

Notes

Introduction

1. Gao Minglu, "Toward a Transnational Modernity: An Overview of *Inside Out: New Chinese Art*," in Gao Minglu, ed., *Inside Out: Chinese New Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 16.
2. Habermas has shown that the term "modern," which first emerged in fifth-century Rome and was closely associated with the origin and traditions of Christianity, again and again expresses the consciousness of an epoch that relates itself to the past of antiquity in order to view itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new, from the past to the future. Continuing this in more secular directions, the Western modern period began in the period of the Renaissance. See Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity—An Incomplete Project," in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic* (Seattle: Bay Press 1983), 3–4.
3. An early example: Bonnie McDougall, in her influential 1971 book *The Introduction of Western Literary Theories into Modern China*, first describes the major trends of the Chinese literary world of the 1920s and 1930s, and discusses how the work of Chinese writers, such as Guo Moruo, Yu Dafu, Shen Yanbing, and others, was influenced by Western avant-garde movements, including expressionism, futurism, and even Dadaism. She states that the Chinese New Cultural Movement of the 1920s and 1930s was essentially not an avant-garde movement because it did not reject tradition, and that Chinese litterateurs and artists were too socialized, too politicized, and did not promote the idea and practice of the autonomy of art, which was the major characteristic of the Western avant-garde in its original meaning. McDougall's argument also represents the thinking of a number of other Western scholars and critics about Chinese avant-garde art. See Bonnie S. McDougall, *The Introduction of Western Literary Theories into Modern China* (Tokyo: Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1971), 196–213.
4. See Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism Avant-garde Decadence Kitsch Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987); and Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).
5. Cultural modernization is also called rationalization by Max Weber, who characterized cultural modernity as the separation of the substantive reason expressed in religion and metaphysics into three autonomous spheres: science, morality, and art. See Peter Bürger, "Literary Institution and Modernization," in *The Decline of Modernism*, trans. Nicholas Walker (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).
6. The earliest text on the topic of the postmodernist phenomenon in Chinese architecture of the 1980s is Wang Mingxian's "Postmodernism in China," the second part of chapter 6 in Gao Minglu, Zhou Yan, Wang Xiaojian, Shu Qun, Wang Mingxian, and Tong Dian, *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986* [History of contemporary Chinese art 1985–1986] (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1991), 455–466. The book was republished in a revised version as *The '85 Movement: The Enlightenment of the Chinese Avant-Garde* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008), in which Wang Mingxian's "Postmodernism in China" appears as the second part of chapter 7, pp. 431–437.
7. See Gao Minglu, "Material Utopia in Contemporary Chinese Architecture and Urban Design," *Time+Architecture*, January 2005, 5–10.
8. Cai Yuanpei, "Yi meishu dai zongjiao shuo" [To replace religion with fine art], *Shenzhou Xuehui* (a lecture at the Holy Land Study Society in Beijing), *Xin qingnian* [New youth] 3, no. 6 (August 1917).
9. Hu Shi, "Pragmatism," *Xin qingnian* 6, no. 4 (1917), reprinted in *Hu Shi Wenji* [Essays by Hu Shi], ed. Ouyang Zhesheng (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1988), 211–212.
10. See Gao Minglu, "Inside and Outside the Political Walls: The Living Space of the Chinese Avant-Garde," in Gao Minglu, *The Wall: Reshaping Chinese Contemporary Art* (Beijing: China Millennium Museum of Art; New York: Albricht Knox Gallery of Art, 2005), 63–83.
11. See Gao Minglu, *The No Name: A History of a Self-Exiled Avant-Garde* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2007).
12. See *The Stars: 10 Years* (Hong Kong: Hanart TZ Gallery, 1989). For more on the "China/Avant-Garde" exhibition, see Gao Minglu, "Post-Utopian Avant-Garde Art in China," in Aleš Erjavec, ed., *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition: Politicized Art under Late Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 247–283; and Gao Minglu, "Fengkuangde yijubajiu: Zhongguo xiandai

- yishuzhan shimo" [Great social happening: China/Avant-Garde exhibition], *Qingxiang* [Tendency quarterly], no. 12 (1999), 43–76.
13. Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 25.
 14. Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*.
 15. Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, lii. In an endnote to his "Introduction," Bürger quotes Burkhardt Lindner's comment: "In its intention to sublimate art in the praxis of life, the avant-garde can thus be understood as the most radical and consistent attempt to maintain the universal claim of autonomous art vis-à-vis all other social spheres and to give it practical meaning. In that case, the attempt to liquidate art as an institution does not appear as a break with the ideology of the period of autonomy but as a reversal phenomenon on the identical ideological level" (Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 106).
 16. Poggioli, *The Theory of The Avant-Garde*, 25–26. Peter G. Christensen summarizes Poggioli's four characteristics of the avant-garde from the original text as following: (1) activism: self-promotion of a movement out of "sheer joy of dynamism, a taste for action, a sportive enthusiasm, and the emotional fascination of adventure"; (2) antagonism: a spirit of hostility toward something already in existence; (3) nihilism: a kind of "transcendental antagonism" which "finds joy not merely in the celebration of movement, but even more in the act of beating down barriers, seizing obstacles, destroying whatever stance in its way," (4) agonism: a kind of "transcendental activism" in which a movement "welcomes and accepts its own self-ruin as an obscure or unknown sacrifice to the success of future movements." See Peter G. Christensen, "The Relationship of Decadence to the Avant-Garde as Seen by Poggioli, Bürger, and Calinescu," in *Papers on Language and Literature* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1986), 209.
 17. I first used the term "apartment art" in "From Elite to Small Man," in Gao, *Inside Out*, 161–169, not knowing that the term had already been applied to aspects of sots art and other conceptual art of the 1970s and 1980s in the Soviet Union. In China, I believe, people were not aware of this Soviet avant-garde phenomenon until the late 1990s because of the lack of knowledge about Soviet art of that period. I discuss Chinese apartment art extensively in Gao, *The Wall*, 63–83. See also Feng Boyi, "From 'Underground' to 'Above Ground': On Chinese Avant-Garde Art since the 1990s," *Yishu pinglun* [Art criticism], no. 7 (2004), 43–47, which discusses exhibitions that occurred in alternative spaces, some of which were orchestrated by independent curators, and many of which were accompanied by publications that circulated unofficially.
 18. By no means do I simplify the sentence. Stella articulated it many times, moving in a more sophisticated direction. To me, however, it is always confined in its degree of representation.
 19. The exhibition was "Chinese Maximalism," co-organized by the University of Buffalo Art Galleries and the China Millennium Art Museum in Beijing. It took place at the China Millennium Art Museum in July 2003 and traveled to the University at Buffalo Art Galleries in October 2003. See Gao Minglu, *Chinese Maximalism* (Chongqing: Chongqing People's Press, 2003).
 20. The exhibition titled "The Retrospective Exhibition of the No Name Group," which I curated, took place in the Deshan Cultural Center and the T.R.A. Gallery in Beijing in September 2006. It and traveled to the Guangdong Art Museum in February 2007 and to the Shanghai Zhengda Art Museum in June 2007. See Gao, *The No Name*.
 21. The first conference, titled "Chinese Abstract Art," took place in the One Moon Gallery in Beijing on December 3, 2006, along with an exhibition "Visible/Invisible"; a catalogue with the same title was published in December 2006 by Timezone8 and One Moon Gallery. The second conference, titled "Aesthetic Narratives: Chinese Abstract Art," took place in the Today Art Museum on December 25, 2006. A collection of the contributed texts was published in 2007: Gao Minglu, ed., *Aesthetic Narratives and Abstract Art* (Sichuan Art Publishing House, 2007). The third, titled "Modernity and Abstraction," took place in the Central Academy of Fine Art on July 2 and 3, 2007. A book that includes the panel discussion and selected articles on the topic was later published: Gao Minglu and Zhao Xun, eds., *Modernity and Abstraction*, Art Studies 1 (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2009).
 22. See "Reconstructing Historical Memory: The Great Wall in Twentieth Century Chinese Art," in Gao, *The Wall*, 189–210.
 23. He Chengyao, "Lift the Cover from Your Head," *Yishu* 2, no. 3 (Fall/September 2003), 22.
 24. He Chengyao, interviewed by Gao Minglu, Beijing, June 30, 2001.
 25. Zhan Wang, artist's statement on *Fixing the Golden Tooth for the Great Wall*, 1997, quoted from Gao, *The Wall*, 202.
 26. Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 1.
 27. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996). Despite the author's conservative, America-centric stance, we should acknowledge his anticipation of the facts and support the view that the best response is to learn how to coexist in a complex, multipolar, and diverse world.
 28. Jim Yardley, "In a Tidal Wave, China's Masses Pour from Farm to City," *New York Times*, September 12, 2004, B6.
 29. Song Dong, interviewed by Gao Minglu, October 4, 2002, in Gao Minglu and Wang Mingxian, *Harvest: Contemporary Art Exhibition* (Hong Kong: Architecture Post Publishing House, 2002), 25–26.
 30. Zhang Dali, interviewed by Gao Minglu, Beijing, December 26, 2004. See also Zhang Dali, "Statement," in the exhibition catalogue *Zhang Dali Headlines* (London: Chinese Contemporary Gallery, 2004).
 31. He Yunchang, interviewed by Gao Minglu, July 20, 2004.
 32. Gao Minglu, *Chinese Maximalism* (Chongqing: Chongqing People's Press, 2003).
 33. Yve-Alain Bois, "Material Utopia," *Art in America* (April 1988), 161–180.
 34. Exhibited in the show "Harvest," held in the Chinese National Agricultural Museum in Beijing in 2002. See Huang Yongping, "About *Made in China*," in Gao and Wang, *Harvest: Contemporary Art Exhibition*, 36.

35. For a detailed discussion of this topic see “The Marginalized ‘Modern Man’ and Chinese Women’s Art,” in Gao, *The Wall*, 249–263.
36. For more discussion of Chinese “new women’s” art in general, see Jia Fangzhou, “Chinese Women Artists of the 20th Century,” in *Half of the Sky* (Bonn: Publishing House Frauen Museum, 1998); Liao Wen, *Feminism as a Method—Feminist Art* (Jilin Fine Arts Publishing House, 1999); Li Shi and Tao Yongbai, *The Lost History: The History of Chinese Female Painting* (Hunan Fine Arts Publishing House, 2000); and Xu Hong, *Female: Thoughts on Fine Arts* (Jiangsu People’s Publishing House, 2003).
37. Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: Womanist Prose* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1983).
38. Fei Dawei, “Fang Gu Wenda” [To transcend the East and West: An interview with Gu Wenda], *Meishu* [Art monthly], no. 7 (July 1987), 12–16.
39. *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 18 (May 2, 1988), 1.
40. The opinion most strongly opposed to Meng Luding’s essay was Li Xianting’s article “Shidai qidai zhe dalinghun de jiqing” [The age expects enthusiasm with a grand soul], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 37 (September 12, 1988), 1. Li insisted that art should serve politics and reality; he disregarded academicism.

Chapter 1

1. I discussed this link between the ’85 Movement and the May Fourth Movement in my article “The ’85 Art Movement,” originally a lecture presented at the National Oil Painting Conference held in April of 1986 in Beijing, later published in *Meishujia tongxun* [Artists’ news], no. 3 (1986), 15–23.
2. About the debates, see Chen Song, ed., *Wusi qianhou de donxi wenhua wenti lunzhan lunwenxuan* [Selected works on the question of the cultural debates before and after the May Fourth Movement] (Beijing: Chinese Social Science Press, 1985).
3. For a classic reference for this literature movement, see Bonnie S. McDougall, *The Introduction of Western Literary Theories into Modern China* (Tokyo: Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1971).
4. A volume edited by Gan Yang collected some articles on this topic from important scholars of the 1980s in different disciplines. See Gan Yang, ed., *Zhongguo dangdai wenhua yishi* [Chinese contemporary cultural consciousness] (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 1989). The book included my article “Zhongguo dangdai meishu yundong” [Contemporary art movement in China]. The same book has recently been published in simplified Chinese version with a revised title; see Gan Yang, ed., *Bashi niandai de wenhua yishi* [The cultural consciousness in the 1980s] (Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Press, 2006).
5. I first mentioned the idea of the ’85 Movement as a cultural avant-garde in my essay “The Avant-Garde Mentality in the ’85 Movement” (“Bawu meishu yundong de qianwei yishi”), *Lion Art Monthly* (Taiwan, November 1995), 16–21. Also see Gao Minglu, “Bawu meishu yundong de wenhua qianwei yishi” [The cultural consciousness of the ’85 Movement], in Gao, *Dalu qianwei yishu* [The avant-garde from the mainland] (Taipei: Artists Press, 2001), 213–216.
6. Song Xiaoxia, ed., *Reflections: Chinese Modernities as Self-Conscious Cultural Ventures (Zijue yu Zhongguo de xiandaixing)* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2006). This volume came out of a conference titled “Modernity and the Transformation of 20th Century Chinese Art” organized by Pan Gongkai, the president of the Central Academy of Fine Art. The conference took place in Hong Kong City University from April 29 to May 1, 2006, with scholars from around the world participating. I contributed an essay to this volume titled “A Total Project: The Logic of Chinese Modernity” (“Zhengyixing, Zhongguo xiandaixing de luoji”), 326–346.
7. The theory of proletarian “continual revolution” (*jixu geming*) is the theoretical foundation of Mao’s proletarian Cultural Revolution. This theory, however, first appeared in summary form as an editorial essay in the *People’s Daily*, *Red Flag*, and *Liberation Army Daily* on the same day, November 6, 1967, during the second year of the Cultural Revolution.
8. McDougall, *The Introduction of Western Literary Theories into Modern China*, 196–213. McDougall described some Chinese writers who were influenced by the avant-garde, such as Guo Moruo, Yu Dafu, and Shen Yanbin, but she did not define the Chinese New Literature movement as an avant-garde movement because the individual artists in the movement had very little concern for antitraditional art (or antitraditional literati art in the Chinese context). She also noted that Chinese intellectuals carried the firm tradition of social responsibility and of involvement in the present through social action. Therefore, quite simply, Chinese writers were unable to completely give up tradition. In other words, the Chinese New Literature movement lacked two major characteristics of the original Western meaning of avant-garde: an aesthetic rhetoric of antitradition and the goal of the autonomy of art. McDougall’s critique, however, did serve to showcase Chinese avant-garde literature, especially literature that contained certain contradictory elements, such as traditional versus modern or social action versus the autonomy of art.
9. When Saint-Simon first used the term “avant-garde” to define art in the early nineteenth century, the meaning of the term “avant-garde” referred not only to art but also to a progressive social role for the artist. “It is artists who will save you as avant-garde. ... What a magnificent destiny for the arts ... of exercising a positive power over society, a true priestly function, and of marching forcefully in the vanguard of all the intellectual faculties.” Henri de Saint-Simon, *Opinions littéraires, philosophiques et industrielles* (Paris: Galerie de Bossange père, 1825), quoted in Richard V. West, “The Avant-Garde: Marching in the Vanguard of Progress,” in S. A. Mansbach, ed., *Standing in the Tempest: Painters of the Hungarian Avant-Garde, 1908–1930* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 11.
10. In the classical Chinese it indicates a courageous and powerful military official who is the leader of a vanguard troop. When a battle started, he would rush ahead to the enemy first, leading his soldiers. In the popular novels of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), *xianfeng* was very frequently used to indicate this kind of military official. Some sentences even became employed as popular idioms. For example,

