

Comparative Aesthetics in Transnational Perspective
The Ninth International Forum on Marxist Aesthetics

Comparative Aesthetics in Transnational Perspective

9th International Forum on Marxist Aesthetics

12-14 April 2021
Durham University, UK



Organised by:

The School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Durham University, UK
College of Media and International Culture, Zhejiang University, China

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Conference Contact and Inquiries:

Yang Zhou (yang.zhou2@durham.ac.uk), UK
Zhengzhi Zhao (13697007146@163.com), China

Comparative Aesthetics in Transnational Perspective
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Conference Programme
(based on UK time)

Monday, 12 April

9:00-10:00 Opening Ceremony

Chair	Dr Qing Cao , Durham University
Speakers	Prof Claire O'Malley , Pro-Vice Chancellor, Durham University
	Prof Lianzhen He , Vice President, Zhejiang University
	Prof Janet Stewart , Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Durham University
	Prof Jonathan Long , Head of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Durham University

10:00-11:00 Keynote Session I

Chair	Prof Claudia Nitschke , Durham University
Speakers	Dr Michael Sanders , University of Manchester <i>The "Cultivated Imagination as a Condition Precedent for Revolutionary Class-Struggle": Tommy Jackson on the Value of Classic 'Bourgeois' Fiction</i>
	Prof Jie Wang , Deputy Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Zhejiang University, Vice-president of Chinese Association for Aesthetics. <i>Conceptual Framework of Aesthetic Modernity in China</i>

11:00-12:00 Coffee break

12:00-14:30 Keynote Session II

Chair	Dr Armida de la Garza , University College Cork
Speakers	Prof Jun Ding , Hangzhou Normal University <i>The Interaction amongst Aesthetic Ideals, Needs and Practices and the Spiritual Core: A Study of Karl Marx's Late Aesthetics</i>
	Prof Jianjiang Wang , Shanghai Normal University <i>Transformation of "Aesthetic Modernity" Theories with Bie-Modernism</i>
	Prof Arnold Berleant , Long Island University, Past President of the International Association for Aesthetics <i>The Conflict of Traditions</i>
	Prof Harold P. Sjursen , New York University <i>The Humanity of Chinese Painting from Benjamin's Perspective</i>
	Prof Tyrus Miller , University of California, Irvine <i>George Lukács's Dramaturgical Marxism: History, Tragedy, and Action</i>

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Tuesday 13 April

6:00-8:00 Plenary Session I

Chair	Prof Feng Zhou , Zhejiang Shuren University
Speakers	Prof Yang Lu , Fudan University <i>The Metamorphosis of Richard Shusterman</i>
	Prof Xuguang Liu , Shanghai University <i>On Marxist Methodology and Discourse in Art Studies</i>
	Prof Long Li , Jilin University <i>Understanding 'Meta-politics' in Aesthetics</i>
	Prof Jun Zhu , Shanghai Normal University <i>Shanghai Spleen: Urban Poetics and Aesthetic Modernity: from Shinkankakuha to Wang Hongtu</i>
	Prof Qingben Li , Hangzhou Normal University <i>Cross-Cultural Construction of the Chinese Discourse on Aesthetics</i>
	Prof Jianwen Yu , Zhejiang University <i>An Exploration of Aesthetic Modernity in the Post-Pandemic Era</i>
	Q&A – 10 Minutes

8:00-8:10 Coffee break

8:10-10:10 Plenary Session II

Chair	Prof Long Li , Jilin University
Speakers	Prof Jun Zeng , Shanghai University <i>Chinese Factors in the Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory</i>
	Prof Ziye Zhang , Chief Editor, <i>Cultural China</i> . <i>Contextual Dislocation and Value Conflicts in Aesthetic Modernity</i>
	Prof Lizhe An , National Academy of Arts, China <i>From One of the Plurals to Singular: Reflections on Aesthetic Modernity in the Function of Folk Art</i>
	Prof Yongxiong Mai , Guangxi Normal University <i>Aesthetic Modernity: On Donald Keene's "Japanese Aesthetics"</i>
	Prof Jinghua Guo , Hangzhou Normal University <i>Aesthetics in classic Liangzhu cultural symbols</i>
	Prof Wei Feng , Chinese Federation of Literary and Art Publishing House <i>The Construction of Art Criticism: On the Neoptolemus Metaphor</i>
	Q&A – 10 Minutes

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10:10-11:10 Plenary Session III

Chair	Prof David Margolies , Goldsmiths, University of London
Speakers	Prof Petra Leutner , Fresenius University <i>Conflict and Dialogue of Cultures in the Field of Fashion</i>
	Dr Heiko Feldner , Cardiff University To be confirmed
	Prof Ching Lin Pang , Katholieke Universiteit Leuven <i>Engaging Art at the Crossroads of Authenticity and Conviviality in Everyday Urban Encounters: The Case of Recyclart</i>
Q&A – 10 Minutes	

