

Luise Kloos, next - Verein für bildende Kunst



China  
goes  
Europe



**NUROPE X. Graz 21.-25.03.2010**

**Nomadic University for Arts, Philosophy and Enterprise in Europe**







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# Editorial

Luise Kloos, next - Verein für bildende Kunst

Next – Verein für bildende Kunst in collaboration with NUROPE – Nomadic University for Arts, Philosophy and Enterprise in Europe - organized an oasis by the name of “China Goes Europe” in Graz. Apart from the numerous economic co-operations between Europe and China, an aspect of special interest to the oasis was China’s cultural policy to establish Confucius Institutes all over the world. The oasis in Graz exhibited the historical and cultural developments of China alongside those of Europe. Students were able to learn from curators’, artists’ and economists’ experiences with, and in, China. Through a series of lectures and discussions, all participants developed deep insights into present day developments in China and the Greater China area.

During a special think tank, opportunities were charted out by discussing the Confucius Institutes and the local cultures they are situated in. Special emphasis was placed on the historic, aesthetic, cultural, economic and educational implications. This kind of exploration generated knowledge that is highly relevant to all European nations. Europe’s post-colonial points of view and attitudes were, among various other aspects, discussed and put into the context of contemporary cultural developments of Asia.

## **What is NUROPE - Nomadic University for Arts, Philosophy and Enterprise in Europe?**

Europe – a continent with complex structures of identity amplified by a geography of change and the variations in glocal logics. The reflection during the oases will draw upon the local context and its possibilities, including all available global links. In our time, we are also confronted with new geopolitical challenges as a former European and American domination is exceeded by a postcolonial era with a growing Asian influence. This emphasises the cultural perspective.

Philosophy of Action – builds upon the tradition of European humanism as which underlies enterprising and all entrepreneurial business projects. Enterprising according to principles of a social responsible transformation raises questions of sustainability and the ethical responsibility tied to human conduct. This emphasises the ethical perspective.

Renaissance – a European model of paradigmatic importance for understanding how innovations are achieved by synergies between cultural prosperity and economic growth. The constant echo of the Renaissance model draws upon utopian energies. Today these can be identified in phenomena such as the cultural capitals of the European Union, the rise of the experience economy and the growth of creative industries. This emphasises the aesthetic perspective.

Criticism – creating a critical distance which makes change and “the art of thinking everything anew” possible. Today art critique offers aesthetic resources for the development of democracy and markets, where new forms of assessment are used through which trust can grow. This emphasises the political perspective.

The Aim of NUROPE is:

- to contribute to the cultivation of the complex formation of identities in a changing transnational Europe where art and culture function as resources both for growth and for identity constructions in open communities
- to offer both post graduate students, researchers and leaders within culture and economy a platform to develop and reflect on questions concerning the synergies between art and economy from a glocal European perspective
- to offer a multidisciplinary academic course for European postgraduate students
- to document every oasis by a series of research reports, publications and media productions for comparative and cumulative learning and research initiation on European leadership
- to share experiences and develop creative models for education and research in social and cultural as well as economic entrepreneurship

In order to facilitate a creative learning process, both for us as individuals and as part of a group, a pedagogical model inspired by three elements of practical philosophy has been designed. This model is based on three pillars associated with three artifacts frequently used during the oasis sojourns: the Note Book (reflection), the Nomadic Chair (dialogue) and the Baltic Table (communication).

[www.nurope.eu](http://www.nurope.eu)

The successful realization of this oasis would not have been possible without the generous support of many individuals. I am especially grateful to our supporters and sponsors: Mayor Siegfried Nagl, Governor Franz Voves, Hangzhu Chen, Landesrätin Kristina Edlinger-Ploder, Landesrat Christian Buchmann, Stadtrat Karl-Heinz Herper, Edith and Johannes Hornig, Kathryn List, Franz Leitner, Hannes Voraberger, and Werner Wiedenbauer. I would also like to thank Roberta Maierhofer, Peter Grabensberger, Gert Haubehofer, Raymond Saner, and Wan Jie Chen for their sensitive preparatory work, and all the lecturers, artists and participants (nomads) for their interesting contributions, performances, discussions, and above all their enthusiasm. I am grateful to Bengt Kristensson-Uggla and Helena Hildur for the excellent collaboration with NUROPE. Last but not least, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my assistants Doris Pojer, Michaela Herman, Katharina Dilena, Birgit Meier, Anne Martischinig, and the students of Karl-Franzens University of Graz for their collaboration.



Lichia Saner-Yiu

Bengt Kristensson Ugglia



Kathryn List



Think Tank



Think Tank



Mao Mao Lin



Raymond Saner



# Welcoming Words

Mag. Siegfried Nagl, Mayor of the city of Graz

(transcript of opening speech)

When nomads travel across the country, they are always looking forward to the next oasis. Therefore, we hope that this city represents a nice oasis for you. Compared to Chinese cities, Graz must seem like a very small town, having about 258,000 citizens, but we have people from many nations all over the world living in this city. I would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank Mrs. Luise Kloos for having suggested the idea for this Nomadic University, and for having brought this international idea to Graz.

I have been working for this city for twelve years now, and been its mayor for seven years. The city hall of Graz has, at its main entrance, four pillars with one statue each. The two male statues represent trade and commerce, and the two female statues represent the sciences and arts. These four statues are faithful replicas of the original statues that have been lost. With this conference we would like to contribute to new projects concerning these fields - arts and education.

China is on the move, and perhaps Graz is a good starting point for this new move into the future. In Austria, tradition and progress have always joined forces to move towards the future. When the world hears of Austria, most people think of Vienna or Salzburg, but Graz too is a city of creativity. We would therefore also like to contribute to international creative networks, as we already partly did by being the European cultural capital in 2003.

Not only is one of the promoters of international networks here, the Vice-Rector of the University of Graz, Ms. Roberta Maierhofer, but we appreciate and cherish everything we have here in Graz. We have to start thinking about what will happen when economic production will move away from the West. As Wladyslaw Bartoszewski put it: "The greatest dangers for the coexistence of people are on the one hand disinterest and on the other hand ignorance. These two attitudes often contain the roots of all evil. This is as true for private life as it is for politics, because it is even more political than we think. Perhaps disinterest is the reason why people adapt too much and get used to all the suffering in the world too easily. In this world, human beings are the most important thing and we have only started on this way that everything is about the human being."

There is a second quotation from Confucius: "The superior man in the world does not set his mind either for or against anything; what is right, he will follow."

As I said, Graz is a city of creativity, and we have the University of Music and Dramatic Arts here. However, we do not

have a university for fine arts. Being a Renaissance city, we hope to be able to establish universities dedicated to the all arts here in the future. We hope that you are able learn many things and make new friends. Concluding all my welcome speeches, I like to say: if there is anything you do not like about Graz, please tell the mayor, me. But if there are things you really like, please go around the world and tell everyone about them!



Siegfried Nagl and his translator Haidacher-Steinklauber

## Greetings to the Nomadic University

Mag. Kristina Edlinger-Ploder, Member of the Provincial Government of Styria for Science and Research, Health and Nursing Management

It is a common view that the 21st century will be economically affected and even dominated by Asia - in particular by China. At the same time there is the danger that Europe will fall behind, if it does not take strong action in view of these new developments and challenges.

There is no doubt that China is developing an impressive and formidable dynamic. A comprehensive understanding and knowledge of Chinese thought and culture are critical requirements for a fruitful relationship and cooperation. China is much more than just a future market and has to be perceived and treated accordingly.

There is little awareness of the manifold and historically developed economic, scientific and cultural connections between China, Europe, Austria and even Styria. At this present time it is imperative to create and strengthen networks between these cultures.

One such important network in this context is NUROPE.

The oasis "China Goes Europe" opened up fascinating perspectives and gave numerous valuable impulses. Above all, this is due to the dedicated work of Luise Kloos, who developed the concept and managed the project, giving tireless and creative inputs that set interesting accents and highlighted many important aspects.

Mag.a Kristina Edlinger-Ploder  
Member of the Provincial Government of Styria for Science and Research, Traffic and Technology



# Greetings to the Nomadic University

Prof. Chen Hangzhu, Councillor of the People's Republic of China to Graz

Dear Mr. Mayor,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear friends,

I am very pleased to take part in this opening of "China goes Europe", and first of all I would like to thank you for this invitation.

The city of Graz is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was the cultural capital of Europe in 2003 and is home to many cultures. Many artists and people of science meet here and exchange their ideas, and historically, the entire region constituted a meeting point of cultures - even the Romans have left their traces here. Due to this background, it is a good idea to host the Nomadic University in Graz in 2010. The political, economic and cultural relationship between the city of Graz and China has undergone a very good development during the past years. The Graz Oasis is a sign for this deepening relationship, and an expression of the mayor's efforts to contribute to - and intensify - the good relationship between Graz and China. We highly appreciate these efforts.

As I have read in the programme for the Graz Oasis, its intention is to deal with different topics related to China, and we are looking forward to discuss them. Most of all, it shows that China has been noticed and is attracting more and more attention. This is as beneficial for us as it is for Europe.

For this reason I would like to thank the organiser, Mrs. Luise Kloos, for this conference, which is a very good idea indeed!

China is a big country, with a very deep cultural background. We have 56 nationalities and 5000 years of history. Foreigners cannot easily understand the problems we have. On the one hand, this is due to the fact that we have different values, and on the other hand, this is because we have a different cultural background.

To deal with and discuss topics from the sciences, arts and economy helps both China and our partners. We help each other to get to know and understand each other better. I would like to read a quotation at this point: "Having professional discussions and meetings is the precondition for two partners to understand each other."

This quote is from a letter of the mayor of Graz. I completely agree with that: indeed, to meet and discuss different topics is the precondition for reaching new goals. Mr. Mayor, I wish you every success for the Graz Oasis.



## Greetings to the Nomadic University

Dr. Christian Buchmann, Member of the Provincial Government of Styria for Culture and Economy

It is thanks to the special engagement by Luise Kloos that a unique project like the Nomadic University has become – almost paradoxically – an institution. Paradoxically, because the idea behind a Nomadic University precludes any institutionalization in the sense of settling down in one place. This has, in fact, not happened, but the term “university” itself implies both the institutional and the general. Luise Kloos successfully manages to do justice to all these parameters while she subtly weaves her networks across the globe. She deserves continual praise for this, because the quality of the Nomadic University, its lecturers, students and the content of its programs is the exclusive product of her personal efforts. In my function as Kulturlandesrat, I have the pleasure to introduce a project that actually happened before my time in this office. Despite this, I know from experience and from lively stories that China Goes Europe was an extraordinarily engaging project that opened and sharpened our eyes, enabled lively exchanges of experiences, and provided much encouragement for the future. The numerous contacts that have been developed will, in turn, shape new projects, and serve as an inspiration for all contemporary nomads of art and culture.

I wish you, the readers of this book, much inspiration and a stimulating re-experience of China Goes Europe in the pages to follow.

Yours,  
Dr. Christian Buchmann



# Greetings to the Nomadic University

Karl-Heinz Herper, City Councillor for Culture



Nomads are people who lead, for various socio-cultural, economic or personal reasons, lives that are not settled or confined to one place. In a security-oriented Europe, the word “nomad” usually evokes images of people fighting for their survival in harsh desert regions. However, such associations of nomadic life - and of the Nomadic university - with poverty and struggle seem inadequate, despite the fact that Austria’s universities today are faced with conditions that one does not often encounter in the so-called civilized world; and despite the fact that the city of Graz is making legitimate demands for an expansion of its existing infrastructure of four universities.

Yet, many scientists, scholars and researchers today lead quite nomadic lives, with linear, settled careers being the exception rather than the rule. What is more, the conditions of many Austrian universities and research institutions are a far cry from the heyday of Austrian sciences and scholarship.

In this respect, a Nomadic University - despite the romantic associations it evokes - only reflects the current conditions of our regular universities. It therefore can be seen as a continuation and extension of institutionalized science and research by different means, in different places.

If the city of Graz expects the federal government to ensure adequate conditions for its institutions of higher education - comparable with those of other European and American institutions - then the initiators and organizers of a nomadic establishment like the Nomadic University may at least claim official interest and acknowledgment for their work and their achievements. I sincerely thank all those who have been engaged in this project.

# The Confucius Institute in Graz

Daniela Unger-Ullmann, Head of Treffpunkt Sprachen Graz

## History of Foundation

With the approval of the application to found a Confucius Institute at the University of Graz, it is possible to meet the increasing demand for Chinese language- and culture-instruction in Styria and the neighboring regions, and to offer an information and meeting platform for all those interested in China. Confucius Institutes have been established around the world, and today there are more than 90 of these educational institutions in Europe alone. The Confucius Institute of Graz is the second institution of this kind in Austria after the Confucius Institute of Vienna, and is a unique opportunity for expertise on all things Chinese to take root in Styria.

The Confucius Institute will be incorporated into the University of Graz through the existing structures of Treffpunkt Sprachen - Centre for Language, Plurilingualism and Didactics. Treffpunkt Sprachen is characterized by many years of experience in language teaching and has been a research centre since 2009, focusing on language policy, documentation and didactics. In cooperation with the University of Jiangsu it offers excellent conditions to guarantee the development of a Confucius Institute.

The Confucius Institute, besides providing instruction in Chinese language and culture, focuses specifically on teaching and research, and aims to cooperate with other educational institutions and anyone in society, politics and the business world who is interested in China. This cooperation will take place on the regional and transregional level with a special consideration of Southeastern Europe. The goal is to contribute to intercultural dialogue by providing a vivid and multifaceted picture of China.

## Mission Statement

The Confucius Institute considers itself to be an institutional establishment that deals with scientific, economic and social topics in teaching and research. To promote the spread of the Chinese language, to examine issues in philosophy, literary studies, art history and cultural studies, to ensure feasibility in practice and to provide assistance to companies in initiating collaborations and projects, a mission statement is needed that is based on the following pillars:

1. Promotion of Chinese language and culture
2. Quality in teaching and research
3. Applicability of results
4. Knowledge transfer in all directions
5. Exploitation of synergy potentials and opportu-

nities for cooperation that present themselves at the local, regional, national and global level.

Original quotation from the constitution and by-laws of the Confucius Institutes, Chapter 1: General Principles:

1. Confucius Institutes devote themselves to satisfying the demands of people from different countries and regions in the world who learn the Chinese language, to enhancing understanding of the Chinese language and culture by these peoples, to strengthening educational and cultural exchange and cooperation between China and other countries, to deepening friendly relationships with other nations, to promoting the development of multi-culturalism, and to construct a harmonious world.

## Objectives

The Confucius Institute provides a unique opportunity to pool and sustainably position all China-related activities at the University of Graz, as well as to introduce them to the general public. The Institute will closely cooperate with schools and other institutions of higher learning in Styria and incorporate existing networking, marketing and multiplying services into these cooperations. Subsequently, the existing comprehensive network of relations, which includes municipal authorities, the government of Styria, the Federation of Austrian Industries and the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, businesses, universities, secondary schools, adult education centers and educational institutions as well as Chinese associations etc., will be exploited to a full extent in order to establish the Confucius Institute as a communication and service platform on all China-related matters beyond Styria's borders in South Burgenland, in Carinthia and in the neighboring countries, too.

With the support of all the aforementioned stakeholders, there is a unique chance to develop the Confucius Institute on a long-term basis into a sinology center, which will combine teaching, research and culture; promote (continuing) education in Chinese for secondary school pupils, students, externals, and, in particular, employees from renowned businesses; introduce the HSK test system; organize language-specific, philosophical and literary series of lectures as well as cultural events; and in addition offer resources for Chinese language classes to other instructors or institutions as well as training and continuing education for Chinese instructors besides giving certification exams for instructors.

## Tasks

The following activities are planned in the areas of teaching, research, cultural exchange and cooperations:

### Teaching

- Practice-oriented Chinese courses for students of non-philological and philological fields of study at the University of Graz and other universities, gradually expanding the levels up to the full range of courses from A1 to C2 after demand for the courses has developed
- Language courses for the staff of the University of Graz and external participants
- On-site Chinese courses for companies and educational institutions
- Chinese language instruction and corresponding cultural and sporting events for secondary school pupils including children of foreign nationals with a Chinese background or Chinese expatriates
- Training and selection of outstanding pupils for participation in international Chinese competitions
- Provision of E-learning materials for autonomous language learning
- Exchange programs (summer schools) between the University of Graz and the University of Jiangsu
- Training and (continuing) education courses for Chinese teachers
- Offering certification tests for Chinese teachers
- Development and implementation of training modules for teachers whose native language is not Chinese

### Research

- Participation in the fields of research on plurilingualism and didactics
- Initiating and developing cooperations in specific fields
- Development and implementation of bilateral research projects
- Implementation of research results in teaching

The establishment of the Confucius Institute at *treffpunkt sprachen* – Centre for Language, Plurilingualism and Didactics makes possible the Confucius Institute's smooth integration into the centre's own fields of research on plurilingualism and didactics. The results of these fields of research are to

be implemented especially in teaching.

Besides being directly integrated into the fields of research pursued by *treffpunkt sprachen*, the Confucius Institute generally acts as a platform for developing and conducting bilateral research projects between Styrian (trans)regional and Chinese institutions of higher education. The Confucius Institute is responsible for promoting research cooperation. At the same time, its profound knowledge of the Chinese university sector in the fields of philosophy, literary studies, art history and cultural studies plays a crucial role in the application, implementation and development of individual research projects.

### Cultural Exchange

- Public lecture series on "The Language and Culture of China"
- Forums and lectures on Chinese literature, philosophy, art history, economy, society, etc.
- Organization of a "Knowledge about China" competition
- Organization of a "Chinese Cultural Week" (Chinese food, Kung Fu, Chinese opera, medicine, folk dances, calligraphy, folk music, etc.)
- Organization of a Chinese film week
- Coordination of festivities for May 1st, June 1st, the National Holiday, Spring Festival, etc.
- Organization of an "Evening of Chinese Songs"
- Private viewings and exhibitions
- Coordination of "Cultural Tours to China"
- Evening event on "Intercultural Management"
- Participation and cooperation in China-related events in Styria and Graz

Particular attention will be paid to the exploitation of existing excellent contacts to the Southeastern European region. Southeastern European partner institutions can be integrated in diverse ways into the activities of the Confucius Institute. These activities will also make the Confucius Institute in Graz well-known beyond the borders of Styria. Exploiting these synergy effects makes it possible for the Confucius Institute in Graz to open up a new market and to offer attractive courses (e.g. Chinese summer school by the sea at the University of Zadar, Croatia), just to name a few. At the same time, it helps to strengthen the University of Graz's and the region's focus on Southeastern Europe.

### Cooperations

Internal cooperations within the university with philological institutes and with different departments of the Faculties of Law (REWI), Social and Economic Sciences (SOWI), Natural



Sciences (NAWI) and Environmental and Regional Sciences and Education (URBI) as well as with other centers at the university offer synergetic opportunities to enrich the teaching of the Confucius Institute and act as a starting point for research activities.

Non-university contacts will be cultivated with the regional and municipal government, business associations, the Federation of Austrian Industry, the Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG), the automobile cluster, the forest and wood related businesses cluster and the human technology cluster, and with Chinese associations and organizations. Already existing cooperation networks of the University of Graz with the Graz University of Technology, the Medical University of Graz (MUG), the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz (KUG) and the University of Leoben will be expanded and strengthened beyond the borders of Styria, together with the universities of applied sciences and other educational institutions (European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe, Austrian Language Competence Centre, colleges of education, Graz International Bilingual School, and the Provincial School Board).



# Local Nomads

Andrea Wolfmayr: On the Train. Notes of a Commuter. Edition Keiper, 2011

On the train, Thursday, June 5, 2008

## Respiratory Distress..

Horror, rising panic. To be able to empathize. I know that. Poverty. Hunger. Just around the corner. My daughter, single mom, looking for a job. Of course, one could say, and people do say: she just aimed for the wrong job! Should do something technical, or computers, or webdesign – but that doesn't work either! Already too many are doing that! And then: leave the small ones alone, in a daycare? Anyway, more kids are only possible if both parents earn, or at least one earns well, with all the benefits. You don't make it in a normal life. Grocery prices are scandalous. The corporations can dictate everything, put people in uniforms – I'm so disgusted! There's no time for movement, revolt anymore. Golden 1968, how great we were, intentionally breaking dishes already made us feel good. We thought we were fighting for a humane life. For a future! For more time, education, personal interests. And where did we end up?! I am so angry that I stutter. The comfort of being caught up in a job. If only one has one. Any job. At the same time, the unjustified self-righteousness: everyone else is only lazy or incompetent. Yes, also – maybe. But should we all – do we really want that? – be pressured to be intelligent and over-competent? Functional gloss, friction-less digital people without feelings – Brave New World, Clockwork Orange, Turkish Delight? All true! Here we have Nike, the angel, the elf, the friendly, happy, normal child. Here we have the strong girl, Mother Joanna, with a punk past, then goth career, then color-punk, then Fifties and Sixties and all the disguises of youth culture. I'm stewing in my own juice. Want to help, can help. Money is the first and most important thing, but I've got it. Not much, but I can help with it. Also with reliability. Thus the old have to support young families, because they can't support themselves. So hot and humid. No sun, everybody becomes depressed, irritable, grumpy. For the new novel, big themes then: poverty and nomadism. To (have to) wander the world and find one's own place. Redistribute roles. In between, baffled infants. The youth never grows up in the West, but much too early in the East and South. Shooting. Criminal. I engraved, again, the place on the table with the five white crosses and HLGR HRSB. Everything misty. At work I struggled myself free like a frog in butter. Still a lot to do today, but then I have everything under control. Potatoes and squash are standing high, red cabbage too. Mommy gives a thick laugh, but her face is gaunt, the first wrinkles, many curls, dyed with henna or red. The little Chinese woman in colors, blue and green, plugged and closed eyes, always looking to the floor. Nike forces me, anyway, to be fully in the moment. Grasp touch carry lift ice

wafers mirror laughter granny! Maybe Joanna really has to go abroad to survive. This town is too small. "Small grocers will soon die out", the Krone newspaper says. Yes, we knew that. "This my extra!"\* Pseudo. The Chice very chic today, new hairstyle, hairband, everything new. Black, with an umbrella, colorful like a rainbow. Shining. Clear brown skin. The blonde girl next to me is lost without her clique. Fiddles with her hair and disappears in her corner, but can't sleep, can't watch. Beige suit-man with turquoise umbrella. Sting wearing a bright green short with the Puma-panther. The unfriendly man in rain jacket, and newly short spikes, the horseman in beige anyway, the blonde girl chews her fingernails, her legs and thighs are guaranteed ten centimeters longer than mine, even more. Of Nike I have to think, with her long arms and legs.

\* "This is my extra!" is an advertising slogan by Spar (a supermarket chain).

On the train, Thursday, June 19, 2008

## It gets narrow, very narrow.

Everyone is in trouble and in small employments where they get less and less, have to perform more and more, invest time, strength, nerves, and then say thank you for just... Transport costs rise, mobility and flexibility are pre-supposed. Watch out that we don't give you a very different turn! Europe costs us much. This peace, this wealth is really taking it out of each of us. No luxury-life of democrats anymore, but stretch towards the ceiling, which is made of glass. And still the big-wigs drive soundlessly with their shiny cars not washed by themselves, with leather seats, muted music and champagne that they can drink in peace, after all, it's a company car with a driver. I talk as if I was going to join the Communists any moment. But my own little rag of a white shirt is washed a thousand times, the faded jeans, the white jacket is easily five years old, and the bracelet I bought when I lived with my ex in Düsseldorf, which is easily ten years ago. Well, I own other things. A home. Which the bank will own until I'm seventy. But time flies in the morning. The sleeper's mobile phone signals a message. But finally sun! This at least is one joy. I handled our households quite well this morning, Maria comes and will take over the rest. Beautiful summer countryside. Grateful for that. Every day working off a bit more, soon I'm done. Forest idyll-door closed, behind shutters I vaguely recognize someone. Funny, every day the same thing differently. Want to watch good movies with Oz again and do something together. We can't manage our houses anymore. If there is no time, for both of us. This weekend Manfred for him, Nike for me. What remains? 68.9 today. Slowly down again, then. By the way, today Margit and I met Johann H,

we walked towards each other in the passage. Me, totally bashful like a thirteen-year-old, looking and quickly looking away again. We talk. I am black and white, Margit has freshly washed, wet hair. What difference the weather makes. In the sun everything looks so different! Shining. Like our faces. I hope for Joanna that her job will work out, and this won't take forever either, just a transition until the end of her studies.

Andrea Wolfmayr is an author, lives in Gleisdorf, and works since 2007 as a municipal employee at the Kulturamt Graz.

Introduction of the Nomads



# Knigge for China

Hong-Ling Yang, Language Teacher, Graz

## 1. What Confucius Said

The teachings of Confucius deal both with service to society and with the fulfillment of one's domestic, everyday duties connected to each individual's social position. For Confucius, service and duty were closely connected to the individual's realization and inner assimilation to the Dao and to heaven. We learn that human beings can only work for the benefit of their families, nations and the world if they have first learned to develop their own virtues. We also learn that we should not do to others what we do not want others to do to us.

## 2. The Greeting – Ninhao

A newly arrived delegation is greeted according to their position in society or the company, starting with the most important person, or otherwise according to seniority or simply in order. The principle of 'Ladies First' does not apply in China. When picking up a Chinese business delegation at the airport, care needs to be taken that the person sent has the same rank as that of the leader of the arriving delegation.

## 3. Introductions in China

3.1. In contacts with Chinese business people, the European business person should always display seriousness and respect. If women participate in negotiations, then their function and responsibility should be clearly pointed out.

3.2. The handshake has been adopted from the West, and generally constitutes the accepted form of greeting today. Europeans notice that Chinese handshakes are usually not strong, but can last several seconds. When the Chinese greet, they avoid direct eye contact and direct their eyes slightly downwards. This is a sign of honor and respect.

3.3. Intensive, direct eye contact from our side can be perceived as uncomfortable by the Chinese.

3.4. Handshakes are always followed by a ritual exchange of business cards. It is thus important to always bring enough business cards. Ideally, the business card's text should be in English on one side, and in Chinese on the other. It is important that one's own title or function is mentioned on it. It is recommended to consult experts in the translation of business card texts, because certain Chinese characters may have a better, more positive meaning than others.

The classical procedure for the exchange of business cards is to hand over and receive cards with both hands. One's own business card should be held by the corners so that the business partner can directly read the text. It is important not to put away the received card immediately, but to intensively read/study it for several seconds (even if it is printed only in Chinese) in order to show one's respect.

The business card represents the person it refers to. For this reason, no crumpled or dirty cards should be used. Business

cards should not be stored in one's wallet in the back pocket, since this is considered unclean, but in a special container in the breast pocket of a shirt or the inner pocket of one's jacket. It is considered very impolite to make notes on received business cards!

## 4. Personal Relations

4.1. In China, personal relations are a basic element in any successful business venture. It is quite common not to talk about business at all during a first meeting. Rather, this meeting serves to get to know each other.

4.2. The Western businessman should not be surprised if asked private questions about himself, his family, or general living conditions of his country during the first meeting.