- referring to a militarily weak kingdom, one might say “Shu zhong wu da jiang, Liao hua zuo xian feng” (Because there are no generals powerful enough in Shu, the Shu are forced to take Liao Hua in the position of the commander of the vanguard). This comes from the Ming Dynasty novel *Sanguo Yanyi* [Romance of Three Kingdoms] by Luo Guanzhong (circa 1300–1400), set in the wars during the period of Three Kingdoms (220–280 AD).
11. See Leo Ou-fan Lee, “In Search of Modernity: Some Reflections on a New Mode of Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Chinese History and Literature,” in Paul A. Cohen and Merle Goldman, eds., *Ideas across Cultures: Essays in Honor of Benjamin Schwartz* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asian Monograph, 1990), 109–135. In the essay, Lee describes the meaning of *xin* (new) and the relationship between “new” and “modern” in a specific Chinese cultural and historical context. See also Lee, “Literary Trends 1: The Quest for Modernity 1895–1927,” in *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 12: 451–504.
 12. For an excellent English-language source, see Colin Mackerras, “Chinese Language Periodicals on Literature and the Arts,” *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 6 (July 1981), 219–229.
 13. *Dongfang zazhi* [Eastern magazine], Publishing House of Commerce, 1921–1923.
 14. Whistler, Degas, and Picasso were discussed in *Shijie meishu* [World art], February 1979. *Meishu* [Art monthly] has introduced modern art since April 1979. For instance, the May 1979 issue of *Meishu* introduced Auguste Rodin and his artworks. *Guowai meishu ziliao* [Overseas art collections], founded in January 1979, mainly introduced famous artworks from classicism to the latest style, e.g., essays and pictures about abstract art; its articles, even including comparative studies of Chinese and overseas art, in various forms such as interviews, notes on art, criticism, and so on, consisted of original material written by overseas artists and critics. The name of the journal was changed to *Meishu yicong* [Collections of art] in January 1980. In January and February of 1986, there were featured articles on Warhol and Miró, also in *Shijie meishu*.
 15. See Young-Tsu Wong, “Revisionism Reconsidered: Kang Youwei and the Reform Movement of 1898,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 51 (August 1992), 522–526.
 16. Chen Duxiu, *Meishu geming* [Revolution in art] 6, no. 1 (January 1918), 85–86.
 17. Liang Qichao was a Confucian scholar who was one of the advisors of the Guangxu Emperor during the Hundred Days Reform in 1898. After the failure of the reform, he traveled in Europe and wrote up his notes, titled “Ouzhou xinxing lu” [Travels in eleven European countries]; see *Shishi xinbao* [News and events newspaper], March 3–March 25, 1920.
 18. See Gao Minglu, “Lun Mao Zedong de dazhongyishu moshi” [The discourse of Mao Zedong’s mass art], *Ershiyi shiji* [Twenty-first century], no. 20 (December 1993), 61–73. The essay describes a transition of the Chinese avant-garde when some avant-garde artists went to Yan’an in 1942, from their project of enlightenment to engaging a program of revolutionary mass art advocated by Mao. Following Mao’s principles, these elite avant-gardists became ordinary art soldiers and were reeducated by the masses. This was a basic but important change in the identification and position of the avant-garde artists.
 19. Cai Yuanpei, “Yi meiyu dai zongjiao shuo” [To replace religion with fine art], Shenzhou Xuehui [lecture at Holy Land Study Society in Beijing], *Xin qingnian* [New youth] 3, no. 6 (August 1917).
 20. Lin Fengmian, “Zhi quanguo yishujie shu” [A Letter to the national art world], *Yishu conglun* [Collections of art essays], 1927, 20.
 21. Both Pang and Ni studied art and criticism in Japan. The major members of the group were Ling Xihung, Zhao Shou, Zhou Duo, Wan Jiyuan, Zhang Xuan, Yang Taiyang, Yang Qiuren, and Li Zhongsheng. *Juelan* literally means “a great wave,” but “Storm Society” was their choice for an English name. See Ralph Croizier, “Post-Impressionists in Pre-war Shanghai: The *Juelanshe* [Storm Society] and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China,” in John Clark, ed., *Modernity in Asian Art* (Sydney: Wild Peony Press, 1993).
 22. “Juelanshe xuanyan” [Manifesto of the Storm Society], *Yishu xunkan* [Art weekly] 1, no. 5 (October 1932), 9.
 23. Pang Xunqin, *Pang Xunqin* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Education Publishing House, 2006), 24–25.
 24. Lin Fengmian, “Dongfang yishu zhi qiantu” [The future of Eastern and Western art], *Dongfang zazhi* [Oriental journal] 23, no. 10 (1926).
 25. The essay came from one of Mao’s talks. On June 11, 1945, Mao gave a closing speech at the Seventh National Conference of the Communist Party of China in Yan’an. See Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong xuanji* (Selected works of Mao Zedong) (Beijing: People’s Press, 1964), 1102.
 26. For more on the Woodcut Movement see Shirley Sun, “Lu Xun and the Chinese Woodcut Movement, 1929–1935” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1974). See also Tang Xiaobing, *Origins of the Chinese Avant-Garde: The Modern Woodcut Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).
 27. *Liang Shiqiu lun wenxue* [Liang Shiqiu’s collection on literature] (Taipei: Shibao, 1978), 234.
 28. Examples of such transitions among the Russian and European avant-garde artists who participated in the October Revolution and in the fascist rebellion are described by Boris Groys in *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), and by Igor Golomstock in *Totalitarian Art in the Soviet Union, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy, and the People’s Republic of China* (London: Collins Harvill, 1990).
 29. The motivation of achieving material utopia in the Russian avant-garde was analyzed by Yve-Alain Bois in his essay “El Lissitzky in Material Utopias,” *Art in America* (June 1991), 98–107.
 30. See Gao, “Lun Mao Zedong de dazhongyishu moshi.” Jiang Feng is a good example of a transitional avant-garde artist. He participated in the Woodcut Movement, then went to Yan’an. After the founding of the People’s Republic, he served in several of the most important official positions in the art world, but finally was dismissed and received extremely harsh criticism. See Julia F. Andrews, “Revolutionaries

- and Academics: Art of the Republican Period,” in *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China, 1949–1979* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
31. “Hence, the proletariat, both through its vanguard the Communist Party and through the many types of proletarian organizations in general, should display the utmost activity and play the leading part in all the work of public education.” Lenin, “On Proletarian Culture,” in his *Collected Works*, 4th English ed. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), 31: 316–317. Also in *Lenin lun wenxue yu yishu* [Lenin on literature and art] (Beijing: People's Literature Press, 1983), 119.
 32. See note 9 of this chapter.
 33. Before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Mao's views on art were expressed in the “Talk on Literature and Art at the Symposium in Yan'an” in 1942, known as the Yan'an Talk. Parts of his attitudes toward art and literature could be seen in his articles, such as “Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan” (March 1927), in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), 1: 30–34, one part of which is titled “Vanguards of the Revolution”; and “On New Democracy” (January 1940), in *ibid.*, 339–384, which includes several parts that focus on culture and democracy: “XI. The Culture of New Democracy,” “XII. The Historical Characteristics of China's Cultural Revolution,” “XIII. The Four Periods,” “XIV. Some Wrong Ideas about the Nature of Culture,” and “XV. National, Scientific and Mass Culture.” After 1949, some of his artistic ideas were published in *On the Correct Handling Contradiction among the People* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966); *Speech on the Communist Party of China's National Propaganda Work Conference* (March 12, 1957) (Beijing: People's Press, 1976); as well as some important editorials such as “Attention Should Be Paid to Criticism of the Film ‘Biography of Wu Xun’” (*People's Daily*, May 20, 1951, 1). He also wrote some editorials related to literature and art for the *People's Daily*.
 34. Mao Zedong, “Zai Yan'an wenyi zuotanhui shangde jianghua” [Speech on Literature and Art at the Symposium in Yan'an], in *Mao Zedong xuanji* (Beijing: People's Press, 1967), 4: 804–835. The speech include two parts: an Introduction, which was given on May 2, 1945, in Yan'an, and a Conclusion on May 23.
 35. *Ibid.*, 822; also in English translation in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, 3: 86. In footnote 1 of the speech, the full paragraph from Lenin's article was quoted. The English translation of Lenin's paragraph comes from *Collected Works of V. I. Lenin*, English ed. (Moscow: Friendship Publishing House, 1962), 10: 48–49.
 36. According to Zhou Yang, the translator of the book, in 1942 Yan'an Xinhua Shudian published Chernyshevsky's *Shenghuo yu meixue* (Life and aesthetic) in Chinese, translated by Zhou from an English journal that was published in Moscow in 1935. A revised Chinese version, now titled *Yishu yu xianshi de shenmei guanxi* (The aesthetic relation between art and reality), was published in 1957; see “Chuban shuoming” [publisher's words] to the 1978 reprint (Beijing: People's Literature Press, 2009).
 37. *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, 3: 73.
 38. Mao Zedong, “Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing” (February 8, 1942), in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, 3: 63 (original in *Mao Zedong xuanji* [1967], 3: 798). In this translation, *dazhanghua* was translated as “mass style,” and *xiaozhonghua* as “small circles.”
 39. Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 3–21.
 40. Mussolini did eventually move to adopt futurism as it changed into a more classically inspired idiom. Similarly, many avant-gardists willfully adopted the new classicism early on, as Picasso did in his Iberian period during what Kenneth Silver calls the *rappel à l'ordre*. See Kenneth Silver, *Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914–1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).
 41. From 1953 to 1956, the government officially sent a total of twenty-six artists to the Soviet Union to study. They were divided into four groups as listed below: In 1953, those who were sent were Qian Shaowu, Li Tianxiang, and Chen Zunshan; in 1954, they were Xiao Feng, Lin Gang, Quan Shanshi, and Zhou Zheng; in 1955, they were Deng Shu, Guo Shaogang, Wang Baokang, Ji Xiaoqiu, Ma Yuanhong, Zhou Benyi, Shao Da Zhen, Xi Jingzhi, Chen Peng, and Luo Gongliu; in 1956, they were Zhang Huaqing, Xu Minghua, Feng Zhen, Li Jun, Dong Zuyi, Tan Yongtai, and Wu Biduan. (Document provided by the former president of the China Academy of Fine Art, artist Xiao Feng, one of those sent to the Soviet Union in 1954.)
 42. Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China*, 76–86.
 43. For more on the Peredvizhniki, see Elizabeth Valkenier, *Russian Realist Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 76–97. My argument on this topic was also inspired by Marian Mazzone, “China's Nationalization of Oil Painting in the 1950s: Searching beyond the Soviet Paradigm” (graduate seminar paper, Modern Chinese Art, Ohio State University). The course was taught by Julia Andrews; I was a guest lecturer.
 44. Lu Dingyi, “Baihua qifang, baijia zhengming” [A hundred flowers blossoming, a hundred viewpoints contending], *People's Daily*, June 13, 1956.
 45. See Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996).

