Chronology

Names of artists in the Inside Out exhibition are printed in bold.

MAINLAND CHINA

1977

The Cultural Revolution (CR) ends with Mao Zedong's death in October 1976. But the change in leadership does not immediately result in new cultural values. From 1977 to late 1978, artists continue to produce work in the CR style, substituting new leaders for the former cast of characters. However, a few small-scale group exhibitions organized by artists feature landscape and portrait painting, challenging conventions that demand overt political/ideological subject matter in art.

1978

A January exhibition of French 19th-century rustic landscape painting at the National Gallery, Beijing, contributes to the emergence of a new form of critical realism later in the year. This is the first show of foreign art since the beginning of the CR, and parallels an influx of publications on western art. The Review of Foreign Art (Guowai meishu ziliao), which later changes its name to the Journal of Art Translation (Meishu yicong), is established in January. Along with World Art (Shijie meishu), an academic journal of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, it becomes the major periodical source of western art movements of the 1970s and '80s.

Deng Xiaoping introduces economic and social reforms emphasizing increased openness to capitalism and western culture. Intellectuals and the public respond to the initiative with the Beijing Spring Democracy Movement, which

flourishes from November 1978
through 1979. Intellectuals challenge the foundations of Maoist
ideology with philosophical and
cultural debates on humanism and
individual freedom. This questioning spirit and the concurrent influx
of western aesthetic ideas catalyze
several new art movements.

1979

The New Spring Painting Exhibition (Xinchun huahui zhanlan) opens in February at Sun Yat-sen Park, Beijing. The show features some 40 artists from different generations, including influential older artists such as Liu Haisu and Wu Zuoren, all of whom advocate an apolitical approach to artmaking. A significant moment in the development of this "New Academicism" occurs in September when several murals are unveiled at the Beijing International Airport, Yuan Yunsheng's Water-Splashing Festival: Ode to Life, includes nude female figures, which triggers a serious controversy over nudity in public art. (The mural is boarded over in 1981.)

In February a group of twelve artists in Shanghai organize an exhibition (Shierren huazhan) at the Palace of Infants, Huangpu district; it is China's first modernist show since mid-century. The works are influenced by Impressionism and Postimpressionism, considered radical in the post-CR context, although the subjects are traditional (birds, flowers, etc.).

Scar Painting (Shanghen huihua) and the Star group (Xing xing)

emerge as the two most important art movements of 1979. Both aim at criticizing the realities of contemporary China and often portray the CR negatively.

Scar Painting, part of a broader movement called New Realistic Painting (Xinxianshizhuyi huihua), takes its name from a related literary tendency. The term refers to the emotional wounds inflicted on the Chinese — especially intellectuals, students, and older cadre—by the CR. For example, Cheng Conglin's painting A Certain Month of a Certain Day in 1968 and the illustrations to Zheng Yi's short story "Maple," by Liu Yulian, Chen Yiming, and Li Bin, describe the tragic results of Red Guard battles during the CR.

The Stars are principally selftaught artists (i.e., not trained in the Academy) and are the first influential avant-garde group, challenging both aesthetic convention and political authority. Their use of formerly banned western styles, from Postimpressionism to Abstract Expressionism, is an implicit criticism of the status quo. The group's first exhibition, in September 1979, is a provocative display of work hung without official permission on the fence outside the National Gallery, Beijing. After the exhibition is disrupted by the police, the artists post a notice on Democracy Wall and stage a protest march. The Stars' first formal exhibition (Xing xing huazhan), held in Beihai Park, Beijing, in November, includes 163 works by 23 nonprofessional artists.

1980

In March, Art Monthly (Meishu) publishes an article about the Stars in which the author, Qu Leilei (a painter in the group) proclaims "art for the sake of self-expression" (ziwobiaoxian de yishu). The article prompts a debate about art's function that continues for two years. The Stars hold another exhibition (Xing xing huazhan) at the National Gallery, Beijing, in August, this time with official approval. The primary intention of the group is to criticize authority by emphasizing self-expressionism (ziwobiaoxian), although the show becomes controversial for its overt political content, in particular, Wang Keping's wooden sculpture of Mao as Buddha, a comment on the seeming deification of Mao.

Rustic Realism (Xiangtu xieshi), a trend of New Realistic Painting which sometimes overlaps with Scar Painting, becomes prominent by year's end. But while the Scars focus on their own experiences of the CR, the Rustics depict the CR's impact on ordinary people in rural and border regions. Chen Danging's Tibetan Series (Xizang xuhua), shown in October 1980 at the graduation exhibition (Zhongyang meiyuan yanjiusheng biyezhan) of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, and Luo Zhongli's Father (Fuqin) which wins first prize in the Second National Youth Arts Exhibition (Di'er jie quanguo qingnian meishu zuopinzhan) in Beijing, are particularly influential examples of Rustic Realism. Some filmmakers of the New Chinese Cinema are influenced by the style

and incorporate its imagery in their work, for instance, Chen Kaige in Yellow Earth (1984), and Zhang Yimou in Red Sorghum (1987) and Raise the Red Lantern (1991), all critically acclaimed in the West.

The liveliest artistic activity occurs in a few unofficial and quasi-official groups that flourish in various parts of China (Beijing, Shenyang, Kunming, Shanghai). These "oil painting research groups" are devoted to the study of European painting traditions, and represent the peak of New Academicism. Meanwhile, the debate over formalism continues in the pages of Art Monthly (May issue) with the publication of "Abstract Aesthetic" (Lun chouxianmei) by Wu Guanzhong, a French-trained painter of the older generation who argues against the dominant forms of realism in favor of abstraction, or "no subject, just form."

1981

Rustic Painting continues. Several modernist shows open around the country. In March, the First Xi'an Modern Art Exhibition (Xi'an shoujie xiandai yishuzhan), in Xi'an, Shanxi Province, causes a sensation and attracts 60,000 viewers. Modern Chinese ink painting is featured in Hubei Ink Painting (Hubei shiren guohua lianzhan) in Beijing. New Academic Painting is spotlighted in the Yunnan Ten-Person Painting Exhibition (Yunnan shiren huazhan), featuring works with "exotic" themes such as minority cultures.

