstances, multiple photographs were collected for a single performance art event. The photographs were arranged to show the chronological build up and development of the events. Where a combination of photographs could not be clearly set out in the chronological sequence of the performance art event, a brief description based on interviews and the academic and public records, if available was added to connect the photographs and reconstruct the event. The restructured photographs and the additional description were given to the performance artists for verification before they were finally included in the catalogue.

The video footage of the performance art events often included records of the preparation for the

performance events. These video footages were edited to portray the thoughts of the performance artists. They were sourced as part of a full performance festival that could stretch over the course of 4 weeks; the video footages were edited to include only the performances included in the appendix of the catalogue.

## Performance Art and Chinese Socio-economic Development

Performance art has been adopted by Chinese artists as one of the best tools of performance to break free from the dominant media and the constraints of the evolving social and political environment in China. Its development has been a long journey starting at the end of 1970s.

The end of Cultural Revolution marked the beginning of a long period of general socio-economic transformation and reform. Art in China witnessed significant changes along the way. Art was used as a medium for the Communist Party led by Chairman Mao Zedong to bring the party agendas and thoughts to the public. The messages that were delivered through this art and the artistic forms and mediums used to execute the delivery were controlled. Consequently, creative artistic ideas were restricted during the Cultural Revolution period.

However, “creative” artistic developments took place shortly after the Cultural Revolution ended. The art works of the post Cultural Revolution era were mainly represented by “Scar Art” and “Realism”. These works typically reflected the artists’ afterthoughts on the Cultural Revolution. However, if, as in the case of Wang Peng’s 1984 performance work [84’s performance], which included nudity, the artists’ thoughts and/or the means of expression the works violated the accepted norms. This could very often be the case and, at the time of performance, the artists and their works could face challenges from the law enforcement agencies like the earliest example of forced closure of “Star Art Exhibition”<sup>5</sup>, and the “China Modern Art Exhibition”<sup>6</sup> in 1989. Thus, the early performance art works could not be performed at public art exhibitions. Many artists recorded and shared their works by photographs to avoid the intervention of the law enforcement agencies.

The pace of Chinese socio-economic reform accelerated at the start of the 1990s. The exchange of information between China and the U.S. as well as between China and Europe was more frequent and more open and this led to increased influences from overseas performance art work on Chinese artists. A variety of new mediums of expression stimulated the creative thought of Chinese artists, the new generation artists, in particular. In the meantime, Chinese society was also undergoing changes but the new ideas and thoughts were only reaching a small, limited group of people. There

seemed to be a mismatch between the public’s perception on performance art and what had been gained (from the rapid socio-economic developments by some performance art artists This created misunderstanding, and performance art began to be labeled as a provocative art form that could lead to social disorder. There were incidences where performances were stopped or artists were sentenced to jail:

- *October 1994: Ma Liuming and a group of East village artists are conducting performance in East Village, Beijing. Ma Liuming and Zhu Ming are arrested by the public security bureau officers during their performance. The artists are accused of “conducting obscene performances in the name of art” and are jailed for two months before they are later sent back to their home towns.*

- *June 2007: The opening of the June-Alliance is meant to take place at the performing artist Yang Dawei’s personal studio “Ou” Contemporary Art Space. However, the venue was changed to the “Coincident” Art Space due to mounting police pressure. Some artists and the event crew are questioned by the police and then decide to leave the festival.<sup>7</sup>*

- *June 2010: The First Casual Art Festival takes place. Due to conflict between the Songzhuan Art Management Committee and the festival organizers, 5 artists whose performance involves nudity are arrested by the police. Later Shen Yun, one of the 5 artists who is arrested and charged with assault.*

There were performance art works involving the use of dead bodies that were reported by the press. These performances, together with selected examples of performance art works, which involved nudity and the use of blood in the works, attracted bad publicity and received negative criticism. The Chinese Ministry of Culture even issued Wenzhengfafa [2001] No. 14,<sup>8</sup> the official circular addressing the problem of performing or displaying act of bloody, violent and indecent scenes in the name of “art”. An extract of the circular is set out below:

In recent years, a small number of people in some regions perform or display bloody, violent and indecent scenes in public places by means of self-injury, torture of animals or display of human or animal bodies under the mask of “art”, and, also, spread them through illegal channels. These ugly behaviours violate the state law, disturb the social order, degrade social conduct, do harm to the

physical and psychological health of the public and have bad social influence. In order to maintain social order, purify cultural environment and eliminate cultural rubbish, we shall resolutely prohibit such performing behaviours, or displaying bloody, violent and indecent scenes in the name of “art” according to the state’s laws and regulations; and have those who violate the criminal laws bear penal responsibilities.

The circular did not stop performance arts. In fact, the number of performance art works conducted after the publication of the circular steadily increased. However, the use of blood and nudity to deliver the artists’ message decreased.

As China continues to gain importance and emerges as one of the next global superpowers, its interaction with the rest of the world is becoming more global and China is becoming receptive to new ideas. Global topics such as environmental protection have started to influence performance artists’ creative thoughts. Some performance artists, who have participated in world-class art festivals like the Venice Biennials are exploring new ways to execute their ideas. These artists draw freely on different media, such as literature, poetry, theatre, music, dance, architecture and painting, as well as video, film, slides and narrative to formulate their work. Artist Xing Xin is one of the performance artists who have successfully created their own definition of performance art in the very process and manner of execution.

June 2010: [*Meditation on Floating Ice*] [ill.141] conducted by Xing Xin and a team of artists and collaborators. The group collected a piece of ice from the Glacier at the headwaters of the Yangtze River and kept the ice in portable refrigerating equipment. The ice was then carried by cross-country vehicles to the estuary of the Yangtze River in Shanghai before its melting into the East China Sea.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the broadening of topics as well as execution methodologies, there has been a commercialization of certain performance art works. The ideas and methodologies adopted in artist Liu Bolin’s [*Hiding in the City*]<sup>10</sup> series attracted the attention of global luxury brands such as Missoni and Jean Paul Gaultier and was put to commercial use. These developments not only

demonstrate the growing importance and appreciation of Chinese performance art, but also help change the public’s perception of performance art in China – a shift from provocative to positively creative.

Socio-economic development in China has introduced a new range of topics and a variety of methodologies to performance art in China. The performance art works of recent years have gradually moved away from the “traditional” works. These recent performance art works promoted interpretive individualism. The most significant characteristic of these performance art works was using wide range of new mediums to deliver the thoughts of the artists.

### **The Three Major Eras of Development of Performance Art in China**

It is not an easy task to categorize the information collected for research purposes. The first performance art works date back to 1979, and over 2000 pieces of performance art works, conducted over a 30-year period are included. The grouping and categorization are based on the following criteria:

- *The typical background of the artists when performing the work*
- *The common influencing factors affecting the artists’ ideas or thoughts*
- *The common methodologies adopted to execute the ideas or thoughts by the artists*

Based on these criteria, the 31 years of performance art works could be divided into 3 periods:

#### **1. From 1979 to 1989 – The emerging stage of Performance Art in the post Cultural Revolution China**

The typical background of the artists performing the work was that of university students and academics who had channels, for example, overseas literatures, through which they came into contact with Western performance art in the post Cultural Revolution era. Some performance artists also gained experience, albeit limited, of performance art from visiting performance artists such as the cultural and academic exchange visits made by the Hong Kong based performance artist Kwok Mengho<sup>11</sup> [ill.1]. Most of the performance works took place in Beijing.

“Making a breakthrough” and expressing the desire for freedom are the common themes of performance art works performed in post Cultural Revolution China. The breakthroughs took

different forms but they were often related to the artists' wish to free their "mind" and "body". "Unfolding" and "Untying" were the concepts adopted by performance artists. For instance, in the works performed by the Concept 21 group, [*Performance Activity: 52 hours of unfolding Action*]<sup>12</sup> on the 23 December 1986 at the campus of Beijing university, and Sheng Qi's [*Concept 21. Tai Chi*]<sup>13</sup> [ill.15] performed at the Great wall in 1988, the artists are first tied up with bonds and then break free as the works end. In addition, the artists often used their bodies alone as the means of expression without utilizing other media.

## **2.From 1990 to 1999 – The developmental stage of Performance Art during the rigorous socio-economic reform**

As China experienced unprecedented socio-economic reform and started to open up to the rest of the world in the 1990s, performance art works started to take place in different parts of the country. The most prominent performance art community was the East Village artists, who resided in the Eastern part of Beijing. Due to the specific economic circumstances in the early 1990s, the artists in the East Village were living in poor conditions and often created performance art works to share their difficulties surviving as performance artists in times of rapid socio-economic reform. The East Village artists typically used their bodies as the medium to express their thoughts and ideas and their works often contained nudity.

The artists in this period and their works significantly influenced the performance artists of the next generation and their work. Some of the performance art works in this period were publicized albeit in limited circulation. Towards the mid 1990s, the works performed by some of the East Village artists drew the attention of foreign art critics and curators. Some of these artists, such as Zhang Huan, Ma Liuming, Zhu Ming and Cang Xin later had the opportunity to travel overseas to share their works.

China has continued to open up as the socio-economic reform has had a positive impact on the country. As a result, ideas and thoughts were shared and flowed into and out of the country, benefitting the development of performance art.

## **3.From 2000 to 2010 – The rapid growth stage of Performance Art as China gains global influences**

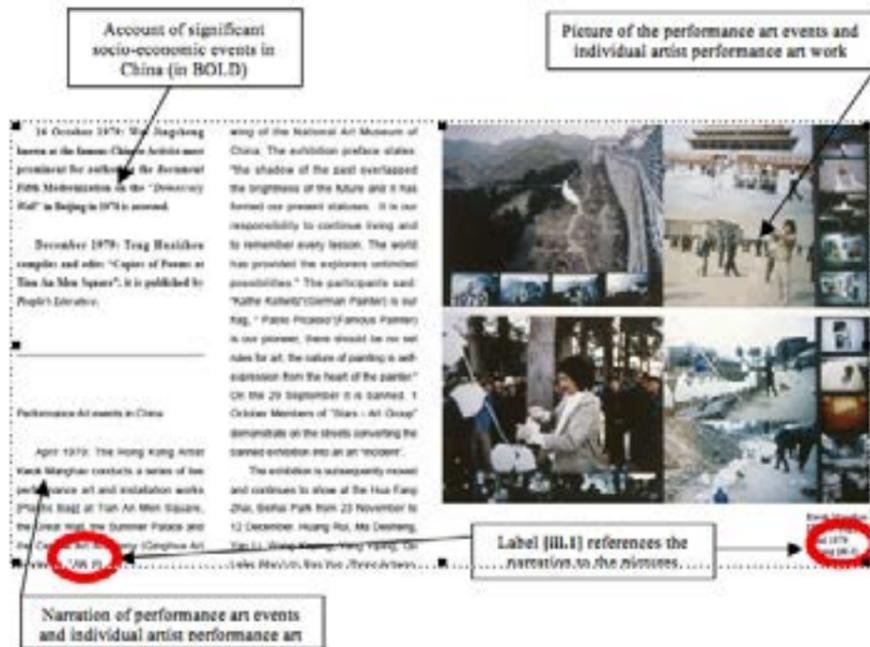
At the beginning of this period, performance artists and their works were affected by the bad press and the publication of the Wenzhengfafa [2001] No. 14. The impact was both positive and negative. The performance artists were facing pressure to avoid using blood, nudity or obscenity to convey their ideas. On one hand, the limitation restricted the creative ideas and expression in their works. On the other hand, the performance artists were forced to look for other means of delivery and explore methods that could help them to express their thoughts and ideas. These developments, in conjunction with the growing strength and wealth of the country, have broadened and accelerated the development of performance art.

In this period, performance art works were conducted by artists from a wide range of backgrounds ranging from professional to secondary school students and both the ideas and thoughts of the works as well as the expression of the ideas have evolved at an amazing speed.

The "underground" nature of performance art gradually changed over the course of the development. Performance art has gained wider acceptance Performance art has been put on in theatres (The Fourth DaDao Live Art Festival, 2006)<sup>14</sup>. Some performance artists have excelled on the international art stage as their performance art works have reached an international audience. These works, for example, Xing Xin's [*Black Box*]<sup>15</sup> [ill.135] performance work conducted at the 53rd Venice biennials in 2009 no longer used provocative means to attract the attention of or to interact with their audiences.

## **Guide on Navigating the Performance Art Development Catalogue**

The chronological account of the development of performance art from 1979 - 2010 is set out in the catalogue in the following format:



As an integral part of the research, some 10-hours of video footage of selected recordings of performance art events and works have been prepared as supplement to the narratives and pictures shown in the catalogue.<sup>16</sup>

February 1989: Xiao Lu presented an installation/performance work [Dialogue] as part of the "China Modern Art Exhibition" held in the National Art Museum of China, Beijing. Xiao Lu's installation work boldly used objects that were commonly seen in our daily life as the subject, for example, the telephone booth. It consisted of two telephone booths with a red phone in between. A young couple dressed like students were making phone calls in the respective telephone booth. The telephone booths were set upon concrete slab paving ground, indicating that this was a public space such as a street or a square. Approximately two hours after the opening of "China Modern Art Exhibition", Xiao Lu fired two gunshots at her own installation [Dialogue].<sup>17</sup>[Ill. 1] [Video 1.1]

Label [Video 1.1] references the folder number of the video footage

- 1 See reference: Waldemar Januszczak Beijing Swings channel four Documentary on Chinese Contemporary art 2003
- 2 See catalogue: third stage from 2000-2010, page 200 Zhu Yu [Eating Foetus] performance process and photography of this performance illustration [ill.74].
- 3 Shu Yang, an independent curator. One of the founders of Open International Performance Art Festival and DaDao Live Art Festival.
- 4 The Curator of Qianti Performance Art Festival Wang Jun was agreed to share the festival's information and video with me in 2009, when it comes to the date that we had agreed to meet, he didn't turn up. I cannot could not reach him anymore; he just disappeared not returning any of my calls or emails. After about a year, he contacted me saying that, due to some artists' works which are being political sensitive, he could no longer share the information or videos with me.
- 5 See catalogue: first stage from 1979-1989 page 48 for details of the Star Art Exhibition.
- 6 See catalogue: first stage from 1979-1989 page 76 for details of the China Modern Art Exhibition
- 7 See catalogue: third stage from 2000-2010 page 276 for details of this event, see also video footage June Alliance 2007 attached with this catalogue.
- 8 See reference: South China., 2001. A Notice to Performance Art Issued by Ministry of Culture [online] Available at: <<http://www.southcn.com/news/gdnews/hotspot/qqbzwxwys/xwysjs/200212010226.htm>> [Accessed May 2005].
- 9 See catalogue: third stage 2000-2010, page 322 for details of the work.
- 10 See catalogue: third stage 2000-2010, page 256, 257, 260, 261, 321, 342 for [Hiding in the City] series of performance work.
- 11 See Catalogue: first stage 1979-1989, page 48 for Kwok Menghao's performance [Plastic Bag]
- 12 See catalogue: first stage 1979-1989, page 60 for concept 21 group [Performance Activity: 52 hours of unfolding Action].
- 13 See catalogue: first stage 1979-1989, page 74 for concept 21 [Tai Chi].
- 14 See catalogue: third stage 2000-2010, page 269 for the Fourth DaDao Live Art Festival.
- 15 See catalogue: third stage 2000-2010, page 303 for Xing Xin's [Black Box].
- 16 See table of content: Video

1979 to 1989

The Emerging Stage of Performance Art  
in The Post Cultural Revolution China

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## Introduction for First Stage 1979-1989

### System and Functions of Chinese Art

In talking about the creation and development of Chinese performance art, it is inevitable to mention the early art system in China. The creation of performance art is inseparable from and Chinese environment, politics and institutions. When the nation was founded in 1949, with Marxism as the political party ideology, art in China was infused with political dogma. Art, as a product with certain symbolic significance, mainly revolved around praising and supporting the government and political party to build a new image for new China.

From 1949 to 1976, the Chinese art that emerged was an "integration" of art that centered on Maoism. This period is characterized by Maoism, which is also known as "Mao's art". Maoism, together with literary and artistic thoughts, profoundly influenced the direction of Chinese art creations and had absolute dominance. Artists of this period were the first literary warriors, followed by artists, art workers including teachers from art institutions, actors and all the others who were forced strictly to obey the regulatory system in art institutions and in the cadre in order to be allowed to engage in activities related to national consciousness when needed. The function of the cadre system is mainly reflected in the following two aspects:

#### 1. Organization

Art creations in the new China were carried out under the national unified organization. This is to say, the subject matter, content, form, style and other aspects of the creation of purposeful and planned activities had to meet specific requirements. The government would give clear instructions for art creation in accordance with the prevailing ideology in different historical periods. For example, the Ministry of Culture issued instructions regarding the creation of Spring Festival arts in November 1949. Teachers at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts also received a task to create a batch of revolutionary history paintings.<sup>1</sup>

#### 2. Management

The cadre system in the artistic regimen in new China was a part of a planned socialist economy. It was responsible for a person from his birth to his death and everything involving his life such as real estate registration, enrollment, graduation assignments, job promotions, marriages, wages, housing, basic food rations, political rights, benefits, pension, which, basically, meant everything

Under this highly regulated system, the society of new China was organized according to a unified

method. It was difficult to imagine there could be any personal living space outside the system. The life of the artist and the national regulatory system were intertwined. Freedom of artistic expression was, therefore, non-existent and artistic creativity was reduced; hence, many art movements and art forms gradually vanished.

### **Transitional Period for Art**

With the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, and the collapse of the "Gang of Four",<sup>2</sup> Chinese society as a whole underwent a transitional period of reform and opening up. Henceforth, the development of art entered a new course. "Scar Art" and "Realism" were the representatives of this period. This undoubtedly also indicated people's reflections on the Cultural Revolution and the emancipation of thought. Starting with the "Stars" art exhibition in 1979,<sup>3</sup> art in China entered a critical moment culminating in 1985 with the beginning of New Wave art. With the opening ceremony of the *China Modern Art* Exhibition,<sup>4</sup> Western modernism and art and culture began to influence young artists who started to reflect on the social and cultural values in China.

Before the Cultural Revolution, not to mention additional innovation on arts, government control meant that no form of arts was allowed to have any unofficial, individualistic features. After a decade of isolation, the Chinese people began to realize that they were falling behind and that they were inadequate in various aspects. When the government started to loosen its grip on censorship compared to that exercised during the Cultural Revolution, artists and the general public were longing for freedom of expression in the gradually opening China. The Western concept of art spread to China through a few art magazines in the late seventies and early eighties. However, this information could generally only be retrieved in colleges, which limited the ability of the general Chinese public to understand art in the West. Performance art also began to emerge in China in the 1980s. Artists started to gain some understanding of performance art through the early Fine Arts in China and magazines that introduced performance art in the West. At that time, the term "performance art" had still not appeared in China. It was mostly termed "Action Art". Many other names were introduced later such as "Body Art", "Unfolding Action", "Live Art", amongst others. New Wave artists, under the influence of Western culture, were no longer willing to return to conventional approaches to creation. They strived to free themselves from conventional conceptual approaches. From their perspective, traditional artistic creation, values and ideals, as well as thought were restricting them from pursuing modern art. New Wave artists, therefore, made use of innovative artistic styles and concepts to create art. The emergence of performance art undoubtedly subverted

traditional arts and visual arts. Artists and audiences were longing for freedom of expression in the gradually opening China

### **Impact of Western Ideas on Influencing Early Performance Art in China**

Before the reform and more open political policy, China had isolated itself from the world. Access to Western thought, arts and philosophy was mainly through foreign publications in college libraries, for example philosophical publications such as Freud, Sartre and Camus. Intellectuals and artists greater freedom of thought compared to that of the general public. They had a strong desire for what was foreign. This can be traced back to November 1985 when the National Art Museum of China held an exhibition of the American pop art artist Robert Rauschenberg.<sup>5</sup> This exhibition was the first avant-garde exhibition that the National Art Museum of China had ever held. The exhibition, filled with pop art and Dada style art collections, attracted more than 300,000 visitors in just three weeks. The appearance of Robert Rauschenberg allowed Chinese artists to examine contemporary artistic forms in the West closely and to learn that, beside canvases, they could also use their bodies, waste, finished products to create art. This stimulated Chinese avant-garde artists and thus indirectly led to the emergence of pioneer creativity such as performance art. My research on performance art in China supports this thesis.

In my research in performance art in China, by interviewing different artists, I learnt that many of those who staged performance art in the eighties were from colleges. Among the interviewees, were Sheng Qi and Xi Jianjun, two of the "Concept 21" members from China Central Academy of Fine Arts, Ding Yi, Qin Yifeng and Zhang Guoliang from Fine Arts College Shanghai University, as well as Ma Liuming from Hubei Institute of Fine Arts.<sup>6</sup> They became acquainted with Western performance art from magazines and photos housed in the campus libraries, which included performance art photos by Yves Klein, *empaquetage* by Christo and also Joseph Beuys who were greatly admired by Chinese artists. Information about the West, especially about Western arts, was limited to academics at that time. Most of the interviewees remember being very shocked when they came across the information about performance art. They were thrilled to learn that this pioneer and avant-garde art creation broke the rules of conventional art since artists using their own bodies or incorporating behavior as the main elements in creations were rare in China. They regarded this as an effective and direct method of making art. Hence, they started to explore the possibilities of performance art.

Artists who participated in performance art creations in 1986 were mostly active participants in the "85 Art Movement". "85 Art Movement", presented to the public an avant-garde art movement and was an important element in Chinese modern art movement. Its linguistic dimension was similar to the western modernism. In addition to the art movements, pioneer novels, poetry, music, as well as art and philosophy that were influenced by the West had an unprecedented impact on and brought freedom to young artists who returned to their institutes after the end of the Cultural Revolution. Performance art was also regarded as a type of post-modern art in the West. Young Chinese artists, after the exposure to influential ideology, were certainly attracted by performance art and began to create performance art creations throughout the country.

### The Emergence of Performance Art

During the process of research and interviews with artists, it emerged that the earliest performance art creation in China took place in Beijing in April 1979. It was created by Kwok Mangho, a visiting artist from Hong Kong, who taught at the School of Design at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Kwok Mangho, better known as the "Frog King", loves to use frogs as a subject in his creation. His [*Plastic Bag*] [ill.1]: at the Great Wall is the earliest example of performance art in China.

In April 1979, Kwok was invited to participate in the Hong Kong Design and Art Exhibition. At that time, 16 people participated in the exhibition. This event is the earliest exchange activity co-organized by the Dean of Hong Kong First Institute of Art and Design Lui Lap Fun and the Dean of Central Academy of Industrial Arts and Design Zhang Ting. Kwok showed the production method of his fire sculpture and improvised a number of performances and installations during the exhibition. He tied plastic bags with a rope to the Great Wall, the Summer Palace, the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square and the Central Academy of Craft and Art (now the Academy of Art and Design of Tsinghua University) and let the plastic bags flutter in the breeze. After securing these plastic bags, the finished product became an environmental installation. Kwok's daring art performance inspired the students at the academy. Inspired by Kwok, students began to stage a series of performance experiments after he left the Academy, in which it included rolling a gigantic tire coated with pigments on drawing paper.<sup>8</sup>

Kwok brought influential new art forms to the students at that time. However, the actual development of performance art can be traced back to the mid-eighties. Kwok inspired and stimulated the students who contemplated his performance art installation at various tourist attractions and schools

in Beijing. However, it was not until the mid-eighties, after Kwok had left, that performance art creations began to grow properly throughout China.

### The Early Forms of Performance Art

Performance Art began to develop throughout China in the mid-eighties and was adopted by increasing numbers of artists. Individual performances were rare during this period. It mostly developed in groups in different cities. As mentioned previously, artists Ding Yi, Qin Yifeng, Zhang Guoliang in Shanghai, Concept 21 in Beijing, the Song brothers Song Yonghong and Song Yongping in Shanxi and the "Chi Community" in Hangzhou began to create through collaboration almost at the same time. We have seen earlier in this paper that art in China under Mao since the establishment of the Maoist government in 1949 appeared to demonstrate uniform style and format. Interestingly, early performance art works also displayed similar nature. For instances:

1. Draping their bodies. By draping their bodies, artists used this masochistic-like behavior to reflect their strong desire to liberate themselves from suppression through social, artistic and political movements. This suggested a feeling of bondage and breakthroughs and implied a healing mentality. This was also born out of the restricted national condition in which everyone's background in terms of education, living environment and family was very similar, and, therefore, all kinds of art exhibitions were rather conventional. Examples of performance art in which artists staged performances by wrapping their bodies in cloth included: the creation of A Scenic Personal Experience by the Song brothers Song Yongping and Song Yonghong at the Workers Cultural Palace at Taiyuan in Shanxi in November 1986; the formation of Concept 21 by Sheng Qi, Zheng Yuke, Xi Jianjun, Kang Mu, Zhao Jianhai at Peking University in December 1986; the Wrapping Up Series: King and Queen by Zhang Peili and Geng Jianyi in Hangzhou in 1987; the Suicide Project by Wei Guangqing in Wuhan in 1988; the Last Supper by Li Shan, Sun Liang, Song Haidong, Zhou Changjiang, Pei Jing, Li Xianting, Wu Liang and, staged in Shanghai in December 1988.<sup>9</sup>

2. Group performance art. The year 1986 saw the development of performance art in various parts of China. In the same year, different forms of performance art activities were staged in Beijing, Shanghai, Shanxi, Guangzhou and Hangzhou by artists who participated in performance art production for the first time. Interestingly, performance art in this period was conducted in groups, almost without any individual performance. Artists were mainly students from colleges or graduates. Among those who staged performances in the form of groups were Chi Community in Hangzhou,

Zhejiang, Southern Artists Sha Long in Guangzhou, Concept 21 in Beijing, the Song brothers in Shanxi, Ding Yi, Zhang Guoliang and Qin Yifeng in Shanghai.<sup>10</sup>

Performance art in the 1980s continued to grow across the country, which delighted the avant-garde artists. Many artists started to stage performance art creations. The China Modern Art Exhibition held by the National Art Museum of China in 1989 marked another culmination of performance art.

### 89 China Modern Art Exhibition

The China Modern Art Exhibition was held on 7 February 1989 in Beijing. The exhibition began with the Grand Slideshow and Symposium on the Art Trends of 85 co-organized by the Fine Arts in China and the Zhuhai Painting Institutes in August 1986. The idea of organizing the nationwide exhibition was to showcase the 85 New Wave art, which was considered essential to promoting the development of modernism. Gao Minglu and Li Xianting were originally chosen to be responsible for the overall design of the Young Artists' Academic Exchange Exhibition, which was to have been held in July 1987 at the Beijing Agricultural Exhibition Hall. However, due to the rise of the criticism of the "bourgeois freedom" movement, the exhibition could not put on national academic activities, hence, was not approved by the relevant department and was stopped.

In October 1988, the Preparatory Committee for the China Modern Art Exhibition was established to discuss the exhibition to be held from 7 February to 19 February 1989. The Committee started publicly to collect works throughout China, though works that could distinctively show the artists concepts. The Committee also issued an "Exhibition Preparatory Notice":

*"The China Modern Art Exhibition offers the first relatively large-scale and comprehensive display of modern art concepts and spirits directed at society as well as domestic and foreign culture spheres. It will assemble the interests, disputes, and evaluations of the major trends in artistic thought and practice in recent years. This will reveal the value and significance of modern art to the development of contemporary Chinese culture. The exhibition will act as a high-level activity for the interaction and study of modern art while promoting the pluralistic development of Chinese art."*<sup>11</sup>

As the first avant-garde exhibition organized in China by the Chinese themselves, the China Modern Art Exhibition had special status that symbolized that China was moving towards the path of modernism and gradually abandoning conventional artistic concepts. Even though the exhibition

adopted an open approach to publicly select collected works, participating artists, in the end, were those featured new wave artists who had had their works published in major magazines which included *Fine Arts in China*, *Art Trends*, *Jiangsu Pictorial* and the two journals *Art* and *Painter* after 1985. In addition, many of those in the Preparatory Committee were new, young critics. As a result, avant-garde installations were featured in the National Art Museum of China and the venue was treated as an image of the country. At that time, the Preparatory Committee of the *China Modern Art* Exhibition stated that performance art productions were not allowed in the exhibition. However, at least six performance art works were staged, if only because the artists did not notify the Committee in advance. These performances included Zhang Nian's performance of [*Hatching eggs*] [ill.20],<sup>12</sup> Wang Deren's performance of featuring a huge silky condom in the venue and scattering his name cards with condoms,<sup>13</sup> Wu Shanzhuan's [*Big Business*] [ill.19]<sup>14</sup> and many more. However, since Xiao Lu opened fire and took two shots at her own work the [*Dialogue*] [ill.16] [Video 1.1],<sup>15</sup> the exhibition was forcefully shut down. Yet, performance art did not come to an end in China; it attracted even more artists to join the ranks of creatives. The *China Modern Art* Exhibition in 1989 was not just a convergence or summary of Chinese modern art in the 1980s; it also had an impact on the art of the 1990s.

1. A History of Chinese Fine Arts 1949 - 2000 by Zhou Yuejin Page 8
2. The Gang of Four controlled the power organs of the Communist Party of China through the latter stages of the Cultural Revolution, although it remains unclear which major decisions were made by Mao Zedong and carried out by the Gang.
3. See page 48 for details information on Stars Group art Exhibition.
4. See page 76 for details information on China Modern Art Exhibition.
5. See further reference on A History of Chinese Fine Arts 1949—2000 by Zhou Yuejin page 127
6. From an interview with Ma Liuming in Beijing 2006 and 2009.
7. See Catalogue first stage 1979-1989 page 48
8. From an interview with Kwok Mengho in Hong Kong in 2006.
9. See Catalogue first stage 1979-1989 page 75
10. See Catalogue first stage 1979-1989 page 57, 59
11. See further information on A History of Chinese Fine Arts 1949—2000 by Zhou Yuejin and China Contemporary Art History by Lu Peng, Yi Dan.
12. See Catalogue first stage 1979-1989 page 45
13. See Catalogue first stage 1979-1989 page 77
14. See Catalogue first stage 1979-1989 page 79
15. See Catalogue first stage 1979-1989 page 76 and Video Folder 1.1 Xiao Lu for video footage.

## Significant Events in China 1979

1 January 1979: China and The United States of America establishes diplomatic relations. Premier Deng Xiaoping is invited to pay an official visit to the United States of America, making him the first leader of the People's Republic of China to visit the United States.

January 1979: The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China announces the Notice of Border Defense and Counter Attack Against Vietnam. The self defense and counter attack begin on 17 February 1979 and end on 16 March 1979.

16 - 23 February 1979: an informal discussion on criticism in literary theory is held by the editorial department of Art Paper. It is hosted by Feng Mu and Kong Luosun and Zhou Yang, Lin Mohan and Chen Huangmei are in attendance and give speeches. The discussion mainly criticizes views that over-simplified the relationship between art and politics. The discussion also counters the accusations brought against liberating ideas and certain thoughts and activities contained in art and literature. Hu Yaobang, one of the most influential Communist Party members and politicians, supports the discussion.

20 February 1979: A signed article is published in The People's Daily declaring "Art needs Democracy"

10 June 1979: A long and strongly worded letter criticizes the publication of a screenshot from a foreign movie Crystal Shoes and Rose depicting a kiss. The photo is printed at the bottom of a page in the 5th edition of Popular Movie. The letter, written by Wen Yingjie - a propaganda officer in Regiment 129 of Xinjiang Production and Construction Army, criticizes the "evil intention" behind its publication calling the magazine "shameless" and claiming the magazine had stooped to "such a level as to be no different than a capitalist magazine".

16 October 1979: Wei Jingsheng, the famous Chinese Activist, best known for being the author of the document Fifth Modernization on the "Democracy Wall" in Beijing in 1978, is arrested.

December 1979: Copies of Poems at Tian'anmen Square, compiled and edited by Tong Huaizhou, is published by People's Literature.

## Performance Art events in China 1979

April 1979: The Hong Kong Artist Kwok Mangho is invited to participate in an exchange program between Hong Kong Da Yi Design College and Central Academy of Craft and Art in Beijing. During this visit, Kwok Mangho conducts a series of live performance art and installation works [*Plastic Bag*] at Tian'anmen Square, the Great Wall, the Summer Palace and the Central Academy of Art and Craft (Qinghua Art Academy). Kwok Manghao ties many plastic bags together on a rope and hangs them on the Great wall, in between trees at the Summer Palace and in Tian'anmen Square. [ill. 1]

September – December 1979: The “Stars - Group Art Exhibition” is held in the small garden on the east wing of the National Art Museum of China; the exhibition preface states: “the shadow of the past overlapped the brightness of the future and it has formed our present statuses. It is our responsibility to continue living and to remember every lesson. The world has provided the explorers unlimited possibilities.” The participants said: “Kathe Kollwitz (German Painter) is our flag, Pablo Picasso (Famous Painter) is our pioneer, there should be no set rules for art; the nature of painting is self-expression from the heart of the painter.” On the 29 September, the exhibition

is banned. 1 October Members of “Stars - Art Group” demonstrate on the streets converting the banned exhibition into an art “incident”.

The exhibition is subsequently moved and continues at the Hua Fang Zhai, Beihai Park from 23 November to 12 December. Art work from artists Huang Rui, Ma Desheng, Yan Li, Wang Keping, Yang Yiping, Qu Leilei, Mao Lizi, Bao Yun, Zhong Acheng, Shao Fei, Li Shuang and Ai Weiwei were included in the exhibition. <sup>2</sup>

## Significant Events in China 1980-1984

23 February 1980: China attended the 13th Olympic Games in the USA.

23 - 29 February 1980: The Fifth Plenary Session of the 11th Conference of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party is held in Beijing, in which the “Resolution to Restore the Good Name of Liu Shaoqi”(Chairman of China from 1959 - 1968) is passed. The solemn memorial service for Liu Shaoqi is held in Beijing on 17 May 1980.

24 March 1980: The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party held a meeting in Guangzhou in which the Guandong and Fujian Provinces were officially named ‘Special Export Zone’ and ‘Special Economic Zone’, respectively.



Kwok Manghao  
[*Plastic Bag*]  
April 1979  
Beijing [ill. 1]

1 April 1980: The State Council authorizes the Bank of China to issue domestic Foreign Currency Exchange Certificates. As per State Council regulations, Foreign Currency Exchange (FCE) certificates are RMB certificates with foreign currency values. All foreigners, overseas Chinese, and Hong Kong and Macao Residents have to exchange their foreign currency for Foreign Currency Exchange certificates when entering China and use them in designated areas for the assigned RMB value. Some highly sought-after commodities not normally available to people using RMB are accessible to those using FCE certificates. Regulations prohibit citizens from exchanging currencies privately, and the difference between official and black-market exchange rates is marked.

20 November - 25 January 1980: The Supreme Court's Special Court opens proceedings against the 10 main criminals of the Lin Biao and Jiang Qin groups. Lin Biao is officially condemned as a traitor by the Communist Party of China. He and Jiang Qing are still considered the two "major Counter-revolutionary cliques" blamed for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution.

27 June 1981: The Chinese Communist Party passes the Resolutions of Various Historical Issues since the Founding of the Republic resolution and officially criticizes and denies the Cultural Revolution.

26 August 1981: For the first time, Premier Deng Xiaoping openly advocates his idea of 'one country, two systems' in a meeting with the Taiwanese V.I.P Mr. Fu Chaoshu.

16 November 1981: The Chinese Women's Volleyball Team wins the match against Japan clinching the first place at the 3rd Volleyball World Cup Tournament, turning the girls into national heroes overnight.

13 March 1982: Planned birth (One Child policy) is made national policy.

1 July 1982: The 3rd national population census shows that China's population has exceeded the one billion mark.

1-11 September 1982: Premier Deng Xiaoping advances his idea 'Build socialism with Chinese characteristics'.

24 September 1982: Premier Deng Xiaoping meets Margaret Thatcher and sets out the Chinese stance on the ownership of Hong Kong.

7 - 16 October 1982: A submarine-launched rocket is successfully tested.

12 February 1983: CCTV (China Central Television) broadcasts, live, the Spring Festival evening gala.

13 March 1983: The Chinese Communist Party

Central Committee holds a solemn meeting in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx. More than 10,000 people attend.

21 November 1983: The National University of Defense Technology successfully completes research and construction of its first super computer "Galaxy-1" which is capable of 100 million calculations per minute. The birth of the Galaxy-1 super computer fills the domestic vacuum in super-computer technology, signifying China's emergence as a global player in computer research and manufacture.

11 December 1983: The use of "Cloth Certificate", a certificate allowing holders to redeem cloth, is put to a stop. This symbolizes the end of the material shortage era.

3 January 1984: At the Central Party School the prominent politician Hu Qiaomu makes the speech 'On Problems of Humanism and Alienation'. A revised edition of his speech is published in Theory Monthly and it is later reprinted in full in the People's Daily on 27 January and in the second edition of Red Flag. 'On Problems of Humanism and Alienation'

criticizes Karl Marx's Theory of Alienation. Discussions on alienation begin in the early 80s.

9 March 1984: A young Chinese scholar, Xun Rigang, successfully breeds the world's first 'test tube' goat in association with Japanese researchers.

22 June 1984: In a meeting with important figures in Hong Kong, Premier Deng Xiaoping promises that the capitalist system and ways of life would remain unchanged for the next 50 years after Hong Kong's return to China. The People's Republic of China and United Kingdom jointly announce 'The Joint Statement of China and Britain' relating to the future of Hong Kong.

29 July 1984: Xu Haifeng, a Chinese Olympic Pistol shooter wins Gold at the Los Angeles Olympic Games, receiving China's first gold medal since the creation of the PRC.

26 September 1984: In Beijing, the British and Chinese Governments draft a Joint Declaration on Hong Kong concerning Hong Kong issues.

## Performance Art Events in China 1984

1984: Wang Peng conducts [*84's Performance*] at the Central Academy of Fine Art's Middle School in Beijing. With the help of his classmates, the artist smears ink all over his body and makes imprints on Chinese rice paper.<sup>3</sup>[ill. 2]



Wang Peng  
[*84's Performance*]  
1984  
Beijing [ill.2]

Wang Peng  
[*84's Performance*]  
1984  
Beijing [ill.2]



## Significant Events in China 1985

15 February 1985: The first Chinese research station at the South Pole, known as “Great Wall Station” is built on George Island, marking China’s entry on the new stage of scientific research at the South Pole.

27 February 1985: The Chinese Youth League’s Central Committee calls on teenagers throughout China to learn and utilize 10 “civilized” words in daily life including: “please”, “how are you”, “thank you” and “bye-bye”.

23 May to 6 June 1985: The Central Committee Military Commission holds a large meeting. Deng Xiaoping announces that the Chinese Government has decided to reduce its troop numbers by 1 million.

6 September 1985: The Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress passes and publishes the Regulations of Identity Card of Civilians of the People’s Republic of China resolution. ID cards have been issued to citizens since then.

## Performance Art Events in China 1985

6 July 1985: The China Art Paper is published for the first time. Closing down in 1989, the magazine is only issued for four and a half years; however, during its short life, the China Art Paper establishes itself as a champion of the development of art in China as well as the witness to the “85-modernized art movement”.

November 1985: Wu Guangyao, a student from the Central Academy of Craft and Art, arrives on campus and wraps himself as a parcel in Peking University.<sup>4</sup>

November - December 1985: Prominent American artist, Robert Rauschenberg visits China. For the first time in its history, the National Art Museum of China hosts an avant-garde exhibition – an extremely stimulating and novel experience for most of its Chinese visitors. Many Chinese artists begin to emulate each other in the exhibition, producing ‘ready-mades’, pop art and Dada style works almost overnight. This phenomenon continues for quite some time. This exhibition opens for 3 weeks and closes on 5 December 1985 attracting approximately 300,000 visitors from all over China.

December 1985 - January 1986: Liu Yun, Shi Qiang and a total of 15 members from art groups, 0 Art Group, Towards Lhasa and 0 Art Group of Hunan hold the first art exhibition at Fu Xiang Art Gallery at Changsha Martyr’s Park, at which 88 art works are shown. Ready-made

installation works are placed in the exhibition with music, and the audience is encouraged to participate and complete the works. Some of the participants conduct performance art activities [*Towards Lhasa*].

## Significant Events in China 1986

January 1986: US’ Time magazine nominates Premier Deng Xiaoping as the man of the hour. This is the second time that Xiaoping makes his appearance on the cover of an American magazine.

3 March 1986: Scientists Wang Dahan, Wang Ganchang, Chen Fangyun and Yang Jiachi present a letter to the CPC Central Committee advocating their proposal to develop China’s High-Tech industry, this proposal is later known as the ‘863 Plan’.

5 December 1986: More than four-thousand students from the University of Science and Technology of China, Hefei University of Technology, Anhui University and other colleges in Hefei, Anhui Province demonstrate on the streets. They demand better press coverage of demonstrations and increased rights of demonstration, including guarantees of political freedom and personal safety. Further demonstrations take place on 19 December with students from Shanghai Tongji University and

Fudan University meeting on the streets and then again on the afternoon of the 23 December when students from Beijing and Tsinghua Universities demonstrate.

## Performance Art Events in China 1986

January 1986: Wang Chuan and other artists from 0 Exhibition organize a comprehensive exhibition in the downtown district of Shenzhen, in Guangdong Province. Art works by 25 Yuan Yuan artists are on display, including performance art pieces and impressionist style paintings.

4 May 1986: a group of graduate art students including Yang Zhichao and Ma Yunfei conduct [*Rolling Canvas*] in Lanzhou, Gansu province. The group cover themselves with paint and roll themselves over a 100-meter long piece of canvas one by one. [ill. 3]

June 1986: Geng Jianyi, Song Ling, Zhang Peili and Wang Qiang, present the [*Work No 1 Tai Chi Series of Yangs*] jointly in the vicinity of the former Zhejiang Art College with members of the Chi Community. 12 pieces, consisting of one meter-high, human shaped drawings made from used newspaper upon which are written technical terms from “Tai Chi”, are placed on the sixty-metre-long, four-metre-high black-brick wall near the art college. Within two days, the pieces are vandalized and they disappear shortly after.<sup>5</sup>



Yang Zhichao, Ma Yunfei  
 [Rolling Canvas]  
 4 May 1986  
 Lanzhou, Gansu province [ill. 3]

July 1986: Wang Deren conduct a series of performances [The Last Orient] in Tibet on the Nyenchen Tanglha Mountains. The artist is an undergraduate student from the Central Academy of Craft and Art at the time. He had been to Tibet in 1984 and decided to realize a performance at the top of the Nyenchen Tanglha Mountains. He returns to Tibet in July 1986 after graduation. With the help of the Chinese Mountaineering Association, the artist climbs the Nyenchen Tanglha together with a friend for a week and conducts the performance. The artist, dressed in white, climbs up the mountain offering himself to the mountain as a living sacrifice.<sup>6</sup> [ill. 4]



Wang Deren  
 [The Last Orient]  
 July 1986  
 Nianqingtanggula  
 Mountain, Tibet [ill. 4]

September 1986: The first performance of [Southern Artists Saloon] designed by Wang Du and others is presented in Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou. Works and performances of more than 10 members are shown in a multimedia exhibition, which combined environment, performance, audiences and other media. This exhibition delivers a different feeling to its audiences, distinguished itself from past exhibitions focused on sculpture and painting.<sup>7</sup>[ill. 5]



Wang Du, Lin Yilin  
 [Southern Artists Saloon]  
 September 1986  
 Guangzhou, Guang Dong [ill. 5]



September 1986: More than one hundred young artists organize the art activity “Under the Sun. Towards 1987” in the long corridor and lawn of Xuanwu Lake Park in Nanjing, Jiangsu. More than one thousand artists participate with 700 pieces including painting, sculpture, installation and performance art works. The exhibition goes on display again in October.

4 November 1986: Song Yongping, Song



Song Yongping, Song Yonghong  
[*A Scenic Personal Experience*]  
4 November 1986  
Taiyuan Shanxi [ill.6]

Yonghong presents a performance art piece [*A Scenic Personal Experience*] at the modern art exhibition held at the Workers Culture Palace in Taiyuan Shanxi province. Walking in slow motions, they wrap themselves in red and white clothes and paint each other with red and white paint.<sup>8</sup>[ill. 6]

November 1986: Members of Xiamen Dada, Huang Yongping, Lin Chun, Jiao Yaoming,



Lin Jiahua, Cai Lixiong, Chen Chengzong, Li Xiang, Li Qunian, Huang Ping and Wu Yanping participate in the “Xiamen Dada Modern Art Exhibition”. After the exhibition, the members of Xiamen Dada burn all the exhibits on the small grounds in front of the Xiamen New Art Gallery. A fire is set in a circle that is drawn on the ground in white chalk. At the same time, they burn a vertical scroll with the words “Dada Exhibition Ends Here”; large banners with inscriptions such as “Dada is Dead” and “Life will not be Peaceful until Art is Killed” are also burned within the main circle. The group also publishes the Burning Declaration on China Art Paper.<sup>9</sup>

November 1986: Zhang Peili, Geng Jianyi, Song Ling, Bao Jianfei, [*Work No.2—Walker in Green*



*Space*], all members of the Chi Community fix nine, three-meter-high hard paper boards made in similar shapes with lines in a wood of Hangzhou. A very limited audience is invited to the performance.

13 November 1986: A group of students from Shanghai Fine Art Academy, including Ding Yi, Zhang Guoliang and Qin Yifeng present the performance work [*Cloth Sculpture on the Street*] on streets of Shanghai. They wrap themselves in yellow cloth and perform an art work where they just stand still on busy streets like the Nanjing Road. They also perform in restaurants, railway stations, art galleries, coffee shops, the gate of the East China University of Political Science and Law and in front of huge billboards.<sup>10</sup>[ill. 7]



Ding Yi, Zhang Guoliang, Qin Yifeng  
[*Cloth Sculpture on the Street*]  
13 November 1986  
Shanghai [ill. 7]

November 1986: Xiao Haichun, Li Shan, Yu Youhan, Yu Sen, Qin Yifeng, Ding Yi, Wang Ziwei and others put on “86 Concave and Convex Exhibition”, which is held in the Culture Palace of Shanghai Xuhui District. Performance art works are also shown at that time.

1986: Wu Shanzhuan puts on [*Red Humour No.1: Today No Water*] in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province; this work is part of his “Red Humour Series”.

December 1986: Wu Guangyao, who is still a student at the Central Art and Craft College, presents his performance in the Literature and Art Festival in Peking University. During which he wraps himself and some volunteers in cloth.

23 December 1986: Sheng Qi, Zheng Yuke, Xi Jianjun, Kang Mu, Zhao Jianhai’s [*Concept 21. Performance Activity: 52 hours of unfolding Action*] is performed at Peking University. The performance takes place on a cold day (-8C). The artists start the performance wearing basic underwear and use meters of red, black and white cloth as well as other waste to wrap their bodies before they walk towards the exit of the university campus in slow motion. The artists unfold themselves when the drums start to play. Zhao Jianhai and Kang Mu then cycle around the campus garden after their bodies have been painted black and white. On the other side of the campus, Xi Jianjun wraps himself in a red gown and breaks the silence by taking off his clothes.

Some artists climb onto a roof and shout, holding out a banner on which they have written popular slogans such as “Yangtze River”, “Great Wall” and “Mount Qomolangma”. The artists continue their creative “unfolding” actions over the course of 52 hours.<sup>11</sup> [ill. 8]

December 1986: Song Haidong, Qin Yifeng, Tang Guanming, Yang Dongbai, Yang Xu and Zhou Tiehai, together known as The M Art Group in Shanghai, perform [*The Same Wasteful Objects as Smashing Women’s make up Products*], [*Pantomime Style*], [*Ceremony*] and [*Sense of Violence*] at the Shanghai Workers Culture Palace.



Concept 21 Group  
[*52 hours of unfolding Action*]  
23 December 1986  
Campus of Beijing University [ill 8]



Concept 21 Group  
[*52 hours of unfolding Action*]  
23 December 1986  
Campus of Beijing University [ill 8]

## Significant Events in China 1987

1 January 1987: Students from the Peking University and Renmin University of China demonstrate once again on the streets. Chairman Hu Yaobang resigns as General Secretary of the Party.

26 March 1987: The Joint declaration of Governments of China and Portugal is drafted in Beijing.

6 May 1987: A rare and massive forest fire breaks out in the Greater Khingan Mountains area; it is later recognized as one of the most significant natural disasters.

1 December 1987: The Shenzhen City Government holds a public auction for the rights to own a piece of state owned land. It is the first public land auction to take place since the founding of the PRC.

11 December 1987: The Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant makes its debut in China; it opens in The Qianmen, Beijing.

## Performance Art Events in China 1987

March 1987: Wen Pulin, Zheng Ziru, the “Wen Pulin Art Exhibition” is held in the Beijing International Art Exhibition Hall. The exhibition consists of 79 pieces, including photos, videos, models of stage art design, photographic collage, paintings and installations. The artists Wen Pulin and Zheng Ziru conduct their marriage ceremony within the exhibition as the 80th piece of art.

May 1987: Sheng Jun and others, members of Lianyungang’s “Space Art Base”, present the performance art piece [*Return Art to Life*], which contains video recordings for the public and answers to questions on art raised by the public.

10 - 11 May 1987: Sheng Qi, Zhao Jianhai, Zheng Yuke, Kang Mu create the work [*Concept 21. Great wall*]. After performing [*52 hours of unfolding Action*] at Peking University, Sheng Qi and others perform a piece on the Great Wall at Gu Bei Kou, Beijing. Wrapped in red and black clothes, they are buried alive by stones, painted in white powder while three others stand in silence and make tributes. At the same time, another artist stands upside-down in a watchtower. Apart from mixing acrobatics with performance art, their show is significant for taking place at a symbolic, historical site.<sup>12</sup>

## Significant Events in China 1988

1 January 1988: The Tian’anmen Square Tower is opened to the public as a sightseeing spot. For the first time, tourists can get access to the Tian’anmen Tower.

15 April 1988: Chairman Hu Yaobang dies from illness. Citizens meet at Tian’anmen Square to conduct memorial services.

## Performance Art Events in China 1988

March 1988: Wang Deren, [*No. 2 of the Third*

*Series—Exercise of Great Art Revolution*]. This performance art work is displayed in a square of Peking University. The artist distributes a poster the day before his performance. A large audience comes, including foreign journalists. He uses a large piece of red cloth and places it on the floor in front of a Chairman Mao’s statue, as a symbol representing the Buddha. The performance ends when an officer from the security department of Peking University appears and takes away all the cameras of the foreign journalists. The artist escapes on a bike and leaves Beijing for another city the same night. <sup>13</sup>[ill. 9]

Wang Deren

[*No. 2 of the Third Series—Exercise of Great Art Revolution*].

March 1988

Beijing University’s square [ill.9]



April 1988: Wang Changbai and Huang Yan present *[Mud Print]* in Changchun. The artists use a certain type of mud from northeastern China and mix it with colorful paints. Then they press objects into the mud to produce different prints. They use their bodies, faces and hands, as well as a chair and other objects. Subsequently these prints are publicly exhibited. <sup>14</sup>[ill. 10]



Wang Changbai, Huang Yan  
*[Mud Print]*  
April 1988  
Changchun [ill. 10]



Wang Changbai, Huang Yan  
*[Mud Print]*  
April 1988  
Changchun [ill. 10]

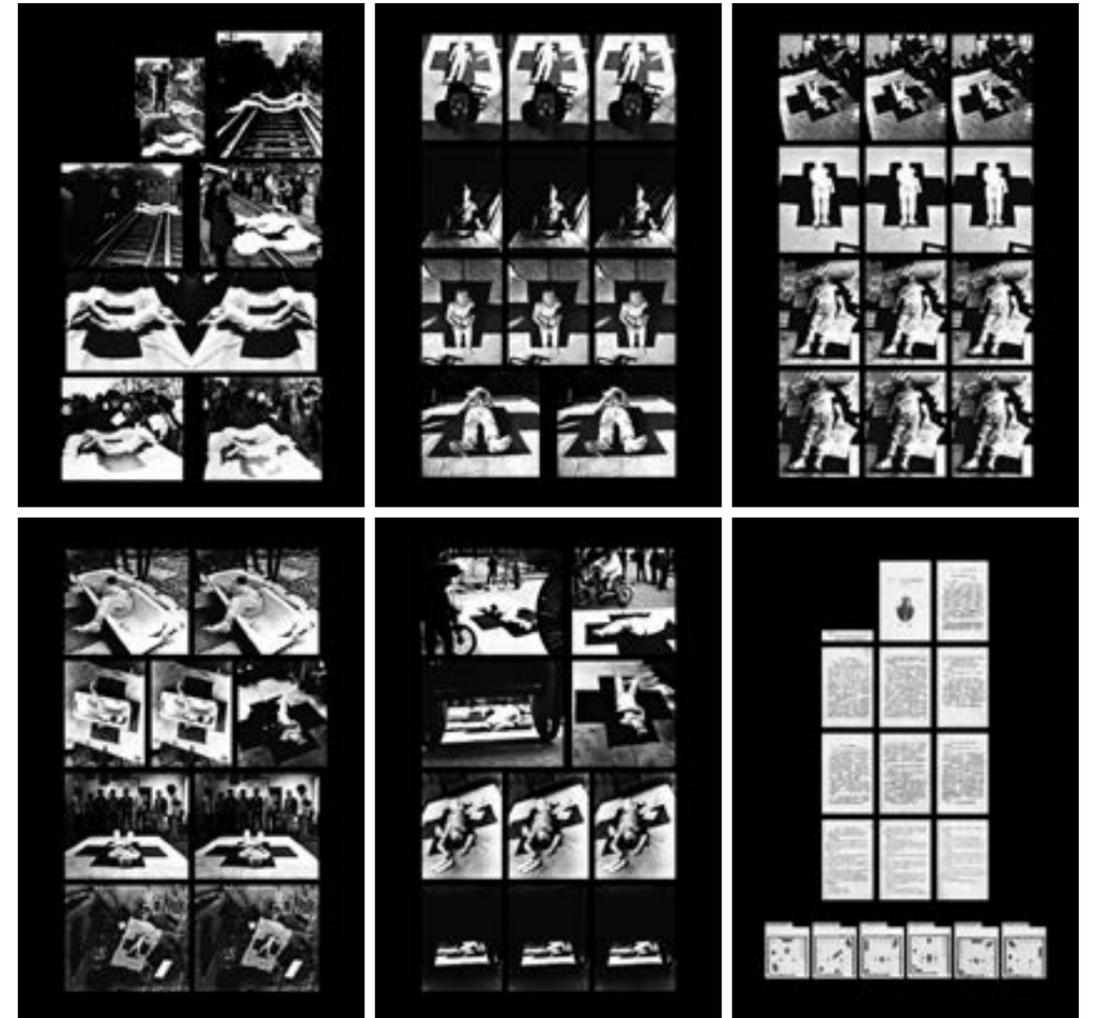
April 1988: Wang Changbai and Huang Yan present [*Blind Viewing Exhibition*] in Changchun. Huang Yan, the artist, who participated in the Print Art Exhibition in 1988, is teaching at a special education academy. After talking with several other participating artists, Huang Yan invites a disabled student from the special education academy to guide a blind student to view the exhibition. Various installation works are displayed in the exhibition. In order to avoid the audience damaging the works, the artist paints the out-of-bounds areas white. <sup>15</sup>[ill. 11]

Wang Changbai, Huang Yan  
 [*Blind Viewing Exhibition*]  
 April 1988  
 Changchun [ill. 11]



1988: Wei Guangqing presents [*Simulated Experience of a Suicide Plan*] in Wuchang, Hubei. “—” is directed and implemented on the Wuchang Section of the Beijing–Guangzhou

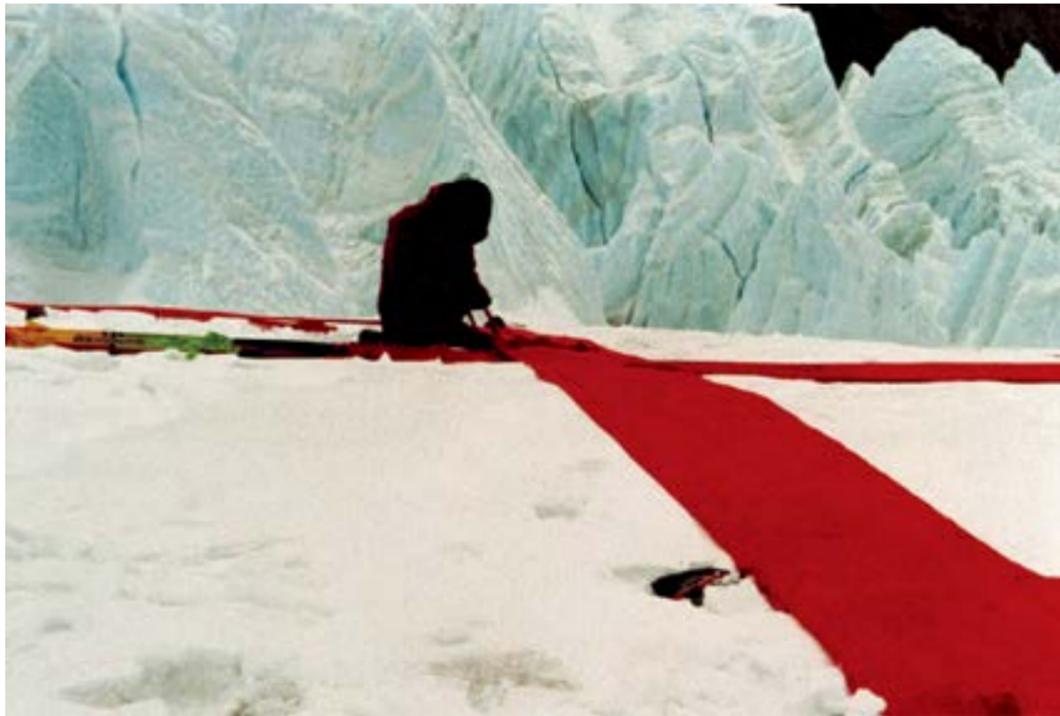
Railway, “—” is a code for different objects. During the performance, the performer lies on a cloth with a “Red Cross” painted on it when performing his suicide acts. <sup>16</sup> [ill. 12]



Wei Guangqing  
 [*Simulated Experience of a Suicide Plan*]  
 1988  
 Wuchang, Hubei [ill. 12]

April 1988: Wang Deren conducts a series of performances [*Canon of Beckoning Spiritual Appearance*] and [*Colour the Himalaya Mountains in Red*] in Tibet on the Himalayas. The artist uses large piece of red cloth to make a cross and places another two huge crosses on the north and south side of the mountain respectively. He is on the mountain alone with no help. During the performance, he places a camera on a tripod to document the performance himself.<sup>17</sup> [ill. 13].

Wang Deren  
[*Canon of Beckoning Spiritual Appearance*] &  
[*Colour the Himalayas Mountain in Red*]  
April 1988  
Himalayas mountain, Tibet [ill. 13]



Wang Deren  
[*Canon of Beckoning Spiritual Appearance*] &  
[*Colour the Himalayas Mountain in Red*]  
April 1988  
Himalayas mountain, Tibet [ill. 13]

1988: [*Warehouse No. 3*] by Ni Haifeng is performed in Warehouse No. 3. Both the inside and outside of the building are covered with images of figures and mathematical formulas.

10 – 11 May 1988: Zhao Jianhai, Sheng Qi, Zheng Yuke and Kang Mu from Concept 21 group present the [*Great Wall Series*] at the Great wall, Beijing. This series reveals the underlying anxiety of, and sympathy for, the individual with a deepening understanding of the meaning of life and death. The [*Great Wall Series*] consists of 7 components set out as follows:

[*Greeting the Dawn. Farewell to the Moon*]

Slightly after 4 a.m. in the morning, Zhao Jianhai, Sheng Qi, Zheng Yuke and Kang Mu worship Heaven with warm rice wine and begin the day's events. They take out a piece of black cloth and make it into different shapes that resemble barren mountains. The artists wrap their bodies in meters of red and black cloth as part of the rituals to worship the sun, moon and earth. The artists then scatter the arid earth into the air. As the yellow dust begins to settle on the ground, each artist takes turns to dance. The series ends when all 4 artists kiss the Great Wall, which is shrouded in yellow dust.

[*Crying out to Heaven*]

At 5:18am, the artists climb the Great Wall as the worshiping rituals of the sun, moon, and earth are completed. Zhao Jianhai and Kang Mu take

off their clothes and painted each other's bodies red, black and white. The artists stand still in silence and wait for the right moment to start their cries to Heaven; the cries sound simple and direct, like peasant folk songs. The cries reach Heaven and Earth and summon the spirits of the ancestors who have built the Great Wall. The cries also symbolize the relationship between Man and Nature, and convey the sufferings behind the stones that form the monument.

[*Holy Go Battle*]

The artists use the fight between the Black King (Zhao Jianhai) and the White King (Sheng Qi) to explore the different dimensions of existence. The artists use the geometric patterns on the bricks of the Great Wall as the grid of a chessboard, and the rocks lying on the Great Wall as the chess pieces.