Chapter 2

1. In about 1981, Chinese philosophers began discussing questions of humanism and alienation. At that time, the philosophical debate was initiated by renewed interest in and research on Marx's “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts” of 1844, in which the young Marx criticized alienation in capitalist society and emphasized humanism as an alternative. This discussion indirectly criticized the suppression of the individual's value in Mao's ideology and opposed the division of people into different classes. Although in the West humanism has, since the Renaissance, been differentiated from the modern idea of individualism, in China after the Cultural Revolution the term *rendaozhuyi*

- (humanism) specifically indicated the search for individual freedom in conjunction with a true vision of mankind and fraternity. This humanism also embraced the desire for individual freedom, after several decades of selfless devotion to Mao's revolution during which humanism was criticized as being bourgeois. Such criticisms appeared in Mao's Yan'an Talk of 1942. This use of the term is not meaningful to most Western readers. Here, in order to avoid complication, I will continue to use the term as Chinese artists, writers, and intellectuals do. This theme was also noted by Bill Brugger and David Kelly in "The Importance of Humanism," in *Chinese Marxism in the Post-Mao Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).
2. A full discussion of cynical realism follows in chapter 8.
 3. I have previously discussed the scar art phenomenon in Gao Minglu, "Yige chuanguo shidai de zhongjie—Jiantan di liujie quanguo meizhan" [The end of an era—Discussion of the Sixth National Art Exhibition], *Meishu sichao*, no. 2 (April 1986), 1–7.
 4. It was not until I used the term *shanghen huibhua* (scar painting) in my essay "Jinnian youhua fazhan de liupai" [The major trends of the recent development of oil painting], *Meishu*, no. 7 (July 1985), 62–66, that the term was employed by the Chinese art world. The origin of the term "scar" originally comes from a short story of the same title. For an early treatment of rustic realism, see Shui Tianzhong, "Guanyu xiangtu xieshi huibhua" [Rustic realist painting], *Meishu*, no. 9 (September 1984), 57.
 5. The Red Guard movement went through three phases. The first phase was from May 1966 to August 1966. In this period, a few students from Tsinghua University organized a *Hong Weibing* (Red Guard) group and immediately expanded it nationwide. Because the Red Guards in this period consisted of children of high-ranking officials, they were called the conservative Red Guard. From August 1966 to July 1967 was the period when Red Guard groups occupied all the schools and universities, with the participation of almost all students. They were all called Red Guard; family background was no longer a qualification for joining. In the second phase, the old, conservative Red Guard, who were intent on protecting the leaders of local government (often their parents), fought with the radical Red Guard called "rebel teams" (*zaofan pai*). The conflict even led to violent physical battles using any means, including military weapons. From July 1967, Mao sent *gongxuandui* (workers' propaganda teams) and *junxuandui* (army propaganda teams) into all universities and schools to make a *dalianhe* (great merger) between the conservative and radical Red Guard groups. In late 1968, Mao issued an order to send all Red Guards to the countryside for reeducation by the peasants. Most members of the conservative Red Guard, however, joined the army or got city jobs rather than being sent to remote areas, thanks to their family background. I am writing from my own memory, because I am of the same generation as the scar and rustic painters and was sent to Inner Mongolia in 1968 to herd cattle for five years. The Red Guard movement ended in 1968, but the poetry, literature, and music they made during the reeducation period in the countryside is well known as *zhiqing wenxue* or "reeducated youths'

- literature." The melancholy, depressive, and self-expressive style is part of the underground literature of the Cultural Revolution, which initiated the amateur avant-garde poetry and art movement when the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976.
6. Chen Yiming, Liu Yulan, and Li Bin, "Guanyu chuansuo lianhuanhua 'feng' de yixie xiangfa" [Some ideas about the illustration of the short story "Maple"], *Meishu*, no. 1 (January 1980), 34.
 7. See Shui, "Guanyu xiangtu xieshi huibhua."
 8. An early English-language publication on this topic is Eugene Wang, "Anxiety of Portraiture: Quest for/Questioning Ancestral Icons in Post-Mao China," in Liu Kang and Xiaobing Tang, eds., *Politics, Ideology, and Literary Discourse in Modern China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 243–272.
 9. Gao Minglu, Zhou Yan, Wang Xiaojian, Shu Qun, Wang Mingxian, and Tong Dian, *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986* [History of contemporary Chinese art 1985–1986] (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1991), 37.
 10. I discuss these debates in Gao, "Jinnian youhua fazhan zhong de liupai."
 11. Some literary and filmic phenomena of this kind are discussed in Ellen Widmer and David Der-wei Wang, *From May Fourth to June Fourth: Fiction and Film in Twentieth-Century China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 1–14.
 12. *Ibid.*
 13. For more on the April Photo Society, see the document *Biange zai Zhongguo—1976–1986* [Reform in China 1976–1986] (Zhejiang Photo Press, 2003). A number of historical photographs and dialogues with the author Li Xiaobin are published in the book.
 14. See Li Xiaobin, "Recording History with a Camera—Li Xiaobin, Ding Dong (Dialogue)," in *Biange zai Zhongguo—1976–1986*, 45.
 15. The most thorough research of pre-1940s Chinese art education has been published by Mayching Kao, including "China's Response to the West" and "The Beginning of the Western Style Painting Movement in Relationship to Reforms in Education in Early Twentieth-Century China," *Xinya xueshu jikan* [New Asian art bulletin], University of Hong Kong (April 1983), 373–397. See also Julia Andrews, "National Academies before 1949: Lin Fengmian and Xu Beihong," in *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China 1949–1979* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 27–33.
 16. "Beijing Youhua Yanjiuhui disanci zhanlan xuanyan" [Preface to the third exhibition of the Beijing Oil Study Society], *Meishu*, no. 2 (February 1981), 36.
 17. I summarized the four characteristics in "From Aestheticism to New Academicism," in Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 534–535.
 18. Four characteristics of *Xinxueyuan zhuyi*: distance from society; pursuing literati and elite taste; searching for individual style and allied techniques; eliminating any conceptual and political subject matter. See *ibid.*, 531–536.
 19. Ju Yuan, "Shierren huazhan gaikuang" [A brief report on the "Twelve-Person Show"], January 3, 1987, unpublished.

- Some of the works in the show were published in *Meishu*, no. 5 (May 1979). For more on Beijing's exhibitions, see Jiang Feng, "Xinzhun huazhan qianyan" [Preface to the "New Spring Painting" exhibition], in *Jiang Feng meishu lunji* [Jiang Feng's writings on art] (Beijing: People's Fine Art Press, 1983), 126–127.
20. Bu Ji, "Shoudu guoji jichang houjilo Bihua luo cheng" [The mural paintings at the Beijing International Airport have been accomplished], *Meishu*, no. 11 (November 1979), 3–9.
 21. I mentioned the aesthetic inclination in the period after the Cultural Revolution in the article "Schools of Oil Painting in Recent Years," *Meishu*, no. 7 (July 1985), 62–65; I referred to Yuan Yunsheng's mural on the airport wall as "in pursuit of the 'beauty' of body, color, line, and structure" (63). As the painter once said, "the most exciting thing is the fantastic beauty of the people of Xishuangbanna and the Dai nationality. It is a world of lines that are both varied and simple: there are gentle and flexible lines, straight and beautiful lines, as well as lines that are persistent, romantic, and slow with the airiness of gossamer" (Yuan Yunsheng, "Dream of the Mural," *Meishu yanjiu* [Fine arts] 1 [1980]).
 22. See Wu Guanzhong, "Guanyu chouxiangmei" [Abstract aesthetic], *Meishu*, no. 10 (October 1980), 37–39. Another article by Liu Gangji, entitled "Luetan chouxiang" [A brief discussion of abstraction], attempted to give a philosophical interpretation of abstraction. It was published in *Meishu*, no. 11 (November 1980), 11–13.
 23. Wu, "Guanyu chouxiangmei," 38.
 24. The first issue of *Yishu* (Art), published in January 1983, collected many articles discussing abstract art, including works by Huang Yongping, Qu Leilei, Wang Keping, Huang Rui, and Zhong Ming. This not only sparked controversy in the world of art, but also led to the overhaul of *Meishu* by the Chinese Artists Association, the official association of art world. He Rong, the chief editor, was dismissed, and Li Xianting, another editor, was also transferred out.
 25. See special issue on the Sixth National Art Exhibition, and "Jianxun" [Brief news], *Meishu*, no. 11 (November 1984), 64.
 26. See Gao, "Yige chuangzuo shidai de zhongjie—Jiantan di liujie quanguo meizhan," 1–7.
 27. For Westerners, it is difficult to comprehend that the entire educational system was shut down in the service of the Cultural Revolution. The reopening of these institutions, and the resumption of university training, only took place in 1977. Those who began their university training at that time are often referred to as 77 *jie* (the class of '77). Therefore, those who were maturing prior to this date had to be completely autodidactic. This was a dangerous endeavor, as most intellectual subjects were considered illegal and studying them could result in imprisonment or worse.
 28. For a complete treatment of the No Name group, including the most authoritative collection of historical documents concerning the artists and their works, see Gao Minglu, ed., *The No Name: A History of a Self-Exiled Avant-Garde* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2006).
 29. The Xihua School was founded in 1926 as the Beijing Women's School for Western Painting, an institution that played an important role in the early era of art education in China. It was founded by Tang Shouyi (the daughter of Madame Li Zongren), who hired Xiong Shaokun as director. Tang Shouyi is also known as Xiong-Tang Shouyi, as her husband was Xiong Shaokun, who had participated in the Xinhai Revolution and the Northern Expedition before going to study in Japan in 1914. He returned to China in 1918, teaching in the literary institute at Peking University, as an early Chinese educator and expert on the *Yi jing*. The school was located in Dongcheng district at 4 Wuliang Daren Hutong. In 1946, Xiong Shaokun assumed twin positions as administrator of the school and a member of the national education committee. In April of 1953, the Bureau of Education changed the school's name to Xihua Fine Arts Extracurricular School. In May of 1954, the school's founder and headmistress Tang Shouyi fell ill and died, with her husband taking over as replacement headmaster. In the late 1950s, when Zhao Wenliang and others studied at the school, it was located in the Nan Luogu Xiang area of Dongcheng district on Shajing Hutong. On October 15, 1960, management of the school was taken over by the education bureau of Dongcheng district and administered by the Beijing City Fine Arts Company. See Xiong Shaokun, "Self-Criticism from the Cultural Revolution," June 25, 1969, unpublished, original manuscript collected by Jia Junxue.
 30. Gao, *The No Name*, 17.
 31. *Ibid.*, 75.
 32. This comes from one of Mao's poems titled "Militia Women, Inscription on a Photograph, February 1961." The complete poem reads: "How bright and brave they look, shouldering five-foot rifles. On the parade ground lit up by the first gleams of day. China's daughters have high-aspiring minds, They love their battle array, not silks and satins." ("Sashuang yingzi wuchi qiang, Shuguang chuzhao yanbingchang. Zhonghua ernü duo qizhi, buai hongzhuang ai wuzhuang.") From *Mao Tse-tung Poems* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1976), 38.
 33. Liu Xun was a very important official figure in promoting new art. In particular he supported the No Name and the Stars in the later 1970s. He was a rightist, persecuted in 1957 and later imprisoned for nine years from 1967 until 1976, when the Cultural Revolution ended. In April 1979, in his declaration at the "Beijing Oil Painting Seminar" titled "The Banner of Beauty" (published in *Meishu*, no. 9 [September 1979], 9), Liu proposed that "political democracy is the guarantee of artistic democracy, and the acknowledgment of an artist's personal style is the dominant chord in sounding the horn of 'flourishing art'." Liu Xun died in 2008.
 34. On the history of the Stars, see Wang Keping, "Xing Xing wangshi" [A memo of the Stars], originally in *The Stars: Ten Years* (Hong Kong: Hanart TZ Gallery, 1989), and republished with the author's revision in Gao Minglu, ed., *The '85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008), 15–37.
 35. The event was published in two magazines outside the art world. "'Star' Amateur Art Exhibition," which included reproductions of works by Huang Rui, Ma Desheng, and A Cheng, appeared in *China Reconstructs* (monthly, in English, June 1980), 54; A Man, "Jietou meizhan de jixu:

- ji dierjie xingxing meizhan” [The continuity of street art: The second Stars exhibition], in *Xin guan cha* 241, no. 5 (September 10, 1980), 12–13.
36. Li Xianting, “Guanyu Xingxing meizhan” [The Stars talk about their work], *Meishu*, no. 3 (March 1980), 8–9.
37. This statement appeared on the title page of *The Stars: 10 Years*. The book is the catalogue of a tenth-anniversary retrospective exhibition as well as a documentary history of the Stars movement.
38. Guan Wei, Guan Naixin, Song Hong, and Long Niannan, interviewed by Gao Minglu, November 13, 2007.
39. This group also perfectly fit the concept of apartment art. I included this group of artists in the first of the series of apartment art exhibitions I curated with Zhang Runjuan and Zhang Min as curatorial assistant, “Apartment Art in China 1970s–1990s (1): The Ecology of Post-Cultural Revolution Frontier Art,” at Shuimu Contemporary Art Space. The catalogue (see chapter 9, note 1) includes four essays: Gao Minglu, “What Is ‘Apartment Art?’”; Zhang Runjuan, “Self-Claimed Avant-Garde between Family and Society”; Zhang Runjuan, “Family Salon: The Shelter of Abstract Art”; and Zhang Min, “Apartment Art in the Courtyards.” All four essays, in particular Zhang Min’s, connect to the activities of the “loose wanderers” group in Beijing.