1982

Authorities launch the AntiSpiritual Pollution Campaign in
early 1982, intended to counteract
western influences that they
believe are undermining the
Chinese people's commitment to
Communism. The campaign, which
continues through late 1984, targets humanism in philosophy and
literature, and condemns three
westernizing trends in art that
have appeared since the end of
the CR: individualistic values, "art
for art's sake," and abstraction.

In September, the Beijing public is introduced to modern American art through an exhibition of works from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts held at the National Gallery. This is the second major and influential exhibition of foreign art since the CR.

1983

As part of the Anti–Spiritual Pollution Campaign, authorities denounce the January issue of Art Monthly—which contains articles about abstract art—as a contaminating influence. The editorial team is replaced. Even in this oppressive context, however, officially sanctioned presentations of western art continue. Exhibitions of Italian Renaissance art, the work of Picasso and Munch, and French contemporary oil painting are held in Beijing.

Aesthetic experimentation continues, too, outside of Beijing. In May, the Five-Person Exhibition of Modern Artists (Xiamen wu ren xiandai yishuzuopin zhan) in Xiamen, Fujian Province, features conceptual works and readymade objects by artists—including Huang Yong Ping-who will later form the Xiamen Dada group. The show never opens to the public. In September, the Experimental Painting Exhibition: The Stage 1983 (Basannian jieduan: Huihua shiyan zhanlan), which includes ten Shanghai artists, is forced to close soon after the opening and is harshly criticized in the Shanghai Liberation Daily.

1984

The Sixth National Art Exhibition (Diliujie quanguo meishu zuopin zhanlian), held in October at the National Gallery, Beijing, resurrects the political themes and propagandist forms of the CR. The retrograde content and style of the exhibition provokes a widespread backlash among artists, especially the young, laying the groundwork for the emergence of the '85 Movement.

1985

A banner year for the Chinese avant-garde. The Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign had ended and the government embarks on a series of liberal reforms. Released from the restraints of the previous three years, avant-gardism flourishes across the arts—literature, dance, music, visual art, film—a phenomenon soon to be dubbed the '85 Movement.

In February, the Chinese Writers Association holds its fourth conference in Beijing, denouncing conservatism and calling for freedom of expression (chuangzuo ziyou). A parallel development occurs in the visual arts with the widespread appearance of unofficial groups - more than 80 across the country, 1985-87—in which artists of the younger generation debate, write, and exhibit. These groups sponsor some 150 events during 1985–86, involving at least 2,250 artists. Openly antagonistic to official culture, they champion individualism, freedom of expression, and a radical overhaul of aesthetic concepts and forms; they reject both Chinese traditional art and socialist realism, deploying instead western modern and postmodern styles such as Surrealism, Dada, Pop, and conceptual art.

Avant-garde ideas and artists are promoted in new magazines and newspapers such as Art Trends (Meishu Sichao), Fine Arts in China (Zhongguo Meishu Bao), and Painters (Huajia). Established journals such as Art Monthly and Jiangsu Pictorial (Jiangsu huakan) shift attention to the '85 Movement. Many of the publications' editors are young critics who themselves are involved in the avant-garde.

The new groups can be divided roughly into two types, Rationalist (Lixing huihua) and Current of Life (Shengming zhiliu). Representative of the Rationalists are the North Art Group (Beifang qunti), the Pool Society (Chishe), and the Red Brigade (Hongselu). The North Art

Group, founded in March in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province (the area formerly known as Manchuria), promotes a "Civilization of the North," which its artists-among them, Wang Guangyi, Shu Qun, Ren Jian, and Liu Yian — believe will surpass both western and traditional Chinese civilization. Emulating Surrealism, their paintings often feature landscape elements and abstract forms suggested by the glacial terrain of northern China. Members of the Pool Society, based in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, are notable for their biting sense of humor and absurdist spirit. Their first exhibition, New Space '85 ('85 xin kongjian huazhan) — which includes Zhang Peili, Geng Jianyi, and Wang Qiang-features "gray humor" paintings, performance works, and conceptual art. The Red Brigade, established in 1987 in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, consists of the principle organizers of the Jiangsu Art Week Modern Art Festival (Jiangsu qingnian yishu zhou), an influential exhibition covering all the arts.

Current of Life artists advocate an anti-urban pastoralism or regionalism, along with the exploration of individual desire, which, they argue, has been suppressed by collectivist rationalization. Many are from remote areas, for instance, Gansu Province, where a group of five artists led by Cao Yong organizes the exhibition Research, Discovery, Expression (Tansuo, faxian, biaoxian); or Kunming, Yunnan Province, the base of the Art Group of Southwest China (Xinan yishu qunti), which includes Mao Xuhui, Pan Dehai, Zhang Xiaogang, and Yie Yong Qing. The ad hoc Shenzhen Zero Exhibition (Shenzhen lingzhan), so-named because it has no funding or institutional framework, is held on the streets of Shenzhen, a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in South China. The Three Step Studio's (Sanbu huashi) first exhibition in Taiyuan City, Shanxi Province, features installations constructed from ordinary tools used by peasants.

Q8 CHRONOLOGY

Twenty artists from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, organize the November Exhibition (Shiyiyue huazhan), held at the Forbidden City; these artists later form the Beijing Youth Painting Society (Beijing qingnan huahui). Other groups of the Current of Life trend include the New Barbarianism (Xinyiexinzhuyi, Nanjing), the Miyang Painting Group (Miyang huahui, Hebei Province), and the Hunan Zero Art Division (Hunan ling yishujituan, Changsha).

Young, academically trained artists begin to play a forward role, in particular the graduates of the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou. Wang Guangyi, Zhang Peili, Geng Jianyi, Huang Yong Ping, Wenda Gu, and Wu Shan Zhuan are all leading figures in the '85 Movement and all attended the Zhejiang Academy. The exhibition Young Art of Progressive China (Qianjin zhong de Zhongguo qingnian meishu zuopin zhan), held in May, brings together work from various academies, including Zhejiang, Beijing, and Sichuan. The most remarkable works in this show combine Neorealism and western Surrealism, an approach typified by Zhang Qun and Meng Luding's Enlightenment of Adam and Eve in the New Age (Xinshidai de qishi).

