



SOUNDINGS: east asia monthly

a newsletter for undergraduates

VOLUME I, NUMBER 3: NOVEMBER 2006

WEATHERHEAD EAST ASIAN INSTITUTE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHINA INSTITUTE EXHIBITION EXPLORES BOOKS IN CONTEMPORARY CHINESE ART

by Wei Wei Hsing, CC'08



(Wang Jin, *New Ancient – Stele of Zhang Qian*, 1998;
Courtesy of the China Institute)

Contemporary Chinese artists have become the new darlings of the art world. Scholars, collectors, and even amateurs have fallen in love with their representations of the collision between tradition and modernity. On display through November 11th at the China Institute, *Shu: Reinventing Books in Contemporary Chinese Art*, is an intimate collection of thought-provoking pieces that reflect upon the unique mixture of old and new in contemporary China. The exhibition features the work of over 20 artists, such as Zhang Xiaogang, Xu Bing, Yue Minjun, and Yuan Chin-ta, and includes a wide range of mediums, from sculpture and painting to media art. All of the pieces on exhibit were made during or after the 1980s.

The book, or *shu*, serves as the exhibition's uniting theme, bringing the time-honored bearer of knowledge together with its contemporary reinterpretations.

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KOREAN CULTURAL SERVICE PROVIDES (FILM) FORUM FOR DISCUSSION

by Jon Kief, CC'07

On alternate Thursday nights for the past three years, the Korean Cultural Service of NY has been hosting free screenings of contemporary Korean films with English subtitles. Called "A Night at the Movies" and open to the general public, this program is exciting and unique not only because it provides access to a diverse range of Korean films often hard to locate in subtitled form, but also because it incorporates an audience discussion session at the end of each screening.

Of course, a certain degree of communality is part of the typical movie-going experience, especially with the rise of massive, stadium-seating multiplexes. And yet, when was the last time any of us gave real consideration to the responses, reactions, and opinions of the stranger sitting in the next seat? By facilitating open dialogue and discussion about each film, the Korean Cultural Service's program enables movement away from the model of the movie-goer as isolated individual, instead opening up a space for a more active sociality. This not only broadens understanding and consideration of the film, but also restores it to its social relevance and embeddedness in a more general sense.

Most recently, on October 26th, "A Night at the Movies" presented director Kyung-hee Park's 2003 feature, *A Smile* (Miso), an engagingly self-reflexive film about a young photographer who gradually begins to lose her eyesight. Combining theoretical questions of the intersections between vision, knowledge, and social interaction with a character-centered study of individual identity and human relationships, Park's film challenges its viewer to reconsider the meaning of

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CONTEMPORARY CHINESE ART (CON'T)

Pieces chosen for Part I of the exhibit, “Reimagining Tradition,” specifically focus on the use of traditional forms in a contemporary aesthetic context. Xu Bing’s *A Book from the Sky*, for example, comments on the arbitrariness of meaning conveyed through the strokes of Chinese characters. Upon first glance, the characters carved into the woodblock look like Chinese ones, but further examination reveals that the “words” are not real.

Part II of the exhibition, “Negotiating History and Memory,” will begin on December 12th and will run through next February. It will feature artistic expressions of personal memories linked to historical experiences in China. Additionally, the exhibition includes a small Part III, entitled “Displaying Books.” Housed in a separate gallery for the duration of both Part I and Part II, it explores the role of books on display in both public and private contexts.

Robert Harrist, Professor of Chinese Art at Columbia, praised the exhibit, saying, “the selection of works is visually and intellectually exciting.” He considers it a “landmark” exhibition for the Institute, marking its first showcase of contemporary Chinese art.

Shu: Reinventing Books in Contemporary Chinese Art is curated by Wu Hung, a professor at the University of Chicago who has organized a number of influential exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art. The China Institute is located on E 65th Street between Lexington and Park Avenues. Admission is \$3 for students. For more information, please visit:

www.chinainstitute.org/gallery/current.html.

KOREAN CULTURAL SERVICE FILMS (CON'T)

visual experience. As such, it also challenges its viewer to rethink his or her own position with respect to the film in its cinematic presentation.