4.3. Personal relations are the most important connection in a business deal. In China, such relations are cultivated over long periods of time, and are maintained even if more efficient partners or competitors (from abroad) appear. Travels to visit the Chinese partner, possibly with a delegation of staff from one's own company, are thus of great importance.

4.4. "Guanxi" is probably the most important term that anyone who hopes to be successful in negotiations with the Chinese needs to know. It refers to relations that are built through personal contacts. They develop out of a web of friend- or family-relations, which are over the years constantly expanded through gifts and services (e.g. mediation of contacts). Such favors are based on a principle of reciprocity. Whoever has good "guanxi" has good chances to obtain products, services or positive official decisions fast and without problems.

## 5. Gifts in China

5.1. Gifts not only maintain friendships but are an important element of the relation itself. Thus, one should bring several gifts typical of one's country (ethnic art, ties, watches, carvings, sweets, wine, pens, etc.) on every journey to the Far East. Beware of pocket knives, however, because knives can cut friendships. Always respect Chinese import regulations.

5.2. The exchange of gifts is very important.

5.3. Generally, a gift that is too cheap can insult the host, while an overly expensive gift may embarrass him. In delegations, the delegation leader should always receive a markedly more expensive gift than the other participants.

5.4. Do not use white paper to wrap gifts (white and black are considered colors of mourning). Gifts are generally not unwrapped in presence of the giver, except if the giver explicitly encourages one to do so.

5.5. The timing of the gift exchange is decided by the host, either at the beginning or the end of the meeting. For

the gift exchange, the same order should be maintained as in the greetings.

## 6. Negotiations with the Chinese

### 6.1. Sitting order:

Guests normally sit as far from the door as possible. The delegation leaders sit at the middle of the table, junior participants sit on chairs along the wall.

### 6.2. Drinks – Smoking:

Unsweetened green tea, jasmine tea, coffee, water, fruit juices, (alcohol after 6 pm). Smoking of cigarettes (but no cigars or pipes) during negotiations is normal.

6.3. The host opens the talks by addressing words of welcome, and closes the talks by addressing words of thanks.

6.4. The art of negotiations consists generally in finding out who is the actual decision maker. In many cases, this is not the person who seems to have that function in the beginning. While the middle cadres lead the actual negotiations, the senior cadre takes over the talks during the breaks.

6.5. Always schedule enough time for negotiations. Often they last twice as long as normal negotiations, because of necessary simultaneous interpretation. It is recommended to use a professional interpreter.

6.6. Speak slowly and clearly, and allow your opposites to formulate their thoughts. Never presuppose anything. If topics have been agreed to in advance, it is generally considered rude to come to the point directly.

6.7. In the first phase of negotiations, small talk is in order (see 4.2.). Chinese business partners tend to first elaborate general principles and find agreements on common interests. For Western business partners, this first phase is often a mere formality, after which one should concentrate on more important topics as soon as possible.

6.8. The Chinese partner, however, likes to elaborate general principles in order to later be able to criticize the other side for breaches of these principles. He uses this time to get to know the foreign partner and his strategies, and to ascertain whether he is a suitable candidate for a partnership. Only then he will move to the specifics or potentially controversial details.

6.9. The Chinese prefer to wait until the end of negotiations to make concessions!

6.10. The Chinese try to avoid conflicts, or approach them indirectly.

6.11. During the second phase, which is the actual negotiation, one should not try to take too many hurdles at once. The aim should be to slowly develop a consensus. If asked, the Chinese usually do not object to anything: there is agreement. This, however, does not mean that the proposition will be accepted later. The side that is speaking is not interrupted

and can make all its points, which will only be addressed later.

6.12. Trick: Even after concluding negotiations, problems that seem to have already been solved are often raised by the Chinese side. This trick is sometimes used to win further concessions. In the Chinese view, the business partner becomes more flexible in regard to old problems if he has already achieved successes in negotiations.

6.13. Another Chinese strategy lies in identifying the business partner's sensitive points and using them to one's own advantage.

6.14. The European should avoid being too direct in his statements. This may be seen by the Chinese as confrontational, and thus disturb the harmony as well as the development of friendly relations.

6.15. Europeans have to be prepared for long negotiations. In order to be successful in business with the Chinese, they need to take their time.

6.16. Chinese partners usually mention the high prices connected to the good quality of the products offered. Often, this remark serves as an opening to a tough price war, in which European companies are played off not only against American or Japanese, but potentially also against local producers.

6.17. The European has to get used to vague, indirect answers. Certain questions or wishes are not answered because it is considered impolite by the Chinese to say "no" directly.

6.18. Without concessions, there will be no contract. Negotiations with the Chinese are often long-winded. A contract will only be arrived at through a long succession of concessions and compromises. Thus, the Western business partner should not start the negotiations with his best offer.

6.19. The European negotiating partner regularly – but discreetly – checks whether his starting position is still understood.

6.20. If the Chinese business partner does not agree to a solution, or there are obvious misunderstandings, then it is advisable to search for a different phrasing. In no case should the voice be raised.

6.21. From a European perspective, the own standpoint should not be defended too strongly, even when the opposite party is not in agreement.

6.22. A "yes" does not always mean "yes", or that the Chinese agrees with a proposition. Often, it simply means that he is following the conversation attentively.

6.23. The Chinese is a calculating businessman. Any business must also be to his advantage. From a Chinese perspective, the weaknesses of the business partner are as important as one's own strengths.

6.24. Usually, negotiations do not last longer than 6 pm, and the conversation topics during dinner should not be about the actual business at hand. This convivial setting is an opportunity to learn as much as possible about the business partner's family, leisure and hobbies. Later inquiries about the general well being of the family, successes at golf etc. strengthen the relation and show the Chinese that you are honestly concerned about him.

6.25. Frequent, short interruptions are normal. Do not let yourself be irritated if your business partner (or members of his delegation) dozes off for a little while! This is normal and has nothing to do with a lack of interest or respect.

6.26. Techniques for negotiation and conversation

a) Slow, step-by-step approach. To convince the other is a long-winded procedure.

b) Emphasize that one's own company is willing to invest in a long-term partnership, and not interested in only one deal.

c) Place high emphasis on a pleasant, friendly atmosphere. This is a much bigger deciding factor for the Chinese than constant arguments why they should buy a product.

d) Avoid situations in which your opposite may lose face.

e) Try to accept ambiguities and contradictions.

6.27. In negotiations and business deals with Chinese, the general rule is that the bigger the foreign delegation, the higher its credibility.

6.28. One usually only hears about the failure of negotiations from a third person.

## 7. Eating in China

7.1. The main guest sits to the right of the main host. The next ranking guest sits to the main host's left. To the right of the main guest sits his interpreter.

7.2. Usually, one does not refill one's own glass, as this is done by one's sitting neighbor. In order to facilitate this, one lifts the glass rather than leave it standing on the table.

7.3. Be attentive, since it is generally expected that glasses are refilled by sitting neighbors.

7.4. If chopsticks are served in an envelope, they should be put back into the envelope after the meal, or placed across one's soup bowl.

7.5. If different dishes are served together, then the hot ones should be eaten first.

7.6. Always use both hands to pass dishes or to serve your neighbor second helpings.

7.7. As a host, always offer something two to three times before accepting a refusal.

7.8. The guest places his chopsticks next to each other upon his rice bowl to show that he has eaten enough.

7.9. If a dish is served in a bowl with a lid, then the lid should be placed upside down on the table. After finishing the

meal, the lid should be placed back on the bowl.

7.10. As rice is the basic staple of all Asians, it should be eaten with special care. Rice should only be left in one's bowl if second helpings are desired.

7.11. Do not use your own chopsticks to pass food around. They should be used for breaking down large pieces of food to mouth-sized morsels.

7.12. The Chinese audibly slurp noodles and other foods that are served in soup or liquids.

7.13. One should not be irritated by burping, slurping and noisy eating of one's table companions during and after the meal. These are signs that they like the food.

7.14. Leave the room if you need to blow your nose.

7.15. A common meal is closed immediately after the last dish by the host getting up and thanking the guests for their visit. The guests are thus requested to leave.

Hong Ling Yang





# New Tendencies of Postcolonial Theory in Practice: Anti-colonial Strategies and the Globalised Art World

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This essay aims at connecting some basic ideas of postcolonial theory, highlighting the intersection of postcolonial thought in the art world and presenting current tendencies of anti-colonial strategies in practice.

## POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

After its development out of literature studies in the 1980s, postcolonial studies have undergone many changes and the term has adopted a variety of different meanings to different people, focusing on a variety of issues. (Ashcroft et al, 1989: 193) Postcolonialism does not mean 'post-independence' or 'after-colonialism', but as Ashcroft writes, "postcolonialism rather begins from the very first moment of colonial contact. It is the discourse of oppositionality which colonialism brings into being." (Ashcroft et al., 1995: 1) Another definition by Chris Barker sees postcolonial theory as exploring "the discursive condition of [...] the way colonial relations and their aftermath have been constituted through being spoken about." (Barker, 2000: 219)

## AUSTRIA AND COLONIZATION

Austria's position and role within colonization is an issue not widely known and talked about in Austria itself as well as internationally, obviously because Austria's involvement in the process of colonization – which is commonly linked to the political process of European expansion over many parts of the rest of the world from the 16th century onwards – has been very limited in terms of the current geographic and political situation of Austria. This, however, also means that the relevance of current aspects of postcolonial and anti-colonial strategies and necessities in the broader socio-political, cultural and artistic spheres are not much discussed and at first sight often not obvious in their relation to the Austrian context.

Austria's colonial endeavors from the 17th century

were very limited in contrast to those of other nations, many of which still have close relations to their former colonies. However, also the Austro-Hungarian Empire made attempts to position itself globally as colonial force: the imperial and royal frigate *Novara* embarked for the *Novara Expedition* (1857-59) to surround the world, which was prepared and accompanied by the *Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaft, Wien*. In the week before the departure of the *Novara* from its harbor Trieste (at that time part of Austria), newspapers in Austria, including the local *Tagespost* of Graz, reported the upcoming event (cf. Basch-Ritter: *Die Weltumsegelung der Novara*, 2008). So in the beginning of February 1857, one could read a call for applications recruiting the *Novara* crew, as well as an invitation for selected researchers to participate in the journey. The *Novara* was scheduled to leave from Trieste on 12 April 1857. (Basch-Ritter, 2008: 13) This expedition landed, among other places, in China (Hong Kong, Shanghai) and Australia (Sydney). (Basch-Ritter, 2008: 141-155; 159-163) The Austro-Hungarian concession in Tianjin, China (1901-1917), is another part of Austria's colonial history. It was common practice for colonizing nations at that time to bring back from their ventures scientific findings, botanic samples, pictures, artefacts as well as human skeletons that started to fill up museum spaces and archives. (Basch-Ritter, 2008: 223, Maxwell, 1999)

Thus, one zone in which aspects of postcolonial struggles and power structures – also in Austria – become evident is the museum. Analyses of museum contexts in Austria and Europe show the high potential of conflict within international exhibitions when art from so-called 'other' cultures is presented, such as various indigenous art forms or cultural objects.

## **THE MUSEUM AS PLACE OF POSTCOLONIAL STRUGGLE AND INTERCULTURAL CONTACT ZONE**

The museum has always played an important role in the communication of - and between - cultures. From the 19th century onwards and closely related with the process of colonization, the museum often became an area where ‘colonizers’ demonstrated the dominance and superiority of the European race. The then prominent theory of Social Darwinism placed European races above those of other parts of the world. For example, the age of imperialism had a strong influence on how indigenous peoples were represented in mainstream European culture, and took part in the creation and distribution of often highly racist stereotypes about other peoples. Exhibitions of non-western objects or actual persons, so-called live-displays of people from other cultures, were common and very popular in the 19th century, attracting millions of interested people to the museum (Maxwell, 1999). Obviously, through these types of exhibitions and representations of ‘other’ cultures, as also in colonial photography, a variety of myths and racist stereotypes about other cultures were created. These subsequently acted as a justification for military invasions of ‘new’ territories to claim them as colonies. Thus, the act of presenting and repeating stereotypes was an important part of the structures of colonial discourse, as Homi Bhabha (1994: 66) points out.

Even today, unequal power relations are complex questions in current debates about international exhibitions. On the one hand, the museum is a site of fruitful intercultural encounters, but on the other hand it also bears many challenges in providing the basis for an adequate intercultural dialogue. Mary Louise Pratt coined the concept of the museum as intercultural contact zone where “peoples geographically and historically separated come

into contact with each other” (1992: 7), as a space of possibilities as well as threats. Cultural anthropologist James Clifford argues that the exhibition space becomes a contact space so as to “be part of an ongoing historical, political, moral relationship” (1997) between cultures. Homi Bhabha envisions this space as the ‘third space’ which is the “cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture.” (Bhabha, 1994: 141) The “burden of meaning” – as I would see Bhabha’s reflection – comments on the ambiguous nature of communication in an intercultural setting. Each communication is accompanied by understanding but also by misunderstanding, bringing together individual speaking positions and cultural contexts, different knowledge and value systems that are often difficult to be unified or put next to each other.

As “meaning is created by drawing on socially shared narratives of one’s own culture”, as Arun Mukherjee (1998:13) puts it, it is especially important to act within ethic guidelines when exhibiting art from ‘other’ cultures, to avoid overgeneralization, the repetition of stereotypes or exotization. Curating is a complex process which can deeply affect how people understand the artworks they see in the exhibitions.

## **PEACE, THE MAN & HOPE: AN EXAMPLE OF CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN ART**

To exemplify the importance of being aware that Western viewers in museum are often challenged by art, I would like to cite the example of an artwork by Brook Andrew, an indigenous Australian artist. Brook Andrew belongs to the Wiradjuri people and is an artist, lecturer and curator. He has exhibited widely both on the national and international stage.

Generally speaking, it can be said that contempo-

rary art by Indigenous Australian artists are presented in European museums predominantly in two ways: either they are put within the context of a universal aesthetic, which means their cultural contexts are not dealt with at all, or as second option they are often presented within highly problematic, exoticising concepts of exhibitions that highlight stereotypical and inaccurate cultural aspects. Often these concepts lack accurate cultural information and use of Indigenous knowledge or the accurate involvement of Indigenous peoples themselves in the establishment of the exhibition.

I would like to briefly point out some interesting aspects of the photo “Peace, the Man and Hope” (2005) to make you aware of the richness of cultural information that contemporary art can present. As western onlookers who are culturally uninformed about indigenous Australian issues, we can easily miss out on a variety of interesting points of the artwork.

When we look at the artwork from an uninformed European perspective we see in the centre a man with his arms held out, some design in the background and some comic-style words written.

The man in the centre of the artwork is the indigenous Australian boxing legend and rapper Anthony Mundine. Brook Andrew explains that the photo was taken in Mundine’s father’s gym in Redfern (personal communication with the artist). Mundine has his arms held out, Christ-like. The background of this photo tells a variety of stories in their own right.

Evidently the centre of attention is Anthony Mundine, who is called ‘The Man’ and ‘The Black Superman’ in boxing circles. (Mundine, Anthony Homepage). By entitling the artwork “Hope, The Man and Peace”, Andrew refers to Mundine as ‘The Man’. Mundine functions as a positive figure

for indigenous Australian youth and is actively involved in the struggle of indigenous Australians. As a singer, he engages with Australian politics and openly functions as a political voice. As an indigenous person and a Muslim, he openly speaks about racism in Australia (no author, 2005). In the artwork, Mundine functions as a complex and ambiguous symbolic figure. As a boxer he stands for strength of body and mind on the one hand, but on the other hand also for a body which is continuously being hit and hurt.

In Andrew’s photograph, Mundine is represented as a superman figure with his arms stretched out. The background design may correspond to patterns of an open coat hanging down from Superman’s open arms. The zigzag design represents indigenous cultural knowledge of Andrew’s mother’s nation, the Wiradjuri people. This design covers a part of the background like a big, protective coat. Beneath Mundine’s arms there are two sentences in Wiradjuri language arranged like two big noticeboards, (saying ‘Ngajuu ngaay nginduugirr’ and ‘Nginduugirr ngaay ngajuu’). As Craswell points out, the sentences mean ‘I see you’ and ‘You see me’. (Craswell, 2005) Through the text, Andrew makes us aware of the problems of translation, of understanding and of miscommunication per se. (Barlow, 2007: 30) As Barlow argues, the Wiradjuri sentences perhaps become “placeholder[s] for a complex culture that is largely beyond our understanding and awareness” as non-indigenous onlookers. (Barlow, 2007: 30) One may argue that through these sentences, the informed onlooker is invited to enter an intercultural dialogue.

Dr. Marica Langton, Head of the Dept. of Indigenous Studies of the University of Melbourne and an indigenous academic, states that Brook Andrew “celebrates the postcolonial Aboriginal man as a hero of the resistance, overcoming racism with his extraordinary hard work and physical and

mental focus and determination.” (Langton, 2005: 28) I see the concentration in this artwork on the indigenous hero figure as a form of mnemonic device, supporting the writings of indigenous Australian history, which presents the struggle for indigenous rights. Furthermore, it shows the participation of indigenous peoples in global and international debates on, and battles against, war, racism and xenophobia. The artist gives a ‘voice’ to aspects of past and current history that are usually silenced.

This artwork as a platform of intercultural dialogue opens, as I have shown, a variety of complex issues. It confronts the European onlooker with a variety of postcolonial questions and breaks up racist views about “the trope of a ‘Stone Age’ Aboriginal culture frozen in time.” (Langton, 2003: 81) Andrew’s work is a powerful example of anti-colonial strategies in art. Moreover, Andrew includes indigenous ‘insider knowledge’, in the form of a few lines in the Wiradjuri language, or the image of the indigenous hero-figure Anthony Mundine. This special indigenous perspective leaves the Western viewer in a marginal position. At the same time, the lines in Wiradjuri language are integrated in ‘Western’ and consumerist symbols. Thus, the artwork expresses Andrew’s concern to break up stereotyped, essentialist views of entirely encapsulated indigenous cultures and of oversimplifies ideas, which does not help at all when trying to make sense of our complex world (Gigler, 2008).

This short example tried to highlight the cultural richness and diversity of contemporary art and the perspectives and voices that often go beyond the knowledge or understanding of uninformed Western viewers. Moreover, it shows the importance of art as a platform of anti-colonial struggle.

## **NEW ANTI-COLONIAL STRATEGIES IN PRACTICE**

New tendencies in postcolonial theory are reflected in current trends within the art world. As was highlighted in the brief analysis of the photograph before, artists creatively re-work postcolonial issues in their oeuvres, challenging their audiences in many ways. Moreover, there is a current trend of re-thinking curatorial strategies and of giving space to voices of ‘other’ cultures/perspectives in the interpretation of art. Also there is a current re-interpretation of the exhibition space by acknowledging its potential as a site of struggle over (post) colonial power relations. For example, the restitution of artefacts and bones - that were brought to Western museums during the colonial period - to their indigenous owners can be regarded as an anti-colonial strategy in practice. Increasingly, also Austrian institutions recognize their responsibility in the proper handling of colonial artefacts.

To give one example: on October 9th, 2009, the Natural History Museum in Vienna hosted a repatriation ceremony of Australian indigenous remains. For this event, which was the first repatriation of that kind in Austria, representatives of the indigenous Australian community from the Kimberley region had flown from Australia to Vienna to perform this ceremony. They performed their cultural ceremonial smoking tradition and took their ancestors’ bones back to their homeland to have them buried according to their spiritual and cultural belief. The event was organised by the Natural History Museum in collaboration with the Pathological-Anatomical Museum of Austria. Human remains of 17 indigenous Australian persons were handed over to a delegation of this specific indigenous Australian nation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities from Australia are just one example of people re-claiming and resituating human remains that had been taken during colonial exploration

voyages and mostly ended up in Western museum collections. Since 1990, more than 1,150 human remains of Indigenous Australians have been re-situated from non-Australian museums, particularly Great Britain, Germany, France, Poland and the USA (press release, Australian Embassy and Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Vienna, Oct. 8th 2009). To conclude, as I have tried to point out in the various examples listed above, the current (art) world is significantly shaped by post-colonial struggles. Predominantly we witness the instalment of effective and important anti-colonial strategies to counteract and break up systems of unequal power relations. A balanced and educated intercultural dialogue is key to enter new paths of coexistence in the postcolonial, multicultural and globalised world, including the art world.

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Elisabeth Gigler

# The Colonial Gap

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If a lion could speak, we could not understand him.  
Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*.

When we think of colonialism we usually have in mind a power-structure, a political history of oppression and exploitation that occurred from the 16th century onward as a venture of the Western world. In this presentation I want to examine a perhaps more elusive problem of interaction between cultures that is related to, but goes beyond this specific historical political project of colonialism.

A common way of addressing the problem of colonialism can be formulated into the following question: how can we describe the other without using our own culturally acquired framework of knowledge? How can we describe the other with a language that is our own without distorting, misunderstanding, subjugating or exploiting the other? To paraphrase Claude Levi-Strauss, if this gap is not bridgeable it will entail that all situations where two cultures come in contact with each other, will result in the other being subjugated, thus all interactions between cultures will result in some form of colonialism. Here it is important to note that this question already presupposes a gap between the own and the other. Although the question quite rightly points out that colonialism is related to a problem of understanding and that this phenomenon works through a privileging of the so called master narrative, the language of the colonizer, the question still seems to indicate that there is something inevitable in this power structure. In this way the colonial gap becomes a model of how cultures deal with each other. In this presentation I want to find a way out of this line of thinking.

When we start to address these questions we have to be clear about what we actually are speaking about. In what follows, firstly I want to give an example of how colonialism in its most explicit form

uses this presupposed gap and how this will have consequences for both the colonized and the colonizer. Secondly I want to try to find a starting point for an alternative way of describing the problem of understanding.

## THE COLONIAL BOOMERANG

As Swedish historian Michael Azar points out in his book *Frihet, jämlikhet och brodermord* (Liberty, Equality and Fratricide) about France's colonial rule in Algeria, colonialism is a concept that is dependent on representation. He writes:

A fundamental meaning of the word colonialism or colonization is particularly organization, or arrangement (from lat. *Colere*, which means to cultivate or to design), with Valéry's terms we can speak about France (he speaks actually about Europe) as a "large factory; a factory in its actual significance, a transforming machine" that transforms other territories, social organizations and expressions into the representations of France (Azar 2001, p. 38, my translation).

Azar's book describes how France's colonial project in Algeria consisted of a rearrangement of the Algerian society into an image of France. This was thought to be an enlightened form of colonialism in which the newly acquired advances within science, art and culture within Europe and particularly in France as the centre of Europe, were exported to an uncivilized and pre-modernized world. According to Victor Hugo: we (the French) have not come to Africa in order to bring it back to Europe, but in order to bring Europe to Africa (in Azar, p. 49). This was not comparable to the aggressive colonialism of conquistadors, it was an intellectual project, Algeria was thought to receive the fruits of the enlightenment and the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity.

In this way it was not acknowledged that Algeria and Algerians had expressions, languages, images, history and a self-understanding of their own. Of course this was true in the sense that Algeria did not exist as a nation like France did during the early 19th century. From the French perspective they were filling a void, bringing an order to a territory without history. Besides the obvious factors of economy, geopolitics, territory etc., France saw its involvement in Algeria as a cultural project in which history was brought to a society without history. When adapting Algeria as a part of France, the French, or at least a certain group within France who believed in the ideals of the tradition of enlightenment, thought they brought self-understanding to the Algerians.

The problem that arises from this kind of colonial situation is double-edged. Obviously, for the indigenous Algerians France's involvement meant oppression, exploitation and subjugation. But what Azar points out as the more subtle consequence is that this colonial situation also introduced uncertainties concerning France's understanding of itself. If the project succeeded in the way that some French intellectuals (Valéry, Hugo and later Camus) had in mind, that is if Algeria was successfully transformed into a part of the French nation, with French ideals, French parliamentarism, democracy, culture etc. then it meant that the Algerians were to be considered according to the ideals of France, as free individuals, as equals, as brothers. That is, if the transformation of Algeria into a part of France was successful, the ideals of the French revolution were to be the ideals of the Algerians. What Azar points out is that when certain intellectuals like Frantz Fanon, who can be seen as the father of postcolonial theory, during the beginning of the Algerian revolution in the 50's proposed that this project was completed, that Algerians had found a voice, a struggle and an intellectual culture of their own, the true economic and political inten-

tions of French rule came into play. This is what Azar calls the colonial boomerang.

The end of French rule in Algeria was also the end of the European age of empires. Algeria was one of the last territories to become decolonized. It exemplified the paradox of an enlightened form of colonialism. If the ideal of, for example, Paul Valéry and Albert Camus was achieved, if Algeria had become French according to how they conceived "France", then French colonialism in Algeria had reached its goal, it had made its presence superfluous. Now, of course in reality this was not the case. France's colonialism in Algeria had a very ugly ending. Because of this the question concerning the level of civilization and Enlightenment was turned back toward the metropole. How enlightened was France actually? What is interesting in Azar's account of French colonialism in Algeria is the form that it takes. The case of the Algerian revolution becomes a question about France's self-understanding.

## **RECIPROCITY**

My aim with the example above is not to point out who was right or wrong in the Algerian revolution, but to describe a certain aspect of colonialism. Colonialism entails a power structure in which everything is defined within the frames of reference of the dominant culture. The colonial perspective does injustice to the otherness of the other, it reacts inadequately to the latter's own aptitudes and concerns. But this discrepancy also distorts our concept of ourselves. If we translate the problem above into other terms, the uncertainty concerning the other reveals uncertainties concerning the self. To exemplify this I want to use an anecdote told by my friend, professor Anthony Johnson. Johnson was visiting London and travelling in a bus, when suddenly a young boy pointed at him and asked his mother: Mom, that man over there, is he



a stranger? The mother abruptly hushed the boy and explained whisperingly, that it is rude to express such a question. After a while, though, the boy replied with anxiety: but if he is a stranger, then I am a stranger too. What this boy had discovered, maybe for the first time in his life, was the reciprocity of otherness. If we think of other persons, cultures or societies as other, unknown or alien in some sense, then the same has to apply the other way around. Then we are also other, alien or foreign in the eyes of somebody. The anxiety that the boy felt was consequently the fear of the possibility of being alien to oneself. What if the perspective of the gap between self and other is true? Does this not entail a quite horrific conclusion?

But what is the alternative to this? How can we bridge the gap between the own and the other? The key here is to understand the problem as a consequence of how the question is formulated. It seems to presuppose that there is another kind of knowledge involved when we are faced with the other, when in fact there is not. Philosopher Phil Hutchinson makes this point explicit, when he writes:

Before one imagines that one understands a culture better than its inhabitants do, one ought to be confident that one understands it at least as well as its inhabitants do (Hutchinson et al 2008, p. 131).

