Welcome

Name: Linda Pittwood

PhD: School of cultures, languages and area studies; cultural studies and critical theory

Thesis Title: Interventions on the female body in contemporary Chinese art 1984-present

Thesis Description:
The impetus for this project came from my article *The headless woman in contemporary Chinese art*, which was published in the inaugural edition of the Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art in 2014. The scope is expanded here to include other representations of the female body in contemporary art from the PRC, exploring whether and how they are indicative of dominant societal attitudes.

Feminism as it has existed in Europe and America since the 1970s cannot be said to have occurred likewise in the PRC. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong stated that: “women hold up half the sky.” However, since the end of the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s, there has been a reinforcing of patriarchal attitudes, and a revival of Confucianism, despite government claims to the contrary. Obstacles prevent women from fully participating in public life, or, if they do so, can create tensions within their extended families, as artist Lin Tianmiao acknowledged by interview (Lin, 2013).

Several academics including Roy Forward, Sonal Khullar and Sasha Welland are engaged in researching the output of female Chinese artists and the nature of Chinese feminism. Concurrently, others including Silvia Fok and Thomas J Berghuis are researching the body and performance in Chinese art. The critical lacuna that this project aims to address is a focus on representations of women by both male and female artists.

The primary research question is: are representations of the female body in contemporary art from the PRC since 1984 indicative of dominant societal attitudes? This research will take the view that Chinese contemporary art combines the legacy of Chinese culture and art history with influences from Western art history and discourse. Therefore, to investigate this question it will depart from Laura Mulvey’s theory of the ‘male gaze,’ Freud’s theory of scopophilia,’ will use a Foucauldian approach and refer to the writings of Chinese feminists Dai Jinhua and Li Xiaojiang.

Supervisors and Institution(s):

Paul Gladston Associate Professor of Critical Theory and Visual Culture in the Department of Culture, Film and Media at the University of Nottingham.

Joshua Jiang Professor of Chinese Art, Birmingham School of Art, Birmingham City University

Publications:


University email address: ajxlp@nottingham.ac.uk

LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/pub/linda-pittwood/38/7a2/1b

Twitter: https://twitter.com/lindapittwood

Other Social Media: http://lindapittwood.org/