Within this context, *A Smile* acted as an especially useful lens through which to appreciate the program’s post-screening dialogue. If the film sought to explore the interconnections between visuality, identity, and sociality, the re-orienting of the viewing experience as an explicitly social and communal activity served to underline the relevance and meaningfulness of these explorations beyond the static screen of projection. In listening to other individuals’ reactions to the film, re-emergent was the engagement of art and life often elided by the typical movie-going experience.

The Korean Cultural Service was established in 1979 by the Korean Consulate General in order to foster Korean-US cultural exchange and understanding. It is located on the 6th floor of 460 Park Avenue, between 57th and 58th Streets. The next film screening and discussion will be on Thursday, November 9th, at 6:30pm, and will feature director Tae-yong Kim’s *Family Ties*. The following event, an “Original Film Night,” is scheduled for Thursday, November 30th, at 6:30pm, and it promises to be especially exciting because it will feature screenings of a number of short films by directors Jinh Park and Soopum Sohn, who will be present to participate in the post-screening discussion. For more information on “A Night at the Movies” and the Korean Cultural Service of NY, visit: www.koreanculture.org.

EAST ASIAN STUDIES ALUMNI PROFILE:

KEN KIYOTA, CC’05 (EALAC MAJOR)



Ken graduated Magna Cum Laude from Columbia College in 2005 with departmental honors in East Asian Languages and Cultures (EALAC) and a specialization in Japanese language, literature, and film. After graduation, Ken attended a yearlong intensive Japanese language program at the Inter-University Center (IUC) for Japanese Language Studies in Yokohama, Japan. In addition to advancing his Japanese language skills, Ken notes that the IUC program also provided a great opportunity to meet other people interested in pursuing Japan-related careers both in academia and beyond. Ken is currently working as an assistant to a Tokyo-based American attorney, who he says has turned out to be an amazing mentor. He has ambitions to pursue a career in international law in the future and is currently applying to law schools for next fall. Ken would be happy to answer any questions that undergrads may have about studying at the IUC program or living and working in Tokyo; he can be reached at ken.kiyota@gmail.com.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Weatherhead East Asian Institute Events

Thu, Nov. 16, 12:00-1:30pm

Brown Bag Lecture: "Social Science Research in China and Alternative Approaches to Development"

Huang Ping, Research Professor and Deputy Director, Institute of Sociology, CASS, Beijing

918 IAB

Wed, Nov. 29, 12:00-1:30pm

Brown Bag Lecture: "Spectacles of Violence at Century's Turn: The Boxer Crisis of 1900 Revisited"

Prof. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, Department of History, University of California, Irvine

918 IAB

Thu, Nov. 30, 12:00-1:30pm

Brown Bag Lecture: "Roots and Routes of Koreans in Kazakhstan: Migrations of a Soviet/Post-Soviet Minority"

Prof. German Kim, Head of the Department of Korean Studies, Kazakh National University

918 IAB

See www.columbia.edu/cu/weai/events.html for an up-to-date calendar of Institute events.

Donald Keene Center Events

Thu, Nov. 9, 6:00-7:30pm

Lecture: "Nichiren's 'Great Mandala': Practice, Community, and Lineage"

Jacqueline Stone, Princeton University
403 Kent Hall

Thu, Nov. 16, 6:00-7:30pm

Lecture: "Secular Garment, Sacred Cloth: The Four-Hundred-Year Life of a Japanese Textile"

Terry Satsuki Milhaupt, Independent Scholar
403 Kent Hall

Thu, Nov. 30, 6-7pm (reception), 7-8pm (performance)
Twentieth Anniversary Concert: "Gagaku: An Evening of Japanese Classical Music and Dance"

Ono Gagaku Society, Tokyo, Japan
Theatre at Riverside Church

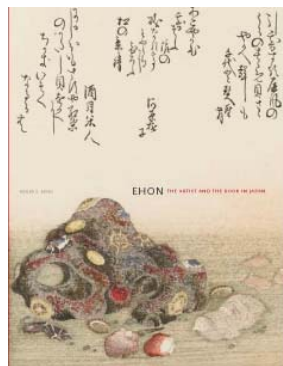
For more info on any of these three events, see www.donaldkeenecenter.org.