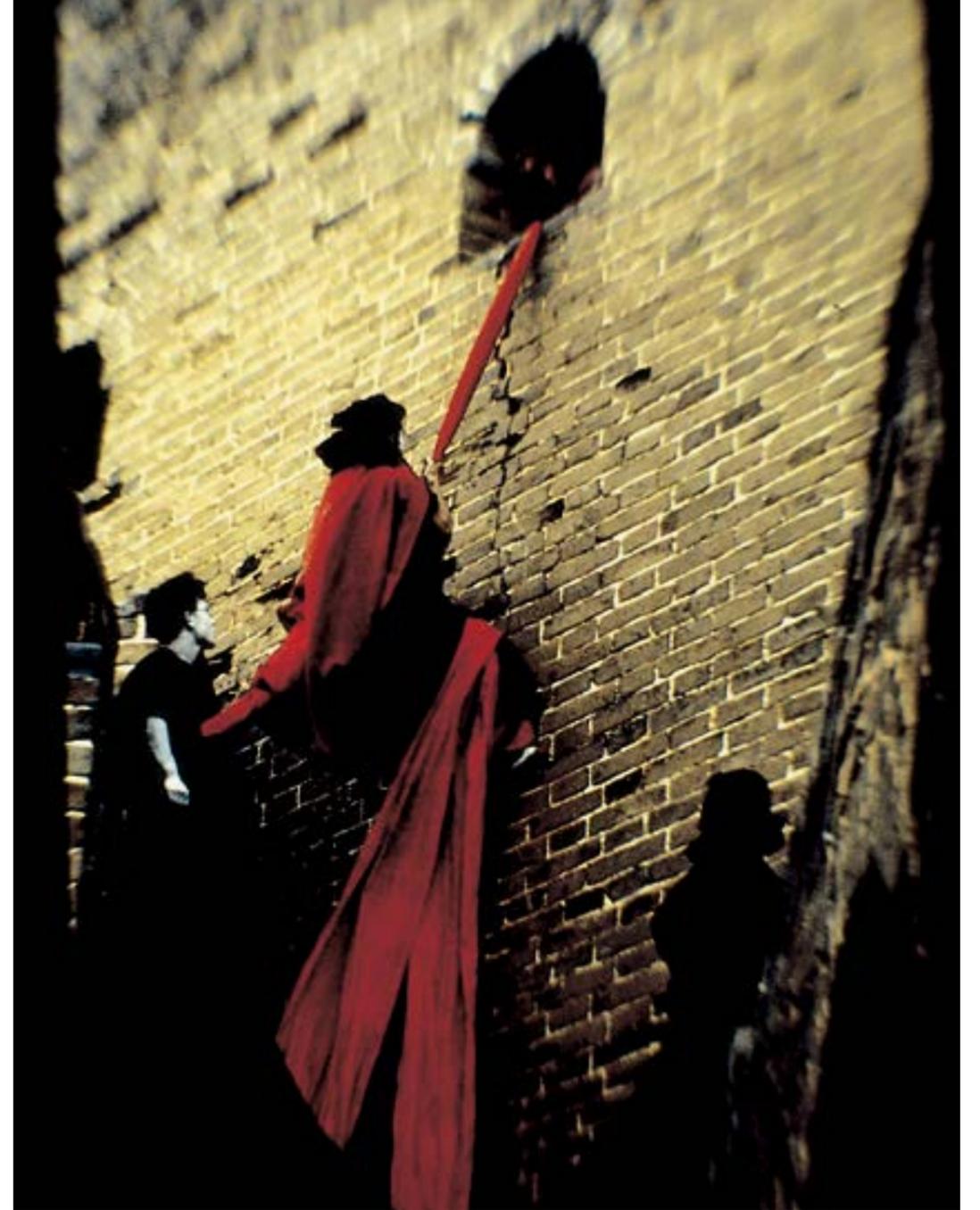
The group then perform [*Borrow Fire*], [*Tragic Great Wall*], [*Wrap the Great Wall in Red*] and [*The Rescue of Death*] before concluding the Great Wall Series.<sup>18</sup>[ill. 14]



Concept 21 Group  
Zhao Jianhai, Sheng Qi, Zheng Yuke, Kang Mu  
[*Great Wall Series*]  
10 & 11 May 1988  
Great Wall, China [ill. 14]



Concept 21 Group  
 Zhao Jianhai ,Sheng Qi, Zheng Yuke, Kang Mu  
 [Great Wall Series]  
 10 & 11 May 1988  
 Great Wall, China [ill. 14]

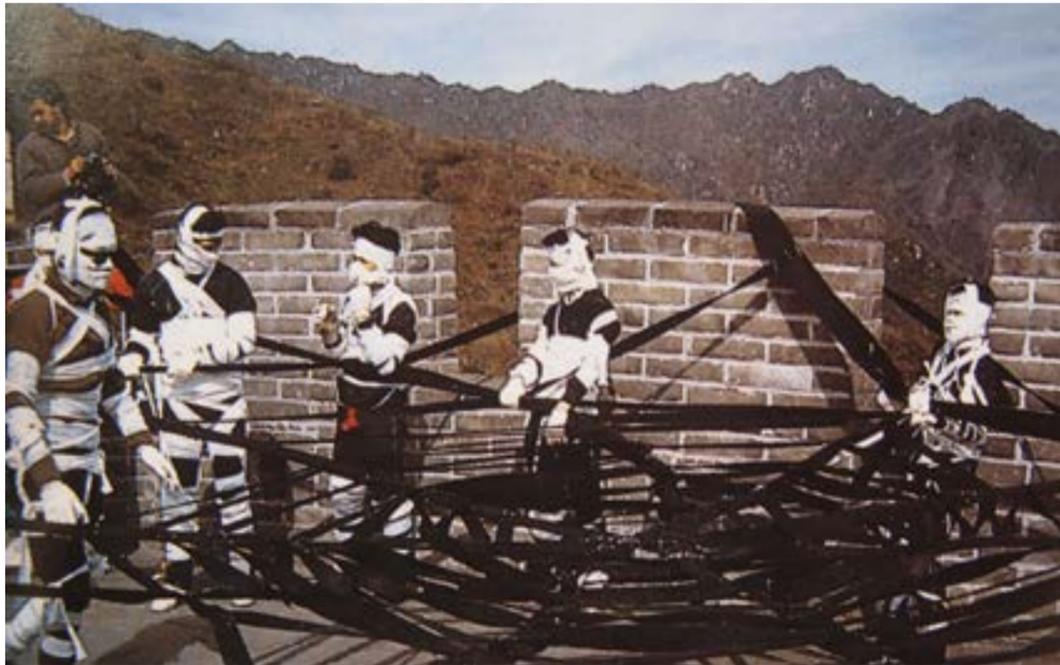


Concept 21 Group  
 Zhao Jianhai ,Sheng Qi, Zheng Yuke, Kang Mu  
 [Great Wall Series]  
 10 & 11 May 1988  
 Great Wall, China [ill. 14]

September 1988: Sheng Qi, Kang Mu, Zheng Yuke and others present “Big Earthquake”. Sponsored and financed by “21 Century Research Institute”, a civil art group (formerly the editorial committee of the book series, *Toward the Future*), this made-for-TV movie reflects contemporary art in Beijing. It is directed and edited by Wen Pulin with Ding Bin as producer. The production unit photographed the art event known as “Farewell to the 21 Century” on the Great Wall. This event, which is featured in *Big Earthquake*, includes performance of rock music, modern drama and speeches. Sheng Qi, Kang Mu, Zheng Yuke and others are invited to present performance art that involves body wrapping with linen.

For various reasons, the production of “Big Earthquake” is not completed and after June 1989 the production unit is disbanded.<sup>19</sup>

October 1988: [*Concept 21. Tai Chi*] by Sheng Qi is performed at the Great Wall, Beijing. Sheng Qi invites 12 dancers and wraps them and himself in white cloth in situ. First, the 12 performers pull back a black, spider web shaped, net. Sheng Qi then does Tai Chi in slow motion when he is in the net. The acts symbolize the wide gap between the old traditions and modern thought, as well as the performers’ wish to break with the old traditions.<sup>20</sup>[ill. 15]



Concept 21  
[*Concept 21. Tai Chi*]  
October 1988  
Great Wall, Beijing [ill. 15]

1988: Li Shan, Sun Liang, Pei Jing, Song Haidong, Zhou Changjiang, Li Xianting and Wu Liang conduct a series of performance [*The Last Supper (Act one and Act Two)*] in Shanghai.

22 December 1988: China's first “Human Body Art Exhibition” is held at the National Art Museum of China.

## Significant Events in China 1989

26 April 1989: An editorial in the *People's Daily* entitled *The need to take a clear stand in the fight against riots* is published. The editorial labels the student movement protests as ‘riots’.

19 May 1989: The fourth premier Li Peng accuses the students of rioting.

30 May 1989: Students erect a replica of the statue of Liberty in Tian’anmen Square. Early on the morning of 4 June, the PLA enters Tian’anmen square and disperses all the people in the area. On 31 October, the Peoples’ Congress urgently passes legislation and publishes the emergency legislation *Law of Demonstration of the People’s Republic of China*, which decrees that any meeting, demonstration or parade must be approved by authorities with 5 days advance notice.

June 1989: The student movement reaches its peak as the U.S. government announces economic sanctions against China. The U.S. government halts all insurance for investment in China by U.S. insurance companies, which resulted in great difficulty with direct investment in China and, indeed, paralyzed foreign investment in China. In an effort to side-step U.S. sanctions, the Chinese government attempts to lure large transnational companies to invest in China by dispatching teams of Chinese buyers in key commodity areas, such as the automobile and aircraft industries, thus creating a massive surge in Chinese import of American commodities.

The Communist Youth League Central Committee and The Children’s Foundation jointly advocate the “Hope Project”. In total, 2.3 million students who had left school early are sent back to school. From its implementation in October 1989, the project helps with the construction of 8000 “Hope Schools” and the training of more than 2,300 primary teachers for schools in rural areas.

In an appraisal carried out by the Science and Technology Promotion and Research Centre, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Science and Technology, the “Hope Project”, the largest and most influential social welfare program implemented in the 1990s in China is set up.

## Performance Art Events in China 1989

February 1989: Xiao Lu, Tang Song, Li Shan, Zhang Nian, Wang Deren and Wu Shanzhuan etc. put on “China Modern Art Exhibition”, sponsored by the Editorial Committee of Culture: China and the World, the China Art Society, Art magazine, China Art Paper and Reader magazine and curated by Gao Minglu, Li Xianting and others. The China Modern Art Exhibition is held at the National Art Museum of China. At around 11:10 AM on its opening day, the exhibition is halted twice as a series of performance art works are performed. These included [Dialogue] by female artist Xiao Lu, [Washing Foot] by Li Shan, [Hatching Egg] by Zhang Nian, [Selling Shrimps] by Wu Shanzhuan, and [Throwing Condoms] by Wang Deren. The performance pieces attracts great attention from both the

domestic and international press and sparks discussion in both artistic and academic circles.<sup>21</sup>

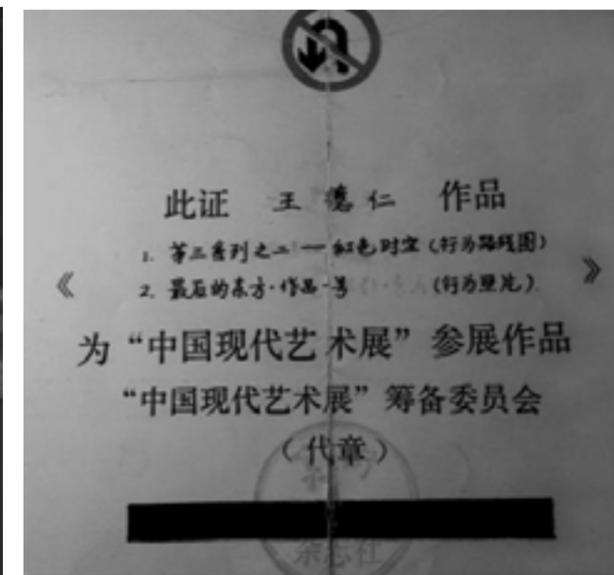
February 1989: Xiao Lu presents an installation/performance work [Dialogue] as part of the “China Modern Art Exhibition” held at the National Art Museum of China, Beijing. Xiao Lu's installation work boldly uses objects from daily life as the subject, for example, the telephone booth. The scene is set with a red phone placed in between two telephone booths. A young couple dressed like students make phone calls in the respective telephone booth. The telephone booths are set upon concrete slab paving ground, indicating that this is a public space such as a street or a square. Approximately two hours after the opening of "China Modern Art Exhibition", Xiao Lu fires two gunshots at her own installation [Dialogue].<sup>22</sup>[ill. 16][Video 1.1]



China Modern Art Exhibition  
Xiao Lu  
[Dialogue]  
5 February 1989  
National Art Museum of China,  
Beijing [ill. 16]

February 1989: Wang Deren presents [The One Who Rises the Sun?] as part of the “China Modern Art Exhibition” held in National Art Museum of China, Beijing. The artist takes out a giant condom and sets it on the floor of the exhibition hall with its head facing southward, the artist then fetches a bag of condoms and coins from the dark room, he runs and shouts, throwing them into the air, causing panic in the crowds. The condoms and coins pour down out of the blue, scattering on people's heads, artworks, and some even end up hanging on people's glasses. [ill. 17]

China Modern Art Exhibition  
Wang Deren  
[The one who rises the sun?]  
5 February 1989  
National Art Museum of China, Beijing [ill. 17]



February 1989: Li Shan presents [*Washing Feet*] as part of the “China Modern Art Exhibition” held in National Art Museum of China, Beijing. The artist is dressed in winter clothes and a red woolen hat. He sits on a folding chair inside the gallery and washes his feet in a large washtub. Beneath his jacket, he is wearing a white T-shirt, on which a black and white photograph of President Ronald Reagan is printed. Reagan's portrait is also printed on the inside of the artist's slippers. At the bottom of the tub, the artist has painted a large image of Reagan facing upwards.<sup>23</sup>[ill. 18]



China Modern Art Exhibition  
Li Shan  
[*Washing Feet*]  
5 February 1989  
National Art Museum of China, Beijing [ill. 18]

5 February 1989: Wu Shanzhuan presents Big Business [*Selling Shrimps*] as part of the “China Modern Art Exhibition” held in National Art Museum of China, Beijing. The artist brings more than sixty pounds of live shrimps from his hometown of Zhoushan, with the intention of selling them “as art” during the opening of the exhibition. The artist builds a makeshift stand outside the main gallery without prior approval and at the stand, the artist sets up a sign advertising the work:



*Dear Customers,  
As our entire nation celebrates the Year of the Snake, in order to enrich the spiritual and material life of the people in our nation's capital, I have brought from my hometown of Zhoushan the highest-quality export shrimp. Venue of display and sale: National Gallery of Art  
Price: RMB 9.5 per catty. Hurry while supplies last.  
The director of the National Art Museum of China – Mr. Liu Kaiqu, buys some. The art gallery is transformed into a "black market"; according to witnesses, the shrimps produce a smell that repels many of the visitors. The sale quickly draws the attention of the show's organizer, who decides to confiscate Wu Shanzhuan's shrimps. Wu presents his letter of invitation, proving that this is an artwork; nevertheless, he is fined RMB 20, and is required to stop selling. Wu Shanzhuan pastes the letter of invitation and the fine onto his blackboard, and writes "Closed for one day. Stocktaking 5/2/1989." <sup>24</sup>[ill.19]*

China Modern Art Exhibition  
Wu Shanzhuan,  
Big Business [*Selling Shrimps*]  
5 February 1989  
National Art Museum of China, Beijing [ill. 19]

February 1989: Zhang Nian presents [*Hatching Eggs*] as part of the “China Modern Art Exhibition” held in National Art Museum of China, Beijing. Zhang Nian is not officially invited to the exhibition as an artist. He sets up his installation in a corner on the second floor of the National Art Gallery. Zhang Nian sits on a hen’s nest made of straw, hatching eggs. Dozens of eggs are laid underneath him, with some eggs and straw scattered around. There

are a couple of cardboard signs written in brush pen that read "waiting". There is also another cardboard sign hanging round Zhang Nian's neck: "in order to avoid disturbing the future generation, no debates during hatching." When the two gunshots of the work [*Dialogue*] by Xiao Lu downstairs disperse the crowd, Zhang Nian stood up and said, “I’m afraid the chicks won't hatch now, why don't you all take some eggs home”.<sup>25</sup>[ill. 20]



China Modern Art Exhibition  
Zhang Nian  
[*Hatching Eggs*]  
5 February 1989  
National Art Museum of China, Beijing [ill. 20]

July 1989: The article Extension and Evolution Dialogue on Performance Art by Fan Di'an and Hou Hanru is published in the 7th edition of Art, 1989. This article provides an initial list and analysis of the history of performance art in China.

1989: Ma Liuming presents [*State Series*] at the Hubei Art and Craft College and features the artists’ photographs of themselves naked and wrapped in plastic bags. <sup>26</sup>[ill. 21]

Ma Liuming  
[*State Series*]  
1989  
Wuhan, Hubei [ill. 21]





Ma Liuming  
*[State Series]*  
 1989  
 Wuhan, Hubei [ill. 21]

1 From a Recorded interview with Shu Yang in 2005 and a Recorded interview with Kwok Manghao in 2006. For further reference see: Thomas J. Berghuis Performance Art in China. (Timezone 8 Limited, Hong Kong 2006).

2 See further reference: Gao Minglu & Huang Rui, The Past and Existence: Conversation on "The Star Art" between Gao Minglu and Huang Rui; Huang Rui Not Star, Not Art Either [http://www.ionly.com.cn/nbo/zhanlan/showAtt\\_2646.html](http://www.ionly.com.cn/nbo/zhanlan/showAtt_2646.html); Huang Rui Preface of the First Star Art Exhibition; [http://www.ionly.com.cn/nbo/zhanlan/showAtt\\_2636.html](http://www.ionly.com.cn/nbo/zhanlan/showAtt_2636.html), Huang Rui, The Full Context of Star Art Exhibition Affairs [http://www.ionly.com.cn/nbo/zhanlan/showAtt\\_2640.html](http://www.ionly.com.cn/nbo/zhanlan/showAtt_2640.html); Huang Rui, Star Adversaria [http://www.ionly.com.cn/nbo/zhanlan/showAtt\\_2637.html](http://www.ionly.com.cn/nbo/zhanlan/showAtt_2637.html).

3 This performance is the first performance to contain nudity in China. Following a Recorded interview with Wang Peng in 2011. See further reference: Wang Peng's work from 1984-2005 catalogue; Wang Peng's website: <http://www.wangpengstudio.com>.

4 See Songzhuang Art Center The Documenta of Performance Art 1985-2010.

5 See further reference Huo Shaoxia, Performance In China Site and the Body (Artist Publishing Company 2010).

Wang Deren's first performance Art work. He also conducted a series of performance art works in 1988. See <http://blog.artintern.net/wangderen>.

7 See Lu Hong and Sun Zhenhua, Alienative Body China Performance Art. (Hebei Fine Arts Publishing House 2006).

8 From an interview with Song Yongping through email in 2010. See further reference: China Art paper 1987 vol 2.

9 See further reference: Lu Hong, China Avant-Garde Art 1979 – 2004 (Hebei Fine Arts Publishing House 2006); Lv Peng and Yi Dan, China Modern Art History (Hu'nan Fine Arts Publishing House).

10 From an interview with Ding Yi through email in 2010.

11 From 3 Recorded interview with Sheng Qi in Beijing in 2005, Xi Jianjun in London in 2005 and Zheng Yuke in Beijing in 2011. See further reference from China Art Paper Vol 78 19 January 1987.

12 See further reference China's First Performance Artists Group: Concept 21 Catalogue, Huo Shaoxia Performance In China Site and the Body (Artist Publishing company 2010); Lu Hong and Sun Zhenhua Alienative Body: China Performance Art (Hebei Fine Arts Publishing House 2006), China Modern Art History. Lv Peng and Yi Dan (Hu'nan Fine Arts Publishing House), Wen Pulin, Documentary film China Action, Wen Pulin, Catalogue China Action Performance Art from the 80s to 90s.

13 See <http://blog.artintern.net/wangderen>.

14 From a recorded interview with Wang Changbai in Beijing in 2011.

15 Same as 14.

16 From an interview through email with Wei Guangqing and a recorded interview with Ma Luming in Beijing in 2005. Ma Luming is Wei Guangqing's student when this performance is presented.

17 See <http://blog.artintern.net/wangderen>.

18 See: Wen Pulin, Documentary film China Action; Wen Pulin, China Action Performance Art from the 80s to 90s Catalogue; Concept 21, China's First Performance Artists Group: Concept 21 Catalogue

19 See further reference Wen Pulin, Documentary film China Action; Wen Pulin, China Action Performance Art from the 80s to 90s Catalogue.

20 Same as 11 and 12.

21 See further reference: Ales Erjave, Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition (University of California Press, 2003) 269; Li Xianting and Hu Shiyin, <http://www.ionly.com.cn/nbo/5/51/20061121/013529.html>; Li Xianting, Conversation between Xiao Lu and Li Xianting; <http://www.artda.cn/www/15/2009-12/2732.html>; Lan Qingwei, China Modern Art Exhibition Info [http://www.artzinechina.com/display\\_vol\\_aid252\\_en.html](http://www.artzinechina.com/display_vol_aid252_en.html).

22 See video of this performance in the USB video folder 1.1 attached with this catalogue, Xiao Lu [Dialogue].

23 Quoted from: Thomas J. Berghuis Performance Art in China. (Timezone 8 Limited, Hong Kong 2006) page 89.

24 same as 21

25 Same as 21; also see: <http://blog.artintern.net/blogs/articleinfo/organhaus/61896>.

26 From a recorded interview with Ma Luming in Beijing in 2005. Ma Luming told me that this is his first performance art work and it is inspired by his teacher Wei Guangqing when he is acting for his performance Simulated Experience of a Suicide Plan in 1988, see illustration [ill.12]

1990 to 1999  
The Developmental Stage of Performance Art  
in Time of Rigorous Socio-economic Reform

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## **Introduction for Second Stage 1990-1999**

## The Form and Circumstances of Performance Art in the 90s

Performance art in the 90s was mostly presented in the form of Happenings. It was connected to with the opening up of the Chinese economy and the introduction of consumer culture in the 90s. Through this form of presentation, artists were allowed to interact directly with society and influence some of the social developments, which provided opportunities to engage effectively in social transformations. Young artists engaging in performance art emerged from both Beijing and Chengdu in the 90s. The differences between these artists and those of the 80s stem from the fact that they were not only concerned with their individual experiences of survival, but they also intervened in culture, discussing environmental protection and other social issues.

Apart from artists from Beijing East Village and the Chengdu 719 artists, many other artists devoted themselves to artworks on environmental protection in the 90s: Yin Xiuzhen [*Washing the River*] [ill.40], He Yunchang [*Move the mountain*] [ill.59], [*Dialogue with Water*] [ill. 60].<sup>1</sup>

### Body Language

To use the artist's body as a medium for the creation of performance art is undoubtedly one of the most common approaches in performance art.

The artist's own body language is the most vivid presentation of the individual. However, the body language of the performance art in question is different. Performance art in China was born in a specific time and under specific circumstances. It appeared to lack theoretical foundation; the approach to body language might appear simplistic and far-fetched. In retrospect, performance art works using bodies in China in 1990s showed the introspective reflection on the individuals' living conditions, the environment and conditions of the people's lives at that time, as well as the relationships between people. Another frequently discussed subject in performance art during this specific period was individual identity.

As most artists in Beijing were drifters, their identity as drifters reflected the social phenomenon of urbanization. The vast number of rural migrant workers who moved into the cities needed to take multiple jobs to earn a living. This made many people feel confused and lost about their identity. This feeling of confusion was felt by the performance artists who were part of the waves of the migrants

moving into the cities and who found it difficult to survive in the rapidly developing urban areas. Cang Xin's [*Trampling Faces*] [ill. 30], Zhu Fadong's [*Missing Person*] [ill. 26], [*This person for sale, price to be negotiated*] [ill. 34], Wang Jin's [*Marry a Donkey*] [ill. 39], and Wang Peng's [*Three Days*] [ill. 36],<sup>2</sup> reflect the transition of Chinese cities. Artists questioned and reflected upon their own identities.

## Artist Community

After the China Modern Art Exhibition in 1989,<sup>3</sup> performance art entered a new era in 1990s and extending to other Chinese cities. One of the most obvious and representative presentation was the Beijing East Village artist community, and the other was 719 Artist Studio Alliance in Chengdu, Sichuan.

### East Village

East Village, formerly known as Dashanzhuang Village, was situated between the east 3rd-ring and east 4th-ring of Beijing, and was formed of sixty to seventy farmhouses connected by a narrow drive. Most of the local born residents in Beijing would not have heard of the name of Dashanzhuang area at that time.<sup>4</sup> In 2003, this former Dashanzhuang area was turned into the Chaoyang Park based on government planning and disappeared from the Beijing map. Between 1992 and 1994, a group of artists and musicians, struggling on the border of poverty, were attracted by the low rent rates and geographical proximity to downtown Beijing. After moving in together coincidentally, some of these artists and musicians formed a core avant-garde art group. Formed in 1992 and breaking up at the end of 1994, this group includes: Ma Liuming, Zhang Huan, Zhu Ming, Cang Xin, Duan Yingmei, Zuoxiao Zuzhou, Gao Yang, Wang Shihua, Zhang Binbin, and Rong Rong. At that time, the artists suggested giving Dashanzhuang Village a more avant-garde name, and they decided to associate the area with the East Village in New York where avant-garde artists gathered. Thus, Dashanzhuang Village was renamed East Village. The artists made a sign with the name East Village and erected it at the entrance of the village. However, the sign was removed shortly after by the villagers. This avant-garde artist community formed gradually and started to create a series of performance artworks, including Zhang Huan's [*12 Square Meters*] [ill. 33] and [*65 Kilos*] [ill. 29], ten East Village artists' [*Increase one meter to an Nameless Mountain*] [ill. 37], and Ma Liuming's [*Fen • Ma Liuming Series*] [ill. 27, 32].<sup>5</sup>

Nudity was often a feature of the artworks of the late 80s-90s, when nakedness and pure body language was more accentuated. Starting from their own bodies in the creation of performance art, artists moved on to create performance art works based on their own life experiences, which undoubtedly reflected their living conditions and experiences, and, in some way, expressed the artistic and cultural conditions of the time in a symbolic manner.

The avant-garde spirit in East Village artists' performance art was initially neither well understood nor accepted by the public. In addition, practicing avant-garde art in China could signify personal risk for the artists. East Village artists' frequent nude performance art works drew the attention of the local Police Department. On June 12 1994, when Ma Liuming finished performing [*Fen · Ma Liuming's Lunch*] [ill.32] nude, Police officers from the Chaoyang District came to East Village, put the artists and some of the audiences into a Police Car, sealed the residence of performance artists Zhang Huan, Ma Liuming, and Zhu Ming, and respectively fined their landlords for RMB1,000. Artists Ma Liuming and Zhu Ming were detained by the police; Zhu Ming was detained for a crinkled Five-Starred Red Flag found in his house. The Chaoyang District Branch of the Beijing Police Department then issued a letter of notice to the families of the detainees, stating: "according to article 41 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of People's Republic of China, on June 13 1994, our department detained Ma Liuming in Chaoyang District Branch for his unlawful act." The personnel concerned in the Police Department explained to Ma Liuming's family that the Police had invited experts to examine the work and it had been concluded that Ma Liuming was suspected of obscene activities. The Police emphasized that the experts were from the Beijing Painting Academy and Central Academy of Art. After 3 months of detention, Ma Liuming and Zhu Ming were transferred back to their hometown.<sup>6</sup> Because of police intervention in the performance art activities in Beijing East Village, together with Ma Liuming and Zhu Ming's detention, the artistic community disbanded towards the end of 1994. Although the East Village artist community was dispersed, the performance artists and their artworks from that period of time significantly influenced the next generation/batches of performance artists. The East Village pushed performance art to another peak.

## **Artist Community in Chengdu**

The 719 Artist Studio Alliance was founded on 19 July 1996, and ended in July 1999.<sup>7</sup> Its members included: Dai Gaungyu, Liu Chengying, Zeng Xun, Yu Ji, Ying Xiaofeng, Zhu Gang, Zhang Hua, Luo Zidan, Hu jian, and Zha Changping. Later, Luo Zidan dropped out of 719, and was replaced by the Xi'an artist, Zhou Bin. The Artists agreed to gather for events on the 19th of every month. As well as the monthly performance, the alliance artists also agreed to perform in group exhibitions and to hold two art festivals every year. In fact, long before the founding of 719, the alliance artists were considered art pioneers in southwest China. From 1995, Betsy Damon, Director of Keepers of the Waters, the Institute for Releasing Initiative, a non-profit organization, and Dai Guangyu led a group of Chengdu artists focusing on environmental issues relating to water resources. They held 3 Safeguarding Water art events between 1995 and 1997. From the founding of the 719 artist alliance, artists Liu Chengying, Zeng Xun, Zhu Gang, Dai Guangyu and Luo Zidan ceaselessly create performance art pieces.<sup>8</sup>

While the East Village artists' performance art pieces were obstructed by the Beijing Police, the performance art atmosphere in Chengdu was relatively relaxed and artistes were under much less pressure. After the founding of the 719 alliance, the Chengdu local media began reporting positively on performance art. From 1997, the Chengdu Business Daily, the West China Metropolis Daily, the Business Morning, as well as Chengdu TV Business host Zhang Xinyu, Sichuan TV host Lin Qiang also positively reported the events and exhibitions of the 719 artists. In October 1997, the State TV host, Wen Pulin, from Beijing brought the crew of a famous CCTV program Arts and Artists to Chengdu to film the development of avant-garde art in Chengdu. The support from the local, regional and State level media unquestionably exerted a positive influence by portraying a different image of performance art. This is evidenced by the fact that performance art was allowed to take place in colleges and universities in Chengdu.

## **Chinese Artist Go International**

From the end of 1990s, rapid social reform and the opening up of the country, has led to rapid economic growth. China has gradually grown closer to the international community, and these social and economic changes have accelerated the development of contemporary art. The artworks from East Village artists like Zhang Huan, Ma Liuming, Zhu Ming, and Cang Xin have been well accepted and favored by foreign curators and critics. From 1996, after the disbanding of the East Village,

artist Ma Liuming started holding solo exhibitions abroad. However, Ma Liuming's solo exhibition in China Contemporary Art Gallery London was not of performance art as he exhibited only his paintings.<sup>9</sup> In the same year, Ma Liuming travelled to Tokyo, Japan to participate in the annual NIPAF performance festival organized by a Japanese artist Seiji Shimoda. In the following years, Ma Liuming's work appeared frequently in exhibitions in Japan, Switzerland and other countries. A highlight was his participation in the Venice Biennale in 1999. Chinese artists' international participation also took the form of migration to other countries: In 1997, East Village artist Duan Yingmei migrated to Germany. In 1998, Zhang Huan migrated to the USA. Other non-East Village artists like Wang Peng migrated to the USA in 1996. Cai Yuan, Xi Jianjun, Cai Guoqiang, Wu Shanzhuan, Sheng Qi, Gu Wenda, Huang Rui, Zhao Jianhai, Zhen Lianjie, and others migrated to the UK, the US, France, and Japan, and continued creating their artworks abroad. As the pace of emigration slowed, in 1999, China's first international performance art exchange event finally took place in Beijing, The event inspired a series of performance art festivals which took place in China after 2000 and pushed Chinese performance art onto the international art scene.

### **First International Performance Art Exchange Event**

“China-Japan Performance Art Exchange” organized by Ma Liuming in Beijing in May 1999. Japanese artist Seiji Shimoda, director of NIPAF (Nippon International Performance Art Festival), Japanese artist Kawabata Mamiko and Chinese artist Wang Mai, Sheng Qi conducted live performances at this event. This was the first international performance art exchange activity ever held and recorded in the history of Chinese performance art.

Many artists attended this performance event and were inspired and influenced by the organizational approach to this event. Shu Yang and Zhu Ming were present at this event. After the festival, they decided to host an annual international performance art festival because there were few opportunities for Chinese artists to participate physically in events abroad. By hosting international performance art festivals locally, in China, Chinese artists would be given opportunities to take part in international performance art events or at least witness the performances in person. In addition, both Shu Yang and Zhu Ming hoped that, through this festival, a platform could be established for international performance art exchanges in China. The aim was to enter into direct and reciprocal exchanges with international performance artists and to broaden the horizons and extend the international influence of Chinese performance art. The idea met with positive responses and attracted the financial support of artist Chen Jin leading to the “1st Open Art Platform-Performance Art Festival in Beijing” in

2000. The festival changed its name to “Open International Performance Art Festival in 2001”.<sup>10</sup> Many subsequent performance Art festivals and events were influenced and informed by the “China-Japan Performance Art Exchange event”

### **“ Post-Sense Sensibility: Alien Bodies & Delusion” Exhibition**

The widely discussed and studied “Post-Sense Sensibility Exhibition” was organized by Qiu Zhijie and Wu Meichun on 8 January 1999 in a basement in Shaoyaoju, Beijing. The participating artists were: Chen Lingyang, Chen Wenbo, Feng Qianyu, Gao Shiming, Gao Shiqiang, Jiang Zhi, Liu Wei, Lu Lei, Qin Ga. Qiu Zhijie, Shi Qing, Sun Yuan, Wang Wei, Weng Fen, Wu Ershan, Yang Fudong, Zhang Hanzi, Zheng Guogu and Zhu Yu.

The exhibition mainly consisted of installations, videos and performance art works. According to Qiu Zhijie, one of the curators of the exhibition, the theme of the exhibition was decided in 1997. Wu Meichun, another curator, and Qiu Zhijie started to discuss organizing an exhibition for young artists. In the art world at that time in China, art forms like installations, performance art, videos and photography were commonly accepted by the public, which was not the case for performance art or live art. Popular trends in the early 90s, like political pop and hooligan art, inspired by foreign artists, had already peaked and had started losing their popularity. Around 1995, the idea of conceptual art started to gain greater acceptance and gradually became mainstream. Young artists who had not been practicing traditional art forms tended to use the new means of expression.

In its early stages, avant-garde art of the 80-90s was not officially acknowledged. Consequently, conventional funding channels such as museums and colleges did not provide support to curators and artists. Without external financial support, curators and participating artists had to pay for their own exhibitions. At that time, in the late 90s, Sun Yuan, one of the participating artists at the “Post-Sense Sensibility Exhibition”, decided that many empty basements near Shaoyaoju, where the artist lived could be used for exhibitions. The artist contacted the property managers and rented the basements with his own money for RMB 2,000 a month. In addition to the rent, the payment for the production of catalogues was also shared between the artists with a contribution of RMB1, 200 for each participating artist. Although this exhibition took place in the basements of residential housing, it drew a large audience, gained the public attention and was widely reported across China.

The curator Qiu Zhijie mentions the works exhibited and articles written about the works in his book *The Scene Is Most Important* (2003). In the Post-Sense Sensibility exhibition, many participating artists used animal corpses and human corpses in their works. A much criticized example was the work [*Honey (1999)*] by Sun Yuan and Peng Yu. The artists placed the dead bodies of an old man and an infant facing each other on an ice bed. In Zhu Yu's installation work, [*Miniature Theology*], an arm was hung from the roof with its hand holding a long red rope. These two works were criticized by critics, artists and audiences for their use of human bodies. Despite the controversy and criticisms, the works inspired and influenced many artists. Consequently, this exhibition, directly or indirectly, led to the many important exhibitions that took place in 2000 such as *Fuck Off Exhibition*, *Indulge in Pain*, and *Man and Animal*. These exhibitions included the extensive use of animal and human corpses as part of the art work. They triggered heated debates in the Chinese art world leading to a negative view of performance art as always involving blood and violence. This negative publicity led to a wave of crackdowns on performance art by the Chinese government.<sup>11</sup>

1. See page 126, 153, 154 for a description of these performance works.
2. See page 98, 104, 113, 119, 125 for a description of these performance works.
3. See 76 for a description of this exhibition.
4. From an interview with Ma Liuming and Zhu Ming, Cang Xin in 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010.
5. See page 106, 112, 116, 117, 123 for a description of these performance works.
6. From an interview with Ma Liuming and Zhu Ming in 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010.
7. See further reference on: 719 alliances on up on Festival catalogue on page 78.
8. See page 122 on this event and page 126, 130, 141, 201 for related work from this event.
9. Same as 4
10. The festival changed its name to Open International Performance Art Festival in 2001, also see: Shu Yang (ed.), 1st Open Art Platform: Performance Art Festival-catalogue (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Sun Sai Kai Publisher, 2000)
11. See page 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 188, 190, 197, 198 and 200 for related performance works.

## Significant Events in China 1990

17 February 1990: China's first Rock concert is held in Beijing.

18 April 1990: The Shanghai Pudong Economic Develop Zone is established.

19 December 1990: The Shanghai Stock Exchange officially opens, marking the birth of China's new stock market.

## Performance Art Events in China 1990

1990 – 1995: Qiu Zhijie, [*Re-write {Orchid Pavilion Series} for 1000 Times*], The artist works continuously on this piece for 5 years, during which he writes “Orchid Pavilion Series” 1000 times in traditional script on the same piece of paper, thus creating the “Orchid Pavilion Series”: an unreadable drawing.

1990: Wang Chuan, [*Ink Spot*]. Ink Spot is presented as a performance/installation piece in Shenzhen Museum's one hundred and eighty-square-meter exhibition hall at the end of 1990.

## Significant Events in China 1991

26 January 1991: The Beijing Medium Court sentences the main defendants from the 1989 student movement. Wang Dan is sentenced to 4 years' incarceration.

10 March 1991: Zhang Xueliang and his wife Zhao Yidi travel to the U.S. to visit relatives. It is their first trip after 55 years under house arrest.<sup>1</sup>

1 May 1991: The Chinese government begin to allow price adjustments for cereals and oil, the first adjustment in 20 years. The price increases from RMB 0.15/ unit to RMB 0.25/ unit.

14 May 1991: Jiang Qing, released on bail to receive medical treatment, commits suicide. On the 4 June, the Xinhua News Agency confirms Jiang Qing's suicide.<sup>2</sup>

25 July 1991: The United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) declares the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Peking Man sites, the Mogao Grottoes and the Emperor's Tomb in Dun Huang World Heritage sites.

15 December 1991: Electricity power from the Taishan Nuclear Power Station feeds into the

national electrical grid for the first time.

16 December 1991: The Association for Relations across Taiwan Straits is set up in Beijing.<sup>3</sup>

## Significant Events in China 1992

18 January to 23 February 1992: Premier Deng Xiaoping makes an inspection tour of Wuchang, Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Shanghai, making several key speeches on economic reform and social progress in the 90s.

2 April 1992: The Peoples' Police News reports that, in 1991, 30,000 prostitutes have been sent to 're-education-through-labour' camps.

13 April 1992: China welcomes its first MacDonald's restaurant. It opens on the corner of Wangfujing and Chang'an Street and is the biggest MacDonald's in the world.

## Performance Art Events in China 1992

August – October 1992: Ni Weihua conducts [*Continuously Spreading Event-'92 Red Boxes*] in Shanghai. Ni Weihua randomly selects clippings from Chinese text from newspapers and magazines and enters the text into a computer.

When performing the text entries, the artist removes the Chinese punctuation as well as changing the form of the Chinese characters, which makes the text clippings meaningless. The texts are printed on red paper folded and put inside the boxes.

These red boxes with meaningless Chinese texts printed on them are distributed through different outlets. This work illustrates how highly developed human civilization could lead to temporary or permanent shock and paralysis. This phenomenon might spread and extend to realms of society such as the economy, politics and culture.

October 1992: Sun Ping's [*Stock of RMB Share A of China Sun Ping Art Company Limited*] confronts the emergence of an era in which art is becoming commercialized. Sun Ping performs in the Guangdong Art and Craft Museum. His work satirizes commercialization by selling stocks in the China Sun Ping Art Company Limited.

3 December 1992: [*Crush Bicycles*] is presented on the Fenhe New Bridge approach to the expressway in Taiyuan, at 9:30 a.m.; painters Song Yongping, Wang Yazhong and Li Jianwei instruct a mobile machinery shop to deposit a dozen bicycles along the road, which they then proceed to crush with a 12-ton steam-roller. They then pour a dozen liters of gasoline over the 12 bicycles and set them on fire. About 10 minutes later, the painters extinguish the fire with dry-chemical fire extinguishers. Finally,

the three painters selectively paint the crushed bicycles with oil-based spray-paint, and, on the road, spray the words "3 December 1992, Taiyuan, Shanxi province, China". The whole process lasts 2 hours and 20 minutes. This is an art action that employs "bicycles" as a new concept. "Bicycles" are not only vehicles, but, their forms altered by the artists, they represent a spiritual configuration. 4[ill. 22]



Song Yongping, Wang  
Yazhong, Li Jianwei  
[Crush Bicycles]  
3 December 1992  
Taiyuan, Shanxi [ill. 22]

## Significant Events in China 1993

29 April 1993: Wang Daohan, Head of the Association for Relations Across Taiwan Straits and Gu Zhengpu, President of the Taiwan Strait Exchange Foundation signs the Wang-GU Meeting Joint Agreement.

14 September 1993: Wei Jinsheng, accused of selling military intelligence and attempting to sabotage the Chinese Government who has spent 15 years incarcerated, is released on probation.

## Performance Art Events in China 1993

17 January 1993: members of the spontaneously organized “Lanzhou Art Army” – Cheng Li, Ma Yunfei, Ye Yongfeng, Yang Zhichao and Liu Yichu conduct [*The Funeral*]. Starting from Lanzhou 18th middle school, these members of Lanzhou Art Army, dressed in white, black and red, together with volunteers, walk around the city for a few hours carrying a coffin. [ill. 23]

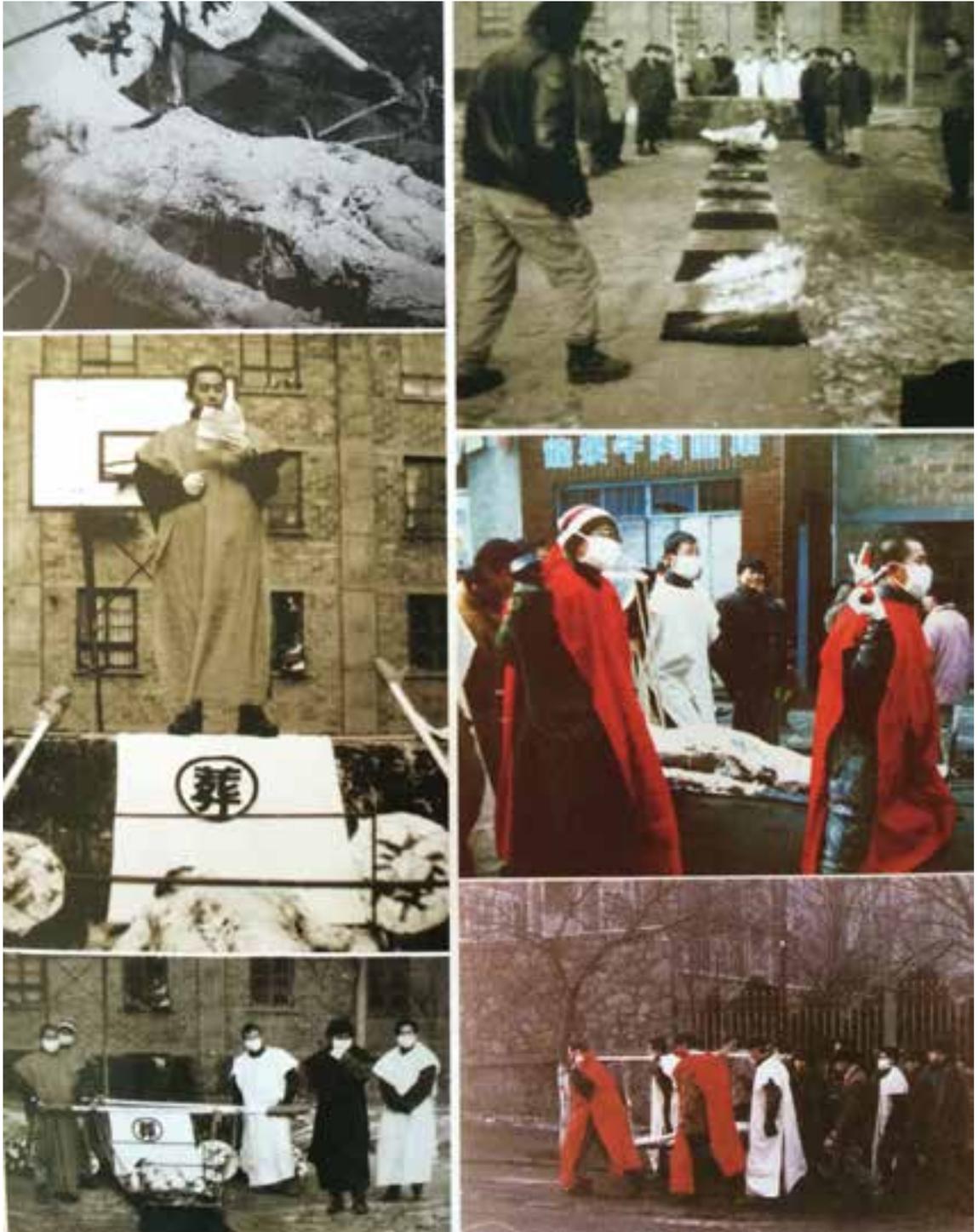
February 1993: Cai Guoqiang, [*Great Wall to be Extended for 10,000 Meters—the 10th Plan for the Aliens*]. With the participation of more than 100 people of different nationalities, at Jiayuguan, at the Western end of the Great Wall, where it

passes through the desert, explosives are laid with a 1000-meter fuse. At dusk, the fuse is lit and the explosions create a brilliant wall of smoke and fire. Around 50,000 citizens are present at this spectacle.

1993: Wang Peng conducts the performance [*Wall*] at the Gallery of Contemporary Art, Beijing. The artist bricks up the entrance to the contemporary art gallery in Beijing. The brick wall built by the artist is scheduled to stand for three days but is destroyed on the second day.<sup>5</sup>

April 1993: Ren Jian, [*Big Consumption – Ren Jian Stamp Collection Jeans*]. Ren Jian performs his piece in Beijing, Wuhan, Zhengzhou and Harbin, among other places. The performance art piece consists of selling “Stamp Collection” jeans. He turns the national flags of each country into stamp-shaped drawings, prints these on cloth and makes a series of jeans. He sells these directly and transforms his art into something practical and functional.

May 1993: Huang Yan, [*Collection Series – Demolished Constructions*]. Huang Yan places a performance art work of 3 imprinted drawings of constructions on the wall of the Chang Chun Railway Hospital on the corner of Dong’ertiao Road and Wusong Road in Kuancheng District of Changchun. The imprinted drawings are 1000 x 530 millimeters in size.



Cheng Li, Ma Yunfei, Ye Yongfeng, Yang Zhichao, Liu Yichu  
 [The Funeral]  
 17 January 1993  
 Lanzhou [ill. 23]

June 1993: Chen Shaofeng, [*Report of Investigation on Social and Art Image of Villagers in Wangguansi Township of Dingxing County Hebei Province*]. In the Wangguansi Township of Ding Xing County, Hebei Province, Chen Shaofeng performed this performance art piece.

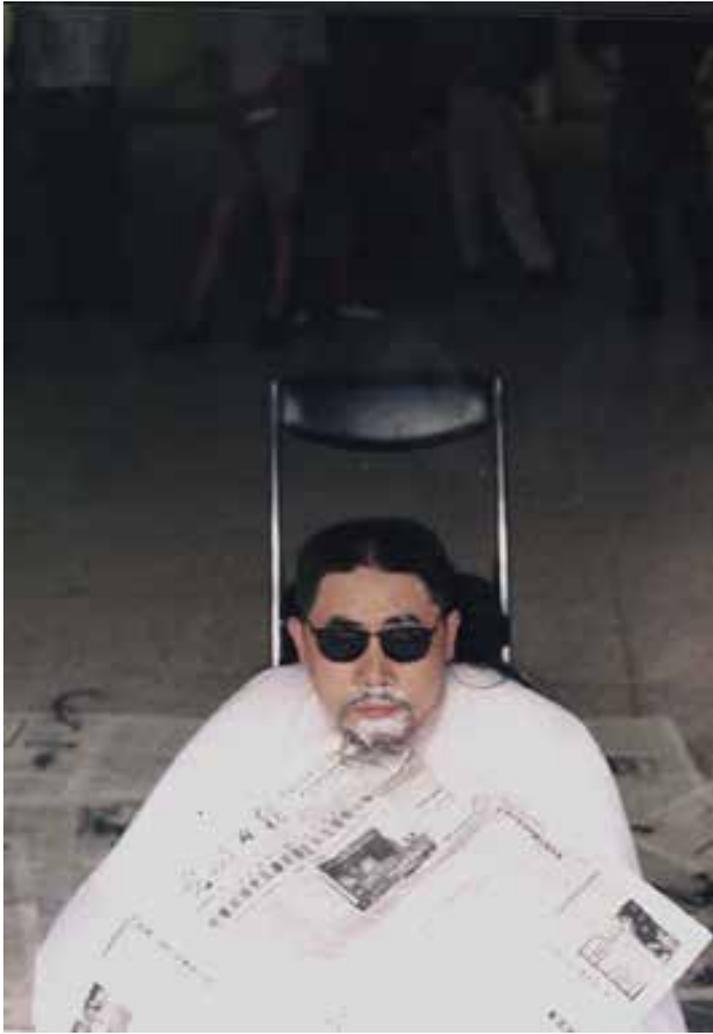
June 1993: Chen Shaofeng performs [*Report of Investigation on Social and Art Image of Villagers in Wangguansi Township of Dingxing County Hebei Province*] in the Wangguansi Township of Ding Xing County, Hebei Province.

June - December 1993: Ni Weihua conducts [*Continuously Spreading Event-'93 Posters*] in Shanghai. Ni Weihua first selects popular public billboard posters designs. From the designs, the artist chooses slogans and cuts the Chinese characters in the slogan into half. The "halved Chinese characters" are regrouped to form new but meaningless characters. These new characters are then replaced in their original position on the slogan from where they have been extracted. The redesigned posters are then printed in large quantities and posted in the public places in downtown areas. The work aims to interrupt temporarily the thoughts of people when they are looking at the posters.

21 August 1993: Song Yongping conducts [*Shave at the National Art Gallery*] at the exhibition "Countryside Project". The exhibition opens at the Beijing National Art Museum and is curated by Song Yongping. None of paintings

are particularly political in content though some portray less-than-positive aspects of Chinese life. For this reason, only 20 percent of the artist's work is exhibited. Song Yongping, the principal exhibiting artist at the "Countryside Project", is furious about the forced cutting of many of the exhibition's works. He tells his friends that he will shave his long hair on 25 August at the National Art Gallery to demonstrate his individualism.

At noon on this day, Song Yongping, a professional barber, friends and a journalist from Shanxi TV Station gather at the National Art Gallery. When the haircut begins, most of the gallery's visitors stop looking at the paintings and concentrate on the haircut. At first, Song Yongping faces in one direction with a stately expression, he then smiles and looks away. Twenty minutes later, the barber daubes his face with soap and starts to shave his face with a razor. At that moment, a gallery security guard arrives, faces the crowd and cameras and asks: "Who allowed you to do this?" Song Yongping answers, "This is our exhibition; I'm fully responsible." Instead of a performance, Song Yongping actions are considered an assault on the gallery. Visitors are expelled from the exhibition; the exhibition is permanently banned, and Song Yongping himself is driven from the gallery by security staff. 6[ill. 24]



Song Yongping  
[*Shave at the National Art Gallery*]  
21 August 1993  
Beijing [ill. 24]

September - October 1993: Ma Liuming conducts [*Dialogue with Gilbert and George*] after meeting these two foreign artists at their “Gilbert & George Visiting China Exhibition” held at the National Art Museum of China. Ma Luming invites them to visit the East village and conducts this performance at his studio in East village. Before the performance, Ma Luming plays Pink Floyd's “The Wall”. He then carries a table to the middle of the space, stands on it, stares at the ceiling and caresses it. He finds a crack in the ceiling, puts his finger into the crack, and blood flows down his finger toward his half-naked body. 7[ill. 25]

Ma Liuming  
[*Dialogue with Gilbert and George*]  
September-October 1993  
Beijing [ill. 25]





Ma Liuming  
*[Dialogue with Gilbert and George]*  
September-October 1993  
Beijing [ill. 25]

October 1993: Geng Jianyi, [*Marriage Law*]. This takes place at the Moganshan Primary School in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. Twenty members of the audience take part in and help to complete the performance.

November 1993: Lin Yilin, Chen Shaoxiong, Xu Tan and Liang Juhui present [*The Third Activity of Elephant with Big Tail*] at the Red Ant Bar Southeast in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province. Works by Lin Yilin [*10 Pieces and 1000 Pieces*], Chen Shaoxiong [*Five Hours*], Xu Tan [*Fable of Love*] and Liang Juhui [*Empty*] and others are shown.

December 1993: Ye Shuanggui, [*Continuously Spread Events Series—Virus of Consumption*] is performed at the Tian Long Hotel in Wuhan Hubei Province. Ye Shuanggui releases 200 “Virus Balloons” and demonstrates how to prepare food with “Viruses”.

1993: Hua Jiming, Liu Gangshun, Xu Jian, Hu Yuanhua, Han Liping and Li Ju perform [*Big Glass-Paradise of Dreams*] in the Worker’s Culture Palace in Huangshi City, Hubei Province. For this piece, members of the “SHS” group lie naked in a large glass tank.

1993: Zhu Fadong’s [*Missing Person*] performance is performed on a street in Kunming, Yunnan Province. “Missing” posters featuring the artist are posted on the street. [ill. 26]

1993: Yan Lei, [*1500cm*]. At his individual exhibition “Intrusion”, Yan Lei swallows a 1500cm-long rope inch by inch and then withdraws the rope from his stomach.

1993: Ma Liuming, [*One of the Naked Faces*], [*Fen. Ma Liuming No.3*], Ma Liuming begin to show his performance art series known as [*Fen. Ma Liuming*] in Beijing.



Zhu Fadong  
 [*Missing Person*]  
 1993  
 Kunming Yunnan [ill. 26]



Zhu Fadong  
*[Missing Person]*  
 1993  
 Kunming Yunnan [ill. 26]

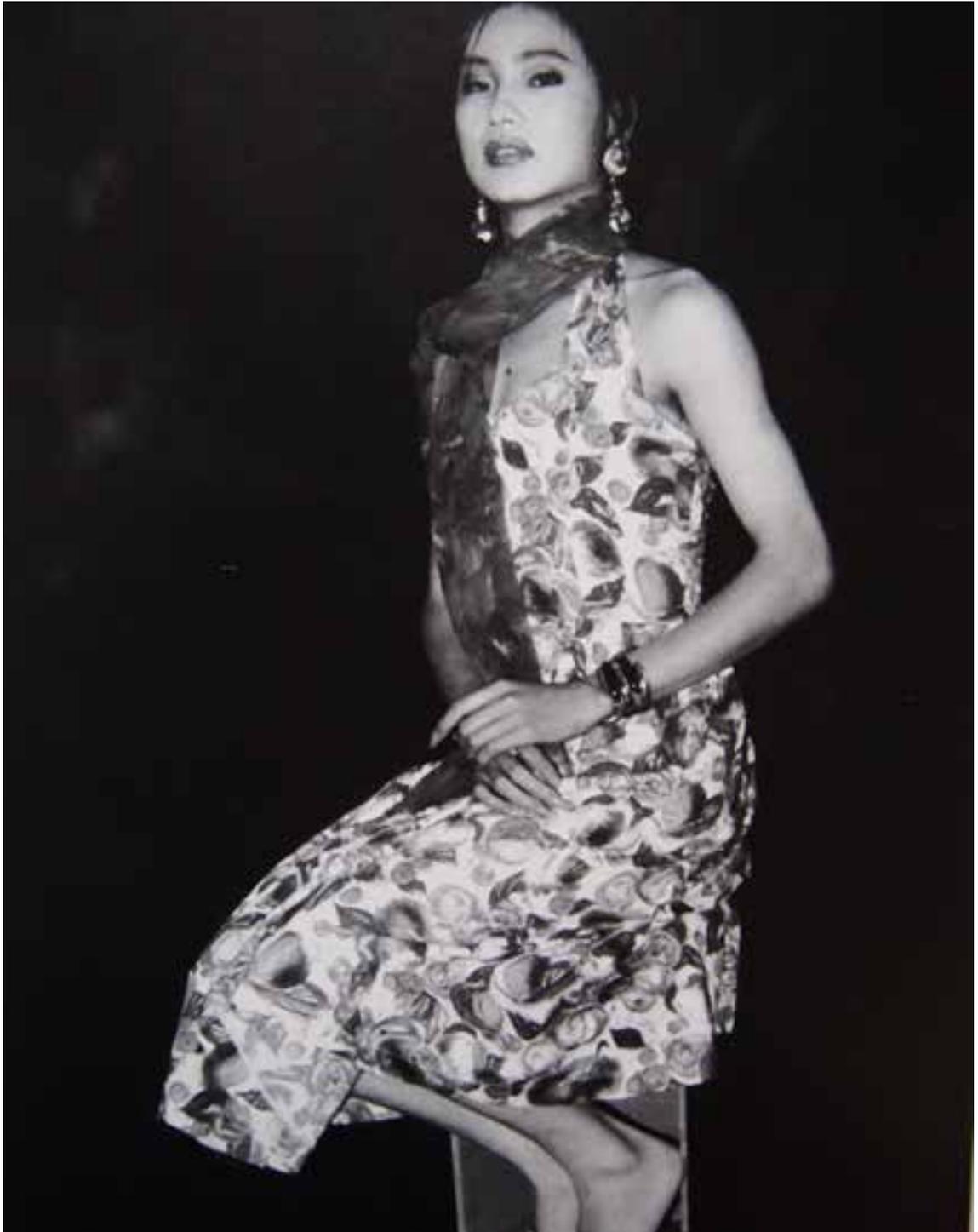
Artist Statement:

*The birth of Fen-Ma Liuming is a coincidence. One night in 1993, as I was preparing to go out with my friends, some of my female friends wanted to fix their make-up. They made fun of me and duly applied make-up to my face; 'I saw my face in the mirror and was terrified that my appearance had changed. I wanted to go further and wear girls' clothes. I put on a woman's*

*dress and they were astonished by my lady-like appearance. However, a woman's dress might mislead others into thinking that Ma Liuming is a transsexual. While in fact I am not in real life. I wanted to create more panic, so I decided to perform naked - this is to let people see my male body. A new personality is born and is given the name Fen-Ma Liuming...<sup>8</sup> [ill. 27]*



Ma Liuming  
[One of the Naked Faces]  
1993  
East Village, Beijing [ill. 27]



Ma Liuming  
[*One of the Naked Faces*]  
1993  
East Village, Beijing [ill. 27]

## Significant Events in China 1994

17 April 1994: The National A Class football league's first games are played.

1 June 1994: The International Recording Industry published a report claiming that China has the biggest laser disc piracy industry in the world.

14 December 1994: Premier Li Peng announces the beginning of the Three Georges Project.

## Performance Art Events in China 1994

1994: Cai Qing and Weng Fen present [*Purification*]. The event takes place on the busy streets of Haikou, Hainan province and is held in three separate locations.

Each time, when an alarm flashed, paper figures start orbiting. A piece of white cloth is placed on the ground, and the two artists sit face to face. 9[ill. 28]



Cai Qing & Weng Fen

[*Purification*]

1994

Haikou, Hainan [ill. 28]

April 1994: Tian Liusha, [*Flowing Rose*]. Tian Liusha distributes more than 1000 roses to passengers on a train from Guangzhou to Shanghai.

April 1994: In Ma Qizhi's [*Pay Full Attention to a Ground of 9 Square Meters*], the artist sweeps a piece of concrete ground clean and scrubs it down with soap.

April 1994: Ma Liuming, [*Fen - Ma Liuming's Lunch "Fish"*] is performed in the East Village of Beijing. In the courtyard of East village, the naked Ma Liuming cooks a fish. This is part of his "Fen – Ma Liuming's Lunch Series".

April 1994: Zhu Ming, [*April 30, 1994*], the artist expresses his view on life by engulfing himself in giant soap bubbles and plastic balloons in a near-death experience by suffocation.

May 1994: Shen Yun, the "94 Art Paragraph" exhibition. The exhibition, hosted by Zhu Qi goes on display at the then Huashan Professional Art College in Shanghai, now known as Shanghai Yifu Vocational and Polytechnic School Huashan Division. Shen Yun dressed as a beggar performed piece known as [*Unemployment of Art*]; this aroused disagreement among the other artists involved in the show.

May 1994: Ren Jian and others, [*1994. Green Engineering Project. Poem Wind Green. 2420*], Ren Jin organizes 'A New History Group' and

conducts this on the Aviation Road fly-over in Hankou, Wuhan.

May 1994: Several artists, "The Third Round Exhibition of Present Study Documents (Data) on Art". Planned by Wang Lin and opened in the library of East China Normal University, Shanghai, the show's theme is "Installation - Environment - Behaviour". The presentation uses mixed media, including slides, video, installations and performance art works. More than ten Chinese artists participate including some artists living abroad. During the exhibition, discussions on "Art in China in the Transform Period" are held.

June 1994: Ma Liuming, [*Fen - Ma Liuming's Lunch "Potato"*] is shown in East Village, Beijing. Ma Liuming cooks potatoes naked in the courtyard at East village.

July 1994: Zhang Huan's [*65 Kilos*] is performed in East Village, Beijing. The artist suspends himself from a crossbeam and, using an intravenous line, carries his blood onto a roasting tray below him.

## **Artist Statement:**

*I remember it was in December 1993 that I had the idea for the 65 Kg experiment. On a day no different from any other, I was alone, partially lying on my bed in the deep of the night, my mind in an agitated daze. It was pitch-black outside; occasionally I could hear the sound of barking made by dogs. The lamp at the head of my bed illuminated the frame of the angled iron rafter beams in a peculiar way, and their shadows were mysteriously projected across the ceiling like some kind of perilous and disastrous omen. Facing upward, I gazed at the single most important horizontal rafter beam supporting my studio. Looking at it... I already began to have fantastic ideas, seeing the rafter beam as a "hammock" suspended in the air. Thus, the idea of relaxing on this "hammock" was born. Originally, I wanted to use iron chains to hang my naked body parallel to the iron rafters, with my suspended body facing the floor. I would experience that state for as long as I could, enduring it for as long as I could endure, and when I could no longer handle it, some friends would take me off, at which point the work would be over. I entertained a momentary thought of hanging from the rafter face-to-face with a woman and conducting the project together, but I quickly dropped that idea.*

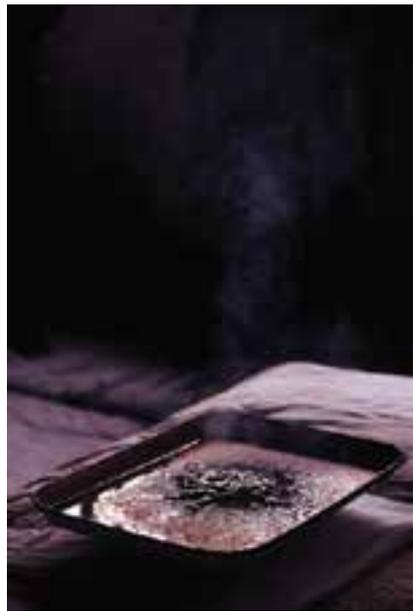
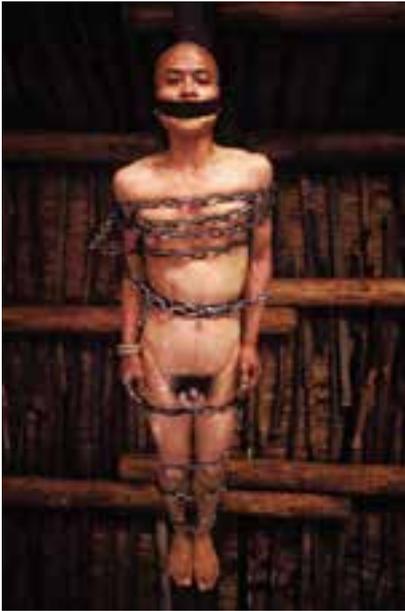
*Later, I added new content to my initial concept: drawing 250 millilitres of my blood and distributing it in drops over 100 white cotton-padded sheets. Two days before the performance I gave this up. In the end, I decided to drip the entire 250 millilitres onto a large medical pan, below which would be an installed electric hotplate. In this way, this performance as a work of art was even closer to me, more pure, and more rational. At the same time, it would also incorporate olfactory sensations into the work, without which the work might have been quite different.*

*The total area of my studio was approximately 32 square metres, it was 6.5 metres long, 5.5 metres wide, and 5 metres high. The iron rafter was 3 metres away from the floor. Of the one hundred cotton sheets, eighteen were spread precisely on the floor with a distance of 3 centimetres between them. Twenty mattresses were neatly piled together like a twin-sized bed, set up parallel to and just below my body. After that, the electric hotplate and pan were placed in a central location on the "twin-sized bed". The remaining cotton sheets were all placed at the wall behind my feet, neatly piled up against the wall. To bind my body I used ten iron chains, a leather belt for my head, a wooden plank measuring 175 by 50 centimetres, and two ladders. The temperature that day was 32° Celsius. These were the basic tools and conditions of the performance.*

*On the day before the performance, I did some necessary tests, resulting in the discovery that some of*

*the details were not what I had imagined at all. I could barely lie facing down on the iron chains for a few seconds: my head and body were slipping toward the ground. Later, I added four more chains, fixing their location and applying some talcum powder, this was the only way that I could manage to hang-on for a longer period of time. The trial lasted about five minutes. This way, I had some idea of how the performance would develop. Sometimes trials were necessary; otherwise on the day of the performance there will be unanticipated problems or accidental occurrences during the course of the work. Perhaps in this particular circumstance, there could have been difficulties drawing blood or I could have gone into shock midway through, and the authorities might have prematurely stopped the performance, which would all have resulted in failure. At the time, I was mentally confident that I was in excellent form and entirely capable of executing the work smoothly. During the course of its execution I was nonetheless, unexpectedly treated to some intuitive experiences. At the time, I was, completely enshrouded by the smell of burning blood, and this unbearable odour filled the entire space. Blood and sweat dripped endlessly, and because the upper torso was where the body's weight was concentrated, my chest was the most painful part and it was in pain for the longest time. My two hands were numb to the point that they were unresponsive, each finger felt swollen ten times its size; my body increasingly ached and I had to change position, but that only amplified the pain. Finally, the best thing to do was not to move; my whole body and mind were engrossed with experiencing each part of the body, for each second. Approximately one hour after the beginning, I felt I could no longer stand it; it was the moment that could draw the work to conclusion. It was endless; time seemed to have stopped. In the few minutes before the work concluded, I was enduring, experiencing the authentic existence of adaptability and endurance.*

*I believe that 65 Kg was completed successfully; everything seemed providential, and it was executed without a hitch. As an artist, it is important to use your own standards in choosing things, and to do things that you are most interested in and most familiar with according to your personal circumstances, to continuously discover the insignificant aspects of everyday objects, and then to use your own means to bring them into art. <sup>10</sup>[ill. 29]*



Zhang Huan  
[65 Kilos]  
July 1994  
East Village, Beijing [ill. 29]

1994: Cang Xin conducts [*Trampling Faces*] at the East Village, Beijing. Cang Xin makes 1,500 plaster casts of his own face and places them on the ground in a yard. He then invites the audience to enter the space and trample randomly on these plaster masks one after another.<sup>11</sup>[ill. 30]

Cang Xin  
[*Trampling Faces*]  
1994  
Beijing [ill. 30]





Cang Xin  
[*Trampling Faces*]  
1994  
Beijing [ill. 30]

14 August 1994: Wang Jin conducts [*Fighting the Flood - Red Flag Canal*] in He'nan, on the morning of the 14 August 1994. Wang Jin takes the No. 67 express train from Beijing to He'nan. Train arrives in Anyang, He'nan province around 2:25 p.m. then; and the artist takes a 6-hour bus to a canal in Linxian. Around 4 p.m. the next day, Wang Jin starts to dump 50 kilograms of red, concentrated mineral powder into the canal. As the powder dissolves into the water, the performance ends. Wang Jin takes the same route back to Beijing on the 16 August. <sup>12</sup>[ill. 31]

August 1994: Wang Peng, Song Dong, Yin Xiuzhen, Zhang Lei, Ruan Haiying and others, [*Ten Weeks in China*], art performances, created by Zhu Jinshi – a Chinese artist residing in Germany – are conducted at different times and at locations in Beijing and Wangzhuan, Hebei.