Traditional styles are challenged by younger artists. In July, art critic Li Xiaoshan publishes "The End and Death of Chinese Painting" (Zhongquohua daole quntumolu zhiri) in Jiangsu Pictorial. The essay shocks the traditional painting world and inspires fierce debate between members of the old and new generations. In November, Wenda Gu and other Chinese ink painters participate in the exhibition Recent Works of Traditional Chinese Painting (Zhongquohua xinzuo yaoqingzhan) in Wuhan, Hubei Province, updating ink painting by synthesizing traditional Chinese philosophy and western art styles such as Surrealism. This new form is called scholar painting (xuezhe huihua).

A retrospective of Robert
Rauschenberg's work opens in
November at the National Gallery,
Beijing, and has a profound impact
on the artists of the '85 Movement. This is the Chinese public's
first opportunity to see original
works by a contemporary western
artist. Rauschenberg delivers a
lecture at the Central Academy of
Graphic Art in Beijing and participates in a discussion with the
artists of the Anonymous Painting
Group (Wuming huahui).

1986

Deng Xiaoping is named Man of the Year by *Time* magazine in January. Deng's cover photo is reproduced as a part of a collage with Rauschenberg's work *China*. The artist is quoted: "It is a great beginning in China today, since there has been a kind of new emotion, new spectacle which had not existed three years ago."

The '85 Movement continues to expand, especially the number of conceptual or anti-art (fanyishu) groups. The conceptualists challenge not only propagandist art and traditional academic styles, but new schools of art as well. Their principal goal is to eradicate utopianism, subjectivity, and the artist's hand. Their primary mediums are language and readymade objects. Their conceptual sources are Dada and Chan (Zen) Buddhism; the latter, like Dada, attempts to break free of any doctrine or authority.

In January, the Last Exhibition '86, No. 1 ('86 zuihou zhanlan yi hao), opens at the Zhejiang Art Gallery. Organized by seven young artists of the Zhejiang Academy, including Wenda Gu and Song Baoguo, it features readymade objects and performance works. The show is closed by authorities three hours after opening because of the sexual content of some of the works. In April, a Tibetan avant-garde group led by Li Yanping exhibits in Beijing People's Cultural Palace. At the same time, Wu Shan Zhuan and fellow artists in Hangzhou

hold two private exhibitions of installations entitled 70% Red, 25% Black, and 5% White (Hong 50%, hei 25%, bai 5%).

The largest of exhibitions of avantgarde work opens in August under the title Festival of Youth Art in Hubei (Hubei qingnian meishu jie) in the cities of Wuhan, Huangshi, Xianggan, Yichang, and Shashi. About 50 small groups participate and some 2,000 works are displayed in 28 exhibition sites. A striking characteristic of the work is a trend toward fusing vernacular culture, including ancient sources and contemporary styles. Concurrent with the exhibition is the first symposium on the '85 Movement and the Chinese avantgarde, held in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, attended by critics, editors, and artists representing groups nationwide. One outcome of the conference is a decision to organize a national avant-garde exhibition.

The September exhibition of Xiamen Dada (Xiamen dada xiandai yishu zhan), a group led by Huang Yong Ping, coincides with Huang's publication of "Xiamen Dada: A Kind of Postmodernism?" (Xiamen Dada: Yizhong houxiandai?) in Fine Arts in China, in which Huang advocates the synthesis of Dada and Chan Buddhism. He also produces a series of roulette wheel-like compositions based on the Yi Jing, or Book of Changes, which he uses to direct his painting.

Similar events—performances, happenings, installations, mixed-media exhibits—are held through-out the year by diverse groups, including the Xuzhou Modern Art Exhibition (Xuzhou xiandai yishuzhan) in Xuzhou, Henan Province, in May; the Luoyang Modern Art Space (Luoyan yishuchang), Luoyang, Henan Province, in May; To Bring into the Light (Shai taiyang) in Nanjing in September; and Convex/Concave (Aotuzhan), which includes the artists Li Shan and Wang Ziwei, in

Shanghai, Xuhui District, in November. The Pool Society—including Zhang Peili, Geng Jianyi, and Wang Qiang—creates a series called Yangshi Taichi No. 1 (Taiji xilie yihao) on the banks of Xihu Lake and in the streets of Hangzhou. The Southern Artists Salon (Nanfang yishujia shalong), founded by Wang Du, Lin Yilin, and others in Guangzhou, organize the First Experimental Exhibition (Diyici shiyanzhan).

In November, the Chinese Modern
Art Research Committee (*Zhong-guo xiandaiyishu yanjiuhui*), an
association of about 30 critics, is
founded in Beijing, in part as a
planning committee for the nationwide avant-garde exhibition.

Student demonstrations are staged in a number of Chinese cities in late 1986. Authorities respond with a campaign against "bourgeois liberalism," targeting all new political and cultural thought. The campaign continues through mid-1988, significantly hampering the activities of the avant-garde.

1987

A planning meeting for the national avant-garde exhibition is held March 25-26 in Beijing. The show is given the seemingly neutral working title Nationwide Exhibition of Research and Communication of Young Art Groups (Quanguo qingnian yishuqunti xueshu jiaoliuzhan). Authorities see through the ruse, however, and on April 4 ban all organized scholarly communication among young people. Then, on April 12, a leader of the Chinese Artists Association (Zhongguo meishujia xiehui), a government-approved organization directed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), approaches the chief organizer of the exhibition with a request to terminate his activities, Plans for a nationwide exhibition are halted. In May, Wu Shan Zhuan and colleagues continue a language project begun in 1986 with a new exhibition called Red Humor (Hongse youmo). Wu himself creates a

related series entitled Red
Characters (Chizixilie). Other group
activities continue, even in remote
areas, for example, the Contemporary Art Association Exhibition of
Inner Mongolia (Neimenggu dangdaiyishu yanjiu hui) in Huhehot.

But the '85 Movement is weakening under the dual impact of the government-directed antibourgeois campaign and pressures to produce more commercial work, a result of Deng's 1978 economic measures. The CCP reduces financial support for art during this period, suggesting to artists that they find commercial outlets for the sale of their work (a formerly illegal practice). Avant-garde art, however, is not a valuable commodity in China.