11:10-12:00 Coffee break

12:00-14:00 Plenary Session IV

Chair	Prof Andy Byford , Durham University
Speakers	Prof Semir Zeki , University College London <i>A Neuroaesthetics Look at Guernica</i>
	Prof Zhuofei Wang , Universität Hildesheim <i>Creativity and Mimesis: Artistic Creation in Chinese and European Perspectives</i>
	Prof Alexander Petrov , St. Petersburg State University <i>The Conflict and Dialogue of Civilizations: Theory and Methodology of Historical Sociology in Civilization Studies</i>
	Prof Michael Rowlands , University College London <i>Reconsidering Heritage, Memory and the Postcolonial Museum</i>
	Prof Curtis Carter , Marquette University <i>The Art Museum in Changing Times</i>
	Prof Jifang Duan , South China Normal University. <i>Aesthetics and Politics: Trend of Contemporary Critical Theory within Left-Wing Aesthetics</i>
Q&A – 10 minutes	

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Wednesday 14 April

6:00-8:00 Plenary Session V

Chair	Prof Daqiao Wang , Lanzhou University
Speakers	Prof Hui Dai , Shaanxi Normal University <i>Modern Science and the Ideal of Disciplinane Nietzsche's Comments on Science</i>
	Prof Li Xiang , Yunnan University <i>Aesthetic Capital and Criticism of Aesthetic Capitalism</i>
	Prof Chengzhu Cao , Shandong University <i>Raymond Williams and the Close Reading Tradition in British Marxist Literary Criticism</i>
	Prof Yifei Luo , Zhejiang University of Finance & Economics <i>Usable "Past Culture": The Trend of "Re-Sinification of Nostalgic Aesthetics" in Contemporary Chinese Art</i>
	Prof Qiong Xiao , Zhejiang University of Media and Communications <i>Termination or Defence: The Future of Humanism in the Age of Posthumanism</i>
	Prof Liangcong Zhang , Yangtze Normal University <i>Key Issues and the Structure of Classical Marxist Aesthetics in China</i>
	Q&A – 10 minutes

8:00-8:10 Coffee break

8:10-9:10 Plenary Session VI

Chair	Prof Yongxiong Mai , Guangxi Normal University
Speakers	Prof Zhenjiang Han , Dalian University of Technology <i>Messianic Time and Historical Materialism: On the Left-Wing Radicalism in Agamben's Philosophy</i>
	Prof Wei Song , Northeastern University <i>Art and Society: Features and Problems in Chinese Marxist Art Theory in 100 Years</i>
	Prof Feng Zhou , Zhejiang Shuren University <i>"Red Classics" and Faith – On Heroic Sons and Daughters</i>
	Q&A – 10 minutes

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9:10-11:10 Plenary Session VII

Chair	Prof Lut Lam , Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Speakers	Prof Tani E. Barlow , Rice University To be confirmed
	Prof David Margolies , Goldsmiths, University of London <i>Hollow Aesthetics in Western Culture</i>
	Prof Yushui Liang , Jilin University <i>Praxis- Intelligent History and Marxist Aesthetic Hermeneutics: On Aesthetic Praxis, Neuro-aesthetics and others</i>
	Prof Bihui Xu , Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences <i>Enlightenment and the Unbearable Heaviness of Aesthetic Modernity in China</i>
	Dr Jie Jia , Institute of Literature, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences <i>The Application of "Critical Credit" in Global Public Health Emergencies</i>
	Prof Zhen Zhao , Zunyi Normal University <i>A Study of Contemporary Fantasy Literature: from the West to China</i>
	Q&A – 10 minutes

11:10-12:00 Coffee break

12:00-14:00 Plenary Session VIII

Chair	Prof Fugui Zhang , Jilin University
Speakers	Prof Caiyong Wang , Fudan University <i>Walter Benjamin and Marxism</i>
	Dr Jun Hu , Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences <i>Intellectual Pleasure in Reconstituting Aesthetic Modernity: Interpreting Cai Yi's Theory of Aesthetics from the Perspective of Neuroscience</i>
	Dr Yongjian Wang , Institute of Anthropological Art, The Chinese Academy of Art <i>Practices, Reflections and Inspirations from Artistic Intervention in Community Building in Japan</i>
	Dr Xiaochuan Xie , Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences <i>On Divinity's Functions in Hegel's Philosophy of Art</i>
	Prof Dingjia Chen , Chinese Academy of Social Sciences To be confirmed
	Prof Xin Liu , Yan'an University <i>Aesthetics of Slowness: The Slowing Turn in Aesthetic Modernity in Post-Pandemic Culture</i>
	Q&A – 10 minutes

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14:00-14:30 Conference Q&A and Discussion

Chair	Prof Jie Wang , Deputy Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Zhejiang University, Vice-president of Chinese Association for Aesthetics
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14:30-15:00 Closing Ceremony

Chair	Dr Qing Cao , Durham University
Speakers	Prof Arnold Berleant , Long Island University, Past President of the International Association for Aesthetics
	Prof Long Li , Jilin University.
	Prof Jie Wang , Deputy Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Zhejiang University



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Paper Abstracts

(in the alphabetical order of authors' surnames)

The Conflict of Traditions

Arnold Berleant

Abstract: A clear difference in thought pervades the overall tenor of Western and Asian ways of thinking about the world. The predominant philosophical view in the West goes back to Plato in his division between the world of the senses and the realm of Forms. Such dualistic thinking became more polarized in the work of his follower, Plotinus, and it has dominated the Western mind ever since, although beginning in the seventeenth century, a contrasting, monistic conception emerged. This Western model contrasts sharply with the dominant philosophical view in Asia as expressed in doctrines associated with Taoism and Buddhism that emphasizes the unity of all existence. This presentation will offer a brief survey of representative thinkers and claims of both traditions.