Chapter 3

- In the years 1923 and 1924, there was an intense cultural debate called *kexuan dalunzhan* (debate about science and metaphysics), which covered all three aspects. All of the important essays of the debate were collected in the two-volume *Kexue yu renshengguan* [Science and worldview] (Shanghai: Yadong Library, 1925).
- For instance, traditional styles were challenged by younger artists. In July 1985, the art critic Li Xiaoshan published “Zhongguohua daole qunrumolu zhilu” [The end and death of Chinese painting] in *Jiangsu huakan* [Jiangsu pictorial]. The essay shocked the traditional painting world and inspired fierce debate between members of the old and new generations. The debate continued for about two years. In November 1985, Gu Wenda and other Chinese ink painters participated in the exhibition “Zhongguohua xinzuo yaoqingzhan” (Recent works of traditional Chinese painting) in Wuhan, Hubei province, updating ink painting by synthesizing early traditional Chinese philosophy, such as Daoism and Chan Buddhism (but not later literati painting traditions, which the young generation of ink painters thought were too personal and a form of degraded formalism) and Western art styles such as surrealism. This new form was called *xuezhe huibhua* (scholarly painting). See Gao Minglu, Zhou Yan, Wang Xiaojian, Shu Qun, Wang Mingxian, and Tong Dian, *The '85 Movement: The Enlightenment of the Chinese Avant-Garde* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008), 131–142.
- Before Read’s book was published in Chinese, the most influential small book was Shao Dazhen, *Xifang xiandai meishu* [Western modern art] (Beijing: People’s Art Press, 1979).
- For instance, in 1978, a January exhibition of French nineteenth-century rustic landscape painting at the National Art Museum of China in Beijing—a contribution to the emergence of a new form of critical realism later in the year—was the first show of foreign art since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, and parallels an influx of publications on Western art. In September 1982, the Beijing public was introduced to modern American art through an exhibition of works from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, held at the National Art Museum of China. This was the second major exhibition of foreign art held in China after the Cultural Revolution.
- Some other discussions of Rauschenberg’s exhibition, including six short essays, were published in *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 22 (December 21, 1985), 1–2. The No Name group was the first unofficially organized art group established in 1979; most members of the group were self-taught artists from the same generation as the artists of the Stars. See Gao Minglu, *The No Name: A History of a Self-Exiled Avant-Garde* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2006).
- For the details and numbers, see “Zhongguo xiandai meishu yundong zhi jingguan” [Overview of Chinese contemporary art movements], in Gao Minglu, Zhou Yan, Wang Xiaojian, Shu Qun, Wang Mingxian, and Tong Dian, *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986* [History of contemporary Chinese art 1985–1986] (Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Press, 1991), 606–626; or see the updated version of this book, Gao et al., *The '85 Movement: The Enlightenment of the Chinese Avant-Garde*, 443–457.
- For instance, I worked at *Meishu* from 1984 to 1990, and I also worked for *Zhongguo meishubao* (a weekly art newspaper) as a guest editor. Figure 3.4 is the front page of the second issue of *Zhongguo meishubao*, containing my essay “New Generation, New Idea.” Li Xianting, one of the most influential critics of the Chinese avant-garde, was an editor of *Meishubao* from 1985 to 1990. Peng De and Pi Daojian, both active critics from Hubei province, were the founders of *Meishu sichao*. Li Luming, a critic and artist from Hunan province, founded *Huajia*.
- See Gao Minglu, “Bawu meishu yundong” [The '85 art movement], *Meishujia tongxun* [Artists’ news], no. 3 (June 1986), 15–23. In it I discuss the connection between the '85 Movement and the May Fourth Movement in terms of the discourse of the Enlightenment. The National Conference on Oil Painting was held in Beijing between April 14 and 17, and representatives of provincial artists’ associations and important oil painters from across the nation participated. Meanwhile, younger critics such as myself and Zhu Qingsheng, as well as several representatives of avant-garde groups (such as Zhang Peili, Shu Qun, and Li Shan), were also invited to participate in the conference. See also Gao Minglu, “Bawu yundong de zongjie he jianyue” [The Survey and Investigation of the '85 Movement], in Gao Minglu, ed., *The '85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008), 45–79. For another important document about the '85 Movement, see the exhibition catalogue *'85 New Wave: The Birth of Chinese Contemporary Art* (Beijing: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, 2008).

9. The first “Qingnian qunti zhuanlan” introduced the Northern Art Group with Shu Qun’s “Beifang yishuqunti de jingshen” [Spirit of the Northern Art Group], a manifesto of the group with some works by Wang Guangyi and other members, in *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 18 (November 23, 1985), 1. Peng De, the chief editor of *Meishu sichao*, published a special issue on young art groups (January 1987) which covered the most important groups’ manifestos and articles. For other documents about the groups, see Zhang Qiang, *Huibua xinzhao* [The new painting trends] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Art Press, 1987); Hans van Dijk, “Painting in China after the Cultural Revolution: Style Developments and Theoretical Debates, Part II: 1985–1991,” *China Information* 6, no. 4 (Spring 1992), 1–18.
10. In 1985, the academy bought all of the books displayed in the exhibition “Guoji yishu tushuzhan” (Exhibition of international art books), the first exhibition of this type since 1949, and established a library with the richest resources of Western art in China. The exhibition was held in the History Museum in Beijing. On the other hand, the professors of the academy did encourage students to learn traditional Chinese philosophy. For instance, Fan Jingzhong, a teacher and art historian in the academy, taught a series of classes on Chan Buddhism which influenced a number of the leading artists of the ’85 Movement, such as Huang Yongping, Wu Shanzhuan, Gu Wenda, and Song Haidong.
11. Xiao Feng says that he bought the books with money that was supposed to buy transportation for the school, including a car for himself. This caused a controversy at the time among the faculty and administration. Xiao Feng, interviewed by Gao Minglu, Hangzhou, May 29, 2006.
12. Jin Yide, “Biyiechuangzuo jiaoxue de tihui” [The experience of graduation teaching], *Meishu*, no. 9 (September 1985), 43–45. The controversy of the graduation exhibition of the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Art was reported in the issue, accompanied by some reproductions of the works. For a debate about the exhibition, see “Zhemai biyesheng zuopin yinqi zhengyi” [The graduation work of Zhejiang Academy of Fine Art caused debates], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 9 (September 21, 1985), 1.
13. For information on the similarities and differences between the graduation exhibitions of different academies, see my essay “Sange cengci de bijiao—du Sichuan meiyuan biye sheng zuopin” [A comparison of three levels—Viewing the graduation works of the Sichuan Academy of Fine Art], *Meishu*, no. 10 (October 1985), 10–13.
14. This work was published in *Meishu*, no. 7 (July 1985), 40.
15. See the special issue “Young Art of Progressive China,” *Meishu*, no. 7 (July 1985).
16. For coverage of the new art phenomena of Shanghai in the mid-1980s, see Wang Bangxiong, “Songsan de yipi” [An unsystematic artists’ community], unpublished, but quoted and introduced by Zhou Yan in “Fei qunti de Shanghai meishu jiao” (The non-circle phenomenon in the Shanghai art field), in Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 166–190.
17. The most influential was “Huatan zhiyou shalong huazhan” (Salon show of painters’ friendship), which took place from December 1984 to January 1985 in the Xuhui Cultural Center. It attempted to explore individual feelings and to glorify human life and love. Another important show was “Xiandai huihua: Liuren lianzhan” (Modern painting: Six-person show), which included the work of Yu Youhan, Ding Yi, Qin Yifeng, and others. This show took place at the Student Club of Fudan University, March 18–26, 1985, and it showed the diverse approaches of the individual artists. The group show “Banhuajiao” (A corner of woodcuts) included the work of twelve artists, and was held in Shanghai Art Gallery from December 1985 to January 1986. Those artists proclaimed that “regardless of the fashion of pursuing collective style and a hegemonic concept, we criticize any phenomena that undermine individuality”; see Gugu, “Kan Shanghai banhuajiao zuopin erxiangdaode” [What I thought when I visited the Shanghai corner of woodcuts], 1986, quoted from Zhou, “Fei qunti de Shanghai meishu jiao,” 171; “Shoujie Shanghai qingnian meishu zuopinzhuan” (First Shanghai youth artworks exhibition), held in Shanghai Art Gallery in April 1986 and comprising 205 works by 200 artists; see the reports of the exhibition by Xu Keli in *Xinmin wanbo* [Xinmin newspaper], April 18, 1986; by Huang Shi in *Shanghai wenhua yishu bao* [Shanghai culture and art], April 25, 1986; by Zhou Gang in *Qingnianbao* [Youth newspaper], April 25, 1986; “Hei, bai, hei” (Black, white, black), a small group show organized by four young artists challenging conventional ideas of art by showing readymade objects only in black and white; see Wang Xiaojian, “Hei bai hei” [Black, white, black], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 38 (September 22, 1986); “Haipingxian: 86 Huihua lianzhan” (Shanghai horizontal: ’86 painting group show) comprising twenty-six artists’ self-selected artworks in various modern forms; see Xu Jieren, “Shanghai Meishujie yongxian tansuo chaoliu: Xiezai Haipingxian huazhan kaimushi” [An experimental trend has emerged in Shanghai art world: A writing before the “Shanghai horizontal ’86” painting exhibition], *Wenhui*, June 19, 1986; “Feijuxiang huazhan” (Non-imagery painting exhibition), organized by two young workers searching for modern abstract form; “Huazhan 1” (Painting exhibition 1), a group show organized by six influential Shanghai artists and including two leading artists of Shanghai’s avant-garde art movement, Li Shan and Jian Jun, which took place in the Gallery of Shanghai Theatrical College; and “Aotuzhan” (Convex/concave), including sixteen of the most influential Shanghai avant-garde artists, such as Li Shan, Yu Youhan, Yu Sen, Ding Yi, Qin Yifeng, and Wang Ziwei, which opened in the Shanghai Xuhui Cultural Center on November 22, 1986.
18. See Li Jian, “Buke siyi de aotuzhan” [The incomprehensible “Convex/Concave” exhibition], *Xinmin wanbao* [Shanghai newspaper], November 25, 1986.
19. Ibid.
20. See Li Xianting, “Xinxing meishujia jiqun 1” [New art groups 1], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 19 (November 30, 1985), 1.
21. See Xu Lei, “Ping Jiangsu qinnian yishuzho: Daxing yishuzhan” [Discussion of Jiangsu art week modern art festival], and Ding Fang, “Cheng, wenhua fansi de xiangzheng” [The city, a symbol of cultural reflection], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 23 (December 28, 1985), 1.

22. Fan Bo, "Xinyiexin zhuyi xuanyan" [A manifesto of New Barbarianism], 1985, in Gao, ed., *The '85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 369–370.
23. Chen Lusheng, "Shai taiyang, zoxiang '87" [To bring into the light, toward 1987], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 46 (November 17, 1986), 1; Zhang Jiangshan, "Weihe shai taiyang?" [Why bring into the light?], 1986, in Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 393.
24. During the seventeenth century, there was a well-known literati painting school called *Jinling huapai* (Jinling school) that included eight masters led by Gongxian. Jinling was the old name of Nanjing, used beginning during the third century B.C. when it was a capital of six dynasties. In the modern period, *Jiangsu huapai* (Jiangsu school), a very influential ink painting school, arose in the late 1950s led by Fu Baoshi (1904–1993). The school aimed to marry traditional literati painting and socialist realism to create a style called "industrial landscape."
25. See note 2; also "Li Xiaoshan fengbo" [The Li Xiaoshan storm], in Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 467–475.
26. A letter by Wu Pingren to Gao Minglu, May 14, 1987, in Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 287.
27. From "Xuzhou Xiandai yishuzhan qianyan" [Preface to the "Xuzhou Modern Art Exhibition"] by the Sunday Painting Society, May 1986, in Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 286.
28. The manifesto was first published in the four-page newspaper-like catalogue of the "Xiamen Dada Modern Art Exhibition," and was later published in *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 46 (November 17, 1986), 1.
29. Liu Xiangdong, "Liangci huazhan qingkuang" [A description of two exhibitions], 1986; see Gao et al., *The '85 Movement: The Enlightenment of the Chinese Avant-Garde*, 371.
30. See the manifesto of Lingzhan, 1986, in Gao et al., *The '85 Movement: The Enlightenment of the Chinese Avant-Garde*, 294; *Shenzhen qingnianbao* [Shenzhen youth newspaper], February 18, 1986, in *ibid.*; and Wang Chuan, letter to Gao Minglu, June 3, 1986, published in Gao, ed., *The '85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 399.
31. "Nanfang yishujia shalong jianjie" [A brief introduction of the Southern Artists Salon], 1986, unpublished; "Nanfang yishujia shalong zai guangzhou chengli," *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 24 (June 16, 1986), 1.
32. The Song brothers' article, which had the same title as the performance, was published in *Meishu*, no. 2 (February 1986), 57. When Li Qun sent the letter to *Meishu*, I was an editor at the magazine, and in fact I had edited the issue that included the Song brothers' article. Li Qun's letter (which remains unpublished) put a lot of pressure on the editor-in-chief, and in turn he put a lot of pressure on me.
33. Zhou Shaohua, the chairman of the Writers and Artists Association of Hubei, was a leading figure of the democratic movement in the Chinese art world of the mid-1980s. In 1985, at the "Disijie qunguo meishujia daibiao huiyi" (Fourth national artists conference), held in Jinan, Shandong province, Zhou Shaohua began a democratic movement with the young artists of the conference. His intent was to criticize and reform the election rules designed and dominated by the inner circle of the official Chinese Artists Association. The movement failed due to its suppression by the Shandong branch of the Communist Party of China. I participated in the conference as a reporter for *Meishu* and was deeply involved in the movement.
34. The exhibitions of the Festival of Youth Art in Hubei were published in catalogue style in *Hubei meishu tongxun* [Hubei art letters] (Wuhan: Hubei Artists Association, 1987); also see "Hubei meishujie qianyan jijin" [A collection of exhibition prefaces], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 52 (December 29, 1986), 1.
35. Luo Mingjun, "Women de yishu guan" [Our art idea], in *Youhua lunwen ji* [The oil study collection], ed. Hunan youhua yanjiuhui [Hunan Oil Study Society], 1986. See Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 401.
36. Jiang Zha, "Changsha Hunan Yishu ling Yishu Jituan Zhanlan" [The exhibition of the Zero Art Group], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 39 (September 29, 1986), 2.
37. The forty-three artists who participated came from the *Leishi huahui* (Leishi Painting Society), Zero Art Group, *Yecao huahui* (Wild Grass Painting Society), *Huaihua guobua qunti* (Huaihua Ink Painting Group), *Lijiaoqiao banhuazhan* (Road Bridge Woodcut Exhibition), and *Hunan meishu chubanshe qingnian yishujia qunti* (Young Artists Group from Hunan Art Press).
38. See Li Luming, "Hunan meishujia jiqun-zhongyang meiyuan zuotanhui jiyao" [The recording of the discussion about the art of Hunan Young Artists Groups at the Central Academy of Fine Art], *Meishu*, no. 2 (February 1987), 16–19.
39. Yen Shuangxi, "Zhengzhou shoujie qingnian meizhan" [The first exhibition of Zhengzhou young artists], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 40 (October 6, 1986), 3.
40. Hou Zhen and Zuo Xiaofeng, "Minzu jingshen de zhuxun" [Searching for the nationalist spirit], 1986; see Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 372.
41. Hou Zhen and Zuo Xiaofeng, "Manifesto of Yishuchang," 1986; see Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 373.
42. The defense paper "Women de xiangfa" [What we thought about], by Hou Zhen, 1987; see Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 373.
43. Hou and Zuo, "Manifesto of Yishuchang."
44. The preface for the exhibition printed in the invitation, 1985; see Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 326.
45. Dong Chao, "Heise Lianmeng Xuanyan" [Manifesto of the Black Union], 1985; see Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 380.
46. Duan Xiucang, "Huihua xiixiang" [An imagination of painting], 1985; Qiao Xiaoguang, "Chuantong huihua yu minjian zaoxing yishu de sikao" [Rethinking the relation between traditional painting and folk art], 1985; and Wang Huanqing, "Guanyu wo de hua" [About my painting], 1985. Summaries of these three articles were published in *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 7 (February 17, 1986), 1.
47. See Chuan Zi, "Zhanlan Jicui" [The collection of exhibition news], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 34 (August 25, 1986), 4.