Some important artists begin to move overseas. Wenda Gu, for instance, has a solo exhibition at York University Art Gallery, Toronto, in August, then settles in New York City.

1988

The campaign against bourgeois liberalism ends, and some avantgarde activities resume or new ones begin in the autumn and winter.

Solo exhibitions of work by Xu

Bing and Lu Shengzhong open at
the National Gallery, Beijing, in
October. Xu Bing's installation,
Book from the Sky (Tianshu),
consists of books and scrolls
fabricated using traditional
Chinese printing techniques and
paper, and classical typographic
styles. The thousands of handcarved characters, however, were
made up by the artist and are
completely unintelligible.

In November, the 1988 Chinese Modern Art Convention (1988 Dangdai yishu yantaohui) opens in Tunxi, a famous scenic site in Anhui Province. About 100 artists and critics from across China participate. Their goal is to revitalize the avant-garde movement and raise again the prospect of a national exhibition.

1989

After delays due to political circumstances, financial problems, and the forces of conservatism, on February 5 the first nationwide avant-garde art exhibition opens at the National Gallery, Beijing. Entitled China/Avant-Garde (Zhongguo xiandai yishuzhan), a total of 293 paintings, sculptures, videos, and installations by 186 artists—including Wang Guangyi, Xu Bing, Wu Shan Zhuan, Huang Yong Ping, and Wenda Gu—are displayed. Wang's Mao Zedong No. 1 causes a stir, and his Pop Art-influenced style initiates the Political Pop trend of the early 1990s.

China/Avant-Garde is closed twice by authorities during its two-week run. The first closing occurs just hours after the opening, when Xiao Lu and her collaborator Tang Song transform their installation, Dialogue, into a performance by firing two gunshots into it. The second closure results from anonymous bomb threats sent to the gallery, the municipal government, and the Bejing Public Security Bureau.

Yong Jiechang participate in Les
Magiciens de la terre, an exhibition
organized by the Pompidou Centre
in Paris. This is perhaps the first
time Chinese avant-garde artists
are shown in a major international
exhibit since the end of the CR.
Huang leaves China to attend the
exhibition and remains in France.

Pro-democracy student demonstrations begin in April. Following the June 4 crackdown in Tiananmen Square and the return of conservatism, the national avantgarde exhibition is castigated as a typical example of bourgeois liberalism.

1990

As a result of the post-Tiananmen tightening down, as well as ongoing commercial pressures, idealist avant-garde activity in China declines drastically and never fully recovers. Art publications suffer as well. In January, Fine Arts in China, which played an important role in the avant-garde movement, is closed by authorities. In September, the most popular art journal, Art Monthly, which had devoted considerable attention to the '85 Movement, is restaffed with conservatives. One of its editors, Gao Minglu, is ordered to stop all editorial work and spend time at home studying Marxism.

Pockets of avant-gardism remain in the Academy, characterized by a discreet eclecticism combining progressive and conservative forms. Liu Xiaodong, for example, a young teacher at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, holds a solo exhibition of oil painting in May. Considered one of the New Generation painters, Liu's work is typical of 1990s Cynicism or Cynical Realism (Wanshi xianshizhuyi). Proponents of this sensibility often engage in self-mockery or present the most mundane aspects of everyday life in which they appear to have lost all faith. Another academic exhibition, The World of Women Painters (Nü huajia de shijie), showcases eight artists-Yu Hong, Jiang Xueying, Wei Rong, Liu Liping, Yu Chen, Chen Shuxia, Li Chen, and Ning Fangqian—widely accepted as the new generation of Chinese women artists.

Xu Bing completes his installation project, Ghosts Pounding the Wall (Guidaqiang), a series of rubbings from the Jinshanling section of the Great Wall in Hebei Province. The work was two years in the making, and involved more than 100 assistants, 1,500 pieces of paper, and 300 bottles of ink. The combined rubbings total 1,500 meters. After this project, Xu Bing moves to the United States.

More and more Chinese avantgarde artists leave for friendlier climes, or at least shift their sights to international venues. In fact, even as outlets for their work dwindle at home, international audiences are receptive to their work, and an increasing number of exhibitions feature Chinese avantgarde artists. For instance, Chine:

Demain pour hier, sponsored by the French Ministry of Culture and held in Pourrières in July, is curated by Chinese art critic Fei Dawei. It is reported to be the largest exhibition of modern Chinese art ever mounted in a western country. Participating artists include

Chen Zhen, Wenda Gu, Huang

Yong Ping, Cai Guo-qiang, Yang

Jiecang, and Yan Pei Ming.

1991

In January, "I Don't Want to Play
Cards with Cézanne" and Other
Works: Selections from the Chinese
"New Wave" and "Avant-Garde"
Art of the Eighties is held in the
Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena,
California. Participating artists
include Geng Jianyi, He Duoling,
Li Luming, Lu Shengzhong, Mao
Xuhui, Xu Bing, Yu Hong, Zeng
Xiaofeng, Zhang Peili, Zhang
Xiaogang, Ye Yongqing, Zhou
Changjiang, and others. A series of
lectures and discussions accompany the exhibition.

The Exceptional Passage, another show of Chinese avant-garde art, opens at the Fukuoka Museum in Japan. It includes Wenda Gu's Vanishing 36 Pigment Golden Sections (Sanshiliuge huangjin fengelü), Huang Yong Ping's Emergency Exit (Feichangkou), and works by Cai Guo-qiang, Yang Jiecang, and Wang Luyan.

In China, artists and critics try to break free of political censorship. The symposium Artistic Creation in the New Period (Xinshiqi yishuchuangzuo yantiaohui), held in Xishan, a suburb of Beijing, focuses on contemporary Chinese art and includes such prominent artists and critics as Shui Tianzhong, Liu Xiaochun, Gao Minglu, Li Xianting, Shao Dazhen, and Yi Ying, among others. The symposium is criticized by the conservative-controlled Art Monthly.