Raymond Williams and the Close Reading Tradition in British Marxist Literary Criticism

Chengzhu Cao

Abstract: The cultural theory represented by Raymond Williams is undoubtedly one of the main contributions of British Marxist criticism. However, the initial focus of this theory is not to construct but to dissolve the theory, including the simple correspondence between ideology, worldview and literary works, as well as the simple correspondence between the economic base and superstructure. The way of dissolving theory is to return to the literary presence in a historic way, thus showing the subtle connection between a fresh, alive literary experience and the process of cultural change and social development. The Close reading and explication of literary works is the basis and clue of cultural theory, and also the most vivid and enlightening part of it. It's first due to the legacy of the British literary criticism, represented by F. R. Leavis. At the same time, British Marxist theorists such as Raymond Williams contributed a lot by absorbing and improving these skills. We can say that close reading may not be a conscious theoretical contribution, but a valuable theoretical experience of British Marxist literary criticism.

Keywords: British Marxist literary criticism; Raymond Williams; F. R. Leavis; close reading

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The Art Museum in Changing Times

Curtis L. Carter

Abstract: The social climates of the museum today differ from the times of revolutionary fervour that opened the doors of the Louvre in Paris in 1793 to audiences curious and seeking knowledge but lacking the experience necessary for appreciating and understanding museum art of the great masters. The problems of museums in our age also differ from the crisis of the museum in Russia at the beginning of the Twentieth century when the Constructivists, who aimed to transform the museum into a living laboratory for the worker artists, gained control of the museums with plans to replace art in the museum with their own machine inspired constructions. Artists today have offered their critique of museum practices, but do not envision replacing the art or the public audiences. However, today's art museums serve in social climates where traditional roles for the museum as a repository for cultural artifacts with the responsibility to care for and exhibit art for the benefit of the public, is called into question on many levels. At the core of such questioning is the role of museum curatorship, representation of cultural diversity in collections, exhibitions, and staffing, and their relation to politics in the wider society. What roles, for example, might the museum play in shaping the identities of diverse communities, and in interpreting diverse cultural identities? Should the museum assume an activist or advocacy position? If so, how does this affect the independence of its contributions to knowledge?

Modern Science and the Ideal of Disciplinarity
Nietzsche's Comments on Science

Hui Dai

Abstract: Nietzsche's comments on modern science are parts of his work of interpreting human history. The will to power, by which science and its truths become tools for servicing the fight of life, is Nietzsche's ultimate understanding of Life-World. Theory is the existential form of the theorist. It has been represented as the ideal of divinity. But it degenerates into the will eager for nihilism in the end.

Keywords: Enlightenment; the ideal of disciplinarity; the will of truth

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The Aesthetic Dimension of Liangzhu Cultural Heritage Symbol

Jinghua Guo

Abstract: Liangzhu Archaeological Site, located in Hangzhou Zhejiang Province, was selected as a World Heritage Site in 2019. It serves as the world recognized material evidence of the '5000 years of Chinese civilization'. The cultural memory of Liangzhu period depends on the representation of many symbols, among which the Deity and Animal Mask Motif is the most typical representative. The paper interprets this cultural totem which has rich connotation, high generalization and abstract expression, as well as analyses it in cross-media writings. The memory of Liangzhu culture has effectively enhanced the cultural identity of contemporary Chinese people, and is also an important window to show the world the time-honoured Chinese civilization. As an innovative transformation of Liangzhu culture, the image symbol of 'the Deity and Animal Mask Motif' in Liangzhu not only protects the root of Chinese civilization, but also shows a strong vitality and makes a unique contribution to spreading the connotation of Liangzhu cultural heritage and the value of The Times.

**Intellectual Pleasure in Reconstituting Aesthetic Modernity:
Interpreting Cai Yi's Theory of Aesthetics
from the Perspective of Neuroscience**

Jun Hu

Abstract: Aesthetic modernity in perceptual against rational enlightenment modernity, this is the correction and reflection on the instrumental rationality, excessive rationality, but modernism, post-modernism gradually developed to the pursuit of pleasure of sensual feelings, desires to run mental pleasure, the aesthetic evolution of 'new sensibility', 'pan-aesthetic', has deviated from the purpose of the aesthetic itself. The aesthetic process should be a combination of sensibility and rationality, cognition and emotion. Aesthetic experience is not sensual pleasure, but a kind of intellectual pleasure. We try to reconstruct aesthetic modernity with intellectual pleasure, create a beautiful art world with the latitude of beauty, promote the beautiful state of human spirit, and design a beautiful future of human life.