What this means is that there is no shortcut that we can use in order to achieve an understanding of a culture. On the other hand this means that there is no gap either. When we are dealing with other people or other cultures there is in fact no outside perspective to start with, since we all are capable of seeing and constructing meanings, language, history and a self-understanding. Isaiah Berlin describes this way of knowing as the knowledge of the participant, compared to that of the observer, the knowledge of the actor against the knowledge

of the audience (Berlin 1981, p. 117). He writes: Nevertheless, the children of one culture can attain an understanding of the life and activity – the thought, behaviour, art, religion, the entire vision of life – of another culture, of what our ancestors could create while we cannot, because they were what they were, and we are what we are, occupying, as we do, different segments of the same cycle (Berlin 1981, p. 128).

Although there are real shortcomings, problems and misunderstandings present when we are in contact with other people, societies and cultures, this does not mean that the ideal would be a possible neutral common ground on which we can meet. Nor does it mean that we should choose one view over the other in this kind of situation. The possibility of misunderstanding means that there is also a possibility of understanding. And consequently the problems, misunderstandings and shortcomings are always common, they are shared by both parts of an encounter - that is, if there is some kind of intimacy and engagement in that encounter. Isaiah Berlin writes:

Language is the direct expression of the historical life of societies and peoples: ‘every court, every school, every profession, every corporation, every sect has its own language’; we penetrate the meaning of this language by the ‘passion’ of ‘a lover, a friend, an intimate’, not by rules, imaginary universal keys which open nothing (Berlin 1981, p. 10).

## **AT HOME WITH THE OTHER**

In order to make a contrast to the outline of the colonial attitude, I want to present a very different kind of example of how to approach a foreign culture. One way to articulate a way out of the difficulty of the own and the other can be found in Jakob Meloe’s discussion on the concept of a “natural harbour” and this concept’s significance to seafar-

ing people. Meloe is a Norwegian philosopher who has lived in the rural northern part of Norway most of his life among traditional cultures of reindeer-herders and fishermen. He has dedicated much of his philosophy to the problems concerning preservation of traditional forms of life in northern Norway.

When we ask; “what is a natural harbour?”, “how do we determine that a place is suitable as a natural harbour?” we are engaged with a certain philosophical tension between concept and object. Is it our concept of a harbour projected on to a natural landscape? Or is it a natural landscape that creates our concept of the harbour? Meloe’s point is that neither of these alternatives is philosophically accurate. To understand and to be able to recognize a natural harbour, we have to understand what part it plays within a certain culture. The significance of an expression or a concept in language can not be understood as idle. The meaning of a certain place is formed through ways of living, through action, intentions, choices etc. If we are at a loss with the concept of a natural harbour, then we probably do not belong to a seafaring culture. We could not then be confident at sea during heavy weather. This does not mean, however, that we could not understand the importance of the concept. We can understand what it would mean to be in need of a safe haven at sea during heavy weather and we can understand that to achieve this goal requires a certain skill of identifying a place that is suitable for anchoring, a place that offers shelter from winds etc. We are not at a loss with understanding the predicament of a culture that earns its living at sea, since we are not at a loss with what it means to strive, to seek safety or to secure a living. Then we have something to start from if we want to understand the concept of a natural harbour. Meloe writes: “The method of investigating the concept of a harbour, therefore, is this: Situate yourself within the practice that this object belongs to, and then investigate the object and its contribution to that

practice.” (Meloe 1988, p. 393)

In order for something to be a natural harbour, it has to have certain qualities. Our perception or our concepts cannot create these qualities in a material landscape. In order to recognize such a place one has to understand a culture of seafaring and its relation to certain aspects of the landscape, and in order to do so one has to be acquainted with the practices of sailing, fishing, etc. The qualities of a natural harbour are, for example, that it is at least 4 metres deep at low tide; its bottom should be of a kind that will hold an anchor even if the wind is pressing against the boat with the force of a storm; and its surroundings of skerries or islands should be such as to make it possible to approach it in most sorts of weather (Meloe 1988, p. 392). To be able to see this requires a certain life form, a certain experience and understanding of what exactly is required of the geographical structure of a certain place. The natural harbour does not exist a priori in nature. “Without the activity and life form of the fisherman: there are no such formations to be seen, since there are then no eyes to see them. [...] If there are no fishermen, or other seafaring people, seeking refuge from foul weather, then there are no havens” (Meloe 1988, p. 392-393). In order to understand a certain place and landscape, we have to be in contact with the cultures and societies who can appreciate this landscape, for which this place has a purpose, for which a certain place, perhaps foreign in our eyes, is home. What I propose with this example is that it entails a completely different way of understanding the relationship between the own and the other.

To tie it up, let us focus again on the quote by Wittgenstein that I started with. “If a lion could speak, we could not understand him.” What does he actually mean with this remark? What I think Wittgenstein wants to indicate is that our understanding of the lion is dependant on our understanding of

the life-form of the lion. If it could speak English it would still require of us to understand its life and experience that goes beyond linguistic utterances. Language in this sense is not a go-between that can be used to bridge a gap between the self and the other. If and when we understand the language of the other, we have, at least to a certain extent, to understand their choices, goals, actions and their artifacts. Thus, to understand the other's language does not consist of translating it to our own, or vice versa that the other learns to speak our (national) language. Understanding a culture goes deeper than that. It requires that we understand what certain words, concepts and sentences mean in a lived life, in another persons experience.

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Antony Fredriksson

# Some examples of 'non-market oriented' Chinese contemporary art

Monica Dematté, Sinologist, Italy

In the last 10 years or so, Chinese art has entered the international contemporary art market, gradually gaining an important place and high market value. At the same time, the impact of Chinese industrial production and export on the global economy has changed the perception of China abroad, and the Chinese people's self esteem has largely improved.

I feel that in this historical period the highest value is accorded to the economy: materialism is the yardstick by which everything is measured, with only a few sporadic attempts to oppose it. Even on an individual scale, our lives are governed and determined by material concerns and needs. We appear free, but are in reality slaves of many induced burdens that prevent us from enjoying the time that could be devoted to achieving spiritual/intellectual independence and creativity. Art has always somehow been connected to money, if not the market, but I doubt that those masterpieces which are still able to move and inspire many people even several centuries after their creation have been conceived only in order to fulfil a material need or quest.

Chinese art in the last century has had a rather unusual and somewhat unnatural development. From the May 4th movement with its western-oriented ideas, to the Lu Xun wood engraving 'campaign' with its declared social role, to the 'revolutionary/socialist' support and celebration of the Communist Party's ideals, art has been clearly and openly considered as a 'way', a 'tool' to propagate ideas with social/political/nationalistic aims.

Only at the end of the Seventies and again in the mid-Eighties some movements started to claim the artist's need for creative freedom. However, strongly influenced by Twentieth century European literature and thought (Proust, Freud, Kafka, Sartre, Nietzsche, etc.), visual artists were then more concerned with philosophy and theory than with artistic issues.

In a short period of time, Chinese visual artists have become acquainted with the artistic trends that had happened in Europe and the U.S.A. in the previous eighty years or so. Their understanding has obviously been filtered by their own culture and social background, by the few existing printed materials, and by the limited (and in some cases approximate) translations. I have personally witnessed the development of Chinese art since 1988. From that time onward, with the single exception of 1995 and 96, I have spent several months in China every year, investigating the state of art and artists. I feel that since the beginning of the Nineties, when the West-

ern world has started to welcome collective shows of Chinese art (1993: Berlin, Hong Kong, Venice Biennale), the standard used has always been decided according to a Western expectation. This expectation, be it based on a taste for 'socialist', 'zen', 'dissident', 'kitsch' art (some of the fixed prejudices on Chinese culture, nurtured by a very superficial knowledge of it), has strongly influenced many Chinese artists' direction in creating their works. If they could only be recognised and successful in the West, then they had to adjust their work to the West's expectations.

Over the years, this attitude has created a vicious circle on both sides, resulting in today's situation. For various economic/market reasons that I have not investigated in depth, many Chinese artists' works have reached prices in the recent years that are unthinkable for Western artists of similar age and background. This is causing an attitude among Chinese artists that I would compare to a 'gold rush': not knowing how long this 'manna' is going to last, everybody is producing and selling as much as possible. I wonder whether anyone is willing to consider this an 'artistic' way of creating. No many people are really concerned with this issue, though, because most of the 'collectors' are people who are investors rather than amateurs.

Right. I have spent too much time talking about 'market oriented' trends, and now I should really focus on something different – and quite rare. I hope I will find here some people who can agree on the fact that artworks, to be called so, must display something more than mere technique and/or conceptual cleverness. These two can be easily achieved by many people, but in my opinion are by no means to be considered 'Art'. I believe that, to be able to 'move' and strike a viewer – and to keep doing it for a long time, hopefully forever - an artwork should be the result of a true interior need, of a deep quest and of course of an ability to express all these in a well mastered artistic/visual medium (be it painting, sculpture, installation, photography, video, performance...).

I agree with those who consider 'form' and 'content' being indivisible, although there might be a disparity between them: at times the content is really deep and overwhelms a visual expression not yet mature. The opposite interests me less. With 'non-market oriented artworks' I do not necessarily mean artworks that are not for sale: indeed, they can be accessible on the market if someone wishes to purchase them. But their creation is NOT the result of a material calculation about what trend, or which curator's taste, is more fashionable. The artists I will mention here have their own individual, deep, personal self-awareness and the necessary skills to

express themselves through peculiar 'artistic means'. I have known the people I am talking about for at least five, but up to 21 years. As I followed their lives and their achievements, I have come to appreciate their coherence and their determination. I have been moved, inspired, struck, enlightened, and accompanied by their works.

In the following, I will list the names of these artists, describing them and their activities. During the lectures, showing their works, I will talk about them in more detail.

Chen Yanyin (female, 1958, lives in Shanghai)  
He Yunchang (male, 1967, lives in Beijing)  
Luo Yongjin (male, 1960, based in Shanghai, lives 'on the move')  
Meng Huang (male, 1966, lives in Beijing and Berlin)  
Song Haidong (male, 1958, lives in Shanghai)  
Zhou Qing (female, 1975, lives in Luoyang)  
Zhuang Hui (male, 1963, lives in Beijing)

**Chen Yanyin** is a sculptor who has produced, at an early stage (beginning of the Nineties), strong installations inspired mainly by her personal experience/feelings regarding some major issues of life from a woman's perspective. Later she became attracted to Tibetan Buddhism, which she still practices and strongly believes in. This spiritual perspective has given her concerns a different perspective, providing greater depth and universality to her continual themes, such as the alternation of life and death or the ultimate origin of human pain.

**He Yunchang** is mainly a performance artist, although he produces paintings that, being 'objects', can be sold and assure him an income. For about 15 years he has planned and then realized many performances in which he takes his body to very extreme stages of pain, physical stress, and danger. All these actions, bringing no other result than the demonstration of the absence of meaning and the futility of individual initiative and action, mix an inner determination with a deep awareness of one's own lack of any freedom of choice. This feeling is so strong that at times he purposely decides to 'harm himself' as the only action he can carry on without other people interfering.

**Luo Yongjin**, photographer, leads a quasi-nomadic life being attracted to, and inspired by, the many details and characteristics of 'life'. Especially fond of cultural relics and traditions, be they Chinese or foreign, he interprets them in a personal, sensitive, and poetic way in his photographs. Surrounded by the ugliness of many Chinese city environments, he tries to

redeem and/or denounce them in his own way that is apparently detached and somewhat fatalistic. Many things are ugly, but we have to face them for the very reason that they exist. It is up to us to make the best out of them. In this case, there are several series of relevant images.

**Meng Huang** is mainly a painter, although he often uses other medias. He is concerned both with challenging the history of art and creating works that can 'add something' to what already exists, and with social issues related to his home country. He is in touch with several Chinese intellectuals who are considered dissidents and he himself is hoping for more freedom of expression. One of the most interesting works he has made in the recent years is a series of large scale paintings made in the open air, that can be realised only through the installation in situ of a huge scaffolding supporting the canvas. The artist eats and sleeps outdoors during the whole creative process, which takes about a week, and an important part of the work is the relationship created with passers-bys. By doing so, he also frees painting from the dependence on photography that has been developed in recent decades.

**Song Haidong**, sculptor, has been one of the earliest artists to experiment with the contemporary art language imported from the West. Later he has been inspired by different, Eastern ways of thinking like the Japanese Gutai. After a period of strong involvement with Buddhism he is now conducting a spiritual research that takes him deep into Chinese traditional culture, so as to overcome concerns with 'technique' and attain instead the highest interior achievements. His whole life is entirely in tune with his thought, and at this stage of what is, really, an existential quest, he has realized that the 'sine qua non' is the moral quality of a person, of which any 'exterior' result (be it a poem, a painting, a sculpture, an object...) is nothing but an emanation.

**Zhou Qing** is a female photographer who has so far been working as an assistant helping university students solve their bureaucratic needs. She started photography completely out of personal need, with a small digital camera, which has then become an important tool to create a kind of diary, a way to record, to 'fix' emotions as soon as she recognises them in the world around. These images are imbued with a melancholic sense of loneliness and show how 'ordinary' perspectives of the environment can become unique through her personal interpretation. Her landscapes are mainly 'soulsapes', and she would not accept or be able to conceive her practice as anything other than a genuinely personal expressive need.

**Zhuang Hui**, multi-media artist (mainly installations, photo

graphs, video), is concerned with social injustice, with political issues (not only national), and with the expression of his people's recent history as personally experienced. Most of his works have a strong autobiographical aspect, because his own experience of a 'common person' can represent the whole population in a certain period. In China, society has been so homogeneous during several decades that really each person's life has much in common with everybody else's. His works thus express, in different ways, the dramatic role of a contemporary artist who shares the same past with the common people, but who has developed a unique sensibility and individual viewpoint. The artist's task is to 'take distance' in order to see things clearly from outside and therefore to be able to 'express' them and sometimes even 'denounce' them, giving voice to all the voiceless people behind him.

All the above-mentioned artists have shown their works abroad, and some of them are quite well-known. Some manage to live as artists, others still need to keep other jobs. For all of them the artistic practice is the result of a true, genuine existential and expressive quest, that is well expressed in their works and can therefore achieve the viewers' recognition. Being deeply imbued with Chinese culture, they do not need or want to recur to predefined, explicit symbols in order to highlight their background. They expect to share their feelings only with viewers who are on their same wave-length, who care for their issues and whose inner chords, for different reasons, vibrate in unison. This is, in my opinion, what art appreciation is all about.

(thanks to Christopher Taylor)



Michaela Herman

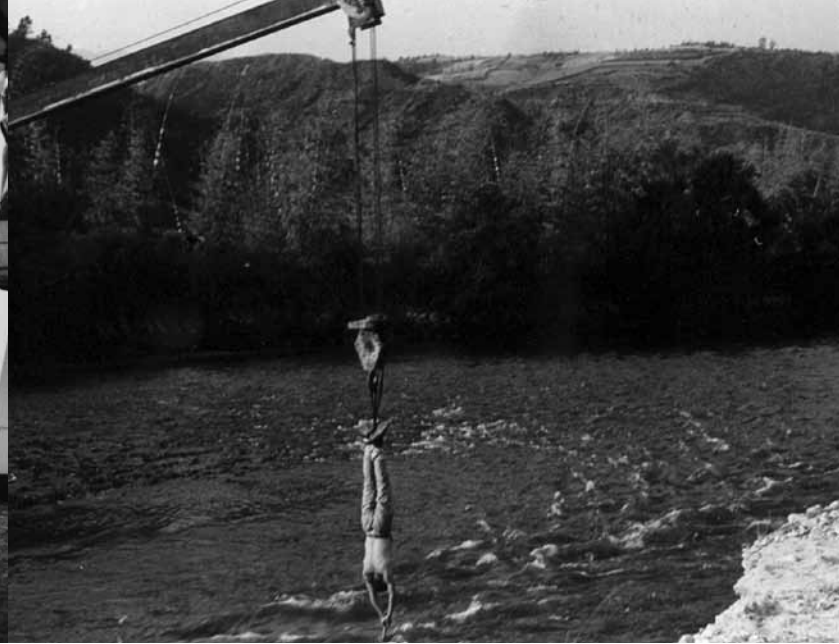
Monica Dematte

Song Haidong





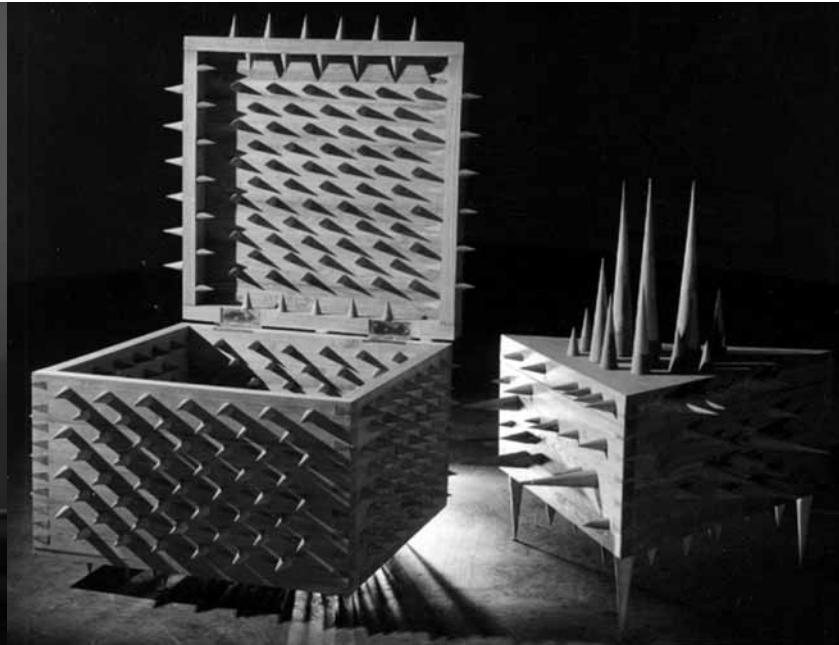
Luo Longjin



He Yunchang



Zhuang Hui



Meng Huang





# Learning across time and space in Europe & China

## Arts & Ideas: from Europe to China

Raymond Saner, CSEND, Geneva

### OBJECTIVE OF THIS PRESENTATION

Records of Europeans travelling to China exist since the Middle Ages, but it seems likely that there have been earlier visits by Europeans during, for instance, the times of Alexander the Great or even before. Hence, what follows is limited to the recorded history of a few Europeans who travelled to China and lived there, sometimes even to the end of their lives, taking on Chinese names, dressing in Chinese clothes, and teaching Chinese scholars science and art as it was known at that time in Europe.

#### Jesuits from Italy

One of the most famous Italian Jesuits who travelled to China was **Mateo Ricci**. He was born in 1552 in Macerata, Italy, where he studied theory and law, and where he joined the Jesuit religious order in 1571.

Mateo Ricci was assigned to go to China as a missionary. He arrived in Macau in 1583 and lived in China until his death in 1610. He was the founder of the Catholic mission of China, worked as a court mathematician in Peking, as a mapmaker, book translator and even science teacher (trigonometry, geometry, cosmology, astronomy). His profound appreciation of Chinese cultural and moral values enabled him to make China known to the West and the West to China. He learned the Chinese language both in its colloquial and classical forms. He adapted to Chinese culture and customs, and used existing Chinese concepts and Confucian values to explain and diffuse Christianity in China. Mateo Ricci made Western developments in mathematics available to Chinese scholars, wrote books on geometry and trigonometry in Chinese, introduced trigonometric and astronomical instruments, translated the first six books of Euclid into Chinese, created a Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary, translated

the Confucian classics into Latin and created the first maps of China that brought about a revolution in traditional Chinese cosmography. Mateo Ricci had an important impact on Chinese scholars as they learned from him, joined his faith and later even worked as teachers and religious persons themselves, following the example of Mateo Ricci. Without the assistance of the Chinese, foreigners could accomplish only little in China, in the past as well as in the present.

One of his pupils was **Xu Guangqi** who was born in Shanghai, China in 1562 and died in China in 1633. Xu was a scholar and a political and intellectual leader of China. He became assistant secretary of the Supervisorate of Imperial Instruction in 1617. He was very impressed by the knowledge and piety of the Jesuit missionaries, and put his mind to the ideas this new religion offered. On January 5, 1603, he was baptized in Nanjing by Fr Rocha and assumed the name Paul. He collaborated with Ricci on various subjects including the study and translation of works on mathematics, hydraulics, astronomy, trigonometry and geography into Chinese. Xu became the first known Chinese to translate European books into Chinese (including Euclidian geometry). Together with other Jesuits, Xu constructed a number of astronomical instruments for improved calculations. He wrote the “Nongzheng Quanshu” (Complete Treatise on Agriculture), one of the four greatest agricultural books in China.

Another Chinese who learned from Mateo Ricci was **Li Zhizao** (1565-1630). He was a Chinese mathematician, astronomer and geographer who translated European scientific books, which greatly contributed to the spread of Western science in China. In 1601 he met Mateo Ricci, who baptized him in 1610.

**Yang Tingyun** (1557-1627) was another Chinese

who learned from Ricci. He was born in Hangzhou, China, was a writer and theologian and held several very important positions, including that of the vice-governor of Peking. He is considered as one of the 'three pillars of Christianity in China' together with Xu Guangqi and Li Zhizao. Yang wrote eight books on religious matters, and collaborated on many Jesuit publications (nine forewords and epilogues). His works were central to the dialogue between Neo-Confucianism and Christianity.

All three of these men were scholars of the Confucian classics holding jinshi degrees and high positions as officials in the imperial court. They not only facilitated the introduction of their Jesuit tutors into the official environment and the subsequent establishment of churches in China, but also defended and protected them in times when priests and other Jesuits came into conflict with the authorities or local Chinese.

## **GIUSEPPE CASTIGLIONE**

Giuseppe Castiglione was born in 1688 in Milan, Italy. He joined the Jesuit order, and was sent to China as a missionary in 1715 where he died in 1766. Castiglione was a missionary and artist and was appointed as a court painter at the Imperial Palace in Beijing, as a designer and architect for the Emperor. His style was a unique blend of European painting with Chinese subjects and themes.

Castiglione forged a new artistic style combining his western training of shading and atmospheric perspective, suggesting depth and realism, with the brushwork and traditional themes of Chinese art. He introduced Chinese painters to perspective, three-dimensionality and other western techniques. Based on his work, Chinese artists wrote the first book on Western painting. Castiglione designed the Western-style palaces in the imperial gardens of the Old Summer Palace and had

a long-lasting influence on Chinese painting, way beyond his lifetime and presence in China.

## **RICHARD WILHELM**

Richard Wilhelm was born in 1873 in Tübingen, Germany. He joined the Allgemeiner Protestantischer Missionsverein (General Association of Protestant Missionaries), and traveled to China as a missionary. After Germany was defeated in WWI, the German concession in Shandong province was taken over by the Japanese imperial army and Wilhelm had to return to Germany where he died in Stuttgart, in 1930. Richard Wilhelm was a distinguished sinologist and friend of the Swiss psychiatrist C.G.Jung. Wilhelm learned the Chinese language and developed a passion for Chinese culture, particularly their religious texts.

He began to see the world through the perspective of the Chinese and adopted Chinese spirituality. He was one of the first to realize the value of Chinese thinking, and tried to bridge the gap between the two cultures. He contributed to a great extent to the explanation of China's spiritual heritage to Western people. Wilhelm translated the great philosophical works from Chinese into German: I-Ching and The Secret of the Golden Flower in close collaboration with Chinese scholars who took up residence at his home in Shandong province. Most of today's translations of the I-Ching are in fact a translation of his book written in German. Wilhelm founded the China Institute in Germany in 1925 and devoted his life to the understanding of Chinese culture in Europe.

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# Learning about “The West”

Lichia Saner-Yiu, CSEND, Geneva

## SYNOPSIS OF PRESENTATION

The symbolic meaning of “the West” has gone through different versions of iteration in China. The so-called “West”, formerly meaning close neighbours reachable on the horseback in the steppe (Western territory, 西方) is now seen as the distant place (Western direction 西方) across the ocean, e.g. North America & Western Europe.

Throughout history, exchanges with the West were sometimes voluntary, and at other times imposed. The Great Wall demarcated the boundary towards the Western Territory. This Wall was built, rebuilt and maintained throughout dynasties since the 5th century B.C. The most recent renovation was in the 90’s due to the destruction caused during the Japanese invasion. Remnants of the wall are mostly from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 AD), extending over 8,851.8 Kilometres. The Great Wall manifests in its majestic and silent way the push-and-pull relationship with the western neighbours sharing the same continent.

Active contact to the tribes situated to the west of China was mostly maintained via trade. This was also the gateway through which the contact between China and the Far West was established and intensified. Chinese pioneers desired to know and learn about from people in the West.

## FAMOUS “ENVOYS” OF EXCHANGES

### 西方 Zhang Qian (195-114 BC)

He was an imperial envoy to the world outside of China in the 2nd century BC, during the reign of the Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220AD). The Huns (Xiongnu) often intruded into the northern borders of the Han Empire, causing the emperor to prepare for battle against the Huns. When he found out that the king of Da Yuezhi (an ancient state in Amu Darya) was killed by the

Huns’ Chanyu (the headman of Hunnish tribes), who turned the king’s skull into a goblet, Emperor Wudi decided to unite with Da Yuezhi in order to fight against their common enemy. Therefore, Zhang Qian was sent as a diplomatic envoy to the Western Regions.

In 138 BC, Zhang Qian left the Empire for his first expedition to Central Asia. Zhang Qian unfortunately was taken hostage for 10 years before he could return to China.

### 西方 Faxian (337-422)

Faxian was born in Ping Yang, today’s Lin Fen in Sanxi Province. He travelled to India and Sri Lanka in 399-412 to study Buddhism and gathered Buddhist scriptures (“A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms”, filled with accounts of early Buddhism, and the geography and history of numerous countries along the Silk Roads at the turn of the 5th century CE.)

### 西方 Xuanzang (602-664 AD)

Xuanzang was a famous Chinese Buddhist monk, scholar, traveller, and translator who described the interaction between China and India in the early Tang period. In 629 AD, Xuanzang reportedly had a dream that convinced him to travel to India. The Tang Dynasty and Eastern Türk Göktürks were waging war at the time. Therefore Emperor Tang Taizong prohibited foreign travel. Xuanzang persuaded some Buddhist guards at the gates of Yumen and slipped out of the Empire via Liangzhou (Gansu) and Qinghai province. He subsequently travelled across the Gobi Desert to Kumal (Hami), then following the Tain Shan westward, arrived in Turpan in 630. Here he met the king of Turpan, a Buddhist who equipped him for his further journey with letters of introduction and valuables to serve as funds.

Moving further westward, Xuanzang travelled through Yanqi, Kucha, Aksu and then across the

Tian Shan's Bedal Pass into modern Kyrgyzstan. He skirted Issyk Kul before visiting Tokmak, Tashkent, Samarkand, Amu Darya and Temez. Further east he travelled through Kunduz, Balkh (modern day Afghanistan), crossed the Shibar Pass, reached Kapisi (about 60 km north of modern Kabul), Adinapur (now Jalalabad) and Laghman in 630 AD. For the next 15 years before his return to China in 645 AD, Xuanzang travelled through Buddhist Pakistan, where he visited places like Peshawar, Swat Valley, Oddiyan, Buner Valley and finally reached Taxila where he studied for two years at the Mahayana School of Buddhism. He also visited Lahore, which he described in his texts. These texts still exist, and constitute the earliest written documents available about this ancient city.