October 1994: Huang Yan, [*Huang Yan News—Rubbish News*], 1000 pieces of rubbish are picked up along Stalin Street in Changchun and the action is captured in photos printed in the “Huang Yan News”. Copies are sent by post throughout the country.



Wang Jin  
[*Fighting the Flood*]  
August 1994  
He'nan [ill.31]

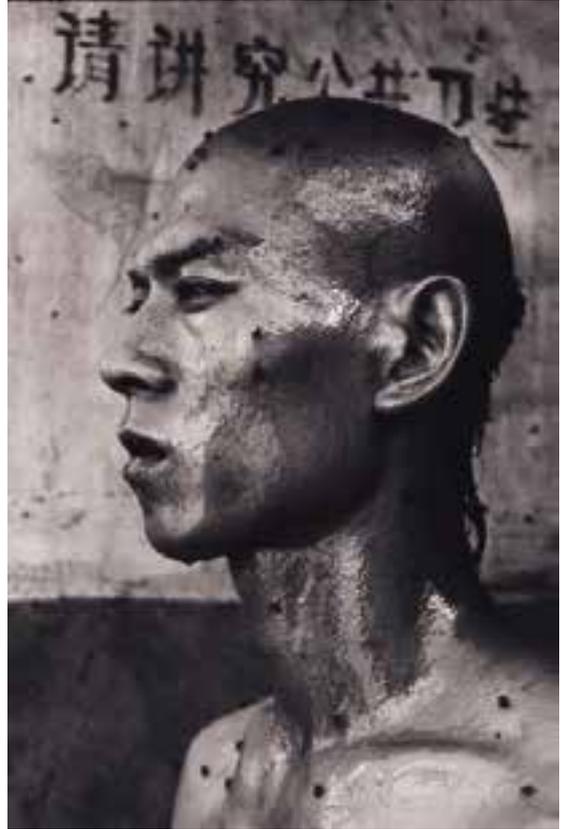
October 1994: Ma Liuming's [*Feng - Ma Liuming's Lunch*] is performed in East Village, Beijing. Ma Liuming cooks various dishes in the courtyard at East village, the performance lasts about 15 minutes before officials from the public security bureau come and take Ma Liuming and two members of the audience away. The artist is jailed for two months accused of "Playing obscene performances under the name of art"; the artist is later sent back to his home town. <sup>13</sup>[ill. 32]



Ma Liuming  
[*Feng - Ma Liuming's Lunch*]  
October 1994  
East Village, Beijing [ill. 32]

October 1994: Zhang Huan performs [*12 Square Metres*] in the East Village, Beijing. Zhang sits, naked, on a toilet in the countryside with his body covered with a mixture of honey and fish guts, flies crawl over his body for an hour. <sup>14</sup>[ill. 33]

October 1994: Zhan Wang, [*Washing Plan for Ruins*] is shown at Wangfujing, Beijing. The artist paints the ruins in the original colors; he cleans the tiles and re-points the walls. The artist is confronting the disturbing possibility of a commercial development of these ruins with a symbolic cleansing ritual.



Zhang Huan  
[*12 Square Meters*]  
October 1994  
East Village, Beijing [ill.33]

1994: Song Dong, [*Another Lecture, are You Willing to Play with Me?*] is performed in the Central Art and Craft Academy. In a corridor of more than 100-square-meters, a series of red and blue symbols are randomly arranged on the floor and the walls where they are obviously visible. In the corridor, there is also a blank blackboard, and school desks topped with blank books. As the artist rings a school bell, students enter in gowns, sit at the desks and read the blank books while the audience move freely among them. The bell rings a second time; the class is over, there comes the sound of flowing water and singing birds; the students give their pens to the audience and then the audience writes and paints

1994: Shu Qun, [*Salute to Prestige*] is performed at Wuhan University in Hubei. The participants and the audience are invited to assemble in front of the People and Culture Gallery of Wuhan University. Shu Qun, wearing a red scarf,

calls the people to come down the steps to the gymnasium; students in navy officer uniforms positioned on both sides of corridor salute the audience. The crowd passes through the gymnasium and arrives at the Physics academy to the music of the red flag [*Mi Shaiya*] Shu Qun begins to draw; the drums of Young Pioneers and songs of youth band are also playing. Red cloth banners fly with the slogans [*Salute to Prestige*] and [*Salute to Ideal*], a thousand pigeons and balloons are sent up into the air. The work finishes with the songs of Young Pioneers.

1994: Zhu Fadong conducts [*This Person for Sale, Price to be Negotiated*] in Beijing. Zhu Fadong, wearing a Chinese tunic suit and with a poster on his back with a words [*This Person for Sale, Price to be Negotiated*], walks the streets of Beijing for an entire year. [ill. 34]

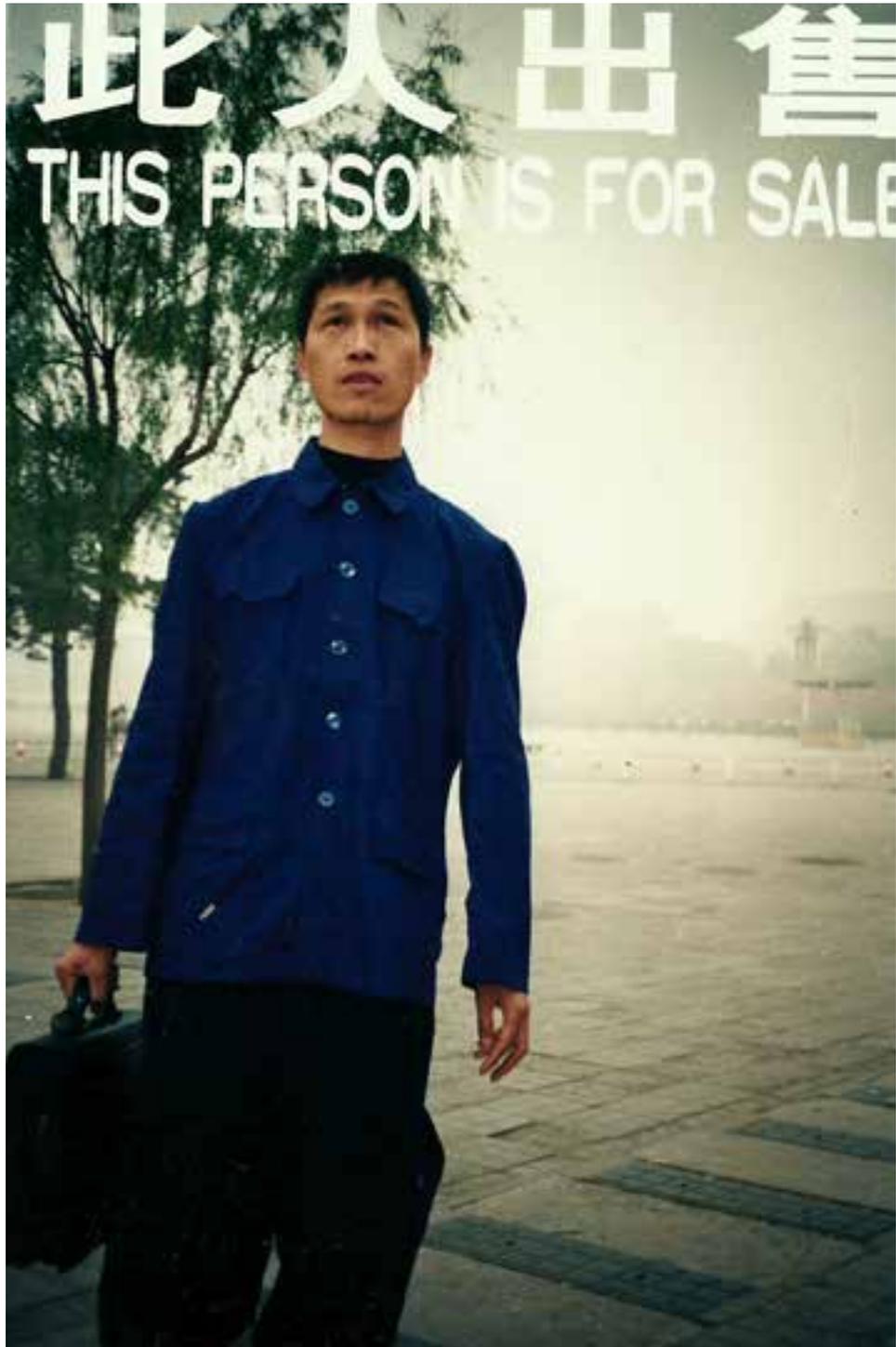


Zhu Fadong

[*This person for sale, price to be negotiated*]

1994

Beijing [ill. 34]



Zhu Fadong

*[This person for sale, price to be negotiated]*

1994

Beijing [ill. 34]

## Significant Events in China 1995

1 May 1995: The five-day working week is implemented, changing the lifestyle of Chinese people and boosting the emerging “holiday” economy.

## Performance Art Events in China 1995

23 January 1995: [*Original Sound*], is organized by Song Xiaohong with the participation of Zhang Huan, Zhu Fadong, Ma Liuming, Cang Xin, Zu Zhou, Song Dong, Luo lin, Gao Xiangfu and Rong Rong, Song Xiaohong and more than ten artists perform different performance art pieces under a fly-over in Dongbianmen, Beijing.

17 February 1995: Wang Jin conducts [*Fry RMB*] over a dinner banquet. The artist fries Chinese dollars and serves them as one of the courses presented to the diners.

March 1995: Luo Zidan, [*Chicken Rib*] is performed on a street in Zhongguanchun, Beijing. Luo Zidan collects some old one yuan banknotes for a total value of 1000 RMB and places them along 10 feet of a busy street with shops selling electrical products in

Zhongguanchun. Luo Zidan uses a camera to document the reaction of people passing by the banknotes. For this Performance, Luo Zidan is arrested by the Ministry of State Security and is later sent back to his hometown in Sichun. [ill. 35]



Luo Zidan  
[*Chicken Rib*]  
March 1995  
Zhongguanchun, Beijing. [ill. 35]

March 1995: [*Contact of the Third Kind*] by Ma Liuming and Zhang Huan is performed at a private apartment in Beijing. Zhang Huan and Ma Liuming brush their teeth and shave their bodies completely and bathe together in a bathtub full of their own hair.

March 1995: In the toilet of an apartment, Zhu Fadong does a full-body hair painting entitled [*No. 13*].

10 March 1995: Wang Jin conducts [*Knocking on the Door*] outside the walls of the Forbidden City in Beijing. The artist inserts bricks printed with the image of a US dollar note into the wall of the Forbidden City.

1995: Wang Peng conducts his performance/ installation work [*Three Days*] in Beijing. The artist exhibits his performance, which was executed five months before at the same location. Five months previously, the artist lived in an old pavilion of the Forbidden City for three days. Photos were taken from various positions in the pavilion. Friends came to visit and brought food, during which time conversations were taped. Five months later, the pavilion is refurbished. The furniture used during the three days is brought back to the pavilion and returned to its original position. The photos of the old pavilion are placed on the floor where they are originally taken. The audio tapes of the conversations are played back over speakers. <sup>15</sup>[ill. 36] [Video 1.3]



Wang Peng  
 [*Three Days*] Performance  
 1995  
 Forbidden City, Beijing [ill. 36]

April 1995: “Slides Show and Informal Discussion among Sino-US Artists” takes place in the Chengdu Army clothing factory workers’ union. Organized by Betsy Damon, Director of Keepers of the Waters, The Institute for Releasing Initiative a non-profit organization, and Dai Guangyu; participants include Betsy Damon, Dai Guangyu, Li Jixiang, Liu Chengying, Zeng Xun, Zhu Gang, Zhang Hua, Zhang Wei, Li Jinyuan, Li Yuanguo and Christian. Betsy Damon (USA) had come to Chengdu to propose a project for a “Live Water Park”, from which the idea for an art exhibition with the theme “The First Battle of Safeguarding Water” is born. The exhibition is widely promoted and takes place in August in a public space alongside the Jinjiang River in Chengdu City, with the support and sponsorship of the Chengdu City authorities. The exhibition mainly consists of performance art pieces including, [Washing the River] by Yin Xiuzhen, [Water Quota Which is Long Laid Aside] by Dai Guangyu, [One Day Show of Washing Face in Fu Nan River] by Yin Xiaofeng, [Fishing] by Zeng Xun and [Action of Searching for Fish and Shrimp] by Liu Chengying and works by artists Betsy Damon, Zhu Gang, Zeng Xun, Wang Peng, Cai Jian, Xu Hongbin, Ang Sang and Christian are also shown.

5 May 1995: Zhang Binbin conducts [Boundary Line] in the East Village, Beijing. This is a spontaneous piece of performance art in which fellow artists, Zhang Binbin’s friends and their

children participate. During the process, Zhang Binbin lies on a bed naked while the participants came in to the room one by one to interact with Zhang Binbin by touching, whispering and kissing. The performance lasts about 18 minutes.

### **Artist statement**

#### **(recorded in the artist diary):**

*This is not only an invisible line between people, but an invisible wall that marks the people’s difference in beliefs and moral values. If I were to demolish this wall of difference, how will people react? <sup>16</sup>[Video1.2]*

*May 1995: Zhang Huan, Ma Liuming, Zu Zhou, Ma Zhongren, Wang Shihua, Zhu Ming, Cang Xin, Zhang Binbin, Duan Yingmei and Gao Yang perform [Increase One Metre to a Nameless Mountain]. The work is performed at the Miaofeng Mountain in the suburbs of Beijing. The artists take turns to weigh themselves before they start the work. The artist who weighs the most lies on the ground first and the rest of them lie on him in weight order. [ill. 37]*



East Village Artist  
[Increase one meter to an Nameless Mountain]  
May 1995  
Beijing [ill. 37]

May 1995: Curators Kong Bu and Zhang Huan organize a group performance [*Nine Holes*] at an anonymous peak of the Beijing Miaofeng Mountain. 9 artists from the Beijing East Village, including Ma Liuming, Ma Zhongren, Wang Shihua, Zhu Ming, Cang Xin, Zhang Huan, Zhang Binbin, Duan Yingmei and Gao Yang participate the performance. The nine artists choose their own positions to undertake

their parts of the performance at the same time. For the male artists, holes are dug on the ground into which the artists to place their genitals. For the female artists: bumps on the ground are identified and the artists press their private parts against the bump. All the male and female artists lie still, face down, until the end of the performance. [ill. 38]



East Village Artist  
[*Nine Holes*]  
May 1995  
Beijing [ill. 38]

8 June 1995: Artist Song Dong conducts [*Chinese Medicine*] in a residence in Dongcheng District, Beijing. Pieces of Chinese literature are placed in a traditional Chinese chest of drawers that is typically used to store Chinese medicine. The artist's aim is to transform cultural materials into medical supplies that could help heal people who are "culturally" injured or sick.

June 1995: Lin Yilin [*Pass Forests and Roads Safely*] is performed on the busy main road on Linhe Road, Tianhe District, Guangzhou. The

artist builds a wall with several dozen bricks, then dismantles the wall brick by brick and rebuilds the wall on the other side of the road; these actions are repeated forming a "moving" wall.

July 1995: Wang Jin conducts [*Marry a Donkey*]. Wang Jin, wearing Western-style clothes, holds a solemn wedding ceremony with an elaborately dressed and heavily made-up donkey. [ill. 39]



Wang Jin  
[*Marry a Donkey*]  
July 1995  
Beijing [ill. 39]

August 1995: Yin Xiuzhen, Dai Guangyu, Yin Xiaofeng, Zeng Xun and Liu Chengying, etc., “The First Battle of Safeguarding Water”, a Contemporary Art Exhibition, organized by Betsy Damon, director of Keepers of the Waters, The Institute for Releasing Initiative a non-profit organization from the U.S., is held on the banks of the Funan River, Chengdu, Sichuan province. This exhibition uses performance art as its principal medium. Pieces by various artists are shown, including [*Washing the River*] by Yin Xiuzheng, [*Washing Face for One Day in Fu Nan River*] by Yin Xiaofeng, [*Fishing*] by Zeng Xun and [*Searching for Fish and Shrimp Actions*] by Liu Chengying as well as others.

August 1995: At “The First Battle of Safeguarding Water” event in Chengdu, Sichuan province. Yin Xiuzhen presents [*Washing the River*], The artist collects 10 cubic-meters of the polluted river water and transports this to an ice plant where it is frozen; he then carries the ice back to the bank; with the help of passers-by, the artist washes the ice with pure water. It takes two days to wash away the block of ice completely. [ill. 40]

The First Battle of Safeguarding Water  
 Yin Xiuzhen  
 [*Washing the River*]  
 August 1995  
 Chengdu Sichuan [ill. 40]



4 November 1995: Song Dong conducts [*Heavenly Secret*] at the Wanghaiting Mingren Tea Club, Houhai, Beijing. Song Dong invites his painter friends and art critics to the tea club to talk. The artist and his guests have their discussions with a few toy parrots hanging in bags above the tea table. The artist expresses the phenomenon of people making repetitive speeches or copying what other people say when they engage in discussions.

25 November 1995: In memory of the 50th Anniversary of anti-Japan war, Shen Yun conducts the performance [*95 Ten Thousand Miles' Trip*] in the East garden of National Art Museum of China. This performance involves many major cities and areas where the battles against the Japanese army were fought, and the whole performance takes one year to complete. At each performance locations, the artist wears the uniform of the "Eighth Route Army", the Chinese troops who were given the task of fighting against the Japanese army during the Second World War, with red shoulder girdles. Slogans like "In Memory of the 50th Anniversary of Anti-Japan War's Success" and "New Eighth Route Army Fight Devils" are written on the army uniform. In addition to the army uniform, the artist also carries air guns at his waist. Before the performance starts, big paintings and balloons with images of devils are set at main streets and busy areas. When the performance starts, the artist passes one of his air guns to the participants and encourages

the participants to shoot the devil paintings and balloons with him.

Artist statement:

*Art is not creation but rather combination. Through appropriation, resemblance, symbolisation, metaphor, and the irony of reality, let the participants "play their proper role" according to the "market" rules.*

Winter 1995 - Present: Song Dong presents [*Diary Written with Water*] in Beijing. Song Dong has a stone tablet that he has collected from a national park. Every night before he sleeps, he dips a brush pen in pure water and writes his diary on the stone. "Sometimes he might write for more than two hours, or sometimes just a few words." Writing diaries in water becomes a habit and part of his daily routine, diluting his every day emotion and making him think with pure water. Seeing the writing slowly sink in and then fade away, it seems that he is depositing a whole life within that stone, a life which remains to be savored on another day. He specifies in his will that, after his death, the stone will be placed back where it was collected, returning to nature. [ill. 41]

16 December 1995: In the Black Forest Bar near Wangfujing in Beijing, artist Wei Ye performs the work [*Future Fast-food*]. Wei Ye's work invites art critics and artist friends to dinner and watches a performance in a special room he has prepared in the Black Forest Bar.



Every participant is served with "dishes" made by the artist himself including "fruit salad", "Yongle Canon", "stewed sausage", and "Kresge Multimedia Disc" etc., each had its own specific price. During dinner, the waitress collects a minimum RMB 10 dining fee from each diner according to the artist's wishes.

**Artist statement:**

*In the future culture towards the end of the 20th century, art such as literature and film for example would be thoroughly changed. Future culture has been here for a long time, but in our times it has been deserted. As an artist, through further understanding in the art of future culture, I intend to try to experience future culture as regular creation, which demands a comprehensive analysis of the literature and art fields. I will spread future culture into different levels of society like air. I am determined to change the living environment and present human a new nature and order, making it more rich and colourful. This is the theoretical starting point of my "Future Fast-food"..*

Song Dong  
[Diary Written with Water]  
Winter 1995-Present  
Beijing [ill. 41]

## Significant Events in China 1996

18 –25 March 1996: The PLA (People's Liberation Army) conduct a joint exercise involving the army, navy and air force in the Taiwan Strait.

May 1996: The first internet-café opens in Shanghai.

## Performance Art Events in China 1996

January 1996: Wang Jin's [*Ice 96 Central China*] is performed in the 2.7 Square, Zhengzhou, Henan province. The artist freezes popular daily consumables onto a giant wall of ice there with the intention of creating a direct exchange of ideas with the public turning the ice sculpture into a public performance art work. Some members of the audience take the frozen daily consumables by breaking the giant ice sculpture [ill. 42]

March - April 1996: Yu Ji begins to conduct the first part of his work [*Put Piles into the Milk Bottle*] on the streets in Shuanglin Road, Chengdu; the subsequent part is conducted at the exhibition [*Listen to Stories by Man and Woman*].



Wang Jin  
[*Ice 96 Central China*]  
January 1996  
Zhengzhou, Henan [ill. 42]

April 1996: Ye Yongqing, Chen Wenbo, Li Jixiang, Yu Ji, Dai Guangyu, Liu Chengying and others. Organized by Wang Lin, [*Listen to Stories by Man and Woman*] is shown in the Ya Feng Art Saloon of the Chengdu Communication University. They discuss gender issues through art.

May – June 1996: [*Action of One Cent*], [*Circle*], [*My (Our) Shelf, Installation, Behaviour*] and [*Installation on a small street*] by Luo Zidan. This series of performance art works are performed at various locations: [*Action of One Cent*] on the Chun Xi Road; [*Circle*] and [*My (Our) Shelf, Installation, Behaviour*] at the Overseas Chinese Hotel; and finally [*Installation on a Small Street*] on a market stall on the Daxue Road vegetable market.

August 1996: Zhang Shengquan, Song Dong, Yin Xiuzhen, Dai Guangyu, Zhang Lei and Liu Chengying, “*The Second Battle of Safeguarding Water*”, Lhasa. This contemporary art show is held on the bank of Lhasa River, Tibet. Participating artists include Zhang Shengquan (aka “Big Zhang”) with [*Cross - Free animals*], Song Dong with [*Print Water*], Yin Xiuzheng with [*Alive Water*] and [*Butter Shoe*], Dai Guanyu with [*Listen Attentively*] and Zhang Lei with [*Barley*] and [*3650 Metres above Sea Level, 25°C*] as well as others.

August 1996: Zhang Shengquan performs [*Cross - Free animals*] on the upper section of the Lhasa Bridge. The artist plans to slaughter a sheep after

he carries the sheep on his shoulders across a local river. However, the artist gives up the idea after one of the participating artists successfully persuades him to free the sheep.

August – December 1996: Luo Zidan’s works [*I Stand Upright*], [*Sports in the East and West*], [*Facing IV Conversion after Getting Rid of Testis*], [*Half a White Collar, Half a Peasant (City)*] and [*Half a White Collar Half a Peasant (Field)*] are shown in Chengdu, Sichuan province. The artist performs these pieces in different locations: [*I Stand Upright*] is shown at the front gate of the former Chengdu Science and Technology College; [*Sports in the East and West*] on the football ground of the Sichuan University; [*Facing IV Conversion after Getting Rid of Testis*] in the “Mutual Photos and Drawings Society” on the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Chengdu Art Building; [*Half a White Collar, Half a Peasant (City)*] on Chunxi Street and [*Half a White Collar Half a Peasant (Field)*] in the Xinfan village.

Summer of 1996: [*Revival*] by Dai Guangyu was shown in Sichuan. Dai Guangyu focuses his attention on social problems caused by environmental issues. He performs his installation piece [*Revival*] single-handedly within the perimeter wall of the Sichuan University. The piece consists of actions like placing fish into plastic bags and then tying them to the wall. The fish eventually suffocate within the bags.

Summer of 1996: Liang Juhui's [*Games for One Hour*] is performed on the construction site of a skyscraper in Tianhe, Guangzhou. The artist plays a game in which, for an hour, he battles tanks from a rapidly moving construction lift.

Winter 1996: Song Dong conducts his performance [*Breathe Out*] at two different locations in Beijing. In Tian'anmen Square, in

temperatures of nine degrees centigrade below zero, the artist first breathes on the surface of a brick for about 40 minutes until it is completely covered in ice. Then he blows on the ice in Houhai Park of Beijing for 40 minutes in temperatures of -8 degrees centigrade. [ill. 43]

1996: [*YZPUNK in Subway, 1/2 of Employees in the Company*] by Yan Lei. The piece is shown



Song Dong  
[*Breathe Out*]  
Winter 1996  
Beijing [ill. 43]

on the subway in Beijing. Yan Lei split one week into two parts and lives the life of an ordinary white-collar worker as well as that of the artist's friends.

1996: [*Programme of the Patient—Practice of Tongue*] by Cang Xin is performed in his house in Beijing. The artist licked 36 different articles.

1996: [*Feng - Ma Liuming*] is shown at the NIPAF in Tokyo. The performance was conducted in a dark room, the artist illuminates parts of his naked body using matches. When the performance came to end the light goes on and he is standing still, in the room, naked. This is Ma Liuming's first performance at a festival overseas.

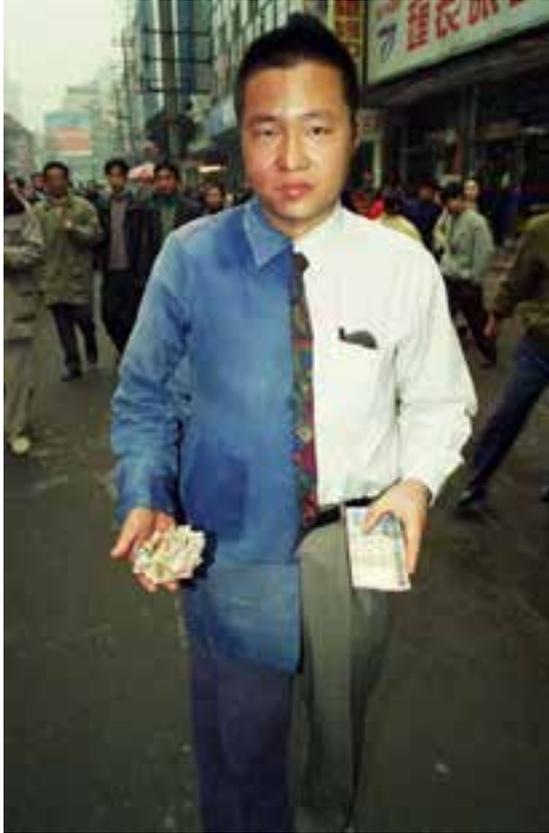
1996: [*Movement of the Soul of the Dead at Home*] by Gu Kaijun is performed in East Village, Beijing. The artist wraps himself in yellow cloth and ignites himself; he extinguishes the fire a minute later.

1996-1997: Wang Peng's performance [*Passing through New York*] is performed in New York. The artist hides a roll of thread inside his clothes, with one end of the thread attached to the back of his clothes and tied to a building in the city. The artist then walks freely through the streets of the city trailing the thread behind him.<sup>17</sup>[Video 1.3]

4 December 1996: Luo Zidan's [*Half a White Collar, Half a Peasant*] is performed in the busy business

district on Chunxi Road in Chengdu, Sichuan province. Luo Zidan wears a tailor made costume. Half the costume is peasant dress while the other half is white-collar clothes.

The artist arrives at the busy shopping street around 10:30 a.m. and starts to walk into different shops to try on clothes, shoes or glasses. One of the highlights of the performance involves the artist's entry in a bookstore. He walks in and draws out the antenna of his mobile phone to underscore and read words from a Chinese dictionary in an obvious manner. The artist then leaves the bookshop and rests on one of the benches on the shopping street. While resting, the artist's peasant-half wipes mud from his right legs while he pays a female shoe shiner to help him polish the shiny Italian shoe worn by the white-collar half. The artist continues his work by entering a luxury watch store and trying on a diamond watch priced 2.3 million RMB. The artist takes a lunch break at the Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant before reaching the last location of the performance, the Holiday Inn Hotel. At the hotel check-in counter, the artist used his peasant half sleeves to wipe the surface of the marble desktop. Some onlookers discuss among themselves while watching the artist's performance. Some of them even express their feeling about the performance by shouting "This is real art!" The performance lasts for about 4 hours.<sup>18</sup>[ill. 44]



Luo Zidan  
[*Half a White Collar, Half a Peasant A*]  
4 December 1996  
Chengdu Sichuan [ill. 44]

15 December 1996: few days later after Luo Zidan conducted [*Half a White Collar, Half a Peasant - City*], the artist puts on the second part of the performance [*Half a White Collar, Half a Peasant - Filed*]. The artist travels to Xinfang, a remote county near Chengdu. Local villagers are shocked to see the artist wearing his tailor made costume one half of which was in peasant dress while the other half in white-collar clothes. The artist tries to behave like a local villager: he shops at the local food market, plays with children in a school playground and

sings Karaoke in one of the local nightclubs. The performance lasts about 4 hours. A crewmember from a local television station documents the whole event. <sup>19</sup>[ill. 45]

The entire school year of 1996: [*Art Lecture—Remember 12.9 Forever*] by Ma Yunfei is performed in Lanzhou Gansu while he teaches art. Ma Yunfei, an art teacher at Lanzhou Gansu, conducts this performance for the entire school year teaching high school students. The process is to hand out school work according to different



Luo Zidan  
 [*Half a White Collar, Half a Peasant -City&Field*]  
 15 December 1996  
 Chengdu Sichuan [ill. 45]

commemoration days and holidays to all the 8 classes of junior 3 when they have the class together. For example, on the Anti-Japanese War anniversary, the students are asked to make masks of Japanese cartoon figures. Materials are not restricted. After all of the masks are completed, students put them on their faces, comment on the qualities of the masks and talk about Japanese culture. On the National Day,

students are asked to design a flag; on the Youth Day to design a symbol and to imagine and draw a school uniform, school badge and a campus; on Teacher's Day to draw a picture of the teacher they want to draw the most. They also draw their parents at home. [ill. 46]



Ma Yunfei

[Art Lecture—Remember 12.9 Forever]

1996

Lanzhou Gansu [ill. 46]

## Significant Events in China 1997

19 February 1997: Premier Deng Xiaoping passes away in Beijing, aged 93. His ashes are thrown into the sea on 2 March, as per the wishes of Deng Xiaoping himself and his family.

From Midnight to Dawn on the morning of 1 July 1997: The Chinese and British governments participate in a solemn ceremony, marking the power-exchange in Hong Kong. Jiang Zeming, Chairman of the PRC, announces China's sovereignty in Hong Kong and the founding of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

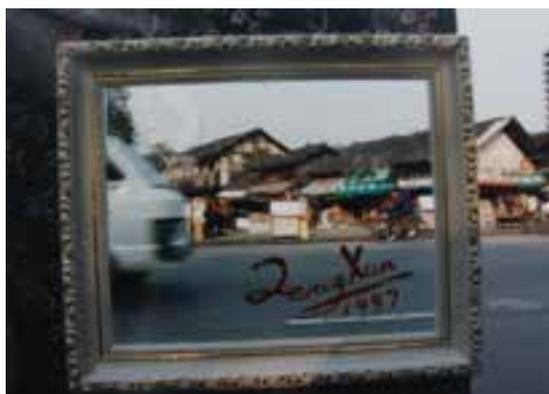
1 July 1997: The Hong Kong area is finally returned to her motherland.

## Performance Art Events in China 1997

January - May 1997: [*One Phenomenon of Feminism*] and [*Specimen of White Collar*] by Luo Zidan are shown in Chengdu, Sichuan province. The pieces are performed in the Zongbei District (the so-called rich man's area in Chengdu at the time) and on the bridgehead of Xinnanmen Bridge respectively.

1997: Zeng Xun presents [*Magical Frame*] in Chengdu, Sichuan province. A board mounted with wallpaper is framed. It is then used to frame the streets and squares in Chengdu. Every time the shutter is pressed, the scenery enters the

frame. Approximately 200 photos are taken this way. [ill. 47]



Zeng Xun  
[*Magical Frame*]  
1997  
Chengdu, Sichuan [ill. 47]

March 1997 – April 1998: Chen Shaoxiong, Dai Guangyu, Yan Lei, Hu Jianping, Liang Juhui, Lin Yilin, Liu Chengying, Ma Liuming, Pang Lei, Qiu Zhijie, Shi Yong, Song Dong, Wang Jin, Weng Fen, Xu Tan, Yin Xiaofeng, Yin Xiuzhen, Yu Ji, Zeng Xun, Zhang Huan and others, [*Wild life 1997 the Waking of Insects·Start*]. Organised and edited by Song Dong and Guo Shirui, [*Wild life*] is published as a single publication. The publication included plans and photos documenting the execution of these pieces. It is shown at the Beijing Modern Art Centre. Song Dong had contacted several people from key art ecology areas throughout the country and along with 27 other artists, together they hold a nationwide “Party”, called [*Wild life 1997 the Waking of Insects·Start*], it is an experimental concept. It began in March with the “Waking of Insects” and lasts for an entire year. The concept of this work is on-the-spot creation in open spaces, constituting a new attempt at creating artistic activity outside of the traditional exhibition style and space.

April 1997: Dai Guangyu [*Frog in Well*], Zhang Hua, Dai Guangyu and other artists hold a series of solo exhibitions at the “152B” Studio in the Central Park of Chengdu, Sichuan province. [*Frog in well*] by Dai Guangyu is a performance/installation work. Frogs are locked in a birdcage; all the frogs are numbered, tagged and photographed. The cage is deposited on a pyramid-shaped pile of mud, where a 500W light keeps on shining on it, and the frogs gradually

die of dehydration. Afterwards, Dai Guangyu wraps the dead frogs using a map of China which is painted red by pig blood and red paint, in front of the pile of mud. The tags of each frog are buried in front of the tombs with crosses.

May – August 1997: Cai Qing, Xue Lei and Ma Liuming and others, [*Another Long March*], perform in an exhibition planned by foreign artists Maranne Brouwer and Chris Driseeen. Organised by the Chinese artist Tang Di, the exhibition is held in an army barracks in Breda, Holland with 18 participating Chinese artists.

8 June 1997: [*Keep Black When You Know White*] by Luo Zidan is performed on South Taisheng Road Chengdu, a street specializing in telecommunications equipment. With skin painted white, wearing white body fitting garments, with a red silk ribbon bound to the waist on which hang two delicate black squares of different sizes, Luo Zidan enters the prosperous street of communication equipment in Chengdu’s South Taisheng Road. The piece lasts 40 minutes.

30 June 1997: Song Dong conducts [*Reclamation*] on the coast of Shenzhen where the stretch of sea separates Hong Kong and Shenzhen. The artist performs his work on the eve of the Hong Kong handover from the UK to Chinese government. The artist first uses seawater to mark the numbers 1840 to 1997 on 158 stones. After completing the markings, the

artist throws the stones into the sea that separates Hong Kong and Shenzhen.

July 1997: Yin Xiaofeng, Dai Guangyu, Liu Chengying, Yu Ji, Zeng Xun, Zhang Hua, Zhu Gang, Luo Zidan, Zha Changping and others form the [*Federation of 719 Artists' Studios*]. The federation's main focus is the study of and experimentation with performance art. However, it disbands a year later.

July 1997: Zhu Fadong, [*Invite You to An Action of Hiring the Last Zhu Fadong*]. Zhu Fadong conducts a 100-day-long performance art piece. He later sponsors discussion of a show called [*Open the Living Aay for 100 Days*] as well as a discussion of a photography and drawing exhibition at the Art Museum of Beijing.

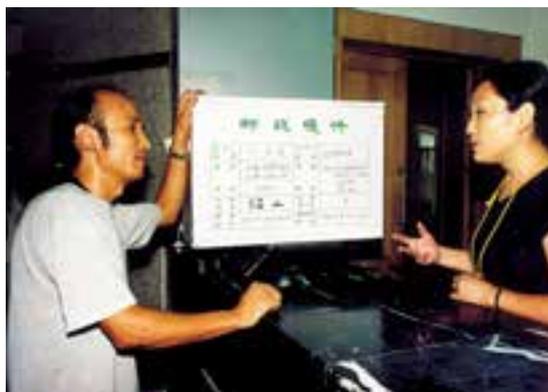
July 1997: [*Programme of the patients series 2*] by Cang Xin. This is an experimental performance art installation piece held at No.52 Dong Si Ba Tiao, Beijing.

July 1997: [*Exchange*] by Zhao Bandi. A piece of earth, measuring 25 x 25 x 25 centimetres, is removed from the ground near the Ming Tombs in Beijing and loaded into a case. The earth is then taken as luggage to London where it is unloaded in London's docklands. A similar chunk of earth from the site in London is then removed and taken back to Beijing.

Summer 1997: [*Increasing Water Level for*

*A Fish Pond*] by Zhang Huan. The piece is performed in Beijing. More than 40 provincial peasant workers and their children, ranging in age from 4 to 60 are invited to jump into a fish pond to increase the water level of the pond.

August 1997: Liu Chengying presents [*Slow Express - Mailing Earth*] in Chengdu, Sichuan province. The artist delivers 5 boxes of earth to the Chengdu branch of EMS Global Delivery in order to send these 5 packages to five different countries, each on a different continent. He specifies that the packages must arrive exactly 139 years later. After half an hour's negotiation with the department, "Slow Express" pulls out from the post office on August 13<sup>th</sup> 1997. [ill. 48]



Liu Chengying  
[*Slow Express - Mailing Earth*]  
August 1997  
Chengdu, Sichuan [ill. 48]



Liu Chengying  
[*Slow Express - Mailing Earth*]  
August 1997  
Chengdu, Sichuan [ill. 48]

October 1997: Dai Guangyu, Yu Ji, Yin Xiaofeng, Zeng Xun, Liu Chengying, Zhang Hua and Zhu Gang hold the exhibition “The Third Battle of Safeguarding Water Origin -Life” in Dujiangyan. CCTV’s interview group known as ‘Sky of Art’ – headed by Wen Pulin - produces a detailed record of the exhibition. The program is broadcast nationally as a special report, which represents progress in that it is the first time that CCTV has reported performance art in a positive light.

8 October 1997: Luo Zidan performs the piece [*Human Contamination Source*] in the Chengdu Wang Jiang Park. After setting up a 10-metre range of domestic garbage bags along the ecological river embankment in Wang Jiang Park, the author paddles in the chilly river. After playing in the water and swimming, the smudged author goes through a garbage bin connected to a drainage pipe, and, with the assistant's help, washes off the dirty stuff with brushes, shampoo, body wash, and repeatedly pouring clean water. The dirty water along with the washed-off dirt flows back into the river via the drainage pipe. The joint between the pipe and river is wrapped in white cloth. The process takes 2 hours. [ill. 49]



Luo Zidan  
8 October 1997  
[*Human Contamination Source*]  
Chengdu [ill. 49]

12 October 1997: Zhu Gang presents his installation/performance [*Rose Boat*] at the “Third Battle of Safeguarding Water Origin – Life” event in Dujiangyan, Chengdu, Sichuan province. The artists use 200 roses, 200 paper boats made from photocopies of human images and enlarged prints from the book *Research on Chengdu City and its Irrigation System*. The performance consists of placing the paper boats into the Dujiangyan River. The artist imagines that the vivid roses in the paper boats will continue their “life” in the clean, clear river.<sup>20</sup>[ill. 50] [video 1.8]



Third Battle of Safeguarding Water ‘Origin - Life’  
Zhu Gang  
[*Boat of Roses*]  
12 October 1997  
Dujiangyan, Chengdu [ill. 50]

12 October 1997: Zhu Gang presents [*Looking at Water*] at the “Third Battle of Safeguarding Water Origin – Life” event in Dujiangyan Chengdu, Sichuan province. 100 cobblestones and 100 pictures of people's five sense organs are used. The artist deposits the 100 cobblestones along a river bed, each of which is covered in an image of a person’s five sense organs. The

river flows constantly over the sense organs on the cobblestones along the river bed. The water of the river erodes the river bank, and finally washes the images of people's five sense organs on the cobblestones out, or distorts them making them hard to recognize. [ill. 51]



Third Battle of Safeguarding Water ‘  
Origin - Life’  
Zhu Gang  
[*Looking at Water*]  
12 October 1997  
Dujiangyan, Chengdu [ill. 51]

November 1997: Yu Ji; Dai Guangyu, Yin Xiaofeng, Zeng Xun and Liu Chengying. Zhu Gang presents the exhibition [*Man Reproducing Time*]. The show is organized by Dai Guangyu and hosted by Zha Changping, it is held in a completed but disused building in Chengdu, Sichuan province.

November 1997: The return of Hong Kong is a potent symbol of the current global post-colonial transformation and gives many creative ideas to the artists who produce works attempting to reveal the collective, unspoken panic facing such historic changes. In November 1997, the artist Lin Yilin conducts [*Shark Proof Web*] in a swimming pool in Hong Kong. The artist creates a web made from hundreds of copies of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region* in the swimming pool and floats himself on a floater marked with “Life Saving” character.

December 1997 – 1998: More than 100 artists participate in the event “The Fifth Exhibition of Documents on Modern Art Study” organized by Wang Lin. The main theme is “*Citizen Character 1997*”. The exhibition includes photography, poems, drawings, sculptures, installations, environmental art and film. For an entire year, more than one hundred artists, in more than 20 cities, hold individual or joint studio exhibitions. They later publish a book under the title [*Citizen Character and Modern Art*].

1997: [*Eliminate Sex Distinction*] by Ma Liuming is shown at the Museum of Tokyo, Japan. The performance expresses gender confusion. Ma

Liuming wears a black jacket with vest and red dress underneath. A Video image of Ma Liuming shaving is projected on the wall, the sound of the shaving is very loud. A few minutes later, Ma Liuming starts to put make up on his face and moves to the stage. He is standing on the edge of the stage holding a pair of scissors and starts cutting up his black vest. Later, he starts to cut up the red dress underneath his black jacket. When he has almost finished cutting up the dress, the light of the stage dims; he begins to walk towards the audience and continues to cut the cloth that still remains on his body until he is completely naked. Then, he walks through the audience towards the back of the room.

1997: [*Culture*] by Gu Kaijun is performed at the artist’s home in Beijing. Gu Kaijun draws on the text of a book with a white pen for a week.

1997: Yan Lei and Hong Hao, [*Invitation Letter*]. Taking a satirical dig at the West-adoring vanguard art circles in China, the artists, falsely pretend to be the curators of the Kassel “Documenta” exhibition in Germany and issue invitations to almost every important artist and art critics in China leaving a public phone box as the contact number.

1997: [*Beef in a Swimming Pool*] by Yan Lei is shown at a modern art exhibition in 1997 in Victoria Park, Hong Kong.

## Significant Events in China 1998

*16 June 1998: The National Planning and Development Committee and the Ministry of Education issue a joint statement announcing an immediate increase in student enrolment numbers. Enrolment numbers are raised by 42% from 1998 to 1999, constituting one of the most welcomed education policy decisions in many years. This event is widely considered one of the most significant events in the history of Chinese education policy.*

July-September 1998: Massive flooding kills 4150 people and causes 255.1 billion RMB in loss and damages.

## Performance Art Events in China 1998

January 1998: Cai Qing, Song Dong, Tang Cheng and Liu Fenghua, [*Trace of Existence*]. It is performed in a private workshop and warehouse at a private modern art show organized by Feng Boyi, in the north of Yaojiayuan, in the Beijing suburbs. This show stresses the artist's feeling of the marginalization of live art. Among the pieces shown in the exhibition, are Cai Qing's [*Cultivation*] and Song Dong's [*Making Sauerkraut*] performance art works. [*Home Town*

*is an Umbrella Countrywide Environmental Protection*] by Tang Cheng and a happening event [*Duplicate Lei Feng*] by Liu Fenghua are performed at the opening of the show.

January 1998: Luo Zidan creates his work [*Dying and Died Artist*] at the main entrance of Lie Nong Bar near the 7<sup>th</sup> Middle School in Chengdu. With the sonorous symphony of Fate playing, Luo Zidan is tied with a thick hemp rope under the column with Beethoven's white bust, where he kneels for almost 2 hours on black hardwood and stands with clenched teeth.

February 1998: [*Dismantle*] by Zhang Dali is performed in the courtyard of the Museum of the Forbidden City in Beijing. Zhang Dali's images are sprayed on the walls that are destined to be pulled down as part of the city's regeneration plan.

1998: Cai Qing and Weng Fen conducts [*2.21 Project*] in Haikou, Hainan province. The project is located in a deserted library in Hainan University. Participants include a cameraman, a female secretary and three workers. The work processes are:

1. Record the building in its original color.
2. Paint the building deep blue and capture images of the painted building.
3. Remove the deep blue paint from the building and the captured images of the building after the paints are removed.

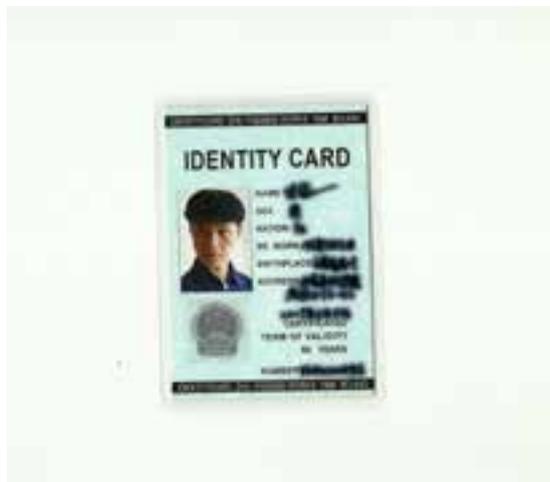
The three stages are completed in one day. The hired to work on the building are paid RMB 40 each for one day's work. [ill. 52]



Cai Qing & Weng Fen  
[2.21 Project]  
1998  
Haikou, Hainann [ill. 52]

15 March 1998 - Present: Zhu Fadong's performance work [*ID Card*] begins in Beijing. He sets up a business model based on a study of the market and then issues and sells the [*ID Card*] to anyone who needs or wants one. So far, the owners of the [*ID Card*] have been to more than twenty countries and regions over all five continents; in mainland China, the owners of the [*ID Card*] have come from 30 provinces and municipalities; in China, apart from the Han ethnic group, the owners include members of more than 20 minorities of Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Miao, Yi, Zhuang, Hui, Korean, Manchu, Yao and Oroqen descent. Now the number of owners of the work [*ID Card*] has reached several hundred, among whom are artists, art critics, government officers, diplomats, collectors, journalists, merchants, researchers, soldiers, private businessmen, workers, peasants, university, high and primary school students, children, or infants.<sup>21</sup>[ill. 53]

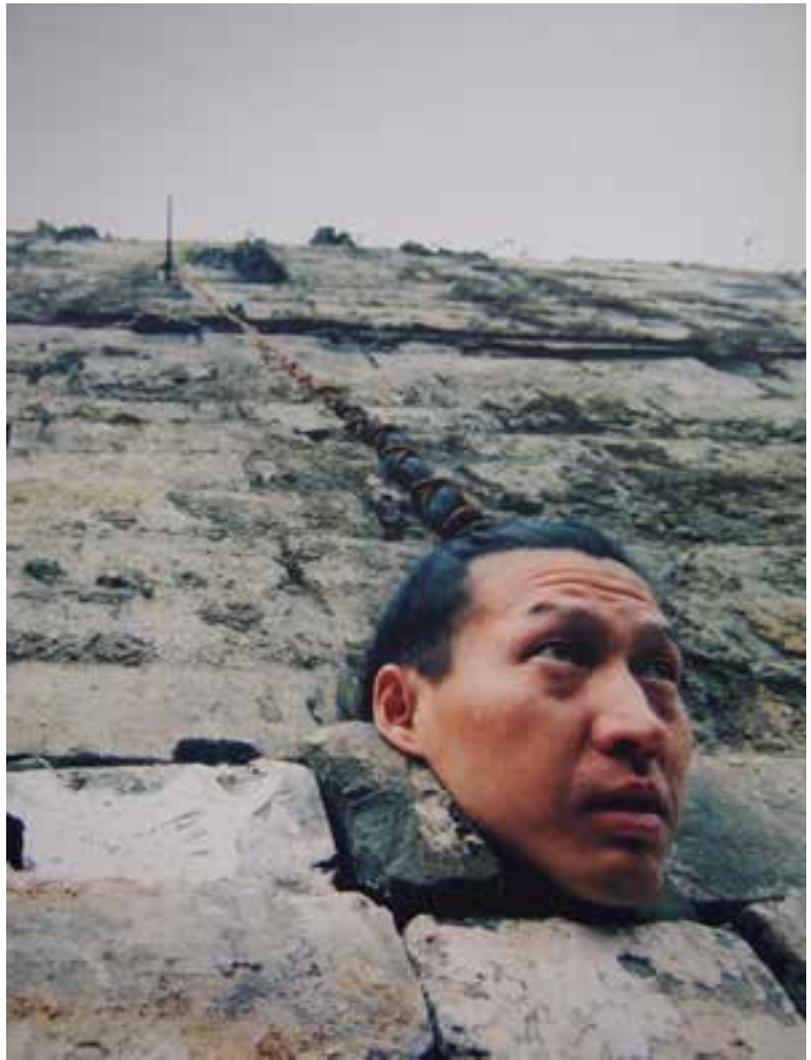
March-September 1998: Held on the demolition site of the Ming Dynasty city walls, in the Culture and History Gallery, Sichuan, "On the Spot Show of Ming Dynasty City Wall Series and Relics Protection Proof" is organized by Zha Changping and Dai Guangyu with the participation of Yin Xiaofeng, Zhu Gang, Zhou Bin, Dai Guangyu, Zha Changping, Chen Mo, Zhang Yingchuan and other scholars. Works including [*Baby of the City*], [*99 Hanging Show*] by Yin Xiaofeng, [*Fossil*] by Dai Guangyu, [*History of Water Print*] by Zhou Bin and [*Select a Hole*] by Zhu Gang as well as others are shown.



Zhu Fadong  
 [*ID Card*]  
 15 March 1998  
 Beijing [ill. 53]

1998: Yin Xiaofeng conducts [*99 Hanging Show*] in Chengdu, Sichuan province. The long-haired artist Yin Xiaofeng crouches within the walls of an air-raid shelter used in the 1960s. His whole body is covered except his head, the only exposed part. He ties his long braids to the walls, attempting to create the art of ‘burying’ his own body as a performance. Environment

and body are closely linked and mutually reflect each other. The partially shown “image” of a body has strong symbolic significance and visual impact. The “*99 Hanging show*” is similar to public beheading in ancient China. The “head” hanging on the city wall served as a warning to those who were alive. [ill. 54]



Yin Xiaofeng  
[*99 Hanging Show*]  
1998  
Chengdu, Sichuan [ill. 54]

April 1998: Luo Zidan showed his work [*Burst out in Arrogance*] in the Zong Nan Red Wine Restaurant in Chengdu, Sichuan province. In the middle of the dance floor, in a night club, Luo Zidan places a giant loudspeaker, and covers it with a large amount of colored Chinese hair he has gathered. The zither music of *Leung Juk* subtly plays from the pile of hair... The volume increases, and the music becomes the continuous loud dance music played in discos. The fierce music makes the pile of hair tremble, and the hair becomes puffy. In the vivid lights, the dance floor is filled with passionately devoted and

skilled disco dancers and guests of Luo Zidan.

June 1998: Luo Zidan presents his work [*Pushing*] on the busy streets of Chengdu. The piece consists of the artist pushing a car and broadcasting a video in which he is disguised as a “Rich man”. He goes in and out of deluxe shops and walks along the streets.

1998: [*Walks on the Great Wall*] is performed in Beijing. Ma Liuming walks along the great wall, naked; during the process, photographs and video are taken documenting the whole event. [ill. 55]



Fen Ma Liuming  
 [*Walks on the Great Wall*]  
 1998  
 Beijing [ill. 55]

July 1998: [*Answering All Questions*] by Zhu Gang is performed in the commercial downtown area of Chengdu, Sichuan province.

dilapidated library in Chengdu, Sichuan Province in order to experience the tendency towards the spiritual. [ill. 56]

July 1998: The series of works [*Touch a Stone and Turn It to Gold*] by Dai Guangyu are shown at several locations in Chengdu, Sichuan province. Dai Guangyu finds a wall at several locations within the city and removes some of the original bricks from the wall replacing them with gold colored bricks.

31 August 1998: Luo Zidan presents his work [*Burn Himself Partially*] at the front entrance of the Old Tree Café on Yulinxi Street, Chengdu, Sichuan province. Luo Zidan sits cross-legged on a cattail hassock with Buddhist music playing. Behind him, the projector screens his works from different periods. Approximately 5 minutes later, Luo Zidan starts to burn bankbooks, work photos and films in the two fire baskets beside him, which takes 50 minutes.



August 1998: Dai Guangyu, Yin Xiaofeng, Zeng Xun, Liu Chengying, Zhang Hua, Zhu Gang and Zhou Bin present the “Safeguard Memory Exhibition”. Organised by Dai Guangyu, it is shown on the site of the Sichuan Library, which is facing demolition.

Safeguard Memory Exhibition  
Liu Chengying  
[*Mummy No.1*]  
August 1998  
Chengdu, Sichuan [ill. 56]

August 1998: At the “Safeguard Memory Exhibition” Liu Chengying conducts his performance [*Mummy No.1*] in Chengdu, Sichuan province. The artist wraps his ,

September 1998 – January 1999: More than 60 artists from Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong as well as foreign artists participate in the exhibition “Inside Out: New Chinese Art”, which is organized by Gao Minglu and hosted by the Asian Association USA and the Modern Art Gallery of San Francisco. The exhibitions are shown simultaneously at the Asian Association in New York and the P.S.1 Modern Art Centre. The show consists of 92 pieces. All the works were created between 1985 and 1998 including water and ink paintings, oil paintings, installations, performance art and photography.

15 October – 20 November 1998: Luo Zidan presents his work [*City Xi Meng Si*] at the entrance to the Chengdu Department Store ‘Ren He Chun Tian’ near Tianfu Square. He places a white hospital bed in the hall of the most popular downtown shopping mall; he soils the bed, and, delicately, plants imported grass seed

on top of it. The two rusty iron cages in front of the bed lock the artist's and his lover's sandals. The installation is specially guarded by the mall security everyday. For a month afterwards, Luo Zidan and his lover water and trim the grass at regular intervals on a daily basis, until it grows into a delicate, verdant turf.

1998: [*Appoint Spring*] by He Yunchang is performed in Kunming Yunnan. The artist dials random telephone numbers for 30 minutes with his entire body covered in mud. The entire performance lasts 75 minutes.

December 1998: Liu Chengying's [*Mummy No.2*] is presented in Dujiangyan, Chengdu. The artist is wrapped in medicine-soaked gauze looking alike a patient on the ancient walls of Dujiangyan. [ill. 57]

Liu Chengying  
[*Mummy No.2*]  
December 1998  
Dujiangyan, Chengdu [ill. 57]



## Significant Events in China 1999

8 May 1999: During military operations in Yugoslavia, a NATO warplane bombs the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade killing 3 Chinese journalists and igniting a surge of anti-American sentiment in China.

20 July 1999: The Chinese Government officially declares Falungong Cult an illegal organisation and bans it.

06:30 on 20 November 1999: The Shengzhou No 1 spacecraft is launched at Jiuquan.

20 December: Macao returns under Chinese control and the Macao Special Administrative Region of the PRC is founded.

## Performance Art Events in China 1999

9 January 1999: “Post-Sense Sensibility: Alien Bodies & Delusion” exhibition curated by Qiu Zhijie and Wu Meichun is held at the basement of the Shaoyaoju Building 202. Participating artists in the exhibition are Chen Lingyang, Chen Wenbo, Feng Qianyu, Gao Shiming, Gao Shiqiang, Jiang Zhi, Liu Wei, Lu Lei, Qin Ga, Qiu Zhijie, Shi Qing, Sun Yuan, Wang Wei, Weng Fen, Wu Ershan, Yang Fudong, Zhang

Hanzi, Zheng Guogu and Zhu Yu. The exhibition features a wide range of works by artists from across China, including several installations even multi-media works that require the artist to make use of human parts and dead animals.

9 January 1999: on the “Post-Sense Sensibility: At the *Alien Bodies & Delusion*” Exhibition Sun Yuan presents his performance/installation work [*Honey*] in Beijing.

### Artist Statement:

*This work is the reconstruction of a death scene using real bodies. I imagined that an old man and a baby died at the same time and passed on to the other world together. But they had experienced different things in life, so in death they conversed, they embraced and exchanged feelings about their experience of death. The way they were put together was not as though they had died but as though they were intimate with each other, and alive. I want death to be something calm and peaceful, not frightening.*<sup>22</sup>[ill. 58]



Post-Sense Sensibility: [*Alien Bodies & Delusion*]

Exhibition

Sun Yuan

[*Honey*]

January 1999

Beijing [ill. 58]

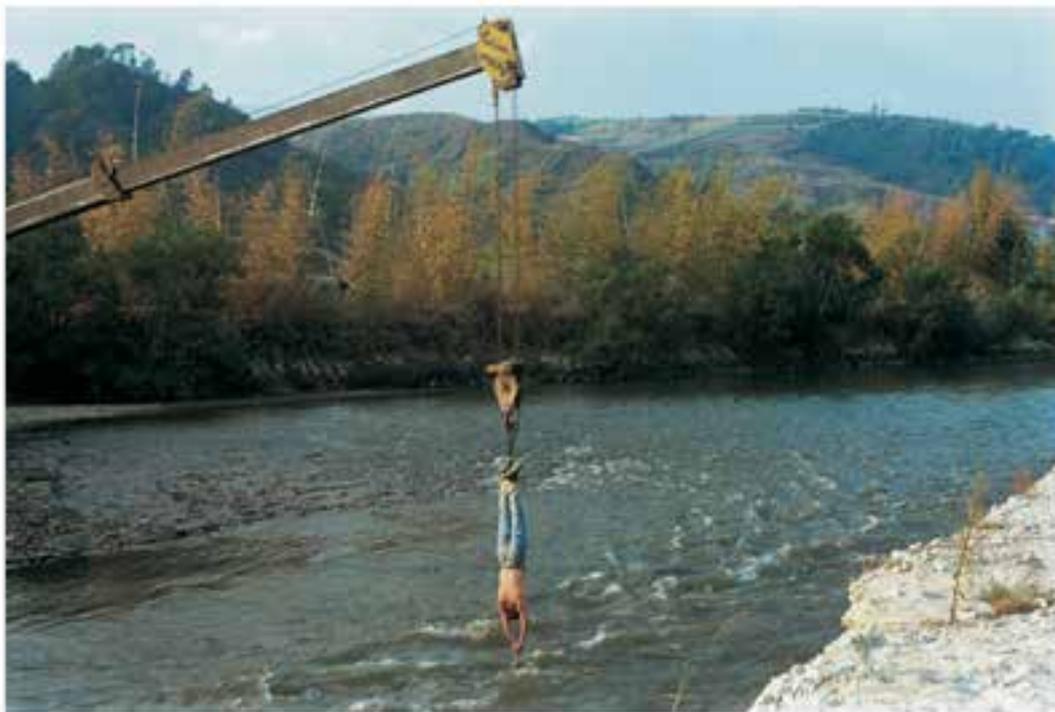


February 1999: He Yunchang's performance [*Move the Mountain*] is conducted in Liang He, Yunnan province. He Yunchang ties a rope to a mountain in Liang He Yunnan and pulls on it for 30 minutes. [ill. 59]

He Yunchang  
[*Move the Mountain*]  
February 1999  
Liang He Yunnan [ill. 59]

February 1999: Performance [*Dialogue with Water*] by He Yunchang is presented in Lianghe, Yunnan province. The artist suspends himself, upside-down, over the river and divides the Lianghe River in two with a knife, creating a 4,500 meter long, 30 centimeter deep mark on the river. The artist cuts his elbows with the knife forming a 1 millimeter deep wound, blood drips from his elbows to the river. The performance lasted 90 minutes. [ill. 60]

He Yunchang  
[*Dialogue with Water*]  
February 1999  
Liang He Yunnan [ill. 60]



February 1999: Luo Zidan performs his work [*Merchant · Actor*] at the entrance of the “Ren He Chun Tian” Department Store in Chengdu, Sichuan province. On a cold day in Southern China, Luo Zidan, in dirty, old, thin, overalls for painting, carefully paints a full-length picture of and for a merchant sitting on a luxurious cane sofa opposite him in the hall of the up-market mall in downtown Chengdu. When the painting is complete, the merchant gives the painter a fake 100 RMB bill. Luo Zidan, the painter, sticks the fake bill on the hand of the merchant's portrait. In front of the fashionable, luxury commodities displayed in the shop windows, the complete painting, merchant and artist are

displayed to the crowd. The performance lasts 2 hours and 20 minutes.

April 1999: Wang Chuyu presents [*Pigeon Feast*] in Beijing. Wang Chuyu cooks a banquet using pigeons. The table is laid with flags of the U.S. as well as flags of other countries from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The artist invites the audience to be seated and when the audiences are enjoying their meal, he slaughters a live pigeon on the table. The audience scatters and the work ends. [ill. 61]



Wang Chuyu  
[*Pigeon Feast*]  
April 1999  
Beijing [ill. 61]

April 1999: Geng Jianyi, Shi Yong, Yang Fudong, Zhang Peili, Zheng Guogu, Song Dong, Yin Xiuzhen, Zhu Yu, Zhu Jia, Zhao Bandi, Xu Zhen, Yang Zhenzhong, Luo Zidan and others present [*Super Market*], at an event hosted by Guo Shirui and organized by Xu Zhen and Yang Zhenzhong. [*Super Market*] is performed on the 4th Floor of Shanghai Square at number 139 Huai Hai Road in Shanghai. In this performance, more than 30 artists participate with installation pieces, performance art, drawings and photographs are featured and each is marked with price tags and placed on the shelves of a small supermarket. The audience is able to select what they want and could take it home after having paid at the cashier.

10 April 1999: Luo Zidan presents his work [*Wild Animal Book a Beauty*] in Shanghai Square. In an important avant-garde art exhibition “Supermarket Art Exhibition” in Shanghai, Luo Zidan stands in an iron cage, naked, with a pile of broken beer bottles at his feet. A female mannequin made of fiberglass, and plastic, dressed in fashionable clothes stands opposite him. After drinking 6 bottles of beer, Luo Zidan is a bit drunk and points at different parts of the female model with laser pointer in his hand. Meanwhile, his other hand indicates the prices of the parts with rude gestures. An assistant in a costume with a white collar gradually takes off the female model's clothes, and sticks price tags on the respective parts of the female model following Luo Zidan's gestures. Two hours

after the exhibition opens, the crowd gradually scatters. In order to best articulate the work, Luo Zidan insists on performing for another two hours or more with the risk that his bare feet could be cut by the glass any time.

April 1999: Tang Huangzhen's [*I Am Going to Travel 1—Trip to Beijing*] is shown at the [*Field Vision of Plural Number Origin*] exhibition at the China Art Gallery.

May 1999: In Beijing, a performance art exchange between Japan and China took place. It is organized by Ma Liuming and artist Shimoda Seiji and Kawabata Mamiko from Japan, Wang Mai and Sheng Qi from China participate in the event.

1999: Cang Xin's [*Communicate*] is performed for the first time in the East Village of Beijing. Chang Xin uses his tongue to explore a series of objects.

June 1999: Cang Xin conducted [*Communication-Series 2*]. Cang Xin uses his tongue to “communicate” with all kinds of objects by licking them. Objects include a shoe, a mirror, a razor blade, a light bulb, wood, water, books and a candle.