Keywords: aesthetic modernity; sensibility; rationality; Intellectual pleasure

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The Application of 'Critical Credit' in Global Public Health Emergencies

Jie Jia

Abstract: This thesis seeks to understand the social roots of the global pandemic of COVID-19 and other relevant issues by taking a panoramic retrospection and investigation of the pandemic, which can be carried out from two perspectives: bureaucratism and the freedom of speech. Human species have been living with a contradiction between order and freedom. From the events of this pandemic, it's not surprising to discover that only through the constructive criticism can we keep away from the risk of it. In the author's opinion, it's necessary to take 'complete argumentation' as the basic criterion to construct social 'criticism credit system' in the digital age, so as to guarantee the normalization of constructive criticism and the sustainable development of good governance. The author believes that the criticism credit system will be a huge boost for the construction of intelligent democracy, and the achievement of intelligent democracy in human society will certainly contribute to jointly build a community of common destiny for all mankind.

Keywords: tragedy, bureaucratism, free speech, criticism credit

Conflict and Dialogue of Cultures in the Field of fashion

Petra Leutner

Abstract: The lecture deals with the question of how, on the one hand, the Western fashion system has been able to establish itself as an independent, critical authority vis-à-vis religion and politics and stands for aesthetic freedom, but on the other hand, it has also installed certain exclusion criteria that ensure that a dominant aesthetic culture can assert itself. The problem to be discussed is at what point new regionalisms, foreign cultures or subcultures can even get involved. Today's autonomous fashion system will be described in the first step in order to work out its characteristics. The lecture uses examples to illustrate how political or youth-cultural aspects migrate into fashion, but only act there as aesthetic quotations and ornaments without still being virulent in their original meaning. The semiotic transformation process that takes place in this way is quite comparable to corresponding processes in the autonomous art system. However, in contrast to art, fashion has a strong impact on the realm of individual and habitual self-construction and in this sense must also be considered under psychological and sociological aspects. In a second step, examples of ruptures that have actually shaken the Western fashion system are named. Currently, these include fashion trends such as Modest Fashion or the problem of postcolonial critique.

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Yang Zhou (yang.zhou2@durham.ac.uk), UK
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Understanding 'Meta-politics' in Aesthetics

Long Li

Abstract: the political philosophy of Rancière and Badiou provides us with a new understanding of 'meta-politics', which leads us to think about the meta-politics of aesthetics. Kant's questioning of 'what is human' established the meta-politics of modern aesthetics. As far as general aesthetics is concerned, aesthetics refers to the generation, liberation and freedom of human being. But there are two problems in contemporary aesthetics: first, it ignores the premise of Kant's aesthetics, that is, the idea of 'world citizen'. Secondly, in the sense of Marxist aesthetics, aesthetics refers to the construction of a free community. Therefore, how to construct a new form of subject and community constitutes the meta-politics of contemporary aesthetics.

Keywords: meta-politics of aesthetics; community; subject

Cross-Cultural Construction of the Chinese Discourse on Aesthetics

Qingben Li

Abstract: The term 'aesthetics' was introduced into China from the West through Japan. But The important contribution of Wang Guowei to modern Chinese aesthetics is that he integrated western aesthetic terms into the construction of Chinese aesthetic discourse and established a new paradigm of cross-cultural aesthetics. Wang Guowei's 'theory of tragedy' is a cross-cultural construction using western theoretical terms, while his 'theory of state' is a cross-cultural construction using ancient Chinese theoretical terms and western theories, 'Guya theory' is a new theoretical term created by him according to the actual situation of Chinese aesthetics, which is expounded by Chinese and Western theories and constructed cross-culturally. These are the three forms of Wang Guowei's cross-cultural construction of Chinese aesthetic discourse.

Praxis- Intelligent History and Marxist Aesthetic Hermeneutics: On Aesthetic Praxis, Neuro-aesthetics and Others

Yushui Liang

Abstract: Since the 1950s and 1960s, the study of contemporary Chinese Marxist aesthetics has generally regarded 'practice' as the anthropological stipulation of aesthetic occurrence, namely 'material productive labour of making and using tools', and carried out aesthetic research from the Practice point of view. Based on this, the practical anthropological aesthetics studies 'human nature' and its free nature-oriented as the essence of beauty and aesthetic value. This 'popular view' has a certain degree of philosophical hermeneutic value, and has constructive significance and influence on the basic principles of contemporary Chinese Marxist aesthetics.

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However, with the dialectic and in-depth understanding of Marxist philosophy and the rapid development of modern biology, psychology, especially the brain science represented by cognitive neuroscience, the research horizon and ideological space of Marxist philosophy and aesthetics are constantly updated. The arrival of the era of human intelligence has promoted the 'intelligence' problem to the era of science and technology, life, thought and Cultural themes. We live in an increasingly 'being intelligent' world, and our lives and experiences are constantly being reshaped.