As he returned to China, Xuanzang retired to a monastery and devoted his energy to translating Buddhist texts until his death in 664 AD. He became famous for his seventeen-year overland trip to India and back, which is recorded in detail in both his autobiography and biography. Both provided the inspiration for the epic novel Journey to the West, a tale that constitutes a part of Chinese mythology and literary tradition.

#### □□ Zheng He (1371-1435)

Between 1405 and 1433, the Ming government sponsored a series of seven naval expeditions. The Yongle emperor conducted these in order to establish a Chinese presence, impose imperial control over trade, impress foreign peoples in the Indian Ocean basin and extend the empire's tributary system. Zheng He was appointed as the admiral in charge of the fleet and armed forces that undertook these expeditions.

The first expedition consisted of a fleet of 317 treasure ships holding about 28,000 crewmen. His fleet visited the Malay Archipelago and Thailand, Brunei, India, Arabia, East Africa. Along the way,

Zheng He dispensed gifts such as gold, silver, porcelain and silk and in return China received goods and novelties such as ostriches, zebras, camels, ivory and giraffes.

It is worth noting that while the scale of the expeditions was unprecedented, the routes were not. Sea-based trade links had already existed since the Han Dynasty between China, the Arabian peninsula and the Eastern Roman empire. What set Zheng He's mission apart was its political and diplomatic - rather than purely commercial - nature. He preferred diplomacy over military interventions to awe potential enemies into submission. When Zheng He was confronted with an armed attack however, he displayed his military talent and squashed the military offensives from the local lords. He brought envoys from South East Asia and East Africa to pay respect to the Ming court in Peking.

Records of Zheng's last two expeditions were destroyed by the Ming Emperor who succeeded the Yongle Emperor who had originally ordered the expedition to the "Western Ocean" (Indian Ocean). So where Zheng He's fleet actually sailed to has become a historical contention. Did he "discover" America as claimed by the author of "1421"? Or did he merely reach the Cape of Good Hope as many historians claim? One will not get to know in the near future.

#### The China Education Mission (CEM) (1872-1875)

Since Deng Xiao Ping initiated the Open Door Policy in 1979, the Chinese government has pursued an aggressive programme of technology transfer. The results of this policy show that this programme was success.

However, the present day policy of "learning from the West" was not a novel policy. Looking at the idea of "learning from the West", □□, from a historical perspective, we see that it dates back to

the 19th century, when its outcomes were not so positive. At that time, the European colonial powers crashed the gate of Tien An Men and forced the Chin Dynasty's imperial court to flee from the Forbidden City. This power vacuum caused an unfathomed destruction of wealth and looting of cultural relics.

This encounter between China and the West rising out of Enlightenment and industrialisation has changed the development trajectory of an ancient civilisation and opened the door to the transition from a feudal and agrarian society to a modern and industrial society. This transition has been long and painful. The project of China Education Mission is one of the efforts to learn from the West during these turbulent years.

Between 1872 and 1875, 120 Chinese youths set sail for America to acquire a Western education and vocational training. They were sent there by a government-funded scheme known as the Chinese Educational Mission (CEM), something unprecedented in China's history. In a broader sense, the CEM turned a new page in China's relations with the West, as well as in China's ideas about education.

Nine years into this programme, the "experiment" ended due to the perceived "Americanisation" of the youth. Many of them had adopted the American way of life and its liberal tradition, which the Court deemed an unacceptable acculturation. Therefore, the students were recalled to China and the CEM was dissolved.

The CEM marked a break with the traditional Chinese curriculum for education. For centuries, the syllabus never deviated from the Confucian Classics - memorizing them and writing formal essays on their texts and commentaries. Graduates also received special treatment by entering the imperial service without examination. The "standard route"

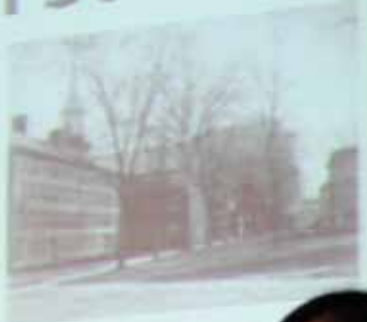
of entry to an imperial career consisted in passing the public examinations based on this curriculum at the local, provincial and national levels. However, under the CEM scheme, after completing their training in America, the successful graduates would be given junior ranks in the civil service.

After coming home to China, six members made their way back to the U.S. to complete their college education. A few returnees managed to slip out of their government obligations to pursue their own career, either working for foreign firms or engaging in private business ventures. The CEM alumni took up careers in the following major sectors at an early stage of their development: industrial manufacturing and extraction of resources, infrastructure for communications and transportation, national security and foreign relations.

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1868-1912), the 1st  
in any foreign



李鴻章 Li  
Shen Lanbin (first  
Spain Peru)



Lichia Saner-Yiu

# Beautiful Crazy - A Movie about Time, Memory and Love

Chi Y. Lee, Writer/Director, Taipeh, Taiwan

There is neither past nor present in our memory, both co-exist in the here and now. We are the only creatures who can modify, twist, and distort what we have experienced as our lives move on. That is why you see the main characters' life events fragmented into bits. Every time the characters bring us back to their lives' incidents, we, the audience, experience what the characters have experienced. However, each time the context is changed, and so is our interpretation of the events.

The colors (black and white) and the camera movements represent the flow of time. On our journey into inevitable degeneration, suggested by the decadent scenery, the age of puberty comes as a beautiful surprise where both the most beautiful and the most cruel incidents happen, and where our redemption lies.

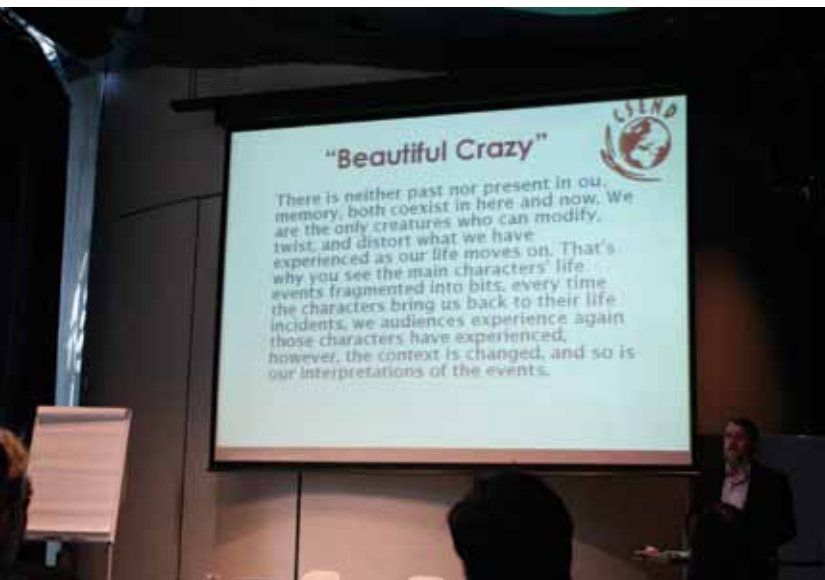
## 2008 BEAUTIFUL CRAZY

Special Mention of the International Jury, Int'l Filmfestival Mannheim-Heidelberg

2009 International Film Festival Rotterdam

Tokyo Int'l Film Festival

Nominated for Taipei Grand Award, 2008 Taipei Film Festival









Han Van Meegeren "Supper at Emmaus", 1937, oil on canvas, 115x127cm. Courtesy Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

May 29, 1945 at six o'clock in the morning, it was raining in Amsterdam. Two police officers knocked at the door of Han Van Meegeren, painter, to declare his arrest for high treason against the state. His name had been found in connection with papers showing the sale of Dutch master paintings to the Nazis during the war. It was especially the sale to Hermann Goering of a Vermeer painting that put Van Meegeren under suspicion of collaboration with the enemy. After weeks of denial Van Meegeren confessed to the crime, but with inclusion of a statement that stunned the world even in those hectic postwar times: the painting in question was not a Vermeer, it had been painted by Van Meegeren himself and he claimed to have done other newly discovered works by De Hooch and Frans Hals. The greatest nightmare of all, however, was his assertion that it was him who had painted Vermeer's famous "Christ at Emmaus", which had already been hanging for seven years in the Boymans Museum in Rotterdam. When this canvas appeared on the market in 1937, its authenticity certified by the most outstanding experts in the world, numerous publications spoke of the ultimate masterwork of Vermeer, it sold to the museum for the incredible price of 550.000 guilders. The painting became the centerpiece of the 1938 exhibition of 450 Dutch masters. Enormous crowds of visitors were led to a separate room with carpets on the floor so as not to disturb the silence of contemplation and the feeling of mystical serenity emanating from the work as if from an altar, as critics described it. It became the most popular painting in Holland, said to contain all the elements of the holy, the mystical and the spiritual which convert the viewing of art into a pilgrimage to a sacred shrine wherein man's inner state is liberated from worldly anxieties, healed by a wondrous, religious spirit.

The assertion of Van Meegeren to have painted "Christ at Emmaus" was received by the world and particularly by Vermeer experts as if it were a joke. They said that Van Meegeren came up with such lies only to get off the accusation of having sold national treasures to another country. After all, when the painting came on the market in 1937, it had been investigated for its authenticity by a number of high ranking institutions and the most famous Vermeer experts in the world. These included the University of Amsterdam, the national bureau of art-historical research, the central laboratories for Belgian museums in Bruxelles, experts for painting at the museum in Den Haag, laboratories for British museums in London. All of them testified that "Christ at Emmaus" was an original Vermeer. The judge in the trial against Van Meegeren ordered canvas and paint to the prison so the artist could prove that he could paint like Vermeer. The large canvas depicts Christ among biblical scholars. It was finished

in 8 weeks and even though it doesn't have the quality of his work in the studio, it served its purpose. Experts praised the oversized heads, the masterly paint application with indigo and lapislazuli, etc. Now it was said "We have lost Vermeer but we have found Van Meegeren". Still in prison, he received hundreds of portrait commissions and he signed with an American publishing house for a book illustration. Freed from the accusation of having sold Dutch treasures, he was convicted for forgery and one year in jail. But through the stress of the trial he died 6 weeks later in December 1947.

The story is not only the story of a skillful forger who knew how to put old paint on old canvas, but more importantly, it calls into question the concept of spirituality in art and the changing climate of aesthetic appreciation.

Today, sixty years after Van Meegeren's painting was demoted to the museum's corridor, we might say that it represents the false pathos of a childish illustration. The heads of the depicted persons are like decorated balls floating over the canvas, the fingers are dead sausages with fingernails stuck on them, the hair is wet and hanging down in strands as if they had just come out of the rain, the shadows are arbitrary, the whole arrangement of form is dull and unrelated to the demands of structuring pictorial space.

And what about the holy, the wondrous, the spiritual? Did it suddenly evaporate in the sun of truth that rose as soon as the clouds of pretense lifted? Altogether, the example of Van Meegeren reveals an unstable weather condition with a low pressure area surrounding the phenomenological conditions of a work of art and what viewers denote as the spiritual forces contained within.

If the spiritual is one day contained in a phenomenon and the next day escapes through the introduction of hitherto unknown facts, the spiritual is either not contained in the phenomenon or the effect of transcendence is only imagined as a result of expectations of spirituality. But why would we talk about the spiritual, the mystical, the transcendent, if we did not assume that it can be found in art and that certain works contain it more than others? In fact, the whole question of quality centers around the spiritual; individual works are criticized in terms of formal features and essential emotions that rescue the work from its existence as empty visual matter.

Since the spiritual can be either present or absent in a phenomenon, we can assume that the spiritual is not something like a ghost or a vapor flying in front of every painting that contains certain formal features. It must rather be at-

tached to both the painting and the beholder in a mutually inclusive manner. In that sense, "Christ at Emmaus" carries values, esteemed at the time as something spiritual, namely a post-nineteenth century Realist style that mistakes sentimentalism for the heroic and the spiritual. And because it resembles nothing that Vermeer had ever done, it was supposed to be his greatest work ever. The master was said to have made the ultimate push into a style of silent pathos, widely appreciated in the 1930's as the official High Art not only by dictatorial regimes but by most of European society. A work is sometimes this, sometimes that, depending on the forces which take possession of it. The question concerning the essence in art must therefore be concerned with the synthesis of forces already in possession of the object and the forces that struggle for its possession. There is something tragic in this because nothing would suit us better than to know the essential characteristics of art which enable us to make order within the multiplicity of appearances. But if we could see the absolute in a single work, it would be unnecessary to look at other works.

The myth of art, keeping our interest alive, is the trend of interpretation of reality manifest in the kind of working and the particularity of feeling expressed by individual artists. In that sense, the visual characteristics of a work are not its essence but only a possibility of appreciation. Immanuel Kant tells us that a loving couple seated in the early evening hours on a meadow is blessed when in addition to the beauty of the landscape a nightingale starts to sing. However, when they turn around and discover that the sound of the bird had actually been produced by a mischievous boy hiding in a tree, the whole situation is destroyed. One and the same stimulus can provide different strata of appreciation. Once the Emmaus painting was discovered to be a product pretending a history of production requisite to paintings of an earlier age, its value changed. Our indignation comes from the displayed characteristics not being genuinely derived from historical or subjective necessity but from the re-creation of an old master look. Our appreciation suddenly shifted into the realm of a conceptual enterprise. Awareness of a painting's existence for a purpose extraneous to art hampers our willingness to re-create it in terms of an emotional necessity. Masterworks conceal their intellectual propositions by the intensity of a feeling condensed into the autonomous reality of the art object itself. Artworks are not billboards for the illustration of ideas, but three-dimensional objects leading into their internal necessity of existence. The Emmaus painting is an example of the unstable nature of aesthetic interpretation. Visible properties are the foundation on which various interpretations and aesthetic predilections can be built. The

forces of propaganda have laid themselves over the properties of the Emmaus painting and prevented us from receiving what we expected to receive from Vermeer. We have not received aesthetic properties, but only entertainment from story telling elements. And what if the Emmaus painting, discovered as a fake by sheer coincidence, were still hanging in the museum? Has our eyesight improved to now apprehend its identity particularly in contrast to the work of Vermeer?

Vermeer, the painter of pure expression, finds deep emotion in the abstract formation of pictorial elements. He sinks his feeling into the structural totality of the work as if it were a single and autonomous reality with which he participates in the creation of the world. Catharina, weighing pearls, finds herself on a wonderful scale of art. A sublime silence surrounds the pregnant woman who silently weighs pearls in the house of a patrician. Silence is in every object. They hold each other without overt intention, correspond as pictorial forms with the edges of the canvas and always serve the totality of the composition. Even the folds on Catharina's blue cape structure the lateral picture plane parallel to its edges. The white of the fur flows onto the plane like a silent waterfall. It is the whitest white in the work and it determines a center on which the rest of the painting hangs. Here we feel the impulse of an artist to escape narrative illusion and give the painting its existence in real space. Altogether it is an abstract composition that holds together in all its details. The depicted light is not wasted for illusion – as in the Emmaus painting whose figures are lit as if sitting on a stage – but light becomes the property of the painted areas themselves. Light does not shine onto a wall but it is found in the transition from light to dark on a painted form. A reality is created that demands little from the objects of representation because the painting is an object itself in which form and content embrace each other as equal values of aesthetic appreciation.

The confusion between master and forger appears today as an incomprehensible error that resulted from the superficial perception of structural qualities in the work of two totally different painters. Without concentration on the structural identity we experience nothing but an enumeration of narrative and mostly banal objects. What is essentially artistic will get lost when perception exhausts itself in finding similitude between known and depicted objects. Aesthetic circumference will not be established by the concentration on individual elements but solely in the apprehension of the entire nature of a work. The structural identity of a work is a nature all of its own. It creates an emotion found nowhere else but in this work. Ultimately, the feeling we experience is the essential message of art. However, aesthetic feeling does not derive

from a naïve surrendering to visual stimuli alone, but it results from the inclusion of all components of consciousness. Immanuel Kant speaks of *Denkgefühl* as a feeling when thinking.

Since the truth of an aesthetic object does not emerge through appearance alone, there must be something contained and yet concealed in the object that is the same and yet different from the exhibited characteristics. The example of Van Meegeren shows that aesthetics cannot be a branch of psychology that measures how excitedly Wittgenstein's dog wags his tail in front of his master, or how much pleasure we get in front of our masters. Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy concerned with the value system in the back of your head when standing in front of a painting. There is a difference between the judgments: "This painting is beautiful" and "This painting is art". The first is a theoretical judgment based on sensuous attributes, the second is a critical judgment supported by values. Values are assembled by contextual relationships with the same or similar classes of objects. While both judgments are independent of each other, they are connected in aesthetic apperception: the appreciation of sensuous beauty and the imagination of aesthetic ideas. Neither one can claim to be the final determination of aesthetic value.

It doesn't make sense for an artist to work outside the linear development of history. We should not forget that Van Meegeren's work came at a time in European art history when Modernism was in full swing. Abstraction, Cubism, Dadaism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Constructivism had already seen major accomplishments in the 1930's. Looking back at his work, we can say that he understood how to put oil on canvas but his products are totally outside of art. They pretend a history of production that places them into an earlier century. While we admire the skill of an artist, his products are nothing but stale repetitions if he follows a mode of working unconcerned with aesthetic issues of his time. Still, the scientific intelligence necessary to arrive at new regions of consciousness is just one of the many and complex components of creating art.

At this point of my reflection I need to say something about style, because the confusion between the Emmaus painting and the work of Vermeer is a confusion of style. Style is an excellent tool to differentiate painters. Style is the visible expression of inner necessity that creates motives in their full development from subjective emotions to aesthetic intentions on a continuous basis in examples of art. Style is the foundation of the spiritual which lays itself like a concept

over a series of artistic events. Style is not only a theoretical principle the artist can decide upon as a goal. It is not a manner in which to work but an emotional necessity. Style is the underlying basis for various phenomena and a unifying principle. Even though there is always a definite intellectual directive for the creation of a certain type of work within historical circumstances, there is no reasoning as to the why of a style; reason always finds its way back to inner necessity. Of course, not everything is possible at all times. Inner necessity determines the choice of forms at a particular time in history and marks the demarcations of the territory from which artistic creations come. Even though formal relationships or techniques are pursued consciously and working strategies are consolidated for the future, the artist is bound by his singular energy expressed in a singular emotion maintained throughout his approach to art. In that sense, style is an elementary proposition which cannot be further analyzed. The emotion represented by a sequence of works is on a relatively simpler and more condensed level than in individual examples. When we think of paintings by masters we know or love, we don't have a clear idea of depicted images but we connect their names with the imagination of their styles that created particular emotions. The myth of art is the myth that each artist has created through his feeling. It doesn't make sense for an artist to work only on paintings. An artist has to work on himself.

Among the many propositions available to painting, the artist chooses those which carry his feelings with greatest clarity. A painter who continues to work throughout his life is not adding more and more work of the same kind into the already existing household of reality, but he subtracts from the possibilities of interpretation.

A single example is more complex than a whole proposition. A series of works, while simpler, is also stronger because it shapes a more precise vision of aesthetic reality. Value in the visual arts does not derive from the introduction of a multiplicity of separate meanings as in literature, but power in the visual arts resides in the condensation of the visually presented into one single uninterrupted stream of consciousness operating as fine emotion. Aesthetic strength in the visual arts is synonymous with simplicity. The aesthetic value of a painting does not derive from a multiplicity of narrative details but from the condensation of the depicted in a single stream of consciousness. The visual arts are the only arts in which recognition manifests itself as an emotion. This emotion is recognized only within the context of what we have recognized in the past in either normal reality or in works of art. We cannot grow tired of looking at more and more



Johannes Vermeer "Die Perlenwägerin", 1664, oil on canvas, 40,3x35,6cm. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

works of the masters because the more clearly their singular energy emerges, the more appetite we have for them.

The first encounter with the Emmaus painting was full with the expectations of high art from Vermeer. The fake had succeeded to creep into the family of Vermeer with whom it had nothing in common. In the interval between its appearance in 1937 and its demise seven years later, the whole family of Vermeer was put into bad reputation. If I had seen this painting as the first Vermeer, it could have happened that I lost appetite for more. One single parasite is enough to bring the whole family into trouble.

The Emmaus painting is a rather arbitrary arrangement of bodies which share no more than bread, freshly baked, and the table around which they sit. Mary Magdalene's roughly painted face appears not to have found its proper place within the pictorial space. The soft face of Christ with its swollen lips beats the plane brutally in coloration. The clothing of the figures is all the same, rough blankets sewn together with thick seams. Christ wears a morning coat, freshly ironed as if he wore it for the first time. The objects on the table are dead matter without aesthetic life, boring, freshly polished utensils that make the onlooker believe that there is a place for eating here. The wall of the room, modeled from light to dark, gives the impression that the room had not been painted for a while or that the figures are placed on a dirty stage. A light rectangle à la Vermeer pushes from the left into the picture as if it were an afterthought. Instead of bringing light, it is a dirty area. Figures and other objects are isolated phenomena that meet as in a blind rendezvous of foreign elements. They don't allow the eye to rest in contemplation of the totality of the work, but point to the division of objects in the world, their separate existence, like a snapshot that allows only momentary vista of a vanishing scene, like the first sentence of an unfinished story.

While the superficial viewing of a painting I found in the attic of my grandmother is exposed to various misinterpretations, its inclusion into the oeuvre of an artist or into the style of a period may clarify its aesthetic message. The spiritual that condenses in feeling is the driving force between works of art. Family resemblance, as Wittgenstein calls it, is an elementary proposition which cannot be further analyzed. However, style is not the only criterion to allow a work to be part of art. A shoemaker who produces the same type of boot may also speak of style or at least of fashion as a limited style in time.

The rational effort for style leads many painters into a routine of producing the same type of work. They become craftsmen

of their own propositions. The works of masters cannot be explored through an analytic analysis of visual components alone. Their inner being cannot be extrapolated by forms that the painter has laid upon the canvas like a shoemaker. Formal properties never crystallize into laws that determine the future of an oeuvre. An artist lives out of his present energy that overcomes the path of the past and invites new challenges and formal risks. Academic painters, in comparison, beat the same forms until they are dead. They glue a visual label on their works so that they may be recognized from a hundred yards. They propagate their individuality with a company logo. Once you have seen one painting you know them all. The employment of redundant elements leads the onlooker into the formal mechanism like a planned exercise instead of allowing a new visual experience beyond conceptual parameters. It is certainly great when an artist is aware of his means of expression, but petty diligence in arresting aesthetic dogmas should not place itself in front of discovery. The work of masters can also be recognized at first sight, but not because of already established forms, but because of feelings invested in the conquest of art. Masters resist analytical extrapolation of the elements of their style because what constituted the formal properties of their work in the past is not a guaranteed end for the future. They live out of their energy which they trust more than past accomplishments. They expose themselves to ever new challenges in their approach to painting when coming to grips with their imagination.

Feelings in art do not reside or come from the phenomenon alone, but are similar to the space between laundry hanging between poles. The emotional, the spiritual, the transcendent manifest contextually in the empty space between works or on a pre-aesthetic level in the space between created image and reality itself.

The myth in art is the singularity of expression that an individual has created for himself apart from all other examples in the history of art. Singularity manifests itself in the newness of style because it means particularity of emotion. All great names in the history of art have separated themselves by opening avenues of innovation for a new state of consciousness. All innovations can be appreciated in the context of what is older in art. Artists have insight into art because their innovations are not superficial reactions to the works of other artists, but derive from a careful analysis of the premises on which art as a whole is based. And since the emotions in art operate out of real life, the masters must have had a great insight into life, for it is life which contains the inspirational emotions condensed in a style that advances a single, uninterrupted stream of consciousness. The feelings expressed

through the artist's stylistic decisions represent the myth in which he senses the world. He rediscovers this myth in works he has substituted for reality.

The enterprise of art has its origin in the longing for transcendence of reality. Works of art affect us in the context of real life and in the context of emotions from other art. The energy displayed by a master is not exposed; as a structure it can be felt only in the context of an assimilation of past and present experience. Someone who is not in touch with himself, or who has never had previous experience with art, might stare in astonishment or bewilderment.

Works of art liberate us from the Here and Now of reality, and while they are physical bodies, they represent only what is not physical: the general, the absolute that beyond all individual appearance has made itself room in the spiritual. Aesthetic motives return in their concreteness to the idea of art. Without an idea for art an artist will get stuck in the accomplishments of masters or in the individual appearances of nature.

Hegel saw the truth and the absolute of art, whose place was postulated by Plato only in the idea, as only existing in the concrete existence of the aesthetic object. The Platonic idea is not really concrete because only in its concreteness is the idea really true. And since a concept is not actually true without its manifestation in reality, so an idea is not really an idea without concreteness. An aesthetic idea must progress to its physical manifestation and only in its phenomenological existence can it be an example of how individual subjectivity has become an aesthetic idea. Thus, the limitations of subjectivity have been lifted in the limitlessness of the idea. The more we understand about art and life, the sharper our sensitivity to differentiate between similarities or differences of emotions evoked by works of art. The energy of an artist reveals itself not only on the surface of the canvas, but as a spiritual attitude within the panorama of aesthetic possibilities. The structural identity of a work derives from an assimilation of past and present experience. The significance of an aesthetic experience results for the beholder from a contact with himself and the phenomena of art.

While it is true that there is contemplation of a thing for its own sake and how pleasantly or unpleasantly we are affected by it, the apprehension of a fuller value is the complete development and consummation of an act of looking for the creation of a consciousness that includes all facets of past experience with the world as well as with art. But the rational comprehension of art does not guarantee the recognition of

the finest feelings because intellect and emotion are two different strata of consciousness. Intellectually we are ready for any master at any time but emotionally it is a different matter. We are not ready for any art at any time. We can sense the message of art only if our emotional channels are prepared to be opened by art. We may understand the teleological aspects of a work and its historical significance and yet not comprehend its full significance when practical thinking prevents intuitive appreciation. The structure of the perceived must persuade us in all its aspects as a totality beyond its concepts and ideas outside the work. Intuition orders knowledge into a persuasion about truth. Art does not contribute to the basket of analytical knowledge. It leads us to a particular feeling. One may understand everything about the formal constituents and the history of art and yet not get the feeling. This, one gets only if persuaded.

To make this point more tangible, I would like to tell a story I have told before. A few years ago I lived in a tiny village in Texas very close to what they call the hill country desert. After some time, I noticed that every day at almost the same hour in the early evening a distinctive sound of an animal could be heard. I thought it might be a frog or perhaps a small, rare animal. A woman in the country store told me that it was the green stone-eater, an animal measuring a little more than a foot, all green, living two feet underground and that it eats stones. Every evening the animal comes to the surface and makes its distinctive sound. The people on the East Coast would not believe this, the woman said, because they believe only what they read in books. But there are natural phenomena, the woman said, not explained in any book of natural history.