### **Artist statement:**

*The main direction my work has taken in recent years has been one of exploring the manifold possibilities of the physical senses of taste and touch. There are two main aspects to my work; the first had social causes. In 1993 I moved into the “East Village” artist community on the eastern outskirts of Beijing, and along with some other friends began using my body to make art. In my works, I used violent methods to transform myself, alluding to the existential conditions of my life and a quality of psychological criticism. During that time, we had some run-ins with the local police, and I was twice arrested and taken to the police station. Living in such a reality, I sank into a depressed and anxious state; I became quite autistic and avoided socialising with others. For the whole year of 1995 I had practically no contact with the rest of society, and instead I sat at home thinking and reading.*

*The second aspect of my work arose from physiological reasons: after staying for long periods of time in my damp and gloomy room, seldom moving about, I suffered from a herniated disc in my back, and many strange ideas appeared in my mind. During the day I had very little contact with people, and after falling asleep at night I had many dreams. My dreams were mostly about attending meetings, parties and other social gatherings; there was a yearning for communication in me that gave rise to a kind of instinctive impulse.*

*Sitting in my home, looking around, I found I was surrounded on all sides by everyday objects. In no particular order, just as they came to hand, I grabbed them and “communicated” with them (licked them). The list included a shoe, a mirror, a razor blade, a light bulb, wood, water, books, a candle and so on. However, the things that gave me the most profound taste experience were living substances and animals. When my tongue touched fire, after the piercing pain, it caused a reaction of nausea and retching. For two or three days the tip of my tongue was numb and blistered, and I couldn’t taste the flavour of anything I ate. When I licked mustard, my nose was filled with an irritating flavour; my tongue swelled and water streamed from my eyes. Out of the animals, the cat had a fishy-smelling film on the surface of its fur; it was extremely sensitive and would follow the direction of the tongue with its body movements. The dog was a master taster, with a tongue that was wet but full of warmth, which stretched out and drew back with a smooth flexibility. It was the scaly skins of lizards and snakes that gave me the deepest impression. Their surfaces were covered with a fishy-smelling coldness, and had a macabre feeling that is quite terrifying.*

*As the list of things I had licked increased, I started to be more selective in my licking, choosing*

objects that represent Chinese culture and symbolic buildings. When I prostrated myself on the ground in front of Tian'anmen Gate, the policeman standing nearby shouted "The ground is dirty, get up off there!" I thought he was concerned I would get my clothes dirty. When I stuck out my tongue and licked the ground, it was covered with dust and people's phlegm, which have a very strange taste. On the other hand, when I licked the ground at the Unit 731 Museum (Japanese Germ Warfare Experimental Base) in Harbin, I found it dry and bitter, and there was a stifling feeling in the air. The ground at both the Temple of Heaven and the Great Wall had a sort of deeply meaningful, magical flavour. I carried out those works in a pious and devoted frame of mind. The culture of eating and drinking has been developing in China for a few thousand years, and occupies an important position in Chinese culture as a whole. It is one of the ways in which the Chinese seek physiological pleasure; Chinese people attach much importance to the taste of food, paying little attention to its nutritional contents. This is just the opposite to Westerners, who regard the nutritional contents of food more important than the way it tastes. My way of describing this is to say that Chinese culture is an upper body culture while Western culture is a lower body culture. Works that involve licking are therefore best done by a Chinese person.<sup>23</sup>[ill. 62]



Cang Xin  
[Communication-series 2]  
June 1999  
Beijing [ill. 62]

1999: Zhang Huan conducts [*My America*] at the Seattle Art Museum, in Seattle, United States. Zhang Huan sits on a chair, naked, in the middle of the art museum surrounded by lots of bread and 56 other naked participants.

**Artist statement:**

*"I moved to New York from Beijing in 1998, to immerse myself in an entirely different culture and society. It was a new beginning for me, both in work and my daily life, and it was inevitably hard to acclimatise to my new surroundings. Having been immersed in Chinese culture, a culture of 5,000 years, I realised that some things could be changed while some things could not be changed in my life. I remember one day I went to find some food for my pregnant wife in Madison Square and suddenly a guy asked me 'Are you hungry?' He then gave me some bread. I felt very strange, and maybe my self-esteem was injured a little. I could not describe exactly what my feelings were at the time but eventually I returned home with the bread. Recently someone told me that bread is often provided by soup kitchens to the homeless. When I heard that, I felt shocked. I have so many memories of that time, and these have inspired my ideas for a new work."*

4 June 1999: Sheng Qi presents a photographic/performance series called [*My Left Hand-Memory*] which involves using his deformed left hand to hold black and white images. The

black and white images come from pictures in newspapers as well as the artist's own collection. The pictures are shrunk to "palm" size before they are used for the performance.

July 1999: Luo Zidan presents his work [*Eat 300 Pieces of Litchi in One Day*]. The performance takes place on a hot sunny day, in Yulin, Chengdu, Sichuan province, in front of the "Old Barr" in front of the TV screen repeatedly playing TV commercials for Litchi made by Luo Zidan. The artist sits on an old-fashioned wooden chair wearing an costume from ancient times. He continuously eats litchi whilst drawing on the ground with chalk to count because the artist wishes to eat 300 pieces of litchi. The maid, a seller hired in a nearby fruit market, who is also the supplier of the litchi, serves a scales of litchi and puts it beside the artist for him to eat. The work lasts two hours, and the artist eats more than 200 pieces of litchi in total.

July 1999: Dai Guangyu, Yin Xiaofeng, Zeng Xun, Liu Chengying, Zhang Hua, Zhu Gang and Zhou Bin [*Figure Print in the Basement*]. Organised by Zha Changping, this exhibition is held in the basement of the Ao Sheng Garden Community in Chengdu, Sichuan province.

July 1999: Liu Chengying presents [*Mummy No.3*]. Wrapped as a mummy, the artist rolls down to the center of a basement and lies there for one hour after writing the content of an ancient Chinese medicine reference book "Compendium

of *Materia Medica*” over his body.

10 August 1999: Ou Zhihang presents [*Ou's Style Push Up Series*]. The “Ou's Style Push-up series” intervenes in reality, recalls history and focuses people's attention and reflection on the major public events in the news. Ou Zhihang identifies the location where the public events took place or where the viewers or audiences of his work can be reminded of the public events. The artist then goes to the identified locations and takes photos of his naked body when he sees fit. The artist is caught by the police and security guards when he takes some of the photos for the series and is only released after he agrees to delete some of the photos.

[*Xiamen Yuanhua Group Smuggling Scandal*] is the first performance presented by Ou Zhihang. The performance is inspired by the scandal triggered by a letter received by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the CPC and the China Customs. The letter reported significant smuggling criminal activities in April 1999. It developed into a major court cases at the time and is known as “*Ad Hoc Case 4.20*”. By September 2001, over 600 suspects, including approximately 300 China Customs officers and the Vice Minister of Public Security, allegedly related to the incident have been interrogated. About 160 people i.e. 13% of the staff in Xiamen Customs are arrested and 14 people are sentenced to death.

Later, it is verified that Xiamen Yuanhua Group's smuggling scandal involved 53 billion RMB and evaded tax of 30 billion RMB. The scandal is the largest economic crime case in China since 1949.<sup>24</sup>

September 1999: Luo Zidan presents his work [*Nutrition and Coerce*] in ‘Small Bar’ in Yulin, Chengdu, Sichuan province. Luo Zidan sits cross-legged in glamorous, traditional Chinese garments, with a blue and white porcelain plate on his head, on which there is a struggling gold fish. Above that, a cannonball-shaped copper barrel hung like the sword of Damocles. The barrel is filled with clean water, which drips through a small hole nourishing the small fish on the blue and white porcelain plate.

5 October 1999: Luo Zidan presents [*Prophecy of Dog Walking*] on the Chang Jiang Road, Air Harbour, Chengdu. On a sunny day, Luo Zidan walks a pure bred dog on a broad avenue newly built in the rural-urban fringe zone. At the same time, the artist's collaborator, Miss B. walks a Chinese rural dog. The Chinese man and the white woman walk along on the broad avenue, and the dogs quickly interact. They try to coordinate with Luo Zidan and Miss B's postures, and the scene gradually turns bright. (It takes around 1 hour.)

October 1999: He Yunchang presents [*Golden Sun Light*]. Performed in a prison in Anning, Yunnan, the artist is raised by a fork-lift truck

and moves in a dark space with his body covered with paint. The artist then moves in tandem with the movement of the sun using the paint on his body to cover the wall in a golden color.

December 1999: Zhou Bin's work [*Communicate*] is performed at the entrance to the Baiye Bar in West Yulin Street, Chengdu, Sichuan province. Zhou Bin is surrounded by 4 glass walls. He paints what he sees from inside of the glass walls. When his sight is blocked by the painting, which completely covers the walls, he breaks the glass and the performance ends.

31 December 1999: Luo Zidan performed his work [*Prayer of a Chinese White Collar by End of 1999*] in Beijing. In a standard office, the God of Wealth and the figure of Mercy Buddha are placed side by side on the desks amidst the computers, and offerings are placed in front of them. With traditional Chinese zither music playing, Luo Zidan devotedly worships the gods with incense in his hands. It takes 30 minutes.

December 1999: Zhang Nian performs [*Drop*]. On a winter's night, on the Mutianyu Great Wall, the artist molds his coagulated blood into a shape.

December 1999: [*Concept 21-Aids*] by Sheng Qi. The artist shows his performance art work inside the National Museum of Art Beijing. This is the first performance art shown inside the National Museum of Art Beijing since the 1989 "China Modern Art Exhibition".

1999: Li Wei's [*Seal the Mouth*], [*Will Not Die This Way*], [*Dinner of a Green Person*], [*Red Flag of a Green Person*] and other works are performed. Li Wei performs a series of his works in Beijing.

1999: Sheng Qi's [*Ambush on All Sides*] is exhibited in Mexico. Sheng Qi creates a round circle in the center of the exhibition hall with soil from Mexico; a red silk cloth is placed in the center. The artist stands bare-foot within this shape; he stretches out his left hand and says: "Are you willing to shake hands with me?" In his right hand, he holds a long stick adorned with a photo of his left hand. The hand in the photo is marked with the logo of Aids Foundation. "Are you willing to shake hands with me?" is printed on a small poster in English. The piece is accompanied by the Chinese classical music work [*Ambush on All Sides*] broadcast on 4 loudspeakers behind him.

1999: Sheng Qi, Runa OKURA from Japan, [*A Tiny Area*], is presented in Nagano, Japan. Naked from the waist-up, the artist and a Japanese university student Runa OKURA wriggle and from time to time reach out to touch the toy soldiers that are placed on the ground around them. With his left hand Sheng Qi pulls several transparent balls out from his crotch, inside each ball is a toy soldier. The work reflects the competition and suspicion as well as the contradictions and disequilibrium that exist between India, Pakistan, China and Japan.

1999: Zhang Nian's [*Broken Egg*] is shown at the China Design Museum. Zhang Nian invites other artists and the audience to throw eggs at a piece of wood covered in a white cloth, on which "Zhang Nian 1999" is written.

1999: Ma Liuming conducts [*Fen-Ma Liu Ming in Basel*] in Basel, Switzerland. The naked artist puts make-up on his face. The work aims to deceive the audience that a woman's head is "placed" on a man's body.

1999: Huang Yan's [*Chinese Mountains and Waters—Tattoo*] is shown at the Great Wall. Using his body as a medium, he draws traditional images depicting mountains and water on his body.

December 1999 – January 2000: [*Dangerous Spiritual Experience*] by Yang Zichao. The artist, posing as a mentally ill patient, is hospitalized in a psychiatric hospital in Jiayuguan City, Gansu province and receives treatment for one month.

1999-2000: Chen Lingyang's [*Flower in December*] is performed in Beijing. The artist composes a drawing containing mixed images of menstruation and some traditional Chinese floral patterns representing different lunar months.

1999-2001: The exhibition "*Memories of 100 Years*" is shown in Osaka, Japan. It is organized by the artist Huang Rui, who lives in Japan. Participating artists include Huang Rui, Rong Rong, Wang Mai and Bei Dao as well as others. The exhibition is held at Huang Rui's home between 1999 and 2001 to mark the turn of the century. Huang Rui invites more than 20 artists of different nationalities to participate in the events that consist of performances and the creation of performance art, installations, photography, music and dance.

- 1 Zhang Xueliang was the effective ruler of Manchuria and much of North China after the assassination of his father, Zhang Zuolin, by the Japanese on 4 June 1928. As an instigator of the Xi'an incident, he was planning to end the Chinese civil war, but then he spent over 50 years under house arrest.
- 2 Jiang Qing was Chairman Mao Zedong's last wife. She became a member of the Politburo in 1969. She established a close political working relationship with what in due course would be known as the Gang of Four—Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen. She was one of the most powerful figures in China during Mao's last years and became a controversial figure. See further reference at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiang\\_Qing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiang_Qing).
- 3 The Association for Relations across the Taiwan Straits is an organization set up by the People's Republic of China for handling technical or business matters with the Republic of China (Taiwan).
- 4 From an interview with Song Yongping through email in Beijing.
- 5 From an interview with Wang Peng in Beijing in 2009
- 6 From an interview with Song Yongping through email in 2009
- 7 From an interview with Ma Luming in 2005.
- 8 From an interview with Ma Luming in 2005.
- 9 From an interview with Weng Fen in Beijing, this performance was the first performance art ever conducted in Hainan.
- 10 See further reference: "Guanyu 65 Kg de zishu" [it's me] (Beijing: China Federation of Literary and Art Circles Publishing, 2000), 150-52. Translated by Lee Ambrozy.
- 11 See further reference: Catalogue, Chief Editor: Xie Suzhen Cang Xin Legend (Shanxi Normal University Publishing House 2008), Catalogue Cang Xin's Mythology (Xin-Dong Cheng Publishing House).
- 12 See further reference on <http://www.ionly.com.cn/nbo/auction/ZuoPin.aspx?id=69183>.
- 13 From an interview with Ma Liuming and Zhu Ming in 2005; See further reference Daniel Brine and Shu Yang China Live Reflections On Contemporary Performance Art Published by Chinese Arts Center in collaboration with Live Art UK Live Art Development Agency and Shu Yang of the DaDao Live Art Festival, Beijing.
- 14 See further reference: [www. Zhanghuan.com](http://www.Zhanghuan.com); Huo Shaoxia Performance In China Site and the Body (Artist Publishing Company 2010).
- 15 See video Wang Peng Three Days on USB Video folder 1.3 attached with this Catalogue; Wang Peng's website: <http://www.wangpengstudio.com>.
- 16 From an interview with Zhang Binbin in Beijing in 2009; see video Zhang Binbin Boundary Line on USB video folder 1.2 one attached with this catalogue.
- 17 See video Wang Peng Passing Through New York on USB video folder 1.3 attached with this Catalogue.

18 See further reference on Luo Zidan's blog: [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_5f88c78c0100ew91.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_5f88c78c0100ew91.html).

19 ibid

20 See video Zhu Gang Rose Boat on USB Video folder 1.8 attached with this catalogue.

21 From an interview with Zhu Fadong in 2005, during the interview Zhu Fadong issued me an ID card.

22 See further reference: Waldemar Januszczak Beijing Swings channel four Documentary on Chinese Contemporary art 2003.

23 Artist statement quoted from:<http://www.artnow.com.cn/CommonPage/ArticleInfo.aspx?ChannelID=274&ArticleID=5429> and See further reference on Public Space and Personal Eyes- A New Vision in China (Kampnagel Hamburg, Deutschland 2003) pg. 106-107

24 See further reference on Ou Zhihang's blog: <http://photo.blog.sina.com.cn/u/1293623721/page3>. For details on the scandal, please see: [www.northnews.cn](http://www.northnews.cn); [www.news.cntv.cn](http://www.news.cntv.cn); [www.news.ifeng.com](http://www.news.ifeng.com);

2000 to 2010  
The Rapid Growth Stage of Performance Art  
as China Gains Global Influences

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**Introduction for Third Stage 2000-2010**

## 2000-2010 Forms and Situations of Performance Art

After winning its bid for the Olympic Games in 2001, China suddenly became the focus of foreign corporations, investors, art buyers and critics wishing to come to this big market of economy and culture. Construction projects were set up for the Olympics. From construction and transportation to social change and progress, it was hoped that that China would see change through organizing the Olympics. While the entire community was undergoing different degrees of transformation, performance art in China reached greater heights after almost 20 years of development. More creations on performance art were produced from 2000 to 2010 than in the 1980s and 1990s. However, there was a shift in the forms and natures of performance art moving away from the early emphasis on body language, social development and individual lives. Most of the performance art creations during this period were staged in performance art festivals and exhibitions held throughout the country. 2000-2010 was also the 10-year period that government officials clamped down vigorously on performance art.

### Performance Art Festivals

From 2000 to 2010, after Ma Liuming organized the China-Japan Performance Art Exchange Project in Beijing in May 1999, many international performance art festivals were hosted in different cities. For example the “Open International Performance Art Festival”,2000-Present [video 2] “Da Dao Live Art Festival” 2004-2009 [Video 3] “Transborder Language”2003-2006 Xi’an “Guyu Action”,2007-Present “Qianti Performance Art Festival”,2008-2010 “Changsha Live Art Festival”2009[Video 5] and “Chengdu Up-on International Live Art Festival”. 2010 “Guangzhou Live” 2010. <sup>1</sup>

The rise of these art festivals has played a critical role in promoting performance art exchange within China and on a global scale. Of all the art festivals, the Open International Performance Art Festival has had the most significant influence. This was especially true during the 10th anniversary of the Open International Performance Art Festival. The curator, Chen Jin, invited 6 other curators from different countries and nearly 300 artists from around the world to participate in this 57-day performance art festival, which has so far been the largest performance art festival in the world and the one with most participants. In mainland China, performance art does not have any commercial value and is not supported by the government. Therefore, since 2000, except for foreign artists who can apply for travel expenses in their own countries to participate in art festivals in China, all the others rely on the curator to raise funds to keep the festival running further. In order to raise funds for

the 2009 festival, Chen had to sell his house.<sup>2</sup>

The festivals listed above have been held every year. However, sustaining performance art has been very difficult with no financial support. Except for the Open International Performance Art Festival, the Xi'an "Guyu Action" and the "Guangzhou Live", the rest of the festivals have been terminated due to various reasons.

## Important Exhibitions and Controversial Works

In 2000, three important exhibitions and events of performance art took place in China. These three exhibitions and events directly influenced the subsequent development of performance art in China. The artists used human and animals specimens in their creations as in the "Post-Sense Sensibility: Alien Bodies & Delusion" Exhibition" in 1999.<sup>3</sup> These works created much controversy in the artistic community, government and the general public and were the subject of extensive media coverage. The following are the examples of controversial works in the three exhibitions:

22 April 2000: Indulge in Hurt Exhibition<sup>4</sup>

- Peng Yu 's [*Human Oil*] [ill. 67]
- Sun Yuan & Peng Yu's [*Linked Bodies*] [ill. 68]
- Zhu Yu's [*Skin Grafting*] [ill. 69]

March-September 2000: Series of Human and Animal Exhibition<sup>5</sup>

- Yu Ji [*Pet's Kiss*] [ill. 70]
- Zeng Xun [*The Rescue*] [ill. 71]
- Liu Chengying [*Flying - Chicken*] [ill. 72]
- Wu Gaozhong [*Birthday on 28 May*] [ill. 73]
- Liu Jin [*Large Soy Sauce Vat*] [ill. 74]
- He Yunchang's [*Emergency Exit*] [ill. 76]

November 2000: Fuck off Exhibition <sup>6</sup>

- Yang Zhichao's [*Planting Grass*] [ill.82] [Video.1.4]
- Zhu Yu's [*Eating Foetus*] [ill.83]

[*Eating Foetus*] [ill.83] by Zhu Yu in the Fuck Off Exhibition was the most controversial production in the three exhibitions. After the media extensively covered the photos of Zhu Yu eating babies, it aroused growing criticism in Chinese society. The general public began to condemn the artists on the Internet for this artwork. This did not only happen in China but also in the UK. This artwork was aired in the programme *Beijing Swings*,<sup>7</sup> a Chinese avant-garde documentary broadcast on Channel Four in the UK in 2003, featuring the performance art creations by Cang Xin, Ma Liuming, He Chengyao, Sun Yuan, Peng Yu and Zhu Yu, as well as Xi Jianjun and Cai Yuan who migrated to the UK. Shortly after the documentary was broadcast, Channel Four received hundreds of complaints condemning Zhu Yu's *Eating*. The Chinese Embassy at the same time also reportedly condemned the programme, criticizing the broadcasting company for secretly entering China to film without the permission of the Chinese government. The incident also affected Xi Jianjun and Cai Yun, the two artists residing in the UK, who acted as intermediaries for this documentary. They tried to return to their motherland China at that time but were denied entry on the grounds that many of the works featured in the documentary *Beijing Swings* had seriously damaged the image of China.

### **Government's Campaign to Combat Performance Art**

The works featured in these exhibitions and documentaries brought about a crackdown by the Chinese government. Government officials and the media began a series of campaigns to combat performance art. The government first cited an article *Harmful Art* written by Xiang Nan in the first issue of the *Art* magazine in 2001, below is a summary of this article:

"Works featured in some art exhibitions, art magazines and art institutions are often decadent, obscene, pornographic and bloody in the name of contemporary art, blatantly polluting the culture and morality of the society, as well as destroying the civilization that we have been working very hard to establish and exerting influence on the mental health and growth of the young generation (especially on young art students).

Subsequently, the *Art* magazine in its third and fourth issues, together with the China Society

Periodical and the Shenzhen Evening News, published articles speaking against performance art. The Ministry of Culture issued a document in April 2001 condemning performance art, which was the first case in China.

There were performance art works involving the use of dead bodies that were reported by the press. These performances, together with selected examples of performance art works that involved nudity and the use of blood attracted bad publicity and were severely criticized. The criticism grew to such an extent that the Chinese Ministry of Culture issued, Wenzhengfafa [2001] No. 14,<sup>8</sup> an official circular addressing the problem of performing or displaying act of bloody, violent and indecent scenes in the name of “art”. An extract of the circular is set out below:

In recent years, a small number of people in some regions perform or display bloody, violent and indecent scenes in public places by means of self-injury or torture of animals and display of human or animal bodies under the mask of “art”, and also spread them through illegal channels. These ugly behaviors violate the state law, disturb the social order, degrade social conduct, do harm to the physical and psychological health of the masses and have bad social influence. In order to maintain social order, purify cultural environment and eliminate cultural rubbish, we shall resolutely prohibit such behaviours of performing or displaying bloody, violent and indecent scenes in the name of “art” according to the state’s laws and regulations and have those who violate the criminal laws bear penal responsibilities.

### **Official Publications and Symposiums**

After the document 4.17 was issued, researcher Chen Lusheng, as the official representative of the Research Institute of Traditional Chinese Painting published a book called "In the Name of Art" in December 2002. The book recorded artworks from 50 different countries and cities in a systematic manner. Chen did not obtain the artists' permission prior to the publication. He even crossed out the names of the artists included in the book except for the foreign artists. Chen quoted a Greek myth as his point of view in the Foreword of the book: “Someone set the temple on fire without a reason; the judge asked him why he did that; he said it was only because he wanted to be famous. Then the judge said to him that he would be sentenced to death but there would not be any record of it.” Chen said that this Greek myth inspired him and that was the reason why the artworks included in the book were not labelled with the name of the artists but with speeches by theorists. The book included extreme behaviours in performance art and extreme artworks in a large collection of photography

and installation. Chen even included a systematic categorization and commentary of body painting business practices. This book was published by the government officials and offered no reasonable, fair or open criticism of the arts. The understanding of performance art was therefore confusing for the general public. Domestic media reports were not objective highlighted extreme behaviours. Performance art other than bloody and violent artworks were not even mentioned.

On the 10 January, 2003, in the morning, a year after the book was published, the Art magazine published by the China Artists Association and the Gazette of Literature and Arts run by the China Writers' Association convened a seminar with the title "Expand Advancement in Culture and Resist Degenerate Culture" at the meeting hall of the Art magazine located on 13th floor of the Federation of Literary and Art Circles Building. The meeting was chaired by the head of the Art magazine Wang Zhong and the Chief Editor of the Gazette of Literature and Arts Jin Jian Fan. More than a dozen representatives from various newspapers and magazines also participated in the meeting. Performance art was frequently described as "going too far" during the seminar, and was also demonized and criticized.

This condemnation and distortion performance art in China made academic research on performance art difficult and documentation inadequate. No ideal platform for artists to hold any in-depth discussion on performance art existed in China.

## **2000 - 2010 Police Intervention**

In addition to the documents and publications issued by the officials to combat performance art, police took forceful action to intervene in performance art activities. From 1989 when Xiao Lu opened fire and took two shots at her own work the Dialogue at the China/Avant-Garde Exhibition and 1990, when police took away the East Village artists Ma Liuming and Zhu Ming because of their installation. The followings are incidents of police intervention during 2000 to 2010.

•28 August 2000: *1st Open Art Platform-Performance Art Festival (it changed its name to Open International Performance Art Festival in 2001). The police interrupt the performance because one of the participating artist Liu Jin's performance work [Cola bath] [ill.] [Video 2] contains nudity. As the performance ends, the Police show up and take Liu Jin, Li Yong, Shu Yang and Zhu Ming (organizers of the festival) to the police station for questioning. The Police detain the artist and the festival organizers until 11pm in the evening.*<sup>9</sup>

• *June 2007: The opening of June-Alliance is meant to take place at the performing artist Yang Dawei's personal studio "Ou" Contemporary Art Space. However, the venue has to be changed to the "Coincident" Art Space due to the mounting police pressure. Some artists and the event crew are questioned by the Police and decide to leave the festival.*<sup>10</sup>

• *June 2010: The First Casual Art Festival Due to conflicts between the Songzhuan Art Management Committee and the festival organizers, 5 artists whose performance involve nudity are arrested by the Police. Later Shen Yun, one of the 5 artists who arrested, is charged with assaulting a police officer.*<sup>11</sup>

## **Performance Art Entered Institutions in Chengdu**

Beijing, as the capital of China, exerts strict control over ideology and artistic activities. In the last chapter 1990-1999, I establish that Chengdu had a comparatively positive attitude towards performance art compared to Beijing. The media tended to be more supportive and their articles were less prone to distorting and demonizing performance art; moreover, the 719 Art Group was set up in Chengdu in the nineties, making it a more favourable environment for performance art.

In 2002, a group of high-school students started to create performance art. Most of them were young artists learning oil painting and sculptures. Chen Mo was an activist, planning contemporary art activities during the early stages of contemporary art in Chengdu and planned quite a number of performance art activities. He taught at Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts in 2002, where he set up contemporary art history courses, and subsequently organized performance art exhibitions for university students.<sup>12</sup> Starting from 2003, Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts encouraged cohorts of students from different grades to participate in performance art experiments. With companies of students joining them from overseas, and artists like Chen Jianjun, the team expanded continuously over the next few years. Chen's first exhibition organized for university students was held in January 2003, titled "Experience of the Old Liberated Areas: Exhibition of Contemporary Art", sponsored by the academy. At that time, a throng of nearly forty people walked hundreds of miles, and built more than 30 performance and equipment works in Zhu De Memorial Hall in Zhu De's hometown, Yilong, garnering support from the Dean, Ma Yiping, and Professor Liu Hong. After the exhibition, the effect of performance art started to spread, attracting students to join from surrounding schools, like Chengdu University of Information Technology, Art College of Sichuan University, Southwest

University for Nationalities, Xihua University, Sichuan Normal University. Over the following two to three years, high-school students joined the activities of performance art and continued to work on their creations..

Performance art gained recognition at established art schools, seemingly convincing others that performance art could be accepted in academic institutions. However, another major event dealt a heavy blow to the image of performance art. In 2005, 41 students who came mainly from Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts spontaneously organized a performance art work named [ @ 41 ] [ill. 107] [video1.10].<sup>13</sup> The work shows the symbol of @ formed by 41 naked in-campus students, representing the Internet era. After it was published by the “Yishu Tongmeng”, the work circulated rapidly and widely on the Internet. The students and the academy were on the receiving end of doubts of the public. These doubts, despite being felt by the students, did not quash their pursuit of freedom of expression in art.

The students from Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts partaking in the performance art activities back then have long graduated now, and have since engaged in art-related work in society; but some of them still continue to create performance art, and have made their way to the international stage with their multifarious performance art work. Among them, Xing Xin is arguably the champion. He has created numerous high-quality performance art work pieces since his graduation in 2006 among them, the Black Box, which went on display during the 53rd Venice Biennale. Chinese performance art has certainly turned a new page.

During the 30 years of development of performance art in China, while non-mainstream types of art creation have been continuously curbed by society, the government and even the art industry, its artistic form still remains unshakable largely due to the perseverance of the artists.

1. See page 192, 194, 195, 212, 213, 236, 248, 268, 278, 288, 304 for the festival information.
2. From an interview with Chenjin in 2009, 2010
3. See page 151 for the exhibition information.
4. See page 180 for information.
5. See page 183, 184 for information.
6. See page 197 for information.
7. See reference: Waldemar Januszczak Beijing Swings channel four Documentary on Chinese Contemporary art 2003.
8. See reference: South China, 2001. A Notice to Performance Art Issued by Ministry of Culture [online] Available at:  
<<http://www.southcn.com/news/gdnews/hotspot/qqbgzxwys/xwysjs/200212010226.htm>> [Accessed May 2005].
9. From an interview with Chenjin, Shu Yang, and Zhu Ming in 2005,
10. I was the hostess of the event; 10 police cars and around 30 police officers showed up after the opening of the event.
11. From an interview with Wang Chuyu in 2010.
12. From an interview with Chen Mo in Chengdu in 2006.
13. From an interview with participating students in Chengdu in 2006

## Significant Events in China 2000

October 2000: China attends the Olympic Game in Sydney and wins 59 medals, including 28 golds, 16 silvers and 15 bronzes, ranking third after the United States and Russia.

November 2000: Twenty-five separate cases of multi-billion-dollar smuggling scandals in the Eastern Chinese port city of Xiamen are brought to light on November 8. Over 600 suspects (including approximately 300 Chinese Customs officers and the Vice Minister of Public Security) who are allegedly related to the incident are interrogated. About 160 people (i.e. 13% of the staff in Xiamen Customs) are arrested and 14 people are sentenced to death.

Investigations find that the Xiamen Yuanhua smuggling group and others have smuggled refined oil, vegetable oil, cars and cigarettes. It is verified that Xiamen Yuanhua Group's smuggling scandal entailed 53 billion RMB (approximately US\$6.4 billion) and a tax evasion of 30 billion RMB. The scandal is the largest economic crime case in China since 1949.

## Performance Art Events in China 2000

2000 - 2005: Cang Xin conducts the [*Communication-series*] from 2000 and the performance brings fame to the artist. The artist selects locations that are typically near landmark buildings or architecture and licks the ground or other objects in the select locations. In [*Communication-series 5*] Cang Xin performs his work in Tian'anmen Square in Beijing and Big Ben in London, etc.<sup>1</sup> [ill. 63]



Cang Xin  
[*Communication-series 5*]  
2000-2005

Beijing, Taipei, London, Singapore, Fukuoka and others [ill. 63]



2000-2005: Li Wei conducts his performance work [*Mirror*] in China and Italy etc. The artist prepares a prop mirror for his performance [*Mirror*] by cutting out a large section of a mirror. The area cut out the prop mirror is large enough for the artist's head to pass through. The artist then carries the prop mirror to select sites in China and Italy where the images of the landmark buildings, architecture, signs and people are superimposed with the artist's head, creating illusions and building relationships between the artist, his surroundings and the reflections. [ill. 64]

Cang Xin

[*Communication-series 5*]

2000-2005

Beijing, Taipei, London, Singapore, Fukuoka and others [ill. 63]

February 2000: Dai Guangyu, Yin Xiaofeng, Yu Ji, Zhang Hua, Liu Chengying, Zhou Bin and Zeng Xun present the [*Prepared for Danger in Times of Peace*] art exhibition. Organized by Dai Guangyu, it is held on Lake Xindugui, about 20 kilometers from Chengdu.



Li Wei  
[Mirror]  
2000-2005  
China, Italy [ill. 64]

2000: Zeng Xun prepares three copies of newspaper as props for *[Live Report]*. The first copy dates back to the Cultural Revolution period while the second is a copy edited by the artist when he was working in a newspaper agency. The third copy has been brought

from the USA. The artist prepares his props by mounting the newspapers on a board. A significant section of the newspaper articles under the headline is cut out. The artist then chooses locations for the historic events to interact with the present. [ill. 65]



Zeng Xun  
*[Live Report]*  
2000  
Chengdu [ill. 65]

March 2000: Zhu Yanguang and Ren Xiaoying present [*March 18, 2000*]. Members of the “W·R” Group commemorate Zhang Shengquan by wrapping themselves in red robes at the house of Zhang Shengquan, the place where he committed suicide.

March 2000: Weng Fen presents [*Puzzle of water*] at the “Human and Animal Exhibition”.

This takes place in an aquarium in Hainan. After a thorough medical check to ensure that he had no scar or bleeding on his body, Weng Fen enters the shark pool naked and touches sharks. In the process the artist hardly moves, so as not to alarm the sharks and devil ray in the pool. Apart from the aquarium attendants, there are no external parties during the whole process. The work is then present in performance photos and videos. <sup>2</sup> [ill. 66]



Human and Animal Exhibition  
Weng Fen  
[*Puzzle of water*]  
March 2000  
Hainan [ill. 66]

April 2000: Sun Yuan, Peng Yu, Qin Ga, Zhu Yu, Zhang Hanzi, Xiao Yu, Da Tong Da Zhang and others present the “Indulge in Hurt Exhibition”. Organized by Li Xianting in the creation studio of Central Art and Craft College, it uses human body parts and animal corpses as a media for creation. It receives widespread attention from

art circles both at home and abroad.

April 2000: Peng Yu conducts [*Human Oil*] at the “Indulge in Hurt Exhibition” in Beijing.

Peng Yu sits on the floor holding a fetus and feeding the fetus (using oil extracted from corpses) as if feeding milk to a baby.<sup>3</sup> [ill. 67]



Indulge in Hurt Exhibition Beijing  
Peng Yu  
[*Human Oil*]  
April 2000  
Beijing [ill. 67]

2000: Sun Yuan and Peng Yu conduct [*Linked Bodies*] at the “Indulge in Hurt Exhibition” in Beijing. Sun Yuan and Peng Yu sit on their own chairs, sitting in front of them are the fetuses of Siamese twins. The artists take their own blood and inject the blood into one of the fetuses.

Sun Yuan Peng Yu’s Statement:

*This work was done just before we got married. In this photo, our blood was merged with these*

*two dead babies. It symbolises two people integrated with one another, an end to independent life. You can consider these two babies as a single body because they were Siamese twins. They were born conjoined and faced one another, they could never avoid each other, this was like marriage - one must always face the other. We thought about it over and over again before we decided to marry and this work expresses our feelings about the decision.*

*4[ill. 68]*



Indulge In Hurt Exhibition Beijing  
Sun Yuan & Peng Yu  
*[Linked Bodies]*  
2000  
Beijing [ill. 68]

April 2000: As part of the “Indulge in Hurt Exhibition” Beijing, Zhu Yu’s [*Skin Grafting*] is created in the Sculpture Research Institute of China Central Academy of Fine Arts. The artist grafts a piece of his skin onto the body of a dead pig. <sup>5</sup>[ill. 69]

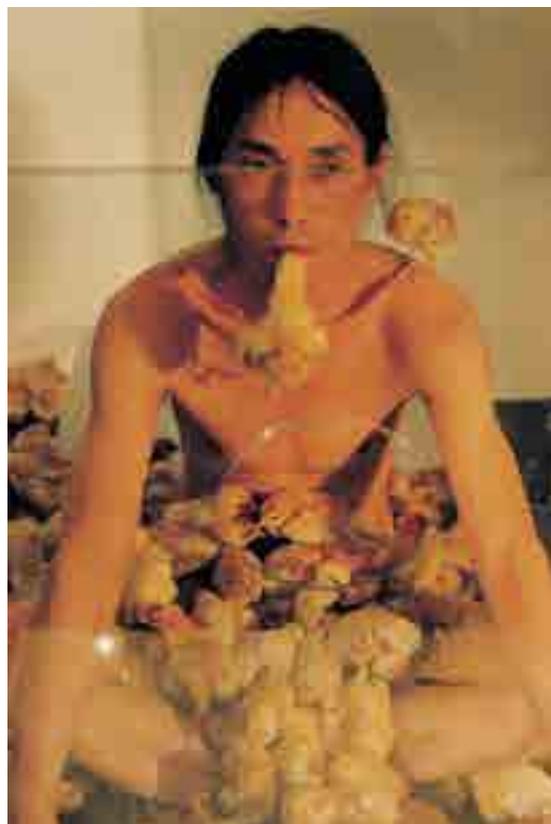


Indulge In Hurt Exhibition Beijing  
Zhu Yu  
[*Skin Grafting*]  
2000  
Beijing [ill. 69]

April 2000: Sheng Qi, Jin Feng, Gao Brothers, Cang Xin, Zhang Nian, Zhou Xiaohu, Wang Mai, Chen Qingqing, Zeng Xun, Liu Chengying, Yu Ji, Dai Guangyu, Yin Xiaofeng, Wu Gaozhong, Gu Xiaoping, Liu Ding, Wu Yuren, Hong Lei, Zhao Qin, Liu Jian, Xu Hong, Gao Bo, Han Bing, Zhu Ming, Gu Kaijun, Huang Yan, Ren Jin and others take part in the “Human and Animal” performance art exhibition. Organized by Gu Zhenqing, the event is held in a range of places on different dates. On 23 April at “Zhu Di” Artists’ Camp of mountain and forest sculpture park in Huairou, Beijing, the main theme is “Human·Animal; Unnatural Relations”. On 30 April, at San Yi Bookstore in Chengdu, Sichuan, the main theme is “Human - Animal; Cultural Animal”. On 28 May at Gong Xian Memorial Hall at Nanjing’s Saoyuelou Qingliangshan Park, the main theme is “Human - Animal: Estheticism and Ambiguity”. On 2-3 July and in the Jingjishen Happy Bar Changchun, by the bank of Yitong River, Changchun City, the main theme is “Human - Animal: Animal Games” and on 2 September, at scenic area of Huaxi, the theme is “Human - Animal: Live Together”.<sup>6</sup>

30 April 2000: Yu Ji conducts [*Pet’s Kiss*] at the “Human and Animal Exhibition” in Chengdu. The artist sits in a glass box; chicks gather around his body. The artist holds a chick’s beak in his mouth for a long time, representing a kiss. After a short period of asphyxia for both, the artist spits the chick out through a small hole in the glass box and then repeated the process until

the end of performance. [ill. 70]



Human and Animal Exhibition Chengdu

Yu Ji

[*Pet’s Kiss*]

30 April 2000

Chengdu [ill. 70]

30 April 2000: Zeng Xun conducts [*The Rescue*] at the “Human and Animal Exhibition” in Chengdu. The artist partially covers a duck's body with plaster, and then he tries to rescue the duck from the state of being restrained and set it free. At the beginning of the rescue, the observers started to protest. Before long, the observers debate whether such work constitutes cruelty to the animals or

whether it is an act to set the animals free. A woman exits the scene with tears streaming down her face. During the disturbance, some bystanders voluntarily take part in the rescue process, but accidentally kill the duck. This artistic work turns into a controversy and brings criticism from local and foreign media. [ill. 71]



Human and Animal Exhibition Chengdu

Zeng Xun

[*The Rescue*]

30 April 2000

Chengdu [ill. 71]

30 April 2000: Liu Chengying conducts [*Flying - Chicken*] at the “Human and Animal Exhibition” in Chengdu. A rooster and a hen, decorated with flowers of honor, are attached to a large balloon filled with hydrogen that is lifted up into the sky. The significance of performance is to allow the animal who has lost its ability to fly to experience their ancestor's feeling of soaring into the sky. [ill. 72]



Human And Animal Exhibition Chengdu  
Liu Chengying  
[*Flying - Chicken*]  
30 April 2000  
Chengdu [ill. 72]

May 2000: Zhou Bin's [*Strike the Wall*] is performed in Xi'An. The artist is naked and repeatedly strikes the old city wall with a velour phallus until he is completely exhausted.

28 May 2000: Wu Gaozhong conducts [*Birthday on 28 May*] at the "Human and Animal Exhibition" in Nanjing. Before the start of the performance, the artist brings a slaughtered buffalo, its belly cut open and its bowels removed, from a local slaughterhouse and scatters rose petals in and outside of the

buffalo's belly. When the performance starts, the naked artist clambers into the belly and his assistant collaborator subsequently closes the belly with a needle and threads. Within the buffalo's abdominal cavity, the artist lies silently, moving occasionally and caressing the animal from within for about 10 minutes. The blood and rose petals cover artist, who forcibly rips out the threads and pushes his way out of the buffalo's belly. After the escape, the artist stands on the buffalo's body and throws the rose petals into the air. [ill. 73]



Human and Animal Exhibition Nanjing

Wu Gaozhong

[*Birthday on 28 May*]

28 May 2000

Qingliang Mountain Garden, Nanjing [ill. 73]

Human and Animal Exhibition Nanjing  
Wu Gaozhong  
*[Birthday on 28 May]*  
28 May 2000  
Qingliang Mountain Garden, Nanjing [ill. 73]



28 May 2000: Liu Jin conducts [*Large Soy Sauce Vat*] at the “Human and Animal Exhibition” in Nanjing. Before the start of the performance, the artist sets a large traditional vat, 1.5 meters diameter and 1.2 meters tall, filled with soy sauce on a fire to heat it. A wooden pallet is set at bottom of the vat to allow the artist to stand in the vat. The artist climbs into the soy sauce

filled vat together with a 60kg live pig with its limbs tied. While the artist and the pig are being heated up in the vat, the artist tries to immerse the pig into the soy sauce and the pig struggles. The performance ends as the soy sauce reaches a temperature the artist can no longer stand. Both the artist and the pig leave the vat.<sup>7</sup>[ill. 74]



Human and Animal Exhibition Nanjing

Liu Jin

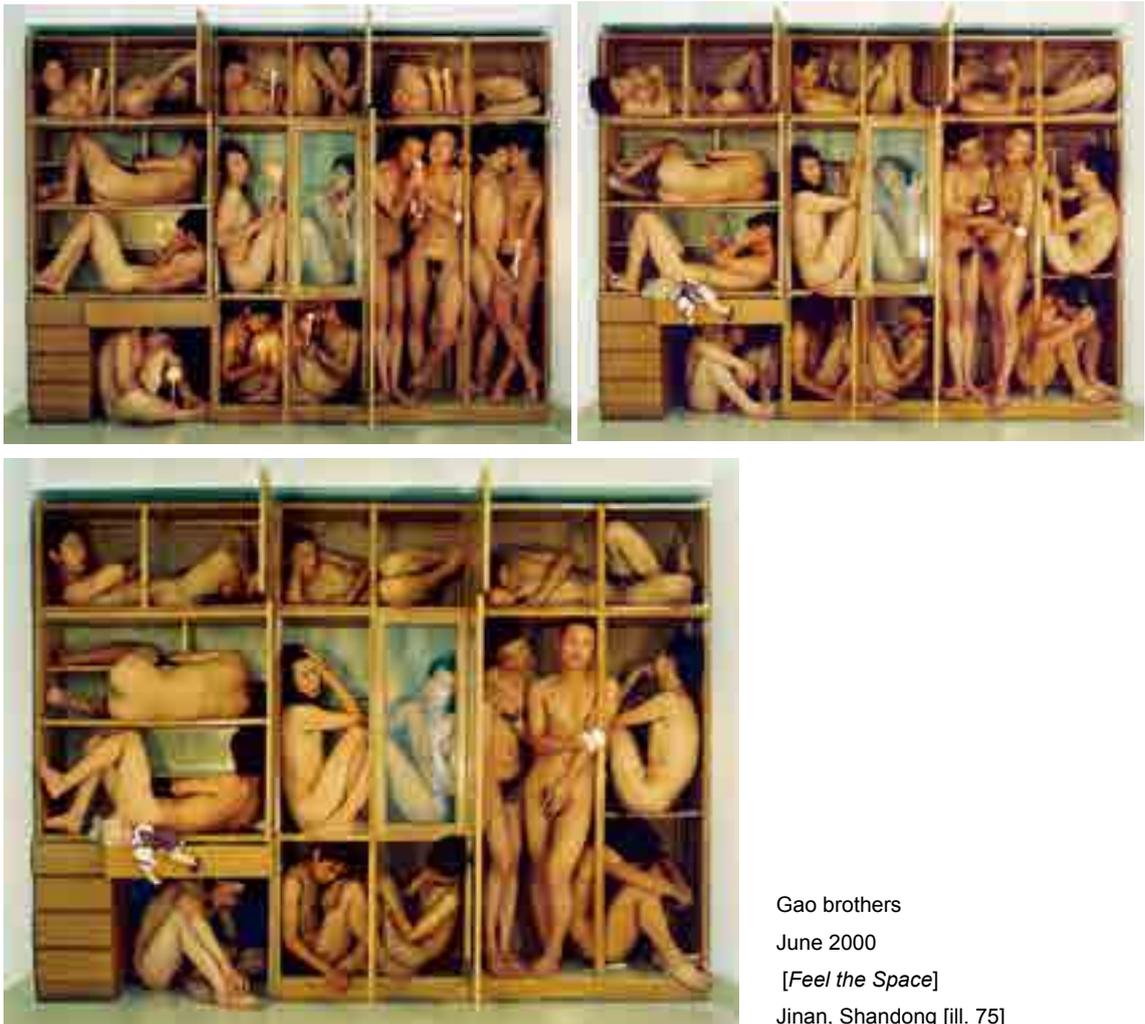
[*Large Soy Sauce Vat*]

28 May 2000

Qingliang Mountain Garden, Nanjing [ill. 74]

June 2000: [*Feel the Space*] by the Gao brothers. The Gao brothers, together with 12 invited performers squeeze into the partitions of a cupboard intending to feel the space within the partitions. The Gao brothers invite 12 participants, of both genders, all of them students studying in art colleges to feel the space by entering a 2.4-meter-long, 3-meter-wide cabinet naked, at the same time; the

door to the cabinet is disassembled before the work starts. The cabinet is in the living room, which is approximately 40 meters square, of an old apartment in Jinan, Shandong, where the Gao brothers used to live. Before entering the cabinet, the participants choose their position according to their height and weight and arrange the order on entering. [ill. 75]



Gao brothers  
June 2000  
[*Feel the Space*]  
Jinan, Shandong [ill. 75]

July 2000: Ma Zhongren, Liu Jianwei, Li Jianbo, Sun Dajiu, Chen Xiaohui, Li Yan and Liu Jinting present [*One of Conclusions of Investigation on Balance of Social Ecology: Events between Prosecutor and Accused*] at a performance art exhibition organized by Ma Zhongren in Shenyang.

July 2000: He Yunchang's [*Emergency Exit*] is present in Changchun at the "Human and Animal" Exhibition curated by Gu Zhenqing. The artist is locked in a burning iron cage for 15 minutes with a pigeon. The pigeon is then released. [ill. 76]

Human and Animal Exhibition Chang Chun  
He Yunchang  
[*Emergency Exit*]  
July 2000  
Chang Chun [ill. 76]





Human and Animal Exhibition Chang Chun

He Yunchang

[*Emergency Exit*]

July 2000

Chang Chun [ill. 76]

July 2000: Zhou Bin presents an individual installation exhibition called [*Condition State*]. Works including [*Ignorant Writing*], [*Called Book*], [*Hook in the Sky*] and [*Suspended Chess Table*] are shown in the Trinity Bookstore in Chengdu.

11 July 2000: Yang Zhichao and Ai Weiwei conduct the performance [*Hide*] in Beijing. An object to be implanted into the artist Yang Zhichao's body (legs) has been selected by Ai Weiwei. The entire selection process is kept from Yang Zhichao so that Yang Zhichao would not have any idea about the nature of the object to be implanted into his body. After the implant, Yang Zhichao has an x-ray to confirm whether an object has indeed been implanted into his body.

#### Artist statement:

*I cannot forget the excitement and nerves I felt when I used to hide. I even remember the disappointment of being unable to find lost objects, objects that inspired and motivated me. That kind of temptation, which is like a mystery, eventually becomes an eternal hope. It is like the Sisyphus in Greek mythology, who keeps on repeating the same method and my endless hope becomes an eternity. At the same time Ai Weiwei's purpose of the fantastic artistic design and cooperation has jointly and successfully extended my dream. Only as a knower, Ai Weiwei must be tight-lipped. This has brought him certain torture. And the crucial point is that his*

*silence is a kind of symbol. Now that it is still a mystery, there must be a day when it will be solved and that moment foreshadows the start of another mystery*

16 August 2000: Zhu Yu conducts [*Happy Easter*] in Beijing. Zhu Yu cuts and opens the chest of a pig, revealing the pig's heart when the pig is still alive. After the viewing, a doctor, hired by Zhu Yu, sews up the incision.<sup>8</sup>

28 August 2000: The first "Open International Performance Art Festival" is held in the Shiduhe Huairou District of Beijing. It is initiated by Chen Jin; Shu Yang and Zhu Ming. Cang Xin, Chen Guang, Chen Jin, Feng Weidong, Li Wei, Liu Jin, Shu Yang, Wang Chuyu, Wang Deren, Yang Qing, Zhu Ming, Du Lun (Hong Kong), Chen Mukai (Japan), Arai Shin-ichi (Japan) and Roi Vaara (Finland) who all participate.<sup>9</sup>[Video 2]

28 August 2000: Li Wei presents [*Global Village*] at the First "Open International Performance Art Festival" on the 28 August 2000, Siduhe Village, Beijing Huairou. All the world's national flags are lined up in a row: each flag is attached to a participant's neck. First, they all stand still; then they march together in the same direction, their bodies slowly emerging from the unfurling flags.<sup>10</sup>[ill. 77] [ Video 2]



Human and Animal Exhibition Chang Chun

He Yunchang

*[Emergency Exit]*

July 2000

Chang Chun [ill. 76]

28 August 2000: Liu Jin perform [*Cola Bath*] at the First “Open International Performance Art Festival” in Beijing. [*Cola Bath*] is a continuation piece; it is the second piece of the “Soy Vat” performance and it expresses the existential misery and emptiness as well as the fake prosperity of consumer culture in the mid-90s following the Reform and Opening of China. In [*Cola Bath*], a traditional Chinese vat is turned into a giant cup of Coca-Cola. After filling the vat to the brim with Coca-

Cola, Liu Jin uses the Coca-Cola to go through the everyday process of bathing and invites the audience as well as the participating artists to participate. The performance lasts for about 30 minutes. As the performance ends, the Police show up and take Liu Jin, Li Yong, Shu Yang and Zhu Ming, the organizers of the festival, to the police station for questioning. The Police detain the artists and the festival organizers until 11 the following morning.<sup>11</sup>[ill. 78][Video 2]



First Open International Performance Art Festival

[*Cola Bath*]

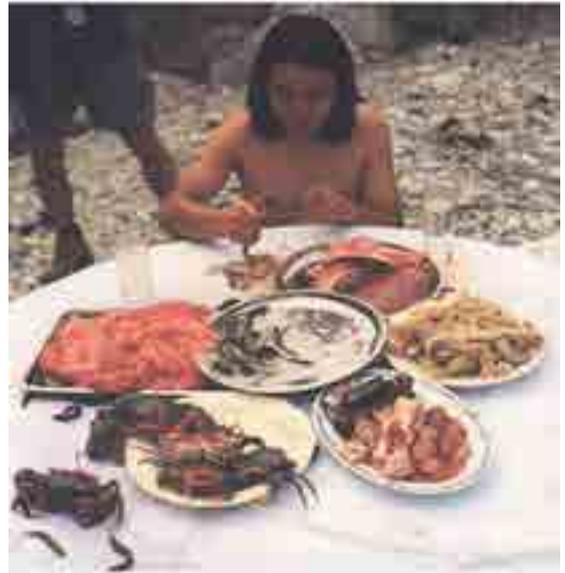
Liu Jin

8 August 2000

Sidu River, Huairou County, Beijing [ill. 78]

28 August 2000: Cheng Guang performs [*Supper*] at the First “Open International Performance Art Festival” in Beijing. There are plates of shrimp, crab, carp, intestines, viscera and meat on the table, which is held aloft by four

laborers. Chen Guang sits at this table and eats the raw foods. During the performance, Chen Guang vomits several times because of the taste. This performance lasts about 45 minutes.<sup>12</sup> [ill.79] [Video 2]



First open international performance art festival  
Cheng Guang  
[*Supper*]  
28 August 2000  
Sidu River, Huairou County, Beijing [ill. 79]

September 2000: Chen Wenbo, Gu Kaijun, Jin Feng, Liao Bangming, Lin Yilin, Tan Haishan, Weng Fen, Xu Tan, Yan Lei, Yang Qian and Yin Xiuzhen presented [*Abnormal and Routine*], an exhibition organised by Gu Zhenqing. It was held at the Yuan Gong Modern Art Gallery in Shanghai.

9 October 2000: Yang Zhichao conducts [*Iron*] in Beijing. At 11:00 AM on October 9th 2000, a long bench in the Qing Dynasty style, 1,600 by 400 by 400 mm is placed in the studios of the artist Ai Weiwei, in the Caochangdi Art District of Beijing. Yang Zhichao, half-naked, lies on the stool facing downwards. A specially made iron (500w) is heated electrically for five minutes, which Ai Weiwei uses to brand Yang Zhichao's back. The process lasts 15 minutes. [ill. 80]

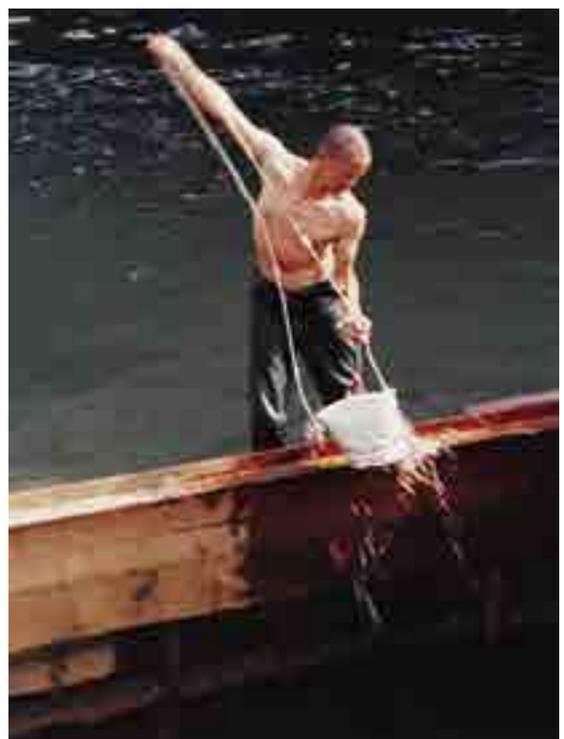
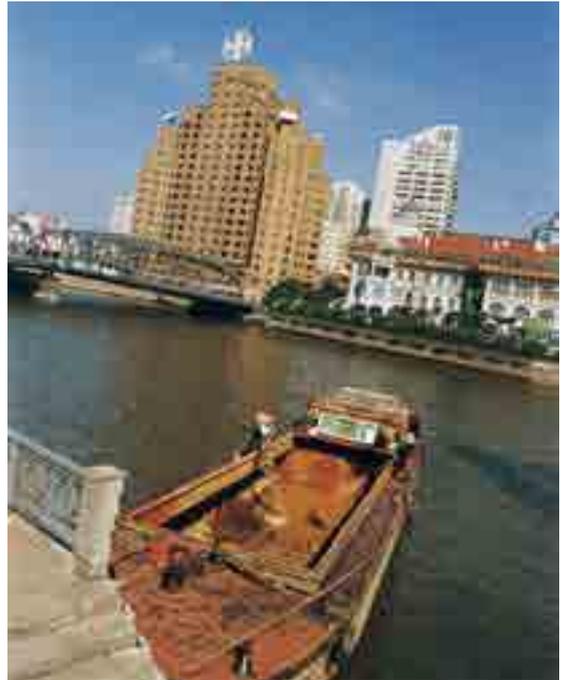


Yang Zhichao  
[*Iron*]  
9 October 2000  
Beijing, China [ill. 80]

14 October 2000: Zhou Bin organizes the performance art event [*Go with Water*] in Xi'An. It is the first performance art event to be held in Xi'An since the 80's.

November 2000: Wang Chuyu, Yang Zhichao, He Yunchang, Zhu Ming, Feng Weidong and others present the exhibition "Fuck off Exhibition". It is organized by Ai Weiwei and Feng Boyi and is held at the Dong Lang Drawing Corridor in Shanghai. Forty-eight artists try with strange postures and uncooperative stance to express their understanding of modern art. Yang Zhichao, Wang Chuyu, He Yunchang, Zhu Ming, Feng Weidong and others present their performance art works, with the exception of the controversial performance [*Eating Foetus*] by Zhu Yu, which is only shown in a catalogue. The exhibition triggered great debate about performance art in China. <sup>13</sup>[Video 1.7]

3 November 2000: [*Shanghai Water Diary*] by He Yunchang is conduct during the "Fuck off Exhibition" in Shanghai. He Yunchang uses a bucket to fetch 10 tons of water from the lower reaches of the Suzhou River in Shanghai. Storing the water in the hold of a ship, he transported it 4 kilometers upstream and then proceeded to pour the 10-tons of water back into the Suzhou River, making it flow the 4 kilometers Again. The whole process lasts about 8 hours. <sup>14</sup> [ill. 81]



Fuck Off Exhibition Shanghai  
He Yunchang  
[*Shanghai Water Diary*]  
3 November 2000  
Shanghai [ill. 81]

5 November 2000: Yang Zhichao conducts [*Planting Grass*] at the “Fuck off Exhibition” in Shanghai.

At 10:00 a.m. on 5 November 2000, on the second floor of No. 1133, Suzhou Road, Shanghai, artist Yang Zhichao performs [*Planting Grass*] as one of the work present at the “Fuck off Exhibition”. The artist first lies face down on an operating table and invites a doctor to make two incisions (1cm deep and 1cm wide) on his left shoulder without applying any anesthetic. Grass freshly removed from the banks of the Suzhou River is then planted into the incisions. The performance lasts 45 minutes.

#### Yang Zhi Chao’s Statement:

The idea comes from the feelings of the phenomenon of life and the challenges which we must experience. In the real environment and space, it narrates the preciousness and tenaciousness of life. It explains clearly how the phenomenon of life is discovered and touched by art. However, we know that when a clump of green grass trembles in the wind, we are touched. In reality, life is sometimes surreal and helpless. But no matter how surreal and unreasonable it is, life itself is unavoidable and this is exactly the endless nature of life. Compared with reality, planting grass is unreal. While we can feel the surrealism of life, we also understand the objectivity of life. When someone dies, someone is also born.

On the other hand, as our body changes, the

biological basis of our body also reflects the social and political factors affecting our body. Besides the biological functions such as breathing, the heartbeat and blood circulation which fulfill the mechanical demands of our body, our body also possess consciousness, thought and complex social judgment of complicated social and mental issues. This enables our body to be multi-functional and directly completes this kind of examination in depth.<sup>15</sup> [ill. 82] [Video 1.4]

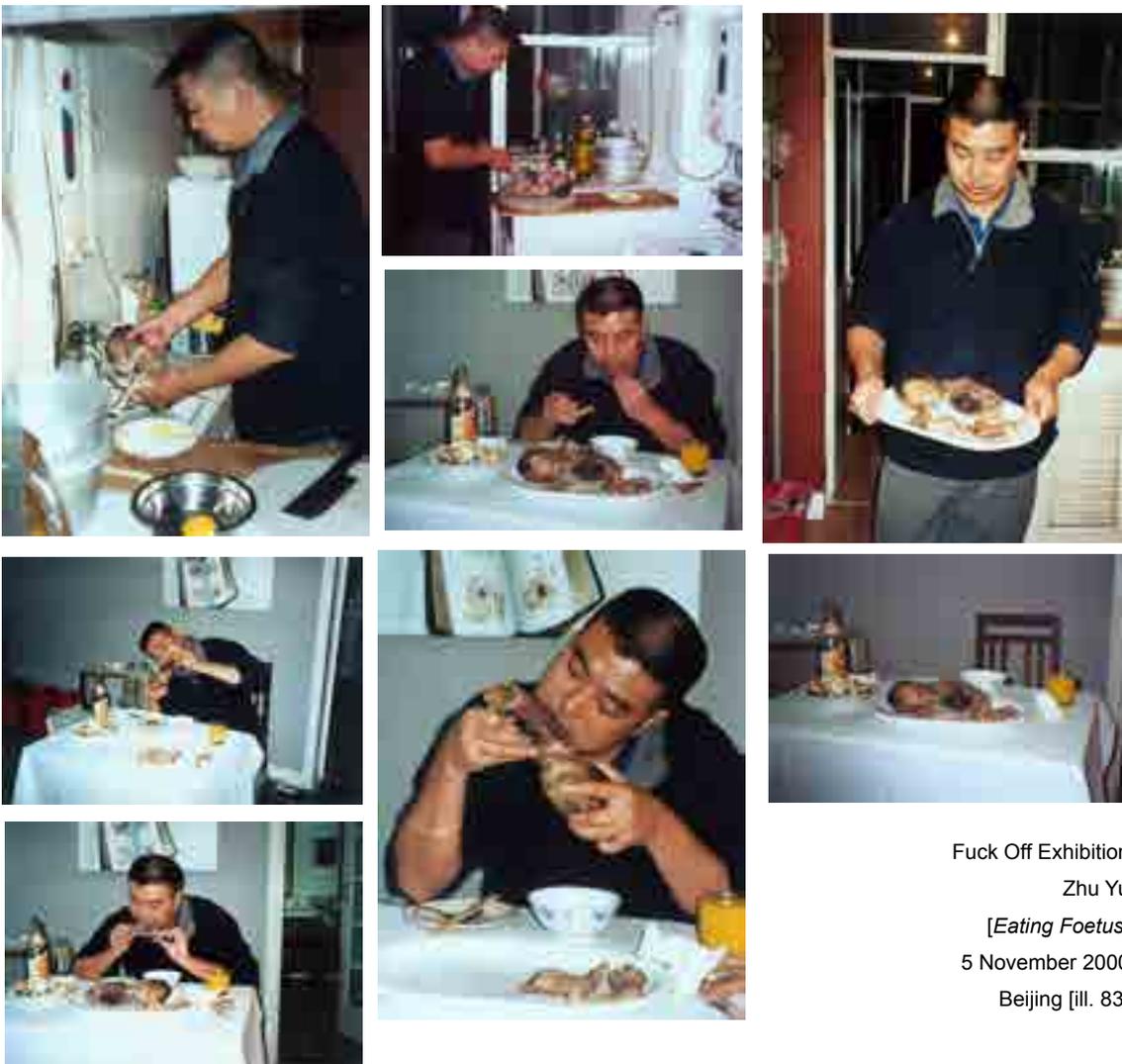


Fuck Off Exhibition  
Yang Zhichao  
[*Planting Grass*]  
5 November 2000  
Shanghai [ill. 82]



Fuck Off Exhibition  
Yang Zhichao  
*[Planting Grass]*  
5 November 2000  
Shanghai [ill. 82]

November 2000: Zhu Yu's performance art photographs [*Eating Foetus*] are shown at the "Fuck off Exhibition" in Shanghai. Zhu Yu is eating a dead cooked foetus in front of a dining table. Photographs of this event are divided into several groups portraying the whole process of Zhu Yu washing the dead foetus, cooking the dead foetus, and eating the dead foetus in the kitchen.<sup>16</sup> [ill. 83]



Fuck Off Exhibition  
Zhu Yu  
*[Eating Foetus]*  
5 November 2000  
Beijing [ill. 83]

December 2000: Dai Guangyu, Yin Xiaofeng, Yu December 2000: Dai Guangyu, Yin Xiaofeng, Yu Ji, Zhang Hua, Liu Chengying, Zhou Bin, Zeng Xun, Song Yongxing and Zhu Gang present the “The Fourth Battle of Safeguarding Water ‘Release Water’ Exhibition”. It differs from the previous three exhibitions, which are centered on water. The exhibition space covers a wider water area in the center of Chengdu City, which is downstream from the River Minjiang.

28 December 2000: Liu Chengying conducts [*Slow Express - Mailing Water*] at the “Fourth Battle of

Safeguarding Water ‘Release Water’ Exhibition” in Chengdu. Liu Chengying collects 10 bottles of clean, clear Minjiang River water from Dujiangyan, and then delivers them to national, provincial, and civic environmental protection departments and governments. The slow express leaves on 28 December 2000 and is planned to arrive on 28 December 2000. This idea produced chaos at Xingfu Road department of the Dujiangyan post office. Due to current postal regulations, the slow express is denied permission and is finally forced to withdraw the bottles from the post office. [ill. 84]



Fourth Battle of Safeguarding Water ‘Release Water’  
Liu Chengying  
[*Slow Express - Mailing Water*]  
28 December 2000  
Chengdu [ill. 84]

December 2000: Shi Yong and others present [*Are you willing to play with artists?*]. A group of young artists from Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing and other places produce performance art works in the Central Square of Nanjing.