All of these need us to take the Marxist historical materialism as the guidance, on the basis of practical historical materialism and Practical Anthropology, respond to the times, and systematically expound the ideas of 'intellectual historical materialism' and 'intelligent anthropology'. The understanding of 'human nature' needs the regulation of 'intelligent anthropology', and the human history needs the philosophical understanding and ideological elucidation of 'intellectual historical materialism'. The emergence and development of human intelligence, the intelligent structure formed by its 'evolution' and 'differentiation', and the continuous shaping of the world by 'artificial intelligence' which is 'externalized' through science, technology and engineering, is of great importance to our understanding of the occurrence of beauty, the aesthetic problems in the era of artificial intelligence, the construction of contemporary aesthetic principles and the future aesthetic imagination and construction. The study of 'intellectual historical materialism based on practice and new interpretation of Marxist aesthetics' will provide us with historical and scientific understanding of 'human intelligence' and 'artificial intelligence', understand 'human' and 'post human' and aesthetic issues. To a certain extent, it is a new academic promotion and growth point to the study of Marxist Aesthetics and will expand the connotation of Marxist aesthetics .it is also helpful to enrich and deepen the study of Marxist philosophy and aesthetics.

This paper takes Li Zehou's proposition of 'why practical aesthetics has not yet begun' as the starting point, and regards this proposition as an ideological event in the study of contemporary Chinese aesthetics, so as to reflect on 'Practical Aesthetics', and discuss neuroaesthetics and others. It is proposed that contemporary aesthetic research should rethink Marxist philosophy through multi-disciplinary integration methods in the new social science and natural science conditions, we should strengthen the research on the 'truth' of the 'law of beauty' such as the mechanism of aesthetic cognition and the neurobiological basis of aesthetics , expound the Marxist intelligent anthropological aesthetic view based on the Practice point of view, and promote the 'scientization' and 'modernization' of contemporary Marxist aesthetic research From the perspective of Marxist intellectual historical materialism.

Keywords: Marxism; intellectual historical materialism; intelligent anthropology; practical aesthetics; neuroaesthetics

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**Aesthetics of Slowness: The Slowing Turn in Aesthetic Modernity
in Post-Pandemic Culture**

Xin Liu, Nan Zhang

Abstract: At the beginning of the twentieth century, modernity came onto the scene with various masks. Modernity characterized by accelerated movement and speed echoes the art of the heyday of European aesthetic modernity. But on the other hand, the rapid development of modern industry blurs the perception of the present, and the public is immersed in the pleasure of speed, thus losing the ability to feel the multi-dimensional, appealing and communicating power of the current momentary emotions. The arrival of the epidemic forced this speed to a certain degree. People began to ‘gaze’ at their own era, breaking through the boundaries of learned perception and individualistic thinking. Based on this, Kopnik puts forward the aesthetic point of ‘slowing down’, indicating that a new turn has begun to appear in the accelerated development of the society, that is, through the movement and interaction of the subject in the space in the diversity of time. Momentary flow. Reflected in the field of literature, the state of ‘slowing down’ also allows creators and literary workers to re-plan aesthetic choices, and to carry out a deep sorting and writing of such an important epidemic moment in human history.

Keywords: post-epidemic; slow modernity; slow aesthetics; aesthetic representation

The Metamorphosis of Richard Shusterman

Yang Lu

Abstract: For Richard Shusterman, the essence of aesthetics is how to trace back to the core questions on perception, consciousness, and affection. In Baumgarten’s founding of aesthetics as a discipline which was defined as the perfection of perceptual recognition, there is no place for body. Kant inclined to use terms like pleasure to represent his taste judgement, but there was also no position for body in his ‘transcendental base.’ In this view, Shusterman’s personal transfiguration recorded in his *The Adventures of The Man in Gold* (2016) is a belated answer to questions as how somaesthetics could be applied to contemporary art. In short, the metamorphosis of a prestige philosopher displays in person a life aesthetics through his transformational consequences going far beyond the between the life and the art. It demonstrates once again a somaesthetic necessity between theory and practice as well.

Keywords: Shusterman, somaesthetics, *Man in Gold*, performative art

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Usable 'Past Culture': The Trend of 'Re-Sinification of Nostalgic Aesthetics' in Contemporary Chinese Art

Yifei Luo

Abstract: The focus of this essay will be on the trend of thought which exists in Chinese contemporary art world. In this essay, the author took various Chinese contemporary artists art works from various types of art cases and exhibitions to explain this phenomenon, namely, music works from composer Tan Dun, dance works from dancer Yang Liping, Ceramic artists Zhu Legeng, Tim yip clothing and aesthetic works etc, including a group of this type artists and exhibitions. Therefore, following conclusion could be drawn based on these case study. In china, it shows a kind of 're-Sinification of nostalgic aesthetics' Trend of Thought in Chinese Contemporary Art World. Tradition cultural used as a kind of 'past culture' which used in today art works. Chinese contemporary art from following west and gradually to find themselves Oriental aesthetics. Chinese artists returning from following west back to east. With a period obsessed with west in history in past years, they try to out of western style aesthetic and back to china aesthetics. Chinese aesthetics change from traditional classical aesthetics to New Oriental Aesthetic, namely, 're-Sinification of nostalgic aesthetics'. It means that Chinese contemporary art step into a golden age of 're-Sinification of nostalgic aesthetics'.