The New Generation (Xin shengdai yishuzhan) opens in July at

200 CHRONOLOGY

Beijing's Museum of Chinese
History, a group show of New
Generation academic artists,
including Wang Jinsong, Song
Yonghong, and Liu Wei, exemplars
of the Cynical Realist trend. In
December, an exhibition of installation works by Feng Mengbo and
Zhang Bo at Beijing Contemporary
Art Gallery is closed by authorities. This is the first public installation show since the Tiananmen
Square incident of 1989.

1992

A few small-scale avant-garde shows are organized in various cities. The Beijing Art Museum sponsors an exhibit of works by Liu Wei and Fang Lijun. In May, Zhang Peili and Geng Jianyi mount an installation and video show at the Diplomat's Hotel, sponsored by the culture section of the Italian Embassy in Beijing. "Pop-Abstract" art is the theme of A Documentary Exhibition of Contemporary Chinese Art (Zhongguo dangdai yishu wenxianzhan), held in Guangzhou, a slide/photo presentation with commentaries by art critics. Young Contemporary Sculptors (Dangdai qingnian diaosujia), held at Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou, is the first exhibition organized by and for the new generation of sculptors, and includes Zhan Wang and Sui Jianguo.

The first nationwide avant-garde exhibition since the Tiananmen Incident, Guangzhou First Oil Painting Biennial (Guangzhou diyijie youhua shuangnianzhan), opens in Guangzhou in November. The show is developed under official policies urging economic expansion; an ideal (and naive) goal of the exhibition's organizers is to increase the value of Chinese avant-garde art in both domestic and international markets. The work of some artists in the Guangzhou Biennial - Wang Guangyi, among them-exemplifies Political Pop (Zhengzhi popu), a dominant artistic trend in China after Tiananmen, and not especially popular with authorities.

Practitioners combine socialist realist or CR imagery with the irreverent sensibility of American Pop Art. Political Pop and Cynical Realist works are in demand on the international exhibition circuit throughout the early 1990s.

1993

The Chinese avant-garde begins producing work that takes as its subject the problems of consumerism and materialism, increasingly evident in Chinese culture under the impact of a globalized economy. This critique is prominent in the work of the New History Group (Xinlishi xiaozu), led by Ren Jian, and the Long-tailed Elephant Group (Daweixiang), which includes Lin Yilin, Chen Shaoxiong, Xu Tan, and Liang Juhui.

The New History Group organizes a multimedia event entitled Mass Consumption (Daxiaofei), which is to include rock music, painting, and a fashion show, scheduled to take place at the new McDonald's restaurant in Beijing on April 28. The work reflects a transition from a focus on the art object to the production process. At midnight on April 27, however, the event is prohibited by the Beijing Public Security Bureau. In November, the Long-tailed Elephant Group produces a series of installations in the Red Ants Bar (Hongmayi jiuba) in Guangzhou.

International interest in Chinese avant-garde art heats up, for both ideological and commercial reasons. China's New Art, Post-1989 opens at the Hong Kong Arts Centre in January, then travels to Australia. The exhibition includes more than 200 works by some 50 artists, including paintings, sculptures, and installations, predominantly of the Political Pop and Cynical Realist stripe.

China's New Art boosts the international cachet of Chinese avantgardism. In June, thirteen artists from this show—Wang Guangyi, Zhang Peili, Geng Jianyi, Xu Bing, Liu Wei, Fang Lijun, Yu Hong, Feng Mengbo, Li Shan, Yu Youhan, Wang Ziwei, Sun Liang, and Song Haidong—are invited to participate in the 45th Venice Biennale. In July, works by Wenda Gu, Huang Yong Ping, Wu Shan Zhuan, and Xu Bing are showcased in Fragmented Memory: The Chinese Avant-Garde in Exile, held at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio.

1994

Lack of government support and declining public interest forces avant-garde artists to find alternative venues for exhibiting their work: books, magazines, private homes, less populated rural areas. For instance, artists Zeng Xiaojun, Ai Weiwei, Xu Bing, and art critic Feng Boyi fund the publication of Black Book (Heipishu), a parody of Red Flag (Hongqi), the official organ of the CCP.

In Shanghai, a new generation of installation artists exhibits in The Stage 1994 (1994 Jieduanzhan), held at Huashan Art School in May. The Third Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Art Documents (Disanjie zhongguo dangdai yishu wenxian [zisiao] zhan), held at the library of East China Normal University in Shanghai, consists mainly of slides and videos showing installation and performance works. A similar presentation, Installation: Location of Language (Zhuangzhi: Fangwei yuyan), continues into 1995.

A number of performances and installations are held in private spaces, a phenomenon dubbed Apartment Art (Gongyu yishu). Ma Liuming, Zhu Min, and other young artists stage performances in a private space in the East Village (a suburb of Beijing). It is reported that they are arrested because of the work's erotic content, then forced to move. In September, Berlin-based Chinese artist Zhu Jinshi organizes a series of activities under the title Eye Ear (Yaner) in his own apartment in Beijing. Similarly, Wang Gongxin and Lin

Tian-miao mount installations in their apartment, open only to the art community.

Only one academic institution,
Capital Normal University in
Beijing, provides space for the
public exhibition of avant-garde
art. The Com-Art Show: China,
Korea, and Japan '94, organized
around the theme "Today Is the
Dream of the Orient" (Jinri shi
dongfangzhimeng), presents modern paintings and installation
works. The Chinese artists include
Wang Luyan, Wang Jianwei, Song
Dong, Li Yongbin, Wang Guangyi,
Wei Guangqing, Wang Yousheng,
and Gu Dexin.

In October, Political Pop artists Li Shan, Yu Youhan, Wang Guangyi, Liu Wei, Fang Lijun, and Zhang Xiaogang participate in the 22nd International São Paulo Bienal. It is reported that the content of the works, especially images of Mao, spurs protest among Chinese in Brazil.

1995-1997

In the aftermath of the Cold War, Chinese avant-garde artists have developed a high profile in international art circles but are virtually ignored at home. For international art institutions, the Chinese avant-garde signifies an important underground voice in one of the few remaining Communist countries. On the other hand, China's rapid entrance into the global economy has catapulted Chinese art into the international art market.