48. Yan Xiaohua, “Zhongguo wumingshi huahui zixu” [Preface to the Chinese Anonymous Painting Society], 1982; and Zhao Rongsheng, “Benhuahui huodong jianjie” [Brief chronology of our Painting Society], 1986. See Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 315, for both documents.
49. Zhao Runfan and Yan Xiaoming, “Yishujia yu yishu” [Artists and art], 1985; see Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 315–316.
50. Liang Yijun, “Yijiu baliunian liuyue Fuling shiye meizhan” [The perspective painting exhibition, June 1986], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 44 (November 3, 1986), 2.
51. Guiqi, “Lutian yitai huazhan” [The open-air yitai exhibition], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 42 (October 20, 1986), 2.
52. Fang Zhou, “Neimenggu xibu qingnian meizhan” [The art exhibition of young artists of western Inner Mongolia], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 40 (October 6, 1986), 2.
53. I was invited by the group and participated in the opening and discussion with Jia Fangzhou, a critic based in Inner Mongolia.
54. Zhang Guangrong, “Qinnian shengsheng huahui qianyan” [Preface to the “Exhibition of Vitality”], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 38 (September 22, 1986), 2.
55. Qian Zhengkun, “Qingqing she ji hanlu huazhan” [The Qingqing Society and its Hanlu painting exhibition], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 46 (November 17, 1986), 2.
56. Yang Jun, “Qiba—tansuo, faxian, biaoqian” [Uniqueness—research, discovery, expression], *Lanzhou qinnian bao* [Lanzhou youth newspaper] February 1, 1985.
57. Cao Yong, “Lanzhou xiandai yishu ziliao” [The materials of modern art in Lanzhou], 1986; see Gao, ed., *The '85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 412–413.
58. See Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 36–64.
59. Some of this analysis is inspired by Chinese translations of Sigmund Freud’s “Le Bon’s Description of the Group Mind,” in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, which appears in *Selected Later Works by Sigmund Freud* (Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Press, 2005); for an English version see James Strachey, trans. (New York: Liveright, 1949).
60. For information on this exhibition, see Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 36–69. This material also appeared in *Meishu*, no. 2 (February 1987), 56–57.
61. See Hong Zaixing, “Yongganzhe de xisheng” [The sacrifice of the brave], *Meishu*, no. 2 (February 1986), 44–46.
62. In the 1980s, I analyzed the characteristics of the group psychology of the ‘85 Movement by using the theoretical framework of Freud’s group psychology theory. See Gao Minglu, “Zhongguo xiandai yishu fazhan Beijing zhi zhankai” [Unfolding the context of Chinese modern art history], *Meishu sichao* (Spring 1987), 40–48.
63. Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 20.
64. *Ibid.*, 25.
65. See Peter G. Christensen, “The Relationship of Decadence to the Avant-Garde as Seen by Poggioli, Bürger, and Calinescu,” *Papers on Language and Literature* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1986), 209; and Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 27–40.
66. Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 25.
67. I used to give lectures about contemporary art and the avant-garde in various universities in China in the 1980s. I found that students from different fields were fascinated with Western modern art and Chinese avant-garde art, though they might not be able to understand the details. My lectures consistently attracted large audiences, which excited and moved me.
68. Hong, “Yongganzhe de xisheng,” 44–46.
69. For some background on this exhibition, see Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 371–374. The text of the exhibition preface appears on p. 374.

Chapter 4

1. Many descriptions in this chapter come from my memories and various firsthand, unpublished materials I have preserved. I am working on a document about the “China/Avant-Garde” exhibition, to be published this year. My detailed article about the exhibition, written in Chinese, was published in *Tendency Quarterly*. See Gao Minglu, “Fengkuang de yijiubajiu—Zhongguo xiandai yishuzhan shimo” [1989—a crazy year: A description of the beginning and end of the “China/Avant-Garde” exhibition], *Tendency Quarterly* (Taipei), no. 12 (1999), 43–76. A part of this chapter was also published in English in my essay “Post-Utopian Avant-Garde Art in China,” in Aleš Erjavec, ed., *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition: Politicized Art under Late Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 247–283.
2. At that time, I was also working as a guest editor for *Zhongguo meishubao*. My full-time job, however, was as an editor of *Meishu*.
3. Chen Weihe, Gao Ling, and Fan Bo, “Huiyi jianbao no. 1–4” [Conference bulletin no. 1–4], August 15–19, 1986, unpublished. For more on the members and director of the committee, also see the announcement of the conference published in *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 38 (September 22, 1986), and *Meishu*, no. 11 (November 1986), 34–35.
4. “Zhongguo xiandai yishu yanjiuhui yixiangshu” [Manifesto of the Chinese Modern Art Research Society], November 25, 1986, unpublished, in Gao Minglu archive.
5. See original contract between the National Agricultural Exhibition Center and Beijing Young Painters Society; unpublished, in Gao Minglu archive.
6. See original handwritten letter by Gao Minglu, March 9, 1989; unpublished, in Gao Minglu archive.
7. To avoid having political pressure put upon any sponsoring organization, I personally wrote a private letter to the major avant-garde groups in the nation to invite the representatives to have an organizational meeting for the avant-garde show. See Gao Minglu’s letter to the groups, March 9, 1987 (figure 4.6).
8. See “Guanyu choubei gedi qingnian yishujia xueshu jiaoliuzhan de yixiangshu” [An announcement for organizing the “Academic Exchange Exhibition for Nationwide Young Artists”], March 26, 1987, unpublished.

9. For example, the *Renmin dahuitang* (Great Hall of the People) is the representative symbol of the people of the whole country. Every important national convention, such as all previous Representative Conventions of the Communist Party and all previous National People's Congresses, has been held there. Similarly, *Zhongguo lishi bowuguan* (the Museum of Chinese History) is itself a symbol of Chinese history. It has collected important historical materials to display Chinese ancient history and modern revolutionary history.
10. On the English and Chinese titles of the exhibition, see the conclusion of this chapter.
11. See "Xiandai yishuzhan yixiangshu" [The proposal of the "China/Avant-Garde" exhibition], September 1988, unpublished. On the proposal can be found the six original red seals of the units as well as that of the Department of the Secretary of the Chinese Artists Association, which approved it in these terms: "We agree that *Meishu* is one of the sponsors of the 'China/Avant-Garde' exhibition and hope the National Art Museum of China will strongly support it—the Department of the Secretary of the Chinese Artists Association, 9/22/1988."
12. I discussed the significance of "behavior art" and performance art in both the Chinese and Western contexts in my chapter "Demonized Man: Ritualizing the Body in Chinese Performance Art," in *The Wall: Reshaping Contemporary Chinese Art* (Buffalo: Timezone 8/Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, 2006), 161–187.
13. Unpublished, in Gao Minglu archive.
14. See "Zhongguo xiandai yishuzhan chouzhan tonggao, diyihao" [Announcement of the organization of "China/Avant-Garde" exhibition], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 44 (October 31, 1988), 1.
15. I participated in the organizational work of the Sixth National Exhibition in its late stage, from December 1984 to February 1985, as a reporter for *Meishu*.
16. Zhang Kangkang, "Zheshi zhiyou zhaoni" [We have to turn to you for help: A letter to Feng Jikai], January 15, 1989, *People's Daily* (Beijing), February 2, 1989.
17. On the closing day of the exhibition, Song Wei carried 50,000 yuan in cash to give me as his donation in front of the public on the plaza at the National Art Museum of China. I was shocked because I had never seen that much money before. He donated 7,000 yuan again. Unfortunately, when the student democratic movement began in April 1989, two months after the end of "China/Avant-Garde," Song Wei's fast food company was put out of business due to the street being fully occupied by students and Beijing citizens, and he has not had a chance to realize his ambitions. Due to the failure of his business, Song Wei asked me to pay back 30,000 yuan from his original 50,000-yuan donation. He never returned the money and left the budget problem to me, as a result of which I suffered for about two years. The money had been earmarked for the catalogue fee. After the exhibition ended, I carried the 30,000 yuan as a private loan, borrowed from China City Environment (*Zhongguo shirongbao*) for the "China/Avant-Garde" exhibition. I was eventually helped by an artist friend, Ling Huitao, who did a lot of fundraising for me. I was able to repay the money before I left for the United States in September 1991.
18. There is only a small catalogue, *Zhongguo xiandai yishu zhan* [China/Avant-Garde exhibition] (Beijing: National Art Museum of China and Guangxi People's Art Press, 1989).
19. See Wang Guangyi (Zhuhai), Wu Shanzhuan (Zhoushan), Zhang Peili (Hangzhou), Sun Ren, Sun Baoguo (Hangzhou), Ye Yongqing (Chongqing), Geng Jianyi (Hangzhou), Meng Luding (Beijing), Huang Yongping (Xiamen), and Yang Zhilin (Nanjing), "Jiuren baizitan—yu Zhongguo xiandai yishuzhan zhuyao zuozhe tanhua" [Discussion with nine artists—A dialogue with major participants of the "China/Avant-Garde" exhibition], *Beijing qimian bao* [Beijing youth], February 10, 1989.
20. Wang Deren, "Guanyu biyuntao de shuoming" [An explanation of the condoms], February 6, 1989, unpublished, in Gao Minglu archive.
21. Xiao Lu and Tang Song, "Guanyu qiangji shijian de shengming" [A claim about the gunshots], February 10, 1989, unpublished, in Gao Minglu archive. It will appear in my foreword to Xiao Lu's forthcoming book *Dialogue*, translated by Archibald McKenzie.
22. Xiao Lu, personal letters, February 4, 2004; February 25, 2004; March 19, 2004; and March 23, 2004. The four letters are posted on Xiao Lu's personal Web site: <http://www.xiaoluart.com/dangan.asp?id=204&fid=234>. They were also published in *Meishu Tongmeng*: <http://arts.com.com> (accessed April 20, 2004). Gao Minglu, personal letter to Xiao Lu, April 14, 2004; also see <http://www.xiaoluart.com/dangan.asp?id=204&fid=233>, <http://arts.com.com> (accessed April 20, 2004).
23. The book will come out in August 2010, published by Hong Kong University Press.
24. The work was published in *Meishu*, no. 10 (October 1988), on the back cover page.
25. I discussed some of these issues in my essay "The Sound of Gunshots, Xiao Lu's Half a Life's Dialogue: On Xiao Lu's Dialogue," published in the exhibition brochure for Xiao Lu's solo show at Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York, USA, October 2006.
26. One exception was Wu Shanzhuan's *Big Business*, which was approved by the organizational committee. The only person who knew about the gunshots was Wen Pulin, who was informed by Xiao Lu because she wanted to be sure the work would be documented. Wen recorded the gunshots in a video that also included the exhibition's other performance projects.
27. Unpublished. I saw the letter in the Security Office of the National Art Museum of China when I was told to go to the office for the emergency by the museum. The security office of the National Art Museum of China called me at noon on February 14. When I arrived at the museum from a meeting taking place in the Central Academy of Fine Art held by *Jiangsu huakan* [Jiangsu painting monthly], the Beijing Security Bureau and the National Art Museum of China were in an emergency meeting. I was asked to remain outside the door for about three hours, until 4:00 p.m. When they let me in, I saw the letter.
28. Ann Scott Tyson, "Avant-Garde Bursts onto Chinese Art Scene: Action Art Symbolizes Artists' Determination

- to Brashly Take Advantage of Eased State Censorship,” *Christian Science Monitor*, February 7, 1989.
29. Li Qi, “Pipan zichanjieji ziyouhua” [To criticize bourgeois liberalism], *Meishu*, no. 10 (October 1989), 3. A related article by Li Qi is “Buyao wangji” [Do not forget it], *Meishu*, no. 11 (November 1990), 4.
 30. I got a fellowship as a Visiting Scholar, Postdoctoral Researcher, invited by the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People’s Republic of China (CSCPRC) of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, and The Ohio State University. This was an exchange and collaborative project between Professor Julia Andrews and myself. It was initiated by Professor Andrews when she visited me in Beijing in 1986. She submitted our proposal to the committee in 1988, and it finally got approved in 1990. During one year’s collaborative research and teaching, Professor Andrews and I completed several writings, including “The Avant-Garde’s Challenge to Official Art,” which appears in Deborah S. Davis et al., eds., *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China: The Potential for Autonomy and Community in Post-Mao China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 221–278. We also organized an exhibition titled “Fragmented Memory: The Chinese Avant-Garde in Exile,” which took place at the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University in 1993. The exhibition was one of the earliest Chinese avant-garde exhibitions to take place outside of China. It featured Xu Bing, Gu Wenda, Huang Yongping, and Wu Shanzhuan’s installation works. See the catalogue with the same title as the exhibition.