2000: Wang Changping, Liu Ding, Chen Hui, Yang Zhichao, Yang Li, Yu Jie, Luo Quanmu, Dong Wensheng and others present [*In*] at an exhibition organized by Liu Ding. The artists use an unoccupied villa at the foot of Zijin Mountain, in the Eastern suburbs of Nanjing as the venue. The work include installations, videos, performance art, photography, spray painting, pictures and computer design.

2000: The Gao Brothers present the [*Utopia of 20 Minutes Embracing*] series. The brothers recruit more than 150 young volunteers who did not know each other and invite them to different locations including a large Dam on the Yellow River, a railway bridge across the Yellow River and inside a large building site in the center of the city. The volunteers are asked to choose any object they wish to and embrace it for 5 minutes.

## Significant Events in China 2001

10 January 2001: The Shengzhou No 2 pilotless spacecraft, developed and built by China, is launched from the Jiu Quan satellite launch center.

13 July 2001: During the 4<sup>th</sup> session of a

Ministerial level meeting of the WTO, in Duhar Katar, a resolution granting membership to China is passed.

11 December 2001: China officially enters the World Trade Organization, becoming its 143<sup>rd</sup> member.

## Performance Art Events in China 2001

January 2001: The periodical ‘Art and Literature Paper’ publishes an article by Yang Zhong entitled “In the name of Art: The Dead End of Vanguard Art in China”. The article criticizes extreme performance art. The purpose of the article is to get public support for the suppression of performance art.

January 2001: Chen Guang performs the works [*Happy Life*] and [*Kiss China Deeply*] in a Bar on Gongtidong Road, in Sanlitun, Beijing.

January 2001: Dai Guangyu, Yin Xiaofeng, Yu Ji, Liu Chengying, Zhang Hua, Zeng Xun and Song Yongxing presents the [*Hold White*] art exhibition. Organized by Zhou Chunya and Dai Guangyu, and hosted by Chen Mo, it is held at the Chengdu Drawing Gallery.

January 27 – 30 2001: In his home town, Luo Zidan presents the religious series of performance art pieces [*Native Town·People·Graves*] (Year

of 2001), [*New Door Gods·New Antithetical couplet*], [*Totem of Fumes*], [*Cut the veins*], [*Be Trained in City*], [*Believe*], [*Vanguard Art; Report work to Parents and Natives*], [*Discussion on Construction with Younger Uncle, Luo Hongbi, Contractor of Foundation Construction*], [*Discussion on Education of Children with No. 4 Uncle, Luo Hongxi a Teacher in Rural Area*], [*Heart to Heart Talk·Under Prescription of Grand Mother*], [*Old and New Group Photos*], [*Tradition*], [*Liberty·Equality·Fraternity*], [*Guard the Coffin·New Human Being*], [*Simulated Development*] and [*Enrich the Male by Female*].

At the beginning of 2001, Luo Zidan returns from Beijing to a rural area in Sichuan and plans a large-scale art event about clan culture, “Native Town·People·Graves”. The house of Luo, bearing the family motto of “cultivation and reading pass on down the family”, is respect and is quite influential in the county of Changning, where their family's large-scale ancestral grave mound is perfectly preserved and well-tended. In the grave mound stand four baluster columns more than 9 meters high and several delicately engraved headstones, included the engraving of the imperial decree. Luo Zidan, as the eldest branch, an eldest son and eldest grandson, leads the clan and fellow townsmen in completing 14 installation-performance art pieces. Liberty·Equality·Fraternity is a piece that moves a lot of people; at the foot of the ancestral grave mounds, villagers stand in line and dig in the soil. The taller ones dig holes to stand in in order to look shorter, and the shorter ones pile soil under their feet in order to look taller. After all look equally tall,

a banner reading “Liberty·Equality·Fraternity” is held high. The French artist Marc who is presents starts to shout, in the front of all people, “Freedom... equality... humanity...” The other villages present respond and join in. The scene is filled with passion. In Tradition, the clan gathers together reunited from different places, and stand in a row from the center of the ancestral grave mound to 10 meters beyond the foot of it positioning themselves according to their seniority in the clan. The delicate mud molded into the pattern of headstone is passed down the clan from the one with highest seniority, and to the last member, a 4-year old girl. She is too young to hold it because when she takes it, the molded clay is has become distorted; therefore, it cracks and she drops it. When the event is aired on Chengdu TV Station, it receives good reviews from the scholars and citizens. Luo Zidan writes more than 40,000 words of material on this event. Art critic Wu Hong publishes it on Art Allies at the Tom.com.

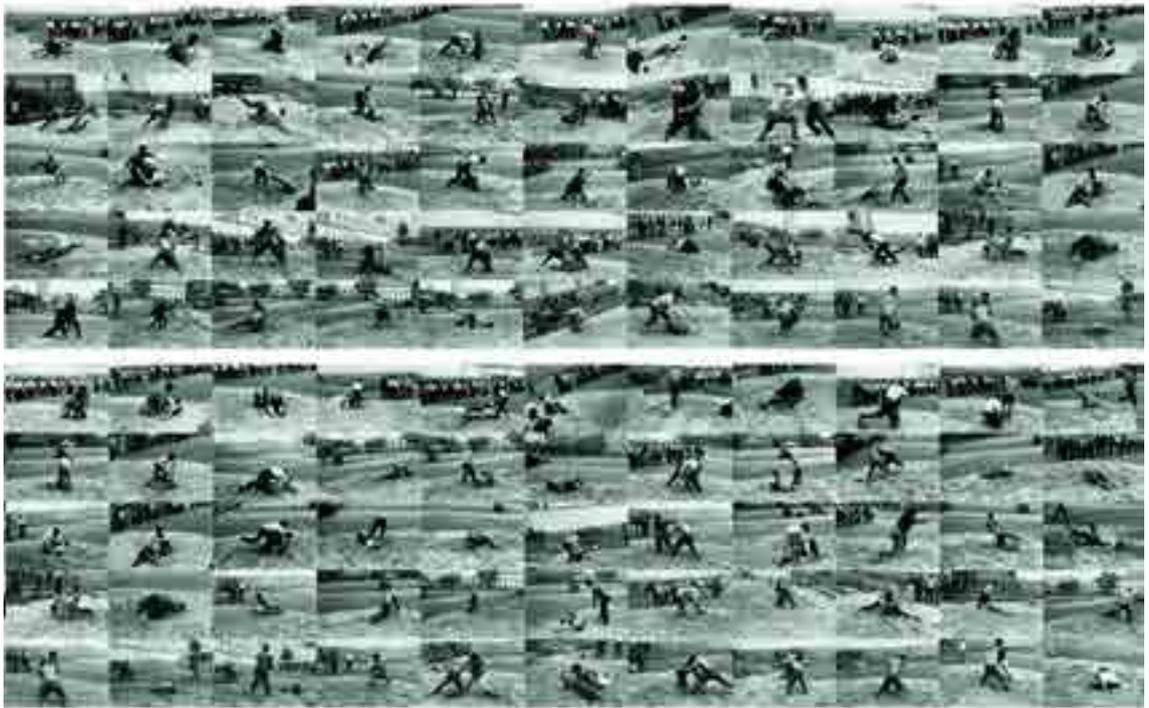
March 2001: Qiu Zhijie, Wu Ershan, Liu Wei, Zhang Hui, Shi Qing, Zhou Ren and Wang Wei present at the exhibition "Post-Sense Sensibility: Carnival". The exhibition is organized by Qiu Zhijie and is held in the photography studio at the Beijing Movie Academy.

March 2001: He Yunchanag's work [*Gun Man*] is shown in Kunming Yunnan province. The artist confronts a fire truck and its high-pressure fire hose for 20 minutes. [ill. 85]



He Yunchanag  
[*Gun Man*]  
March 2001  
Kunming ,Yunnan [ill. 85]

March 2001: He Yunchang's work [*Wrestling*] is shown in Kunming, Yunnan province. The artist held a wrestling competition and competed against more than 100 people. The event lasted 66 minutes. [ill. 86]



He Yunchang  
[*Wrestling*]  
March 2001  
Kunming ,Yunann [ill. 86]

March – May 2001: At the [*Wreckage*] art exhibition, Dai Guangyu, Yin Xiaofeng, Yu Ji, Liu Chengying, Zhang Hua, Zeng Xun, Song Yongxing and others present pieces. Organized by Chen Mo, it is held in the Labour People's Culture Palace on "Consumers' Rights Day". Works shown include [*Three Genital Wine*] by Yin Xiaofeng, [*Sex-Eating-Sex*] by Dai Guangyu, [*Dance of Pyramid—Bread and Bread Worm*] by Yu Ji, [*Fortune- Salary-Longevity-Happiness--- Fortune*] by Zhang Hua, [*Live Report*] by Zeng Xun, [*Sew up No. 2*], [*485 meters Above Sea Level. 20°C*] by Liu Chengying, [*Personal Status- Identification*] and [*Accidental Contamination*] by Song Yongxing.

January 2001: Jin Feng, Cang Xin, Chen Shaoxing, Zhou Xiaohu, Qiu Zhijie, Weng Fen, Ma Jian, Liu Chengying, Wang Guofeng, He Zhenhai, Zhou Shaobo, Tan Haishan and others participate in "Several Living Ways in Future". Hosted by Su Lv, the exhibition includes performance art in which more than 20 artists from all over China take part.

January 2001: Song Dong, Sun Ping, Yin Xiaofeng, Zhu Gang, Dai Guangyu and others; [*Door of the Century*]. This exhibition opens in the Chengdu Exhibition Center. In Yin Xiaofeng's [*Touch Art*], the artist leads 100 blind men he invites into the exhibition hall. Hanging from their chests are signs that read 'distinguished guest'. Zhu Gang performs [*Recovery*] in which he tries to buy art works

at high prices under the name "China National Century Art Recovery Company". Dai Guangyu presents his work [*Quiet and Vivid*].<sup>17</sup> [Video 1.5]

January 2001: At the Busy Bee Bar in Beijing, Luo Zidan presents [*Freedom to Intellectuals Brought by Hooliganism*]

March – May 2001: Twenty-eight artists from East Asia participate in the exhibition "Translation of Performance—Human Body Show from East Asia". The exhibition is held in the World Culture Palace in Berlin Germany and is hosted by Jin Yongshan. Artists from China, Japan, and South Korea participate in the exhibition.

2001: Dai Guangyu presents [*Food and Love are Basic Needs*] in Chengdu, Sichuan province. The artist dresses a naked woman in a transparent plastic raincoat and covers the woman with flour. The woman is then asked to stand on a table covered in flour while participants are invited to eat noodles around the table. The woman carefully looks at the people who are eating noodles and appreciating her. At this moment, food becomes an obstacle to the people who are peering at.

April 2001: The Ministry of Culture issues a memo asking local authorities to stop the "unhealthy activities of bloody, brutal and obscene performances in the name of "art". The memo claims that "in recent times a very

small group of people in some areas, under the pretense of “art” have conduct performances of self-torture and the torture of animals in public, also of showing bloody, brutal and obscene scenes and disseminating these scenes through illegal channels.” The memo goes on to claim that “such evil acts have offended the law of the country, disturbed social order and corrupted social values. They have physically damaged and morally injured the masses and have created a bad influence on society. In order to maintain social order and clean cultural environment and so as to remove cultural rubbish, we hereby issue this memo”. The memo is accompanied by references to relevant laws and clauses.

April 2001: Yu Ji participates in the “Chinese Glamour Exhibition” in Thailand.

May 2001: Dai Guangyu, Yin Xiaofeng, Yu Ji, Liu Chengying, Zhang Hua, Zeng Xun, Song Yongxing, Feng Jiali and Liao Haiying present “Up and Down, Left and Right: Summer Learning Invitation Exhibition” at Chengdu Modern Art Gallery organized by Chen Mo and Zhang Yingchuan.

2001: Wang Peng conducts [*Gate*] at the MSG in Beijing. The artist defines the inside and outside of the gallery as two spaces, divided and connect at the same time by a gate. He installs a camera in each space so that the audience both inside and out of the gallery space can see their counterparts’ actions. After inviting some

of the audience members into the gallery, the artist locks himself and the audience members in and plays a video that shows how the artist had purchased the lock. It becomes obvious that after buying the lock the artist has thrown away the keys. At this point, the artist announces that his performance had commenced. One hour later, the door is broken down violently by the audience, the work concludes.

17 May 2001: The German artist H.A. Schult, stands on the Jinshanling Great Wall, exhibited his personal work – a thousand life-size people construct from tin cans in front of more than fifty well-known journalists from both China and abroad.

17 May 2001: He Chengyao performs [*Open Great Wall*]. While the German artist H.A. Schult sets out the 1,000 “Trash men” from the giant industrial waste manufacturers upon the Jinshanling Great Wall, the artist He Chengyao performs an improvised intervention – removing her red top and walking through H. A. Schult's figures half-naked.<sup>18</sup> [ill. 87][Video 1.6]

2001: He Chengyao presents [*Me and Mom*] after [*Open Great Wall*]. He Chengyao had gone back to her hometown to visit her mother. Her mother, who had a history of mental illness, was found at home alone, half-naked, playing with a rotten apple. The scene made He Chengyao very sad, and she took off her top, stood behind her mother and took a picture of them both. She



He Chengyao  
[*Open Great Wall*]  
17 May 2001  
Great Wall, Beijing [ill. 87]

called the photo [*Me and Mom*]. He Chengyao said that this was the first time that she had taken a photo of herself with her mother. She wanted to speak out about her life and family history of mental illness, which she used to cover up rigorously. She had to use the sense of touch to confirm her kinship with her mother. [ill. 88]



He Chengyao  
[*Me and Mom*]  
2001  
Chongqing [ill. 88]

2001-2002: He Chengyao presents [*Testimony*] in Chongqing. This work is composed of three photos, which take one year to complete. After [*Open Great Wall*], He Chengyao went back to her hometown to visit her mother. Her mother, who had a history of mental illness was at home, alone, half-naked, playing with a rotten apple. The scene made He Chengyao very sad, she take off her top, stood behind her mother and take a picture of them both. The year after, He Chengyao take her son to visit her mother and take the picture with her son at the same location where the pervious picture was taken. The work witnesses kinship over three generations. [ill.89]



He Chengyao  
[*Open Great Wall*]  
17 May 2001  
Great Wall, Beijing [ill. 87]

June 2001: Xiong Wenyun and others orchestrate the environmental protection event [*Flowing Rainbow*], from Beijing to Qomolangma. Xiong Wenyun is accompanied by her companion.

July 2001: Song Dong, Yin Xiuzhen, Qiu Zhijie, Wang Jianwei, Zhan Wang, Wang Jingsong, Dai Guangyu, Yu Ji, Song Yongxing and others present “The Cross: Urban Public Environment Art Plan Exhibition”. It is hosted by Li Xianting and held in the Chengdu Modern Art Gallery. Various works are shown, including: [*The Cross*] by Song Dong, [*Chart*] by Yin Xiuzhen, [*Manhattan Celestial Burial Plan*] by Qiu Zhijie, [*Standard House—One Fen Rice + Two Bedrooms and One Sitting Room*] by Wang Jianwei, [*Fly-over*], [*Forecast*] and [*Old Wall*] by Wang Jianwei, [*Dismantle*] by Wang Jingsong, [*Target*] by Dai Guangyu, [*Method of Production*] by Yu Ji, [*Under Ground City*] by Yin Xiaofeng and [*Time-Erode*] by Song Yongxing.

July 2001: Zhou Bin’s work [*N Times of Yell from the One Drown in Ink*] is shown in Xiao Guan Yuan, Chengdu.

3 July 2001: Huang Kui conducts [*I’m Cold*] at Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Chongqing. Huang Kui wears a plastic costume with the words ‘I am cold’ cut out on the back. The artist then puts a T-shirt on over the plastic costume and lies face down on the ground. As time passes, the artist starts to sweat and the sweat goes through the T-shirt. The words ‘I am cold’ appear on the

back of the artist’s T-shirt.

August 2001, the Japanese performance artist Seiji Shimoda and China artists Shu Yang, Chen Jin and Wang Mai hold a private performance in Beijing.

August 2001: [*Hiring Embrace*] by the Gao Brothers is shown on the East side of Spring Square in Jinan. The Gao brothers, along with 20 other naked, hired workers embrace each other. The naked embrace is conducted twice, first on the top floor and then on stage in the hall inside the building.

August 2001: Zhou Bin and the Gao brothers present [*Rebuild the Society*] in Chengdu, among the various pieces shown, [*N Times Yell from the One Drown in Ink*] and [*Hired Embrace*] attract particular public attention.

August 2001: Peng Junjie, Wang Ruixian, Wen Meiyun, Yuan Jianliang, Tan Daqiang and Lin Yulian (Hong Kong) and others present [*Rice Change*], organized by Lin Hanjian and Zhu Qi. The “Asian Surpass Culture Plan” presents a performance piece in the Art Refueling Station in Beijing. Artists from China, Hong Kong, Singapore and the Czech Republic attend the performance. Later, the performance is halted by the building’s authorities, on the grounds that they are damaging the walls and floor of the space.

8-17 August 2001: The Second “Open International Performance Art Festival” is held in the Leshan part of Pengshan Town in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. It is curated by Chen Jin, Shu Yang. Many artists from China and abroad participate, including: Academic support Li Xianting. Artist Zhu Ming, Chen Jin, Dai Guangyu, Li Qiang, Shu Yang, Song Yongxing, Tian Liusha, Yin Xiaofeng, Yu Ji, Zhu Ming, Zhu Yu, Arai Shin-ichi (Japan), Skip Arnold (USA), Miriam King (UK), Lennie Lee (UK), Anita Cahill (Ireland), Deapina Olbric-Marianou (Greece/Germany), Beate Roning (Germany), Helge Meyer (Germany), Marco Teubner (Germany), Eric Letourneau (Canada), Myriam LaPlante (Canada/Italy), Jozsef R.Juhosz (Slovakia) and Lee Wen (Singapore).

August 2001: Zhu Yu’s [*Happy Easter*] is performed at the Second “Open International Performance Art Festival” in Chengdu. The artist’s plan of the work is to cut a pig’s thoracic cavity open, reveal the pig’s beating heart and sew up the wound after viewing. The artist hires a doctor to give an anesthetic to a pig before the performance. The doctor cuts the pig’s cavity open using a pair of forceps and the operation is going smoothly until 5 minutes into the performance, due to the insufficient dosage of anesthetic application, the sedated pig started to struggle and eventually dies after a significant loss of blood. During the performance, one of the participants tried to stop the performance by hitting doctor and the artist with a shovel but is stopped by the other participants. [ill. 90]



Second open international performance art festival.

Zhu Yu

[*Happy Easter*]

16 August 2001

Chengdu [ill. 90]

August 2001: Yu Ji conducts [*Want to Be a Stowaway*] at the Second “Open International Performance Art Festival” in Chengdu. The performer uses numerous white cotton ropes of different lengths and ties them to an iron railing at one end and to himself at the other. He is wearing casual, white, Chinese clothing. He crawls 50 meters in pain and with difficulty. The performer’s clothing is torn to pieces by the time he reaches his destination. A Western suit is placed on a chair. He hurriedly but calmly puts on the suit and the performance ends. [ill. 91]



Second Open International Performance Art Festival  
Yu Ji  
[*Want to Be a Stowaway*]  
August 2001  
Chengdu [ill. 91]

9 September 2001: The Performance artist Zheng Lianjie performs his two latest pieces, [*Cocktail of Native Town*] and [*Flowing Dinner Table*].

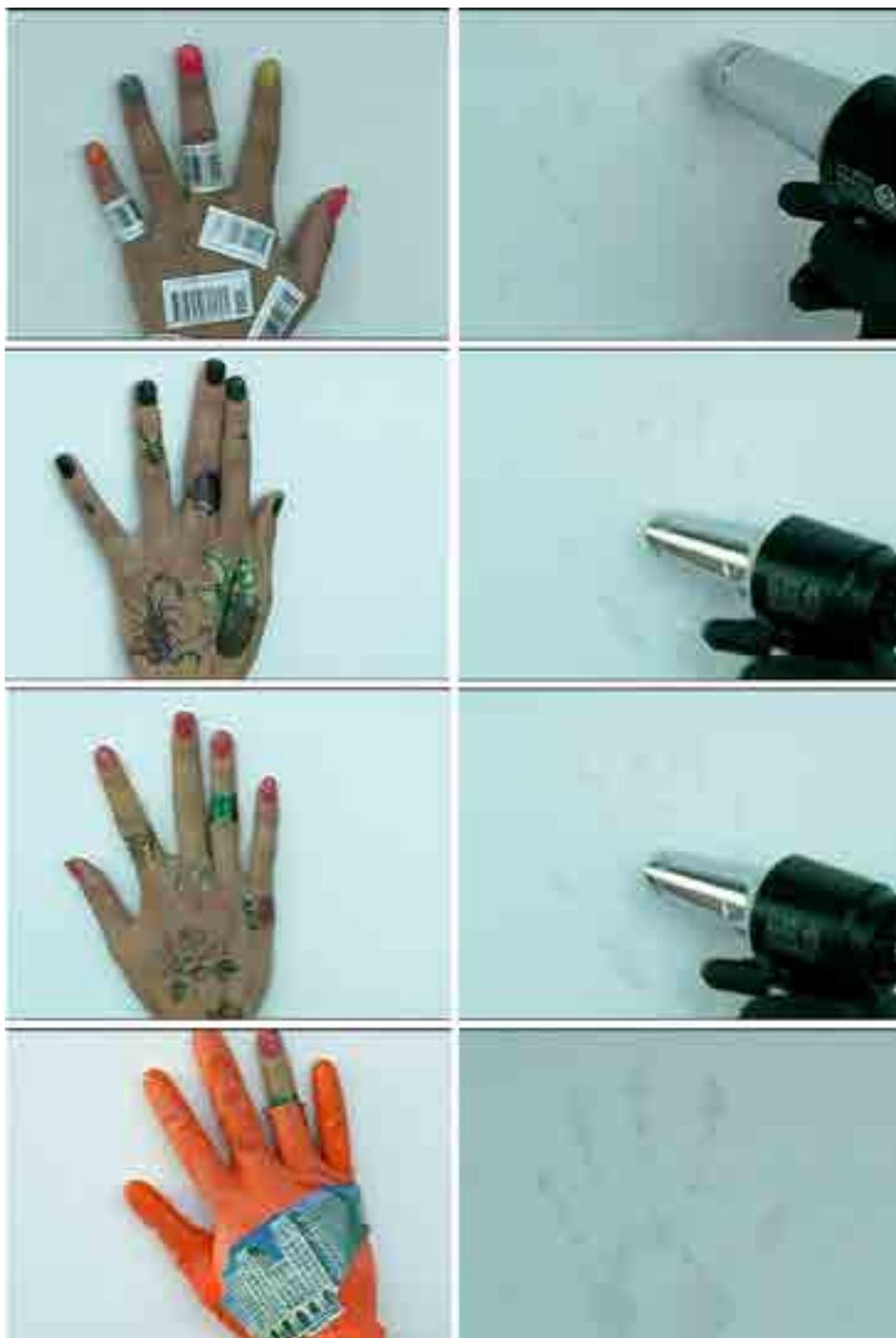
September 2001: Wang Wei, Qiu Zhijie, Liu Wei, Zhang Hui, Shi Qing and Wu Ershan present the exhibition “Retribution”, which is organized by Li Zhenhua and held in Jie Zi Yuan, Beijing. The six participating artists are each designated a space within the exhibition. Each artist works for one week in his designated space. The show begins on a Saturday. The artists select the materials to be used jointly. The artists draw lots, which establish the order in which they must work, this order is not negotiable. The first artist must use these materials to construct his work, other materials can be added but nothing can be removed. On the second day the second artist must build upon his colleague’s work, again, nothing can be removed or altered, only added. The process continued in this manner. Artists unable to attend on their designated day would have to participate by remotely guiding another artist. The entire week’s activity is monitored and recorded by surveillance equipment. This exhibition is a joint show held in a shared space but at different times. It stresses the relationship that exists between the works and the transition that occurs and is not to be regarded as a series of works.

September 2001: Bai Ding and others present [*Wrong Position and Variation: Performance Art*

*Night Jinan*], held in the 1+1 Leopard Bar, one of the trendiest places in Jinan. Bai Ding, together with 9 other artists, produce the Leopard Bar’s highest takings ever.

September 2001: Dai Guangyu, Yin Xiaofeng, Yu Ji, Zhang Hua, Zhu Gang, Song Yongxing and others present [*Friday—Related to Sound*], held in a Tea House in Chengdu. Poets read poems and artists present performance art. Works shown include: [*Saliva*] by Yin Xiaofeng, [*Rare Sound of Shout*] by Yu Ji, [*Buddha’s Sound*] by Dai Guangyu, [*Read Out*] by Zhu Gang, [*Conspiracy of Words*] by Song Yongxing and Fan Bei, [*A Piece of Fur is Flying*] by Che Qianzi and [*Mid Night of Mosaic*] by Ya Shi and Shi Youbo.

10 October 2001: Yang Deqing conducts [*Big Handprint*] at Ma Wu’s Studio, Beijing. The artist leaves his wet handprints on a wall by pressing his wet hand onto the wall. These wet handprints could drie naturally, but the artist decides to use a hair dryer to accelerate the drying process. [ill. 92]



Yang Deqing  
*[Big Handprint]*  
 10 October 2001  
 Ma Wu's Studio, Beijing [ill. 92]

13 October 2001: Organized by Xiang Xishi and Wang Jian, the [*Big Week*] Performance Art Festival is held in Xi'An. The participating artists include: Yue Luping, Liu Sihai, Wang Jian, Xiang Xishi, Shu Yang, Fei Xiaosheng, Liu Xiangjie, Shao Yanxin, Wang Ye, Li Zhe, He Li and Li Long.

October 2001: Fei Xiaosheng, Liu Chengying, Yue Luping and Zhou Bin present [*Inside and Outside of the Wall*], an installation performance art event organized by Zhang Wenqing and held at the ruins of the Great Wall at Dingbian, Shanxi. 11 pieces of work by the 4 artists are shown. The works express the artists' thoughts about and attitude toward the symbol of "the wall" through the language of performance and installation.

October 2001: Hua Jiming presents [*Crawling on the Great Wall*]. The artist crawls along the Badaling Great Wall in Beijing together with his wife and son.

October 2001: [*Notarization*] by Liu Chengying. The artist takes a bag of sand and soil from the ruins of Great Wall in Dingbian Shanxi and at the Notary Office of Sichuan notarizes the bag as part of the heritage of the Chinese nation

October 2001: Dai Guangyu, Yu Ji, Yin Xiaofeng, Luo Zidan, Zhu Gang, Song Yongxing, Zhang Hua and other presented the "Revolving by 360° Art Exhibition". It was organised by Wang

Lin and held in the Hai Shan Painting Gallery in Shanghai.

November 2001: Gao Feng, Chen Mu and Tang Cheng presented [*Salt*] at a Performance Art Exhibition in Jie Zi Yuan, Beijing.

November 2001: "Political Dialect Performance Art Festival" is present in Xi'An

November 2001: Yu Ji participate in "The Resources of Body and Articles Exhibition", in the Art Commune Hong Kong.

November 2001: Yu Ji participate in "The Third State: Modern China Art Show" at the Bali Modern Art Museum, Italy.

November 2001: Dai Guangyu, Liu Chengying, Zhou Bin and Yin Xiaofeng take part in the "China Festival" Art Tour Show" at the Hanover Faust Museum in Germany.

December 2001: Liu Chengying, Song Yongxing, Tan Haishan, Chen Qiulin, Huang Ru, Ma Jie, Huang Kui, Zhang Qing and others present at the "Parabola Exhibition", which is hosted by Chen Mo and organized by Dai Guangyu. The exhibition is held near the exhibition area at the Antelope Painting Gallery in "Mao Yuan", Chengdu on the day before the opening of the first Chengdu Biennale as a fringe event. Its main themes are photography and performance art.

22 December 2001: Xiang Xishi, Shu Zhongqiu, Liu Xiangjie, Yue Luping, Fei Xiaosheng, Liu Sihai, Li Mengyuan, He Li, Li Zhe, Li Long, Yuan Fenghui, Yu Tao, Yang Bin, He Jun, Deng Aiguo, Li Yajie, Cai Xiaohua, Zhang Tili, Wang Jian, Wang Fenghua, Li Qiang, Shao Yangde, Ma Hua and Shao Yanxin participate in the "Xi'An Open Modern Art Exhibition". Organized by Yue Luping, Xiang Xishi and Fei Xiaosheng, the exhibition is held in Xi'An Dongyang City Primary School, with works including paintings, installations, performance art, execution plans of the performances and photographs on display. At 15:30 on the 21st of December, when school is over, the artists start to set up the exhibition. All classrooms on the second floor are used for installations and conceptual photography. Liu Xiangjie's work is House-Moving. He moves his entire studio to the exhibition hall. In Li Long's work, scores of pig hearts are hung all over the room. On the yellow desk, a DVD player is playing the scene of monks chanting scriptures in the evening, while the pig hearts are dripping blood. He Li's installation is made of bricks and red ropes, as well as eggs on the floor. It is entitled Jie. Xiang Xishi takes barrels and broomsticks and turns them into a combination of objects. Li Yajie's installation consists of two books on formalism, but there is no contents in the books. All the other paintings are hung on a long wall near the toilet in the school yard. On 22nd, when the exhibition officially opens, there is a larger audience than expect. Large-scale installations are created outdoors and in

the stairwells. Shao Yanxin makes an enormous magic cube with the theme of pop culture and "brand" figures. Li Zhe's work is a combination of cushions, wooden boxes painted black and animal bones. At 11 a.m., the event officially starts. The first performance is Fei Xiaosheng's work, Experimental Music, in which he holds a microphone and sings loudly "march march march..." Then his cooperater Doudou starts to play and sing the music he wrote himself. Following, is Shao Yangde's performance piece: Face the Wall, in which the 68-year old artist writes "cicada = cool"; in Chinese, cicada sounds the same as zen, and the two characters looks very similar. He writes the phrase on the blackboard in the classroom and then has someone burn his book Symbolic Suicide., During the whole process, Shao Yangde faces the wall and meditates, without uttering a word, until one of the participating artists Deng Aiguo comes and asks to purchase his work. Aiguo's work is to purchase the artworks from the artists of this exhibition. The third is Yue Luping's performance Hunting in the Classroom. He sets two down chickens among the audience in the classroom and lets them fly around, until, a while later, he captures and kills them. On the ground floor, Su Zhongqiu puts an animal's skeleton on the table and starts to make marinated meat in baked bun, traditional food in Xi'An, for the audience. Wang Jian borrows a gas oven. Su Zhongqiu starts his work Welcome to Xi'An, Enjoy the Feast of Fried Terra-Cotta Warriors in the classroom. With flour syrup, Wang Jian

wraps 30 small Terra-Cotta Warriors and fries them. Afterwards, he puts them on 16 plates and invites the audience to eat. Lu Gang removes his oil paintings and puts them on the school's dumpster for show, and then destroys them. The performance section in the exhibition lasts for almost 3 hours.

December 2001 – Jan 2002: He Yunchang, Han Bing and He An put on performance art works at the [*Knowledge is Power*] modern art exhibition in the Books Building Xi Dan, Beijing. It is organized by Feng Boyi and Hua Tianxue.

2001: Zhang Nian presents [*Planting*] on an abandoned construction site in the Wangjing area of Beijing. The artist, disguised as a peasant, erects model houses on the site. He then douses them with water and destroys them.

30 December 2001- Present: [*Buttocks-123*], Hei Yue hits his buttocks one hundred and twenty three times. This particular performance begins on the afternoon of 30 December 2001 in Kobe and has already been performed 99 times in Japan, the United States, Korea, and China. The performance would be repeated a total of one hundred and twenty three times.

2001: Ma Liuming presents [*Pay Attention to Me*] at the International Istanbul Biennial exhibition, Turkey. In the piece, Ma Liuming is sound asleep, surrounded by sixty other artists.

## Significant Events in China 2002

China plays in the 2002 World Cup. China makes their first ever football World Cup appearance in the competition hosted in Japan and Korea. China fails to achieve a point in the group stages and heads home after three games.

25 March 2002: The Shengzhou No 3 spacecraft is launched at the Jiuquan satellite launch center.

12 August 2002: Personalized car registration plates are allowed in Beijing, Tianjin, Hangzhou and Shenzhen. A driver uses USA-911 on his car registration plate and this, together with other events of similar nature, are said to have caused the end of the use of personalized car registration plates.

3 December 2002: Shanghai wins the competition to host the 2010 World Expo.

30 December 2002: The Shengzhou No 4 spacecraft is launched.

## Performance Art Events in China 2002

January 2002: Sheng Qi presents at the [Revisit Old Haunt], an event organized by Li Zhenhua and held in Jie Zi Yuan, Fei Village in Beijing.

2002-2005: Cang Xin [Identity Exchange-Series]. Artist Cang Xin execute “Identity Exchange” series between 2002 and 2005. In the process, he dresses in different uniforms – pretending to be a police officer, a chef, q city cleaner, a white collar worker, a hospital patient, a waiter and a doctor etc. – in order to feign their identities. Finally, he takes snapshots of the performance process.

### Artist Statement:

*The game of exchanging identities can represent an aspect of contemporary culture. It is also a self-questioning exercise in a changeable era. The questioning of identity reflects the possibility of the change in oneself: change to other states or life from the current image, profession, appearance and character. The questioning can be true or false - just like the products promoted in cosmetic and fashion advertising attempt to arouse desire and imagination. .<sup>19</sup> [ill. 93]*



Cang Xin  
[Identity Exchange-Series]  
2002-2005  
Beijing [ill. 93]



Cang Xin  
*[Identity Exchange-Series]*  
 2002-2005  
 Beijing [ill. 93]

January 2002: Song Yongxing, Zhang Qing, Huang Kui, Weng Fen, Huang Xuebin, Li Yingrong, Yu Xudong, Lu Shaoyi, Jin Feng, Huang Shaopeng, Zhou Shaobo and others present at [*Feeling the Spot*], an art show organized by Gu Zhenqing and held in Naning. All twenty participating artists are asked to respond to the same challenge: first to get a feel for the space then to devise an idea suited to that space and to implement the idea utilizing the resources available within the space. The artists are allowed to bring minor tools to aid the implementation.

February 2002: The Gao brothers present [*Invite Guests to Xiao Nian-Dinner with Homeless People*]. According to the Lunar Calendar, December 23 is Xiao Nian, a special Chinese festival. A photographer called Sun Jianhao, working for the Shandong TV Station, and the Gao brothers invite homeless people, scholars, writers, business entrepreneurs, artists, media workers, government and Party officials, peasant workers and passing strangers to have dinner with them. This is documented in a video recording.

February 2002: Lin Bing presents [*Tian Die Series-Land001*] on a block of wasteland by State Highway #109, about 14 km from the center of Lanzhou City. Lin Bin hires three workers from a construction site nearby and together they used many bags of Talcum powder to made three big circles with a diameter of 52 meters. Lin Bin's friends from Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou witness his performance.

February 2002: Ya Liang shows [*Culture Shoe Pad*] in Wen Hua Dong Lu, Spring City Square Jinan.

March 2002: Shu Yong presents [*Drawing of New Carrier*] at the Knitting and Cotton Commodity Fair in the High-Tech Exhibition Hall, Shenzhen. Dressed in a black tunic suit, the artist carries a large bottle of coke in his left hand and a hamburger in his right hand. Three dancers, with their faces painted with the makeup of the Peking Opera, follow him rigidly beating the traditional instrument used by monks when they pray. Shu Yong moves a series of 12 coke bottles around, filling them with red, yellow and blue paint and begins to consume hamburgers and coke desperately. Sitting in the center of the stage, the artist drinks the coke and eats the hamburgers voraciously. From time to time, coke runs down his face, hands and body. At one point, the artist stands up suddenly and throws the remains of the hamburger to the audience. The artist drinks from one of the coke bottles filled with paint and vomited the paint onto a naked model in front of him. Both the model's body and the artist's mouth and chin are covered in red.

March 2002: Wen Peng presents [*Man is So Insignificant*] in Changsha.

8 March 2002: [*Experiment of Performance Art by Guangzhou Art Life Group: Kill a Chicken*] is shown at the Guangdong Art Gallery.

March 2002: Yu Ji presents [*Wash Feet—One Hour at a Bookstore*] in a bookstore in Chengdu.

March 2002: Liu Chengying presents [*Beg 31 lots for Art*] in a bookstore in Chengdu.

March – April 2002: Liao Bangming, He Chengyao, Weng Fen and others present [*Limit of Body*] at a modern art exhibition organized by Huang Du and held in Fei Village, Beijing.

March – May 2002: Liu Chengying, Yu Ji, Song Yongxing, Chen Qiulin, Zeng Xun, Zhang Hua, Zhu Gang, Dai Guangyu and others present works at the “Chengdu Xin Rui Art Series Week Exhibition”, which organized by Chen Mo and held in a bookstore in Chengdu.

April 2002: More than 200 artists from all over China meet in the Guli Township in the Jiangning district of Nanjing to participate in “2002 Nanjing under the Sun in the Open Art Party”.

April 2002: Zeng Xun present [*Fierce water*] in a bookstore in Chengdu.

April 2002: Jin Feng and Ma Liuming participate in the [*Moscow Art Fair*], hosted by the Culture Department of Moscow Municipal Government in Moscow. It is the first time that Chinese experimental art is included in the fair. Exhibited works include Liuming's recorded performances and [*Vanish of My Figure*] by Jin Feng.

April 2002: Zhu Yu present [*Sacrifice*] in Beijing. Using artificial insemination techniques, Zhu Yu impregnates a woman. Four months after the pregnancy, the woman aborts the pregnancy in a hospital. Zhu Yi steals the aborted foetus from the hospital and places it on a large table, wrapped up in a white cloth on an open platform. At 2 p.m., Zhu Yu places both the aborted foetus and a dog bought from the market on the table. With a dinner knife, Zhu Yu cuts the foetus into small pieces and feeds it to the dog. The whole process lasts for nearly 20 minutes. The performance only ends when the dog is full. [ill. 94]

13 April 2002: Song Yongxin exhibits his work [*Book Facing the Mirror*] in which the artist tried very hard to walk forwards and write the poem Li Bai while attached to a giant elastic band.

20 April 2002: Zhang Hua presents his work [*Veneration and Fear*]. The author writes “Veneration and Fear” on the wall of the bookstore in honey and releases bees from nearby cages so that they would swarm onto the words.



Zhu Yu  
 [*Sacrifice*]  
 April 2002  
 Beijing [ill. 94]

27 April 2002: Zhu Gang's performance art work [*Reading - Hitting*] is performed in Chengdu. Tools include a 32-kilogram book with 360 wordless pages, 2 meter-long rulers, two Chinese characters "wen" and "hua" (which mean "Culture").

The words "wen hua", "Culture", are stuck on the two rulers. The artist sits on a chair with his back to the audience wearing a backless top and attentively reading the wordless book in his hands. The audience use the meter long rulers

inscribed with the words for "culture" randomly to beat the artist's back, until the artist finishes the wordless book in his hands. During the performance, due to the strength of beating, the words for "culture" become detached from the rulers. The reader's back also starts to bleed<sup>20</sup> [ill. 95] [Video 1.8]



Zhu Gang  
*[Reading - Hitting]*  
 27 April 2002

Trinity Bookstore, Chengdu [ill. 95]

4 May 2002: Chen Qiulin presents his work [*Fairs on the Net*]. The artist selects and downloads words from websites randomly and then prints the words onto cloth, forming a disordered maze.

11 May 2002: Dai Guangyu presents his work [*Eat and Word*]. Dressed in a tunic suit, the artist hangs upside-down in a bookstore and eats western style meals over a nine-week period.

May 2002: Li Zhe, Liu Sihai, He Li and others present works at [*Big Week of Xi'An No. 2: an Art Activity Far from the City*], which is organized by Wang Jian and Xiang Xishi and held in various locations, including Changshengfang Village, and the Dongyangwan village and Xing Guo Temples in Chang'An County.

May 2002: Li Xiuqin presents [*Wrapping*]. Along with a female professor from the China Art and Craft College and 3 postgraduate colleagues, the artist wraps himself and the others in a 3 metre-wide, 1000 metre-long blue silk ribbon on a small island in the middle of the river at the source of the Nanxi River in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province.

May 2002: Chen Qiulin present [*God of Luo – Water Sleeve No. 1*], which he performs on a tributary of the Ming River in the suburbs of Chengdu.

May 2002: Xiang Xishi, Liu Sihai, Yue Luping,

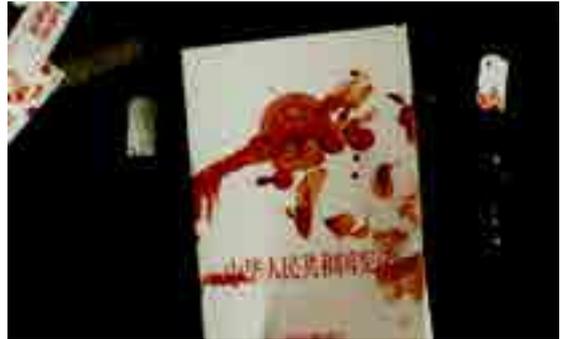
Shao Yanxin, Cui Yang, Li Zhe, He Li, Yu Tao, Fei Xiaosheng and Yuan Fenghui appear on a broadcast arts discussion panel at the “Japan NIFA International Performance Art Festival” organized by Xiang Xishi and held in Rui An Culture Promotion Company in the Yu Cai Building Xi'An City. Seiji Shimoda is the main speaker. Performance artists from Xi'An – Xiang Xishi, Liu Sihai, Yue Luping, Shao Yanxin, Cui Yang, Li Zhe, He Li, Yu Tao, Fei Xiaosheng and Yuan Fenghui share their works with Seiji Shimoda at the “No.4 Roast Meat” Shop at the North gate. The following day, performance artists from Xi'An perform their work in collaboration with Seiji Shimoda.

May 2002: The second “Big Week Performance Art Festival” was presented in Xi'An.

May – July 2002: Tang Song and Xiao Lu present [*Dialogue 2—We Are in New York*]. Tang Song makes a model of his body, which is then air-freighted to New York to have a dialogue with Xiao Lu.

15 May 2002: Yu Ji conducts [*Lips, Paper, Breathing*] at the Chengdu Academy of Painting, Sichuan province. Sitting in front of the table Yu Ji picks up some paper tissues and, after soaking them in a plate of water, he puts them one by one over his face. When he finds it difficult to breathe, he uses his tongue to pierce the tissue paper. When they are too thick to be pierced and he starts to suffocate, the performance comes to an end.

4 June 2002: Wang Chuyu conducts [*Reading (Constitution)*] in Beijing. Wang Chuyu cuts the index finger on his right hand and uses the wounded index finger to browse through the Constitution of People's Republic of China. All the pages read by the artist are covered with blood [ill. 96] [Video 1.7]



Wang Chuyu  
[*Reading (Constitution)*]  
4 June 2002  
Beijing [ill. 96]



June 2002: At the Yun Feng Drawing Gallery Beijing the modern art exhibition “Important Thing is Not to Play” is shown. It is organized by Zhang Wei and held at the Beijing Central Art and Craft College. Participating artists finish their works by playing like children for a very short period in an extremely loose and free manner. Stress is placed on the two-way relationship that exists with the audience.

June 2002: Immediately after the opening of “Kassel 11th Documenta Exhibition”, a group of Chinese artists including Zhang Qikai, Cai Qing and Shan Zeng, and European and Asian artists organize the “Red Star through Europe Tour”. Zhan Qikai, a Chinese artist living in Germany, leads the group of artists to march on the city square dressed in dark-grey army uniforms with red-star caps and holding the China Workers and Peasant Red Army flags printed with the words ART FOR THE PEOPLE in both Chinese and English. The march is accompanied by the sound of bugles, and the group distribute leaflets heralding “the new long march”. Then, the group of artists enter the exhibition; some artists march in lines while the others move around the hall to express their feelings using their bodies and actions. The following day, the group of artists climb a peak in Kassel and declare the closing of the “International New Long March—Red Star Cross Europe”. This also completed the first activity of a series of work to be performed.

June 2002: Cang Ying, Lin Bing, Tian Liusha, Ye

Niu, Ye Bing and other Mainland Chinese artists together with Chen Shisen from Hong Kong, Arai Shin-ichi, Teruyuki Tanaka and Fumiko Takahashi from Japan present the “Sino-Japanese Performance Art Artist Interchange Activity Guangzhou”, which is held in front of a shop called “Water Snake Village” in Guangzhou.

June 2002: The musician Xie Chengqiang and the artist Shu Yong collaborate to create environmental protection art works through performance art and music. After the event, the artists collect all the pictures and make a large work about environmental protection and donate it to the environmental protection art gallery.

June 2002: The well-known Japanese performance artist, Seiji Shimoda, together with Dai Guangyu and Yu Ji present a performance art exchange event in Chengdu. Works such as [*Human Vegetable No. 2*] by Dai Guangyu and [*Breath by licking paper*] by Yu Ji are shown.

June 2002: In the city of Xi’An, a group of artists present the performance art activity “Under the City Wall”.

1 July-1 September 2002: The “Long March Project” organized by Lu Jie and curated by Qiu Zhijie, is staged; 80 artists take part in the project. The project starts from Ruijin, Jiangxi Province and ends in Sichuan Province, along the Long March route.

Participants include Chen Shaoxiong, Ding Jie, Guang Yuda, Guo Fengyi, Fang Lijun, Feng Qianyu, Fu Liya, Fu Xinming, He Chi, Hong Hao, Huang Ru, Huang Ying, Jiang Jiwei, Jiang Jie, Jiang Zhi, Lao Jiang, Lei Yan, Li Dahong, Liu Jin, Liu Wei, Ma Jie, Ma Han, Ma Limei, Pan Xuan, Ren Qian, Qin Ga, Qiu Zhijie, Shi Qing, Song Dong, Song Yanping, Sui Jianguo, Sun Guojun, Sun Ping, Wang Chuyun, Wang Gongxin, Wang Jianwei, Wang Jin, Wang Jinsong, Wang Qiang, Wei Jun, Wu Ershan, Wu Weihe, Xu Bing, Xu Sa, Xu Zhen, Yang Fudong, Yang Mian, Yang Shaobin, Yang Zhenzhong, Yao Ruizhong, Ye Yongqing, Yu Congrong, Yue Minjun, Zhan Wang, Zhang Lun, Zhang Peili, Zhang Xiaogang, Zhang Zhongqi, Zhao Bandi, Zhou Xiaohu, Zhu Fadong and Zhu Qingsheng. During the project series, several performance artworks are carried out:

[*Memory of Memory*] by Li Fang, [*New English Calligraphy*] by Xu Bin, [*White Shirt Drawing Seminar-Blood Clothes*] by Ma Han, [*Water Asking*] by Fu Liya, [*Planting Marijuana*] by Lei Yan and Sun Guojun, [*Panweinizhi*] by Pan Xuan, [*Going Home Performance*] by Wu Weihe,

[*The Goddess Mountain*] by Su Ruya, [*The World will be More Beautiful*] by Su Yabi, [*Tea with Judy Chicago and Mosuo People*] by Zhang Lun, [*Bookshelf in Move*] by Ma Han, [*Constitution*] by Wang Chuyun, [*Urgent Notice*] by Zhu Fadong, [*The Long March Ceremony*] by Guang Yuda, [*Warmly Celebrate*] by Wang Chuyun, [*The New*

*Meteorite Project*] by Zhan Wang, [*Thought Must be Liberated*] by Liu Chengying, [*The Flood*] by Shi Qing, [*Sending off the Red Army: in Commemoration of the Mothers on the Long March*] by Jiang Jie, [*Left/Right*] by Qiu Zhijie, [*Interspace*] by Wang Jianwei, [*Untitled*] by Yin Xiuzhen, [*Long March Camera*], [*Along the Art on a Long March*] and [*Walking Space*] by Song Dong, [*Signature*] by Qiu Zhengzhong, [*The Long March Propaganda Team*] by Xiao Lu Shenmeng, [*Miniature Long March*] by Qin Ga and [*Who is the Third Party*] by Qu Guanci.

June - September 2002: Qin Ga present [*Long March: A Display of Walking Sense of Sight*] which is organized by Lu Jie and Qiu Zhijie. A team of artists go on a long march, Qin Ga replicates the long march by tattooing the route onto his back creating the performance art work [*Mini Long March*].

July 2002: He Yunchang presents [*Beyond Tian Shan Mountain*]. The artist lights the fuse of a home-made explosive filled with 1.25 kilograms of dynamite in a rural area of Xinjiang, he then runs behind a cement mound on top of which are stuck 5000 pieces of Xuan paper. The mound of cement and paper protect him from the explosion.

14 July 2002: He Chengyao presents [*99 Needles*] at the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine. In the yard of BUCM a doctor conduct acupuncture and moxibustion on He Chengyao. From head to foot, approximately 110 needles pierce her body. The piece lasts 50 minutes.<sup>21</sup> [ill. 97] [Video 1.6]

He Chengyao  
[*99 Needles*]  
14 July 2002  
Beijing University of Chinese  
Medicine [ill. 97]



30 August 2002: Yu Ji, Zhang Hua, Zhou Bin, Yin Xiaofeng, Dai Guangyu, Liu Chengying, Zhu Gang and others present works the “Water-Life Performance Art Exhibition”, organized by Wang Lin and hosted by Chongqing Jin Can Culture Development Company Ltd. held in the Coral Park on the banks of the Yangtze River.

September 2002: In “Performance and Writing – Zhang Qiang/Wu Wei Art Exhibition”, Zhang Qiang present photos and performance videos, which include [*Shadow of Heaven Robe – Report of Track by Zhang Qiang A/B94 Model*]. After the opening ceremony, Zhang Qiang conducts his writing performance [*Zhang Qiang Track Report A/C6 Model*]. Wu Wei shows three video works including [*Change of Pen—Series No.2 of Secret*].

September 2002: Bai Ding, Han Tao, Ya Liang and others present at the “Wrong Position and Change—Jinan performance Art Night”, organized by the Gao brothers and held at the 1+1 Leopard Bar at the South End of Lishan Road in Jinan.

September 2002: He Yunchang presents [*Beat a Drum across the Flowers*]. The artist completes the work in Busan, South Korea together with 100 people.

September 2002: He Yunchang presents [*Safe Jie Long*]. The artist physically carries a member of the audience up onto the stage; the member of the audience carries him back to the auditorium; the

whole process is repeated

September 2002: Dai Guangyu participates in the “Seventh Asian International Performance Art Festival” in Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, Kyoto and Nagano.

September 14-16 2002: “The Third Open International Performance Art Festival” is held in Xi’An Ban Po Museum and The Big underground Funk Hole at the Eight and a Half Bar in Xi’An. It is curated by Chen Jin, Shu Yang and Xiang Xishi; Ai Weiwei lends Academic support to the festival

October 2002: The artists Chen Qiulin and Dai Guangyu attend [*Harvest*], the China Modern Art Show in China Agriculture Exhibition Hall, which is organized by Gao Minglu.

October 2002: The Luo brothers, the Gao brothers, Li Wei and others present at [*Hallucination*], an art event held in Fanshan Middle School in Donghai County, Jiangsu. The Luo brothers present their piece [*Sleeping in Flowers after Drunk*] and the Gao brothers present [*Embracing*].

October 2002: Li Wei, Liu Min, Yin Feng, Huang Yifan, Yan Xiao and others present [*Sudden Occurrence 10.28*]. Financed by the Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts, students volunteer to organize an art show that is held in an abandoned warehouse on the college grounds.

28 October 2002: Lin Chun conducts [*Playing Water Chess*] on a beach on the East coast of Xiamen, Fujian province. A chessboard and a table are set on the beach facing the Jinmen Straits separating Mainland China and Taiwan. The artist then invites a female Taiwanese student to play chess; as the tide changes, the seawater level rises and washes the chessboard and table away.

November 2002: Zhang Zhongqi, Sun Guojuan, Fu Liya and others present at [*Experience: Working Display of 21 Artists*], organized by Ye Yongqing, Mao Xuhui and Zhang Zhongqi held in Shang He Warehouse, Kunming.

November 2002: Zhu Yu and others present [*Mushroom Cloud, or Utopia*] at a modern art exhibition held at The Bund Art Gallery in Shanghai. Twenty-four artists participate, showing performance art works such as [*Offering Sacrifice – Feed the Dog with His Own Child*], [*YOU DIED*], [*Imaging of Standing, Walking or Escape*], [*Puzzle with Hair*], [*Leisure Life on an Ocean Ship*] and [*Cough – Cough*].

6 November 2002: Shu Yong presents [*China, The Form of Forces*]. The artist performs the piece before an audience of several hundred people at the Guangdong Real Estate Culture and Art Festival in Hong Cheng Square, Guangzhou. It starts at 9 a.m. on November 6th. More than 2,000 young pioneers, together with volunteers and teams from various companies gather

together in 1506 Creative City. They select the Nanfeng Kiln as the site for the performance (where blocks of clay have been made available). At 4 p.m., hosted by famous artist Shu Yong, more than 3,500 participants press with their utmost force on the clay blocks. The pressure later cause the clay to spontaneously takes on various shapes, which are signed by those who exerted the pressure. The participants take photos of themselves with the clay in front of a white background. Dozens of photographers and cinematographers record every participant. The entire scene is a part of the large-scale interactive landscape art work, China, the Form of Forces. This is only the start. Later a long term creation spot is set at one side of Nanfeng Kiln so that anyone can participate for free. Then all the clay bearing the participants' fingerprints and force are fired in the Nanfeng Kiln. Finally Shu Yong assembles these clays into a 30-metre high totem pole.

18 November 2002: Organized by Wu Hong, Wang Hengsheng, Huang Zhuan and Feng Boyi, “Guangzhou Triennial Modern Art Exhibition – Re-explain: China Experimental Art Year 1990 – 2000” is held at the Guangdong Art and Craft Gallery in Guangzhou. Wang Jianwei debuts his performance art piece [*Watching*] and Gu Wenda shows the piece [*Wedding Life No.5*].

18 November 2002: Gu Wenda present [*Wedding Life No.5*] at the opening of “Guangzhou Triennial” at Guangzhou Museum of Art. It is

the first performance art work ever conducted at an official exhibition in China. 20 couples in wedding attire are driven slowly down the lamp-lit street in white limousines. The brides (wearing white gowns) and grooms (in black tuxedos) wait together with spectators standing by the side of a pavement for the official start of the ceremony as well as of the performance. A long white limousine taking the leading groom (Gu Wenda) and bride (Eleonora Battiston) appears. Gu Wenda and Eleonora Battiston step out of the limousine and walk down the street to meet the master of ceremony, Wang Huangsheng, the director of the Guangdong Museum of Art. As the master of ceremony finishes reading the wedding vows, the red carpet leading to the wedding altar is removed to reveal a long Chinese paper scroll (26m × 3m). Gu Wenda and Eleonora Battiston then began to write their personal statements starting at the opposite ends of the paper.

At one end, Gu Wenda writes in Chinese:

“Gu Wenda was born in Shanghai, lives in New York, loves Eleonora Battiston, an Italian living in Beijing.”

At the other end, Eleonora Battiston writes in English:

“Eleonora Battiston was born in Bologna, lives in Beijing, loves Gu Wenda, a Chinese living in New York.”

Their declarations are completed when the couple meet in the center of the scroll. The wedding couple then repeat their statements

simultaneously in different languages where their nationalities and life experiences are symbolically transformed and united.<sup>22</sup>

December 2002: “Art Dialect” Performance Art Event is held in Xi’an

December 2002 – January 2003: Liu Xun, Ma Yongfeng, Hu Chijun and others present at “Post Experiment-Fusion: The second Changsha Modern Art Show” organized by Liu Xun, Wen Peng and Zeng Zhaoman. The artists invite 24 contemporary artists from Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Hunan to work with local artists Liu Xun, Ma Yongfeng, Hu Chijun and others. On the commercial street South Huangxing Road in Changsha, Hunan, more than 30 pieces of modern art are shown. Works shown include various forms of installation, performance art, video, digital photography and drawings.

2002: Li Wei present [*Li Wei Dropped into the Earth*] and [*Pull Me Out*] in Beijing.

## Significant Events in China 2003

January 2003: Gao Yaojie is elected woman of the year for her humanitarian work by the [*Sanlian Life Weekly*] publication. A powerful figure within the AIDS campaign, she worked determinedly to improve understanding and government policy on AIDS.

Gao Yaojie also single-handedly wrote, edited and printed her own magazine [*Knowledge of Preventing AIDS*], publishing a full 16 editions, totaling 610,000 printed units, a figure which greatly exceeded official health-department pamphlets and any kind of informative publication on AIDS in the Henan Province. Since 2001, China's AIDS death-toll has risen sharply with deaths in 2002 rising by 42% compared to 2001.

April 2003: The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic spreads worldwide rapidly.

September 2003: US Treasury Minister John Snow visits Beijing. Snow's so-called [*exchange rate trip*] came at a time of extremely fierce discussions on the value of the RMB. Premier Wen Jiabao talks of the mutual benefit of keeping the value of the RMB at a "reasonable and balanced level". The managing director of China International Monetary Company, Xu Xiaonian publicly ridicules the US by saying

"when his own house is not swept clean, the best excuse is to blame the neighbors for throwing rubbish".

At exactly 09:00 on 15 October 2003: Shengzhou No 5 spacecraft is launched successfully carrying the PRC's first astronaut into space. The astronaut, Yang Liwei, becomes a star overnight.

1 November 2003: The annual meeting of the Asian Boao Forum is held in Boao, Hainan Province.

## Performance Art Events in China 2003

January 2003: Chen Qiulin, Yin Feng, Huang Yifan, Li Pengfei, Liu Min, Song Wei, Zou Yongmei, Chen Yang and others present at "Experience in the Old District", a modern art exhibition organized by Chen Mo and hosted by the Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts and coordinated by the Culture Bureau of Yilong County, Sichuan. It is held in the Zhu De Memorial Garden in Yilong County. It is the first performance art show held at this important politician's memorial site.

March 2003: Chinese artists Cang Xin, Chen Jin, Feng Weidong, Gu Kaijun, Huang Rui, Wang Chuyu, Wang Mai, Zhu Fadong together with Arai Shin-ichi and other Japanese artists present

“Transborder Language: Poem/Performance Art Scene”. The event is organized by Huang Rui and Shu Yang and held in the Tokyo Art Projects Gallery in the 798 art factory. Performance artists from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea participate.

27 March 2003: Huang Rui conduct [*Newly Brewed Chinese History*] at the Beijing Tokyo Art Projects, Beijing. Huang Rui places two copies of the book titled “General Chinese History” into two vats and pours 240 bottles of local Chinese spirit (name Er Guo Tou, usually made from sorghum wheat) before the vats are sealed with lids for 5 years. The artist plan is to lift the lids during a performance to take place in 2008.

March 2003: Zhang Yiguo, Fei Xiaosheng, Gao Mo present [*Anti-war is not to Follow in Blind*], [*Female and War*] and [*Disaster*] in an event organized by Fei Xiaosheng and held in City Park in Xi’An. Through the performance, the works express the artists’ protests against war, and their love for peace.

28 March 2003: The day the war in Iraq begins, Zhou Bin performs at Tianfu Square, Chengdu. The piece is called [*N Pieces Bubbles of Lies*]. The artist is forced to stop by the police and is taken to a police station for investigation.

April 2003: Shen Shaomin, Xing Junqin, Cang Xin, Zhang Hao and Liu Zhuoquan present at “Violence’ Death and Fashion Space”, organized

by Liu Zhuoquan and Shen Shaomin and hosted by Zhu Qi. This Performance art and installation focused exhibition is held in the exhibition hall of Criminal Evidence of 731 Unit of the Japanese Invading Army in Shenyang during the SARS outbreak.

April 2003: The live art show “Knowing the White and Keep the Black” is held at the stadium in Chengdu City. It is organized by Dai Guangyu. Participating artists include Yu Ji, Zhu Gang, Zhang Hua, Song Yongxing, Liu Chengying, Chen Qiulin, Yin Xiaofeng, Zhou Bin, Yan Cheng and Dai Guangyu.

May 2003: Shi Xinning, Zhang Nian, Qu Yan, He Chengyao, Chen Lingyang, Lv Shengzhong and others present [*No Defense against Blue Sky*] at an event organized by Xu Yong, Huang Rui, Feng Boyi and Shu Yang and conducted in a field south of Beijing Yi Zhuang Economic and Technology Development Zone. It is the biggest art activity to take place during the SARS outbreak. More than 60 artists take part, expressing their thoughts and reflections concerning the sudden outbreak through more than 50 works including installations, performances, photography and music.

A selection of these works are later exhibited at the Beijing Tokyo Art Projects Gallery in 798 Art District during the 1 to 14 of June.

10 - 11 May 2003 (Saturday): The “Sino Japanese Performance Art Exchange Exhibition” is held in the Pan Hu Palace of Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts, organized by Wang Lin and hosted by Zha Changping and Chen Mo. This exhibition is also shown in Xi’An and Chongqing.

June 2003: “Health Dialect” Performance Art Event is held in Xi’An

2 July 2003: Yan Cheng organizes the “135M X 135M Modern Art Exhibition” in the Sichuan Art Gallery. Using the Three Gorges Project as a backdrop, this exhibition is named after the water levels planned by the project.

July 2003: The “Rural Plan Lan Tian Wang Chuan” Performance Art Event is held in Xi’An.

15 July 2003: Zhang Nian conducts [*Far Away (From Me)*] in Beijing. The work expresses the artist feelings about the phenomenon of a large population of workers coming from the rural areas. The workers had to leave their stable rural home and move to the cities where there is no social security and no jobs that are suitable for them. Zhang Nian places his picture on a kite, which he flies high in the sky. The picture represents the artist’s soul and the separation of the soul from the artist body and the land, delivering the meaning of the work.

24 July 2003: Li Wei conduct his work [*29 Levels*

*of Freedom*] at the one of the Jian Wai SOHO buildings. The artist ties and hangs himself in a flying posture outside a window on the 29th floor.

#### Artist Statement:

*This has been planned for a long time - the freedom that the sky offers and feeling of spirituality that exists on the top of this building located in the crevices of the city. I have been searching for a proper performance venue and, with assistance from my friends, I have secured a performance venue at Jian Wai SOHO.*

*Beijing's success in the bidding to host the Olympic Games has spurred rapid development in the city. The planning and construction of the central business district (CBD) has transformed the area into one of the most commercial places in Beijing. Jian Wai SOHO is located at heart of the CBD.*

*The rigid lifestyle of modern people creates enormous pressure. Many people have to work mentally and physically in just a few square meters of space every day. The diversification of life can only exist as an illusion and can only be fulfilled, experienced and felt through imagination. In this regard, we are living in an invisible crisis masked by prosperity. The crisis is caused by the behaviour resulting from the suppression of human nature.*

*Human nature is perceptual. We cannot calibrate our sentiments by numbers. However, it seems that we are building our life around numbers such as the square meters of space, life expectancies, standards of behaviour, output and expenditure, etc in order to achieve a false satisfaction. This false satisfaction is produced*

*by the pressure of being controlled, passive obedience and inertia-that is the false reality. [ill. 98]*



Li Wei  
[29 Levels of Freedom]  
24 July 2003  
Beijing [ill. 98]

August 2003: Ni Jun present [*Then and Now*], one of the artist's installations about time and performance, it is held in the Bi Yi Art Center in Shanghai.

August 2003: The "Xi'An·Nanjing·Native City" Performance Art Event take place in Xi'An.

25 August 2003: Huang Kui conduct a performance work [*Capture*] at an exhibition in Shenghua Arts Center, Nanjing. When the exhibition starts, the artist holds a kitchen knife that is covered with fishing line and walks among the audience. As the artist walks, the fishing line becomes loose and he quickly gets his body tangled with the fishing line that has unwound from the kitchen knife. The artist then uses the kitchen knife to free himself from the fishing line.

4-7 September 2003: "The Fourth Open International Performance Art Festival" is held in Chang Chun. It is curated by Huang Yan and Zhao Shulin. With the academic support from Wu Huang. The event had participating artists such as: Chen Jin, Chen Tan, Chen Xiaoge, Zu Cao, Fei Xiaosheng, Huang Junhui, Lin Bing, Ma Shang, Ma Yunfeng, Sun Dajiu, Zhang Ding, Zhang Zhaoyu, Chen Shisen (Hong Kong) Ko Siulan (Hong Kong), Arai Shin-ichi (Japan) and Biro Jozsef (Hungary).