HIGHLIGHTED EVENT

Ehon: The Artist and the Book in Japan

New York Public Library (www.nypl.org)

October 20, 2006 through February 4, 2007



"*Ehon*... will demonstrate the variety of visual languages used by artists over many historical periods from 764 to 2005. It will include... 200 books with printed illustrations [*ehon*], as well as related manuscripts, drawings, woodblock prints, and photos." (text and photo: nypl.org)

East Asia Events in NYC

Sun, Nov. 12, 1:30pm

Film: "The Blood of Yingzhou District"

Margaret Mead Film Festival, American Museum of Natural History (www.amnh.org/mead)

Mon, Nov. 13, 8:00am-6:00pm

Symposium: "HIV/AIDS in Asian & Pacific Islander Communities in the US and China"

Chinese-American Planning Council (cpc-nyc.org)
New York University School of Medicine

Fri-Sat, Nov. 17-18, 8:00pm; Sun, Nov. 19, 3:00pm

Performing Arts: "I Land"

Asia Society (www.asiasociety.org)

Sat, Nov. 18, 2:00-6:00pm

Discussion: "Throwing Down the Gauntlet: What Does it Mean to be Chinese in America?"

Museum of Chinese in the Americas (moca-nyc.org)
RSVP required; see website for details.

Thu, Nov. 30, 6:30pm

Original Film Night: "Fish in the Sea Is Not Thirsty" (dir. Jinoh Park) and "Request" (dir. Soopum Sohn)
Korean Cultural Service (www.koreanculture.org)

Sun, Dec. 3, 6:30-8:30pm

Performance and Discussion: "The Making of the Met's New Opera with Tan Dun"

Asia Society (www.asiasociety.org)

Fri, Dec. 8 and Sat, Dec. 9 (two parts), 7:30pm

Music: "New Voices from Japan II: Power of the New Japanese Woman"

Japan Society (www.japansociety.org)

OPPORTUNITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EALAC Thesis Writing

Deadline: complete draft must be submitted to faculty advisor and graduate student tutor by Mon, Nov. 13.

Study Abroad

Information Session: Japanese language and Japanese Studies-related opportunities will be discussed Fri, Nov. 10, 2:30pm, 413 Kent.

Internship/Volunteer/Employment

Internship: The Japan Center for International Exchange (www.jcie.org) seeks interns able to work approximately 10-15 hours per week. Interns must have native-level English fluency and interest/experience in international affairs (focus on Asia preferred); basic website/html skills are preferred. To apply e-mail resume and a cover letter to Naoko Fitzgerald at nfitzgerald@jcie.org.

Internship: Office of Executive Director, Korean American Community Foundation (www.kacfny.org) seeks interns to begin immediately. Hours are flexible, but a minimum commitment of 6 weeks, 8 hrs/week is preferred. Interested candidates should send their resumes to Bomsinae Kim at bsnkim@kacfny.org.

Part-time Job: Dealer of Korean and Japanese art is seeking a part-time assistant to work about 10 hours a week. Hours are flexible. If you are interested, please call Lea Sneider at 212-724-6171 or e-mail learsneider@aol.com

CONTACT INFORMATION

To add your name to the undergraduate mailing list, visit <http://www.columbia.edu/weai> and click on "get on the mailing list," or e-mail us at: weaiundergrads@columbia.edu.

WEAI undergraduate liaisons:

David Aaron Engle, GS
(dae2106@columbia.edu)

Wei Wei Hsing, CC
(fwh2101@columbia.edu)

Nicholas Kavoussi, SEAS
(nlk2104@columbia.edu)

Meghan Wu, BC
(mw2173@barnard.edu)

For information on how to contact East Asia-related student groups on campus at Columbia, visit:

http://www.columbia.edu/cu/weai/undergrad_student_groups_n.html

ABOUT US

About SOUNDINGS: east asia monthly

Published monthly, **SOUNDINGS** aims to help better incorporate undergraduates into the broader East Asian Studies community at Columbia by providing increased access to information about East Asia-related groups, activities, and events. Incorporating academic as well as non-academic news and listings, it seeks to help interested undergraduates further pursue their interest in East Asia, whatever form it may take. **SOUNDINGS** is edited by Jon Kief (CC'07, jk2336@columbia.edu).

About the Weatherhead East Asian Institute

Since its establishment in 1949, Columbia University's Weatherhead East Asian Institute has been a major center for research, teaching, and publishing on modern and contemporary Asia. The Institute's mission is to train new generations of Asian experts in the humanities, social sciences, and the professions and to enhance understanding of East Asia in the wider community.