Chapter 5

1. Gao Minglu, “Bawu meishu yundong” [The ’85 art movement], *Meishujia tongxun* [Artists’ news], no. 3 (May 1986), 3.
2. Such criticisms appear in Mao’s Yan’an Talk of 1942. In the early 1980s debates about the concept of humanism in Marx’s writings, the term “humanism” was used to refer to concepts of individual value, human nature, and human freedom. This use of the term is not meaningful to most Western readers. When contemporary Chinese artists use “humanism” in their writings, they usually mean something like individualism. Here, in order to avoid complication, I will continue to use the term as Chinese artists and intellectuals do.
3. Gao Minglu, “Jinnian youhua fazhan de liupai” [The recent developing trends of oil painting], *Meishu*, no. 7 (July 1985), 62–65.
4. Gao Minglu, “Guanyu lixing huihua” [About rationalist painting], *Meishu*, no. 8 (August 1986).
5. On December 2, 1985, for example, the Pool Society’s exhibition “’85 Xinkongjiang” (’85 new space) opened in Hangzhou in Zhejiang province. The artists described their intent to make *yonggan zhe de xisheng* (brave sacrifices) for the future. See Hong Zaixing, “Yonggan zhe de xisheng” [The sacrifice of the brave], *Meishu*, no. 2 (February 1986), 44–46.
6. Jochen Schulte-Sasse, “Foreword: Theory of Modernism versus Theory of the Avant-Garde,” in Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xvi–xix.
7. See, for example, the work of Megan C. McShane, *Genese einer Revolution: Von Dada zum Surrealismus* [Genesis of a revolution: From Dada to surrealism], trans. Nathalia Broskaia (London: Parkstone, 2009), and Megan C. McShane, “The Balance of Reality and Time: Surrealist Games and Traumatic Memory,” *China Museum Journal* (January 2007).
8. Shu Qun, the most noted theorist of the Northern Art Group, wrote “Yige xinwenming de dansheng” [The birth of a new civilization] in 1985; see *Tuxiang bianzhengfa: Shuqun de yishu* [The dialectic of images: The art of Shu Qun] (Guangzhou: Lingnan Art Studio, 2009), 48–49. See also Shu Qun’s “Guanyu beifang wenming de sikao” [Thought on the northern civilization], 1985, in Gao Minglu, ed., *The ’85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008), 104–108. It is interesting to note that the surrealists used a barren landscape background to depict the cultural and emotional wasteland following the trauma of World War I, while the Northern Art Group used these barren landscapes following the trauma of Mao’s Cultural Revolution.
9. Shu Qun, “Beifang yishu qunti de jingshen” [The spirit of the Northern Art Group], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 18 (November 23, 1985), 1.
10. For instance, the articles written by Shu Qun include: “Yige xinwenming de dansheng” and “Guanyu beifang wenming de sikao” (see note 8); “Handaihou wenhua de chubu xingcheng” [The preliminary emergence of the post-frigid zone culture], unpublished; “Lun lafeierqianpai de lishi yiyi” [The historical significance of the Pre-Raphaelites], unpublished; “Shilun xinwenming de quanzhong yiyi” [The determined significance of the new civilization], unpublished; and “Wei beifangqunti chanshi” [An interpretation of the Northern Art Group], unpublished. By Wang Guangyi: “Beifang wenhua dui huihua de yaohu” [The civilization of the north determines creation of painting], unpublished; “Zhongguobeibu de huajiamen” [The artists of north China], unpublished; “Yishu zuowei renlei de yizhong xingwei” [Art creation as an act of mankind], unpublished; and “Women zhege shidai xuyao shenmo yangde huihua?” [What kind of paintings do we need in our age?], *Jiangsu bukan* [Jiangsu painting monthly] (April 1986), 6. By Ren Jian: “Genxin de jueqi” [Raising the foundation], unpublished; and “Zaoxing zhongde taiji guannian” [Tai chi in art creation], unpublished. By Liu Yan: “Dangdai yishu de kunjing he shiming” [The embarrassment and duties of contemporary art], unpublished; “Rexing de sanzong xingtai” [Three types of humankind], unpublished; “Fenxi de bainjie” [The boundary of analysis], unpublished; and “Yishu zhongde lixing” [Rationalization in art creation], *Meishu*, no. 8 (August 1986), 57.
11. Among the critical views, the article entitled “Lixing huihua xiaoyi” [A short discussion of rationalist painting] by Zhang Long, a member of the Southwest Art Group, was the most extreme example. It was published in *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 51 (December 22, 1986), 1.

12. “Hongselü zhenyan” [An admonition by the Red Journey], *Meishu sichao*, no. 1 (February 1987), 14–15.
13. Deng Qiyao, ed., “Laizi zhijue de ganwu” [The enlightenment from intuition], of which a summarized version was published in *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 51 (December 22, 1986), 1; Mao Xuhui, “Xinjuxiang—Shengming quxiang tushi de chengxian he chaoyue” [New specific image—The true presentation and praising of life], *Meishu sichao* (January 1987), 25–28; Mao Xuhui, “Ji Xinjuxiang huazhan he huajia yiji xinanyishu yanjiu qunti” [New specific images painting, the exhibitions and Southwest Art Group], 1985, unpublished; Ye Yongqing, “Xinan qunti huihua de ziran yishi” [The consciousness of nature in the art of the Southwest Art Group], 1985, unpublished; Zhang Xiaogang, “Xunzhao nage zunzai” [Seeking the true being], *Yunnan meishu tongxun* [Yunnan art chronicle] (March 1986), 12–16; Zhang Long, “Lixing huihua xiaoyi” [A short discussion of rationalist painting], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 51 (December 22, 1986), 1; Zhai Wei, “Shengming shu women” [The life belongs to us], *Yunnan meishu tongxun* (April 1986), 4–7.
14. Concerning these artists’ ideas, see Zhang Xiaogang, “Xuzhao nage zunzai” [Seeking the being], *Yunnan meishu tongxun* (March 1986); Mao Xuhui, “Xinjuxiang, shengming juxian tushi de chengxian yu chaoyue” [New specific image, a presence and glorification of true human inner reality], *Meishu sichao* (February 1987), 25–28; and Mao Xuhui to Gao Minglu, March 19, 1986; September 9, 1986; November 11, 1986.
15. See the brochure of the “Third Exhibition of New Specific Images” with cover page and prefaces, published in Gao, ed., *The ’85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 315–316. All related materials about the activity are also published in the same book, 315–323.
16. See Zhang Qun and Meng Luding, “Xin shidai de qishi” [The enlightenment of the new age], *Meishu*, no. 7 (July 1985), 48.
17. Hu Shi, “Pragmatism,” *Xin qingnian* 6, no. 4 (1917), reprinted in *Hu Shi Wenji* [Essays by Hu Shi], ed. Ouyang Zhesheng (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1988), 211–212.
18. Yuan Qingyi, “Wo he ‘wo’ yiji ...” [I and ‘I’ and ...], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 15 (1985), 2.
19. Note by Zuo Zhengyao, published in “Huajia tan hua” [Artists talking about art], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 52 (1985), 2.
20. Wang Guangyi, “Ziwo kendingde chensi, chensiyi: Chensiyi” [Meditation on self-affirmation: Meditation no. 1], in Gao, ed., *The ’85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 112–113.
21. *Ibid.*
22. I used the term “universal current” to discuss Chinese contemporary ink painting in an English-language publication; see Gao Minglu, “From Elite to Small Man: The Many Faces of a Transitional Avant-Garde in Mainland China,” in Gao Minglu, ed., *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 156–158.
23. Wang, “Women zhege shidai xuyao shenmeyang de huihua?,” 6.
24. Wang, “Ziwo kendingde chensi, chensiyi: Chensiyi,” 112–113.
25. There are several writings by Ren Jian describing the meaning of primeval chaos. Among them, an essay entitled “Wo de zuopin yuanhua daoyan” [An introduction to primeval chaos] gives the clearest explanation of the idea behind the work. The essay includes three parts: (1) the concept and content of primeval chaos; (2) the form of primeval chaos; (3) the construction of primeval chaos. It was published in *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 21 (1988), 1.
26. Unfortunately, the talented artist died in 2000. Before Chen Zhen moved to Paris, while I was working as an editor for *Meishu*, he had written to me from Shanghai. See Chen Zhen’s letter to Gao Minglu, December 14, 1986, published in Gao, ed., *The ’85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 232. We never met in China or Paris, but he visited me in 1996 at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
27. See Gu Wenda’s “Notes on Art,” part of which was published in *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 9 (1985), 2.
28. When Chinese artists searched for a national modernity, literati painting became the victim, as it was seen as the backward face of ancient Chinese culture. For instance, Kang Youwei, the leading reformer of the late nineteenth century, after the failure of the Hundred Days Reform in 1898, wrote a harsh criticism of the literati painting tradition of the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties in his *Travels in Eleven European Countries*. See Lawrence Wu, “Kang Youwei and the Westernization of Modern Chinese Art,” *Orientations* 21, no. 3 (March 1990), 46–53.
29. As mentioned above, Red symbolizes life, so that Red Journey means the journey of life.
30. Ding Fang, “Cheng: Wenhua de fansi” [Castle: Reflections on culture], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 23 (December 28, 1985), 1.
31. From Mi Fu, *Huashi* [Painting history]; English translation in Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 214.
32. See the following works by Ding Fang: “Yishu guan” [The concept of art], 1985, in Gao Minglu, Zhou Yan, Wang Xiaojian, Shu Qun, Wang Mingxian, and Tong Dian, *The ’85 Movement: The Enlightenment of the Chinese Avant-Garde* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008), 182; Ding Fang to Gao Minglu, June 14, 1987; “Weida de duanni” [A great initiation], *Meishu*, no. 11 (November 1986), 43–44; and “Neirong jushi linghun” [Content is just the soul], *Meishu*, no. 12 (December 1986), 48. Ding Fang also authored many other letters full of spiritual and religious reflections.
33. Mao Xuhui, “Yishu biji” [Notes on art], unpublished article, quoted in Gao Minglu, Zhou Yan, Wang Xiaojian, Shu Qun, Wang Mingxian, and Tong Dian, *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986* [History of contemporary Chinese art 1985–1986] (Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Press, 1991), 254.
34. Zhang Xiaogang, “Yishu biji” [Notes on art], 1985, unpublished, in Gao Minglu archive.
35. *Ibid.*

36. Yie Yongqing, another major artist of the Southwest Art Group, analyzed the natural consciousness in the artworks of the Southwest Art Group very well in his essay “Xinan huihua qunti de ziran yishi” [The natural consciousness of the painting of the Southwest Art Group], 1985, unpublished, in Gao Minglu archive.
37. Yan Shanchun, “Wang Guangyi hewo tan shenhua he youxi” [Wang Guangyi and I talk about myth and strategy], *Xinmeishu* [New art magazine], no. 2 (April 1988), 25–31; another version is in Yan Shanchun and Liu Peng, eds., *Dangdai yishu chaoliuzhong de Wang Guangyi* [Wang Guangyi in the trend of contemporary art] (Chengdu: Sichuan Art Press, 1992), 84–85.
38. See chapter 7 for my discussion of this important transitional moment in the avant-garde community.

Chapter 6

1. The slogan “Freedom in creation of literature and art” comes from the title of a speech given by Hu Qili, the secretary of the Communist Party, at the Fourth National Literature Conference.
2. Gao Minglu, “Bawu meishu yundong” [The ’85 art movement], *Meishujia tongxun* [Artists’ news], no. 3 (May 1986), 3; also in Gao Minglu, ed., *The ’85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Resources* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008), 55.
3. Stephen Bann, introduction to *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin 1950–1980s* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1998).
4. *Ibid.*
5. This article was first published in a four-page newspaper-like catalogue. See Huang Yongping, *Xiamen ’86, xindada xiandai yishuzhan* [Xiamen ’86: New Dada Modern Art Exhibition, September 28–October 5, 1986] (Xiamen: Xiamen Masses Art Gallery, 1986), 1. Later it was published in *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 46 (November 17, 1986), 1.
6. In Gao Minglu, Zhou Yan, Wang Xiaojian, Shu Qun, Wang Mingxian, and Tong Dian, *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986* [History of contemporary Chinese art 1985–1986] (Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Press, 1991), 337–360, Wang Xiaojian wrote a complete summary of Huang Yongping’s and Xiamen Dada’s early art practice.
7. See chapter 2, in which I discuss academicism and the amateur avant-garde.
8. Huang Yongping, “Tan wode jizhang hua” [About my paintings], *Meishu*, no. 1 (January 1983), 22.
9. “Fujian, 1983 Xiamen: Huang Yongping deng wuren huazhan” [Fujian province, 1983 Xiamen: Huang Yongping and Others’ Five-Man Exhibition], in the section “Xinchao meishu ziliao huibian” [Selected materials of the new wave of art], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 38 (September 22, 1986), 3.
10. Huang Yongping, “Fei biaoda de huihua” [Nonexpressive painting], *Meishu sichao*, no. 9 (June 1986), 16. In the *Roulette Wheel Series*, Huang made objects according to a strict set of procedures he determined for himself, which led to a very impersonal work of art. Marcel Duchamp was very interested in roulette. In Duchamp’s Monte Carlo vouchers, he engaged with the inventor of the game of roulette, statistical mathematician Blaise Pascal, by reading a treatise on his method and the statistical probabilities in the game. Pascal originally invented the game as a form of statistical play for monks. Duchamp was always interested in games, mathematics, and number theories that approached chance operations and randomness in ways that he could intertwine with his own chance operations.
11. Huang Yongping, “A Letter to Wang Xiaojian, October 22, 1987”; see “Xiamen Dada xielie hudong” [The series works of Xiamen Dada] by Wang Xiaojian, in chapter 5 of Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 342.
12. See note 5.
13. Herbert Read, *A Concise History of Modern Painting* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959). This book was first translated into Chinese in 1979 by Liu Pingjun, and was published by Shanghai People’s Arts Press, Shanghai, in that year.
14. Huang Yongping, “Baqinian de sikao, zhizuo he hudong” [Thinking, making, and projects in 1987], in Fei Dawei, ed., *85 Xinchao dangan* [Archive of the ’85 New Wave] (Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Press, 2007), 469–485.
15. Huang Yongping, preface for the exhibition, unpublished. See Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 347.
16. Huang Yongping and Huang Yongpan [the former’s younger brother] to Gao Minglu, January 24, 1989, unpublished, in Gao Minglu archive.
17. See note 14; this is a sixteen-page essay with illustrations of Huang’s works done in 1987.
18. Of course, in the Western historical avant-garde, particularly in the year 1924, the Dadaists and surrealists were quite famous for their walks, tours, photographs, and general engagement with the slaughterhouses, or abattoirs, of the nineteenth arrondissement in Paris (an area known as La Villette). See Louis Aragon, *Le paysan de Paris* (1926; Paris: Gallimard, 1998).
19. The marks he made are dated April 20, 1987; June 2, 1987; September 1, 1987; October 7, 1987; November 29, 1987; and January 9, 1988.
20. Due to the historical hegemony of the seat of power being located in the capital in the north, there has been a long history of prejudice against the southern provinces, most notably Guangdong. However, there is also a saying, “The emperor is far away,” which hints at the freedom that has always existed in the south, where one can experiment without official intervention. When Deng Xiaoping opened China to the West and created his policies of reform, most of his uniquely permissive Special Economic Zones were located in Guangdong, because the Cantonese had a long history of interactions of with foreigners. Many believe that people in Guangdong also have a strong sense of initiative, which might have been another reason for the decision.
21. Wang Du, “Tongbu butonglu” [In the same way, but not in the same direction], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 24 (June 16, 1986), 1; “Nanfang yishujia shalong jianjie” [A brief introduction to the Southern Artists Salon], 1986, unpublished.