I accepted her explanation and from then on listened to the sound of the green stone-eater. Now, I need to tell another story. Imagine drilling a hole into the ground where you happen to stand. You continue drilling to the middle of the globe and then even further until you reach the other side of the earth. Now you take a stone and let it fall into the shaft. How deep will it fall? To the center of earth? Will it appear on the other side of the globe? A professor of physics may explain everything about fall and gravity, but I tell you that the stone will fall only two feet before it is eaten by the green stone-eater.

Even though I just told you there is an animal two feet underground eating stones, you were unable to make a connection between the first and the second story. I am not trying to convince you, I persuade you to believe what I say. The Latins made a difference between *persuadere* and *convincere*.

Convincere is to conquer, to overcome doubt. Persuadere is to induce belief, to urge, implying the fuller notion of changing a person into the direction of a new belief system. Aesthetic judgments are synthetic judgments adding nothing to our knowledge but rather amplifying it. We need intuition to get the drift of content.

No intuition is necessary with works that approximate or synthesize the accomplishments of earlier art. They cannot change us because greater works have already changed us. An enlargement of consciousness occurs with the experience of artistic inventions having an effect on the number of emotional channels available to us as responses to the world. What we call the spiritual in art is the never-ending change in our innermost condition. Of course, the more sensitive we are, the more varied feelings we have. Not only is art not for everyone, but a particular type of art may be appreciated only by few at a time. The capacity to integrate new emotional information into the established household of our existence depends on flexibility and willingness to take risks. The ratio of familiar emotions combined with a driving curiosity for change delimits the amount of new aesthetic information available to us at a particular time. Radical changes from the expected appearance of art liberates psychic energy and nourishes the vividness of consciousness by allowing new phenomena into the household of established ideas and predilections. Such aesthetic forces come into being through works which do not slavishly adopt or synthesize the parameters of older art. The spiritual in art is a message about the continuously changing inner condition of mankind.

The concept of newness in art, traditionally viewed by society with suspicion and often met with resistance, has turned today into a fanatic search for extravagant phenomena. New art is brought on the market as if the visual arts were a branch of the entertainment industry. The visual arts are jeopardized by what is sensational instead of providing inner rejuvenation and interrogation of existing parameters of expression. It is symptomatic that works receive great applause when appropriating older ideas and employing them as superficial newness. Synthetic artists live through the heads of other people. Original artists, in comparison, manifest their substance through new means of art making. I doubt that one can speak of a linear development of art which would allow to predict the future of artistic phenomena. A forecast of art must take into consideration the unpredictability of the human condition which always operates with the most varied energies to assert its position in the world. Returning to Van Meegeren we can say that his attitude is a synthetic layering of already known and superficial properties

of old masters. Even though he developed a style, his style is only the product of a spirit that lives through the spirit of other artists. This is the only thing we learn about the painter. The Emmaus painting is a piece of Italian laundry (the painting was said to be so great because it carried Italian influences – Vermeer was said to have finally succumbed to Italian influences) which found itself hanging on the same line with linens made in Holland. How could it be possible that the inferior quality of the Italian linen was mistaken when so much was known about Dutch linens and particularly the brand of Vermeer?

A work of art exists in relation to style, to its time, and most of all to reality itself. At the time when the Emmaus painting surfaced, expectations distracted from the visual characteristics contemplated earlier in Vermeer. The beholder suffered from the spell of a myth created by the applause of the world. Even though Van Meegeren's style contained characteristics admired by millions of people, its value totally changed. Now, we don't look at the work as carrying pleasant or admirable properties, but we look for aesthetic values that assemble in a more fully developed act of looking. While the first encounter with the Emmaus painting was tinted by the imagination that it belonged to the family of Vermeer, we now contemplate the work in its inner structure and realize that there is nothing to be looked at. The beholder was fascinated by a myth that the world had built around the work, instead of searching for an expression which so clearly had been present in the art of Vermeer.

Some philosophers today claim that an object, any object, becomes a work of art as long as the art world has elevated it into the status of art. The paintings of the chimpanzee Betsy in the Chicago Zoo would be art as long as the curator of the Chicago Art Institute is willing to christen them as art and display them on the walls of his museum. Such arguments confuse the ontological status of a phenomenon with its social or monetary status. It has become a desire of wealthy collectors to concentrate on world famous works. They claim to have an understanding of art when often doing nothing more than enumerating famous works. Yet, real understanding of art, it seems to me, is the concentration on the inner structure of an aesthetic object. The value of a work should not depend upon worldly myth - even though we enjoy standing in front of a popular work - but aesthetic value must ontologically be contained in it as an objective necessity equal to a truth which is super-individual, universal and eternal. In that sense it should make no difference whether we look at old or already known phenomena or whether we see new structures that have had no previous place in consciousness. While we



have predilections for aesthetic movements, we love art as a whole because it provides the continuously changing substance of the human spirit. The spiritual objectifies in the stylistic features of a work, in its formal qualities which show its position within the hierarchy of other art. That the style of an artist is original and powerful does not depend on the subjective disposition of an onlooking individual; it manifests itself through the objective characteristics of the work itself like a thing of nature which you either see or not see.

Experts were unable to identify a painting as not belonging to an artist they supposedly loved. They took their intellectual convictions more seriously than the truth out of which they should have lived. They failed because they did not invest enough emotion, not enough empathy and no contemplation. Contemplation eliminates the functional apprehension of an object and arrives at what lies beyond the visible thing and causes it to be. A liberation from common material states transfers loyalty from intellectual reasoning to innermost feelings. Contemplation refers to the holistic perception of an object. In contemplation an array of sensuous stimuli is ordered into an uninterrupted intuition. The concept 'uninterrupted' is important here, because we are one with the entirety of the work only if visible details lose their name.

A painting of Vermeer is different from any other painting by any other artist. I can establish how he paints and what formal devices he maintains throughout his oeuvre, but nothing I say about Vermeer may hold true for Rembrandt or for any other painter. It is more likely that everything I say for the art of Vermeer may be terrible if applied to somebody else. The history of art cannot be considered a history of actual values - there is no reason to believe that the best survives - but rather, it is a basket full of myth, the myth of individual artists who have created a vision for themselves and for the glory of man.



Paul Z. Rotterdam



Vincent van Gogh, "Wild vegetation", Saint-Rémy, 1889, ink - 47 cm x 62 cm, Inventory number: d 0177 V/1962, Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

# Wild Vegetation

Paul Zwietnig-Rotterdam, Artist, New York

In late June or early July of 1889, Vincent Van Gogh created a pen and ink drawing that is markedly different from his earlier work. It shows a remarkable thrust into unknown regions of abstraction far removed from the expectations of his style and from Impressionist painting at the time. The image develops an unexpected distance from recognizable subject matter and reaches a degree of visual autonomy that makes questionable its title "Wild Vegetation in the Hills", probably invented by Van Gogh's oeuvre cataloger Baart de la Faille. One is tempted to place the work into the period of Kandinsky around 1910 or into the oeuvre of an artist of our time. From a contemporary perspective the drawing has a timeless modernity no longer comparable with the efforts of an Impressionist working in front of nature, attaching himself to visible subject matter even if the depicted objects serve no other purpose than as material for artistic innovation and abstract manipulation of form.

Wild Vegetation is not the re-creation or the abstraction of a phenomenon of nature. It is the presentation of an autonomous object whose content is contained within its own nature. The character of the drawing resides in short, curvilinear scribbles that follow neither an identifiable shape nor serve a traditional landscape space. The linear marks act as structural elements for the articulation of the picture plane. Applied evenly with little distance from one another, these elements create an energetic pattern not dissimilar to the "all-over painting" practiced half a century later. The drawing evolved from an activity that concentrated solely on the sensuous material as if the playful spirit of the artist observed from the outside, or from a distance, how the scribbles assembled almost automatically and create a mesh-work of lines totally at ease, completely immersed in its own making. The result is certainly not the product of a strict intention nor is it the reproduction of objects imagined or re-created from memory.

Six months earlier, in the autumn of 1888, memoir was a hotly discussed topic when Gauguin visited Van Gogh in Arles. Gauguin insisted that a higher degree of abstraction and a more truthful display of stylistic features could be accomplished only if the artist kept his distance from outer appearances. In a letter to his brother Theo, Vincent wrote in December of 1888, "Gauguin, in spite of himself, and in spite of me, has more or less proved to me that it is time I was varying my work a little. I am beginning to compose from memory, and all my studies will still be useful for that sort of work, recalling to me things I have seen... I am going to set myself to work from memory often, and the canvases from memory are always less awkward, and have a more artistic

look than studies from nature, especially when one works in mistral weather."

Wild Vegetation is not only a variation of Van Gogh's drawing style, but the clear proof of his ability to push abstraction with the audacity of a genius to the highest peak at a time when no one expected an artist to allow his fantasies to erupt spontaneously, apply an almost automatic working method and force the beholder to come up with his own conclusions about what he sees and what the perceived is supposed to mean. The aesthetic idea in Wild Vegetation is no longer in conflict with or dependent upon empirical data, seen or imagined. Van Gogh's style emerges from the drawing-action as a raw force that distributes pictorial elements almost randomly and allows the entirety of the work to come into being as if automatic. Liberated from the often uncertain and hazy connections to past experiences, the aesthetic idea is now situated in the physical existence of the work itself. In this respect Wild Vegetation can be distinguished from the aesthetic ideology of the late 19th century that envisioned the essential character of artistic production in the symbiotic relationship between artistic principles and the measure of nature.

Cypresses in a Starry Night, by comparison, completed two weeks before Wild Vegetation in June of 1889, is still indebted to interactions between memory of a landscape and the impulse to make a rendering according to traditional notions of how objects should be depicted and located in pictorial space. Cypresses in a Starry Night evolves from short, linear marks that follow the contours of objects in an imagined space. A shallow illusion is created by gradually diminishing sizes of depicted images from the foreground into a deeper space of the sky. Invented constellations of linear structures and marks of the pen derive from the representation of something existing. Despite the presence of visible subject matter the artist pursues the abstract quality of the work by carefully controlling the application of strokes. He avoids overlapping and merging of linear marks which easily occur when working with pen and ink. The pictorial space is invigorated by texture and dynamic elements as if they had erupted from an inner boiling, as if a celestial command had opened the pores of reality and allowed initially separate elements to construe themselves in a newly found world. A fantastic illusion stands in front of our astonished eyes.

Despite the high degree of abstraction that encompasses every element, Cypresses in a Starry Night still depicts reality. Van Gogh succeeds in overcoming the tight brushstroke articulation of the Impressionists by tearing pictorial elements



Vincent Van Gogh "Landscape with Cypresses", 1889, pen and ink, 24x63,5 cm. Courtesy Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), nr. 1541

apart, shaking them up, making them float while holding them together by a magnetic force before releasing them into space and establishing a fluent transition between tangible objects on earth and intangible events in the sky. Invention of form is carried to its limit as if there were no other purpose to art than to open distant sites of the mind where repressed and dormant images have been waiting.

Wild Vegetation, in contrast, allows pictorial elements to emerge from a vague idea and come to clarity solely in the concrete existence of the visual structure itself. Something is depicted without having depicted it. It is a modern work even one-hundred years after its creation. The drawing reflects issues much discussed in 20th century aesthetics and particularly in recent years when the advent of Postmodernism forced a reconsideration of aesthetic values for works on various levels between Realism and Abstraction. Postmodernist manifestations promote a laissez-faire attitude toward the implementation of realistic subject matter while simultaneously engaging abstract elements as if it were most natural to employ images of the visible world in conjunction with invented forms. Images come into being almost automatically, guided only by the energy of the artist and by conditions at the time of creation. While shapes associated with the visible world may be brought into the work according to subjective impulses, the presence of abstract shapes provides physical immediacy and visual autonomy.

Wild Vegetation is Van Gogh's most abstract work. At the moment of its completion the artist had to decide whether to push his work further into purely abstract expression or to continue the tradition of formal exploration of identifiable subject matter. He asked himself how far an artist is allowed to distance himself from outer appearances of reality. Today, in comparison, ambitious artists must consider how far to distance themselves from pure abstraction.

Five months after he drew Wild Vegetation, in November 1889, Van Gogh wrote that the problem with Gauguin and Bernard is that they had let themselves go too far into abstraction. "If you work diligently from nature without saying to yourself beforehand - 'I want to do this or that', - if you work as if you were making a pair of shoes, without artistic preoccupation, you will not always do well, but on days you at least anticipate it you find a subject which holds its own with the work of those who have gone before us". "Artistic preoccupation" with preconceived concepts allows an artist to go too far into a conceptual enterprise. Van Gogh's enterprise was solidly grounded in the beauty of the world. Wild Vegetation was created in an aesthetic experiment that transported the

artist far beyond his time.

Working from memory and imagination was an important issue for ambitious artists at the end of the 19th century. They tried to overcome the Platonic accusation that simple imitation creates an ontological barrier between the ideal of art and the captured forms of nature. According to Plato, imitated objects find themselves on a teleological inferior level, because nothing can transcend the truth of actual reality. The parasitic position behind the forms of nature, assigned by Plato to representational painting and sculpture, places the visual arts behind the truth of existence and the clarity of ideas. Products of mimesis slavishly follow the outer appearance of imagined or perceived things and seduce the beholder to mistake the depicted for the real. The history of art evinces, however, that the craft of imitation has always met with opposition from artists who conceive beauty not only as it is found in the visible world, but also as it is located in the physical properties of the work. Impressionists liberated pictorial material from its service to illusion. Van Gogh delivered physical marks to the surface of the support. He developed a pictorial language more radical than anything Western painting had seen when trying to overcome the Platonic stigma.

Van Gogh operated in the wake of an aesthetic and philosophical climate that would bring the traditional synthesis between representation and abstraction to an end. Avant-garde movements at the beginning of the 20th century provided ample fuel for critical dialogue by either adapting, interpreting or challenging not only traditional values of art, but ultimately interrogating the traditional synthesis between feeling and thinking. Free invention of form was meant to evoke a universal understanding of art and create emotional states never experienced before. Today, critics ask whether the promises of early abstraction were fulfilled or whether abstract art has become increasingly useless.

The tradition of 20th century art concerned itself with objecthood. Anything narrative or associative was forced out of the work. Form and formal invention was reduced to the presentation of pre-existing geometrical shapes synchronized with the geometry of the support. The traditional conflict between the shape of the canvas and pictorial elements placed within its delineated area disappeared. A pictorial space emerged, unbroken by subjective decisions or idiosyncrasies of expression. This minimalist approach led to the perception of the work as an actual object hanging on the wall like a Persian carpet. Cleansed of any involvement with the emotional, the psychological, the personal, or the irrational, abstract art inclined to become a rational enterprise for creating good de-



Paul Z. Rotterdam "Blenheim Night", 1999, graphite, 61x43 cm

signs. The phenomenological purism of Minimalism regarded the multiplicity of sensations and the pluralism of meaning, attached to freely invented form, as something vague and exchangeable. Ambitious artists limited their parameters of execution and the horizon of expression to arrive at an aesthetic perception that focused on a synthesis between appearance and its understanding of how and why it had come into being. The myth of spirituality and the formal freedom from which early non-representational painting drew its inspiration transformed into the logic of construction. Formalist works are concretions of an aesthetic ideal and represent the liberation of Western Art from the detested Platonic curse. Today, a painting exists in the same three-dimensional space as any other object in the world. We ask ourselves what to do with the accomplishments of Modernism and what territories of aesthetic consciousness are waiting to be explored and at what expense.

In the visual arts, content manifests itself as a feeling. The elimination of subject matter in the beginning of the 20th century promised a universal understanding connected with the emotional experience of formal constellations. Yet, the short history of abstract art produced results quite to the contrary. The "black hand" of materialism and decoration, feared by Kandinsky, took theoretical issues more seriously than expressive necessity. At the end of Classical Modernism, in the late 1970's, we saw a lot of stripes and decorative patterns placed on the canvas like a disease of the skin. Critical voices questioned the aesthetic virility of the enterprise of abstraction. New impulses were expected from a new figuration. Already the first signs of Neo-Expressionism produced enormous interest because the new movement promised relief from the rational sterility and deafening silence of reductive abstractions. Attention was directed to subjective handwriting, to the irrational, the intuitive, the raw, the unfinished and spontaneous, to the here and now of creative manifestation. After a period of philosophical stringency, the Postmodern epoch may be praised for an absence of theoretical dogma, for the lack of overt aesthetic purpose, for the freedom to work at any height of abstraction, the rejection of a consistency of style, and finally, for the repudiation of style itself as an art making feature.

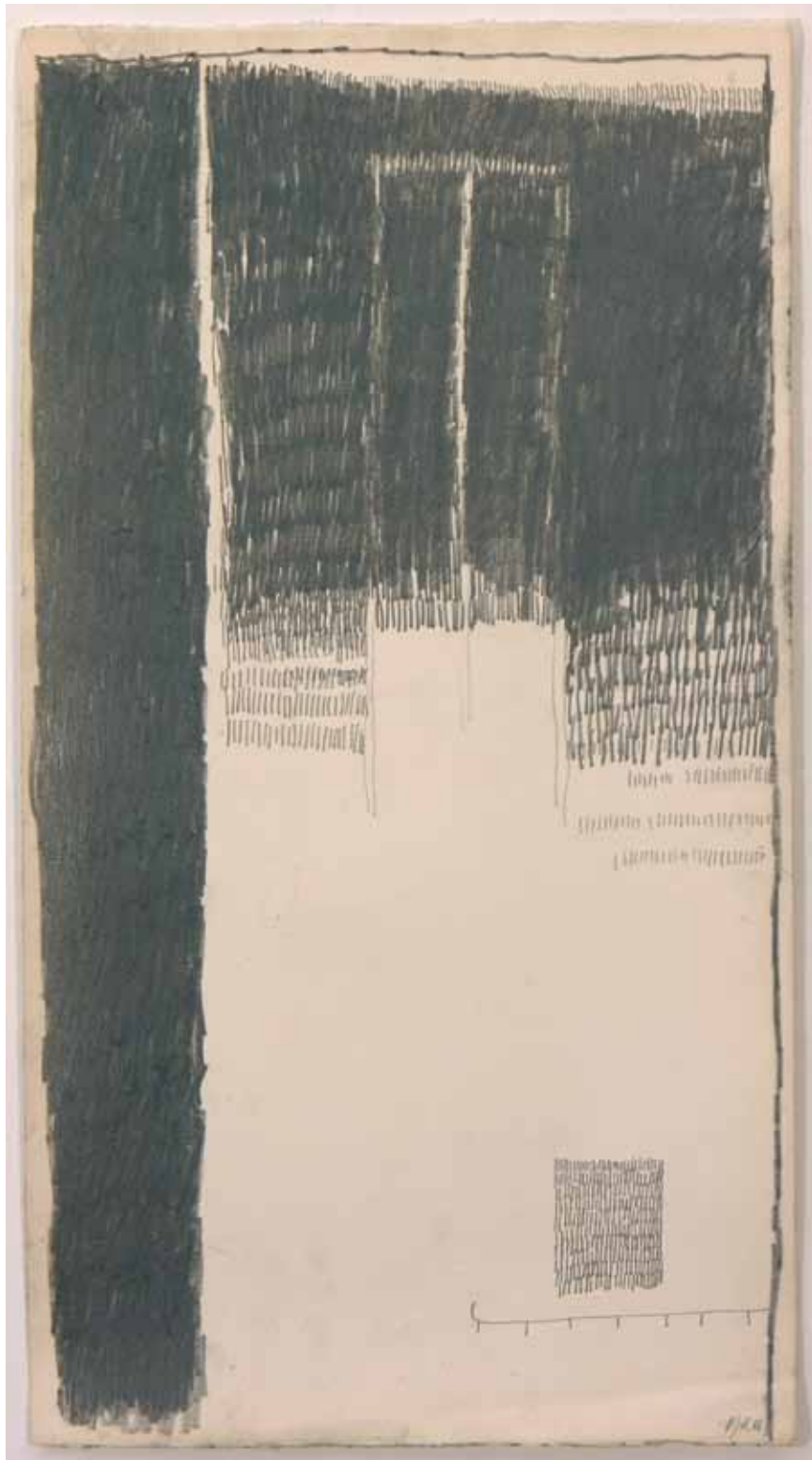
Parallel to the rejection of critical norms, the 1980's produced a sociologically interesting situation. An enormous apparatus of financially motivated collectors and powerful art dealers pushed artists almost at random into the limelight of attention. Capital gain and short term speculation infiltrated the realm of art. Unprecedented competition arose amongst dealers who saw their purpose of life in becoming and act-

ing as conceptual artists themselves. They gained control of contemporary ideology and the course of history. What an artist produced was less important than what works the galleries exhibited.

In an essay entitled "Bad Aesthetic Times in the USA", Arthur Danto reasoned that nobody was prepared for the advent of Neo-Expressionism and that even ten years later we still have no clue what it actually intended. Other critics deplored the loss of contemplation and silent apperception. They wondered what is the matter with our society. What is the matter with those who spend enormous sums of money for works produced only yesterday? Who is responsible for the diffused period and who delights in the aesthetics of an incomplete experiment rather than in truly new parameters of expression? The aesthetic basis of Neo-Expressionism was said to be no more than an extended phase of the expressionist impulse of the first half of the 20th century. Such an impulse brought to fruition the provocative adventure of raw form and raw execution started by Van Gogh, who replaced intellectual control with instinct and sensuous delight. On the other side of the contemporary discourse are the protagonists of a new figuration. They denounce abstract art as a fiction without effect, an exhausted style that indulges in stale concepts, a phantom of absence and reduction of energy, a phenomenon without critical challenge, without psychic energy, without confrontation with the visible world, solely directed at itself and its perverted principles of operation - a symbol of what we miss in art. Abstract art, critics argue, has become so commonplace that one may suspect the loss of its ontological foundation. Critical dialogue is obsolete and we yearn for something else, for something either not contained in abstraction or for attainment made possible only by the challenge of its innate laws of operation. A new figuration is said to be the avant-garde movement of the day because its content makes us self-conscious and self-critical.

On my part, I see no purpose in either discarding figuration as something unimportant, nor would I admonish abstract art for lost territory. On the contrary, the virtue of figuration as a branch within the ramifications of Postmodern pluralism resides in stimulating non-figurative artists for a renewed contact with the visible world and for more sensuous and subjective modes of expression. The last stages of a purist abstraction known as Minimalism, seen by many as the culmination of an aesthetic theology of sublime nothingness, could proceed in no other direction than into further nothingness. Paranoia of pictorial articulation produced redundant geometry and monochromatic empty canvases supported only by philosophy. Of course, the holy abstinence of Mini





Paul Z. Rotterdam "Garden III", 2006, graphite, 57x31 cm

malism, leading to intellectual and emotional exhaustion, was in need of change. Painting was in need of exploding into a wild collection of styles on various levels of abstraction. Painting should conquer the vast and almost uninhabited territory stretching from the spiritual Abstraction of the North to the beguiling Realism of the South, from the concepts of art in the East to the hard reality of the West. All styles and all cultures have gained access and are available as context for contemporary aesthetics.

At the end of the 20th century a new freedom of creation and variation of feeling has come home to the visual arts. The traditional, linear development of artistic movements has been replaced by a coexistence of multiple meanings on the same historical plane. Painting gained freedom to show content without depicting it. The visible world is involved again without asserting itself as the exclusive source for the imagination or creation of form. In this context Wild Vegetation is still a wild work of art, because it breaks the traditional distinction between subject matter and aesthetic reality. Van Gogh created an image of beauty, a piece of paper driving imagination to its limits.

We live in a hopeful period for art. A new concentration on aesthetic quality has replaced the formal doctrines of Modernism. Distinctions between Realism and Abstraction have become irrelevant. We neither apologize for abstraction nor avoid references to nature. We avoid nothing for ideological reasons. Theoretical, political and aesthetic dogmas have been replaced by ethical considerations. Emergent styles encompass the general presentation of autonomous form while enjoying a new freedom to engage the visible world. While no specific content may hold our attention, we stand in front of art as if we were in the presence of nature. The circumference from art to reality, from reality to art has come full circle again.

# My Future is not a Dream<sup>1</sup>

Peter Pakesch, Head of Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz

To realize an exhibition of contemporary Chinese art - and exclusively of contemporary Chinese art - is a great challenge these days. It raises, inter alia, the question as to the value of nationality-based displays of art. In recent times, the subject of China has become a talking point in all sorts of respects - indeed, almost too much so, but then there has scarcely been anything previously to match the radical changes and breakneck speed of change in a whole culture, a whole nation and an economy of this size. And the process has been taking place with the world paying close attention to every possible aspect of it. In the period during which the present exhibition will be on, in Austria alone there will be at least four other exhibitions of note dealing with China's history, culture and contemporary art.<sup>2</sup> This serves as a measure of the widespread attention paid to China in the West, and of the West's great fascination with the historical, cultural, political and economic developments in this country.

The present exhibition, "China Welcomes You... Desires, Struggles, New Identities", is thus about our fascination for a major new and hitherto unknown player in the global arena of art. In the recent years, China has distinguished itself for the vitality of its art scene, occupying a unique creative zone between grand old traditions and the search for total renewal and topicality.

It was less than ten years ago that exhibitions first drew our attention to young Chinese artists who interested us because they went beyond exercises in folklore and official state art.<sup>3</sup> Even before that, artists from China had made appearances in Western events, but it was not until we were offered exhibitions with representative figures from China itself and from the art scene there that we began to get a more comprehensive view of what was going on in China and what was driving it. Around the same time, Western collectors were starting to take an interest in what Chinese studios were producing, making sense of the information available to them and - of necessity - making selections. In a European context, the outstanding pioneer in this respect was collector Uli Sigg, who was also Swiss ambassador to China at the time and had come to know the country very well over the years. The importance of the effect that the collectors had should not be underestimated.

In a country like China, the basic structures that furnish artistic output with resonance and continuity are (or were at that time) lacking. Thus the collections brought together a diverse - and initially of course highly uneven - corpus of works that enabled the art world to study and chew over the phenomenon in greater depth. The importance of this was evident

from the Mahjong exhibition of the Sigg Collection in 2005 at the Kunstmuseum in Berne, where we were treated to probably our first reliable over-view of contemporary art in China. Given the scale and complexity of events in China today and the spatial limitations of the Kunsthaus Graz, it would be otiose to even attempt a meaningful overview comparable to the one at the Kunstmuseum in 2005, which was based on a coherent collection patiently assembled over many years.<sup>4</sup> Our ambition in planning this exhibition was to highlight individual artists and see how they worked in the context of the Kunsthaus and to make the most of the building as a platform for artistic debate.

What is the significance of the fact that we see Chinese art through Western eyes?

Debate about the general validity of artistic statements and their relationship to a particular cultural environment is as old as our knowledge of other cultures and aesthetic reference systems. In the context of the present-day blossoming of topical, contemporary Chinese art and the rapid acceleration of globalisation as a parallel phenomenon, it seems a highly promising approach to inquire about the specifics that can be identified in the artistic production of a country and a culture of this kind. Here we are entering an extensive zone that inevitably constitutes a challenge to our Western artistic orientation, based as it is on modernism and its offshoots. To recapitulate: Chinese culture is among the oldest on earth - certainly the oldest culture with a continuous evolution - and has produced an elaborate system of art that is in many ways distinct from Western culture, and subject to other developments and principles.