Keywords: re-Sinification; nostalgic aesthetics; past culture; Chinese contemporary art; trend of thoughts

Hollow Aesthetics in Western Culture

David Margolies

Abstract: Starting from the characterisation in the Conference theme of aesthetic experience as 'the intuition of intrinsic values', this paper will draw on an expanded reading of Marx's Preface to *A Contribution to 'The Critique of Political Economy'* to elaborate briefly on the formation of 'intrinsic values'. The paper will then attempt to explain the way increasing commercialisation of all aspects of Western culture, mediated more and more by electronic means, diminishes aesthetic responses and weakens social solidarity.

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Georg Lukács's Dramaturgical Marxism: History, Tragedy, and Action

Tyrus Miller

Abstract: As a literary scholar, the Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukacs is celebrated above all as a theorist and critic of narrative prose, especially of the European realist novel of the 19th century. This paper considers another dimension of Lukács's literary thinking: his work on European drama and the close connections he draws between the dramaturgical and the historical, particularly in the domain of the tragic, which Lukacs extends beyond literary genre to a modality of individual and collective experience and to a concept grounded in a philosophical anthropology drawing upon, especially, Aristotle, Hegel, and Marx. Through this focus on Lukács's dramaturgical concepts and critical writings on drama and the tragic, I suggest the continuities that exist between Lukács's literary, political, and philosophical writings, showing how each of these types of writing converge in common problems of character, action, and 'performative' context.

Engaging Art at the Crossroads of Authenticity and Conviviality in Everyday Urban Encounters: The Case of Recyclart

Ching Lin PANG

Abstract: In my paper I will probe aesthetics and arts as practice and performance at the crossroads of authenticity and conviviality. The paper first sets out to revisit and scrutinize the concepts of authenticity and conviviality, followed by some art practices to demonstrate how these concepts are implemented, enacted, performed and communicated in everyday urban encounters, and thereby creating a specific local context and community.

The Conflict and Dialogue of Civilizations: Theory and Methodology of Historical Sociology in Civilization Studies

Alexander Petrov

Abstract: The paper is devoted to the conflict and dialogue of modern civilizations. Interest in the study of civilizations began in the 19th century when European social scientists first became actively interested in other cultures. Europeans are faced with a different philosophy, aesthetics, and way of life. This concept focuses on the multilinearity of the development of society and culture, identifies certain types of social and cultural systems, and emphasizes their uniqueness. The civilizational theory was formed as the antithesis of the linear Eurocentric theory of social development. Already in the 20th century, historical sociology became the theoretical and methodological basis for the study of various cultures, societies and civilizations.

Keywords: civilizations, historical sociology, theory, methodology, civilization studies

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Reconsidering Heritage, Memory and the Postcolonial Museum

Michael Rowlands

Abstract: There is a growing consensus that a paradox exists that a gradual decline of historical consciousness is being met by a boom in Heritage and Memory studies. I do not mean by this to contrast objective versus subjective pasts. The paradox, I will argue, highlights on the one hand shifts in perceptions of national identities and more significantly, the paradox of remembering and forgetting. The latter highlights the significance of growing fears of loss and oblivion. The growing popularity of family DNA testing suggest this at a personal level. One of the few questionnaire-based studies (surprising how little has been done beyond this method) in Sweden suggests the interest of interviewees is not in their 'Swedeness' but a wish instead for a sense of deep past, often based in prehistory. My focus in my lecture will be on how to account for the boom in heritage and memory studies and I will focus on the museum as the most prominent site of its objectification. China, for example, now surpasses Italy in having the largest number of UNESCO World heritage sites and more museums than Europe. I cite the postcolonial museum to briefly focus on two trends. One trend is the destruction of pasts as a continuing outcome of conflicts and war. The second will be the restitution debate. By this I mean the postcolonial recognition in Europe of responsibility for past crimes and the issue of return of stolen cultural property to communities of origin.

The 'Cultivated *Imagination* as a Condition Precedent for Revolutionary Class-Struggle': Tommy Jackson on the Value of Classic 'Bourgeois' Fiction

Mike Sanders

Abstract: This paper explores the aesthetic theory developed by the English working-class autodidact (and one of the founding members of the Communist Party of Great Britain), T.A. (Tommy) Jackson (1879-1955). In particular, this paper focuses on the dual claim he makes in *Old Friends To Keep: Studies of English Novels and Novelists* (1950) concerning 'the indispensability of a cultivated imagination as a condition precedent for revolutionary class-struggle, and of the high worth of classic fiction as a means of stimulating and developing that imagination.' Therefore, Jackson identifies the aesthetic-as-process ('cultivated imagination') as a fundamental aspect of an emancipatory politics and sees the aesthetic-as-product ('classic fiction') as a way of developing that self-same imagination. This paper asks – should we take Jackson's claims seriously? It analyses Jackson's literary criticism, particularly *Old Friends To Keep* and *Charles Dickens: The Progress of a Radical* (1937), with a view to identifying both what Jackson means by the term 'cultivated imagination' and how it is developed by 'classic fiction'. The paper concludes by considering the reasons why Jackson considered the aesthetic to be a vital aspect of any attempt at social and political transformation.