In China, however, some artists continue to seek out alternative exhibition spaces. For example, Sui Jianguo, Zhan Wang, and Yu Fan install works in a demolished area of Beijing, while Feng Boyi uses a private space in the eastern suburbs of Beijing for a group show of installation and performance work. The principal viewers of Feng's exhibition are peasant residents of the suburb.

Capital Normal University continues to support avant-garde work by providing public exhibition space. It sponsors a series of one-person exhibitions under the title Individual Method (Geren fangshi), featuring installation works by Zhu Jinshi, Song Dong, and Yin Xiuzhen. In December, the university organizes Beijing—Berlin Art Exchange (Beijing—Bolin yishu jiaoliuzhan) in which eight Chinese artists participate.

Reality, Today and Tomorrow: An Exhibition of Contemporary Chinese Art (Xianshi, jintian yu mingtian), held in Beijing in 1996, features recent painting, sculpture, installation work, and video by the new generation of artists, including Fang Lijun, Zhao Bandi, Zhan Wang, Sui Jianguo, Song Dong, Wang Jin, and Sun Liang. The exhibition is organized by a new generation of art critics, Leng Lin, Feng Boyi, Qian Zhijian, Zhang Xiaojun, and Gao Ling. In December 1996, however, the large-scale Invitation Exhibition of

Contemporary Chinese Art (Zhongguo dangdai yishu yaoqingzhan) is canceled on opening day for reasons unknown.

Meanwhile, the international circulation of Chinese avant-gardism expands geographically to include all Asian and European art capitals, as well as major US museums. Exhibitions include Avantguardes artístiques xinese (Centre d'Art Santa Mònica, Barcelona, 1995); China: Zeitgenössische Malerei
(Kunstmuseums Bonn, 1996);
Quotation Marks (Singapore Art
Museum, 1997), Against the Tide
(Bronx Museum of the Arts, New
York, 1997); Cities on the Move
(Vienna Secession, 1997).

Compiled by Gao Minglu, with contributions by Qian Zhijian.

TAIWAN

1971

Taiwan loses the China seat at the United Nations, and embarks on a campaign of economic and social development accompanied by increasing political liberalization. This bid for self-sufficiency, along with the loosening of ties to Taiwan's Cold War supporters, sets the stage for gradual political liberalization, widespread disenchantment with western notions of progress and development, and a search for an authentic Taiwanese identity.

1975

Yen Chia-kan assumes the presidency after Chiang Kai-shek's death. Premier Chiang Ching-kuo, son of Chiang Kai-shek, announces the objectives of the Six-Year Plan for National Economic Development. Taiwan enters its first period of Nativist (Xiangtu) consciousness, in which the Taiwanese-Han Chinese who predate the migrations of Nationalist Chinese (Kuomintang, or KMT) from the Mainland after the Communist takeover in 1949 as well as indigenous peoples-begin to demand economic and political rights.

This social-political movement is accompanied by a Nativist movement in literature and art that

advocates both an exploration of Taiwan's indigenous cultures and an attack on the Taiwanese tendency to accept all things western. Nativism/Xiangtu defines Taiwan's identity as anti-modernist and anti-western, a rejection of the cultural traditions of modernism introduced first by Japan during its colonial occupation (1895-1945) and then by the United States Information Service (USIS) in Taipei. Criticized by some as nostalgic and provincial, the Xiangtu movement is also credited with generating a new sensitivity to the environment and the dangers of unchecked modernization. Xiangtu artists-influenced by the literary output of grassroots writers as well as American photorealismturn to nature, rustic subject matter, and Taiwanese folk culture for inspiration, producing romanticized images of rural life in a hyperrealist style. Chou You-rui's series, Banana (Xiangjiao lianzo), exhibited at the USIS, is representative of the new aesthetic and receives critical acclaim as a groundbreaking synthesis of Photorealism and Xiangtu.

Lion Art (Xiongshi Meishu), a monthly journal of art and culture, shifts its focus from traditional Chinese to native Taiwanese art. Artist magazine (Yishujia/I shu chia) is founded and publishes a series of articles by Hsieh Li-fa entitled "The Taiwanese Art Movement during the Japanese Occupation." The KMT's efforts to "sinicize" Taiwanese culture included suppressing Taiwanese artists educated under the Japanese and promoting traditionalist Mainland artists who had migrated with the Nationalists. Hsieh's articles are notable as the first art-historical scholarship to discuss this virtually forgotten generation, and to focus on native Taiwanese rather than traditional Chinese artists.

1976

Taiwan Political Forum (Taiwan zhengzhi luntan) is forcibly shut down, its registration license revoked by the Supreme Military Court. A new journal championing native Taiwan, Summer Tide Forum (Xiari xinchao luntan) quickly fills the void.

Taipei's mayor orders a feasibility study on building a modern art museum in Mu-ja. The market for contemporary art is practically nonexistent and will remain so until the mid-1980s, although a few private galleries open.

Grassroots realism and Photo-

realism become the dominant styles in art academies. Solo exhibitions of self-taught painter Hung T'ung at the USIS and sculptor Ju Ming at Taipei's National History Museum are popular with critics and the public; the native background of the two artists, reflected in their work, further enhances the status of the Xiangtu movement. Hung T'ung's paintings, inspired by Taiwanese folk art and noted for their brilliant color and use of pictographic symbols, will influence a second wave of Nativist sensibility (Bentu) in the late 1980s and '90s.

Artist Liao Chi-ch'un dies. As mentor to the Fifth Moon Painting
Group (Wuyue, prominent during the 1950s and '60s), Liao had advocated the adoption of western modernism—i.e., Abstract
Expressionism and other forms of abstraction—and condemned traditional Chinese art.

1977

Taipei municipal government designates Yuan-shan Number 2 Park for the Taipei Fine Arts Museum. Formerly the site of the country's diplomatic hotel, the selection represents a symbolic gesture conferring government legitimacy on Taiwanese art. Guotai Art

202 CHRONOLOGY

Museum, Taiwan's first private museum, opens in Taipei.