To look at contemporary Chinese artists' work through Western eyes is thus an interesting experiment, especially in times of change and globalisation. The most populous country in the world is in a state of radical economic and social change that is historically unique and involves the whole world. By its very nature, this involves cultural change at all levels, in a culture that oscillates between old age and youth, between tradition and innovation to an extent that has rarely been encountered in this form and with such contradictions.

In this society, in this state of change - which is highly important for the whole world by virtue of its sheer scale - the arts are on the move, and it is painting and its associated arts that chiefly capture our attention, before all others. The heterogeneity of artistic output we encounter is confusing, which is what makes this scene so exciting. It also confirms that, for all the topicality, complex traditions of a different history of art underlie it. On a greater scale than anywhere else, this history of art was disrupted and buried by the events of the

twentieth century and various 'Western' modernisations, but has now resurfaced in all sorts of guises, with due gravitas, flavoured with a tinge of irony.

Yet in using a term such as irony, there is a problem of evaluation that inevitably arises when one is dealing with a culture based on different assumptions. There is always the question as to how far the canons and aesthetic tools of Western art theory apply and can be used, and how far we are in a position to tackle other dimensions and systems and empathise with them. How universal can art be, and how much does Chinese art say something about the exoticism of our approach to it?

In the course of preparing for the China Welcomes You exhibition, we asked the artists to name influences, artists they considered important and works that made a difference to their own artistic output. Using these as reference points, we can get a feeling for the system of aesthetic coordinates involved. It was no surprise to find that in many cases film directors were named. China is famous for the multiplication of films on video and DVD, which means that international cinema is much better known than works of Western painting or sculpture. Zhang Peili for example mentions Ingmar Bergman, Feng Mengbo cites Stanley Kubrick, and Cao Fei speaks of Shuji Teryama, an eccentric figure of Japanese cinema who is not very well known in Europe. There are of course in addition traditional Chinese references such as Song painting (Zhao Ji, Ma Yuan or Fan Kuan), but also classic Western modernists (Kandinsky is mentioned by Xie Nanxing, Duchamp by Ai Weiwei and others) and even current Western painting (Duan Jianyu mentions Julian Schnabel).

Ai Weiwei for example is a major personality among contemporary Chinese artists. His approach seems thoroughly in tune with both reference systems, and displays great knowledge of both Western modernism and Chinese traditions. In this respect, the fact that he mentions Marcel Duchamp as a point of reference contains an importance that may be a key to the relationship between Western and Oriental art, placing great value on the role of artists and their methods of achieving aesthetic effect. Various forms of penetrating, provocative destruction and modular addition define these new qualities. It all began apparently trivially, with Western logos on prehistoric Chinese vases, a monumental abstract sculpture constructed from separate parts of an old temple, and modular reconstructions of diverse spiritual meanings. The mental concept and the craft implementation are interwoven in a logic where Duchamp is a guest in a Chinese game we know

nothing about as yet. Is it possible that Western art is cast in the role occupied by black African sculpture in early 20-century Paris? It is indeed worth approaching these sculptures with something of that sort in mind. Ai Weiwei uses the differences in a manner and with a feel for ambiguities, thereby approaching the dynamics of the game of meanings and taking over prevailing Western methods. The materials and their craft realisation are elements in a linguistic game that make sentences that we perceive as works of art.

Of course, not all the artists on show in the exhibition are so many-layered and complex. But there is an element of continuity running through most works that operates consciously with the presence of two visual cultures, pursuing the differences between them and developing a narrative from them. Duan Jianyu's way of doing that is particularly exemplary and appealing, turning Julian Schnabel, the American painter of the 1980s, into a mythical figure who travels to exotic places like a picture spirit so as to leave art there. It is a thoroughly ironic allusion to Western cultural chauvinism that evolves into a method, and in the rich imagery of her paintings leads us in seemingly naïve fashion to totally fantastic games of association between the cultures.

Let us recall again how far the history and reflections of Chinese art go back, and how little we really know about this continent of art despite everything, how greatly "Western" interpretations of it differ, and how differently various approaches and assessments turn out. These differences are of course a highly relevant part of the debate about the status of contemporary art in our contemporary society. When Lothar Lederrose stresses the importance of modularity and mass production for artistic activity in Chinese history and can even draw conclusions about the early industrialisation of Western society therefrom,<sup>5</sup> a little thought shows us very profoundly how insular and exotic European art can look today, if seen from another perspective. However, if we approach it at a different level, moving away from a concern with forms of production to an interest in how works were received and what their social status was, it is evident that the processes taking place in Chinese history are very similar to those in the West. Art is an important part of status aesthetics here as well, and that in this regard, China was historically far ahead of the West. The use of small-format stones - left in their natural condition - in the context of Literati painting of the Ming period could easily be seen as a form of appropriation à la Duchamp, where objects are contextualised in a complex system of art. In this connection, it is remarkable that the importance of Duchamp is recognised by younger Chinese artists.

Of course, a view of these same “classic” Literati paintings, created in fact not by professional artists but by highly educated laymen and collectors, could admit quite a different interpretation. Abstract expressionism saw itself reflected there, and Far Eastern calligraphy become a universal aesthetic authority. The mutual attraction and misunderstandings associated therewith, which of course outweigh - in a highly productive fashion - profound knowledge, are manifold, and have perhaps achieved further interesting facets of mutual stimulation in an area of modern art we rather disregard. Socialist Realism and its highly idiosyncratic and singular developments in the People’s Republic of China is a wide terrain of constellations that often has none of the superficial connection characterising the reciprocal influence of Western and Chinese aesthetics. It is a creative zone that is now beginning to unfold, and we can safely say that it involves a significant Chinese contribution to a new global art.

To go one step further from the above deliberations, the importance of this contribution is that perhaps for the first time in history, two very complex and different art systems are encountering each other as equals, against a background of a highly active art trade and global media public that is to some extent attuned to the subject. The importance for art in particular is that very different methods of production, public attitudes to art, and ways of thinking about it can get together and by their very diversity offer great potential for renewal.

#### Notes

1 The meaning of this sentence reflects the characters on the t-shirts of the band members who are the subject of the exhibition. The scene is from: Cao Fei, *Whose Utopia*, 2006.

2 *Jade und Gold*, Kunsthalle Leoben, Chu Zhen, Kunsthalle Wien, Mahjong, Museum der Moderne Salzburg, China – *Facing Reality*, MUMOK Wien, China Entdecken. G.R.A.M., Künstlerhaus Graz.

3 The first major presentation of current Chinese art in Austria was China! at the Künstlerhaus in Vienna in 1996/97, an exhibition originating from the Kunstmuseum in Bonn and subsequently going on tour. The exhibition featured a number of painters some of whom are still of great relevance today and are meantime even achieving record prices at auctions. Another, larger selection of Chinese art was put on show by Harald Szeemann at the 1999 Venice Biennale.

4 Mahjong was subsequently exhibited at the Kunsthalle in Hamburg and will be at the Museum Moderner Kunst in Salzburg in the summer of 2007. MUMOK in Vienna is also presenting a similar coherent overview of con-temporary work in China in the autumn of 2007.

5 Lothar Ledderose: *Ten Thousand Things, Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art*. Princeton University Press 1998.



Peter Pakesch

Luise Kloos

# Time Leaps

Lore Heuermann, Artist, Vienna

I have traveled to China six times between 1990 and 2000. My grandfather visited the Middle Kingdom already a hundred years ago during the Boxer Rebellion - a time in which some Western countries, Russia and Japan thought they could take over parts of China. It is one epoch in the appalling and sad history of the colonialism of former powerful nations.

My grandfather was a doctor and a collector of objects from foreign cultures. Not only did he return with exotic things from the time he spent in Africa, doing research on sleeping sickness with Robert Koch, but he also brought back many magnificent collectors' items from his two-year stay as a doctor in China. As a child I was more impressed by the objects from Africa - the spears, arrows, stools and bronze hatchets.

From the age of 20 I began to learn to love the beauty and perfection of the Chinese things in my surrounding - the antique porcelain, the scrolls, the Buddha statues. I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of these foreign items. During the following years I bought countless art books and read important Chinese poets and literary classics, such as "The Dream of the Red Chamber" and "Journey to the West" by Wu-Cheng-en. I concerned myself with Taoism, Lao-tse, Tschuang-tse and the I-Ching. An incredible wealth of philosophic thought and cultural expressions opened itself up to me and deeply influenced my own thought and work.

It was my dream then to visit China. I talked about this dream on many occasions. One evening, as I was once again telling everybody about this deep rooted wish of mine, one lady, who was touched by my passion and longing, bought two of my larger paintings under the condition that she could accompany me to China. This is how my first two trips to the Middle Kingdom manifested. I traveled all the way from Beijing to Hongkong, climbed the holy mountains of Tai-Shan and Emei-shan, saw the excavations of Chian, visited Shanghai and traveled by boat on the Yangtse-Kiang. I saw the ancestral temple of Confucius and the wonderful cemetery there.

During the following years I visited China four more times - once with my sister, once with my daughter and twice for lectures, workshops and a grand exhibition at the Fine Arts Museum in Chongqing. I encountered familiar and unfamiliar, but always interesting things. The wonderful and vast countryside with its rivers and mountains never failed to impress me. Individuals met me with open hearts full of curiosity.

During my later trips I witnessed big changes that occurred at a pace that was previously unknown to me. Within the short-

est periods of time whole parts of old Peking disappeared and gave way to skyscrapers. What impressed me most was the concurrence of different levels of time. I am well aware of the fact that everybody longs for technological advancements that make life easier. I also know that many people wish for a modern state. I have been to South America and India and have to say that China does very well for its enormous population. This huge country has a different history and evolution than Europe. The West still holds on to the bad habit of giving unasked advice. This attitude stems from the time when Europe felt that it was the center of the world. Times change and we change along with it.

I am impressed by the different approach to time that old Chinese culture has. How different are the ideas and thoughts of poets and thinkers such as Confucius! His philosophy was written down very early, 551 - 475 BC, for alleviating the suffering in human life. Master Kong (Confucius) was ennobled around 500 years after his death. Some of us are so proud that our dynasties go back 1000 years, but compared to Chinese noble dynasties this is not very old. I have been to the cemetery of Confucius, where over 60 generations are buried and there still are living successors known today.

I will exhibit two photo series, which I have taken in China. One shows "Dazu" - Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian cultural monuments that were chiseled out of a rock wall between the 7th and 11th century. They received the status of cultural heritage in 1999.

The second series shows photos, which I have taken in Chongqing in 2000, of the versatile works of artists, who dealt with the subject of feudalism and the exploitation of human labor - "Rent Collection Courtyard" from 1965 was exhibited in the West only in recent months and drew a lot of attention.

After this, I will show a few examples of my own artistic work, which I have exhibited in China. For over 40 years now I have worked with human movements, literary as well as figuratively.

Our European culture is not as old as its Chinese counterpart and we do not have records as rich as theirs. All we had for a short while was technical superiority, but that too has changed. May we increase our historical and cultural knowledge of other cultures around the world and gain mutual understanding and cooperation.



Thomas Hochgatterer

Lore Heuermann



# Visits to China

Franz Yang-Mocnik, Artist, Graz

I first visited Asia 18 years ago. In February 1992, the owner of the Chinese restaurant "Asia" in Graz that he had opened in the 70s invited me, along with four others, to his home - Ta Tu, in the Tai Zong province of Taiwan. We stayed for 14 days.

This trip took place before the Asian crisis, which started in 1997 and mostly affected the Southeastern Asian countries of South Korea and Taiwan. I can still remember the malice in the reporting of the temporary downfall of Asia. This decline happened immediately after the New Millennium of economic success had been predicted for that region. The Asian century of success had ended before it even began.

I met my wife in 1997. She was from Taiwan and I took on her last name Yang as my second name when we married. Since our marriage I have traveled to Taipei every two years. In 2006 I started visiting Peking as well, where I had my first exhibition in a private gallery in district 798, followed by two more exhibitions at the Tody International Museum in 2007 and 2009.

For the Western eye, the most significant aspect of Chinese day to day life is the food. I do not need to mention the variety and colorfulness of the many dishes, since most of us are familiar with them. The organization of even a small restaurant with seven tables for five people each is truly spectacular. A team of three - cook, assistant and waiter - will serve full-course meals without delay to the ongoing rush of customers. I am astounded by the competence and skill it takes to run such a place.

These collective qualities distinguish the cultures of Southeast Asia, and are increasingly acknowledged and respected in the West, especially since the Vietnam War. Their way of approaching other people appears to be less marked by habitual manners of noblesse than it is customary in the West.

Patterns of Western conflict strategies are seen everywhere in the ongoing process of loosening the propagandistic and egalitarian cultural policy and its objectives. This endeavor, which started 20 years ago, is lead by a generation of young artists.

The 100 year old revolution in Western art, beginning with the classic avant-garde of the Ecole de Paris and the Dada-Movement, lead by the fathers of Ready-Made, can now be seen as key elements in the thoughts of many Chinese artists. Most of them have previously imbibed the feelings of a strongly contrastive culture in the USA. These artists come

from a background in which iconographic painting was the sole influence in art.

This stands in contrast to Western fine art, which has gone through many stages. The canvas has over time become an area for inscriptions, which had to be disfigured.

In the thirties, Picasso said in an interview: In earlier times paintings approached their completion in stages. A painting used to be a sum of additions. For Picasso, it became a sum of deletions. Had he been born in China, he would have become a writer, not a painter. This means that he saw Chinese calligraphy as the pinnacle of constructive destruction, which is one of the key influences in modern art with its controlled relationship between affect and action. This process of bringing out new picture moments through a so-called negative painting method, lies at the heart of modernism. It started with Cubism and continued in American abstract expressionism (action painting) up to the post-war Europe of the fifties, where it had its triumph, which necessarily destroyed the disputability of its goals.

The wild gestures were repeated in the eighties and were called trans-avant-garde.

The term anti-painting should not in any way be understood as derogative. It is about the inherent negativity of earlier informal painting, which drove painting in a direction that has been, so far, unfamiliar or half-heartedly executed.

Today's critics see parallels between the emerging economic power of China and the awakening of a new art scene, which could lead to a painting boom similar to the one of the eighties. Narrow-minded sponsorships in disguise equipped with different powers are at work here, pretending that their mouths start watering at the sight of a painting.

Young Chinese are not children of a welfare society who do not have to fight for anything. According to critical observers, the thirst for education in the West - that once enlivened this region - seems to abate. In China, on the other hand, there is no such educational abstinence in which parents prefer to indulge in their hedonistic lifestyles rather than nurture their children.

During my trips to Peking and Tai Jin, where I visited families of the Chinese students I had known from Graz, I could see that they came from incredibly poor (by our standards) backgrounds. The parents often took on great financial burdens to enable their children's education in the West, exceeding

their Western counterparts of the fifties. Not to mention their implicit hospitality to Western acquaintances.

Cultural administration by functionaries was born in the Soviet Union and practiced in socialist Eastern Europe. This often leans towards creating associations and institutions that become structural capsules and that simulate activities to supply certain groups with resources. This system was taken up by Central European countries and, over the course of 30 years, developed into an instrument with monopolistic traits, which simulates openness and justice.

I have lived in Graz and worked as an artist for 30 years now. During my many trips to China I have had countless encounters with unexpectedly open-minded people.

Franz Yang-Mocnik



# Introduction to doing business in China

Wan Jie Chen, SINOplex, Graz

I have lived in Austria for 23 years now, and I am very proud that I have become a Styrian - I love eating pumpkin seed oil and other traditional foods from Styria. I also found my love, who is Austrian, in Styria. So one can see that we have an intercultural daily life at home. I fly to China 10 times every year, therefore I get a good insight and knowledge about current developments and new laws there. Today, I will discuss some differences between European and Chinese mentalities.

Europe is about the size of China. 114 times Austria would be China. China's economy is developing fast, with gigantic proportions. I will tell you a Chinese joke called "presidents visiting China":

George W. Bush, Mr. Putin and the former president of China drive in an Audi A8 to an intersection. George W. Bush knows that he wants to turn right – the capitalistic way. Mr. Putin thinks about whether to turn left or right – communism or capitalism – but eventually turns right. The Chinese president also comes to the crossing and seriously thinks about where to turn. Now, if you have a superior in China, he usually tells you what to do. So he calls his superior and asks him which way to turn. The superior tells him: „Oh, you are stupid!! You indicate left and turn right!“

This little joke also indicates the importance of hierarchy in China. As long as there is a superior, you ask him what to do instead of deciding on your own. This hierarchy dates back to Confucius, who stood for hierarchical family values. This means that if you are doing business in China, it is important to talk to the superior. In other words: the person having the highest rank is the one you should talk to when you have problems. So top-down is better than bottom-up.

There is a second joke about a Chinese delegation coming to Graz and staying at a nice hotel:

The day after the first night the hotel manager asked the delegation how they liked the hotel. So the Chinese head of the delegation answered smilingly: "When I open the window, it is beautiful outside." So what does that mean? That it is not beautiful inside?

Chinese always stress the positive points first and leave out negative things. It is a Chinese habit to express oneself quite indirectly. You probably know the Chinese Ying and Yang sign. To keep Yin and Yang in balance is one of our most important values. This does not mean that there is no „yes“ and „no“, but that „yes“ also contains „no“ and vice versa. Ameri-

cans are much more direct concerning this, while Chinese often look for a third solution or a compromise.

There is a third joke:

An Austrian and a Chinese both go to buy bread. The shop sign says that the shop opens at 10 o'clock – but it is only 9 o'clock now. So what would the Austrian do in such a situation? Maybe go for a coffee? The Chinese would go to the door to knock and check if somebody is there instead of going for a coffee. Why would he act this way? Because waiting there for one hour, or going for a coffee and coming back again would be wasted time if there is a third solution – the compromise! This compromise would be to knock on the door and if someone opens, ask him kindly to sell bread to you as you are in a hurry.

This means that when you have a business meeting in China, you should always have a third solution. This is very, very important to know. Chinese people tend to think in a more spiral way, a round way, while Europeans tend to think in a straightforward way. The European way would be to cover one point after the other; the Chinese would think "yes" today, "no" tomorrow, and then "yes" again. The goal is the same, but it might take longer to reach it. So you need a lot of patience with the Chinese. Another important difference is that the Chinese tend to do things in a more holistic way, and the Europeans in a more partial way. If Chinese people say "yes" or "no", it often does not mean "yes" and "no". So you have to put statements into context and think about who said what and when. Only by thinking in this way you can follow the Chinese strategy.

Another very important point of difference is inductiveness. Chinese people often talk around and take a lot of time to discuss. At that time you might lose your temper. It might occur that a Chinese person has already packed his suitcase, the weather is nice, he has gone to the bank and took out some cash, but he does not say until the very end what he really wants to do. The European would say: "I'm going to Salzburg, therefore I need all of this," and leave. One can see, that Chinese have an inductive thinking structure! So do not lose your temper and be patient.

Regarding mentality I only want to mention two points: One is that Chinese people like to keep their face. So you should always make sure that the other side does not lose his or her face, and does not feel neglected or disapproved. If a Chinese comes to Austria and meets another Chinese who has lived there for 20 years, and the two of them go for

a coffee, the one who has lived here for a long time is aware of the coffee culture in Austria and would tell the other to drink the coffee slowly, one sip after the other. If in this situation there were an Austrian sitting at the same table, the newcomer would be very polite and thank his Chinese host. But inside, the newcomer would be absolutely hurt because he lost his face in front of the Austrian, since he did not know how to drink coffee in Austria.

Another point regarding mentality is the importance of relationships, and the high emphasis placed on taking care of relationships. Chinese society is very person-oriented and not as object-oriented or materialistic. But of course China is a huge and diverse country, so there are many different mentalities even within China. Again, an example: There is a Chinese person from Beijing, one from Shanghai, and one from Hongkong. Each of them has 1€. The one from Beijing

puts his 1€ on the bank and is happy to get the interest rate. The Shanghai person puts half of it on the bank and invests the other. The Hongkong person puts the whole 1€ in the bank as a security for a credit of 2€.

Since China is so big, you should understand the differences within China. Another example is also the difference between people coming from the islands, from Hongkong or e.g. the “banana Chinese” – someone who was born here in the West and is yellow outside, but white inside. So if you do business with a Chinese, it also depends on what kind of Chinese the person is. A “banana Chinese” is used to the Austrian/European business life (since he grew up here), and a Hongkong Chinese would be influenced by the English way of doing business. So you have to differentiate with whom you are doing business.

Wan Jie Chen



# Experience in Chinese Cooperations

Franz Leitner, AVL Graz

A major part of AVL's business activity takes place in China, where we are the market leader in our business. Mainly, we counsel Chinese companies interested in creating their own brands. Cherry company, for example, developed 17 new engines over the last years with AVL's help.

Due to China's increasingly stringent national emissions regulations, there is a high demand for new technologies in the automobile market there. On the one hand, China is working on improving its quality standards to Western levels, while on the other hand, Chinese producers still focus mainly on the Chinese domestic market.

In order to successfully conduct business in China, good personal relations and trust are essential. Thus, you need to cultivate good relationships with people in as many levels of hierarchy as possible. Chinese businessmen value trust more than cheap prices or good offers - without trust, business in China is simply not possible. Of course, you should also strive to offer good value for money. Finally, Chinese have fast minds, so in order to conduct business as usual, one should be able to react very fast.

I noticed that Chinese visiting Austria on business trips or for training often know more about Austria's history than we do. They also like the local food, and love the sweet wine.

Concluding my statement, I would like to say that China is a very interesting and challenging market, because the culture is so different to ours. It took us three years from the first discussions to signing one contract.



Hannes Voraberger - AT&S, Werner Wiedenbauer - BioDiesel International AG, Franz Leitner - AVL Graz

# Experience in Chinese Cooperations

Werner Wiedenbauer, BioDiesel International AG, Graz

I started off in the technical University in Graz, where I received my degree in mechanical engineering and economy in 1997.

Our company is constructing a big BioDiesel plant in Hong-kong. China is huge, and one has to realize that there are many differences between its regions. Everything is possible there, but in the beginning, everything seems to be very difficult.

To be successful in China it is essential to establish good relationships with your customers. I had to visit one customer regularly over five years in order to establish a good relationship. Only then did he have enough trust in me to place several large orders over the next few years.

Patience is just as important, as negotiations can take a long time, and take place in several places. At times, they pick you up for lunch and let you sit there for hours, then pick you up for dinner, let you sit there again, and finally get back at midnight to negotiate for another 1-2 hours.

It is essential in China to answer emails immediately. If you do not answer an email within minutes, it is quite normal to get a phone call ten minutes later, asking you if you received the email.

# Golden Rules of China

Werner Wiedenbauer, BioDiesel International AG

1. Everything is possible
  2. Nothing is easy
  3. Western business logic does not apply
  4. It is a fun project if there is no deadline
  5. You must persist - things will come your way eventually
  6. Patience is the essence of success
  7. "You don't know China" means that they disagree
  8. "New Regulations" means that they found a new way to avoid doing something
  9. "International Regulation" means they are mad at you
  10. "Basically, No Problem" means BIG problem
  11. When you are optimistic, think about Rule Nr. 2
  12. When you are discouraged, think about Rule Nr. 1
- and **Don't Worry - Be Happy**



# Experience in Chinese Cooperations

Hannes Voraberger, Austria Technologie & Systemtechnik, Leoben

China goes Europe 4 AT&S in China AT&S

Austria Technologie & Systemtechnik  
Aktiengesellschaft

Shanghai Plant: 120,000 sqm<sup>2</sup>



AT&S (China) Company, Ltd

The total investment of 500 million USD in AT&S ( China ) by now accounts for almost half of all the Austrian investment in China .

**AT&S (China) Milestone**

- Nov, 2007 Start of Production Shanghai III.
- Aug, 2006 Start of Production Shanghai II
- July, 2006 Set up Shanghai R&D Center
- May, 2005 Ground Breaking Shanghai II
- Dec, 2002 Start of Production Shanghai I
- May, 2001 Groundbreaking Shanghai I

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Aktiengesellschaft


China goes Europe?  
Europe goes China?

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China goes Europe 6 Fear is Dominating Questions ... AT&S

Austria Technologie & Systemtechnik  
Aktiengesellschaft

中国 (zhōng guó)



Is China back on it's track to become the „Middle Kingdom“?

Are moving our jobs from Europe to China?

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China goes Europe 7 Since Ages China had a Dominant Role AT&S

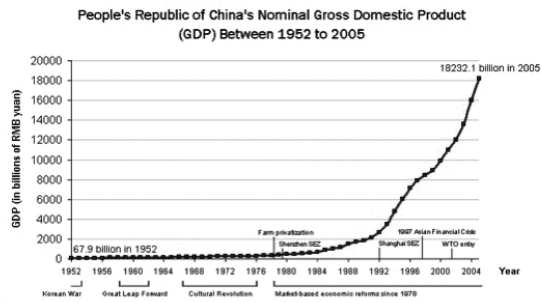
Austria Technologie & Systemtechnik  
Aktiengesellschaft

- 1st centruy AD: Development stage of Han-Dynasty can be compared to that of the **Roman Empire** at the same time.
- During the next centuries China was growing to become the most important economy world wide and using several technologies centuries before their invention in Europe (e.g. printing, explosives, etc.)
- In **1820** Chinas covers **32,4%** of world gross national product (Maddison, 1998). Europe is contributing with 26,6%.
- In the next decades China's economy starts to struggle and in **1890** it contributes only with **13,2%**. Europe is contributing with more than 40%.
- Decline proceeds and reaches it's bottom at **5,2% in 1952**.

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In 5 to 10 years China will reach GDP of U.S.A and will be back at 20% of world gross national product.

(Maddison 2001)



Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall. (Konfuzius)



China will come back to its historical importance  
New is: it will come back to a globalized world  
And this is where the story for Europe begins ...

- **(Global) Environmental Damage**  
Pan Yue "estimates the annual cost of environmental damage at 8-13% of GDP – much the same as the overall economic growth rate."  
(The Economist, 13/03/2008, special report, S. 14)  
Global Responsibility: Many products that we consume on a daily base are produced in China!
- **Demographic Development**  
China is endangered „to grow old before it becomes prosperous.“  
(Waldmann 2005, S.32)
- **Share of Resources**
- ...