22. “Nangang yishu shalong diyihui shiyanzhan” [First Experimental Exhibition of the Southern Art Salon], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 42 (October 20, 1986), 1.
23. Ibid.
24. Song Haidong, “A Letter to Wang Xiaojian,” October 14, 1986, unpublished. Also see Wang Xiaojian, “2. M qunti” (2. M Group), in Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 384.
25. Qian Ping, “M. Huoshengsheng de ren” [Vivid human being—M Art Group], 1986, unpublished manifesto.

Chapter 7

1. *Zhishi* (indicatives) and *xiangxing* (pictographs) are the two most important classifications of the traditional *liu shu* (six classifications) of Chinese characters. In the Han period, Xu Shen listed them in the following order: *zhishi* (indicatives), *xiangxing* (pictographs), *xingsheng* (ideographics), *huiyi* (phonetic-semantic compounds), *zhuanzhu* (mutual explanatories), and *jiajie* (phonetic loans). The primary importance of *zhishi* is that it indicates that painting and writing come from the same source. *Hanshu yuwen zhi* (The Han book of arts and scholarship) puts pictograms first, as follows: *xiangxing* (pictographs), *xiangshi* (*zhishi*) (indicatives), *xiangyi* (*huiyi*) (phonetic-semantic compounds), *xingsheng* (*xingsheng*) (ideographics), *zhuanzhu* (mutual explanatories), *jiajie* (phonetic loans). The proper order of *zhishi* (indicatives) and *xiangxing* (pictographs) was a source of disagreement among later scholars studying the etymology of Chinese characters and the order in which painting and writing developed. For example, Guo Moruo considered the *zhishi* (indicative) function of characters to have primacy over the *xiangxing* (pictographic) function, but Tang Lan thought the opposite. See my essay “Cang Jie zao shu, yu shuhua tongyuan” [Cang Jie’s creation of Chinese characters, and a common origin of calligraphy and painting] *Xin meishu* [New art], no. 3 (1985), 40–45.
2. Translation by Wu Shanzhuan for the original piece *Red Characters*, printed in Gao Minglu, ed., *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). The translation here is incomplete.
3. Wu Shanzhuan, a description of the *Red Poster* for Gao, *Inside Out*.
4. Wu Shanzhuan, “Guanyu zhongwen” [Chinese characters], *Meishu*, no. 6 (June 1986), 61.
5. See Wu Shanzhuan, “Zizhuan” [An autobiography], 1987, unpublished.
6. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Chinese nationalists called the Chinese Communists *chi fei* (red gangsters) and the Communists’ program *chi hua* (red-ization, or red-ification).
7. Wu Shanzhuan, “Chizi de dansheng” [Birth of red characters], 1986, unpublished essay.
8. Wu Shanzhuan, “Hongyin, kaihui, huanzi he hongce youmo” [Red seal, meeting, character, and red humor], 1986, unpublished article.
9. Wu Shanzhuan, “Guanyu wenge yishu” [The art of the Cultural Revolution], 1986, unpublished article.

10. Wu Shanzhuan, “Wuti de meishu pin” [The material work of art], 1986, unpublished essay.
11. Wu Shanzhuan, “Richang shenghuo de yishu” [The art of daily life], 1989, unpublished article.
12. Wu Shanzhuan, “Cong yuedi kaishi de zainan: Shengyi yishu” [A disaster begun since the end of this month: Business art], 1989, unpublished article.
13. Wu Shanzhuan, “Guanyu dashengyi” [About the big business], a statement published in *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 11 (1989), 2.
14. The graduation work was published along with Xu Bing’s article “Wo hua wo ai de hua” [Paint what I like] in *Meishu*, no. 5 (May 1981), 18–19.
15. The event was reported with the title “Nangwang de guocheng” [An unforgettable process], in *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 37 (September 15, 1986), 1.
16. This work was first displayed in the United States at the Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, November 30, 1991–January 19, 1992. See *Three Installations by Xu Bing*, a catalogue of the exhibition with an essay entitled “Process and Meaning in the Art of Xu Bing” by Britta Erickson (Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison, Elvehjem Museum of Art, 1991).
17. The article with the images of Xu’s work was published in *Meishu*, no. 10 (October 1987), 50–51.
18. Some major articles on the topic of Xu’s *Book from the Sky* are: Yang Lian and John Cayley, “Three Words and Nonwords on the Art of Xu Bing,” in *Xu Bing: Classroom Calligraphy*, exh. cat. (Mallorca: Joan Miró Foundation, 1997); Stanley Abe, “No-Sense from Out There: Xu Bing’s Tian Shu [A Book from the Sky] in the West,” paper presented at College Art Association conference, Boston, 1996; Lisa Pasquariello, “From Work to Text and Back Again,” in *Fractured Fairy Tales: Art in the Age of Categorical Disintegration* (Durham: Duke University Museum of Art, 1996), 13–24; Eugene Yuejin Wang, “Of Text and Texture: The Cultural Relevance of Xu Bing’s Art,” in *Xu Bing: Language Lost* (Boston: Massachusetts College of Art, 1995), 7–15; Jonathan Goodman, “Bing Xu: 4,000 characters in Search of a Meaning,” *Art News* (New York) 93, no. 7 (September 1994), 99–101; Wu Hong, “A Ghost Rebellion: Notes on Xu Bing’s ‘Nonsense Writing’ and Other Works,” *Public Culture* (University of Chicago) 6, no. 2 (Winter 1994), 411–418; Jamara Hamlish, “Presidigitation: A Reply to Charles Stone,” *Public Culture* 6, no. 2 (Winter 1994), 419–442; Charles Stone, “Xu Bing and the Printed Word,” *Public Culture* 6, no. 2 (Winter 1994), 407–410; Geremie Barme, “Xu Bing: A Chinese Character,” *Art Monthly Australia* 61 (July 1993), 13–14; Gao Minglu, “Meaninglessness and Confrontation in Xu Bing’s Art,” in *Fragmented Memory* (Columbus: Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio State University, 1993), 28–31; Peter C. Sturman, “Measuring the Weight of the Written Word: Reflections on the Character-Paintings of Chu Ko and the Role of Writing in Contemporary Chinese Art,” *Orientalism* (Hong Kong) 23, no. 7 (July 1992), 44–52; Shigeo Chiba, “Far East Art on Xu Bing” (paper presented at the symposium “China Tomorrow: Misunderstanding in Culture Exchange between the East and West,” Paris, 1991),

- 15; Britta Erickson, "Process and Meaning in the Art of Xu Bing," in *Three Installations by Xu Bing*, 2–32; Jinan Yin, "Ghosts Pounding the Wall and Meaninglessness," *Hsiung Shi Art Monthly* (Taipei) 235 (September 1990), 125–133; Fangzhou Jia, "A Book from the Sky: Five Explanations," *Jiangsu Art Monthly* (May 1989), 17–20; Weihe Chen, "Xu Bing and his Book from the Sky," *Intellectuals* (Beijing), no. 1 (January 1988), 58–62; Christina Davidson, "Words from Heaven: Xu Bing Interviewed," *Art Asia Pacific* (Australia) 1, no. 2 (1994), 48–52.
19. Hui Neng's approach to Buddhist philosophy was completely different from the coexisting Chan Buddhist tradition that was described as Gradual Enlightenment. Founded by a Chan master, Shen Hui, Gradual Enlightenment involved a four-part "purification of the mind" that was based on concentrating the mind through meditation, physical exercise, and ritual forms. The approach of Hui Neng's Sudden Enlightenment, however, emphasized that when the mind is completely emptied and void, when "all paths of language are destroyed" and "all ways of the mind are cut off," there occurs a spontaneous psychic insight into the absolute nature of the phenomenal world. This new approach destroyed the need for all scripture, ritual, and formal meditation techniques, and thus won a popular following. The theory of Sudden Enlightenment influenced many generations of traditional artists and philosophers, and has now come to be a potent weapon for Chinese conceptual artists like Xu Bing, Wu Shanzhuan, Huang Yongping, and others. Almost all of them proclaim an allegiance to Chan Buddhism.
20. Xu Bing, "Looking for Something Different in a Quiet Place," *Beijing Qingnian Bao* (Beijing youth newspaper), February 10, 1989. The English version is quoted from Wu Hung's article "A 'Ghost Rebellion': Notes on Xu Bing's 'Nonsense Writing' and Other Works," *Public Culture*, no. 6 (1994), 411–418.
21. My discussion of *Ghosts Pounding the Wall* is indebted to Britta Erickson's essay "Process and Meaning in the Art of Xu Bing." An important, and the earliest, article on the topic is Jinan Yin, "Ghosts Pounding the Wall and Meaninglessness," *Xionshi meishu* [Lion art monthly], no. 235 (September 1990), 125–133.
22. Andrew Waldron, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), argues that the Great Wall as we know it dates entirely to the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and discusses the strategic failures of the wall as a border defense (see especially pp. 140–164). Xu Bing notes that the seventeenth-century historian Gu Yanwu also remarked on the ineffectiveness of the Great Wall in closing China off from the rest of the world. See Erickson, "Process and Meaning in the Art of Xu Bing," 23.
23. For more on Gu Wenda's art creation of the 1980s, see Gao Minglu, Zhou Yan, Wang Xiaojian, Shu Qun, Wang Mingxian, and Tong Dian, *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986* [History of Contemporary Chinese Art 1985–1986] (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1991), 207–228; and Zhou Yan, "Gu Wenda's Oedipus," in *Fragmented Memory*, 20–23.
24. Wang Luyan, "Chujue yishu" [Tactile art], 1988, unpublished manifesto.
25. Ibid.
26. Geng Jianyi, "Chishe de jinqi huihua" [Recent painting by the Pool Society], 1987, in Gao Minglu, ed., *The '85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008), 203–204.
27. Zhang Peili, "Wode yishu taidu" [My attitude toward art], 1987; published as "Zhang Peili de yishuguan" [Zhang Peili's artistic opinion], in Gao, ed., *The '85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 200.
28. "Chishe Jianbao diyihao" [Pronouncement of the Pool Society no. 1], June 1986; in Gao, ed., *The '85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 198.
29. "Chishe xuanyan" [Manifesto of the Pool Society], May 1986, in Gao, ed., *The '85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 198.
30. "Chishe Jianbao dierhao" [Pronouncement of the Pool Society no. 2], June 10, 1986, in Gao, ed., *The '85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 198–199.
31. Geng, "Chishe de jinqi huihua."
32. "Chishe Jianbao disanhao" [Pronouncement of the Pool Society no. 3], November 4, 1986, in Gao, ed., *The '85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 199.
33. Gao et al., *Zhongguo dangdai meishushi 1985–1986*, 163.
34. Zhang Peili, "Guanyu X? xielie de chuanguo yu zhanlian zhengxu" [The process and rules of the creation and display of the X? Series], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 120 (November 9, 1987), 2.
35. Zhang Peili, "Guanyu hepishu yihao de tonggao" [A description of the Brown Book no. 1], June 1988, in Gao, ed., *The '85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 213–214.
36. Quoted in Valerie C. Doran, ed., *Hou pa chiu Chung-guo hsin I sho* [China's new art, post-1989] (Hong Kong: Hanart TZ Gallery, 1993), 145.
37. Ibid., 28.
38. Geng, "Chishe de jinqi huihua," in Gao, ed., *The '85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 203–204.
39. Ibid.
40. "Shiyi yue ershiliu ri zuowei liyou" [November 26 as a reason], a catalogue-like booklet that includes the projects of sixteen artists from around the nation, 1994, printed by the artists.