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**Art and Society:
Features and Problems in Chinese Marxist Art Theory in 100 Years**

Wei Song

Abstract: As an important part of Marxism, the establishment and development of Marxist art theory is undoubtedly the most revolutionary paradigm shift of cultural thought. With his broad historical vision, sharp sense of the times, dialectical critical spirit and deep humanistic care, Marx opened a new theoretical vision of grasping the world in thought and changing the world in practice, which has a significant and far-reaching impact on the development process of human social history. Here is the revolutionary significance of Marxist art theory: based on practical materialism in philosophy and the inheritance of western aesthetics, German classical aesthetics in particular, Marx sublated traditional metaphysical aesthetics. He dialectically and organically interpreted the production and creation of culture and art and the generation and development of social history as the historical result of the 'resultant of overall forces'. All these helps establish a brand-new vision of Marxist art theory, realize the transformation reform in the history of aesthetics and art science, and produce a cultural and political aesthetics paradigm different from traditional aesthetics. Marxist art theory is still the most revolutionary, cultural and political theory in today's era. Marx's historical dialectics is still the philosophical basis and method horizon for us to construct contemporary art theory. Marx's dialectical criticism of capitalist cultural contradictions is still effective in explaining today's era, and its core proposition 'art and society' is still the cultural and political theory of today's era. It is a 'general problem' that must be faced and solved in the production of modern art. This paper holds that how to understand 'art and society' is of key decisive significance for us to review and interpret the hundred-year history of Chinese Marxist art studies. It helps us grasp and understand the theoretical essence and knowledge pedigree of Marxist art studies from the perspective of 'historical totality', so as to activate or renew the theoretical vitality of Marxist interpretation of the contemporary social and cultural issues, and to promote the contemporary development of Marxist art theory in China.

Keywords: art and society; philosophy of art history; Marxist art history; historical totality

The Humanity of Chinese Painting from Benjamin's Perspective

Harold P. Sjursen

Abstract: Two of the key concepts in the aesthetic theory of Walter Benjamin are *aura* and *denkbild*. With these notions Benjamin connects art and artworks to the feelings and expression of human emotion and to a kind of distinctively human thinking.

Conference Contact and Inquiries:

Yang Zhou (yang.zhou2@durham.ac.uk), UK
Zhengzhi Zhao (13697007146@163.com), China

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According to Benjamin works of art can embody these qualities so that, as Alfred H. Barr Jr, founding director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, once said: 'works of art are like human beings.' As John Dewey held, the work of art is not the simple expression of the artist's emotions but 'is modified as it comes to be attached to the new material.' This notion seems quintessentially Western and modern but in Benjamin's mind it was exemplified frequently in Chinese painting. One remembers, of course, that Benjamin was not a connoisseur of Chinese or any non-Western painting traditions; his ideas were born of Western sensibilities. Do Benjamin's categories of aura and denkbild nonetheless offer a useful way to think about and appreciate traditional Chinese painting? Do paintings from different cultural traditions exhibit broad differences, as Archie Baum argues, based upon contrasting metaphysical sources? Do traditional Chinese paintings express something culturally Chinese that evades Western assimilation? Or on the contrary do they better show something universally human? In exploring these questions Chinese attitudes toward copying and reproduction (山寨) and theories of aesthetic harmony as expressed by landscape (山水) will be taken into consideration.

Practices, Reflections and Inspirations from Artistic Intervention in Community Building in Japan

Yongjian Wang

Abstract: Art is the visual expression of culture and the representation of local cultural symbols. Nowadays creating new cultural landscapes through art projects has formed a new driving force for community development, and this new trend has aroused great interest among community residents. It is a process where the natural and humanistic environments of a community are inspired and utilized as resources by contemporary art and then presented as art works to promote local community development. This has inspired us in many ways. For example, we should break the traditional art display paradigm, integrate art into our daily life, activate the public effect of art, and create an international art language; respect the subjective initiative of community residents, and develop 'expert workshops' and 'resident-participating workshops'; establish a number of NPOs (non-profit organizations) for rural construction; and guarantee the orderly development of communities through legislation. Of course, in this process, we should be vigilant against communities being taken over by art and properly handle the relationship between art and local community culture and residents; be alert to the impact of contemporary art on the cultural heritage of communities and properly handle the relationship between the two; and also encourage art criticism.

Keywords: Japan; art; involvement; community revitalization; art festival

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**Creativity and Mimesis:
Artistic Creation in Chinese and European Perspectives**

Zhuofei Wang

Abstract: From an artistic point of view, creativity and mimesis essentially concern an issue of the function and role of art. In the visual arts, this mainly refers to the approaches of creating images. The corresponding discourses and practices reveal a wide diversity among different cultural and thought traditions. The first part of my speech deals with the general understandings of creativity and mimesis as well as the contemporary significance of an artistic examination of their interconnection. On the basis of important ideas and selected examples, the second part is devoted to the entanglement between creativity and mimesis in the Chinese and European visual art traditions and the related comparisons. Finally, in the context of current prioritization of creativity, my speech uses the New Ink Movement as an example to reflect on the possibility of reconstructing of the relationship between creativity and mimesis.