### Shanghai Plant: 120,000 sqm<sup>2</sup>



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# Risk Management – Reflections on the Oasis

## Do not submit to the master narrative

Max Valentin, Entrepreneur, Stockholm

What I understood during my brief visit in Graz was that the Department of Culture (both local and regional) is great at implementing European best practices in the cultural field. I recognize this phenomenon from Sweden, where best practices are widely accepted and implemented in all the municipalities. Here in Graz, there are three cases of best practice, which I found interesting. The first one is controlling fixed costs by not creating new institutions but instead funding interesting and important projects. The second one is embracing the idea of creative industry in order to catalyse “a melting pot” of culture, education and sometimes business. The third one is seeing the hospitality industry and its spin offs as part of the cultural field. All of this might be good in different ways, but if these best practices belong to the same master narrative, Graz is being exposed to the same risks as other cities following the same master narrative. We can learn from recent history that such an exposure to homogenic risk can lead to dramatic consequences. The good side of homogenising through implementation of best practice is that when the master narrative is in rule, the benefits are spread. It follows, however, that when the master narrative fails, the loss is equally spread. The aviation industry serves as a good example. The industry as a whole was hit hard by the financial crisis. However, the diversification in business modelling allowed some companies to flourish and keep the industry going. What we are facing is an interesting paradox: taking the risk of breaking with master narratives can actually reduce the risk of a generalized crisis. Acting differently is hard and for most people and it requires bravery, initiative and strategic analysis. Art and entrepreneurship, specifically circus and innovation driven entrepreneurship, are disciplines that encourage the development of such skills. During my stay in Graz, I had the pleasure of having a chat with Mrs. List, the director of a cultural foundation created by a company. Mrs. List explained to me that the company invested a lot in products that were different and prone to fail, which was important in order to find unexpected and successful solutions. In accordance to this, the art that the foundation supported was prone to fail too and did not have to be liked by everyone. The element of potential failure is then a core value of the company, both in its artistic and its business investments. The stability of this company is supported by the risk-taking of the innovative engineer and the artist. I do not celebrate the abolishment of all best practices. However, I do believe that it might be worth investing in solutions that are strange, far fetched or that might seem bad at a first glance. In how many ways can you transport a hundred eggs on a dangerous pathway so that you arrive to market with as many unbroken eggs as possible?



Max Valentin

# China in Europe – Reflections on the Oasis

## A comment on the Graz Oasis

Stella Fajerson, Artist, Dubai

Nurope had its 10th Oasis in the beautiful city of Graz, Austria, in March 2010. The theme of this oasis was “China Goes Europe”. There has been active trade between China and Europe since the time of the Roman Empire, and Marco Polo set off on his travels along the Silk Road in 1271 to return to Europe 24 years later with many fantastic discoveries and stories. In Graz we heard some wonderful lectures about more recent Europeans who have spent years, in some cases even decades, living and working in China. Some of them got to know the country very well and, like Marco Polo, spread this knowledge to the West.

Now China is coming to Europe. No, not only to Europe – it is spreading itself over the globe, buying assets like mines, setting up villages of workshops and factories, and trading with goods made in China.

As I am writing this I am in Dubai. Last night (13th of April 2010) I saw a CNN report on Dragon Mart in Dubai. Apparently, this is the largest outlet for Chinese goods produced outside China. It is well over a kilometer in length and built in the shape of a dragon. It is here where you can buy nearly any kind of Chinese product that you can think of. The main entrance is very grand and the kilometer-long mall is very simple compared to other Dubai malls. It seems more like a very long warehouse with a simple shop structure.

When I first started travelling to Dubai in 2007, I used to stay in the International Village situated nearby that was just being built at that time. The China section of International Village - right next to Dragon Mart - was already completed and full of Chinese workers and families. My nearest internet connection - in walking distance from my apartment - was in Dragon Mart, where I thus did my internet errands and spent some hours exploring the small shops and alleys. At that time, I often seemed to be the only European around. The shopkeepers were Chinese or Indian, and the customers mostly Arab and Indian. Now, Dragon Mart is better known and even tourists find their way here. First it was mostly Russians, but now I hear all sorts of languages there. The amount of goods that people buy there makes me think that a lot of them are stocking up their shops back home, but maybe they just have very large families!

Not just goods, but also culture is coming to us from China. It is becoming increasingly easy to access traditional Chinese Art, or find books, exhibitions and courses in calligraphy and language. And many modern day Chinese artists found fame in the West even before they became known in their homeland.

The Chinese state runs the Confucius Institutes, which are being set up all over the world to spread Chinese culture and make it more accessible for everyone.

The effect that such a Confucius Institute may have on the local culture in a city like Graz was of special interest to our Nurope think tank.

So what are the biggest differences between the histories of China and Europe in the last 100 years? In spite of the two World Wars and the more recent breakup of former Yugoslavia, we have had relative political stability and a steady economic growth in Europe. Furthermore, we also have an old and well-established democratic political system and a culture of freedom of information and speech, as well as social welfare. Our workplaces and homes are made as safe as possible and there is a very strong environmental movement. The last hundred years of Chinese history, in contrast, have been full of war, famine and upheaval. The Chinese writer Jung Chang gives a very moving and personal account of China during the 20th Century in her book *Wild Swans*, describing the lives of her grandmother, her mother and herself. It is a good starting point when trying to understand what life in China was like during this period.

The social unrest and economic hardship that finally led to the fall of the Qing Empire in 1912 was followed by a period of civil war between the royalist and republican factors. Japan took advantage of the situation and invaded parts of China and set up a puppet regime with the last Emperor Puyi in Manchuria. The communists finally came to power after the long march of 1934-1935. Then the horrors of the second World War and the Japanese invasion followed. As the country finally started to rebuild itself, a new restructuring was imposed on the people that caused much death, destruction and famine. People were displaced, families separated and children missed out on their school education. This was the Cultural Revolution and it started in 1966 and lasted for ten years. Many people had to leave China during this time to avoid persecution, and some left China to continue their studies abroad as research fellows, or increasingly to do business.

Today there is a new-found pride in the old culture. Old temples are restored, antique artefacts are bought back from the West by the newly rich, and there is a growing and increasingly wealthy middle class. Unfortunately, our levels of health and safety are still missing, environmental issues are not very high on their agenda, and neither the freedom of information and speech nor social welfare - that we in Europe take for granted - exist there. Today the Chinese admit Mao

was not right in everything. When I visited China in 2006, 70% of the people said he was right, and the other 30% said he was wrong.

What have been the most important aspects of trade, travel and cultural exchange between China and Europe? The trade between Europe and China was at first conducted overland via the Silk Road during the Roman Empire. By the end of the 14th Century the sea routes became more important and traffic on the Silk Road declined. The sea trade between Europe and China was dominated by various East India Companies. The Dutch East India Company was by far the largest and operated between 1602-1798. But England, Portugal and other countries including Sweden also had large fleets trading with China. The Swedish Ostindiska Companiet was founded in 1730 and dissolved 1831. Although small compared to the others, the Swedish fleet brought back the largest amount of porcelaine from China to Europe, an estimated 50 million pieces. Much of this was sold to the rest of Europe.

Portugal occupied the Chinese island of Macau from 1557 to 1999. This was an important stopping point for the European fleets, as Chinese regulations did not apply there. Portugal was also the first country to introduce the drinking of tea to Europe. Tea came to England with Catherine of Braganza, the Portugese queen consort of Charles the II of England in the 1660s and 70s. Hong Kong was colonized by the British only after the first Opium War (1839-42), extending the territories in 1898. Hong Kong and Macau were both returned to China in 1999 and are now operating under the slogan: "one country, two systems." With the sea trade, silk, tea, Chinese porcelaine and spices started to arrive in Europe in huge amounts and became the height of fashion. But the expeditions also allowed European botanists to reach new shores and to bring back samples of plants and other discoveries.

With this trade, Chinese seamen started to arrive in Europe in increasingly large numbers. The British Chinese community is one of the largest and oldest in Western Europe. The Chinese immigrants mostly came from the port cities of Tianjin and Shanghai and were settling in port cities such as Liverpool, Manchester and London in the beginning of the 1800s. London had a Chinese district from the late 1800s in Limhouse, East London. But this area was completely destroyed during the Second World War. A new Chinatown has grown from the 1950s and 60s in Soho in central London. Some of the first Chinese restaurants in Europe seem to be dating back to the 1930s in Holland. During the world economic crisis, Chinese sailors were stranded in the harbour cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam without means to

get home. Some of them set up Chinese restaurants. These were very simple establishments with very limited menus.

Then in the 1950s, some 300,000 refugees arrived in Holland from the lost Netherlands Indie Colonies. These were returning expatriates as well as Chinese and Indonesian refugees. More restaurants were opened by the Chinese, and the returning Dutch expatriates provided a customer base for these establishments as they already knew the food. These restaurants were more sophisticated and had a wider range of foods on the menu, including many more Indonesian specialities than the earlier harbour restaurants did.

In England, the first Chinese restaurant, the Tong Kung on Holoway Head in Birmingham, was opened in 1956. Today, Chinese restaurants are an important feature of our urban landscape. We find them all across the continent and in great numbers. I cannot remember ever having been to one that is not run predominantly by Chinese. In France during the First World War, 140,000 Chinese workers arrived as temporary labour, replacing some of the workforce that was sent off to fight in the war. Most of these left in 1918 but around 2000 stayed. Then in the 30s and 40s the Wenzhou Chinese settled in Paris, gradually taking over some of the wholesale trade after the Jews had lost it during the German occupation. Today's Chinatown in the 13th arrondissement of Paris was built during the 1970s. Overseas Chinese have come to this area fleeing the wars and persecution in Laos and Cambodia.

In the 1970s, Chinese communism actually found its way to Sweden and was very popular for a while. There was a general disillusion with Soviet communism, starting when the West increasingly got to know the horrors that were imposed on the Russians by its leaders. Maoism was seen as a better alternative. Mao's little red book was for a time widely available in Stockholm and courses could be taken to study it at various state-run adult education centers. I had a friend who signed up for such a course at the time, outside her regular schoolwork, not because she felt she was a communist but because she felt that it should be part of her general knowledge. The I-Ching also found its way into many homes and is today easily available all over Europe. Another friend took up Chinese language studies at about the same time. Although there are around 40,000 characters, apparently you only need to learn a few hundred in order to be able to cope with everyday life. In order to read a newspaper though you need to know about 3000. And the characters stay the same wherever you go, unlike spoken Chinese which varies so much from region to region that people from the different regions

do not understand each other. Characters from our Latin alphabet also exist in order to spell out names and items for which there are no set Chinese characters. The problem with this for the foreigner is that - just like Arabic - Chinese is spelt the way it sounds. So you have got to know how something sounds first.

So where are we today? There were a lot of personal accounts at the Graz Oasis. We heard from Lore Heuermann who has felt a long and deep connection to China all through her life, and who has visited the country on several occasions. We heard the story from Kathryn List about her father in law, Hans List, who had lived in China between 1928 and 1934, and who has written a book about it. (I hope it will come out in English, it is an amazing story!) Then we heard from members of the Graz business community, who travel to China regularly in order to do business there. I particularly enjoyed the list of good advice for the Westerner doing business in China that Werner Wiederbauer of BioDiesel International shared with us. There were some points that stuck in my mind like: If the counterpart says that you don't understand China, it simply means that they don't agree. And: If they say "no problem", it means that there are big problems. He made it very clear that Western business methods do not apply.

Mr. Wan Jie Chen of SINOplex is a Chinese expatriate who lives and works in Graz. After more than 20 years in Austria he has come to understand the difference between the Western and the Chinese culture. One aspect that is hard for us Westerners to grasp is the flowing nuance between yes and no. The Chinese will always try to avoid saying no. The fact that saying "no" is seen as bad manners means that a negative message has to be communicated in a different way. For a Westerner this might sound terribly vague or even like a "maybe". We might therefore be tempted to push for more clarity, something that will make the Easterner nervous and unhappy. It could even cause them to lose their face - and it is very important for the Chinese not to lose their face. Each side has to help the other to prevent this from happening. There is also an enormous respect for hierarchy, and a lot of attention is given to finding out a new acquaintance's place in the hierarchy, as well as asserting one's own. This, however, should be done with modesty.

To help us to understand Chinese culture even better, we had etiquette lessons from Hong-Ling Yang, a Chinese expatriate now living and working in Graz. With humour and clarity she highlighted some of the cultural differences, and explained how to behave in a company, how to greet each other, or

what are appropriate gifts (don't give clocks, green hats or umbrellas, and anything with big "Made in China" labels!).

So how will increased contact between China and Europe change us all? Maybe the cross-cultural dialogue between the Westerner and the Chinese is simply a subject too big to understand in any other way than through personal contact. It is the individual perspective that makes us connect and understand. The Chinese take on life can only be learned from a Chinese friend. And I never realized how many Chinese friends and acquaintances I had until I started to write this piece. I never thought of them as "Chinese", but just thought of them as friends. Looking back, however, I now realize that some things I learned from these friends actually have roots in Chinese culture.

Has this contact, then, threatened my Swedish identity in any way? Being a bit of a nomad, I would be hard pressed to pinpoint how any one culture has affected me in isolation from other cultures. (And exactly what did I bring with me as my heritage and my personality?) At the same time, I find that contact with other cultures also reinforces my interest in my native Swedish culture. My non-Swedish friends ask me questions about my heritage at least as much as I question them, and as a result I have read a lot of books and reflected much over the Northern European history and culture in order to be able to answer their questions, and to enjoy a meaningful dialogue.

Contrasting different cultures with each other is a very useful tool when trying to get to grips with the various concepts of culture. At the same time, we are all different as individuals and may react very differently in any given interaction. This may change us and most certainly we will all change during the course of our lives in one way or the other. This change should not be met with fear: it is part of our life.

To quote Confucius: the only constant is change.

# On Modesty and Self-Confidence – Reflections on the Oasis

Helena Hildur W.  Artist, Stockholm



Thirty years ago, my French–German father gave me the I-Ching – the ancient Chinese Book of Changes – in Richard Wilhelm’s rendering (translated into English by Cary F. Baynes). It has been with me since then, part of my European heritage.



15. Ch`ien / Modesty



above K`UN The Receptive, Earth  
below K`EN Keeping Still, Mountain

Among the sixty-four hexagrams that represent the universe in this book, the image of Modesty is said to be one of the very few which are favourable in all aspects.

## THE JUDGEMENT

Modesty creates success.

The superior man carries things through.

On the other hand, the idea of self-confidence – so important to the modern mind - does not exist as a consistutive element

in the I-Ching. Modesty is like a mountain that exists within the earth: quiet, great, unseen.

## THE IMAGE

Within the earth, a mountain:

The image of MODESTY.

Thus the superior man reduces that which is too much,

And augments that which is too little.

He weighs things and makes them equal.

It took one Chinese Nomad living in Europe - Dr. Wan Jie Chen - to counterpoint and complement the archaic wisdom of I-Ching with this contemporary mental image; self-confidence, zì xìn. Maybe the conception of self-confidence springs from an experience of potential - or actual - individual freedom.



This exchange is the most substantial experience I bring from the Nurope X Oasis.





# International Relations of the City of Graz

Peter Grabensberger, Head of the Arts & Culture Department, Graz

On behalf of the City of Graz, I have been given the opportunity today to express some thoughts, but also to raise some questions about Austria's second largest city in an international context. This task is even more appealing now, after the speakers' profound statements on matters regarding our universities. After all, the four academic institutions, the two teacher training colleges, the Academy of Sciences, the Styrian JOANNEUM RESEARCH and the FH JOANNEUM make Graz the largest center of universities for applied sciences in the province, and decisively influence its international character. A large part of the international relations concerning Graz thus do not directly originate from the city, the city administration, or municipal politics. In addition, I would like to mention the Department for Europe and International Relations of the Province of Styria, the Styrian Internationalization Centre, the honorary consulates, numerous businesses, schools, friendship societies and – last but by no means least – art and culture.

This is why we are all here today: to discuss and define the sustainability of art and culture as an important element both in the development and orientation of a city, but most of all for the planning and intensifying of international relations.

Let me briefly introduce myself: I am the head of the Department of Culture of the City of Graz, whose operational area of responsibility includes the promotion of art and culture in all its facets, the cultivation of the sciences, the municipal libraries, and the city archive. Since September 2000 I have had the pleasure of dealing with these issues. At the moment, we are under the political authority of three people: our Mayor Siegfried Nagl, who is responsible for the Department of Culture, the sciences and the universities; city councillor Karl-Heinz Herper, who is responsible for art and culture and the city archive on the municipal level; and city councillor Sonja Grabner, who is in charge of all the city libraries and primary education.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to see your reaction to the "Nomads" performance tonight at the Graz opera house. It is a dance piece by our ballet director Darrel Toulon, featuring music by Johann Sebastian Bach. Toulon deals with modern nomadism and the fact that the whole world is constantly in motion. Currently, 120 to 150 million people around the globe are on the move. "Nomadism" has become a well-known metaphor of cultural and internet theory. I would like to quote from the interesting program of the dance piece and from the introduction to the program by Darrel Toulon himself: "There are so many things that tie you to a place in which you have to decide whether to call it home. Things that you eventually do

not need since you are at home where you can live at peace with yourself. As long as the time traveler remains untouched by emotional disturbances that have to do with love, beloved people, deep longings, the laughter and crying of the soul, no issues will arise for the nomads. However, when the final frontier of death comes into sight, this perfect system gets disrupted and questions arise. Where do I belong? What do I leave behind? Does my individual existence have a deeper meaning or am I connected after all? And if yes, with whom or what? Sure, I can continue like this, make detours, but where do I go then? And why do things that I left behind long ago hurt?" Maybe these questions are of particular pertinence in the context of the Nomadic University. Perhaps they will always be discussed anew. Maybe they have something to do with our culture and not merely with our emotions.

But let me come back to the international relations of the City of Graz. The Styrian capital has defined itself time and again by means of international projects. Although Graz is a relatively small city, its inhabitants belong to 164 nationalities. Graz's status as a European city has been proven time and again, such as in 1993 when it organized a "European Cultural Month" with a focus on Eastern-Southeastern Europe. In June 1997, Graz was the venue for the "Second European Ecumenical Assembly" of all the Christian churches in Europe, including the Eastern Orthodox churches. Graz has also organized assemblies of international religions. The historical centre of Graz has been designated a UNESCO world heritage site, and we are striving to extend this designation to another part of the city, too. Finally, in 2003, Graz was the Cultural Capital of Europe, which took years of planning, not least because our city was the only Cultural Capital of Europe in 2003. At that time, there were critical voices in the free art and cultural scene concerning this, and I respect those who opt not to participate in such European projects. In my view, however, 2003 changed the city for the better and there is a new awareness both in the art and cultural scene as well as among the population itself. Since then, nobody can claim that Graz does not offer enough art or culture, and this was proven by the wealth of daily events in 2003. The art and cultural scene also enhanced its international prominence in many areas, and the Cultural Capital project would never have been possible without the many years of involvement of our city's artists.

The "Design City" project aims to integrate Graz into a new city network. This will open up future opportunities not only for art and culture, but also for many other areas of the city. "Design" should by no means be defined as superficial beautification. This project penetrates deeply into many areas of

our city's life and the city councillor of culture, Wolfgang Riedler, places high importance on supporting "communities on site" - that is, the many different nationalities living here, their culture and their art. Previously, international relations at the municipal level in Austria had mainly focused on the creation and the maintenance of so-called city partnerships. In 2003, however, this changed with the establishment of the Office of International Relations within the municipal administration of Graz, following the initiatives of the Council of Europe. By shifting the maintenance of international contacts to the administrative level, a basis was created for uncoupling the European and global contacts of the City of Graz from individuals acting on their own, as well as the immediate political arena. At the same time, work began on an internationalisation strategy, which was passed by the City Parliament of Graz in 2006.

Some key points of this strategy are: international relations at the municipal level should not be an end in itself, nor an act of humanitarian aid. International relations cost money and are in the community's interest as long as they produce actual added value; this may be in the material sense, but is not limited to it. City partnerships are basically an instrument of the 20th century. The existing city partnerships are an integral and valuable part of our international contacts, and they should be maintained and supported. However, no new city partnerships in the traditional sense are planned for the future. In the case of Graz, the traditional city partnerships are being replaced by what is known as project partnerships, in which two cities enter into a relationship for a limited time (about 3 years) for one or more concretely defined topics regarding projects. The aim of the relationship is achieved when the project(s) have been implemented. Currently, there are project partnerships between Graz and three cities.

In the beginning, I introduced you to some of the "players" with whom our city closely cooperates to take advantage of synergies, and to advance common interests in the best possible way. Parallel to networking within the City of Graz, it is also important to network outside the City of Graz on issues of international relations. It is thus not a coincidence that the European Union is strongly promoting the formation of city networks at the moment. Graz is active in some of these networks; some examples of these are the "Association of Towns Awarded the Europe Prize" or the "European Coalition of Cities against Racism". The role of the city and politics very often "only" consists of a kind of shoehorn that helps partners from Graz and other cities - which are connected by common interests and are able to implement joint projects - come together. In this regard, a particular interest

of the municipality is to promote and strengthen the business location as part of our international efforts.

The cultural and artistic international relations - closely interwoven with the Department of Culture - are carried out, to a large extent, through an organisation called "Kulturvermittlung Steiermark", whose managing director, Max Aufischer, is also a staff member of the city's Department of Culture. Besides this responsibility, he is also very successful as a photo artist, oversees the "International House of Authors Graz" (IHAG) through the Kulturvermittlung Steiermark, and is responsible for the head office of CCN, the Cultural City Network in Graz. The focus of all these efforts are international exhibitions and exchange projects for authors, such as e.g. Sihem Bensedrine, an author persecuted in Tunisia, who was a writer in exile in Graz from 2008 to 2009; Peter Zilahy was writer in residence in Graz from 2008 to 2009; and the Congolese writer Fiston Nasser Mwanza was awarded a one year grant from 2009 to 2010. Fiston is well integrated in the cultural life of the city, and is an esteemed guest and participant at many events.

To now try to mention all the art and cultural associations that have made their mark internationally through years of personal effort would go well beyond our timeframe. The city also offers its support here as well as it can. I will restrict myself to the official, public institutions and conclude with the Joanneum Universal Museum with its many departments, the New Gallery, the museum institutions - this universal museum is the largest of its kind in all of Austria and its main location is being completely renovated as we speak - the Kunsthaus (House of Art) as one of the flagships, the Theaterholding Graz Stmk GmbH with its shareholder participation through the City of Graz. Not least thanks to 2003, we have the Kunsthaus; the Literaturhaus (House of Literature); a new children's museum with international connections; a special venue in the Schlossberg, the "Dom im Berg"; and many more.

After this overview, let us turn to our central topic, "CHINA GOES EUROPE". The relations with China reflect the diversity of declarations of intent, specific project ideas, and personal contacts. As usual these begin with art and culture and/or business and science, and take on new dimensions of availability and feasibility in this time of globalisation. I would like to pose a few summary questions to you. How does a city that is barely noticeable in comparison to the size of Chinese cities establish direct contact with Chinese urban centres that seem gigantic to us, or enter into official partnerships which are often requested by the Chinese? How do we integrate ar-

tistic, cultural and scientific demands into a network that goes well beyond the personal feelings described, and how does Graz compete with other cities that are in a better position simply due to their overall situation? Can a city like ours manage to present itself in the European context and competition in a way that it is of long-term interest to Chinese partners? I am in the fortunate position to deal with people every day that need not fear language barriers, since their artistic practice always crosses borders and continents. The common interest in music, including European music, the interest in fine art and media art is undiminished. Here in Austria we have artists who have built up and maintained their relations to Chinese partners in an easy and casual way.

In the end, what can a municipality do when tasks such as the social sector, transport, the environment, and employment policy are always pressing; when budgets are difficult to finance; when creativity is called for?

Although unfortunately I cannot be here this afternoon, I am very interested in your answers to these questions, and in your contributions to the discussion. I would like to thank you for coming on behalf of Mayor Siegfried Nagl and city councillor of culture Karl-Heinz Herper. I wish you an exciting discussion and a wonderful time in our beautiful as well as confident cultural capital.



Peter Grabensberger, Wan Jie Chen, Doris Knasar

# International Relations of the University of Graz

Doris Knasar, Office of International Relations at the University of Graz

After a PowerPoint presentation introducing the University of Graz, a discussion ensues about what could make the university more international. The following is a summary of suggestions from the audience.

- A better integration of soccer in the university as a means of intercultural exchange. Soccer is a team sport that everybody can play, that is internationally popular, and that does not need much equipment. Often, in international get-togethers, there are language problems that can be very exhausting. Playing soccer, there is no need to talk much in order to have fun together. Even women increasingly play it: in Austria alone there are about 30,200 female soccer players in over 300 groups.

- Benchmarking – best price
- Competence-based education
- More interdisciplinarity within the different subjects. Often, the different disciplines do not interact much (in contrast to the Nomadic University that brings together science, art and economics). However, especially in research projects, but also in teaching, one can already notice more interdisciplinary approaches.

- International houses – build up a platform for people who come here, as well for people going to other countries.

- Perhaps divide capacities in different ways. Erasmus is not really used very much in comparison to the amount of students who want to go to England, Australia, America and so on.

- Attract more people by making our university interesting to people from abroad.

- Have more courses held in English – keep up with the market. It is hard getting international people here if the main courses are only held in German.

- Question: Why would you want to internationalize your university? What is the rationale behind this?

Answer: For a university this is an intrinsic need. In academia you have to reach out and cooperate with the academic world outside.

- Do you do summer programs? Yes, for high schools. We have a program called Unikid which tries to integrate the students from tomorrow.

- Faculty training: for example, a French university could not compete with the reputation of American universities, so they sent 500 of their professors to receive additional education in the US.



# International Relations of the City of Graz

Roberta Maierhofer, Vice Rector for International Relations and Interdisciplinary Cooperation,  
Karl Franzens University of Graz

International relations are the focus of a university development that does justice to an increasingly mobile and multicultural society. At the University of Graz, international relations make a significant contribution to this development. Internationalization is an integral part of every academic field, and intercultural education is an essential component of every learning experience.

One particular concern is to incorporate internationalization strategies into the university in a sustainable way. The expertise that the University of Graz has acquired over the years is to be increasingly used and passed on. As an educational institution, we are responsible both for the maintenance as well as the dissemination of knowledge. For this reason, the university has strived to build a widespread network of partners all over the world, so today the University of Graz cooperates closely with more than 500 universities worldwide. These close ties form the basis for the mobility of students, faculty and staff, and numerous joint projects in teaching and research as well as organizational and curriculum development in line with the BOLOGNA-Process. The university also benefits from visits of guest professors and guest researchers who contribute significantly to an “internationalization at home”.

In the recent years, cooperation with Chinese partners has increased all over Europe due to the fact that China has become a leading economic power and today plays an essential role in the global market. But even before this trend started, the University of Graz established its first ties with Chinese universities. The first university-wide agreement was signed in 1988 with the University of Wuhan. This cooperation was mainly built upon student and faculty exchange, and has now been extended to include a special summer school at the University of Wuhan for students from the University of Graz. At the beginning of this century, further joint study agreements were signed with Chinese universities (such as the Hong Kong Baptist University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong). Increasing numbers of students have taken part in summer school programs (e. g. in Sichuan and Chengdu). For many years the University of Graz has been an active member of two international networks (Eurasia-Pacific UNINET and ASEA UNINET), which focus on fostering collaboration between European and Chinese institutions of higher education particularly on the graduate and the post-graduate levels.

With the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Windows (e.g. EMECW) - now called “Erasmus Mundus Partnerships” - a new era of potential collaboration was triggered, offer-

ing new possibilities of exchange to students, researchers and staff - especially from and to countries outside the EU. The University of Graz has been a partner in the EMECW CONNEC (Connecting Europe and China through Interuniversity Exchange) since fall 2009 and has been exchanging students, researchers and staff from and to Chinese universities.