The literary world debates the significance of Nativist writing. Lion Art advocates Nativist art and delineates its central characteristics with special issues entitled "Concern for Our Environment" (Guanhuai ziji zhouzao de huanjing) and "Form-making and Locale" (Fengtu yu zaoxing). Artist introduces the work of Chinese artists living abroad, for instance, Photorealist painter Yao Chingchang (Taiwan-born) and Zao Wouki (Mainland-born). Their success in achieving international fame becomes a blueprint for younger Taiwanese artists.

1978

US president Jimmy Carter announces the establishment of formal ties with the People's Republic of China and ends the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty. Chiang Ching-kuo becomes president and declares a state of emergency, canceling all elections and ordering all military units to assume positions for national defense.

Xiangtu sensibility—embodied in the slogan "Humanism, Nationalism, Realism" (Rendaode, minzude, xianshide) - still dominates the art world, but Taiwanese artists educated abroad begin introducing ideas from the New York contemporary scene about new forms such as earthworks and performance art. Hsieh Li-fa's series on Taiwanese art before 1949 is published as a monograph (see bibliography). The exhibition Twentieth-Century Spanish Masters (Xibanya mingja huazhan) opens at the Guotai Art Museum and is popular with the public.

1979

The US breaks all formal diplomatic ties with the Kuomintang's Republic of China on Taiwan (Taiwan), and transfers diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China (PRC). Formosa Magazine (Meili Dao) is founded

as the voice of progressive, anti-KMT politics. A rally sponsored by the magazine at Kao-hsiung sparks the Formosa Incident, a confrontation with authorities in which a hundred police officers are injured. In response, the government closes the magazine and arrests its staff and supporters.

Meanwhile, the art world redirects its attention from politics to the commercial gallery market. The work of performance artist Hsieh Te-ching provokes a controversy over whether such work constitutes a valid art form. Li Chungsheng, mentor to the Eastern Painting Group (Dongfang/Tong fan) and supporter of westerninspired modernism, has his first and only solo exhibition at the Dragon Gate Gallery. The status of Taiwanese native artists of older generations gradually improves. A revival of Kungu, the classical theater and music of Taiwan, is launched by Kuo Shio-juang.

1980

The family of lawyer Lin Yi-hsiung, a defendant in the Formosa Incident, is attacked while at home; two of Liu's three daughters are murdered. The case dominates the media. Taiwan announces its withdrawal from the International Monetary Fund. Sin-chu Science and Industrial Park opens, a government-sponsored site for hightechnology industries and research. The national per capita income in Taiwan reaches US\$2,312. The Academia Sinica sponsors the First International Sinology Conference in Taipei. The Taiwan University archaeology team discovers the Neolithic site Bai Nan.

Taiwan's art world expands in step with its booming economy and budding international profile as a modernized society. Many art groups form during the early 1980s, promoting experimentation and avant-garde forms from abroad; their potential will not be fully realized until after the end of martial law in 1987. Government

revenue and private money is devoted to the arts, including the building of an institutional infrastructure—cultural centers in each county and municipality, art museums, private galleries—all of which translates into more frequent exhibitions and a broadening market for art objects.

Nativist activism continues. Newspapers advocate a "return to the native soil" (huigui bentu). Artists and cultural workers from central, southern, and eastern Taiwan-in other words, outside the official art world of Taipei in northern Taiwan-organize exhibitions of ink and oil painting, ceramics, and other local crafts, emphasizing vernacular idioms and subject matter. Modernist art makes a comeback, encouraged by government largesse, the institutional demand for art to exhibit, and scholarly as well as popular interest in reconstructing Taiwan's cultural history. These circumstances entice many Taiwanese artists of the 1950s and '60s modernist movement-i.e., the Eastern and Fifth Moon painting groups - who had subsequently left, to return to Taiwan.

The First International Art Festival (Diyijie guoji yishujie), sponsored by private entities, is held in eleven cities and counties and features more than 500 artists from fifteen countries. Hsiao Chin, an abstract artist living in Milan, and Hsia Yang and Han Hsiang-ning, photorealists living in New York City, return to Taiwan for symposium talks.

1981

The Taiwan University archaeology team discovers the Neolithic site Chih-shan Yen near Taipei.

Zao Wou-ki's first visit to Taiwan electrifies the art community.
Conceptual artist Chung Pu returns from abroad; installation and mixed-media work become popular among younger artists. Influential artist Hsi Te-chin dies; a water-colorist, Hsi was the first to combine modernist and native idioms,

and documented Taiwanese native architecture in a book of photography. An exhibition of work by the Fifth Moon and the Eastern painting groups is held on the twenty-fifth anniversary of their founding. The Cloud Gate Dance Company, Taiwan's first modern dance group, tours Europe.

1982

US-Taiwan trade talks are held in Taipei. The Industrial Development Bureau of the Ministry of Economic Affairs announces a plan to develop high-tech information industries.

The National Art Academy is formally established and admits its first class of students. The mayor of Tainan organizes the Exhibition of One Thousand Artists of Taiwan (Zhonghuaminguo qianren zhanlan), an event deemed the first official endorsement of the Taiwanese art world. The 101 Contemporary Artists Group (101 Xiandai yishugun) is founded by Lu Tian-yan, Wu Tien-chang, Yang Mao-lin, and Yeh Tzu-chi (the lastnamed eventually emigrates abroad). All are Taiwan-born, graduate from the same art program, and advocate a grassroots sensibility.

The artist Lin Shou-yu returns from Britain and introduces a younger generation of Taiwanese artists to Minimalism, inspiring a new interest in contemporary idioms. Lion Art publishes special issues on Mainland Chinese art, and begins reporting news related to current developments in the Mainland art world.

1983

Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM) opens, Taiwan's first museum of modern art. The death of Chang Dai-chen, a traditionalist painter who moved to Taiwan with the KMT in 1949, prompts interest in this generation of artists. The Council for Cultural Planning and Development (CCPD; Wenjianhui) organizes the First International Biennial Print Exhibition in Taipei, with 1,140 participants from 49 countries.

Taiwan's film industry is energized by a new generation of directors, including Yang Te-chang, Wu Niencheng, Ko Yi-cheng, Jen Juanhsiang, and Chang Yi. Hou Hsiaohsien's films, notable for their Nativist sensibility, achieve international acclaim.