Aesthetic Capital and Criticism of Aesthetic Capitalism

Li Xiang

Abstract: ‘Aesthetic Capital’ and ‘Aesthetic Capitalism’ are frontier topics in contemporary aesthetics research. On the one hand, they originated from the re-discussion of the space metaphor about the economic foundation and the superstructure. That is, aesthetics and art do not only belong to the superstructure, but as a special form of ideology, it plays a basic function in contemporary society; on the other hand, it is an in-depth discussion of how aesthetics/art and economy construct a new relationship based on structure of feeling. In this way, the critique of aesthetic capitalism is not only a manifestation of the role and significance of aesthetic capital in contemporary social transformation and changes, but also based on the particularity of aesthetic capital, it criticizes the capitalization of aesthetics and the possible relapse of old disease. On this basis, the criticism of aesthetic capitalism requires the reconstruction of the relationship between aesthetics and capital.

Keywords: aesthetic capitalism; aesthetic capital; criticism of aesthetic capitalism

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Chinese Factors in *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory*

Jun Zeng and Mengqiu Wang

Abstract: *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory* is the first encyclopaedia of narrative theory in the world to reference the practices of the Chinese narrative tradition and theory. However, the editors have compiled the encyclopaedia from the systemic perspective of their knowledge of contemporary Western narratology, focusing on the characteristic differences between contemporary Western narratology and the narrative theories of the so-called ancient non-Western societies. To help overcome this shortcoming, this paper makes an introduction of Chinese narrative tradition from the standpoint of Sinology, attending to the oral/written and history/narrative, dichotomies that represent the editors' academic preferences; additionally, it also provides insights into the characteristics of the varied Chinese narrative theories recorded in the encyclopaedia from the perspective of the contemporary Western narrative theory, and highlights the Chinese contributions to the construction of the knowledge system of the narrative theory.

Keywords: Chinese factors; Chinese narrative theories; knowledge system of narrative theory; *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory*

Contextual Dislocation and Value Conflicts in Aesthetic Modernity

Ziye Zhang

Abstract: In the past decades, the unfinished conclusive narratives of aesthetic modernity under the context of globalisation led to the unfinished transformation and assimilation of contexts in comparative aesthetic studies in different countries and nations. This resulted to the reversed trend of globalisation. The emergence of new technologies and medias, especially the artificial intelligence, has announced a new era of aesthetics. The comparative study of aesthetic modernity is explored in two aspects in this article: the conflicts of contexts in aesthetics, and the conflicts of values implied or resulted from aesthetics. This article focuses on the dislocation of context and the conflicts of values in aesthetic modernity: what is the identity and position of aesthetics in post-modernism? What is the aesthetic perspective in the efforts of avoiding the trap of 'the clash of civilizations'?

Keywords: aesthetic modernity; dislocation of contexts; value; the clash of civilizations

Conference Contact and Inquiries:

Yang Zhou (yang.zhou2@durham.ac.uk), UK
Zhengzhi Zhao (13697007146@163.com), China

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On Contemporary Fantasy Literature: From the West to China

Zhen Zhao

Abstract: The combination of modern Western fantasy literature and Hollywood industrial culture draws global interests in modern Western fantasy literature. Chinese contemporary fantasy literature is under significant influences of Western fantasy literature. Both are the consequences of modernity. Modernity in the West treats the imagination as imitation of image, which covers fantasy. Fantasy is imagination. Postmodernism rebels against rationality and uncovers fantasy. It can be considered as an exploration of the possibilities in the world in order to renew how the world is conceptualized. Chinese contemporary fantasy literature has its own feature: it is pre-modern and post-modern at the same time. It is a transformation of mythological archetype, 'abnormal' narrative of the self, and it also can be considered as the construction and deconstruction in both nostalgia and realistic double mirror. This paper aims to promote the study of Chinese and Western fantasy literature.

Keywords: postmodern; imagination/fantasy; possibility; mythological archetypes; self; abnormal; nostalgia

Shanghai Spleen: Urban Poetics and Aesthetic Modernity
From Shinkankakuha to Wang Hongtu

Jun Zhu

Abstract: Melancholy is the core of modernity and urban poetics. It not only created modern Chinese intellectuals' paradox of suffering and love, but also precipitated into invaluable fortune. As a projection of the paradox, the Neo-sensationalism shows the same and different trend of 'revolution' and 'modern', and its 'Inner' and 'Present' writing opens the perceptual revolutionary road beyond Salvation and Enlightenment. Compared with the modern writing of the Neo-sensualism, the contemporary writing of Shanghai further depicts the stagnant appearance of the end age of 'Modern Aesthetics'. Different from 'Euphoric Foxtrot', this is the 'Melancholy Baroque' of postmodern urban poetics, and the portrayal of intellectuals' personified melancholy. From the Neo-sensationalism to Wang Hongtu, Baroque Poetics not only inherited Modernism's 'Play of Words' and 'Salad of Feeling', but also reflects 'Metaphysical Despair'. Art becomes the best way to transcend laimatophobia, and it also represents a kind of thoughtful urban aesthetics.

Keywords: Urban Poetics, Symptoms of the Times, Melancholy, Neo-sensationalism, Wang Hongtu