For the future we envision a rise in cooperation with Chinese institutions of higher education as well as an expansion of the existing ties. Student interest in Chinese language and culture continues to grow. Exchanging knowledge and best practice, making it possible for students and staff to gain insights into other cultures, and fostering scientific cooperation will help to understand each other better and work together on global issues.



Roberta Maierhofer, Hangzu Chen, Siegfried Nagl, Peter Grabensberger

# Think Tank

Conducted by Raymond Saner, CSEND, Geneva

The goal of this Oasis, and especially of the Think Tank, was to learn more about China; how Euro-Chinese or Sino-European relations have evolved over time; and how the relationship between Austria and China impacts life on both sides of the Eurasian continent. The relationship between Austria and China, and specifically between Graz and China, is undergoing many changes and developments. At the time of the Oasis, plans were discussed about setting up a Confucius Centre in Graz, a city with 40,000 students, high-tech companies and a well-established cultural life. Therefore, discussions amongst the participants of the Think Tank dealt with general questions regarding the current and potential future bonds between Graz and China.

The basic concept of a Think Tank, which was already developed and used in previous Oases, is to encourage the expression of creativity inherent in all participants through interactive discussions, resulting in ideas that an individual alone would rarely come up with.

The group of participants within this Oasis – “China Goes Europe” – had an especially high potential, as they had already taken part in several Think Tanks in the past, like the Think Tank for the “Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra”.

## **The Think Tank of this Oasis consisted of three phases:**

- During the first phase, the goal was to identify experiences, knowledge and thoughts that the participants had about China.
- In the second phase, a SWOT-Analysis was organised with the objective of finding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within the context of cultural and economical exchanges between Graz/Austria and China.
- During the third and last phase of the Think Tank, participants were invited to generate synergies between arts, culture and commerce.

The first phase mainly attempted to make everybody at ease so that creativity could be expressed easily. On the one hand everybody tried to figure out positive as well as negative aspects of China’s relations with the West. On the other hand, the participants shared their experience of going to China and interacting with Chinese people or to imagine what this would be like for those who have not travelled to China before.

The core activity of the Think Tank consisted of the SWOT-

Analysis. Generally speaking, this process - developed in the field of business economics - tries to figure out advantages and disadvantages of a business establishment, in many cases in comparison to its competitors. It can also be used for many other social situations and different aspects of human life. The SWOT exercise helped the group figure out positive and negative aspects of relations between Graz/Austria and China. The chart below displays the results as an overview, followed by a more detailed explanation.



Lichia Yiu-Saner, Raymond Saner, Doris Pojer



Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good-will concerning interaction</li> <li>• Similar style of communication</li> <li>• Solid structure and community in Austria</li> <li>• Differences are complementary</li> <li>• Possibility of studying Chinese in Austria, and German in China</li> <li>• Tourism opportunities both ways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No direct flight connections</li> <li>• Language &amp; need for interpretation</li> <li>• Knowing the “rules” of cultural behaviour for both sides</li> <li>• Lack of intercultural/intercontinental social networks</li> <li>• Few spots of interest for Chinese people in Austria so far</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural exchange through personal interaction</li> <li>• Improving educational programmes in universities, schools and business courses about Sino-Graz relations</li> <li>• Improving open-mindedness about each other’s cultural identities</li> <li>• Further exchange programmes in universities and business community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of power, influence, and independence in Austria</li> <li>• Rising unemployment level due to growing Chinese imports leading to social imbalances</li> <li>• Loss of quality of life in a number of areas</li> <li>• Lack of sustainability of current way of life</li> <li>• Rising demand for resources – thus, leading to rising prices</li> <li>• Weakening the leading position of the knowledge-industry in Austria</li> <li>• Political threats due to perceived imbalance of power</li> </ul>

**Strengths**

within the connection of Graz/Austria and China can clearly be seen when it comes to the interaction between both countries. Exchange is wanted and this is supported by a similar style of communication – both cultures are modest, reliable, persistent and are able to assess someone’s character very well and accurately. Furthermore, the solid structure and community in Austria leads to the positive aspect of not seeing the Chinese industry as a competitor but as a possibility for cooperation. Another advantage can be seen in the field of education – people in Graz can study Chinese at Austrian universities and vice versa. Tourism is another area of strength in the connection of Graz/Austria and China – it fosters mutual understanding and can lead to business opportunities for both sides.

**Weaknesses**

on the other hand are prevalent when it comes to travelling – at present, there are no direct flights from China to Austria. And even though language courses are offered, only a few people can speak both German and Chinese. One might think of the word “cultural interpreter” – someone who not only translates between Chinese and German, but who also has adequate social competence when interacting with representatives of the other country. Unfortunately, the very well-known social network “Facebook” is not compatible with the ones that are predominantly used in China. Furthermore, Graz/Austria lacks opportunities and spots of interest for

people travelling to Graz from China. How should the bonds between Graz/Austria and China be strengthened, if no incentive is given to people to come here and increase the interaction?

**Opportunities**

should be mentioned at this point. A closer connection might increase the cultural exchange and open-mindedness of both people. Graz/Austria and China both have a lot to offer to each other, which only needs to be made visible to each other. Closed-mindedness and language difficulties might also be reduced through further interactions between people of both countries – be it at school, university or in business. Further exchange programmes, travel preparation and courses about the respective language and culture might be developed.

**Threats**

Austrians fear a loss of power, influence and independence. A closer connection might lead to companies moving to China, where production costs are cheaper. As a consequence, unemployment might rise in Austria, leading to social imbalances. This could, in turn, impact the quality of production in Graz, and further down the line, the quality of medical care or other social services due to diminishing budgets. As rules for a sustainable production are not yet enforced in China, pollution might further increase. Furthermore, an improvement concerning education in China could threaten Austria’s lead-

ing position in knowledge creation. There might also be political risks: third parties (i.e. other countries) might not appreciate close relations between Graz/Austria and China, which is perceived as authoritarian and lacking freedom. This might have a negative impact on future collaborations and cooperations with countries other than China.

### **Synergies between Creativity, Culture and Commerce**

For our third and last activity within the Think Tank we discussed potential synergies between creativity, culture and commerce in Graz. In order to do so, we split into groups, one consisting of university graduates, and the other of participants who did not graduate from university.

The first group suggested the need to organise cultural festivals, which would bring people from Graz and China closer together. Such joint activities could generate joint creativity, culture and commerce. Unfortunately, those festivals that already exist focus on a limited number of topics and therefore do not cover more diverse areas (e.g. the Diagonale focuses on film-media). Furthermore, these festivals are far too small and therefore not able to cross borders on an international scale. Thus, one should think of a bigger festival focusing on a variety of areas – film, music, knowledge, and so on – to reach the goal of attracting people from all over the world. Another idea that came up was to develop a project like “Nurope”, but on a more global level. In other words, expanding the focus from predominantly Europe to other continents and cultures – the advantage of something like this can clearly be seen in the fact that people would visit Graz more often in order to exchange their knowledge and creativity with people from all over the world. Unfortunately, a project like this might only attract a small group of open-minded and curious people. Therefore, it will be important to focus on the right themes and publicize them in a way that reaches a broad mass of people. Another good starting point might also be the university, comprising over 40,000 students. If students were given the possibility to change the components of their current degree programmes, more investment could be imagined in human, cultural and economic capital.

The second group of participants also came up with the idea of cultural events or festivals, but reiterated that such festival should be promoted in a way that a variety of visitors would be attracted. Another idea was that more cultural exchange could lead to an increase of people who would understand the other culture. Thoughts were also expressed that the recruitment system and behaviour of companies could be adjusted to a more international outlook. Multicultural teams within companies could automatically lead to a better understand-

ing of the variety of cultures that exist, and would furthermore contribute to a new way of solution-finding due to the presence of different styles of thinking and working. Another suggestion was to create a platform for cultural and business exchange where visitors – be it artist or businessmen – are given the opportunity to exchange experiences and knowledge with people from Graz, Austria, and elsewhere.

A detailed protocol of the SWOT-Analysis and the discussion concerning the synergies between art, culture and commerce is attached at the end of this book, providing further insights into the results of the Think Tank.

# Think Tank - Protocol

## Strengths

There is a certain goodwill when it comes to the exchange between the two cultures: people want to have some sort of interaction.

The Austrian communication style is similar to that of the Chinese. Both tend to avoid clear statements like “yes” or “no”, instead offering something in between. Austrians are modest, reliable and persistent. They are good at evaluating who they can rely on. In short, Austrians and Chinese can relate to each other because of these similarities.

Austrians always had a great appreciation for different countries and cultures, as opposed to Americans who do not have that. Austria has a solid infrastructure and community, and industries can cooperate with their counterparts in China rather than entering into competition with them. There is no direct competition with Chinese imports, and Austrians do not want big industries anyway.

Another Austrian strength are our diplomatic skills.

Austrians and Chinese are different enough to be able to complement and stay on excellent terms with each other.

Chinese individuals like Dr. Chen are good examples for positive integration, strength, accessibility, and open-mindedness. The availability of Chinese language courses in Graz, as well as of German language courses in China (e.g. Goethe Institutes) is another positive factor. Furthermore, Austria is well known in China, as evidenced by the popularity of “The Sound of Music” there.

The differences between the two cultures are getting less and less.

Being open-minded and understanding the differences is important.

Emotional similarities are a strength.

Tourism is a great opportunity since so many Chinese visit Austria, spend their money and thus support the Austrian industry.

Chinese are great connoisseurs of food and will probably appreciate the Austrian food.

It would be beneficial if Austrians became more aware of their strengths.

Projects like the Nomadic University are a strength.

The Technical University of Graz has an excellent international reputation, as does the “Montanuniversität Leoben”.

## Weaknesses

- There are no direct-flights from Graz to Shanghai.
  - Only a few people can speak both German and Chinese.
  - It is difficult for us to differentiate between people (comparison to the film: “Beautiful Crazy” – not being able to see the difference between three girls)
  - We have a kind of formal contact – always speaking about “the Chinese”! We would also have a problem if one talks about “the German”, instead of individuals.
  - Another problem lies in understanding each other – we do know certain “rules”, but often do not know their deeper meaning.
  - We make money out of stereotyping ourselves – what people want to see IS a kind of a stereotype.
  - There has been a lot of outsourcing for the last 15 years. Now, Western companies are scared to establish their companies in China, because they might then lose 700 places of employment here. But is this actually a threat or a weakness?
  - The language difficulties are discussed once more: we do not have a lot of people able to interpret between Chinese and German. The word “cultural interpreter” has been mentioned: this would be someone able to explain what a Chinese person said AND how to react to it (e.g. he/she said..... therefore don't look into his/her eyes now...)
  - Lack of intercultural/intercontinental social networks. Chinese have their own social networks in China and do not use Facebook or Twitter. Their social networks are, furthermore, not compatible with Facebook etc.
  - Our ego: there is a big difference between our individualism and Chinese group-thinking. It is hard for us to get into such a group.
  - Paul Rotterdam states one of Graz's weaknesses: “They are not offering anything special for the Chinese to come to Graz. What kind of opportunities or incentives does Austria, and especially Graz, give the Chinese to come here? The business people are the only ones working on solutions, the cultural field is not! Take the three business men from yesterday – they impressed me a lot, because they were also very positive about the future! The only opportunity that Austria has are its inventions.”
- Why should the Chinese visit Graz? They would go to Vienna or Salzburg (Mozart); everybody is fighting against each other on the political level instead of looking for goals and things that we have in common and that we could strengthen. You can only get to know somebody if you talk with them face-to-face – but how do you get that possibility? By offering them something interesting, by offering them opportunities!

- Fear is a very strong emotion and therefore this is a weakness for a collaboration.
- Culture is somehow leaving us - all these buildings in Graz make us unique. Why should they be destroyed just to build up new modern skyscrapers and so on? E.g. in Dubai, tearing down the old town and building it up somewhere else, in order to build up a new town where the old one was. These cities are just losing their culture and nothing else!
- Spirituality - what about religious remarks? Christianity – religion of accepting weaknesses and forgiving them. Chinese had great difficulty with their government intervening in everything.

## Opportunities

- A closer connection to China gives the opportunity to look into other faces.
- Cultural exchange can only happen through personal contact.
- Graz is a beautiful place but people outside Austria don't even know that. There are a lot of touristic opportunities but there must be better communication.
- To use opportunities there need to be more people who are willing to open up. People are very fixated in Austria; they don't want to go anywhere. We should start to show our children at a very young age that being open minded is a good thing.
- Austria already has intense contact with China. But Chinese people might not be as interested in Austria as Austrians are in China. "We don't need you" is an attitude that still exists in China. Austria on the other side needs China – this could end in a kind of slavery.
- Austria has big opportunities in a relationship with China. But does China have these opportunities too? The picture we have so far is that Chinese people coming to Austria come here because they want to open a Chinese restaurant.
- Over one billion people live in China, so there might be a niche market for any business idea.
- To find opportunities, it is necessary to be open for them – this might be a problem in Austria because many people are not open-minded enough to see opportunities.
- Monarchy and other typical pictures are the only thing people from other countries see in Austria. This is good and important for the existing tourism industry but more pictures need to be "created".
- Education is very important. A closer connection to China could be reached by learning Chinese.
- Fresh air in Austria could be a good slogan for tourism.
- Education could also be the best opportunity to "create" open-minded people. If that happens on both sides the relationship could be improved.
- Exchange programs on the university level like the "Erasmus program", but also more exchange on the business level.
- Chinese teachers in universities or a Confucius Institute could handle exchange programs.
- There should also be Austrian institutes in China.
- More than just the language should be taught - e.g. art, culture, or history.
- The same could happen on the business level. There should be institutes teaching Austrian business people how to act in China, and Chinese people about Austrian and European habits.
- Seals of quality (like the AMA Gütesiegel) should be brought to China to underline the quality of Austrian products.
- Chinese people only have one or two weeks a year to go on vacation so our tourism industry has to take that into account.
- An institute acting as a "hot spot" for information about China would be very important. We already have the Afro-Asian Institute but it isn't really known for Asian aspects.
- Medical university: Chinese medicine is not common in Austria. It would be interesting to integrate the philosophy of "a doctor should take care that the patient stays healthy" and not only to cure illnesses.
- The Children's Museum could organize a Chinese week (maybe at the Chinese New Year?)
- A program for international artists already exists in Graz. More exhibitions in commercial galleries should be arranged.
- An "artists' group" with international artists could constitute an interesting platform for the exchange of ideas.
- Exchange program for artists: for the government it would be very cheap to support these groups with workspace and accommodation. The created atmosphere would spread through the whole town and inspire other industries. Culture does not only consist of galleries. It would be represented all over the town. This system could be easily adopted by other cities.
- Street artists, open galleries, etc. are a string attraction.
- What would bring you here as an artist? Friendly atmosphere. But increasing tourism could lead to the city being "run over".
- Artists protect the culture because they create new things out of old ones.
- A poetry festival could attract artists.
- Putting up residences and galleries would be very important, but cities don't realize this.
- Artists' organisation vs. economic organisation: we should sell the artists' organisation idea to the politicians and show that this also has economical benefits.

- An art exchange program could be started. Graz should be the first city to support this idea.
- The European cultural parliament needs a permanent resident.

## Threats

### Loss of

- Power
- Influence
- Independence
- Advantage because cooperation may lead to, for example, cheaper shoes (shoes are just a random example).
- Production in China can mean a loss of jobs in Austria – no income – no consumption.
- New kind of ethnocentrism because of the perception that higher education should be located in Europe, but production should be outsourced. In the long run, though, people in China will be as well educated as we are now in Austria.
- A new oil crisis because of higher demand of oil because of long distance transportation.
- Political threat of human rights abuses: how are people treated by their government?
- How will future generations see the cultural changes in Austria that may happen as a consequence of our cooperation with China?
- Loss of political independence because of pressure related to the dependency in economical issues.
- People becoming goods – people are used like machines – (“Gastarbeit” system) if it is applied to the whole world  
Example: mining workers in some gold or diamond mines in the north.
- If everything is produced in China our quality and craft will be reduced and in the long run we will lose the ability to produce.
- If people lose their ability to produce or repair common things, what will happen to the people in Austria? (Example: stitching)
- We become dependent on other – producing – countries.
- Loss of quality in medical care or children’s toys (toxic plastics).
- If the production moves to China, sustainability will probably be lost (pollution...) because of lack of rules for sustainable production.
- Social imbalance – creating unemployment in our society – high unemployment led to political imbalances in 1930s – high employment results in a stable political situation.
- Breakdown of the environment because of lack of sustainability.
- Political changes in the Chinese system will not happen

peacefully; this may influence our own political systems.

- Problem of the SWOT analysis is that it is not clear in which context it should be discussed (in a business cooperation, daily life communication,...).
- The demand for resources (in this case metal) is rising and the prices are rising too.

## Main Threats

- 1) Unemployment in Graz because production moves to China
- 2) The problem of neglecting or underestimating the rising education of the Chinese – maybe our leading position in knowledge will be overthrown
- 3) Political risks – linked to a dictatorship – threat for the image and credibility of companies and countries who collaborate with the Chinese
- 4) Losing the ability, quality and skills of production – dependence on China

## Synergies between Art, Culture and Commerce

### University Graduates

- It won’t work if you look at a single product or industry. You have to look at Graz as a whole and organize a production in the whole of Graz, e.g. festivals – the Diagonale is a film festival – there is no festival combining EVERYTHING – it has to be a total production with interaction, not only to consume art but also to contribute so that a Chinese coming here will experience something that (s)he can’t experience at home.
- Find out what the Chinese want. Organize a festival that attracts especially Chinese people. If you make a festival in Graz, the content doesn’t have to be specifically about Graz or Austria.
- People have to be willing to come back, and the only reason for coming back is if there are more or new things to experience. What would attract you to come back to the same place again?
- In order to have synergies between creativity, culture and commerce in Graz, you could also have a project like „Nurope“ on a global level – people would come back to Graz, make connections with people around the world, mingle with each other and therefore have a reason to return to Graz. Maybe also a kind of basis oasis which takes place regularly.
- City hopping is no fun – going to a festival for three days and then moving on, they won’t get to see the city. So there has to be something keeping people here for longer. The problem with an oasis like this is that it attracts a small amount of people, a closed group. There should be some-

thing attracting a broad mass of people.

- The festivals we have in Graz are good, but too small to cross the borders – they don't attract an international audience. It is problematic to have these small festivals that don't attract people from outside, so there should be a festival that is a bit bigger and lasts longer, with people from all over the world showing what they are able to do (design shows, lectures, art, ...)
- Also the universities might be a good starting point – having 40,000 students! This core should be pushed – invest in this capital. The problem here is that every university in Europe does that at the moment, so it's nothing special, and a further problem is that students don't have time to do anything besides their studies because we have a fixed programme instead of a flexible one.
- Advantage of Graz: it is quite small, you can bring people together easily and it has some landmarks that can be used (Schlossberg for example).
- A field that no one has ever experienced before and which is new to diverse people (business people, artists, musicians), e.g. a technician teaching at the university for a day.
- No entertainment festival but a kind of knowledge exchange, generating values rather than generating money.

Participants who did not graduate from university

- Create an integrated partnership – get Graz an official partnership with the EU.
- It is important to have a secure fund to put up the expenses because of the pre-financing problem of certain projects. Get cultural funding from the EU to pre-finance also business projects with special criteria and pay the money back afterwards.
- Another opportunity to get a loan for pre-financing – you get the loans from a foundation and the guarantee for that money from the EU to realize new cultural projects.
- These guaranteed funds would also be useful to enable small businesses to realize projects.
- Business people would be good ambassadors for culture because they are used to intercultural exchange – when they give a speech, they should also be allowed to talk about their opinion of art, culture and other belongings, and should also use their new cultural knowledge in business.
  
- “If you want to solve a problem on the Chinese market, you have to be aware of the concrete needs and for that we have to understand the culture.”
  
- “Break it down to a narrower level – you cannot get a comparison between Graz and the whole of China – you

have to compare it with a certain town or region.”

- Change the recruitment system and behaviour – if you get multicultural teams in your company you will get the cultural understanding in your company. Because of the resultant different approaches, you will find new solutions.
  
- A Confucius Institute in Graz will be useful to bring a better understanding of Chinese culture to the university, which may then affect other institutes.
  
- Create a platform for cultural and business exchange. Bring visitors and expatriates from China together at a central point where they can communicate with each other and with Austrians. Artists and business people should meet and exchange ideas.
  
- Interlink different parts of science and ideas in a central point, in some kind of platform or network where ideas can be stored and spread out. Information and knowledge from the different fields can be gathered and used for other fields. “Use ideas and solutions across different fields of science”.
  
- A gallery where the greatest focus lies not on the art, but on creating relationships.
- A business fair in small places, mixed with the flair of a gallery, creating the feeling of a vernissage. A place to have art and business presentations in the same location.
  

“It is useful to get a smooth mood into the whole thing.”

- A gallery is a neutral area – so get a mixture of a fair, a gallery and a vernissage to create a good atmosphere and ease the approach to new business relationships – with e.g. a coffee bar or a cocktail bar.
- Create warm and cozy situations to loosen up the mood of the visitors – a good environment for creating new relationships.
  
- Promote cultural events or festivals – there are a lot of different festivals in Graz. If you promote the great variety of festivals there will be also a big chance for the commerce because if more people come, the consumption of essential products will rise.

# China goes Europe – Programme

NUROPE X. Graz 21. - 25.03.2010

Nomadic University for Arts, Philosophy and Enterprise in Europe

**Sunday, 21st March 2010** Comparative History  
Location: Großer Veranstaltungssaal, Landesbuchhaltung, Burggasse 13

12:00 Registration and Coffee, Snacks, Refreshments

13:00-14:30 Introduction of all participants and presentation of the programme (Luise Kloos, artist, next-Verein für bildende Kunst Graz)

14:30-16:30 History of Graz, Walking and talking in Graz (guided tours)

16.30-17:00 Coffee at Burggasse 13, Großer Veranstaltungssaal

17:00-18:00 Welcome by Siegfried Nagl, Mayor City of Graz  
“Chinese culture and history” Introduction by the Counsellor of Embassy of People’s Republic of China in Republic of Austria Prof. CHEN Hangzhu

18:30 Location: Orangerie, Burggarten  
Reception by Franz Voves, Governor of Styria  
Performance  
Dance: Bostjan Ivanjsic, Shaohui Yi, Eli Ho, Norikazu Aoki  
Violin: Boris Michaljic  
Choreography: Darrel Toulon

**Monday, 22nd March 2010** China Goes Europe  
Location: Literaturhaus, Elisabethstraße 30

8:30 Morning Reflection

9:00 Welcome by Wolfgang Riedler, City Councillor for culture, Graz

9:30 15 min. “Knigge for China” by Hong-Ling Yang, Univ. Graz

9:45 Coffee

10:00-11:00 Postcolonial studies lecture by Elisabeth Gigler, University Klagenfurt, lecture by Antony Frederiksson, Abo Akademi

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:00 LEARNING ACROSS TIME AND SPACE IN EUROPE & CHINA  
a) Arts and Ideas by Lichia Yiu & Raymond Saner  
b) Educational challenges today in China & Europe  
lecture by Lichia Yiu, Centre for Socio-Eco-nomic Development, Diplomacy Dialogue Geneva

13:00-15:00 Lunch at Propeller, Zinzendorfsgasse 17

15:00-16:30 “Some examples of ‘not-market oriented’ Chinese contemporary art” by Monica Dematté, curator & sinologue  
“Nothing is so firmly believed as what we least know” by Marianne Eigenheer, artist and curator, Basel/London

16:30-17:00 Coffee Break

17:00-18:30 “Myth and Art” lecture by Paul Z. Rotterdam, artist, Harvard University

18:30-19:00 Discussion

19:00-20:00 Dinner in Filmzentrum Rechbauer, Rechbauerstraße 6

20:00-22:30 Location: Filmzentrum Rechbauer, Rechbauerstraße 6  
“Beautiful Crazy” movie by Lee Chi Yuarn

**Tuesday, 23rd March 2010** Cultural Identities & Differences  
Location: Literaturhaus Graz, Elisabethstraße 30

8:30-9:30 Morning Reflection with Bengt Uggla Kristensson, Abo Akademi  
9:30 15 min. “Knigge for China” by Hong-Ling Yang, Univ. Graz

9:45-10:00 Coffee

10:00-12:00 “Drawing a line: Van Gogh and the advent of Modernism” lecture by Paul Z. Rotterdam, artist, Harvard University

12:00-14:00 Lunch (incl. Zadar meeting) at Propeller

14:00-15:00 “China welcomes you?” – lecture by Peter Pakesch, Intendant Universalmuseum Joanneum Graz

15:00-16:00 “Artistic experiences in China” Lore Heuermann and Franz Yang-Mocnik, visual artists

16:00-16:30 Coffee

16:30-19:00 “Experience in Chinese Cooperations” - Workshop  
“Doing business in China” – Intercultural Management and China by Wan Jie Chen, SINOplex  
Statements  
Franz Leitner - AVL Graz  
Hannes Voraberger, Manager IPF AT&S  
Werner Wiedenbauer - BDI - BioDiesel International AG

“Hans List in China 1928 - 1934” by Kathryn List, AVL Cultural Foundation

Statements and Pannel Discussion guided by Pierre Guillet du Monthoux Copenhagen Business School, Schwungprofessor of NUROPE and Max Valentin Entrepreneur, Stockholm

19:00 Dinner Kings Wok, St. Peter Hauptstraße 119a  
Chinese Business Dinner and book release “NUROPE PHOTOBOOK”

ca. 22:00 Mingle at Hotel Erzherzog Johann Bar, Sackstraße 3

Wednesday, 24th March 2010 Think Tank  
Location: Kunsthaus Graz, Lendkai 1

8:30 Morning Reflection  
9:00-10:30 "International Relations at the University of Graz"  
lecture by Doris Knasar, Office of International  
Relations, University of Graz  
"City of Graz" - Introduction by Peter Grabensberger,  
Head of the Cultural Department, City of Graz  
"Cultural Exchange between China and Europe"  
lecture by Wan Jie Chen, SINOplex  
10:30-11:00 Coffee Break  
11:00-17:00 Think Tank  
Moderation by Raymond Saner, Diplomacy Dialogue,  
Geneva  
Lunch and Coffee Breaks included  
17:00-18:00 Presentation: Results of the Think Tank  
18:00-19:00 Dinner at Kunsthaus  
19:15 Location: Opera Graz  
"Nomads" Contemporary Dance, Opera Graz,  
Choreography: Darrel Toulon, Music: J.S. Bach  
ca. 22:00 Mingle at Hotel Erzherzog Johann, Sackstraße 3

Thursday, 25th March 2010 Future Steps  
Location: University of Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, 1st Floor, Gruppenraum

9:00 Morning Reflection Conclusion  
10:00-10:30 Coffee break  
10:30-12:00 Information about Zadar Oasis "That Other Sea"  
22. – 27. August 2010  
12:00-13:30 Lunch at University, Café Libresso  
13:30 Future steps of NUROPE – Planning Group  
Planning of Zadar Oasis  
Departure



# China goes Europe – Supported by

GRAZ



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