Chapter 8

1. I began to use the term *zhengzhi bopu* (political pop) before I moved to the United States in October 1991. Before I left, around 1990 and 1991, Wang Guangyi, Yu Youhan, Shu Qun, and Ren Jian all gave me slides of their pop works, and I brought them to the States to introduce their works at Ohio State University. I also gave a talk at the Asian contemporary art conference held by the Asia Society in New York in 1992. I participated in a workshop at the Wilson Center in Washington, with which I published an article including a discussion of political pop, "The Avant-Garde's Challenge to Official Art" (coauthored with

- Julia Andrews) in *Urban Space in Contemporary China: The Potential for Autonomy and Community in Post-Mao China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 221–278. The first formal English publication in which I used the term political pop was the “Chronology of Chinese Avant-Garde Art, 1979–1993,” in *Fragmented Memory: The Chinese Avant-Garde in Exile*, exh. cat. (Columbus: Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio State University, 1993), 14–19. At the time, there was no publication that used the English term political pop.
2. In “Jianbao, 1988 xiandai yishu yantao hui” [Brief report on the 1988 Contemporary Art Conference], in Tunxi city, Anhui Province, unpublished, in Gao Minglu archive.
 3. Yan Shanchun, “Wang Guangyi he wo tan shenhua he celue” [Wang Guangyi and I discuss myth and strategy], *Xinmeishu* [New art], no. 2 (1988), 25–31; another version appears in a book edited by Yan Shanchun and Lu Peng, *Dangdai meishu chaoliu zhong de Wang Guangyi* [Wang Guangyi in the trends of contemporary art] (Chengdu: Sichuan Art Press, 1992).
 4. On the day before the “China/Avant-Garde” exhibition opened, a representative of the Ministry of Culture came to examine the works. With the support of some famous painters, Wang Guangyi’s *Mao Zedong No. 1* was allowed to be shown under the condition that a short explanatory text be exhibited alongside it. As the principal curator of this exhibition, I drafted this explanation along with Wang Guangyi. Also see chapter 4.
 5. These statements and those of other artists are published in the political pop section of the catalogue *China’s New Art: Post-1989* (Hong Kong: Hanart TZ Gallery, 1993).
 6. Margarita Tupitsyn, “Sots Art: The Russian Deconstructive Force,” in *Sots Art* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1986).
 7. Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*, trans. Charles Rogle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 12.
 8. I analyze this phenomenon in “Meishu, quanli, gongfan: Zhengzhi popu xianxing” [Kitsch, power, and complicity: The political pop phenomenon], *Xionshbi meishu* [Lion art], no. 297 (November 1995), 36–57.
 9. An example of this dislocation was found on a *New York Times Magazine* cover in December 1993. On it was a reproduction of a painting by one of the cynical realists and the title of an article on the Chinese avant-garde: “Not just a yawn but the howl that could free China.” Ironically, if you had visited the artist, you would have found him living in a big house in Beijing with a beautiful garden and a big gate between his lifestyle and that of ordinary people. These new professional artists have been passionately involved in creating a Chinese leisure culture, which is an essential part of any capitalist society, rather than engaging in avant-garde culture. The article was by Andrew Solomon, *New York Times Magazine*, December 19, 1993, 43.
 10. Zhou Yan first named cynical realism “*tiaokan* realism” in his essay for the 1991 “Xinshengdai” exhibition; later, in 1993, Li Xianting called it “*wanshi* realism” in the catalogue for “Chinese New Art Post-1989.” In fact, *tiaokan* and *wanshi* share the same English meaning of “cynical.”

11. See chapter 6, in which I discussed Geng Jianyi’s approach to this painting.

Chapter 9

1. I coined the term “apartment art” in my essay “Toward Transnational Modernity: Contemporary Art in Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong,” in *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 15–40. I am currently working on a series of exhibition/publication projects that started with the catalogue *Apartment Art in China 1970s–1990s (1): The Ecology of Post-Cultural Revolution Frontier Art* (Beijing: Shuimu Contemporary Art Space, 2008). This apartment art exhibition series aims to recreate the original state of the important historical phenomenon and to display its development processes through large numbers of works, documents, and photos. In the end, a printed document is to be made to provide firsthand materials for researchers and lovers of Chinese contemporary art. This research project also attempts to achieve a new approach in which one may find the whole history of a movement embodied in the development of a specific kind of space for art activity. This may allow us to make a departure from the conventional ideological narrative or formalist evolutionary history in Chinese art history writing.
2. See my discussion of the amateur avant-garde in the post-Cultural Revolution period in chapter 2.
3. In the *jianxun* (concise news) section, it said, “American modern artist Rauschenberg’s international traveling exhibition respectively opened in Beijing from November 18 to December 8, 1985 and in Tibet from December 2 to 23, 1985.” *Meishu*, no. 1 (January 1986), 72.
4. Zhang Wei, “Zhang Wei’s Autobiography,” February 2008, unpublished.
5. Zhang Runjuan, “Family Salon: The Shelter of Abstract Art,” in Gao, *Apartment Art in China 1970s–1990s (1): The Ecology of Post-Cultural Revolution Frontier Art*, 46–55.
6. For a selection of the photography and works by Zhang and his group, see Gao Minglu, ed., *The ‘85 Movement: An Anthology of Historical Sources* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008), 448–452.
7. See Zhang Shengquan, “Notes on Art,” unpublished.
8. Shao Yinong and Mu Chen, “Xicun Yishujia I” [The Artists of Xicun], 1995, unpublished. Xicun is another name for Yuanmingyuan, an artists’ village that thrived in the early 1990s.
9. According to Chen Weihe, *mangliu*, or “jobless migrants,” was a term first coined by Wen Pulin, a Beijing-based videographer. See Chen Weihe, “Beijing mangliu yishujia yinxiang” [Impressions of Beijing jobless migrants], *Zhongguo meishubao*, no. 171 (October 31, 1988), 2.
10. See the section “Art Merging with Life” in chapter 6.
11. Lea Vergine, *Body Art and Performance: The Body as Language* (Milan: Skira, 2000), 15.
12. Gao Minglu, “Private Experiences and Public Happening: The Performance Art of Zhang Huan,” in *Zhang Huan* (Santiago de Compostela: Museo das Peregrinacións, 2003), 46–63.

13. See chapter 6.
14. Song Dong and Guo Rui, *Yesheng: 1997 nian jingzhe shi* [Wildlife: Starting from 1997 Jingzhe or "Awakening of Insects"], an informal publication.
15. Feng Boyi's essay "From 'Underground' to 'Above Ground': On Chinese Avant-Garde Art since the 1990s" introduces some exhibitions that occurred in alternative spaces, some of which were orchestrated by independent curators. Many publications circulated unofficially. See *Yishu pinglun* [Art criticism], no. 7 (2004), 43–47.
16. Song Dong, interviewed by Gao Minglu, Beijing, January 14, 2005.
17. Zhu Jinsh, interviewed by Gao Minglu, Buffalo, New York, January 23, 2005.
18. For Gu Yuan's story of learning art from a village boy, see chapter 1.

Chapter 10

This chapter mainly comes from the essay I wrote for the catalogue for the exhibition "Chinese Maximalism," co-organized by the University of Buffalo Art Gallery and the China Millennium Art Museum, Beijing. See Gao Minglu, "An Alternative Metaphysical Art," in *Chinese Maximalism* (Chongqing: Chongqing People's Press, 2003), 1–45.

1. Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," *Art and Literature*, no. 4 (Spring 1965), 193–201.
2. Gao Minglu, "Guanyu lixing huihua" [On rationalist painting], *Meishu*, no. 8 (August 1986), 41–47.
3. Yve-Alain Bois, "Material Utopia," *Art in America* (April 1988), 161–180. Bois is an expert in contemporary abstract art of the West, and a professor at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. He analyzed in his work how the early abstract painters of the West regarded two-dimensional paintings as modes of utopia or spiritual revolution. As Donald Judd said: "all that art [European modern art] is based on systems built beforehand, a priori systems; they express a certain type of thinking and logic that is pretty much discredited now as a way of finding out what the world's like." Bruce Glaser, "Questions to Stella and Judd," in Gregory Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968), 151.
4. As Frank Stella said: "My painting is based on the fact that only what can be seen there is there. It really is an object. Any painting is an object and anyone who gets involved enough in this finally has to face up to the objectness of whatever it is that he's doing. He is making a thing. ... All I want anyone to get out of my paintings, and all I ever get out of them, is the fact that you can see the whole idea without any confusion ... what you see is what you see." Glaser, "Questions to Stella and Judd," 158.
5. Michael Fried analyzed the difference between the modern painting of the 1920s and 1930s and minimalism, and summarized the nature of minimalism (or literalist art, as he called it) as follows: "Modernist painting has come to find it imperative that it defeat or suspend its own objecthood, and that the crucial factor in this undertaking is shape, but shape that must belong to painting—it must be pictorial, not or

not merely, literal. Whereas literalist art stakes everything on shape as a given property of objects, if not indeed, as a kind of object in its own right. It aspires, not to defeat or suspend its own objecthood, but on the contrary to discover and project objecthood as such." Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in Battcock, *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, 120. Fried also indicates that the literalist (minimalist) sensibility is theatrical, "because, to begin with, it is concerned with the actual circumstances in which the beholder encounters literalist work. Morris makes this explicit. Whereas in previous [modernist] art 'what is to be had from the work is located strictly within [it].' The experience of literalist art is of an object in a situation—one that, virtually by definition, includes the beholder. And the concern of minimalist artists is the scale within which the beholder and the object are related in a comparative distance. The awareness of scale is a function of the comparison made between that constant, one's body size, and the object. The subject (beholder) and the object is implied in such a comparison" (*ibid.*, 125–126).

6. Zhu Xiaohe, letter to Gao Minglu, September 4, 2002, in Gao Minglu archive.
7. Ding Yi, "Random Thoughts on Art," in "Jiangsu Huakan, Nontrend Paintings," *Jiangsu Art Monthly*, special issue (1993).
8. *Ibid.*
9. Ding Yi, "Notes on Creating," December 1995, unpublished.
10. Zhu Xiaohe, "Overwriting and Obscurity," entry 21, October 2002, in his "Notes on Art," unpublished.
11. *Ibid.*, entry 1.
12. *Ibid.*, entry 22: "Thoughts are some outside quantity of labor, some overaccumulation of labor, and a paranoia of certain labor. I am a thinker when I am engaged in overwriting."
13. Zhu Xiaohe, "Writing Is an Assumption," entry 2, October 2002, in "Notes on Art," unpublished.
14. Zhu, "Overwriting and Obscurity," entries 15, 16, 17, 18. "Entry 15: Overwriting re-presents the old image, makes it hard to understand, so that no one can interpret and respond to it. This suggests a break away from some cultural form, a cultural strategy of rebellion." "Entry 16: To rewrite the traditional Chinese old images, making them hard to comprehend, mixed up and undifferentiated is a Chinese-style breakaway defined by Chinese and Western cultures. It also makes an inroad into and shares the abstruseness and complexity of the Western culture, and does not stay in the primitive, simple and pure mode." "17: Overwriting as a cultural strategy against cultural hegemony is necessary." "18: Abstruseness and mingling is an understanding of the liberation of nationalism. In so doing, the lost territory we take back from Western culture is a kind of reminiscence of the old wisdom. Obscurity and mingling have become the resources, cultural area, and feature shared by us and the West."
15. Zhu Xiaohe, letter to Gao Minglu, September 4, 2002.
16. Zhu, "Overwriting and Obscurity," entry 27.
17. I visited his studio in Xinzhuang, Shanghai, in late 2002, when he had almost finished the painting. I had an interview with him about his method and concept.
18. *Zhongguo xiandai yishuzhan* [China/avant-garde catalogue] (Guilin: Guangxi People's Press, 1989), 11.

19. Song Tao, "The Explanation of 49,368 Square Millimeters," unpublished.
20. For some of Xu Bing's ideas, see his article "Dui fushuxing huihua de xin tansuo yu zai renshi" [A reexploration and reassessment of repetitive painting], *Meishu*, no. 10 (October 1987), 50–51. The images of his entire series are also published in the same issue.
21. Janson Chang, ed., *China's New Art, Post-1989* (Hong Kong: Hanart TZ Gallery, 1993), 28.
22. Lei Hong, interviewed by Gao Minglu, May 20, 2002.
8. "Zhao Mengfu de fugu yu Song Yuan hua feng de bianyi" [Zhao Mengfu's archaism and the transition in Song and Yuan painting aesthetics], a master's thesis published three times. See the summary in *Meishu shilun* [Art history and theory], no. 4 (1985), 60–68; a complete version is available in *Shanghai huayuan jinian wenji* [Commemorative collected works of Shanghai Academy of Painting], 1985 (Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Painting, 1985), 144–189, and in *Xin meishu* [New art], no. 3 (1989), 40–57.

Chapter 11

1. See the introduction to this book.
2. Meaning a modernity with a narrative apart from Greenberg's. For instance, in T. J. Clark's writing, modernity and the avant-garde are not confined by visual evolution; rather they are regarded as a representation of social structure. Therefore, Gustave Courbet's realistic painting turns into a texture in the fabric of French history at a particular changing moment of modern social class.
3. The Chinese version has just been published with the title *Yi pai: yige dianfu zaixian de lilun* [Yi pai: A synthetic theory against representation] (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2009). I recently used this theory as a critical and curatorial approach to organize the exhibition "Yipai: Thirty Years of Chinese 'Abstraction,'" sponsored by Fundació "La Caixa" and Beijing Municipal Culture Bureau, which opened on March 14, 2007, in Palma La Caixa Forum, and traveled to Barcelona in June 2008 and to Madrid in September 2008. The exhibition included ninety works made by forty-six artists since the 1970s. It finished in the Today Art Museum in Beijing with a different title, "Yipai: Century's Mentality," from May 31 to June 21, 2009. See the catalogue of the exhibition, Gao Minglu, *Yipai: Zhongguo chouxiang sanshinian* [Yipai: Thirty years of Chinese "abstraction"] (Barcelona: Fundació "La Caixa," 2008), with three volumes respectively in Spanish, Catalanian, and Chinese; and *Yipai: shiji siwei* [Yipai: Century's Mentality] (Harbin: Harbin Institute of Technology Press, 2009).
4. "Fu Xi [a legendary ruler of great antiquity, the first of the Three August Ones] began to create the Eight Diagrams by way of connecting with the essence of the universe and imitating living things on earth, through his observations of celestial phenomena, the geological environment, and the conditions of all living things as well as the changes of the earth, with his body or other living things at a distance being the objects of his experiment." From the *Yi jing*.
5. As the *Yi jing* said, "observing images while understanding *ci*, or statements."
6. Zhang Yanyuan, *A Record of the Famous Painters of All the Dynasties*, finished in the year A.D. 847. For the English translation of this part, see William Reynolds Beal Acker, *Some Tang and Pre-Tang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), 65–66.
7. See introduction to this book.

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