21-24 September 2003: As the first Live Art Festival in Asia, "The DaDao Live Art Festival"

is an annual performance art event initiated by Shu Yang after he left the Open International Performance Art Festival. "The First DaDao Live Art Festival" is held at the Now Design Club and the Tokyo Art Projects Gallery in 798 Art District. The festival is curated by Wang Chuyu, Francesca Jordan, Chen Shisen, Xiang Xishi and is supported by Canada Council for the Arts.

Artists from China and Overseas, including Chen Mu, Chen Qingqing, Chen Shisen, Cheng Guang, Dai Guangyu, Feng Weidong, Gao Feng, Han Bing, He Chengyao, Huang Rui, Biro Jozsef, Eric Letourneau, Li Wake, Lin Bing, Liu Jin, Qiao Shengxu, Sun Yuan & Peng Yu, Shu Yang, Tang Cheng, Wang Chuyu & Han Bing, Wang Zi, Wu Yuren & Karen Patterson, Xiang Xishi, Yang Qing, Yang Zhichao, Yu Ji, Zhang Ding, Zhang Yiwang, Zhang Yuecun and Zhu Yanguang.

Videos of the performance made by Cheng Guang, Chen Mu, Gao Feng, the Gao Brothers, He Chengyao, Wang Hong, Wang Zi, Ya Liang, Yang Qing, Yang Zhichao, Zhu Ming, Zhu Yu are also shown during the festival.

September 2003: Yang Zhichao conducts *[Ba]* at the “First DaDao Live Art Festival” in Beijing. The performer is smoking and a woman (the artist’s co-performer Chen Xingchen) is peeling an apple at a long table. After a five-minute silence, the woman stabs the performer in his left shoulder three times making the performer bleed. The process lasts 6 minutes.<sup>23</sup> [ill. 99] [Video 1.4]

First DaDao Live Art Festival  
Yang Zhichao  
*[Ba]*  
September 2003  
Beijing Tokyo Art Projects, Beijing [ill. 99]



23 September 2003: Liu Jin conducts [*Blur in the Red Scarf*] at the “First DaDao Live Art Festival” in Beijing. Liu Jin wearing a red scarf standing on the table half naked. The artist puts some books, flowers and a basin of Chinese ink on the other table. When Liu Jin mixes the Chinese ink with Coca-Cola, some members of the audience around the artist throw the books stained with Coca-Cola ink mixture at him. The whole process lasts about twenty minutes.<sup>24</sup> [ill. 100] [Video 1.9]



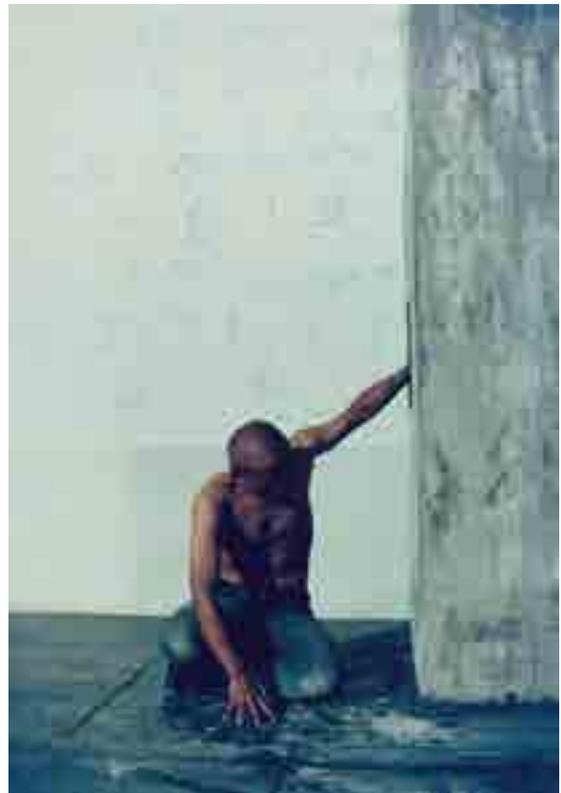
First DaDao Live Art Festival  
Liu Jin  
[*Blur In The Red Scarf*]  
23 September 2003  
798 Art District, Beijing [ill. 100]

September 2003: Xing Xin, Chang Qi and others present the “Making of Material Pictures Exhibition”. Organized by Chen Mo and hosted by the Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts, the exhibition is held in the Chengdu Drawings Gallery.

September 2003: Yu Ji participate in “The Tenth Nippon International Performance Art Festival”. He is involved in discussions and exchanges in the experimental theatres and at universities in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya Kyoto and Nagano.

September 2003: Wang Lin organizes and hosts the “Listen to Stories of Man by Woman Concept Art Exhibition” discussion held in the Chongqing Long Hu Club. The discussion is a response to “Listen to Stories of Man by Woman” Concept Art Exhibition held 6 years prior. Photographic documentation of the event is compiled and printed as an album to be exhibited.

24-25 October 2003: He Yunchang presents [*Appointment Grasping the Column*] in Lijiang, Yunnan province. The artist casts his hands into a cement column for 24 hours. The performance is inspired by a novel by the Chinese intellectual Zhuangzi. In the novel, a boy named Wei arranges to meet a girl under a bridge. At the agreed time, amidst heavy storms, Wei makes his way to the meeting place. As the river surges and flood comes, the boy grasps on to a one of the bridge’s support columns. The girl never arrives and the boy dies.<sup>25</sup> [ill. 101]



He Yunchang  
[*Appointment Grasping the Column*]  
24-25 October 2003  
Lijiang Yunnan [ill. 101]

October – November 2003: Dai Guangyu and Yu Ji attend the “Asia—Mid Europe International Performance Art Exhibition”, in Slovakia, Hungary and Poland.

November 2003: Xing Xin, Wu Wuhua, Hao Lei, Yan Min, Li Pengfei, He Liping and others present at the “The First ‘Peasant Street’ Modern Art Annual Exhibition” organized by Chen Mo and hosted by the Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts. The exhibition is conducted in an old abandoned warehouse on Peasant Street.

November 2003: Song Dong presents [*Together with Peasant Workers*], organized by Yang Xinyi and hosted by the UN Education, Science and Culture Organization, and the China Social Science Academy as part of the United Nation’s program against poverty. Song Dong presents his work at the “We Together Modern Art Exhibition” held at Beijing Today’s Art Gallery.

November 2003: He Yunchang conducts [*Eyesight Test*] in Beijing. The artist stares at a 10,000 watt light for 60 minutes, resulting in a weakening of his eyesight.<sup>26</sup> [ill. 102]

December 2003: Sun Yuan and Peng Yu presents [*Struggle for Supremacy*]. This is a three-way boxing match, in which three different weight classes participate: 80, 75 and 70 Kg. The three participants can attack their opponent freely to earn points but can only deliver punches to the front of the body. If one participant falls to the

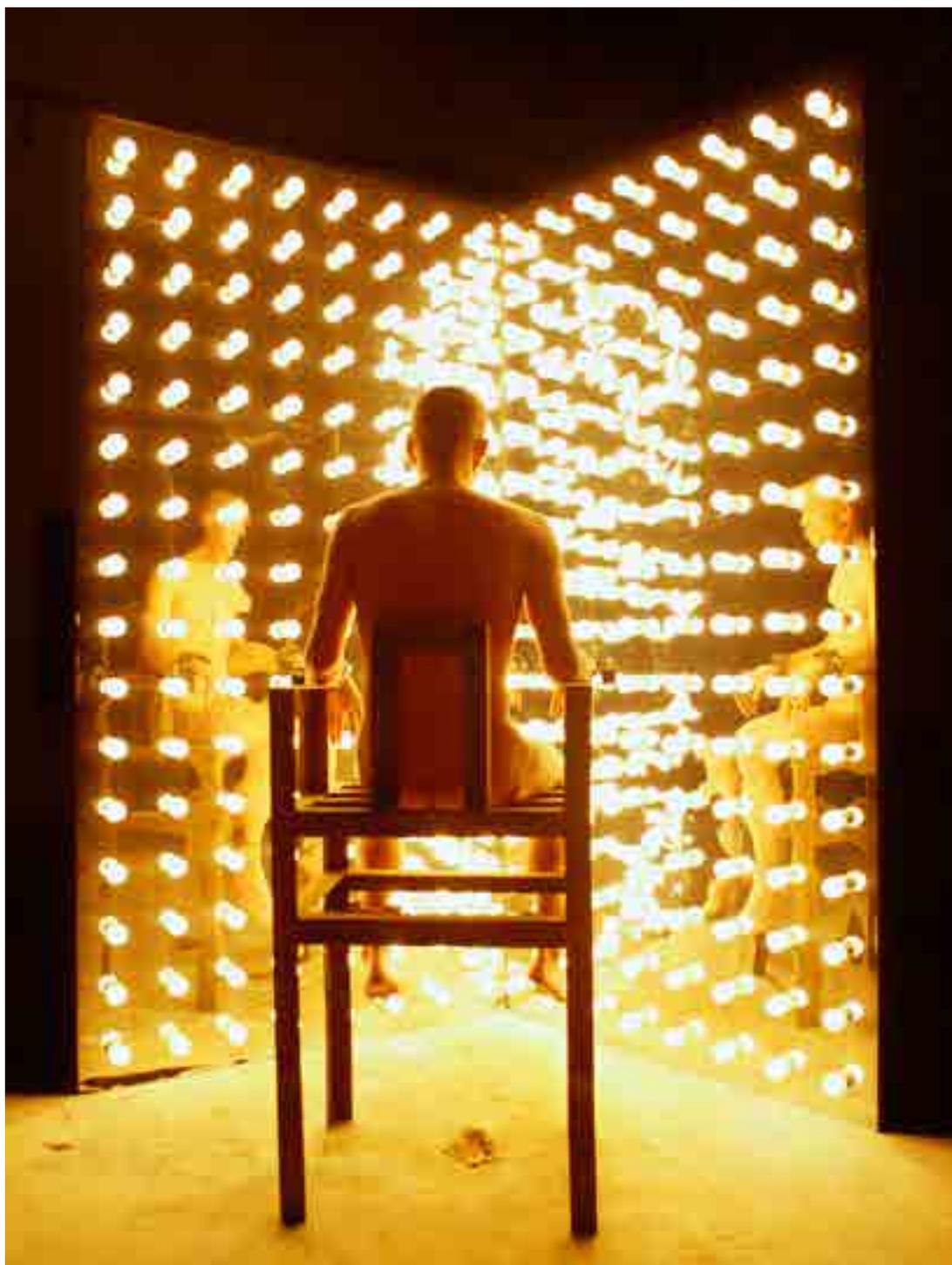
ground he must retreat to the corner while the second and third fighters continue the fight; the fighter who has fallen can re-enter the fight only upon the referee’s command. The final prize is won by Bai from Liaoning province. Haibin of 75kg class

December 2003: Yu Ji gives a speech on [*Performance Art by Yu Ji*] at the Turku Art and Craft College in Finland.

28 December 2003: Yu Xudong conducts a performance work [*Neutral Zone (1)*] in Hong Kong. The artist drags a fish out of water and uses different methods, for example spraying water with a water gun to keep the fish alive. The “rescue” work is first done in a theatre but is moved to outdoor shortly after the artist finds ways to keep the fish alive. The artist takes the “surviving” fish with him for a walk around the Victoria harbour (the fish is kept alive by the artist).

Artist’s statement:

*As for me “A neutral zone is a state that everyone can experience - people struggle to live, just like the fish I was trying to hold, people struggles in such a state and have the desire to expand their space. My home town Hong Kong is a place with more than its fair share of history, which generates its unique political environment and culture. Such uniqueness is a neutral state.”*



He Yunchang  
*[Eyesight Test]*  
November 2003  
Beijing [ill. 102]

## Significant Events in China 2004

27 August 2004: Chinese track and field athlete Liu Xiang wins gold in the 110 meter hurdles race with a record breaking time of 12.91 seconds at the Athens Olympic Games. Xiang's performance sets a new Olympic record and equals the World-record held by Welshman Colin Jackson. It is China's first Olympic gold medal in a men's track and field event.

September 2004: The construction of the CCTV new building, designed by Dutch architect Koolhaas from Holland, beg quietly amidst criticism that China is being turned into an experiment ground for foreign designers. The project becomes one of the most controversial foreign-design projects in Chinese construction history.

8 September 2004: China's first scientific research station in the North Pole began operation is established.

5 December 2004: China becomes the first country to research and develop a vaccine for the SARS virus.

## Performance Art Events in China 2004

January 2004: Chen Yufei and Jekaterina (German artist) present [*A Bag of Rice Poured in China but no Body Cares*]. The work is presented simultaneously in Berlin and Beijing (23:00 to 23:30 Jan 30 Berlin local time and 16:00 to 16:30 Jan 30 Beijing local time respectively). The Berlin performance takes place in a theatre (as one of the presenting items of 2004 "Berlin Performance Art Exhibition and Theatre Performance Art Festival") while the Beijing performance takes place on a boat in Yinhe River, Hefei city in China. The performance is a durational work involving the Chinese and Berlin participants of the work witnessing a bag of rice being poured in China and Germany.

2004: Chen Guang conducts [*Race*] in Beijing. In this work, the artist uses an 80-year-old male as a symbol and then attempts to have sex with the old man. The two conditions that the artist sets for the participant are: 1. must be an elder; 2. must be highly educated.<sup>27</sup> [ill. 103]



Chen Guang  
[Race]  
2004  
Beijing [ill. 103]

1 January 2004: Co-sponsored by the Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts and Lan Ding Art Centre, “In Chengdu 2004 Modern Art Exhibition” is held in “Lan Ding”.

February 2004: Chen Qiulin presents [*Bean Curd on February. 24*]. Chen Qiulin performs this piece in the Lan Ding Art Centre in Chengdu. A hundred large Chinese characters spelling one hundred family names made of bean curd are cut up and placed into a large cooking pot by the audience.

February 2004: Yin Feng’s [*Jiu Gong Ge*] is performed on Peasant Street in Shuang Liu, Chengdu. The artist is naked and fully wrapped in fishing nets, his flesh protruded from the holes in the netting, the audience wrote freely on his body.

26 March 2004: Li Wei performs his farewell to Peasant Street [*Walk at Night*] in the new building of the Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts.

March 2004: The performance art event [*Step into the Township of Drawings*] takes place in Hu Xian County, Xi’An.

24-25 April 2004: He Yunchang’s performance work [*Casting*] is a block of concrete and steel 1.4 metres by 1.8 metres by 3 metres high, with an inner space of 0.8 metres by 1.2 metres by 2.5 metres high. He Yunchang is inserted into the narrow space.

It is also called [*Ar Chang's Persistence*], organized by Tang Xin and executed in Beijing Tokyo Art Project. The performance lasts for 24 hours from 5:30 p.m. 24 April to 5:30 p.m. 25 April.<sup>28</sup> [ill.104]



He Yunchang  
[*Casting*]  
24-25 April 2004  
Beijing [ill. 104]



He Yunchang  
[Casting]  
24-25 April 2004  
Beijing [ill. 104]

April 2004: Yang Zhichao, He Yunchang, Wang Chuyu, Chen Jin and others present at the “The First Beijing Da Shan Zi International Art Festival” with Huang Rui as the general organizer and co-curated by Berenice Angrmy (France), Thomas J. Berghuis (Australia), Yan Jun, Feng Boyi, Shu Yang and Dai Guangyu et al. It takes place in the Beijing Da Shan Zi Art Zone. Thirty art works are shown in various venues including Time Space 798, Ren Ju Club, Propagating Centre of 25,000 Li Long March Culture and Beijing Tokyo Art Projects Gallery. Around 40 different artists open their studios during this period. Nine large-scale exhibitions including photography, drawings and multimedia shows are presented, including [*Language Cross the Limit 2004—Volume Adjustment*]. Four films are presented, as well as three performances by the Wu Wenguang/We Hui working studio and dance and multimedia performances by English artists. More than 100 artists take part in the exhibition, including forty foreign artists.

May 2004: Lai Sheng, Yang Xiaogang and Yuan Xin present [*So It Was Them and It Is Them*]. Organized by Feng Boyi and Liu Chunfeng and performed in the Propagating Centre of 25,000 miles Long March in Beijing. The artists imitate the 2004 China Modern Art Golden Cup Award Ceremony to express a humorous view of Chinese modern art.

May 2004: Yu Ji and Zhou Bin participate in the “Taiwan Asian Performance Art Exchange

Exhibition” in South Taiwan, East Taiwan, Kaohsiung and Taipei. Their participation represents a cultural exchange between Taiwanese and Mainland artists.

13-17 July 2004: “The Second DaDao Live Art Festival” is held at the SOHO business complex opposite the China World Trade Centre in Beijing. Curated by Shu Yang, participating artists included Wang Chuyu, Xiang Xishi, Francesca Jordan (UK), Arahmaiani (Indonesia), Arai Shin-ichi, Kuroda Osamu, Seiji Shimoda, Takahashi Fumiko (Japan), Phil Babot, Cai Yuan & JJ Xi, Matt Cook Leslie Hill & Helen Paris, Andre Stitt, Michael Mayhew, Simon Mitchell, Hayley Newman & Aaron Willamson (UK), He Changyao, Huang Yan, Li Mengyuan, Liu Shihai, Liu Xiangjie, Peng Jiuyi, Shu Yang, Wang Chuyu, Xiang Xishi, Yang Qing, Yang Zhichao, Zhang Yuecun (China), Ko Siulan (Hong Kong), Luca Francesconi (Italy) and Lee Wen (Singapore). The festival is co-sponsored by the Live Art Development Agency in London, UK; the Arts Network Asia in Singapore and the Wales Arts International. As part of the festival, Thomas J. Berghuis and Wu Hong organize a one-day symposium named [*From Practice to Model*] which is held on 15 July at the Now club in the 798 Art District.<sup>29</sup> [Video 3]

July 2004: Wang Chuyu conduct [*Taste of the World—Jin Shanri*] at the “Second DaDao Live Art Festival in Beijing”. The artist writes “I don’t Want to Leave” repeatedly on the cement

ground with his fingers until the words is written in blood. The context of this work is given by Jin Shanri, a Korean man stationed in Iraq, working for a trading company. Jin Shanri was captured and beheaded on June 22, 2004. People all over the world witnessed Jin Shari's screams at the moment of his death. He said: "I don't want to die; I don't want to leave the world". [ill. 105]

Second DaDao Live Art Festival  
Wang Chuyu  
[*Taste of the World—Jin Shanri*]  
July 2004  
SOHO ,Beijing [ill. 105]



August 29-30 2004: “The Fifth Open International Performance Art Festival” is held at the Tai Hu Art Space in the Tongzhou District of Beijing. A discussion workshop is held at IT coffee in the 798 Art District of Beijing. Curated by Chen Jin, participating artists included Chen Jin, Feng Weidong, He Changyao, Huang Rui, Li Mengyuan, Xiang Xishi, Yeh Tzuchi (Taiwan), Ko Siulan (Hong Kong), Mimi Nakajima (Japan), Arai Shin-ichi (Japan), Jill Mcdermid (USA), Exis Bellavance (Canada), Patric Lacasse (Canada), Sylvain Breton (Canada) and Yoyo Yogasmana (Indonesia).

September 2004: Wang Chuyu’s [2004 Version: *Road and Tomb*] is presented at the “Fourth Open International Performance Art Festival” in Beijing. During the process the artist constructs a graves for and buries the latest 2004 version of “Constitution of People’s Republic of China” with his bare hands. [ill. 106]



Fourth Open International Performance Art Festival  
Wang Chuyu  
[2004 Version: *Road and Tomb*]  
September 2004  
Beijing [ill. 106]



Fourth Open International Performance Art Festival  
Wang Chuyu  
[2004 Version: *Road and Tomb*]  
September 2004  
Beijing [ill. 106]

September 2004: Hao Lei, He Jianzhong, He Liping, Hu Geping and Wu Xianying present at the “Mid-Autumn Events Performance Art Exhibition” organized by Hao Lei and Guo Zhongzheng and hosted by Chen Mo. It is held at the junction of Peasant Street in Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts.

October 2004: Zhe Ya present [*Communicate*]. Zhe Ya posts information on the internet to look for participants from all over the world. Once he gets replies he posts a postcard with the Chinese character “Etiquette” to each participant and requires the participant to write down the meaning of “Etiquette” in their own understanding, Zhe Ya adds the collected words together with the names of the participants and makes an installation 1000 metres long and 5 metres high. To date, thousands of participants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, Guangzhou, Sichun, Beijing, Shanghai, An Hui, Jiang Xi, Zhe Jiang, Jiang Su, Shang Dong participate in this Performance work. The installation is shown at the Beijing Exhibition Hall as a large-scale performance art work.

18 October 2004: Shen Ye conduct [*Torpidity*] in Xiamen, Fujian province. The artist constructs a mahjong table. The table contains three layers, around which four chained up people play mahjong. The players can eat on the upper layer, play mahjong in the middle layer, and have a foot massage at the lower layer. The work is infused with simple happiness.

October 2004: Yang Li, Li Yawei, Gour zi, Zhang Wanxin, Shu, Su Fei shu, Sun Tie, Guo Guo, Wu Meng and others present [*@Car*]. Originally conceived by Chen Haitao and Sun Ning and organized by Huang Yan, Zhao Shulin, Su Feishu, Yun Hao, Xiao He and Tian Jianping, it is a large-scale performance art work hosted by the Beijing East Art District. It is held between 1 and 7 in October.

October 2004: The Gao brothers and others present [*Carnival*]. The artists organize a carnival, which includes street exhibitions at the SOHO building areas in Beijing. The carnival attracts over 10,000 people and many performance artists show their work at the event, including a 10,000-person-embrace, which is a powerful experience for those present.

October 2004: Shu Yong present [*Cast a Wall with Copper and Iron*], the first public performance art film. The artist photographs more than 100 face-mask wearing citizens in Guangzhou Bing Feng Fashion Square. The face-masks allow the participants to experience the terror and the feeling of separation caused by the SARS outbreak.

October 2004: Yu Ji conducts [*Face and Flour*] in Kao-Hsiung, Taiwan. Yuji looks at a bag of flour on the desk silently and smells it slowly and gently; then he uses his hands to touch the bag of flour and rubs it against his face. He suddenly starts to bite and tear the flour bag,

which tears causing the flour to spill out. He falls into the spilt flour and his face is covered with flour until he almost suffocates. He lays his head on the flour again and repeats this several times. His head and face covered with flour, he recites a short poem. All the flour in his mouth spews out forming a white fog in the air and he lays his head again on the flour. When it suffocates him and he cannot keep himself from struggling, the performance ends.

3 November 2004: Luo Zidan performs [*Computer is Amazing*] (a reluctant performance art in international computer festival) on stage at the “4th Chengdu International Computer Festival” held on Science and Technology Street.

10 November 2004: Huang Kui present the performance work [*Changeable*] as part of the “Yin Yang Tool” exhibition held at the Shanghai Art Sea Studio and Gallery.

24 December 2004: The “Those Close to Ink Get stained Black; Performance Art Exhibition” is held at the Modern Art Hall of Shenzhen Sculpture Gallery. Organized by Wu Wei and Du Singong, the show includes works by Wu Wei, Lin Bing, Deng Ronbin, Tian Liusha, Du Yinghong, Mo Junfeng, Ye Niu and Cang Ying.

## Significant Events in China 2005

January 2005: China’s population reaches 1.3 billion. In the early morning of 6 January a baby weighing 7 kilos is born, symbolizing the birth of the 1.3 billionth citizens in China.

January 2005: The press reveals the latest conclusions drawn up by the State Statistic Bureau on the “Middle Classes”: those with incomes between RMB 60,000 and 500,000 per year are defined middle class families.

14 March 2005: The [*Law against Splitting the Country*] is passed by the 3rd Session of the People’s Congress with a unanimous vote of 2896 in favor and 0 against with just 2 abstentions.

26 August 2005: The final of round of the singing contest “Super Girl” is held in Changsha. The program, produced by the Hunan Satellite TV Channel, receives unprecedented attention nationwide and is called a ‘national carnival of entertainment’.

12 October 2005: The Shengzhou No 6 manned mission is successfully completed.

## Performance Art Events in China 2005

January 2005: Tang Limi, Xu Dian, Zheng Yong, Yang Qihong, Chen Shiyou, Qi Ying, Gao Na and Chen Xi present at the “1+ Up Exhibition”, organized by Li Yan, Gao Na and Chen Xi and held in the Fei Xuan Square, Xiaozhai, in the Goose Pagoda District of Xi’An.

February 2005: Hao Lei, Li Yang and Xu Dian present at the “Walk into Ice-River Exhibition”, organized by Hao Lei and shown on the bank of the canal that ran adjacent to the Zhengzhou Art Gallery at Cherry Street in the West Development Zone.

February 2005: Hei Yue (Ji Shengli) present [*Buttock-123*] in Yang Shaobin’s studios. To the sound of firecrackers, the artist pats himself continuously on the behind while standing on snowy ground in bare feet.

March - April 2005: Zhu Liye present [*Left Earlobe*]’s video at the “Showing Your Weakness Exhibition” in Beijing. The artist’s left earlobe is excised in a surgical procedure and then decomposed into single cells by using Pancreatinum in the laboratory.

### Artist Statement:

*This is a kind of alternative view, to inflict*

*injury on the body in an analytical way. The attitude, soberness and ambiguousness and the indefinable metaphor of culture, which are coherent in the work all of the time, especially in the case of the decomposition and the geometric indentation of the left earlobe. That is the ultimate purpose of this work.*<sup>30</sup>

April 2005: Xiang Xishi, Chen Xi, Lu Xiangjie, Qi Ying, Yang Bing, Gao Mo, Li Zhe, Gao Na, Gao Ya, Huo Chao, Fan Hongyuan, Hou Lei, Ng Fongzhao (Macao, China), Seiji Shimoda (Japan) and Sima An (USA) present at the “Play Chess-Games”, a live art event organized by Li Yan, conducted on the ground floor of #28, South Xianning Road, Xi’An City.

April 2005: Zhen Yong, Hao Lei, Fu Yu, Hu Geping, Wu Wuhua, Xu Dian, Liu Wei, Li Yang, Hu Xing, Chang Yidan, Tang Limi, He Liping, Jia Qianlan, Wang Ting, Jin Qiwei, Chen Si and Liu Xuan present at “Continuous Guess”, a weekly performance art exhibition held at the Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts. The exhibition is curated by Wang Ting and He Liping. Chen Mo, Zhao Shuli and Zhang Yingchuan are invited to the exhibition as critics. The artists show 1 or 2 pieces of individual or collective work every Wednesday, the exhibition lasts for 10 – 15 weeks.

April 2005: Forty-one young art students (both men and women), mainly from the Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts, present at [*@41*] organized by Wang Ting and He Liping and held in a field east of the Mu Ma Shan golf course in the South Suburbs of Chengdu. Forty-one male and female students from Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts of Sichuan Music College used their naked bodies to form the shape of the “@” sign and fall down in domino style.<sup>31</sup> [ill. 107] [Video 1.10]



41 Students  
[*@41*]  
April 2005  
Chengdu [ill. 107]

18-22 May 2005: “The Third DaDao Live Art Festival” is held at Tai Hu Art Space, Tongzhou District in Beijing. Curated by Wang Chuyu, Shu Yang, Xiang Xishi and Chen Mo, the Third DaDao Live Art Festival attracts 38 performance artists from the UK, USA, Japan, Finland, Thailand and PRC. The PRC performance artists are mostly undergraduates from the Chengdu Academy of Fine Art and Xi’An Art Academy in PRC.

In addition to the live art performances, a live discussion forum is organized by a number of members from the British Art Research Associations, which included the Live Art Development Agency (London), the Chinese Art Centre (Manchester), the Blue Coat Art Centre (Liverpool) and the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art (Gateshead).<sup>32</sup> [Video 3]

May – June 2005: Qin Ga presents [Mini Long March]. The artist begins a long march from Luding alone, climbing the snow-capped mountains, crossing the grassy planes and eventually arriving in Yan’An. Upon completing each leg of the journey, he tattoos a map of the route on his back.

June 2005: Qing Shengming, Chen Bo, Huang Youqin, Miao Peng, Chen Wen, Li Bin, Gao Na, Gao Ya, Qi Yongying, Li Yan and Chen Xi present at the “Egg Red Performance Art Exhibition”, organized by Qing Shengming and shown in several spaces throughout Xi’An.

19 June 2005: Artists from the Egg Red Group conduct [*Pupils Which Need Dilation*] at the Zhouggulou Square in Xi’an, Shaanxi province. In another piece of work [*Pupils of Eyes to Be Dilated*], the artists first paint their bodies before they start engaging in dialogues which then evolve into arguments between themselves. The noises made by the artists irritate some members of the audience. The irritation increases as the artists start provoking the audience. The work demonstrates how performance art interacts with the city and the extent to which performance art can become popular and interactive.

July 2005: Luo Zidan presents [*Only You in My Eyes*], organized by Yang Zhiyuan and shown in the Shun Xin Old Tea House on the 3rd floor of the Chengdu International Convention Centre.

July - October 2005: Artists Chen Qiulin and Dai Guangyu attend the Modern Art Exhibition “Wall: 20 Year’s History Re-structure of Modern Art in China”, which is organized by the well-known critic and curator, Gao Minglu. The exhibition opens at the Art Gallery of China Millennium Monument in July and is subsequently held in the Albright Knox Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Buffalo Branch College of New York University and the Anderson Art Gallery of Buffalo University in October.

August 2005: Yu Ji takes part in organizing the “Establish Relations—China Modern Performance Art Exhibition” at the Taipei Art Gallery and Kaohsiung Art Gallery, in Taiwan. Yu Ji and Dai Guangyu and others hold discussions in the small Dou Pi art theatre of Kaohsiung, as well as presenting live performances in collaboration with Taiwanese artists. Wang Lin also gives lectures in Tai Bei and Kaohsiung.

September 2005: Qiu Zhijie, Liu Ding, Zhang Hui, Shi Qing, Wu Ershan, Wang Wei, Yu Ji and others present “On the Spot of 24 Hour Exhibition”. The Beijing-based independent artists cooperative known as Unified Spot, present [24 Hours] in Beijing Film Studio’s photography studios.

21-22 September 2005: Qiu Zhijie conducts [607 Now] at the No.2 Movie studio in the Beijing Film Company. Qiu Zhijie writes the word “Now” in the air with an electric torch and the movements are captured by a camera that is directly connect with an overhead projector. This set-up allows the word “Now” to be formed by long exposure. A total number of 607 “Nows” are written within 24 hours. Each of the “Nows” have different forms due to changes in the writing and the surroundings. Some of the “Nows” disappear as the new “Nows” are formed.

28 - 29 September 2005: Qiu Zhijie present [Slowly Approaching] at the Yokohama Triennial Exhibition Gallery and China Town, Yokohama, Japan. A traditional Southern Chinese lion and a specially-made camouflaged lion are taken out from the exhibition hall of the Yokohama Triennial, passed through the garden and city center and arrive at China Town. On the following day, the lions are returned from China Town to the exhibition.

#### **Artist’s statement:**

*“The characteristics of camouflage lie in the similarity of visual quality that an object shares with its environment. The similarity on the surface enables an object to hide in its environment and become a stalker. How we should blend in with the place, get along with other cultures, and simultaneously maintain our cultural recognition? These are some of the problems encountered by people living in “China Towns” all over the world. The notion of “China Town” traditionally provides a symbolic stage for Chinese culture. Economic activities in China Towns are also surrounded by a kind of descriptive symbolism. The lion dance is a kind of live symbol; the sound of revelry heard in festivals has repeatedly reinforced its recognition and, at the same time, been appreciated by us all. Camouflage is a military symbol, which can interfere with harmony. The camouflage lion dance in the China Town of Yokohama provoked*

*conversation on 'China Threat Theory' and the complicated Sino-Japanese relations."*

September 2005: Zhou Bin, Wang Ting, Jin Feng, Hou Lei, Xing Xin, Nai Han and Seiji Shimoda (Japan) present at the "MIPAF Macao International Live Performance Art Festival". Sponsored by Po Zai Wu Art Space and organized by Noah, the event is hosted by Chen Mo and takes place in the Niu Fang Warehouse Macao and lasts for two days. Using the title [*Visual Art Works by Performance Art Concept Creations*], the artists creates an exhibition with artists from South Korea, Japan, Portugal, Slovakia, the Philippines and from within China – Chengdu, Wuhan, Xi'an, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Macao, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The event includes performance art, installations, videos and photographs.

September 2005: Zhou Bin attends "The Eighth Nippon International Performance Art Festival" in Japan, Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Nagano.

5-7 September 2005: "The Sixth Open International Performance Art Festival" is held at the Tianyi Chu of Chengdu, Sichuan Province. Curated by Chen Jin and Chen Mo, participating artists include Chen Jin, Chen Qiulin, Dong Xun, He Liping, Hu Xing, Jia Qianlan, Liu Chengyin, Liu Xiangjie, Po Shui, Shao Yanxin, Song Yi, Wang Ting, Xingxin, Yu Ji, Zhou Bin, Voila (Hong Kong), Yuenjie (Hong Kong), Mari Novotny Jones (USA), Milan Kohout (USA),

Martin Renteria (Mexico), Johanne Chagnon (Canada), Paul Gregorie (Canada) and Arai Shin-ichi (Japan).<sup>33</sup>[Video 2]

October 2005: Luo Zidan, Yu Ji, Zhou Bin, Xing Xin, Jia Qianlan, Pang Rui, Ren Qian, Li Yong, Li Chuan and others present the "Right of Body Art Exhibition". On October 24, Wang Lin and Chen Mo organize the performance art section of the exhibition at the Blue Space Drawing Gallery in Chengdu.

November 2005: Yu Ji, Dai Guangyu and Chen Qiulin attend "View the Body with Body—Exhibition of Documents of China performance Art" at the Macao Art Museum.

17 November 2005 - Present: [*Hiding in the City-Sou Jia Cun*] by Liu Bolin in Beijing. Liu Bolin starts creating [*Hiding in the City*] series in 2005. To date, he has created approximately 100 works in countries including China, Italy, France and Britain. The idea for the series derives from the government's compulsory demolition of Suo Jia Cun International Art Camp's on 16 November 2005, as a result of which the artists lost their home. As a victim of the incident, Liu Bolin has been producing this series to protest against the government's demolition of the artists' studios. During the process, Liu Bolin wears a green outfit and stands on designated spots, such as supermarkets, construction sites, or theatres. His assistant helps him paint his body until it gradually becomes the same as the background.

The process takes 3 to 5 hours.

*undermined the public*<sup>34</sup> [ill. 108]

### **News report broadcast:**

In 2003, a company builds the Suo Jia Cun International Art Camp on a plot of land leased from the government. It starts to lease space to artists from March 2004 and due to its low rents, many artists are attracted and move into the Suo Jia Cun International Art Camp.

As the lease is only approved on the basis that the land be used to grow grass, the sub leasing arrangements the company had with the artists are considered as illegal and the company subsequently receives a “Notice of Demolition” on 11 May 2005. The “Notice of Demolition” issued by the Beijing Chaoyang District Court demands that the company evict the tenants and tear down the illegal constructions.

On 15 October 2005, the bailiffs and the Police demolish the artists’ studios at the Suojiacun International Art Camp.

### **The artist's statement:**

*By obliterating my body, I want to reveal what reality is like inside China during various historical periods. I want to examine the difficulties in artists' struggle for survival, as well as to point out people's insignificance in the midst of social development, and how the government has*



Liu Bolin

[*Hiding in the City-Suo Jia Cun*]

17 November 2005

Suo Jia Cun, Beijing [ill. 108]

4 December 2005: The “Grave Guard Modern Art Exhibition” is held at the Tomb of the Second Emperor of Qin Dynasty, Xi’An. Organized by Qing Shengming, Yao Yiqing and Fan Wenkai, participating artist include Dong Jun, Du Zhi, Shao Yanxin, Xiang Xishi, Yang Bing, the Egg Red Performance Group (Qing Shengming + Miao Peng), He Zhihua, Liu Xiangjie, Li Xu; Yao Yiqing, Lu Ping and Zhang Wei.

Liu Chengrui  
[*Walking Barefoot*]  
24 December 2005  
Xi'ning China [ill. 109]

24 December 2005: Liu Chengrui conduct [*Walking Barefoot*]. The artist walks barefoot all around the Xi'Ning city with his body covered in mud. The artist’s feet are torn but he insists on completing his work.<sup>35</sup> [ill. 109] [Video 1.11]



## Significant Events in China 2006

2006: China completes the Three Gorges Dam project, unveiling the largest electricity generating plant in the world. Capable of producing 22,500 MW of energy, the project is regarded as a major engineering, social and economic success of the government. It is argued that it will play a leading role at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Aside from the benefits of the power station, the area gained China 6,000 square kilometers of forest and significantly controlled the danger of flooding from the seasonal flooding of the Yangtze River in the area, which had been a major problem.. Around 1.24 million citizens are relocated.

9 February 2006: China begins a research and production project for large airliners.

27 December 2006: Antiquated agricultural tax laws are abolished after a discussion in the People's Congress. Peasants finally say good-bye to imperial-era taxes.

## Performance Art Events in China 2006

2006: Wang Peng perform [*Passing through Beijing*]. The artist hides a roll of thread inside his clothes. One end of the thread goes through the

back of his clothes and is tied to a building in the city. The artist then walks freely through the streets of Beijing trailing the thread behind him.

2006 to 2009: Qin Jin conduct [*Twenty-Nine Years, Eight Months, Nine Days*] in Guangzhou. This work consists of a randomly arranged combination of items of clothing. The clothes are everyday clothes previously worn, some of which have been worn by the artist herself. In order to make the work function as a whole, and for it to express the artist's idea, the clothes have to be a pale color, such as white and they must be made of silk, which is flexible and durable under the stresses of ironing. To create this work the clothes are ironed on every surface until they burn and turn brown like roasted meat. All the clothes are ironed until the colors become distorted and hard to distinguish. The clothes are ruined but treasured; useless but cherished. As a common household activity, ironing is carried by an ordinary person; it smoothes wrinkles, deforms shapes and burns clothes into ashes.

2006 - 2008: Zeng Xun presents [*Special Focus*] in Chengdu. The artist mounts a frame with no pictures in it and brings it along everywhere placing objects he sees into the frame transferring the object from its original context to a new environment. Approximately 100 photos are taken this way.

25 March 2006: The “Huihong Modern Art Exhibition” is planned to be held from 25 March 2006 to 20 April 2006 at the Beijing New Art Projects in the 798 Art District, Beijing. The exhibition is curated by the Gao brothers, featuring artists such as Wang Wenhai, Li Luming, Zhang Dali, Liu Ligu, Gao Qiang, Ning Fangqian, Wu Wenjian, Shen Jindong, Zhang Jianhua, Wang Guofeng, Liu Bolin, Qiu Hongfeng and Han Tao.

A week after the opening of the exhibition, the Beijing Public Security Bureau and the Chaoyang District Department of Cultural Administration show up at the exhibition and inspect the works. Several artworks are demolished and exhibition venue is closed down by the Beijing Public Security Bureau and the Management office of the 798 Art District. Several days before the opening, the Gao brothers receive a phone call from the police station asking for information about the Huihong Modern Art Exhibition. The exhibition opens as planned. However, four days after the opening of exhibition, men sent by police station, ministry of culture and fire department arrive at the exhibition hall and interrogate the Gao brothers. During the interrogation, the police say that the exhibition will be shut down because the artist Wu Wenjian, who served 7 years’ in prison for participating in the Tian’anmen Square Protests of 1989, is exhibiting 5 expressionist pieces of painting in memory of the June Fourth Incident. Moreover, several other artists’ works involve

sensitive political issues, including the Gao brothers’ creation of chairman Mao’s statue. The police order the Gao brothers to remove half of the works immediately. Two days after removal, Beijing Public Security Bureau and the Management office of the 798 Art District come and shut down the exhibition. After that the Gao brothers shut down the exhibition space and never hold another exhibition. They use the space as their studio and do not open it to the public.

March 2006: Liu Bolin conducts [*Hiding in the City-Policeman*] in Beijing. Liu Bolin, wearing a green outfit, and sits at a designated location where a collaborator in a Chinese Police uniform uses his hand to cover the artist’s eyes. The artist’s assistant then helps the artist paint his body with a view to blend the artist’s body into the background. The process takes 3 to 5 hours.

[*Hiding in the City-Policeman*] is inspired by the forced closure of the “Huihong Modern Art Exhibition”, at which Liu Bolin was one of the participating artists.

“Huihong Modern Art Exhibition” is planned to be held from 25 March 2006 to 20 April 2006 at the Beijing New Art Projects in the 798 Art District, Beijing. The exhibition is curated by the Gao brothers, featuring artists such as Wang Wenhai, Li Luming, Zhang Dali, Liu Ligu, Gao Qiang, Ning Fangqian, Wu Wenjian, Shen Jindong, Zhang Jianhua, Wang Guofeng, Liu Bolin, Qiu Hongfeng and Han Tao.

A week after the opening of the exhibition, the Beijing Public Security Bureau and the Chaoyang District Department of Cultural Administration show up at the exhibition and inspect the works. As a consequence of the inspection, several artworks are demolished and exhibition venue is closed down by the Beijing Public Security Bureau and the Management office of the 798 Art District. [ill. 110]

Liu Bolin  
[*Hiding in the City- Policeman*]  
March 2006  
Beijing [ill. 110]



1 April 2006: The artist Zhou Bin presents his performance art piece [*100 bright points at #27 Ze Xiang Zi*] in Zhai Xiang Zi, Chengdu.

30 April- 3 May 2006: “Dashanzi International Art Festival”: “Transborder Language 2006” Body/Environment is the theme of “Dashanzi International Art Festival” in 2006.

The festival is held from 30 April 2006 to 3 May 2006 in the 798 Art District. 10 live performances are held during the festival curated by Shu Yang. There are also workshops conducted by Kou Siulan, Daniel Aschwanden and Peter Stamer.

The theme “Transborder Language” undergoes several changes in form over its four years’ existence. It features clear communication and ongoing exchanges between artists and the audience, along with workshops and seminars, which give the viewing public access to a more in-depth understanding of the meaning of performance art than that achieved by simply watching.

Details of the 10 live performances curated by Shuyang are set out below:

#### **#1 [*Liquor Sword*]**

Huang Rui

Among the reverberation of radio broadcasting in the air, Huang Rui fold a one hundred American dollar bill into a sword and stab it into flames of burning erguotou, a strong Chinese liqueur.

#### **#2 [*Chairman Mao Is the Red Sun in Our Heart*]**

Kou Siulan

The artist collects views and ideas on Chairman Mao Zedong from the audience

#### **#3 [*Spirit-Emotion*] In Liquor·Intelligence: Hei Yue**

Hei Yue plays the guqin, a Chinese music instrument, while crushing broken glass in a transparent bowl full of mixture of his blood and erguotou (a strong Chinese liquor).

#### **#4 [*Happy Hour*]**

Cai Yuan and Xi Jianjun

After being banned from the Tate Gallery for jumping on Tracy Emin’s installation “My Bed”, Cai Yuan and Xi Jianjun set up their own bed (the bed is named Happy Hour) and invite the audience to jump on the bed until it breaks.

#### **#5 [*Frog Fun Lum*]**

Kwok Mangho (Frog King)

As the artist’s concept of performance art is to make every minute of daily life an act of performance art, Kwok Mangho’s work is a happening event.

#### **#6 [*Human Copybook·Copybook Man*]**

Lin Bing

The artist wears paper with Chinese calligraphy on his body and invites the audience to pour drinks onto the calligraphies until the paper disintegrates.

### **#7 [You]**

Voila

Before the work commences, the artist sleeps on a patch of grass until her skin is marked with the imprint of the grass. The work involves audience watching the imprint disappears.

### **#8 [Dao De Jing for Sale]**

Bai Chongmin and Wu Weihe

Bai Zongmin and Wu Weihe sell home-made baked bricks imprinted with Chinese words “Dao De Jing” (“Dao De Jing” is the title of a Chinese ancient book setting out the rules for ethics).

### **#9 [Body Ink Painting]**

Xi Fu

Xi Fu uses his body as a paint brush to paint red and black color on a canvas.

### **#10 [The Great Tang]**

Dou Bu, Finni, Guo Wei, Jia Yuming, Liu Ning, Ma Yanling, Shi Mingzhong, Shu Yan, Song Chen, Wan Xiang, Yuan Hongbin and Zhao Xiaochu

The Great Tang group consists of 10 performers from diverse backgrounds (artists, curators, designers, cameramen, dancers, students, web designers, along with over ten performers and musicians from the Beijing Youth Shaanxi Opera Academy). The group performs a work involving the different group members show-casing their talents and inviting audience to interact with the artists.

The Great Tang group consisted of 10 performers with diverse background (artists, curators, designers, cameramen, dancers, students, web designers, along with over ten performers and musicians from the Beijing Youth Shaanxi Opera April 2006: Luo Zidan performs his performance art piece [*Escape and Confirmation*] in “Chengdu Civil Park” under the Ren Nan Fly-over in Chengdu.

May 2006: Dai Guangyu attends [*Vital Live Art Festival in Chinese Art Centre*] in Manchester, England.

1 -10 May 2006: Ye Fu conducts [*A Nest in the Metropolis No.2: The Chimney Plan*] at an abandoned chimney in the 798 Art District, Beijing

Initially, Ye Fu planned the work as a 10 day experiment where the artist lives on the top of an abandoned chimney in the 798 Art District. However, the initial performance plan is reject due to safety reasons. The artist then modifies the performance plan by tying a huge balloon bearing the words ‘Ye Fu’s Performance Project’ to the top of the chimney. The artist uses the staircase at the side of the chimney to climb up to the top. He places the balloon and other items to signify his presence at the top of the chimney. Three days after the commencement of the performance, the balloon disappears. [ill. 111]



Ye Fu

[*A Nest in the Metropolis No.2: The Chimney Plan*]

1 -10 May 2006

798 Art District, Beijing [ill. 111]

May 2006 - Present: Liu Chengrui (Guazi) presents [*Decade*] in Qinghai. The work is inspired by the artist's teaching experience in Gangcha County, Qinghai Province. The artist worked as a volunteer teacher in 2005 and 2006. The work involves the artist attaching 182 strings of hair (collect from the head of each of the 182 participating primary school students) to 182 photographs taken with the 182 students. In each photograph, both the artist and the student

hold a balloon. Each photograph is preserved along with a hair. On the reverse side of each photograph is a signed agreement for the two to see each other again in ten years, and at ten-year intervals thereafter, to pose for a photograph and collect a strand of hair from each of the students who remain willing to participate in the performance. [ill. 112]



Liu Chengrui (Guazi)  
 [*Decade*]  
 2006  
 Gangcha County, Qinghai [ill. 112]



Liu Chengrui (Guazi)

[Decade]

2006

Gangcha County, Qinghai [ill. 112]

15 May 2006: Organized by Shang Xiaofeng and hosted by Chen Mo, the “Free 515 Modern Art Exhibition” is held in Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts. A variety of sculptures, installations and photographs are shown.

20 May 2006: The “Experiment Space: Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts, Painting Exhibition of Wang Chengyun’s Experiment Painting Studio”, is held in Nanjing Museum. Some of the works prove controversial, provoking media frenzy.

21 – 23 May 2006: Xiao Lu conducts [*Sperm*] in Yan’an during the “Long March Project-Yan’an,” The performance plan involves Xiao Lu inviting male participants to deposit

their sperm samples in the jars provided. The sperm would then be stored in a CM-M model temperature control machine; sperms is kept at 4° C, and then gradually frozen to -20° C and finally -80° C. This freezing process naturally eliminates sperm of poor quality and kills all possible bacteria. In order to prevent AIDS, sperm must be stored for six months before use; after the sperm collection process, Xiao Lu would undergo artificial insemination during her fertile period on a monthly basis using the sperms collected. The above performance plan did not work because no male participant donated his sperm.<sup>36</sup> [ill. 113] [Video 1]



“Long March Project-Yan’an,”

Xiao Lu

[*Sperm*]

21 – 23 May 2006

Kangda Hotel, Yan’an, China [ill. 113]

6-17 September 2006: “The Seventh Open International Performance Art Festival” is held at the Must Be Contemporary Art Centre in the 798 Art District. Curated by Cheng Jin and Huang, participating artists include Yan Chenjin, Chen Siyou, Han Bing, He Ling, Huang Yan, Li Liao, Liu Xiangjie, Wen Peng, Xing Xin, Zhou Bin, Ng Fongchao (Macau), Arai Shinichi (Japan), Jean Torregrosa (France), Philippe Castellin (France), Besnik Haxhillari (Canada), Paivi Maunu (Finland) and Jane Jin Kaisen (Denmark).

16 September 2006: On the day of the signing of the International Protection of Ozonosphere and Kyoto Protocols, artist Chen Jianjun presents [*Guard for the Air*], the first work in his performance art work series [*Post*] No.1 at a furniture factory in the Cuqiao area of Chengdu. Chen Jianjun selects locations where he would stand and guard the subject matter i.e. Air, Earth,

Forest, and Water of his work. The artist wears same costume: green bathing trunks, military footwear and white gloves, throughout his performance series.

By its second day, the event attracts important press (e.g., Chengdu Commerce) attention.

**Artist’s statement:**

*In the place where I live – where the Chengdu Cuqiao furniture factory is located and an art zone – I can feel a city's confusion and chaos. What do they mean to us: suburbs, urban-rural-mixed area, factories, urbanization, or pollution?*

*I follow my intuition, repeating rituals and authentically expressing the ideals and the reality.<sup>37</sup> [ill. 114]*



Chen Jianjun  
[*Guard for the Air*]  
16 September 2006  
Chengdu [ill. 114]

1-5 October 2006: “The Fourth DaDao Live Art Festival” is held at the South Gate Space, the Process Gallery and at Creek Art (Beijing) in the 798 Art District, in Beijing. Curated by Shu Yang, Wang Chuyu and Pui Yin Tong, about 30 artists from Argentina, Australia, Catalonia, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Hong Kong, Japan, Macao, Philippines, Singapore, Switzerland, Taiwan, UK, USA as well as twenty Chinese artists and art-groups participate in the festival. The artists present their live performance works to public and participate in discussion panels. The artists also deliver art workshops for young Chinese artists and art students. It is the first live art festival held in a theatre space without the express permission of the Ministry of Culture, and there is no police interference throughout the festival’s for 4 days. The festival is co-sponsored by Royal Netherlands Embassy, Beijing, Arts

Council of England, Pro HelvetiIFA-Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e. V, The Prince Claus Fund, Australia Council for the Arts, Danish Arts Council, Art council of the city of Munich, New World Disorder, Pukaw Art and Live Art UK.<sup>38</sup> [Video 3]

28 October 2006: Chen Jianjun performs [*Guard for Land*], the second work in his performance art work series [Post] No.2 in San Dao Yan, Pixian County, Chengdu. Chen Jianjun selects locations where he would stand and guard the subject matter i.e. Air, Earth, Forest, and Water of his work. The artist wears the same costume: green bathing trunks, military footwear and white gloves throughout his performance series. [ill. 115]



Chen Jianjun  
[*Guard for Land*]  
28 October 2006  
San Dao Yan, Pi Xian, Chengdu [ill. 115]

November 2006: Yu Ji, Qiu Zhijie and Zhang Hui present [Black and White Zoo] at a three-person live-art event. It is shown in the Zhong Hua Shan art zone, Taipei, Taiwan. During the event, the artists give lectures at the Taipei National Art College on multimedia and live art with the Taiwanese critic and artist, Yao Ruizhong. The artists also exchange ideas with teachers and students at the Taipei Art College; the artists are also interviewed by the Chief editor and editors of *Collection- Art Today*.

## Significant Events in China 2007

2007: The number of Chinese internet users exceeds 210 million. There is a huge cultural shift throughout the decade connected to the expansion of the Internet. The 210 million internet users make China the largest online community in the world. This great online expansion had a dramatic impact on both society and culture.

24 October 2007: China successfully launches the Chang Er No.1 satellite into space using an A type Chang Zheng No.3 carrier missile at the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre.

## Performance Art Events in China 2007

January 2007: “Vital Live Art Festival” is held at the Organhaus Art Space in Chongqing. The festival is co-organized with the Chinese Arts Centre in Manchester following the visit by the CEO of the Chinese Arts Centre, Sarah Champion to Chongqing in July 2006. Zhou Bin, Xing Xin, Jia Qianlan, Qian Ren, Lang Hao, Zhou Yumei, Gu Xi and Po Shui participate.

27 January 2007: at the “Vital Live Art Festival” Xing Xin conducts [*A Man Whose Wet Underwear Is Being Air-Dried*] with a female collaborator, Jia Qianlan, on a cold day (outdoor temperature of around 5°C). The performance is set to take place in an old neighborhood. Artist Xing Xin takes off his jacket and invites Jia Qianlan to pour cold water over him. After then, Xing Xin climbed up a ladder and holds on to a bamboo stick. Jia Qianlan then stands on a chair, reaches out to Xing Xin and hugs his leg. The performance ends when Jia Qianlan fails to keep hold of Xing Xin’s leg after the chair is taken away.<sup>39</sup> [ill. 116]

4 February 2007: Zhou Bin presents [*Light Scar*] at a famous demolition site on Zhaixiangzi Old Street. The artist uses a broken mirror to reflect sunlight and interact with the audience, addressing in this way the social problems associated with the demolition and construction of cities.



Vital Live Art Festival

Xing Xin

[A Man Whose Wet Underwears Are Being Air-Dried]

27 January 2007

Chongqing [ill. 116]

16 April 2007: Chen Jianjun present his performance art series *[Post]* No.3: *[Guard for Forest]* on Zhaogong Mountain Dujiangyan. Chen Jianjun selects locations. 4 locations are chosen, forming the *[Post Series]*. At the locations, he stands and guard the subject matter i.e. Air, Earth, Forest, and Water of his work. The artist wears the same costume: green bathing trunks, military footwear and white gloves, throughout his performance series. [ill. 117]

Chen Jianjun  
*[Guard for Forest]*  
16 April 2007

Zhao Gong Mountain, Du Jiangyan [ill. 117]



20 – 22 April 2007: “The First Guyu Action: Joint Shows of Chinese Contemporary Performance Art” is held at the Fangyang Contemporary Art Space Xi’An. It is curated by Xiang Xishi and Wang Chuyu.<sup>40</sup>

21 April 2007: Zhu Gang performs [*Learning words*] at the Chengdu Drawing Gallery. Facing the TV screen, naked to the waist, Zhu Gang turns his back to the audience. When the work starts, Zhu Gang invites the audience to participate by writing letters on his back with a 50-cent coin. The whole process is simultaneously broadcast on TV, and, on the live streaming video, Zhu Gang reads out every letter that is written. [Video 1.8]

8 May 2007: Chen Jianjun presents his performance art series [*Post*] No.4: [*Guard for Water*] at the Fish Mouth, Dujiangyan, Sichuan province. Chen Jianjun selects locations; 4 locations have been chosen, forming the [*Post Series*]. At the locations, he stands and guards the subject matter i.e. Air, Earth, Forest, and Water) of his work. The artist wears the same costume: green bathing trunks, military footwear and white gloves, throughout his performance series. [ill. 118]



Chen Jianjun  
[*Guard for Water*]  
8 May 2007  
Fish Mouth, Du Jiangyan [ill. 118]

26-28 May 2007: Organized by Chen Mo, with academic support by Pui Yin Tong, the “Eight Directions: Sichuan-Beijing-Shanxi-Hunan-Chongqing-Hong Kong-Macao-Taiwan Performance Art Exchange Exhibition” is held in the K Gallery Chengdu.

The performances continue for two days. 21 artists perform 19 works in total. The seminar takes place in the afternoon of the 28th. The 19 works are: Callisto Searle's (Britain) [*Do Not Be Afraid of the Ending*], He Ling's [*Crow Diary-Top*], Zhou Bin's [*One Yuan*], Gua Zi's [*Sow*], Xing Xin and Jia Qianlan's [*Might Your Strength Surpass My Weight*], Yang Bing's [*Orchid Pavilion Forever*], Xiang Xishi's [*A Howl in a Late Night at Some Day One Month in 2007*], Bai Ye's [*The Name of Art*], Wen Yau's [*Warmly Celebrate, And Commit to the Motherland*], Kuang Laowu's [*Shut*], Che Jianjun's [*Showcase No. 1*], Zhou Yumei and Gu Xi's [*Wedding*], Jia Qianlan's [*Her (2)*], Shao Yanxin's [*Extreme*], Jiang Jing's [*The Generation of Single Child*], Wen Peng's [*Toy Car*], Qiao Shengxu's [*Nutrition Series*], Ye Xiaoxi's [*Beautiful*] and Ng Fong Chao's [*ESREVER*].

May 2007: Jia Qianlan performs [*She 1*] at the “Eight Directions Exhibition” in Chengdu. Jia Qianlan invites all the male members of the audience ( ) to enter the K gallery space and to take a photo with her. No female members of the audience are allowed to participate. Only the official photographer chosen by the artist

is allowed to take photos of the process. After entering the space, the male participants are told to remove their clothes by the artist. [ill. 119]



Eight Directions Exhibition  
Jia Qianlan  
[*She 1*]  
May 2007  
Chengdu [ill. 119]

27 May 2007: At the “Eight Directions Exhibition”, artist Xing Xin, wearing only underpants, ties himself and a female collaborator wearing only bra and underpants with a rope and suspends their bodies using a pulley. The artist then invites the audience to participant in the performance by pulling the rope to balance the weight between him and the female collaborator.<sup>41</sup> [ill. 120]

Eight Directions Exhibition  
Xing Xin  
*[Might Your Strength Surpass My Weight]*  
27 May 2007  
Chengdu [ill. 120]



1 June 2007 to 6 June 2007: “The Communication Campaign of China Live Festival, June-Alliance” curated by Wang Chuyu is held in Songzhuang, Beijing. The artists invited are mainly from Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, as well as artists from Australia, Japan, England and Italy. The participating artists are: Bai Chongmin, Ban Po, Chen Jin, Chen Shisen (Sanmu) (Hong Kong), Cheng Li, Chen Mu, Chen Xi, Cui Tao + Wen Zi, Du Liang (Guangzhou), Gua Zi, Arai Shinichi (Japan), He Ling (Changsha), He Li (Xi'an), He Lu, Inoue Rei (Japan), Kwang Laowu, Craphone Liu (Taiwan), Mingsheng Lee (Taiwan), Liu Chengying (Chengdu), Liu Hai, Li Peng (Xi'an), Li Yan, Liu Bolin, Liu Di, Li Mengyuan (Xi'an), Liu Sihai (Xi'an), Richard (Australia), Mai Zi, Nuo Group (Feng Weidong, Zhao Jiewei, Shen Song, Song Hongjiang), Shimizu Emi (Japan), Song Youlan (England), Shen Yun, Tang Cheng, Wang Chuyu, Wu Weihe, Wu Shaoying (Taiwan), Wen Zhu, Xue Liming, Xiang Xishi (Xi'an), Right-Hander Group (Bi Xiaobo and Ma Shang), Yili Yeh (Taiwan), Yang Dawei, Yang Fang, Yang Qing, Yu Xudong (Guangzhou), Zhang Dong, Zhang Yiwang, Zhou Bin (Chengdu), Zhao Yue and Zhu Yanguang.

The theme of June-Alliance is “Social mainstream, Humanistic spirit, Atman”. The event lasts half a year. Both the conception, the organization of the event are successful.

Before the commencement of the event, on the morning of 30 May 2007, the event curator, Wang Chuyu, is contact by the Songzhuang Association

for Promoting Arts, who request Wang Chuyu to submit the plan of the event as well as the content of the individual performances. Wang Chuyu refuses to comply with the request. The Songzhuang Police approach Wang Chuyu for further cooperation but the request is declined again.

The event starts as scheduled on the afternoon of 1 June 2007, but is subject to police surveillance:

1 June: Opening of the “The Communication Campaign of China Live Festival, June-Alliance” at the “Ou” Contemporary Art Space/”Coincident” Art Space. The opening of June-Alliance is planned to take place at the performing artist Yang Dawei's personal studio "Ou" Contemporary Art Space. However, the venue has to be changed to the “Coincident” Art Space due to mounting police pressure. On the first day of the event, approximately 10 undercover police officers are stationed at the venue, recording and photographing the event. However, the officers did not interfere in the performances. Some artists and the event crew are questioned by the Police and decide to leave the festival. 16 performances take on the first day of June-Alliance.

2 June: The owner of the "Coincident" Art Space receives police notification and has to inform the festival organizer and curator team that he can no longer allow the performance to go ahead at his premises. The festival organizer and curation team then decide to move the remaining

performances to the backyard of one of the participating artists. The first performance of the second day's event is delayed and does not start until 2 p.m. 10 performances are made on the second day of "June-Alliance".

3 June: [*Nuo — One Day Tour in Songzhuang China*] by the Nuo Group is the first performance planned for the third day of "June-Alliance". The performing and participating artists group gather at the Songzhuang Xiaobao Commercial Plaza and the [*Nuo — One Day Tour in Songzhuang China*] is filmed and photographed by the artists and public. The public display of the performance heightens attention from the Police. The second performance of the day, which takes place at the private premises of the curator Wang Chuyu, [*June's Scenery*] by artist Wen Zhu. Two performances take place on the third day of "June-Alliance".

4 June to 7 June: As the content of the performances from 4 June to 7 June is more politically sensitive than that of the earlier performances, the organizer and the curator decide to host the performances scheduled for the 4 to 7 June at private premises.<sup>42</sup> [Video 4]

18 June 2007: Zhou Bin and Liu Chengying set up the Chengdu "Plutonium" Live Art Space.

23 June 2007: The "Rock Emerges When Water Subsides" at the "Dai Guangyu Works Exhibition"

is shown at the Red Star Drawing Gallery in 798 Art District Beijing.

12 June - 14 July 2007: Ai Weiwei presents [*Fairy Tale*] in Kassel, Germany at the 12th Kassel Documenta Exhibition. Ai Weiwei travels to the city of Kassel in central Germany with 1,001 Chinese collaborators. The trip, involving 1,001 people, is the basic component of the work.

Schedule of the activity: The whole activity is arranged from June 12th 2007 to July 14th 2007. Within this period of over one month, the work is carried out by five groups in chronological order.

4 July 2007: Organized by Tian Taiquan, the "Solicitude: Performance Exhibition" is held at the Art Base of the Tank Warehouse of Sichuan Art and Craft College. Works include [*Clip Out*] by Xu Lu and Xiong Xuejiao and [*Three Touches*] and [*Apply a Certificate*] by Li Luhua.

2 September 2007: "Pain in Heart: Performance Art and Photos by He Chengyao" is shown at Zheng Da Modern Art Gallery in Shanghai. Curated by Wang Nanming, the exhibition features the performance work of He Chengyao.<sup>43</sup>

September 2007: "Echo- New Visual Art Documents Exhibition Chengdu" is held in the Qian Gao Yuan Art Space (Chengdu). It is the first exhibition since the 85 New Wave Art Movement summarizing Chengdu's new visual art. Contemporarily, the artists publish

a catalogue entitled "Echo-Exhibition of New Visual Art Documents Chengdu". Participating artists include Chen Qiulin, Dai Guangyu, Yu Ji and Zhou Bin. Chen Jianjun, Chen Qiulin, Dai Guangyu, Liu Chengying, Luo Zidan, Yu Ji, Yin Xiaofeng, Zeng Xun, Zhang Hua, Zhou Bin and Zhu Gang. Groups of artists from Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts participate in the special art Documenta exhibition.

22-24 September 2007: "The Eighth Open International Performance Art Festival" is held at the Open Realization Contemporary Art Centre in the 798 Art District. It is curated by Arai Shin-ichi and Wang Chuyu, participating artists include Bai Chongmin, Chen Jianjun, Chen Jin, Dai Guangyu, Gao Xizi, Gua Zi, He Ling, Hei Yue, Huang Yan, Left Handed Group, Lin Bing, Liu Hai, Mai Zi, Po Ju, Wang Chuyu, Wu Weihe, Xu Dian, Ye Fu, Zhang Yiwang, Zhao Juntao, Zhou Bin, Zhu Yanguang, Wandan Umma (Taiwan), Inoue Rei (Japan), Megumi Shimizu (Japan), Tanaka Teruyuki (Japan), Nashijima Kazahiro (Japan), Arai Shin-ichi (Japan), Soni Kum (Japan), Tagami Machiko (Japan), Isabelle Mariaux (Belgium), Aor Nopawan(Thailand), MongKol Plenbang Chang (Thailand), Paisan Plienbangchang (Thailand), Vasan Sitthiket (Thailand), Martin Reneria (Mexico), Perter Grzybowski (USA) Inari Virmakoski (Finland), Aung Ko (Burma), Chaw Ei Thein(Burma), Moe Satt (Burma), Hong O-Bong (Korea) and Mideo M Cruz (the Philippines).