1984

Chiang Ching-kuo continues his presidency with a new vice-president, Lee Teng-hui. The Summer Tide Forum publishes an article on Taiwan's relationship to the PRC, stimulating debate on the issues of unification and independence.

The magazine Taiwanese Art and Literature discusses the current "Nativization" of literature, and the literary community enters the climactic phase of the Nativist movement. A freighter en route from Kao-hsiung to Peng-hu accidentally explodes and sinks, taking with it all 450 artworks for the 38th Provincial Exhibition (Disanshibajie quan sheng meizhan). The artists Tsong Pu and Chen Hsing-wan are awarded grand prize at Contemporary Art Trends in Taiwan (Shoujie xian dai huihua xiuzhan wang), an exhibition held at TFAM. The Taipei Painting Group (Taibei huapai) is established by graduates of Chinese Culture University, advocating an art that reflects political and social reality; its members include Wu Tien-chang and Lu Tian-yan.

Li Chung-sheng, mentor to the Eastern Painting Group, dies. The CCPD organizes the International Seminar on Chinese Calligraphy (Zhongguo shufang guoji yantaohui).

1985

The Foreign Reserve branch of Taipei's central bank surpasses the US\$2 billion mark, and the average per capita income rises to US\$3,144. Taiwan's economic boom attracts worldwide attention.

Over a thousand art events are documented for the year. The formation of many young artists'

groups reflects the pluralism of Taiwan's art scene and the broad range of concerns addressed by artists, among them, environmental devastation. The Third Wave Artists Association (Disanpo huahui) organizes the exhibition Rescuing Our Homeland from Pollution (Wuran: Guanxin womende jiayuan) at Taiwan University, and 101 Contemporary Artists Group launches a series of exhibitions entitled Protecting the Environment (Huanbao zhan).

Lee Tsai-chien's star-shaped red sculpture, Minimal Infinite
(Dixiande wuxian), scheduled for exhibition at TFAM, causes concern among museum personnel that the piece will be misconstrued as a Communist red star. Controversy ensues when the museum director has the sculpture painted gray without Lee's permission, raising issues of freedom of expression.

1986

The 200 members of the non–KMT affiliated Dangwai organize the May 19 Green Movement in Wanhua, demanding the abolition of martial law (instituted in 1949). The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) is established, becoming Taiwan's first official opposition party. Concern for the environment prompts a demonstration among the people of Lu-kang, protesting the opening of a local factory by the American Du Pont Corporation.

The Studio of Contemporary Art (Xiandai yishu gongzuoshi) is founded by artist June Lai, who soon becomes a pivotal figure for younger artists. The establishment of the Southern Taiwanese Art Association (Nan Taiwan yishu fengge huahui) reflects growing confidence among artists in the south in relation to the official art world of Taipei. The National Academy of Art establishes a center for traditional art. The Cultural Ministry sponsors the exhibition Art China, a title that raises controversy over who and/or what can be defined as Chinese or Taiwanese.

The First International Ceramic Biennial in Taiwan (Zhonghuaminguo diyijie taoyi shuangnian zhan) opens at Taipei's National History Museum. The first solo exhibition of self-taught Chinese ink painter Yu Cheng-yao (at the age of 88) is received with great fanfare by the media and art world.

1987

Martial law is ended. The KMT lifts restrictions on the news media, and permits citizens to visit relatives on the Mainland. Thirty-one community organizations join a demonstration to protest the traffic in child prostitutes. Forty-one organizations form the Association to Promote the February 28 Day of Peace, referring to the Nationalist/KMT suppression of a local uprising on February 28, 1947, in which some 20,000 Taiwanese died. Academics and legislators draft A Manifesto on the Rights of Workers. Political pluralism, reflected in myriad political factions based in local cultures, generates a second wave of Nativist consciousness, Bentu/Pent'u, which, like the earlier Xiangtu Nativism, focuses on defining "Taiwaneseness," but within an urban, modernist construct.

Many artists and cultural groups support these social movements, and the lifting of martial law unleashes a long-simmering critique of Taiwan's social and political order. Artists such as Yang Mao-lin, Kuo Wei-kuo, Wu Tienchang, and Lu Hsien-ming aim pointed visual barbs at the country's political strongmen, and attack the pervasive materialism. Western Neo-Expressionism is recast in Nativist/Bentu terms by Wu Tien-chang and Hou Chunming, among others, who combine painterly subjectivism with signs and symbols drawn from folk culture and traditional mythology.

This groundswell of political activism is accompanied by a mutual desire among Mainlanders

and Taiwanese to learn and understand each other's history and culture. In the art world, works by Mainland Chinese artists, promoted by commercial galleries, gradually gain the attention of Taiwanese collectors. The exhibition Chinese Modern Ink Painting (Zhongguo xiandai shuimo zhan), featuring Mainland Chinese artists and held at Dragon Gate Gallery in Taipei, moves to Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, a government institution.

The Executive Yuan authorizes the establishment of the Public Foundation for Art and Architecture (Gongzhong jianzhuyishu jijinhui). Nur Sculpture Garden in Pu-li opens, the first of its kind in Taiwan, Hung T'ung dies.

1988

The Labor Union and some twenty other labor groups stage a massive demonstration on May 1. More than 4,000 southern farmers lead a demonstration for farmer's rights; northern farmers join forces in Taipei, leading to a bloody encounter with the police, known as the May 20 Conflict. Some 1,400 members of aboriginal groups gather in Taipei on August 25 to demand the return of their homeland by the government.

Postmodernism takes Taiwan by storm, including lively discussions in the art press. Victoria Y. Lu's "Phenomena of Postmodern Art," published in Artist, is particularly influential, along with western writings on postmodernism translated into Chinese. Christo and postmodern American architect Charles Moore arrive in Taipei for exhibitions at TFAM. The museum also organizes the International Dada Exhibition (Dadade shijie), featuring works by Duchamp and Man Ray, among others.

Artist Magazine and Mainland journal Fine Arts in China (Zhongguo Meishu Bao) begin editorial exchanges, contributing to wider attempts to develop institutional linkages between the

CHRONOLOGY