4 October 2007: Dai Guangyu present [*Mend the*

*Fold if a Sheep is Lost*] at the Southgate Space, 798 Art District, Beijing. The performance starts when Dai Guangyu enters the stage with a sheep he has bought. He sits on a chair and the sheep, who the artist pretends is an art critic, is invited to give opinions on the state of Chinese contemporary art. Dai Guangyu, who pretends to be fluent in the language of sheep, acts as a live interpreter for his sheep. [ill. 121]

5 October - 1 November 2007: "The Fifth DaDao Live Art Festival" is held at the South Gate Space in the 798 Art District. Curated by Pui Yin Tong, Man Yu, Shu Yang and Wang Chuyu, the exhibition records DaDao, a performance art tour, is organized in 6 different cities in China, Hong Kong and Macau. The tour is the result of a collaboration between Hong Kong On The Move, Macau Museum of Art, Shenzhen Free Art-zone, The Culture and Industry Society of Zhejiang Province Cultural Exchange Center and VIS-À-VIS Art Lab Xiamen.<sup>44</sup> [Video 3]

29 October 2007: Wang Jun conducts [*I Left Kunming*] in Kunming, Yunnan province.

100 bricks are tied to Wang Jun's body. The artist, carrying a suitcase, walks from the back door of the Kunming Academy of Arts to Kunming Railway Station.



Dai Guangyu  
*[Mend the Fold if a Sheep is Lost]*  
4 October 2007  
798 Art District, Beijing. [ill. 121]

9 - 10 November 2007: Xing Xin conducts [*Kids of Workers*] in a square where an iron cage 0.6 m (length) × 0.6 m (width) × 0.77 m (height) hangs from a tree. The square and the tree are decorated with flowers and the artist is dressed in a pink coat. At the start of the performance, Xing Xin climbs into the cage. The cage is then welded and sealed. The artist is then provided

with fragments of a hack-saw with which to cut the cage. It takes the artist 19 hours to break free from the cage.<sup>45</sup> [ill. 122] [Video 1.12]



Xing Xin  
[*Kids of Workers*]  
9 - 10 November 2007  
Chengdu [ill. 122]

2007: Dai Guangyu presents [*Broken Defenses*] at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark. Dai Guangyu stands on a map of China, which is red. Using Chinese ink and brush, he colors the map of China and the surrounding territory within his reach black. He must not set foot outside of China. Very quickly, blackness becomes the predominant visual theme. [ill. 123]



Dai Guangyu  
[*Broken Defenses*]  
2007  
Humblebaek, Denmark [ill. 123]

## Significant Events in China 2008

Beginning in January 2008: Southern China experiences the worst snowstorms in 100 years, paralyzing rail, road and air travel. Because it occurs during a Spring travel period, many passengers find themselves stranded at railway stations. There is a tragic death of a woman passenger, who is squeezed to death at the Guangzhou railway station.

14 March 2008: Riots break out in the autonomous region of Tibet. A lawless group administer beatings, smashing, looting and burning in the downtown area of Lhasa. The group burns passing cars, runs down and beats people in the street, and loots shops and government offices.

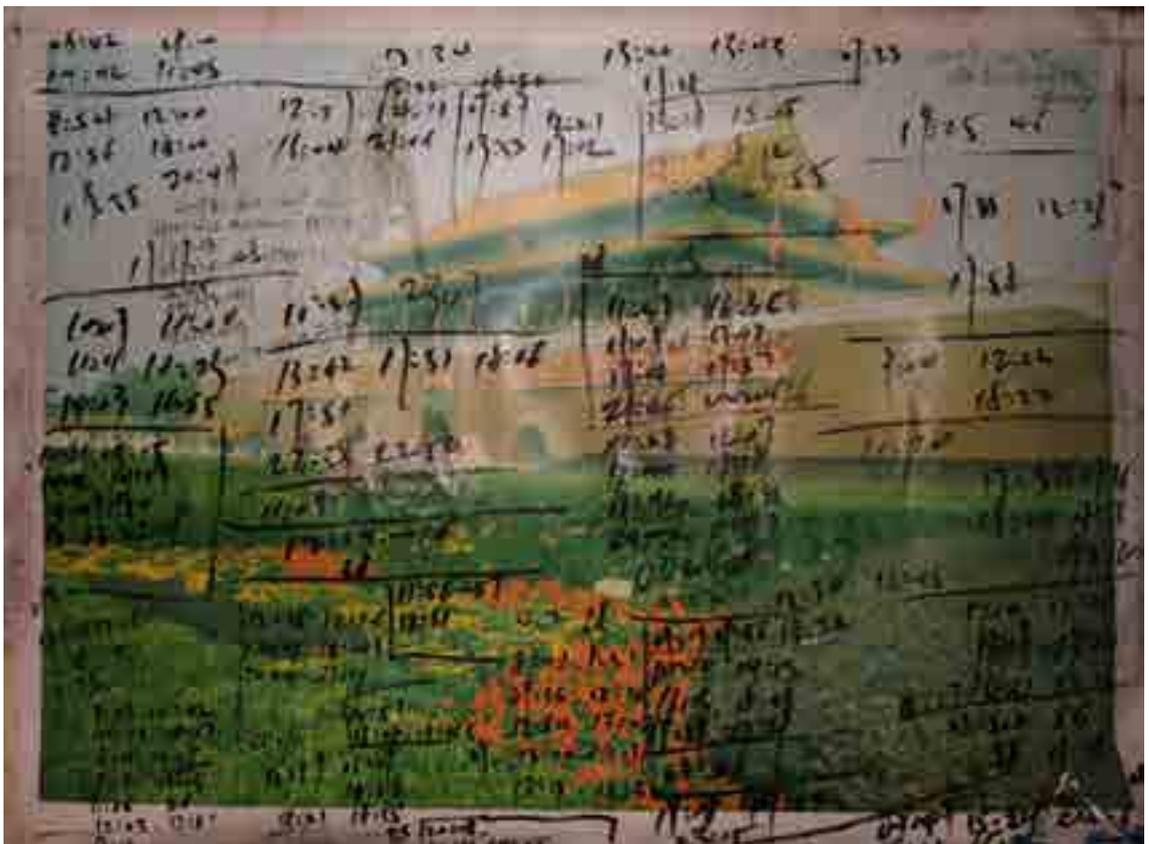
14:28 P.M. on 12 May 2008: A strong earthquake, measuring a magnitude of 8 on the Richter scale, occurs in Sichuan province. The epicenter is in Wenchuan County, Aba prefecture. The earthquake causes heavy casualties. Over 70,000 people are killed and there is massive damage to property and widespread destruction.

8 August 2008: China hosts its first Olympic Games in Beijing. The 29th Beijing Olympic Games opens at the Bird's Nest Stadium. The Chinese team win 51 gold medals and ranks 1st in the medal tally for the first time.

11 September 2008: The Sanlu Group of Shijiazhuang Limited recalls all its milk-products after the infant formula is found to be contaminated with melamine. The Sanlu milk powder scandal sparks a global scare over Chinese food safety.

## Performance Art Events in China 2008

1 January 2008 - Present: Liu Chengrui (Guazi) conducts [*Landmark*] in Beijing. Artist Liu Chengrui had never visited the Tian'anmen Square and had deliberately avoided visiting since he started living in Beijing in August 2006. The artist, wanting to experiment his desire to visit to Tian'anmen Square, sets out a plan to record his thoughts. From the midnight of 1 January 2008, every time the artists leaves or enters his apartment, he touches the photo of Tian'anmen Square hanging beside the door. The artist keeps a daily record of the act of touching the Tian'anmen Square photo. The experiment continues until the artist loses his feeling about visiting Tian'anmen Square. The experiment ends when the artist visits Tian'anmen Square. [ill. 124]



Liu Chengrui (Guazi)

[Landmark]

1 January 2008 - Present

Beijing [ill. 124]

20-21 April 2008: “The Second Guyu Action: Joint Shows of Chinese Contemporary Performance Art” is held at the Fangyang Contemporary Art Space in Xi’an. It is curated by Xiang Xishi and Wang Chuyu.<sup>46</sup>

4 May 2008: The “First activity at Bei Chun Independent Workshop Joint Exhibition of Installation Photography Art” is held at the Independent workshop at Bei Chun. Participating artists include Wei Yan, Zhang Yu, Xue Bowen, Chong Lei, Guo Yan, Feng Dekui, Song Ya and Ma Haijiao.

26 April 2008: The First “Qian Ti Performance Art Festival” is held in Caochangdi CCD Art District, Beijing. All the artists invited are from Mainland China. The name of the participating artists are: Gao Ya + Gao Na, Jia Qianlan, Li Yan, Li Youjie, Mensao Huihui, Wang Jun, Wen Zhu + Yang Jian and Xu Dian. Highlights from the performances are set out as follows:

### **Wang Jun**

#### **[Straw Man]**

Wang Jun dresses as a scarecrow in home-made clothes, could the fabric of the clothes is strong enough to support the weight of the artist and the artist to be tied up and also to allow items to be hung on the artist. The straw man is strung up on an 8-meter pole with a flock of dead birds attached to the artist. The work lasts for 4 hours.

### **Gao Ya + Gao Na**

#### **[April 10<sup>th</sup>]**

This work is composed of digital video and live action and presents the possibility of communication across time and space. The image of Gao Na, one of the performing artists, is pre-recorded on video. In the first part of the video, Gao Ya stands in front of the camera. In the second part, Gao Ya wipes lipstick on the camera. When [April 10<sup>th</sup>] commences, Gao Ya plays the pre-recorded video on a DVD player and the video is shown simultaneously on two televisions. While the first television plays the first part of the pre-recorded image of Gao Na, Gao Ya uses the same lipstick used in the video to paint Gao Na’s lips on the television screen. When the DVD plays the second part of the pre-recorded video, Gao Ya presses her lips against the TV screen showing Gao Na wiping lipstick. The work ends when the video finishes.

### **Huihui**

#### **[Mensao]**

Huihui dresses as a sexy woman wearing a red gown. The artist plays music and sings songs for 240 minutes until the work ends.

### **Jia Qianlan**

#### **[Untitled]**

The artist captures images of her removing a nail from an ancient Chinese building. These images are exhibited as a backdrop to artist nailing herself to the ground using the same nail

removed from the ancient Chinese building. The artist writes a poem for the performance:

“Whether you see me, or not / I'm right there / No sadness nor joy / You miss me, or not / Affection's right there / No come nor leave / You love me, or not / Love's right there / No increase nor decrease / You follow me, or not / My hand's right in yours / Never let go / Come into my arms / Or let me into your heart / Silently in love / Quietly enjoy the happiness”

### **Li Yan**

#### **[Untitled]**

Li Yan hangs a pot of flowers before she removes the flowers and the earth from the pot. The flowers are placed back in the pot up-side-down and are filled with the same lump of earth that has been removed from the pot again

### **Wen Zhu & Li Yan**

#### **[Untitled]**

The artists tears up paper tissue and napkins before dipping the torn paper into a basin of water. The paper soaks up the water. The artists then rolls the wet paper into balls and throws them at the ceiling. The artists invites the audiences to join in.<sup>47</sup>

July 2008: [*Guazi Moves Earth – 3*] is performed by Liu Chengrui (Guazi) at the Left and Right Art Zone Beijing. The artist, naked to the waist, sets a pile of earth outside the performance venue and uses his mouth to transport the earth from the performance venue to a place about 50 meters away. The performance starts at 9 a.m. and ends at around 5 p.m.<sup>48</sup> [ill. 125] [Video 1.11]



Liu Chengrui (Guazi)

[*Guazi Moves Earth - 3*]

July 2008

Left and Right Art Zone Beijing, China [ill. 125]

30 July -1 August 2008: The “Changsha Live Art Festival” is held in Changsha. It is opened by He Ling and Wen Peng and Zeng Junjie.<sup>49</sup>

8 August 2008 (opening day of the Olympic Games): Artist He Yunchang conducts [*My Rib*] at the Adam Hospital, Kunming, Yunnan province. The artist planning the work from 2005 and had been explaining and negotiating with the Adam Hospital (a private Hospital) –

the artist wants to perform a surgical operation to remove a rib from his body. After 3 years of negotiation and going through the necessary medical tests and examination, the artist finally convinces the hospital to take one of his ribs out. On 8 August 2008, a 25 centimeter section of a 30 centimeter rib is removed from the artist and the artist uses the rib to make a piece of jewelry<sup>50</sup> [ill. 126]



He Yunchang  
[*My Rib*]  
8 August 2008  
Kunming, Yunnan [ill. 126]



He Yunchang  
[My Rib]  
8 August 2008  
Kunming, Yunnan [ill. 126]

4 October 2008: Curated by Martin Renteria, “The Ninth Open International Performance Art Festival” is held at the Open Realization Contemporary Art Centre in the 798 Art District, it includes works by artists like Chen Jin+Wen Rui, Huang Yan, Liu Di, Ma Yanling+Wang Bingmi, Po Ju, Si Mao, Wen Zhu, Xu Dain, Ye Fu+Xiao Yu, Ko Siulan (Hong Kong), Arai Shin-ichi (Japan), Snezana Golubovic (Serbia/German), Angelika Fojtuch (Poland), Cesar Martinez (Mexico), Lorena Wolffer (Mexico), Martin Renteria (Mexico), Gerard Altaio (Spain), Hans T Sternudd (Sweden) and Tina Chzberg (Denmark).

5 October 2008: Hai Rong presents the Performance Art Exhibition [*Ten Days Talks*] everyday at Must Be Contemporary Art Centre in the 798 Art District Beijing.

6 October 2008: Xing Xin conducts [*Free and Easy Wandering*] on a wooden bed while dressed in his pajamas. The performance starts at dusk. The artist and the wooden bed begin their 12 hour journey. The wooden bed is placed on the Yangtze River and is allowed to drift from Fuling to Fengdu Chongqing. <sup>51</sup>[ill. 127] [Video 1.12]

10-11 October 2008: “The Second Vital International Live Art Festival” is held at the 501 Art Centre of Huang Jiao Ping.

10 - 14 October 2008: Zhou Bin, Lee Wen, Liu Chengying and Yan Cheng curate the “First UP-ON International Live Art Festival” in Chengdu. A total of 34 Chinese and foreign artists participate in the festival: Elvira Santa Maria (Mexico), Gisela Hochuli (Switzerland), John Boehme (Canada) Jacques Van Poppel (Netherlands) Hilario Alvarez (Spain), Joakim



Xing Xin

[*Free and Easy Wandering*]

6 October 2008

Yangtze River – Fuling – Fengdu – Chongqing [ill. 127]

Stampe (Sweden), Hiromi, Shirai (Japan), Yoshinori Niwa (Japan), Arai Shinichi (Japan), Tran Luong (Vietnam), Jason Lim (Singapore), Hia Chuyia (Singapore), Kai Lam (Singapore), Lee Wen (Singapore), Liu Lushan (Japan), Duan Yingmei (Germany), Cai Qing (China/Germany), He Ling (Changsha), Lin Chiwei (Taiwan), Ren Qian (Chongqing), Ng Fongzhao (Macao), Xiang Xishi (Xi'an), Chen Jianjun (Chengdu), He Liping (Chengdu), Jia Qianlan (Chengdu), Liu Chengying (Chengdu), Liu Wei (Chengdu), Wang Ting (Chengdu), Wu Cheng Dian (Chengdu), Xing Xin (Chengdu), Yan Cheng (Chengdu), Zhang Yu (Chengdu) and

Zhou Bin (Chengdu).

October 2008: Jia Qianlan perform [*She 2*] at the “First UP-ON Live Art Festival” in Chengdu. Jia Qianlan invites all the male members of audience (to enter the K gallery space and take a photo with her; no female members of the audience are allowed to participate. Only the official photographer, chosen by the artist is allowed to take photos of the process. After entering the space, the male participants are told to cover their eyes with their hands while the artist takes her clothes off. [ill. 128]



Chengdu UP-ON International Live Art Festival  
 Jia Qianlan  
 [*She 2*]  
 October 2008  
 Chengdu [ill. 128]

11- 14 October 2008: Xing Xin performs [*My Hand Caressed My Head in Cage for Three Days and Three Nights*] at the “UP-ON International Performance Art Festival” in Chengdu. Xing Xin climbs into an iron frame 0.3 m (length) × 0.35 m (width) × 0.35 m (height) and sticks his head and his right arm out of the frame before the frame is welded and turned into an iron cage. With the assistance of collaborators, the artist

lives in the iron cage for three days and nights. As the artist’s right arm is outside of the iron cage and is free to move, the artists uses his right hand to caress his head to provide some level of comfort during his entrapment. The work ends three days later and the artist is freed from the iron cage.<sup>52</sup> [ill. 129] [Video 1.12]



UP-ON International Performance Art Festival

Xing Xin

[*My Hand Caressed My Head in Cage for Three Days and Three Nights*]

11- 14 October 2008

Chengdu, China [ill. 129]

22- 25 October 2008: Xing Xin conducts [*Send Xing Xin under Escort*]. Xing Xin is first sealed in an iron cage 1.85 m (length) × 0.5m (width) × 0.4 m (height) before the cage containing the artist is put into a wooden packing crate. The collaborators then hire a logistics company to transport the crate from Chengdu to Beijing without informing the logistics company that they are actually transporting a person instead of cargo. After travelling 2,300 miles in a truck, over a 3-day period, the “cargo” arrives in Beijing and is delivered to the performance venue where the artist is finally released from the cage.<sup>53</sup> [ill. 130] [ Video 1.12]

Xing Xin  
 [*Send Xing Xin under Escort*]  
 22- 25 October 2008  
 Chengdu to Beijing [ill. 130]



25-27 October 2008: “The Sixth DaDao Live Art Festival” is held at the Rain Gallery in the 798 Art District Beijing. It is curated by Man Yu and Shu Yang. On 27 October. As part of the festival, artists hold talks at the Art & Communication Academy of the Beijing Normal University. A workshop by Gisela Hochuli (Switzerland) and Joakim Stampe (Sweden) is held at the Urban Design Academy of Central Academy of Fine Arts.

Participating artists include Chia Chuyia (Singapore/Malaysia), Gisela Hochuli (Switzerland), Yoshinori Niwa (Japan), Joakim Stampe (Sweden) and Tran Luong (Vietnam).

## Significant Events in China 2009

18 January 2009: There are continuing reports of cases of people infected with the deadly bird flu in Beijing, Shanxi and Shandong Provinces.

China entered the 3G era.

1 - 22 January 2009: “The Journey through Death”— The WR Group Retrospective Exhibition is held at the Beijing Wall Art Museum. The curator is Wen Pulin, and the three participating artists are Datong Dazhang, Zhu Yanguang and Ren Xiaoying. The style of the exhibition hall reflects Datong Dazhang's ‘Forever Green’ theme. This exhibition displays the WR Group's oil paintings, performance photographs, sketches and installation manuscripts,

including the manuscript of Datong Dazhang's installation “The Journey through Death”. The oil painting section restores the three artists' exhibition first shown in 1992. The WR Group is one of the most significant art groups in Shanxi during the "85 New Wave" period. Their last exhibition together was in 1993. They were banned before that exhibition, and the group disbanded. With this exhibition, Zhu Yanguang and Ren Xiaoying want to cherish the memory of their elder brother, Datong Dazhang, who passed away 8 years earlier.

## Performance Art Events in China 2009

16 January – 19 April 2009, the “Action - Camera: Beijing Performance Photography Exhibition” is held at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery in Vancouver, Canada. The curator is Keith Wallace. The exhibition features artists like: Ai Weiwei, Cang Xin, Dai Guangyu, the Gao Brothers (Gao Zheng and Gao Qiang), Han Bing, He Yunchang, He Chengyao, Hong Hao, Li Wei, Ma Liuming, RongRong, Wang Qingsong, Xing Danwen, Zhang Huan and Zhu Ming. This exhibition celebrates the close relationship between performance art and performance photography in China. It explores the increasingly diverse process of artistic practice and presentation in Beijing and examines its trajectory – from the discreet, underground beginnings of the performance art community in Beijing’s “East Village” in the early 1990s, to the current internationally recognized practice of “performance

photography” and “photographing performance” in China.

17 January to 17 March 2009: “Five Elements - Chinese Contemporary Art Exhibition of Five Artists” is held in Chengdu A4 Contemporary Arts Centre. Featured artists are Cheng Xiang, Hua Jun, Zeng Yi, Xing Xin and Wu Wen; the curator is Sunny Sun.

24 January to 19 March 2009, “Incarnations: Performance Art Photo Exhibition” by Li Wei, Hei Yue and Liu Bolin” is held in the Paris - Beijing Photo Gallery in Beijing.

5 February 2009: The “7 Crimes—7 Performance Art at China Modern Art Exhibition” is opened at the Art Gallery. Organized by Wen Pulin, the show features artists including Datong Dazhang, Zhu Yanguang, Ren Xiaoying, Wu Shanzhuan, Wang Lang, Zhang Nian, Wang Deren, Xiao Lu and Li Shan.

5 - 20 February 2009: The “Twenty-Year Anniversary of the China Modern Art Exhibition” Documentary Exhibition is held at the Beijing Wall Art Museum, curated by Gao Minglu. The exhibition is dedicated to the China Modern Art Exhibition, which took place at the National Art Gallery in Beijing in 5 February 1989. The China Modern Art Exhibition held 20 years earlier was a full retrospect of “85 New Wave Art”, and foreshadowed the development of contemporary art in the 1990s, making it

one of the most significant events in Chinese art history. For the first time, this documentary exhibition exhibits the original documentation of the China Modern Art Exhibition, mainly consisting of records belonging to Gao Minglu and his friends' collections, including photographs, videos, letters, and documents relating to the exhibition.

5 February 2009: Pian Shan performs [*Power of Your Choice, I Choose to Eat Faeces*] at the “Wall Art Museum” in Beijing. The performance is not part of the “Twenty Year Anniversary of the China Modern Art Exhibition” as Pian Shan is not one of the officially invited artists to the exhibition.

Pian Shan highjacks Xiao Lu’s performance [*Wedlock*] when Xiao Lu starts her work at the entrance of the Wall Art Museum. The artist holds his own faeces on a plate and uses the faeces to write on Xiao Lu’s wedding gown, which is the costume for her performance. The artist continues his work by writing “Power of your choice, I choose to eat faeces” on the poster of the “Twenty Years Anniversary of the China Modern Art Exhibition”. The artist finishes his work by eating the faeces.<sup>54</sup>

5 February 2009: On the “Twenty Years Anniversary of the China Modern Art Exhibition”, Xiao Lu performs [*Wedlock*] at the Wall Art Museum” in Beijing, a wedding ceremony without a groom. In the words of Gao

Minglu's letter of invitation:

"At times one may be unable to change something in real life, but one day it may be possible."

A limousine, decorated for a wedding, arrives at the parking area outside the Wall Art Museum. To the sounds of traditional Chinese funeral music, 4 young men lift a black coffin out of the vehicle and carry the coffin to the entrance of the Wall Art Museum. One of the 4 young men uses an axe to break the brass padlock of the coffin. The musicians switch to traditional wedding music and Xiao Lu can be seen lying in the coffin, dressed in a wedding gown. The bride (flanked by the 4 young men) enters the Wall Art Museum and the Master of Ceremonies (Guo Qiang, the curator) conducts the wedding ritual. An account of the ceremony is set out below:

*Master of Ceremonies (MC): "Raise the large red letter for joy, let the red firecrackers burst, red hope is rising, the red day is aflame! Distinguished leaders, distinguished guests, dear friends, ladies and gentlemen, a good evening to all of you!"*

*MC: "On this very special day, which we may call a day of great happiness, we welcome a very special wedding: that is, a wedding of only one person! Now we ask the bride to take a step forward."*

*Xiao Lu (the performing artist), the bride steps forward.*

*MC: "I ask you, Miss Xiao Lu, are you willing to*

*become a wife, true to your own ideas, and even if the seas run dry and become mulberry fields, are you willing always to stay with yourself? Tell us loud and clear!"*

*Bride: "I am willing!"*

*MC: "Good! Miss Xiao Lu before all of us today has made the promise to commit herself to love. Each friend present here is a witness of your love. Please give her another round of applause!"*

*MC: "The bridal party today has a present for herself—a wedding ring. Please let the bride place this ring on the ring-finger of her left hand!"*

*The bride places the ring on her left ring-finger.*

*MC: "The left ring-finger is the one closest to the heart; it fits closely, binding her to herself. Good! Please put on another ring, this one on the ring-finger of your right hand."*

*The bride places another ring on her right ring-finger.*

*MC: "Good! Hold up both your hands and show everybody that you are married today!"*

*MC: "Now, at this solemn and grand moment, we will ask our witness today, who is also our host, Mr Gao Minglu, to say a few words."*

*Gao Minglu: "Xiao Lu, congratulations, but I also feel very sad that you are marrying yourself. I wish you happiness, I wish that you may find love, I wish you a long vigorous life in art."*

*MC: "Now we also have today a family member, Miss Xiao Lu's younger sister Xiao Ge. Friends,*

*please prolong the applause.”*

*Xiao Ge: “Dear Sister, now that you have finally got married after all these years, I wish for you that you find the life that suits you best in marrying yourself. I wish you happiness and joy.”*

*Bride: “Thank you!”*

*MC (to Xiao Ge): “I also wish you an early opportunity to find your own happiness!”*

*MC: “I solemnly pronounce the wedding ritual of Miss Xiao Lu formally complete.”*

*MC: “Today’s bride has prepared a pair of little doves, which she wishes to release to fly into the blue sky. Come! Bring out your doves! Friends, clear a path. The bride wishes to release them in the open.”*

*The bride raises a birdcage containing a pair of doves.*

*MC: “Dear friends, may Xiao Lu fly to a more beautiful tomorrow with the dreams she has not realized in this life!”*

*The musicians again strike up the wedding music. The bride raises the cage containing the white and the grey doves and places it on the coffin. She takes out the white dove.*

*MC: “May the blue sky witness; may the white clouds witness; may all the dear friends present witness together: by her own actions, she lets this dove fly towards a better tomorrow.*



Xiao Lu

[Wedlock]

5 February 2009

Wall Art Museum, Beijing [ill. 131]

*The bride releases the white dove. It makes several short flights and alights. The bride then lets the grey dove fly. It spreads its wings and flies up and away. Finally, the bride tosses a bridal bouquet of white flowers skywards.* [ill. 131]

8 March 2009: Six artists, Liu Chengying, Li Daoguo, Li Kun, Mao Zhu, Wu Chengdian and Zhou Bin, specializing in live art and live music, perform the experimental artwork [*Ceremony—Free Explain of 1/6*] together. Ni Kun from Chongqing is invited to host and to make comments on the event.

10 April to 7 June 2009: Group Exhibition “13 NO KAOS” takes place in Kunming DUFFY Cigar Gallery. Curated by Wen Pulin, this exhibition features 13 pieces of artwork by Datong Dazhang, Dai Guangyu, EMI, He Yunchang, Hua Jiming, Hu Junqiang, Kang Erxu, Li Tiejun, Pian Shan, Feng Weidong, Wang Lang, Zuo Xiaozuzhou, Wen Pulin and Wen Puqing. “13 No Kaos” is originally a term used in mahjong, which is used here by the curator to compare the featured artists to the handful of 13 different mahjong tiles on the table. The curator places 13 artists that cannot be linked together in an exhibition.

11 April - 7 June 2009: The Solo Exhibition of Li Wei’s [*The Amazing Mirror Maze of the Self*] is held at the Michael Schultz Gallery (Beijing) in the Caochangdi Art District in Beijing. This exhibition is the inaugural

exhibition of Michael Schultz Gallery (Beijing), and so it is also significant in that it marks the renowned German’s entrance onto the Chinese contemporary art scene. This exhibition is of a series of the artist's recent installation works consisting of a wide variety of mirrors. Some sculpture figures made of mirrors are deposited on the exhibition stands. Some are suspended in mid-air. Others attempt to reconstruct classic scenes from the artist's performance photographs. The exhibition’s theme “mirror” is a nod to the old Chinese saying “examine oneself in the mirror”, and hopes the fellow art colleagues will build an art world together after self assessment.

17 April -13 May 2009: The contemporary art exhibition “FAT ART, Music to My Eyes” is held at the Beijing Today Art Museum, curated by Karen Smith. It features artists including Aniwar, Chen Hangfeng, Ben Houge, Liu Ye, Mathieu Borysevicz, Pei Li, Sun Lei, Wang Bo, Wu Ershan, Xu Ruotao, Yan Lei and Zhou Yue. “Music to My Eyes” is the first art exhibition of the FAT ART project series, it assembles the most active young artists and musicians in contemporary China, exhibiting a wide variety of extraordinary music and visual art works, including painting, video, performance, installation, opera, and film. The project includes a series of related activities such as lectures, forums, concerts and screenings aimed at drawing a greater numbers of young people to art exhibitions, giving the exhibition a wider demographic.

19 - 20 April 2009: “The Third Guyu Action: Joint Shows of Chinese Contemporary Performance Art” is held at the Fangyan Contemporary Art Space. The event is curated by Xiang Xishi and Wang Chuyu.<sup>55</sup>

1 - 2 May 2009: The Second “Qian Ti Performance Art Festival” is held at Caochangdi CCD 300 Art District, Beijing. 20 artists and groups from overseas and mainland China participate, including Ai Weiwei, He Yunchang and Wang Qingsong as well as Yu Xinqiao as special guests. Other participating artists are Kim, Gao Ya + Gao Na, Gua Zi, Dong Jie, Huang Kuan, Huang Wenya, Jia Qianlan, Li Yao, Li Yan, Li He, Lao Dao, Mai Zi, Ma Zhimin, Ni Ba, Feng Lipeng, Miao Shiming, Emi Shimizu, Qi Ying, Tong Zhiyong, Wang Jun, Wen Zhu, Wan Qiao, Xiao Naihua, Xiao Ri, Xu Dian and the Nerve Center of the Band.

The festival regards performance art as a

revolution and war in the art field. Performance art is seen as a game, delivering art concepts in straightforward yet unique and original ways. Performance are also use the body and any materials to represent breaking with traditional ideas and challenging powers and authorities.<sup>56</sup>

1 May 2009: Liu Chengrui (Guazi) performs [*The Wall...*] at the CCD 300 Art Space, Caochangdi, Beijing. Before starting the performance, the artist, naked to the waist, first establishes a starting point for him to run into a wall. The starting point and the wall are about 3 meters apart. When the performance starts, the artist runs from the starting point and uses his body to hit the wall. The artist writes down the exact time, e.g., 9hr: 30min: 15s, every time he completes a hit and the written records are lined from the wall to the starting point. A total of 116 hits are made in 1 hour and 53 minutes before the last record is made. The artist covers 6,264 meters over the course of the performance. [ill. 132]



Liu Chengrui (Guazi)

[*The Wall...*]

1 May 2009

CCD 300 Art Space, Caochangdi, Beijing [ill. 132]



Liu Chengrui (Guazi)

[*The Wall...*]

1 May 2009

CCD 300 Art Space, Caochangdi, Beijing [ill. 132]

13 June 2009: “Bei Chun Independent Workshop “SOLO” the Second Season” is held at the independent workshop of Bei Chun. Special-guest artists include Mei Jian (Hangzhou), Ou Yang (Sichuan), Peng Xiang (Hunan), Tang Hua (Tianjin), Wang Jingni (Hangzhou) and Zhong Shiquan (Sichuan). Other artists include Feng Dekui, Guo Yan, Ma Haijiao, Sun Peng, Song Wei, Wei Yan, Xue Bowen, Zhong Lei and Zhang Yu. “SOLO the Third Season” is held on 12 December of the same year again, at the Bei Chun Independent workshop.

27 June 2009: “The Seventh DaDao Live Art Festival” is held at Time Space in the 798 Art District. In this year, only one workshop, by

Scottish Artist, Janis Claxton is held at the Dance Department of Beijing Normal University.

9 July 2009 to 9 October 2009: Liu Chengrui is sentenced to six months imprisonment. The artist performs the [*Feather!*] series during his time in prison. The following account shows how the artist finds his feathers can actually show the links between the feathers and those who are suffering in silence:

*“They (the feathers) can really tell you no matter if they are from an angel, a dove, or a sparrow [Feather#1] At 7:07, 9 July 2009, I picked up the first feather in Hebei prison. It made me very excited, for it could bring hope and it is pretty. I*

*picked it up with a sense of worship in my heart. I stashed with my money. Whenever I made a phone call, I would stare at it for a while.*

*[Feather#2] On 18 July 2009 I packed a piece of feather into an empty cigarette carton and stored it in a book Zarathustra Said So. The feather exercised its influence over me every time I read the book.*

*[Feather#3] At 10:26, 29 July 2009, this is a really poor one, damaged a little bit. It looked very shabby. When I told my roommate I would give him one as a gift, he took that one.*

*[Feather#4] At 10:29, 12 Aug 2009, I trusted this one must be one of angel's chest hairs. The angel was marching, facing into a heavy wind; the hair fell off, and floated down into the jail. It made my week.*

*[Feather#5] Around 3pm, 19 August 2009, Xiao Zhi, my buddy, sent me this one as a gift. I kept it in my Bible as a bookmark. Whenever I read Psalms, I carefully put it down at my side. It was just as beautiful as the poems.*

*[Feather#6] At 11:17, 27 Aug 2009, I got this feather on my way to the cafeteria. It was not easy to get, but I did not mind. It was worth taking any risk for it.*

*[Feather#7] At 7:16, 10 September 2009, I had been expecting this feather, from the very beginning!*

*[Feather#8] At 10:40, 20 September 2009, I spent some energy to get this one because it was beyond my reach. I could only stay in my area. Hand by hand, it finally came to me.*

*[Feather#9] Afternoon, 28 September 2009, rest*

*time. I imagined it must have been about 14:30.*

*[Feather#10] End of September 2009, this was a very unique one, my only sparrow feather. It was tiny and sweet.*

*[Feather#11] 7:10pm, 3 October 2009, found one while doing exercises*

*[Feather#12] At 15:36, 5 October 2009, National Holiday. I was drawing at my site. Because of it was a holiday, we got a longer rest time. And painting was my privilege.*

*[Feather#13] 6 Oct 2009, Afternoon*

*[Feather#14] 10 Oct 2009, Saturday, the National Holiday had just ended. This was a nice one. I guessed it must have fallen off from a female dove, nice and soft.*

*[Feather#15] At 15:52, 12 October 2009, another one at break time. We had enjoyed the sunshine so much. With sunshine and feathers, it was just perfect to me.*

*[Feather#16] 23 October 2009, about 8am, I said goodbye to my buddy who was in the next cell. We were in a same cell in Beijing, and he was one of my buddies. While I passed a gift into his hand, he had got something for me too, saying with his kind smile. He took something out from his upper left pocket, where the heart is. It was this feather. He said 'I found it at morning exercises. It took some energy to get it.' My six months in jail was not bad. On my release day, I got a feather, the largest one. "*

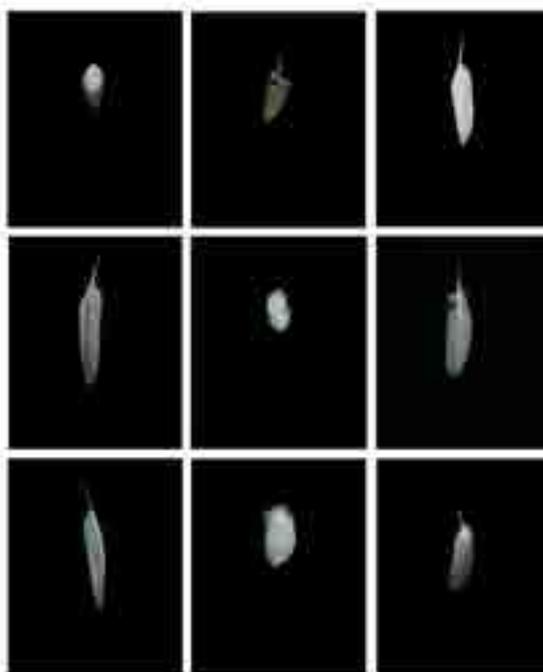
The following is a written account setting out the artist's emotional connection with his feathers:

*“About feather, I have a lot to say. As the story happened to me, I sensed a kind of power, which was not simply mystic, but also holy. It all began when I started wearing feathers in my hair for a performance at The 798 Art District. I felt comfortable. I also wore them in my hair during my performance [Guazi Moves Earth-3]. I knew it was very important to me, though I didn’t know why. Once I found a piece of feather in a friend’s studio. I carefully placed it in my wallet. This gave me a feeling of peace. This feather became part of my work “The Feather Flying to Venice”. It had a very romantic journey to Macao for the Venice Show. I sent the art work to the exhibitor when I was in jail but the work was rejected by the exhibitor. Because of this feather, many people got involved and helped a great deal.”*

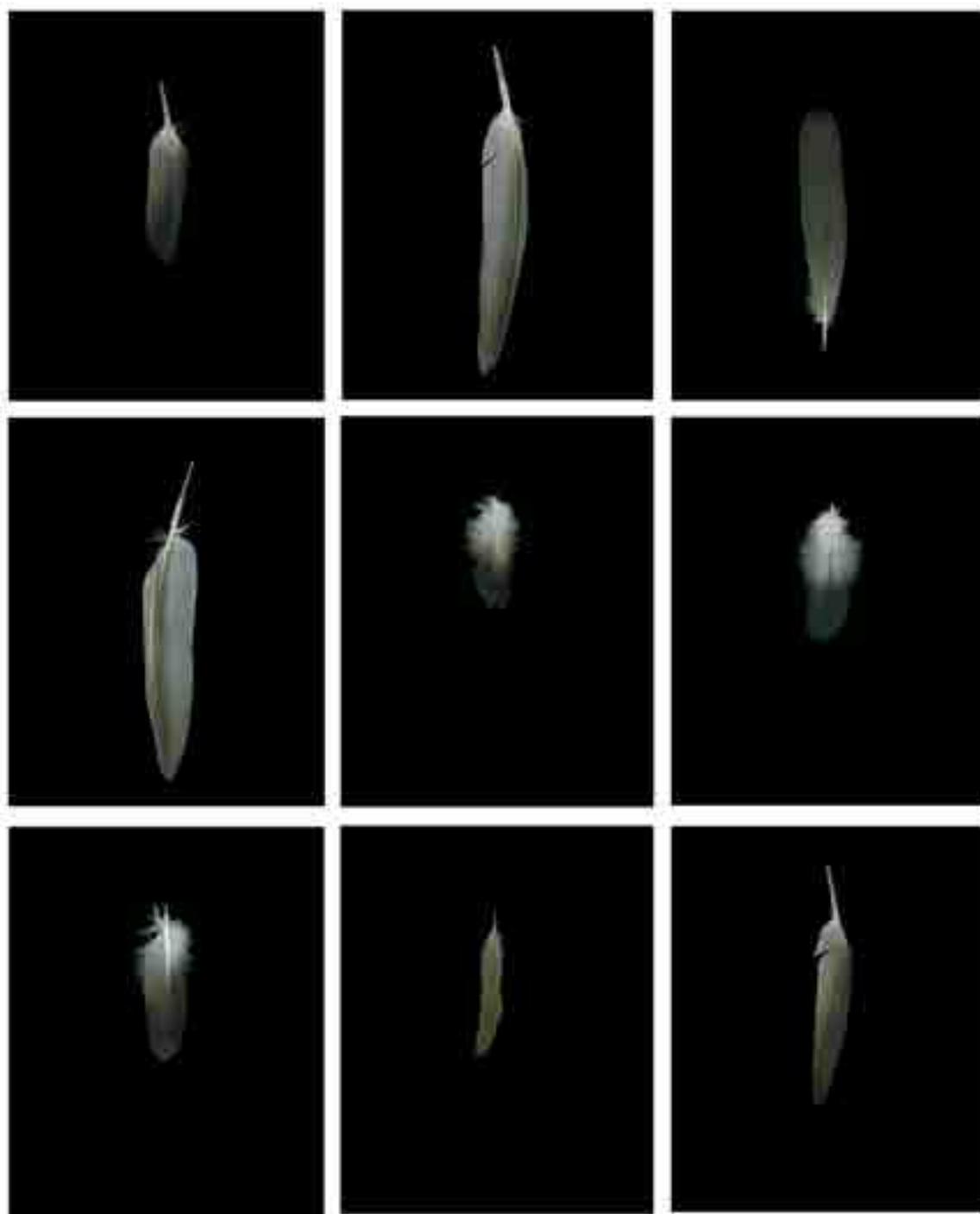
The artist continues:

*“When I was in Beijing Prison, I could only see grey colour. Then, I was transferred to Hebei Prison. They had sports ground, so we could go into an open air place, which made me excited. And feathers came into my view. They also had feathers there! I could not help myself from shaking, it was as if I was my hope and my dreams had become true. Feathers have linked despair and love together. After that, whenever I could go outside and get a chance to pick up feathers, I would be overcome by a strange trembling power.”*

*“I collected most feathers, and my friends also helped. The last feather was a gift from a friend who was in the next cell. He knew my taste. The day after my release, I read my Landmark Diary, and several lines of my words reminded me of something. On May 8th I had written ‘I had a dream. I collected many many feathers. They were pretty nice. My evil mind had so many pornographic images, but how come I could a dream of such beautiful feathers. It might be a good sign, it seemed important.’ On May 11th I was jailed.” [ill. 133]*



Liu Chengrui (Guazi)  
[Feather!]  
9 July 2009 to 9 October 2009  
Hebei Prison [ill. 133]



Liu Chengrui (Guazi)

[*Feather!*]

9 July 2009 to 9 October 2009

Hebei Prison [ill. 133]

2009: [*A Feather Is Flying to Venice*] is conducted by Liu Chengrui (Guazi). Liu Chengrui is invited to participate in the 53rd Venice Biennale in the Macao Pavilion. However, shortly before the opening of the Venice Biennale, the artist is sent to prison for 6 months because his work [*Kissing Gate*] has breached the Beijing Security Regulations. Wishing to participate in the Venice Biennale, the artist explains his performance proposal including his work methodology to one of his fellow inmates who will be released before the artist. With the help of the inmate and friends, the concept for the artist's work is sent on time to be shown at the 53rd Venice Biennale 2009. The concept for the artist's work is planned to be shown as an installation at the Macao Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale.

The work [*A Feather Is Flying to Venice*] starts from the detention center in Beijing and it involves the imprisoned artist Liu Chengrui, Lao Duan (imprisoned), Wang, Li, Chocolate, Zhang and the artist's friends, author Liu Hua, painter Ren Zhongyuan, Wen Chao and fellow performance art artist Xing Xin and others.

The installation work involves the following three items:

*1. A feather: A grey pigeon feather Liu Chengrui kept in his wallet. The feather is taken from the artist's wallet at the artist's request before the artist is imprisoned.*

*2. Hairs: Liu Chengrui passes his own hairs to an inmate who is released before him.*

*3. A one-inch photo: The artist passes instructions to the inmate, who helps him to take the artist's hair out of prison, for the artist friend Liu Hua to download a photo from the artist's home computer and from the artist's email account.*

Although the installation, which contains these three items and three frames in which to display the three items reach the Venice Biennale on time, the work is not shown as planned. In fact, the package containing the installation work that is sent to the Venice Biennale remains unopened. The package is brought back from Venice to China and returned to Liu Chengrui 6 months after he is released from prison. [ill. 134]



Liu Chengrui (Guazi)  
 [*A Feather Is Flying to Venice*]  
 July 2009  
 Hebei Prison [ill. 134]

13- 21 July 2009: Xing Xin conducts his performance work [*Black Box*] at the 53rd Venice Biennials in Italy. Xing Xin is sealed in an iron box 2m (length) × 0.9 m (width) × 0.9 m (height) which is connected to two air-conditioners and two cameras; the cameras are connected to two televisions sets so that the status of the artist can be monitored from the outside of the iron box. During the performance, the iron box containing the artist is placed on a motorboat and is transported along the Venice canals for exhibition. The viewers on bank of the canals can see the entire installation consisting of the motorboat, iron box as well as the monitors showing the artist himself, inside the iron box. When the artist is sealed in the iron box, he reads and counts the

number of Chinese characters in the set of “nine-year compulsory education” textbooks. The artist first counts the characters on each row and counts the number of rows in a page before he finally sums up the number of characters in a book. After the artist finishes counting one book, he moves on to the next until he finishes counting the number of characters in the full set of the “nine-year compulsory education” textbook. After 8 days of living in the iron box, the artist finds it impossible to continue the work and ends the performance by requesting his collaborators to free him from the iron box. The performance lasts for 198 hours.  
<sup>57</sup>[ill. 135] [Video 1.12]



53rd Venice Biennials  
 Xing Xin  
 [*The Black Box*]  
 Venice, Italy  
 13- 21 July 2009 [ill. 135]

10 July 2009: “The 20th run of the Square workshop” is held at the Xiao Pu Village, Songzhuang, Beijing. The location is also known as the Chinese Headquarters of UN Artists Association.

18 July – 18 August 2009: 30s Art Lanzhou: “Lanzhou Three Decades Contemporary Art Exhibition” is held in Lanzhou POST30 art district. Participating artists are Cheng Li, Chen Jin, Liu Yi, Liu Zhenggang, Lin Bing, Ma Yunfei, Yang Zhichao, Wang Youjiang, Li Jianjun, Wang Bing, Cai Weidong, Zhao Juntao, Li Peifeng, Jie Yongyu, Ye Xue, Wang Zhigang, Liu Xiaodi, Zhang Yongzheng, Meng Xiaowei, Zhang Ding, Jin Le, Gao Bo, Ma Qizhi, Liang Zongmeng, Du Yuan, Bao Xiaoqiang, Wang Jinsheng, Zhang Xuezhi, Zhao Shaoruo and Du Hantuo. The curator is Liu Zhenggang.

5 August - 28 September 2009: “The Tenth Open International Performance Art Festival” is held at two different venues: The performance part is held at the Open Realization Contemporary Art Centre in the 798 Art District. Lectures are held at the Chinese Independent Film Archive. Eight curators and approximately three hundred participants from different countries are invited by Chen Jin, the founder of the “Open International Performance Art Festival”.

Chen Jin’s statement:

*Perhaps only under the circumstance of today’s*

*global economic crisis will we realise the importance of art and culture for human beings. This year OPEN festival wishes to fully display works of artists from different countries and regions, within a time frame of two months. During this festival, we could witness the integration and exchange between different personalities, different ways of thinking, and different cultures. We have invited 8 admirable curators from all over the world (four male and four female) to independently take responsibility of curating for 8 weeks, hoping to embody fully the diversity of contemporary art in this way.*

*Open International Performance Art Festival maintains the spirit of openness, pluralism, equality, and experimentation so that each artist receives full representation and display. OPEN 10th is, ‘till now, the world’s the longest and largest international Performance Art Festival, with the most participating artists from most number of countries. A large number of art institutions, government agencies and media are going to participate in this event. We will completely and fully display to the world this year’s festival by webcasting live works through the internet and reporting via media.*

*Each of the eight curators coming from different countries and regions are responsible for curating a week’s performance. Seven of the eight curators set out their curative ideas in statements; they are recorded as follows:*

Statement from Mari Novotny Jones (USA), the 1st Week Curator:

*Mari Novotny-Jones has been a member of the Mobius Artists Group in Boston since 1980. Her original performance work includes both solo and collaborative pieces. Her most recent international credits include participation in the various Mobius art exchanges in Macedonia, Croatia and Poland. She participated in Festival Forfest, Czech Republic, Kicevo Artist Colony, Macedonia, the Harta Festival in Monza, Italy, the 6th Annual Performance Open in Chengdu, China and Eruptio 4 Festival in Transylvania and Navinki 2007 in Belarus. Her most recent local works include "Shrinekeepers" for 2007 Cyberarts festival as part of a collective of six women performance artists and "Harvest" for the Mobius International Festival in 2006. She has also appeared in Mobilize 2008 and Contaminate, an International Artist's Festival, Boston. In December 2007 she participated with the Present Tense, in a Boston/Chicago exchange, Rough Trade. In 2008 she travelled to Java to participate in the 4th Performance Festival and to Bangkok for the 10th anniversary of Asiatopia. Novotny-Jones is on the faculty of the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts where she teaches Performance and CORE foundations classes. She is a recipient of a 2000 Tanne Foundation Artist Award for excellence in the arts. In 2001, she was awarded an Emerging Artist/Humanitarian Fellowship from the Boston Cultural Council for her performance and*

*teaching work. The Museum School awarded a Faculty Enrichment grant for her work in Macedonia in 2003. Mari also holds a M.A. in independent studies from Lesley University, Cambridge Mass. Her thesis paper is entitled, "The Nature of Transformation in Performance and Ritual."*

Statement from Jonas Stampe (France/Sweden), the 2nd Week Curator:

*We are particularly proud to have been chosen by the Open festival in Beijing to present 40 artists of different origin. Our different activities in France and Europe are certainly related to this choice. The director of this gigantic festival, the artist Chen Jin, holds a very good position in the area of contemporary art of his country. It makes his invitation even more significant. Thus, this new opportunity to present European artists in China reinforces the recognition of Infr' Action (A major performance art event in France) on the international scene and allows us to pass to a new level in our activities. Our selection of European artists was prioritized based on a concern with high artistic standards. It will introduce artists of different generations and origins, coming from various countries and regions, with the idea presenting all the force of contemporary creation in the field of performance art in Europe. The invitation of Mr. Chen Jin to curate a part of the Open festival has already produced a considerable impact in our international relations.*

*Infr' Action is a young festival in full expansion; it is also a structure which works actively to stimulate the circulation and the promotion of art performance all over Europe and elsewhere in the world. We have created collaborations and initiated exchanges with other European festivals and are as such engaged in a positive dynamic. European performance art will certainly draw a benefit from it, in the discovery and the broader diffusion of emerging artists on the international scene. The invitation to the OPEN international festival of performance art is one concrete example. These various partnerships confirm the accomplishment of one of the missions of Infr' Action as regards the promotion the European artists outside of our borders. We are pleased with this success which puts in prospect new artistic adventures”.*

Statement from Milan Kohout (USA/Czech), the 3rd Week Curator:

*The Czechoslovakian art underground, “Second Culture”, was a rare, successful instance of popular, non-violent confrontation with oppressive political power, in which people specifically identifying themselves as artists played a central role. This movement, led by underground artists, was the essential element in the ‘Velvet Revolution’ of 1989, which toppled the Communist government of Czechoslovakia, and established democratic rule. In so doing, the movement also established a unique historical precedent, in which underground*

*artists successfully assumed a role of national political leadership. I was an active participant of this movement and for that I was interrogated many times by the security forces, jailed and ultimately expelled by the government forces from Czechoslovakia. After spending two years in a refugee camp in Austria, I was offered in 1988 political asylum in the USA and later gained my citizenship. Living here in the USA I have continued to use art as a tool for a social change. I deeply believe that art should be a part of the “Polls” (citizenhood) and such as must be inherently involved in politics of the citizenhood and the society as the whole. I also believe that there is now (and maybe more that ever) a need for the artists to raise their voices and to address in their work the deeply troubling self-destructive trends in the modern world. Artists, as the most sensitive detectors of the social, religious and political fanaticism, must use their art as much as possible to shake social consciousness and warn and help to divert humanity from the blind march toward disaster. In the Czech underground I learned that Performance Art was the most accessible and effective art tactics to address the common social and political issues of that time. We, the underground artists, almost instinctively developed this art tactic. This was due to the fact that we did not have any access to present our artwork in the “official” media (ie. theatres, cinemas, libraries, galleries, publishing houses etc.) Therefore, we turned to Performance Art as a means to address and spread our art messages.*

*We concluded that Performance Art was the most flexible of art tactics. By definition and according to its own philosophy it does not want to be put into any “box” “style” or “language” and because of that it cannot be controlled by the official censorship. The state believes that where there is no definition there is no art. We benefitted from the fact that Performance Art is not limited by the use of the specific media, time frame or defined artistic language. For our presentation, we were using artist’s bodies mostly and very accessible materials of everyday life and for the location we used any public space.*

*It was so effective because of its authenticity, its unpretentious honesty, the real time experience and the shortness of the communication channels between artists and the people that it sparked at the end a movement for the real social change. But the history is repeating itself and we are now living here again in this very similar situation. The artists have, once again, very limited access to the “official” media. At this time the official media is not owned directly by the government but by commercial interests groups (who, after all, dictate the government). The official media channels mostly admit only “safe and profit serving” commercial art to be distributed through its channels and by that decision effectively censor their messages. And since I have once in my life already experienced the totalitarian social order all my senses are nowadays again on the highest alert. So let me finish by saying: “Long Live*

*Performance Art!*

(Araishin-Ichi from Japan has not released any statement for his work covering the 4th week of the festival)

Statement from Jill Mc Dermid (USA), the 5th Week Curator:

*I have invited an international group of artists, most from North America, also from Europe and South Asia. Some of the pieces will be performed only by the artists, and many are interactive - welcoming the audience into the fun of creating together.*

*My vision of an event is that it should have not only the excitement of a celebration, but also the thrill of experiencing something new.*

*China has a strong influence in all of our countries, and we wish to greet China and her people with a gift of thanks for the opportunity to visit - our performances*

Statement from Jane Jin Kaisen (Denmark), the 6th Week Curator:

*Open International Performance Art Festival represents to me an experimental and non-conventional platform for artists from different countries to meet and engage in each other’s works across language barriers, geographical - and cultural backgrounds. Thus, when asking artists to participate in the 10th OPEN*

*International Performance Art Festival, I wished to invite artists whose work reflect the experimental and diverse nature of Open. I regard the meeting and dialogue between artists as one of the most important and valuable aspects of Open International Performance Art Festival. Being an artist myself, I did not wish to create a strict curatorial concept, but instead I decided to focus on the potentials of meeting. I have invited primarily younger and midcareer performance artists who challenge social conventions, notions of normativity and / or address social, economic, or cultural issues in their performance practice. These artists work in a broad variety of performance art traditions from body art and dance to theatrical and staged performances, from street performance to interactive and multimedia performances, from performances that challenge conceptions of presence/absence to performances in which interaction with the viewers around social situations is central. It is my hope to have artists from various performance traditions, cultures, generations, and geographical locations, so as to create meetings between the artists and between the artists and the viewers, which will further the dialogue around the diverse history, status and re-envisioning of performance art.*

Statement from Julie Andrée T (Canada), the 7th Week Curator:

*The idea of “meeting” is the first reason to do performance. Performance art can be a place where*

*we exchange, communicate and share. Finding a common language is not easy. How can we create an inter-zone where all human being can BE and MEET? As curator, I see myself as the person who invites people to have a “conversation” in the most open sense of the word – a conversation between the artist and the viewer, a conversation between artists and a conversation between viewers. The artists that I invited are coming from all parts of the world. There is a chance to prove that people from different languages and cultures can meet and exchange in peace and creativity. In the abstraction and the poetry of art, I believe there is a universal language of commentary where we can meet.*

Statement from Martin Renteria (Mexico), the 8th Week Curator:

*It's very important to mention that the 10th OPEN International Performance Art Festival will be the biggest performance art festival in the world! It's a great honour to be curator of this festival; it will be a wonderful platform to show experimental and new ideas from different countries and artists generations.*

*The proposal as a curator is to make the festival most versatile, diverse and contrasted, where the differences of idiom, race, idiosyncrasy, politics and religion fade into the background. The expression of ideas, sensations and feelings in coexistence, will be the primary factor to generate closer links and relations between cultures and diverse ways of thinking. Besides, I want to focus on Mexican and Latin American*

*performance art, OPEN Festival will be an extraordinary platform for Latin American artists. This will be the first time that around 40 Latin American artists will perform together in China. The intention is to show that the artists' priority is to make a statement, expressing the vision about their own time and space in their very personal way.*

The following artists participate in the “The Tenth Open International Performance Art Festival”: Adina Bier (USA), Adam Bergeron (France), Agnes Neregard (Norway), Angle Seah (Singapore), Agnes Yit (Singapore), Aidana Maria Rico Chavez (Venezuela), Akenaton (France)\*Ph. Castellin, Jean Torregrosa & Akenaton Alain-Martin Richard (Canada), Alastair MacLennan (North Ireland), Alejandro Garcia (Mexico), Alexander del Re (Chile), Ali Al-Fatlawi & Wathiq Al-Ameri (Iraq/Switzerland), Alice Vogler (USA), Alisia Waller (USA), Amelia Winger Bearskin (USA), Ana Alenso (Venezuela), Anna Berndtson (Sweden), Anna Syczewska (Poland), Annamarie Ho (USA), Anu Ramdas (Denmark), Arai Shin-Ichi (Japan) Male, Arendse Krabbe (Denmark), Nina Wengel (Denmark), Tijana Mirkovic (Denmark), Arti Grabowski (Poland), Aswad Ameir (Malaysia), Bai Chongmin (China), Ban Po (China), Barbara Sturm (Switzerland), Bartolome Ferrand (Spain), Bartosz Łkasiewicz (Germany/ Poland), Bi Xiao Bo + Ma Shang (China), Bill Aitchison (UK), Bill Drummond (UK), Brian Connolly (UK), Bryce Kaufman

(USA), Cai Qing (China/Gemany), Cai Yuan & Xi Jianjun (China/UK), Cao Jiaqi (China), Carla Cruz (Portugal), Carlin Wing (USA), Carlos Pina (Spain), Chen Guang (China), Chen Jin (China), Chen Mu (China), Chen Shisen (Hong Kong), Cheng Guangfeng (China), Cheng Li (China), Cheng Shih Chun (Taiwan), Christian Messier (Canada), Chu Yia Chia (Singapore), Chuck Chaney (USA), Chumpon Apisuk (Thailand), Coco Segaller (USA), Coral Short (Canada), Da Maizi (China), Dai Guangyu (China), Daniel DeLua (USA), Daniela Hernandez Faith (Hungary), Darja Unold & Fabian Hachen (Switzerland), David Snyder (USA), Debora Carnevali Ramirez (Mexico), Demosthenes Agrafiotis (Greece), Dirk Adams (USA), Doris Steinbichler (Austria), Eduardo Flores Castillo (Mexico), Efi Ben-David (Israel), Elin Wikstrm (Sweden), Eloise Fornieles (UK), Elvira Santamaria (Mexico), Eric Scott Nelson (USA/South Korea), Erik Hokanson (USA), Essi Kausalainen (Finland), Etienne Boulanger (Canada), Ewa Rybska (UK/Poland), Fabien Montmartin (France), Faith Johnson (USA), Fat Mariachi (Mexico), Fei Xiaosheng (China), Fernando Reyes Matta (Chile), The Two Gullivers Flutura & Besnik Haxhillari (Canada), Francis Arguin (Quebec), Frank Homeyer (Germany), Frans Jacobi (Denmark), Frantisek Kowolowski & Peter Lysacek (Czech Republic), Frederik Auster (Sweden/Denmark), Viggo Morck (Denmark), Gao Xizi (China), Ge Ya (China), Gerard Altaio (Spain), Gim Gwang Cheol (South Korea), Gisela Hochuli

(Switzerland), Golubovic Snezana (Serbia/Germany), Gonzalo Rabanal (Chile), Groupe Guma Guar (Czech Republic), Richard Bakes & Milan Mikulastik & Daniel Vlcek, Gruppo Sinestetico, Albertin & Sassu & Scordo (Italy), Gua Zi (China), Guston Sondin-Klausner (USA), Gusztav Uto (Romania), Gwendoline Robin (Belgium), Han Bing (China), Han Weihua (China), Hans T Sternudd (Sweden), He Ling (China), Hei Yue (Ji Shengli) (China), Heike Pflingsten (Germany), Hiroko Kikuchi (USA/Japan), Hiromi Shirai (Japan), Hong O Bong (South Korea), Hu Junqiang (China), Huang Junhui (China), Huang Rui (China), Huang Yan (China), Hugo Nadeau (Canada), Ian Colon (USA), Inari Virmakoski (Finland), Inmi Lee (USA), Ioana Georgescu (Canada), Irma Optimista (Finland), Jacques Van Popel (Netherlands), James Geurts (Australia), James Partaik (Quebec), Constanza Camelo (Quebec/Colombia), Jan Cornall (Australia), Jane Hsiao-ching Wang (USA), Jane Jin Kaisen (Denmark), Jean François Cyr (Quebec), Jed Speare (USA), Jeffery Byrd (USA), Jennifer Nelson (Greece/USA), Jeremy Hiah (Singapore), Jesse Jagtiani (Germany/USA), Jia Qianlan (China), Jill Mc Dermid (USA), Jill Wickenheison (USA), Jin Le (China), João Samões (Portugal), Jodie Lyn Kee Chow (USA), Johanna Rosenqvist (Sweden), Johanne Chagnon & Paul Grégoire (Quebec), John G. Boehme (Canada), Jonas Stampe (France/Sweden), Jonna Pohjalainen (Finland), Jose Tavares (Portugal), Joseph Ravens (USA), Jozef R. Juhasz (Slovakia), Juan Carlos Jaurena (Mexico), Julie Andrée T (Canada), Julie Bacon (Quebec), Julien Blaine (France), Jürgen Fritz (Germany), Kai Lam (Singapore), Kaori Haba (Japan), Katia Tirado (Mexico), Katrine Dirkinck Holmfeldt (Denmark), Hisham Jaber & Rania Rife (Lebanon), Kenny Mc Bride (UK), Kirsi Pitkänen (Finland), Klara Schilliger & Valerian Maly (Switzerland), Kuang Laowu LAB39 Group (South Korea), KIM Kang/HyunSoo (South Korea), Son Min Ah (South Korea), Lee Ho Seok/Nam Gung Ho Seok (South Korea), Kwon Beom Chul (South Korea), AN Tae Ho (South Korea), Choi Soon Bok (South Korea), Kim Youn Hoan (South Korea), Lee Wen (Singapore), Lena Eriksson (Switzerland), Varsha Nair (Thailand), Li Wei (China), Li Wake (China), Li Zhe (China), Lilia Scheerder (Netherlands), Lin Bing (China), Line Skywalker Karlstr (Denmark), Liu Chengying (China), Liu Di (China), Liu Hai (China), Liu Lushan (Japan), Liu Sihai (China), Liu Jin (China), Los Torresnos (Spain), Luo Yue (China), Ly Hoang Ly (Vietnam), Lynn lu (Singapore), Ma Qizhi (China), Ma Yanling + Wang Binmi (China), Macarena Perich (Chile), Marcela Armas (Mexico), Marco Teubner (Germany), Margare Bellafiore (USA), Marl Novotny Jones (USA), Maria Cosmes (Spain), Marie Andree Rho (Canada), Mariechen Danz (Germany/USA), Mark Lawrence Stafford (USA), Markus Goessi (Switzerland), Marni Kotak (USA), Martin Renteria (Mexico), Massimo Zanasi (Italy), Matthew White (USA), Maurice Blok

(Finland), Mideo M Cruz (Philippines), Miguel Bonneville (Portugal), Milan Kohout (USA/Czech Republic), Miriam King (UK), Moe Satt (Myramur), Moira Tierney (Ireland), Mona Higuchi (USA), Mongkol Plienbangchang (Thailand), Myk Henry (USA/Ireland), Myriam Laplante (Canada/Italy), Nakajima Mimi (Japan), Nanna Lysholdt Hansen (Denmark), Natalia Swidzinska Natalie loveless (Quebec/USA), Nezaket Ekici (Turkey/Germany), Ng Fong Chao (Macao), Nicholas O'Neal Blume (USA), Nick Bouffon (USA), Nina Boas (Netherland), Non Grata Group Norbert Klassen (Switzerland), NyK\*nicoykatiushka (Chile/USA), Olbrich Marianou Despina (Greece/Germany), Omar Gonzalez (Mexico), Ondra Libal (Czech Republic), Paco Nogales (Spain), Paisan Plienbangchang (Thailand), Päivi Maunu (Finland), Pancho Lopez (Mexico), Paola Paz Yee (Mexico), Pascaline Knight (Quebec), Patrick Jambon (France/Germany), Patrique Lacasse Alexis Bellavanc (Montreal), Paul Couillard (Canada), Paul Waddell (USA), Pekka Kainulainen (Finland), Pernilla Ljungqvist (Sweden), Peter Baren (Netherland), Peter Dobill (USA), Peter Grzybowski (Poland), Peter Kastner (Germany), Pian Shankong (China), Pilar de la Fuente (Mexico), Pino Ivancic (Croatia), Po Ju (China), Protoplay Group Orion Maxied(UK), Racquel de Loyola (Philippines), Rainer Pagel( UK), Randy Gledhill (Canada), Rebecca Jampol (USA), Richard Lerman (USA), Richard Martel (Canada), Rei Inoue (Japan), Roberto de la Torre (Mexico), Rocio Boliver (Mexico), Rodney Dickson (USNUK), Roi Vaara (Finland), Ronaldo Ruiz (Philippines), Ronen Shouker (Israel), Russ Butler (USA/Bermuda), Sarah Paulson & Holly Faurot (USA), Shannon Cochrane (Canada), Shen Yun (China), Wen Rui (China), Shi Zhiyong (China), Shimizu Megumi (Japan), Shu Yang (China), Shui Tian Bu Luo (Taiwan), Chen Yiling (Taiwan), Ye Yili (Taiwan), Zheng Shijun (Taiwan), Wa Dan Wu Ma (Taiwan), Wang Molin (Taiwan), Chen Peijun (Taiwan), Simla Civele (Turkey/Canada), Sinead Breathnach-Cashell (UK), Siri Gossman (USA), Skip Arnold (USA), So ren Dahlgaard (Denmark), Soledad Sanchez (Argentina), Soni Kum (Japan/Korea), Asher Hartman (USA), Stevie McGarrity Alderdice (UK), Yoshiko Shimada (Japan), Stine Marie Jacobsen (Denmark), Sylwia Gorak (Poland), TanakaTeruyuki (Japan), Tang Cheng (China), Tanya Mars (Canada), Tara Hill (USA), Tari Ito (Japan), Thomas Stevenson (USA), Tian Liusha(China), Tomasz Szram (Finland), Tony Schwensen (Australia), Trine Meesook Glerup (Denmark), Ulla Hvejsel (Denmark),Valentin Torrens (Spain), Vasan Sitthiket (Thailand),Wannaphon Chimbanchong (Thailand),Vela Phelan (Mexico/USA),Verena Stenke (Germany), Andrea Pagnes (Italy), Vladimir Havlik (Czech Republic), Waldemar Tatarczuk (Poland), Wan Qiao (China), Wang Chuyu (China), Wang Jian (China), Wen Yau (Hong Kong), Wen Zhu (China),Willem Wilhelmus (Finland), Wladyslaw Kazmierczak (UK/Poland), Xiang Xishi (China), Xiao Maizi

(China), Xing Xin (China)  
Xu Dian (China), Xue Liming (China), Yang Bing (China), Yang Fang (China), Yang Qing (China), Yang Zhichao (China), Yao Yongqiang (China), Ye Fu + Fang Xiaofang + Cui Hongchen (China), Yeh Tzuchi (Taiwan), Yohei Tanaka (Japan), Yoko Toda (USA/Japan), Yu Ji (China), Yu Zhenzhi (China), Yue Luan (China), Yvelte Brackman (Denmark/USA), Zhang Po (China), Zhang Siwen (China), Zhang Xianmin (China), Zhang Yu (China), Zhao Shaoruo (China), Zhao Yi (China), Zhou Bin (China)  
Zhu Gang (China), Zhu Yanguang (China), Zhui Hun (China).

11 - 18 August 2009: The performance art exhibition “Self-locked in Water Tower - Ye Fu and Old Man” takes place in an old silk worm shed in Gaojiazhuang, Chengjiao Village, Linzhou city, He'nan Province. The featured artist is Ye Fu.

15 August 2009: The “First 798 Biennale” curated by Zhu Qi is held at the 798 Art District in Beijing. At the opening of the First 798 Biennale 2009, the artist and curator of the biennale's performance art unit, Wang Jun, announces his withdrawal from the biennale in 798 Art District. In Wang Jun's “Announcement of Performance Art Unit's Withdrawal from 798 Biennale” he said,

“Hereby the organizer of the former performance art unit ‘By-art Times’ (originally named ‘The

Soulful Society VS the Net Spirit’) decides to fully withdraw from this year's 798 Biennale, in order to protest the 2009 First 798 Biennale's total loss of its independence, which has become a fake-non-governmental-bonafide-bureaucratic event.”

The announcement threw the event into the spotlight causing widespread concern within the art world and became one of the principle reasons for the biennale being called a farce. Originally, the performance art projects of the biennale included sensitive content, linked to widely criticized social events. These included Chongqing's “Almighty Nail Household” and “Fan Paopao” - teacher Mr Fan Meizhong, who defended his actions after abandoning his students to their fates during the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake. These contents are later excluded from the biennale, a decision, which eventually leads to the withdrawal of performance unit. After Wang Jun announces the “Withdrawal”, this topic became an eye-catching event. Various newspaper and websites open discussions on the “withdrawal”.<sup>58</sup>

26 August 2009: A group of artists including Fei Xiaosheng, Wen Pulin, Yu Xinqiao and Wu Hong initiate and organized the “First Casual Art Festival”. The festival is held at Songzhuan village, Beijing.

12 September - 31 October 2009: “The Wings of Performance: He Yunchang’s Solo Exhibition”

takes place in at the Galerie Urs Meile (Beijing). The exhibition has three parts: the focus project, i.e. [*My Rib*], a challenging and multi-faceted project consisted of a variegated body of interlinked art pieces including performance, sculpture, photography, video and painting; the artist's other new works; a retrospective selection of photographs documenting the artist's earlier performances. All the works comprising the [*My Rib*] project are the result of a performance held outside, in the public view, during which the artist underwent a medically unnecessary operation in order to have a rib excised from his body. This performance is saturated with intimate, existential and cathartic connotations.

12 September - 11 November 2009: "Getting to Know You Again", exhibition of Qin Jin is held in Magician Space in Beijing 798 Art Zone, curated by Karen Smith. This is the artist's second solo exhibition after "Delete" in Guangdong Art Museum in 2006. Among the works in this exhibition are [*Can I Stay with You a While Longer?*], the artist's first installation created in 2003, and [*Twenty-nine Years, Eight Months, Nine Days*], a performance installation which the artist spent 3 years from 2006 to 2009 in finishing. The exhibition recognizes and interprets common objects, searching for new concepts and perspectives and looking for questions in new places.

17 September 2009 - 16 September 2012: [*Two Rivers*] is conducted by Liu Chengrui (Guazi).

Liu Chengrui (Guazi) signs the [*Two Rivers*] performance contract with fellow inmate Yang Xu. The contract stipulates that from the day Yang Xu is released from the prison - the term served by Yang Xu is shorter than that of Liu Chengrui - Liu Chengrui and Yang Xu make reports of all the new friends they meet. The reports are to be communicated at regular intervals over the agreed contractual period. The terms of the contract also require that, during the contractual period, if either Liu Chengrui or Yang Xu break the contract terms, the violating party shall shave all hair from his body and send the hair as a gift to the other party.

Extract from the [*Two Rivers*] performance contract drawn up by Yang Xu:

### **Two Rivers performance contract**

I myself have met Liu Chengrui (Guazi) in Handan, and parted on 17 September 2009 due to terms of my release. Hereby years after parting we will respectively record our new friends and acquaintances on a daily basis, and elaborate a report via mail or email on a weekly basis, until 16 September 2012 when Liu Chengrui comes to meet me. During the period of time, if one of the two parties has broken the terms of this contract, the violating party will have to shave all his body hair (including head hair, armpit hair, eyebrows, leg hair, and pubic hair) and unconditionally give it as a gift to the other party, thus announcing the termination of

the “Two Rivers” performance project.

The following terms shall govern the responsibilities of the parties signing this contract:

1.This contract goes into effect on 17 September 2009 and ends on 16 September 2012;

2.The two contractual parties are not allowed to break the contract; if so, the violating party will have to take full responsibility;

3.Any introduction to personal life status, emotional conditions, situations and occupation status etc. shall not be included in the future communications (e.g., letters, phone calls and internet communications);

4.Example of the format of correspondence is set out as follows:

Yang Xu:

18 September 2009

New acquaintances at 13:00. Name: Tang Jie, Age: 30, Profession: Teacher, Height: approx. 170cm, Personality: Out-going.

New acquaintances at 15:00. Name: Lao Zhang, Age: approx. 46, Profession: Worker, Height: approx. 160cm, Personality: N/A.

19 September 2009

New acquaintances: 0 person.

5.If any party has ceased introducing new acquaintances without any excuses, the party shall be considered as breaking the contract. In case of any special circumstances, an advance

notice or explanation letter which specifies “special circumstance and insuperable” shall be submitted and the notice or letter shall be accepted. Detailed reasoning shall be communicated in person

6.On 16 September 2012, if Liu Chengrui cannot find me, Liu Chengrui shall be considered as breaking the contract. He shall unconditionally shave all his body hairs under the terms of this contract

7.Before 16 September 2012, if Liu Chengrui anticipates he would not able to meet me on 16 September 2012 due to insurmountable reasons (such as ill in bed or in prison etc.), he could entrust his friends or relatives to meet me and complete the Two Rivers project. Under this circumstance, the responsibilities of executing the project shall be entrusted to the entrusted friends or relatives

8.If I die before 16 September 2012, all my body hair shall be shaved and gifted to Liu Chengrui before burial or cremation

9.If I avoid meeting Liu Chengrui on 16 September 2012, I shall be considered as breaking the terms of this contract. However, this term shall not apply if I am imprisoned.

10.The violating party will have to categorise, label and date the shaved hair

11. During the period between 17 September 2009 and 16 September 2012, both parties shall respect the terms of this contract with a serious attitude.

12. After both parties have signed this contract, the terms of this contract shall be immediately brought into legal effect and each party shall keep a copy of this contract.

13. For any affairs apart from those stated above, both parties' shall exercise his best endeavor to overcome any difficulties. The parties shall negotiate and determine resolution with a view to complete the "Two Rivers" project.

(Note: During the period between 17 September 2009 and 1 November 2009, as Liu Chengrui is still serving his imprisonment terms and cannot correspond with Yang Xu, Liu Chengrui shall record his new acquaintances on a daily basis and the record shall be sent to Yang Xu before November 3rd 2009)

Initiator: Yang Xu

Signature:

Yang Xu

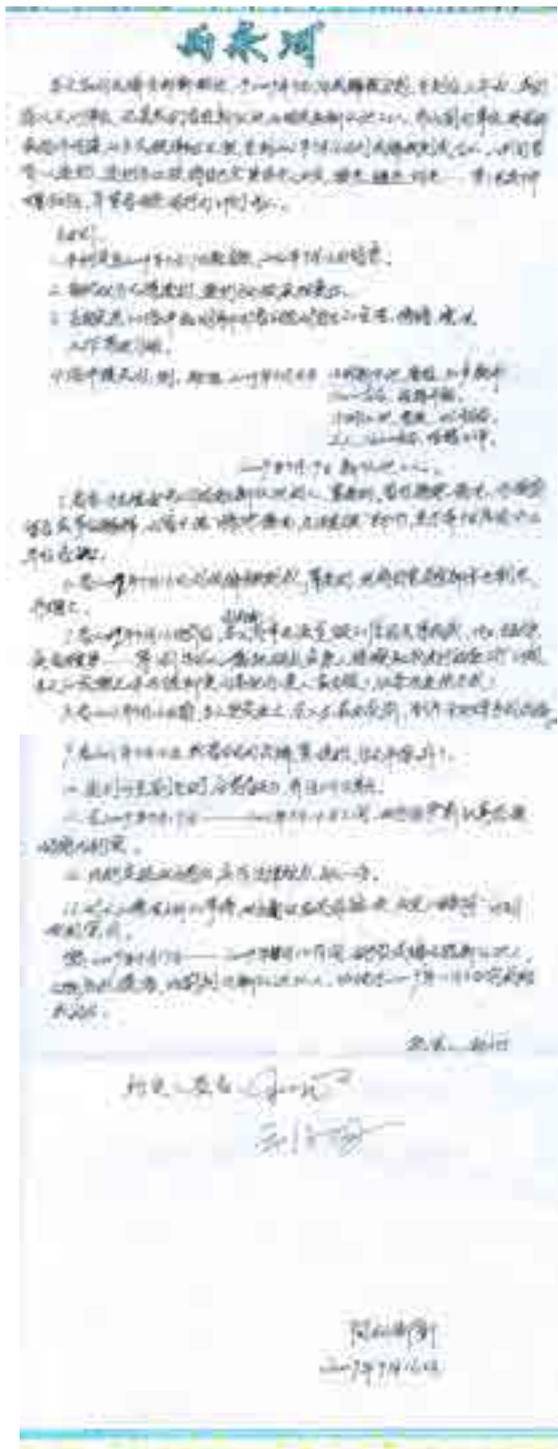
\_\_\_\_\_  
Liu Chengrui

Liu Chengrui (Guazi)

[Two Rivers]

17 September 2009 to 16 September 2012

Hebei Prison [ill. 136]



15 October 2009: Xiao Lu performs [*DRUNK*] in La Bellone, Brussels, Belgium.

The artist invites strangers to drink with her from 8:00 p.m. The artist and her drinking friends consume 16 bottles of red wine. Xiao Lu writes in her record that

“Everything became blurred. I could see nothing clearly, whether visible or invisible. I only remember that I was drunk one night at La Bellone. The ambulance came.

That night, I didn’t know anything.” [ill. 137]



Xiao Lu

[*DRUNK*]

15 October 2009

La Bellone, Brussels, Belgium. [ill. 137]

28 October 2009: [*Mantou Notes*] is conducted by Liu Chengrui (Guazi). The artist takes notes of the mantous (Chinese steam buns) consumed over his 6 month imprisonment. The records start from his first mantou, consumed at a detention center in Beijing. The artist believes this mantou is part of the leftover meals of the Police but he still eats it out of extreme hunger. This experience prompts the artist to record his feelings about the mantous he is going to eat for the next 6 months in the Beijing and Hebei prison, where mantous are handed out to prisoners at every meal. The artist adopts different recording methods, which vary depending on the location. Sometimes the records are made verbally, while some records are made on the mantous, in writing.

According to the artist's records, the mantous served at the Beijing detention center are irregularly shaped; their shapes resemble that of potatoes. The mantous served at the Beijing prisons are smaller than those served at the Beijing detention center and are small and oblong shaped. The mantous served at the Beijing prisons are prepared by male cooks. The mantous served at the Hebei prison are round and are cooked and delivered from somewhere outside the prison.

The last mantou note is recorded on the mantou handed out on the morning of 23 October 2009, the last day of the artist's prison term. The artist takes the mantou out from the prison and to this day, still keeps the mantou with the note written on it. [ill. 138]



Liu Chengrui  
 [*Mantou Notes*]  
 28 October 2009  
 Hebei Prison [ill. 138]

14 November - 12 December 2009: Yang Zhichao's solo exhibition "Chinese Bible" is held at the China Art Archives & Warehouse in Beijing. Ai Weiwei curates the event.

15 to 24 November 2009: "On the Way: 2009 ArTrend International Performance Art Meeting" is held outdoors in Taipei, Taidong, Gaoxiong, and Tainan. Featured artists include Alexander del Re, Boris Nieslony, Julie Andree T., Marilyn Arsem, Melati Suryodarmo, Sakiko Yamaoka, Sinead O'Donnell, Chen Chin, Ding Yuzhong, Watan Uma, Ahdao Bahlafu, Newyork Ji, Chen Chiehjen, Chen Yiling, Tang Huangzhen, Rebecca Tzuchi Yeh, Lai Fangyu and Cheng Shihchun.

24 November 2009: Beginning at 10:00am, seventeen artists from Shenzhen perform a collective art work at the Qian An Art Hotel at F518 Fashion Creation Garden Shenzhen. Thirty-eight artists begin the piece but then many quit due to acrophobia. The work involves the artists climbing up to the 27th floor of a building with fishing rods in hand and then fishing from the balconies.

12 – 16 December 2009: The "Conspiracy: Multimedia Performance Art Exhibition" is held at the Beijing Other Gallery. Participating artists included Wu Xiaojun, Yang Zhichao, Chen Weiqun, Yu Bogong, Zhang Qikai, Gao Weigang, Man Yu, Li Xinmo, Emi Shimizu and You Hao. The curator is Liu Guopeng.

29 December 2009: [*Warm Winter*] at the "Zheng Yang Art Exhibition of Creation" is shown. In November 2009, artists leasing space at the Zheng Yang Creative Art Zone suddenly receive eviction orders that require the tenants to move out within a week from the date of the eviction orders. With a view to initiating a collective fight for their legal rights, the artists form a team and submit an appeal to the authorities, but the attempt did not bear fruit. Based on this experience of the eviction order and other, similar incidents, Xiao Ge, a curator who rented a space and lived in the Zheng Yang Creative Art Zone, initiates the "Warm Winter" Art Project to gather voices from artists from the Dong Ying Art Zone, Song Zhuang Art Zone, 008 Art Zone, 798 Art Zone, Jiangs' House Art Zone, Zheng Yang Creation Art Zone, Dong Ying Art Zone and Nai Zi fang Art Zone. The [*Warm Winter*] functions as an art exchange program featuring artists showing installations and performances with the common theme of protesting against the forced evictions. One of the more prominent performances is [*Gang of Bricks*], which is conducted by a group of artists including Wu Yuren, Liu Yi, Liu Wei, Guo Chong, Zhu Hongbo, Ma Jun, Xi Zida, Wang Xiaojin, An Bo, Jin Songmao, Wang Shuping, Zheng Yi, Jiang Ping, Huang Ye, Liu Ming and Feng Li. The performing artists are divided into two "gangs". Each of the gang members holds bricks picked up from the Zheng Yang Creative Art Zone. The gang members stand still and stare at the members of the other gangs for 1 hour.<sup>59</sup>

## Significant Events in China 2010

Early in the year 2010: Southwestern areas of China suffers the most serious drought for 60 years.

14 April 2010: Two earthquakes occur in the morning in the Yushu County, Gansu Province, with a magnitude of 7.1 on the Richter scale. The epicenter is in very nearby a township.

1 May 2010: The 2010 World Expo opens in Shanghai.

13 May 2010: Several areas in Jiangxi province receive the heaviest rainfall since the flooding season.

16-18 July 2010: Five serious coal-mining accidents cause 59 deaths.

## Performance Art Events in China 2010

20 January 2010: the well-known website “Artintern.net” receives a post deletion order from its database housing supplier 21 Vianet Group, Inc., Beijing, stating that the relevant department insists that the site delete its “Obscene Information” within 2 hours. These items include Russian body paintings exhibited in National Art Museum of China and award-winning works from the National Artworks

Exhibition. On 23 January Wu Hong, the chief editor of “Artintern.net” posts an open letter to the “relevant department” on his blog, and apologized to site users whose information is deleted.<sup>60</sup>

1 March –1 May 2010: The Third “Qian Ti Performance Art Festival” is held in Qingyuan, Guangdong province. It is curated by Wang Jun and has academic support from Lu Hong, Chen Mo, Chen Tong, Liao Bangming, Hu Bin, Wu Yangbo, Zheng Na and Artists Zhu Suxian, He Jinfang, Pan Yuchun, Cang Ying, Fen Feng, Hunag Xiaopeng, Ye Xiaoyan, Zhang Suiyang, Chen Gan, Chen Xiaoru, Cuang, Huang Chen, Duan Yongjun, Wang Jun participate in the festival.<sup>61</sup>

15 March 2010: Liu Chengrui (Guazi) conducts [*Looking for My Lost Finger*]. In March 1999, as a result of a strong feeling that the artist had lost part of his soul and as an act of balancing his life, Liu Chengrui cut off his little finger to compensate for the imperfection. The artist then attached a fragment of finger bone to a necklace and started wearing the necklace as a reminder of his act. In November 2008, the artist lost his finger bone necklace at a casino in Macau and experienced a series of unfortunate events. With the suspicion that the unfortunate events are linked to the missing necklace, the artist tries to wear other necklaces, made of jade and other stones, as replacements, but none of

the replacement necklace offers the same level of peace of mind to the artist.

March 2010: On the 11th anniversary of losing his little finger, the artist realizes the importance of the need to find his missing finger bone necklace. The artist believes he has been receiving signals that will lead him to find the necklace. Sometimes the artist thinks about the necklace being worn by other people or having his finger bone attached to other people's hand. The artist then distributes the picture of his necklace through different media and different channels to urge his friends, netizens and strangers to help find his missing necklace. saying:

“I hope my friends, netizens and strangers care a little bit about my little finger bone – which is shown here in my photo -- and will send it to me if you find it. I will try my best to fulfill any wishes you ask for in return. I don't know if you have something lost that you need to find. I would like to help you to find it and think it over. Thank you very much!”

The artist also promises to help others to find their missing items as he fully understands the pain of missing an important item from his life. [ill. 139]



Liu Chengrui (Guazi)

[*Looking for my lost finger*]

15 March 2010

Beijing [ill. 139]

27- 28 March 2010: For six hours a day Zhou Bin performs his work [*Two Feet*] at the W139 Art Gallery in Amsterdam, Holland.

April 2010: Liu Bolin conducted [*Hiding in the city – Teatro alla Scala*] in Milan, Italy. After a long negotiation with the Teatro alla Scala, one of the best theatres in the world, Liu Bolin

obtains permission to perform his work on the VIP balcony, which is not usually open to the public. During the process, Liu Bolin stands still, wearing a green outfit. His assistant helps him paint his body until it gradually became the same as the background. The process takes 3 to 5 hours. [ill. 140]



Liu Bolin  
[*Hiding in the City- Teatro alla Scala*]  
April 2010  
Milan Italy [ill. 140]

17 April 2010: “Embodiment II—Co-Exhibition of Photography and Performance Art” opens in the Paris Beijing Gallery. Artists include Liu Bolin, Zhu Ming, Li Wei and Chang Xin.

17-18 April 2010: “The Fourth Guyu Action: Joint Shows of Chinese Contemporary Performance Art” is held in Fangyan Contemporary Art Space, it is curated by Xiang Xishi, Wang Chuyu and Qiao Shengxu.<sup>62</sup>

8 – 30 June 2010: Xing Xin conducts [*Meditation on Floating Ice*]. Xing Xin, a team of artists and collaborators drive from Chengdu to the Jianguodiru Glacier on the border between Qinghai and Tibet (the headwaters of Yangtze River). The group collect a piece of ice from the Glacier and keep the ice in portable refrigerating equipment. The ice is then couriered cross-country as fast as possible to the delta of the Yangtze River in Shanghai. After passing through many cities, suburbs, ravine streams, grasslands, deserts, marshes, snow mountains, glaciers and a wide range of geographic areas, the ice is finally taken out from the refrigerating equipment and is melted into the East China Sea. After 552 hours from the start of the performance, [*Meditation on Floating Ice*] ends as the ice disappears into the East China Sea.<sup>63</sup>[ill. 141] [Video 1.12]



Xing Xin  
[*Meditation on Floating Ice*]  
8 – 30 June 2010  
From Jianguodiru Glacier to Shanghai [ill. 141]

1, 2, 10 and 13 June 2010: As a sequel to the “First Casual Art Festival”, Fei Xiaosheng; Wen Pulin, Yu Xinqiao Wu Hong and Chen Meixin organize the “Second Casual Art Festival”. Over 150 artists participate in the festival with performances held at multiple venues including “Beijing Contemporary Art Gallery”, “Sunshine International Art Museum” and “798 Art District”. Due to conflicts between the Songzhuan Art Management Committee and the festival organizers, 5 artists, whose performance involved nudity, are arrested by the police. Shen Yun, one of the 5 artists who are arrested, is charged with assaulting police officers. However, the pictures taken on the date of the arrest do not support the charges.<sup>64</sup>

22 June -21 July 2010: Zhou Bin conducts his performance art event [*30 Days*]. Curated by Tian Meng and jointly organized by Lia Ge Zi No 17 and Ku Art Magazine, Zhou Bin’s 30-day performance art event takes place at Lia Ge Zi No 17 at 798 Art District Beijing. For 30 consecutive days, Zhou Bin creates a piece of work on a daily basis at a designated time.

1<sup>st</sup> day [*Trail of the Insect*]

June 2010

very small insect creeps slowly through Zhou’s fingers, making a melodic sound as it moves about. Ten minutes later, the insect drops on the ground. At night, when Zhou is about to go to sleep, he finds the insect on his bed. [ill. 142]



Zhou Bin

1<sup>st</sup> day [*Trail of the Insect*]

June 2010

Beijing [ill. 142]

2nd day [*Sensitive word – Mark of the Kiss:*  
“Six” and “4”]

June 2010

Zhou sucks his arms forcibly revealing the  
bruise marks showing “Six” and “4”. [ill. 143]



Zhou Bin

2nd day [*Sensitive word – Mark of the kiss: “Six” and “4”*]

June 2010

Beijing [ill. 143]

3<sup>rd</sup> day [*Sensitive Word*]

June 2010

The word “sensitive” is repeated until it becomes strange and inarticulate. After fifteen minutes, the utterances seem to spin out of control. Twenty minutes later, uncomfortable sensations begin to surface, such as nausea and vomiting. The work concludes. [ill. 144]



Zhou Bin

3<sup>rd</sup> day [*Sensitive Word*]

June 2010

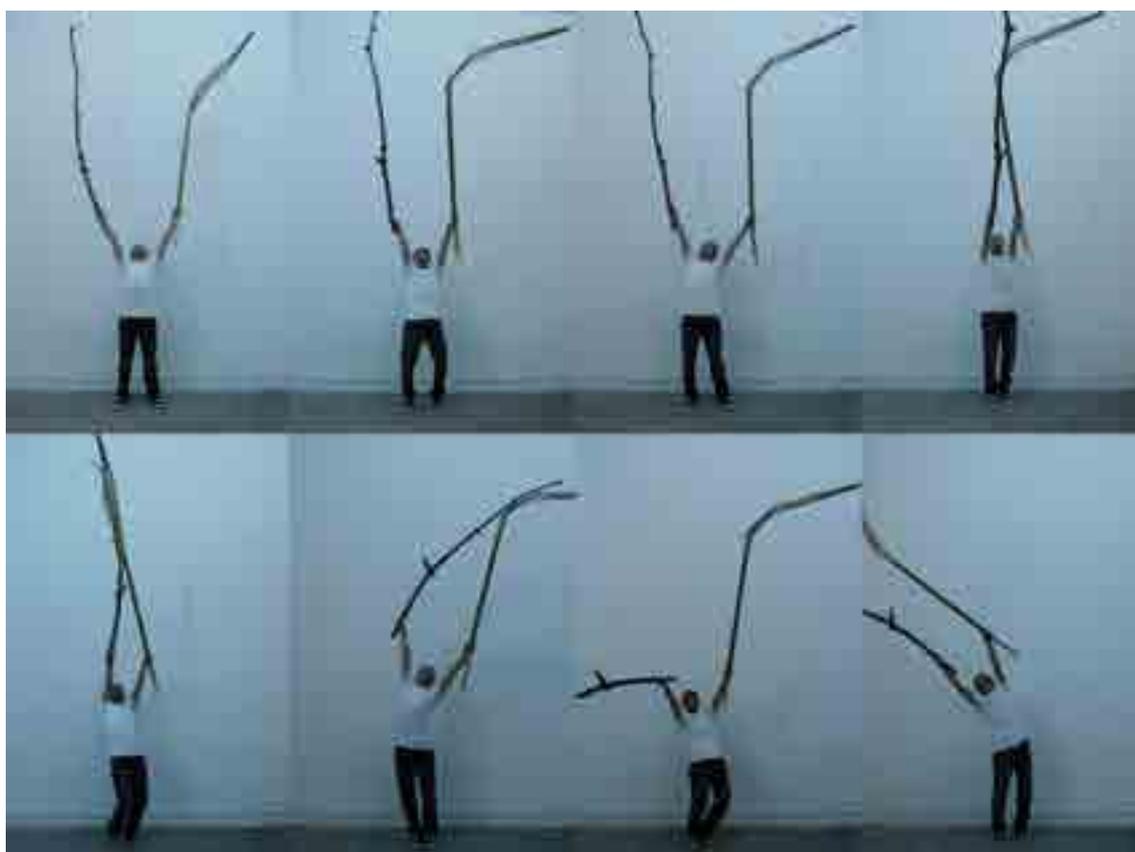
Beijing [ill. 144]

4<sup>th</sup> day [*The Writer*]

June 2010

Zhou lifts up some bamboo branches one by one until he is too tired to move any further.

[ill. 145]



Zhou Bin

4<sup>th</sup> day [*The Writer*]

June 2010

Beijing [ill. 145]

5<sup>th</sup> day [*Harmonious*]

June 2010

The artist uses breadcrumbs to make two Chinese characters “He Xie”, which means harmonious,) on the floor. A group of ants is then released and the ants remove the breadcrumbs from the floor. Gradually, the two Chinese characters vanish from sight.

[ill. 146]



Zhou Bin  
5th day [*Harmonious*]  
June 2010  
Beijing [ill. 146]

6<sup>th</sup> day [*Art Casual Chat*]

June 2010

In Beijing 798 Art District, Zhou carries a display showing “Let’s have a casual discussion about art” in three languages (Chinese, English and Japanese) to the 798 Art District and invites the passers-by to discuss with him as he strolls around the 798 Art District. The work lasts for 3 hours. [ill. 147]



Zhou Bin

6<sup>th</sup> day [*Art Casual Chat*]

June 2010

Beijing [ill. 147]

7<sup>th</sup> day [*Be Brighter, Be Sharper*]

June 2010

The artist uses sand paper to polish a rusty nail partially covered by paint. The work stops when the nail becomes bright and sharp. [ill. 148]



Zhou Bin

7th day [*Be Brighter, Be Sharper*]

June 2010

Beijing [ill. 148]

8<sup>th</sup> day [*Artist*]

June 2010

The artist reads the Chinese phrase “Yi Shu Jia”, which means “artist” aloud as three separate consonants. Each consonant is uttered repeatedly. Then the next consonant is read aloud and repeated, followed by the last word. [ill. 149]

Zhou Bin  
8th day [*Artist*]  
June 2010  
Beijing [ill. 149]



9<sup>th</sup> day [*A Grain of Rice*]

June 2010

Having found a grain of rice in a hidden corner of the apartment, Zhou brought it to the rail station and threw it into the coal pile above the railway track. [ill. 150]



Zhou Bin  
9th day [*A Grain of Rice*]  
June 2010  
Beijing [ill. 150]

10<sup>th</sup> day [*Spout*]

July 2010

With his eyes closed, Zhou vomits milk. [ill. 151]

Zhou Bin

10<sup>th</sup> day [*Spout*]

July 2010

Beijing [ill. 151]



11<sup>th</sup> day [*Walker*]

July 2010

Zhou walks along a pile of coal, which is broken down into small pieces until the ridge flattens to become a smooth curve. The whole process lasts for 70 minutes. [ill. 152]



Zhou Bin  
11<sup>th</sup> day [*Walker*]  
July 2010  
Beijing [ill. 152]

12<sup>th</sup> day [*A Cup of Sweat*]

July 2010

Zhou jumps up and down on the same spot until he gets sweaty. His sweat is collected in a cup, and the artist drinks the cup of sweat. [ill. 153]

13<sup>th</sup> day [*432 Seconds*]

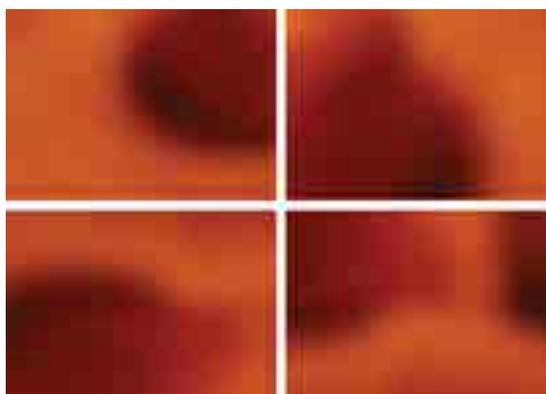
July 2010

A film on masturbation is screened. The images are deliberately kept out of focus.

[ill. 154]



Zhou Bin  
12th day [*A Cup of Sweat*]  
July 2010  
Beijing [ill. 153]



Zhou Bin  
13th day [*432 Seconds*]  
July 2010  
Beijing [ill. 154]

14<sup>th</sup> day [*Easy as Turning Palm*]

July 2010

Zhou takes an hour to turn his hand. [ill. 155]



15<sup>th</sup> day [*Kitchen Knife*]

July 2010

Zhou cuts up a steel rod with the kitchen knife. He scribbles his signature on top of it and puts it on sale in a gallery. [ill. 156]



Zhou Bin

14<sup>th</sup> day [*Easy as Turning Palm*]

July 2010

Beijing [ill. 155]



Zhou Bin

15<sup>th</sup> day [*Kitchen Knife*]

July 2010

Beijing [ill. 156]

16<sup>th</sup> day [*White Line*]

July 2010

The artist measures out 10,000 meters of a long white line with his arm. [ill. 157]



Zhou Bin

16<sup>th</sup> day [*White Line*]

July 2010

Beijing [ill. 157]

17<sup>th</sup> day [*Writing in Blindfolded Fashion*]

July 2010

Zhou blindfolds himself and walks back and forth in a room for 36 times. The distance covered measures 180m. He writes on paper: “ART IS A WORD, ART IS NOT A WORD”. [ill. 158]



Zhou Bin

17<sup>th</sup> day [*Writing in Blindfolded Fashion*]

July 2010

Beijing [ill. 158]

18<sup>th</sup> day [*Body Trace*]

July 2010

Zhou holds a torch following a moving ant.  
The artist moves his body like the ant, crawling  
around. [ill. 159]



Zhou Bin

18<sup>th</sup> day [*Body Trace*]

July 2010

Beijing [ill. 159]

19<sup>th</sup> day [*Train Memory*]

July 2010

Zhou tries to stop a train by waving a tree  
branch, leaning forward his head. During this  
period, he recalls a childhood experience of  
nearly having a train accident. [ill. 160]



Zhou Bin

19<sup>th</sup> day [*Train Memory*]

July 2010

Beijing [ill. 160]

20<sup>th</sup> day [*Something in the Fist*]

July 2010

Zhou stands still in the rain until he is drenched, but his right hand is dry and unaffected by the rain. There is nothing in his hand. [ill. 161]

21<sup>st</sup> day [*Asthma*]

July 2010

The artist suffers a sudden asthma attack in early morning. Zhou starts to ventilate the room and drinks hot water to keep warm. [ill. 162]



Zhou Bin  
20<sup>th</sup> day [*Something in the Fist*]  
July 2010  
Beijing [ill. 161]



Zhou Bin  
21<sup>st</sup> day [*Asthma*]  
July 2010  
Beijing [ill. 162]

22<sup>nd</sup> day [*Weed*]

July 2010

The artist weeds a ruined railway track for 4 hours and 20 minutes. [ill. 163]



23<sup>rd</sup> day [*Search for Money*]

July 2010

The artist sets a target of finding coins or dollar notes on the ground in the 798 Art District area from 8:20 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. The work will end as soon as the artist finds some money. [ill. 164]

Zhou Bin  
22nd day [*Weed*]  
July 2010  
Beijing [ill. 163]



Zhou Bin  
23rd day [*Search for Money*]  
July 2010  
Beijing [ill. 164]

24<sup>th</sup> day [*A Test of Misunderstanding*]

July 2010

Visitors are invited to select 3 records of the work created by Zhou over the past 23 days. Zhou discusses the works with the visitors without giving them any background information about the work. [ill. 165]

25<sup>th</sup> day [*Ominous Shadow*]

July 2010

The artist uses coal dust to simulate the shadow of a miner's head lamp. [ill. 166]



Zhou Bin

24<sup>th</sup> day [*A Test of Misunderstanding*]

July 2010

Beijing [ill. 165]



Zhou Bin

25<sup>th</sup> day [*Ominous Shadow*]

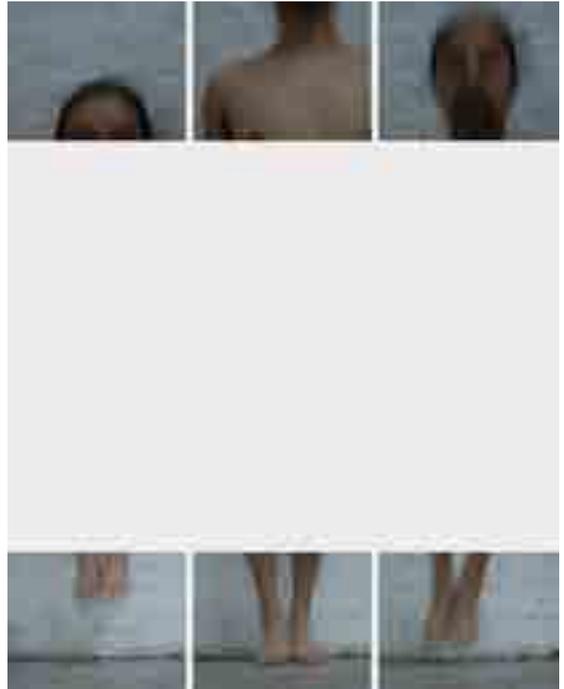
July 2010

Beijing [ill. 166]

26<sup>th</sup> day [*Jump*]

July 2010

Two DV cameras are fixed at two different heights, one at head level and one at foot level, to capture the jumping movement of the artist. The DV cameras only capture images of the artist's head and feet. [ill. 167]



27<sup>th</sup> day [*Feather*]

July 2010

Standing in a corner, Zhou raises the mirror and plays with the reflection created on the wall. Zhou dropped the mirror when the reflection lands on a feather. [ill. 168]

Zhou Bin  
26th day [*Jump*]  
July 2010  
Beijing [ill. 167]



Zhou Bin  
27th day [*Feather*]  
July 2010  
Beijing [ill. 168]

28<sup>th</sup> day [*Safety Distance*]

July 2010

The artist holds his hand still for 10 minutes with his fingers close to a bare electric wire. [ill. 169]



29<sup>th</sup> day [*Moon in Hands*]

July 2010

Zhou holds water in his hands under a clear sky. The water in the artist's hand shows reflection of the moon but the reflection disappears as water leaks out. [ill. 170]

Zhou Bin

28th day [*Safety Distance*]

July 2010

Beijing [ill. 169]



Zhou Bin

29th day [*Moon in Hands*]

July 2010

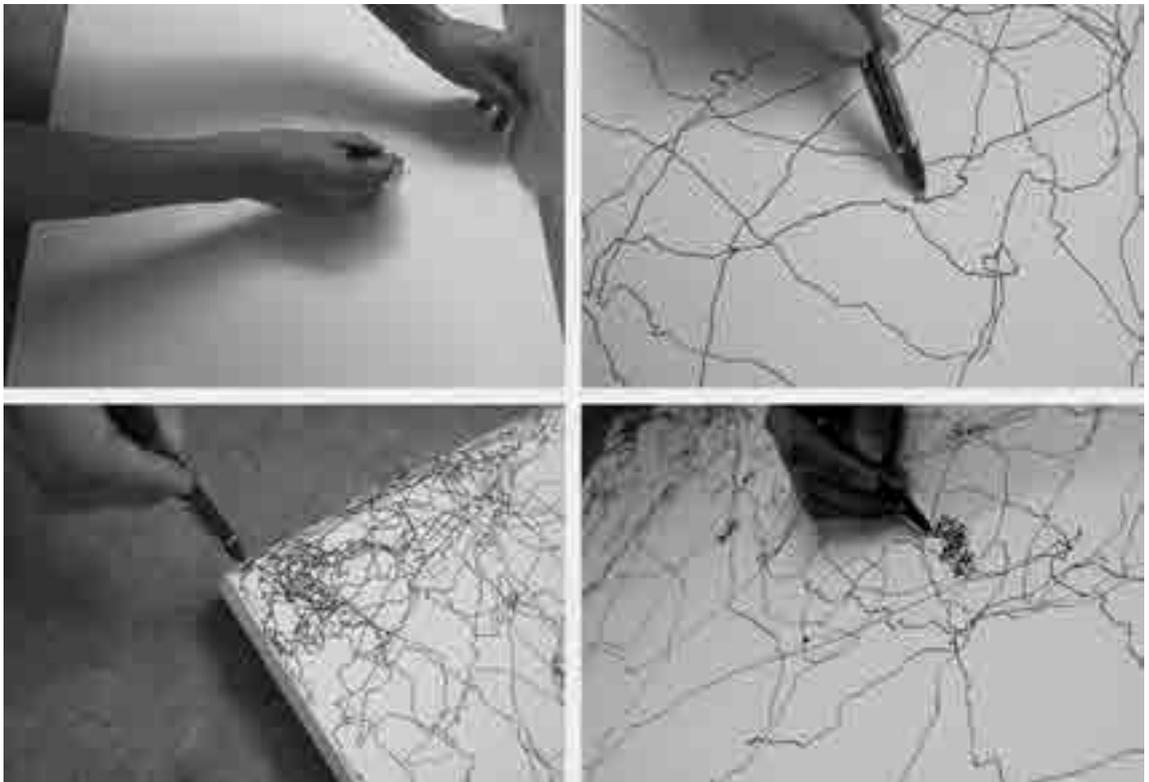
Beijing [ill. 170]

30<sup>th</sup> day [*Puzzled Trace*]

July 2010

Using a pen, the artist traces the shape of a crawling bug. The image is like a riddle. [ill. 171]

24-27 July 2010: “The Second Changsha Live Art Festival” is held at the New Millennium Time Contemporary Art Centre in Changsha, Hunan province.<sup>65</sup>



Zhou Bin

30<sup>th</sup> day [*Puzzled Trace*]

July 2010

Beijing [ill. 171]

September 2010: Liu Bolin conducts [*Hiding in the City-Supermarket*] in Beijing. Liu Bolin stands still in a green outfit. His assistant helps him paint his body until it gradually becomes the same as the background. The process takes 3 to 5 hours. [ill. 172]



Liu Bolin  
[*Hiding in the City-Supermarket*]  
September 2010  
Beijing [ill. 172]

10 October 2010: He Yunchang performs [*One Metre Democracy*] at his studio in Caochangdi Art District Beijing. The artist slashes a one-meter long, 0.5 to 1 centimeter deep wound from below his clavicle to the right side of his body below the knee with the help of a doctor and without anesthesia. Before the slashing operation, there is a simulated plebiscite on whether to perform it or not. More than 20 people participate in the secret ballot without knowing the situation. The result is 12 in favor, 10 against, and 3 abstentions. <sup>66</sup>[ill. 173]

He Yunchang  
[*One Meter Democracy*]

10 October 2010

Artist's studio in Caochangdi Art District, Beijing [ill. 173]



8-14 December 2010: “Guangzhou Live” is held at the 53 Art Museum in Guangzhou, Guangdong province. This is an international performance art festival curated by Jonas Stampe and jointly hosted by the 53 Museum and the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts Committee. Jonas Stampe’s intention for Guangzhou Live is to establish Guangzhou on the international contemporary art circuit.

During the one-week festival, 30 artists from 15 countries present their art combining notion and body as well as poetic and imaginative performances. The artists also give lectures and run workshops and meetings, aiming to strengthen the communication between arts from different geographic regions and to promote meaningful dialogue between artists. Some of the artists have witness and experience the development of Western post-war art while the others are regarded as a new generation of artists who have dedicated themselves to the exploration of performance art.

30 foreign artists participate in the festival. Duan Yingmei (China/ Germany), Stein Henningsen (Norway), Brian Connolly (UK), Nadia Capitaine (France), Ng Fongchao (Macao China), Chen Jin (China), Maurice Blok (Netherlands), Mari Novotny-Jones (USA), Xiao Maizi (China), Joakim Stampe (Sweden), Ge Ya (China), Demosthenes Agrafiotis (Greece), Johanna Householder (Canada), Zhou Bin (China), John Court (UK), Bill Drummond

(UK), Alastair MacLennan (Ireland), Kurt Johannessen (Norway), Roi Vaara (Finland), Julien Blaine (France), Valentin Torrens (Spain), He Chengyao (China), Boris Nieslony (Germany), Irma Optimist (Finland), Tran Luong (Vietnam), Peter Baren (Netherlands), Loïc Connanski (France), Wen Yau (Hong Kong, China), Barbara Sturm (Switzerland), Sylvette Babin (Canada).

Boris Nieslony, a well-respected German artist, who was one of the founders of early 80s international performance art and the founder of Black Market International, presents his unique, mysterious and poetic performance at the Guangzhou Live festival. Yingmei Duan performs [*To Add One Metre to An Anonymous Mountain (90s)*] – one of the milestones in Chinese history of contemporary art.<sup>67</sup>

2010: Dai Guangyu is invited to present [*Memory Lost*], a performance installation at Grand Palais, Paris. Dai Guangyu kneels on a white table, writing consecutive numbers from 1 onwards. When he arrives at number 64, two bystanders, dressed in Ku Klax Klan outfits, begin spraying the scene with black ink. The performance finishes when the setting turns from white to black. When Dai Guangyu leaves the scene, a golden number 64 is revealed in his place. 64 is the Chinese way of writing 4th June, a direct reference to the 89 pro-democracy movement. [ill. 174.]



Dai Guangyu  
*[Memory Lost]*  
2010  
Grand Palais, Paris [ill. 174]



2010: Dai Guangyu presents [*Flexible-Type Printing*] at the Grand Palais in Paris. Two artists dressed as Ku Klux Klan members lift Dai Guangyu who is tied onto sheets of Xuan paper placed by the audience. Under his feet, the two Chinese characters for “beheading” became visible. The man is lifted, set down, lifted again, set down again, like a type block in flexible type printing. [ill. 175]



Dai Guangyu  
[*Flexible-Type Printing*]  
2010  
Grand Palais in Paris [ill. 175]



Dai Guangyu  
[Flexible-Type Printing]  
2010  
Grand Palais in Paris [ill. 175]

2010: There are approximately 280 art pieces in the “Ou’s Style Push-Up Series”. The artist started the “Ou’s Style Push-Up Series” in 1999 and the [That Moment] series is an integral part of the “Ou’s Style Push-Up Series”. Approximately 180 pictures are taken from the [That Moment] series and the total distance covered by the performance venue is estimated to be over 200,000 miles. The “Ou’s Style Push-Up Series” series intervened in reality, recalled history, and prolonged people’s attention and reflection on the major public events reported in the news. Ou Zhihang identifies the location where the public events took place or where the viewers or audiences of his work can be reminded of the public events. The artist then goes to the identified locations and takes photos of his naked body when he sees fit. The artist is caught by the police and security guards when he conducts some of the works and is released after he agrees to delete some of the photos.

*Ou Zhihang’s performance art work [That Moment – ‘My Dad is Li Gang’] was inspired by a news report on the “My Dad is Li Gang” incident:*

*In the evening of 16 October 2010, two female students were hit by a black Volkswagen in front of a supermarket on the campus of Hebei University. One of the two girls died in hospital. The culprit shouted: “Go ahead, sue me if you dare. My dad is Li Gang!” The driver of the Volkswagen, Li Qiming, whose father, Li Gang, is the deputy director of the local Public Security Bureau, was found guilty of drink driving. On 30 January 2011, he was sentenced to six years in jail.<sup>68</sup>[ill. 176]*

*October 2010: Ou Zhihang conducted [That Moment - Murder of Yao Jiaxin] in Xi’An.*

*[That Moment - Murder of Yao Jiaxin] was inspired*



Ou Zhihang  
[That Moment - ‘My Dad is Li Gang’]  
October 2010  
Hebei [ill. 176]

*by a news report of the murder of Yao Jiaxin:*

*On the night of 20 October 2010, Yao Jiaxin, who is studying at the Xi'an Conservatory of Music, hit a girl named Zhang Miao when driving his red Chevrolet. When he got out of his car, the girl was still alive. Worried that the girl would take down the car plate number and report the accident, he killed the victim, stabbing her eight times. When he was trying to flee, his car hit a young couple crossing the road. He was eventually captured by onlookers. However, he was released from prison shortly afterwards because the police did not*

*realize that Yao Jiaxin was guilty. On 23 October 2010, Yao confessed his crime to his parents. The medical examiner confirmed that Zhang Miao died from repeated stabbing. On 22 April 2011, Yao was sentenced to death and ordered to pay the victim's family 45498.5 RMB at the Xi'an Intermediate People's Court of First Instance. He was executed on 7 June 2011.*<sup>69</sup>[ill. 177]



Ou Zhihang  
[That Moment – 'Murder of Yao Jiaxin']  
October 2010  
Xi'an [ill. 177]

- 1 See further reference: Catalogue, Chief Editor: Xie Suzhen Cang Xin Legend (Shanxi Normal University Publishing House 2008), Catalogue Cang Xin's Mythology (Xin-Dong Cheng Publishing House).
- 2 Following an recorded interview with Weng Fen in Beijing.
- 3 See further reference: Waldemar Januszczak Beijing Swings channel four Documentary on Chinese Contemporary art 2003.
- 4 Same as 3.
- 5 See further reference:Zhu Yu: About "Performance Art" Answers to Oriental Art Magazine's Journalist's Questions. <http://review.artintern.net/html.php?id=1048> Artintern.Net.
- 6 See further reference: Yang Fan & Gu Zhenqing "Performance Art Human·Animal- Information and Theory". <http://www.mslm.com.cn/yishupinglun/show.php?itemid-1128.html> MSLM.com.
- 7 See further reference: Gu Zhenqing "Human - Animal: Beauty and Ambiguity", Nanjing Performance Art Exhibition (Taiwan, Art News 2000 Issue 7 Page 50).
- 8 Zhu Yu conducted this performance twice, he performed in Beijing for the first time and the second time was at the Second International Performance Art Festival in Chengdu in 2001.
- 9 See further reference Daniel Brine and Shu Yang China Live Reflections On Contemporary Performance Art Published by Chinese Arts Center in collaboration with Live Art UK Live Art Development Agency and Shu Yang of the DaDao Live Art Festival, Beijing. Also see video footage Wang Ni, Documentary "On the Way" attached with this Catalogue.
- 10 See USB video folder 2 year 2000 Wang Ni Documentary "On the Way" attached with this catalogue
- 11 Same as 10
- 12 Same as 10.
- 13 See USB video folder 1.7 Wang Chuyu "My Dream"; catalogue "Fuck Off Exhibition" (East Link Gallery 2000) attached with this catalogue
- 14 See catalogue "Fuck Off Exhibition" (East Link Gallery 2000)
- 15 See catalogue "Fuck Off Exhibition" (East Link Gallery 2000); video folder 1.4 Yang zhichao "Planting Grass" attached with this catalogue.
- 16 See further reference: Waldemar Januszczak Beijing Swings channel four Documentary on Chinese Contemporary art 2003; catalogue "Fuck Off Exhibition" (East Link Gallery 2000).
- 17 See USB video folder 1.5 Yin Xiaofeng "Touch Art" attached with this catalogue.
- 18 See USB video folder 1.6 He Chengyao "Open Great Wall" attached with this catalogue.
- 19 See further reference: Inward Gazes documentaries of Chinese performance art Page110 (Macao Museum of Art 2006).
- 20 See USB video folder 1.8 Zhu Gang "Reading- Hitting" attached with this catalogue.
- 21 See USB video folder 1.6 He Chengyao " 99 Needle" attached with this catalogue.

- 22 See further reference: Inward Gazes documentaries of Chinese performance art Page110 (Macao Museum of Art 2006).
- 23 See USB video folder 1.4 Yang zhichao “Ba” attached with this catalogue.
- 24 See USB video folder 1.9 Liu Jin “Blur In The Red Scarf” attached with this catalogue.
- 25 See further reference: catalogue “Ar Chang’s Persistence An Exhibition of He Yunchang’s works”, (Beijing Tokyo Art Project).
- 26 Same as 25.
- 27 Chen Guang showed this video of the performance at the “Showing Weakness” exhibition in 2005; See Catalogue of the exhibition “Showing Weakness”
- 28 See further reference: catalogue “Casting He Yunchang’s Performance work 2004 4.23-24” (Beijing Tokyo Art Project).
- 29 See USB video folder 3 of this festival “Second DaDao Live Art Festival” attached with this catalogue.
- 30 Zhu Liye showed this video of the performance at the Showing Weakness Exhibition in 2005; See Catalogue of the exhibition “Showing Weakness”.
- 31 See USB video folder 1.10 of this performance “@41” attached with this catalogue.
- 32 See USB video folder 3 year 2005 of this festival “Third DaDao Live Art Festival” attached with this catalogue.
- 33 See USB video folder 5 of this festival “ Sixth Open International Performance Art Festival” attached with this catalogue.
- 34 See further reference on this news: [www.people.com.cn](http://www.people.com.cn).
- 35 See USB video folder 1.11 of this performance Liu Chengrui “Walking Barefoot” attached with this catalogue.
- 36 Following an interview with Xiao Lu at 798 Art District in 2010; see USB video Folder 1 of this performance Xiao Lu “Sperm
- 37 Chen Jianjun conducted a series of performance works [*Post*] such as [*Guard for Air*]; [*Guard for Earth*]; [*Guard for Forest*]; [*Guard for Water*].
- 38 See USB video folder 3 of this festival “Fourth DaDao Live Art Festival” attached with this catalogue. I was invited by Shu Yang founder of DaDao Live Art Festival to curate the Fourth DaDao Live Art Festival.
- 39 See further reference: Chief Editor Pui Yin Tong. “Xing Xin 2011 A4 Artist Case Study Initiative” (A4 Contemporary Art Center 2011)
- 40 See catalogue of this event: “2007 - 2010 April 20th Guyu Act Chinese Contemporary Performance Art United Cities Exhibition”.
- 41 Same as 39.
- 42 See USB video folder 4 of this event: [*June Alliance*]. I was the hostess of this event for the first day and

about 10 undercover policeman showed up at the event, they started to questioning participants and for the safety reason the curator of the event Wang Chyu and I have left the event early.

43 See further reference: Wang Nanming, "The Rise of Critical Art – Chinese problem Situation and Theories of Liberal Society"(Nuo Zhou Culture and Art Development Ltd Published 2011); catalogue "Pain in Soul: He Chengyao's Performance Art and Video Works" (Shanghai Zendai Museum of Modern Art 2007)

44 See USB video folder 3 year 2007 of this festival: [Fifth DaDao Live Art Festival] attached with his catalogue.

45 See USB video folder 1.12 of this performance: Xing Xin [*Kids of Workers*]; further reference: Chief Editor Pui Yin Tong. "Xing Xin 2011 A4 Artist Case Study Initiative" (A4 Contemporary Art Center 2011).

46 See further reference: "2007 - 2010 April 20th Guyu Act Chinese Contemporary Performance Art United Cities Exhibition".

47 See further reference: Catalogue Qian Ti Performance Art Festival.

48 See USB video folder 1.11 of this performance: Liu Chengrui [*Guazi Moves Earth 3*] attached with this catalogue".

49 See catalogue Changa Live Art Festival 1st & 2nd (New Millennium Center for Contemporary Art 2011).

50 See further reference: <http://arttattler.com/commentaryheyunchang.html>  
<http://en.artintern.net/index.php/review/main/html/4/1007>.

51 See USB video folder 1.12 of this performance Xing Xin [*Free and Easy Wandering*] attached with this catalogue; further reference: Chief Editor Pui Yin Tong "Xing Xin 2011 A4 Artist Case Study Initiative" (A4 Contemporary Art Center 2011).

52 See USB video folder 1.12 of this performance [*My Hand Caressed My Head in Cage for Three Days and Three Nights*]; further reference: Chief Editor Pui Yin Tong "Xing Xin 2011 A4 Artist Case Study Initiative" (A4 Contemporary Art Center 2011).

53 See USB Video folder 1.12 of this performance [*Send Xing Xin under Escort*] attached with this catalogue; further reference: Chief Editor Pui Yin Tong "Xing Xin 2011 A4 Artist Case Study Initiative" (A4 Contemporary Art Center 2011).

54 See further reference: <http://wiki.artintern.net/index.php?doc-view-6188>  
<http://www.artnow.com.cn/Discuss/Special/SpecialArticle.aspx?c=744&ArticleID=23306>.

55 See catalogue of this event: "2007 - 2010 April 20th Guyu Act Chinese Contemporary Performance Art United Cities Exhibition".

56 See further reference: Catalogue Qian Ti Performance Art Festival.

57 See USB video folder 1.12 of this performance: Xing Xin [*Black Box*] attached with this catalogue.

58 See further reference: [http://epaper.dfdaily.com/dfzb/html/2009-08/17/content\\_152823.htm](http://epaper.dfdaily.com/dfzb/html/2009-08/17/content_152823.htm); <http://blog>.

artintern.net/blog/articleinfo/guanyizhao/59664; <http://wangyuanxiu.blogbus.com/logs/55793778.html>; “Fan Run Run” Talks about Education Live in Public Lecture? Performance Art From News SC.org - Chengdu Evening Paper: <http://blog.artintern.net/blogs/articleinfo/flower/53847> Artintern.Net

59 See further reference: “Warm Winter” Photo Record - Zhengyang Creative Art Zone Opening: <http://blog.artintern.net/blogs/articleinfo/gegeart/78884> Artintern.Net.

60 See further reference: Wu hong’s blog, <http://blog.artintern.net/blogs/index/wuhong>

61 See further reference: Catalogue Qian Ti Performance Art Festival; <http://news.163.com/special/00013A7D/qiantiyishu.html>;

62 Same as 61.

63 See USB video folder 1.12 of this performance: Xing Xin [*Meditation on Floating Ice*] attached with this catalogue; further reference: Chief Editor Pui Yin Tong “Xing Xin 2011 A4 Artist Case Study Initiative” (A4 Contemporary Art Center 2011).

64 See further reference: <http://blog.artintern.net/blogs/articleinfo/oufayishujie/104599>  
[http://www.szarts.cn/news/410397\\_7.html](http://www.szarts.cn/news/410397_7.html)

65 See USB video folder 5 of this festival: [*Changsa Live Art Festival 2010*] attached with this catalogue.

66 See further reference: [www.oneartone.com/news/?p=3944](http://www.oneartone.com/news/?p=3944) 2011-1-23.

67 See further reference: <http://www.artda.cn/www/21/2010-12/4657.html>; <http://www.guangzhoulive.org/>.

68 See further reference on the news: <http://baike.baidu.com>; [www.news.ifeng.com](http://www.news.ifeng.com).

69 See further reference on the news: <http://baike.baidu.com>; [www.news.ifeng.com](http://www.news.ifeng.com).



## Conclusion

### A Personal Note to Conclude the Research

As set out in the introduction of this report, the research journey started with a British TV program made in 2003 and has taken many years to reach the point of bringing this investigation to a conclusion.

The decision of living in China and being part of the performance artists' community has been a life enriching experience and the performance artists together with many of their performance art pieces have already formed a part of me.

I am pleased to see many mini breakthroughs towards the long-standing prejudice attitude towards performance art. Performance art has often been perceived or linked to anti-social behaviour but, as China develops, performance art is being reviewed with a more open-minded attitude and at times is appreciated. Evidently, a number of performance art shows have been reported on mainstream media recently and I am very hopeful that the performance art scene will continue to flourish. I am equally hopeful that perhaps in another twelve years time, a younger and braver researcher will come up with a refreshed version of this catalogue.

### Research Achievements and Contributions

This research has captured twenty-two years of performance art which has been divided into three periods:

From 1979 to 1989	The emerging stage of Performance Art in Post-Cultural Revolution China
From 1990 to 1999	The developmental stage of Performance Art during a time of rigorous socio-economic reform
From 2000 to 2010	The period of rapid growth of Performance Art as China is exposed to global influences

Over the course of this research, a total of over one hundred performance art exhibitions and festivals have been recorded with over two thousand photographs and several hundreds of hours of video footage having been collected.

In addition to the efforts made in preserving the data of these Chinese performance art pieces with their historical value, the research has also stimulated the development of academic research in this

field and, more importantly, has promoted positive attention from the wider community.

## **A Comprehensive Collection of Performance Art Data**

Although performance art has achieved an increasing amount of recognition during recent years as China has become more open both economically and socially, performance art as well as the artists has only just started to be considered as one of the mainstream art forms in China. It is only after the popularisation of social media applications, such as WeChat and WhatsApp, used as a means of communication that performance art has been captured and shared in a more complete and organised manner.

The materials of the performance art included in this research are however not part of this social media trend. In fact, part of the research finding is that very often the underlining message artists aim to deliver often involves politically sensitive thoughts and as such, measures have been taken by the artists to manage, reduce or avoid media exposure. As a consequence, many performance art pieces have only been propagated through photographs, videos and words. As only a limited number of performance artists in the 80s could either afford or had access to video cameras, the performance art pieces dating from this period were mainly recorded through photographs. Unfortunately, not all the photographs and videos taken at the time met the level of quality required for this research.

Significant efforts have been made to not only collect and restore some of the photographs and video footage, but also to select the materials to be included in this catalogue. A key assessment criterion in determining whether or not an event should be included in this research lies in the impact the event created on the artist as well as the impact it made on other performance artists and their subsequent performance pieces. As such, this has helped demonstrate the relevance between the different performance art pieces.

There are circumstances where multiple photographs were collected for a single performance art event. The photographs were either arranged to show the chronological build up or development of the event. In the case of combinations of photographs not clearly setting out the chronological sequence of the performance art event, a brief description based on an interview and/or the academic or public records has, if available, been added so as to link the photographs together and thus more clearly reconstructing the event.

The video footage of the performance art events has been edited with the aim of helping to explain as well as to project the thoughts of the various performance artists. As some of the footage was sourced as part of a full performance festival sometimes stretching over the course of four weeks, the video footage has been edited to only include the relevant performances in the appendix of the catalogue. A

total of 200 minutes of edited video footage has been included in this catalogue to provide first hand and often exclusive coverage of fifteen selected performance art events.

The following research association and art archive centres have already shown an interest in exploring further partnership in developing the Chinese performance art archives:

- Franklin Furnace Archive (United States)
- The Live Art Archives Bristol University (UK)
- Live Art Development Agency (UK)
- Independent Archive & Resource (Singapore)
- Asia Art Archive (Hong Kong)
- Macao Museum of Art Performance Art Archive (Macao)
- China Modern Art Archive, Beijing University (China)
- The Center of International Performance Art Research (China)

### **Development in Academic Research on Chinese Performance Art**

As China continues to gain importance and emerges as one of the next global superpowers, its interaction with the rest of the world is becoming increasingly globalised and it is receptive to new ideas. Global topics, such as environmental protection, have started to make an impact on the creative thoughts of performance artists. The unique chemistry between the Chinese social-economic developments and the corresponding reactions from performance artists has triggered unprecedented interest from the Chinese as well as from the international academic research circle. What follows would be fostering the blossoming of performance art with this research, to an extent, promoting the public discussion of performance art and also encouraging a more positive mentality towards performance art. If criticism on performance art were to attain true academic value, there would be a need for precise professional information with clear and systematic organisation. The materials collected in this research have evidently started to help a number of academic organisations and scholars on their pursuits.

Towards the later part of the research process, I received enquiries and invitations from renowned universities, such as Fudan University and Sichuan Art University, regarding the history of the development of Chinese performance art as some of the artists whose works have been included in this catalogue have been teaching at or have a close collaboration with these universities. I have also made presentations to share some of the materials collected with researchers of a number of art research centres. It was unexpected that the sharing of these performance art pieces, especially those

dating from 1990 to 1999 that often include sensitive political topics, could be made openly at a public forum.

Many of the performance art festivals have developed to include technical and academic discussion sessions or workshops as part of the overall event program. As such, I have been invited to address certain topics - one of the most frequently discussed topics is related to how Chinese performance artists use their body and space to express their artistic thoughts - that are related to this research.

In addition to receiving local Chinese interest, I have also been approached by overseas scholars, for example from Germany, Mexico, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, to share with them the history of the development of Chinese performance art and to discuss the future trend for further progress under the rapid growth of China.

It is anticipated that these interests will increasingly grow as Chinese performance art takes up a more prominent role in the general development of art.

### **Positive Attention From the Public**

An observation gathered from this research has been that Chinese performance artists have gradually expanded the mediums used to express their artistic ideas. Internet based social media tools, video, film, poetry, theatre, music, dance, architecture, literature and painting as well as slides and narratives have been considered and adopted to formulate the artists' work. Some performance artists who have gained international experience by participating in world class art festivals such as the Venice Biennials are exploring new ways to execute their ideas.

The above developments coupled with the phenomenon that many of the performance art works have shifted away from heavily political and sensitive topics, has meant that this art form has become more approachable for the general public and even for the Chinese authorities.

Reports on performance art festivals and art pieces have been made on mainstream media. When performance art events are reported, there is often the need for the reporters to understand the artists and their art works. However, as the ideas conveyed and the medium used to communicate these ideas are new to the reporters, they have to look for assistance to interpret them. I have been introduced to help some of these reporters and this research work has formed a sound basis to enable the reporters to understand and sometimes even appreciate performance art pieces. Close collaboration has been established over the course of this research with popular Chinese media such as 99 Art website, Artintern, Art News and Tencent News.

The increasing interest of the public has also caught the attention of a number of art organisations across China. For instance, Fengmian Art space, a Guangzhou based Art Foundation, has set aside funds to support the Center of International Performance Art Research, a Beijing based research center dedicated to the archiving of Chinese and international performance art.

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