

Editor's Note

It has been repeatedly proclaimed that the economic crisis of the past year changed everything in the art world, yet Sotheby's October 2009 art auction in Hong Kong witnessed prices rebounding, and even on the increase, for contemporary Chinese art. In spite of that, the blip that did occur gave rise to a much-needed reality check about what is genuinely important in contemporary art, resulting in artists and thinkers embarking on a journey in search of other realms of art that are less submissive to the market than they were during the past decade and more focused on exploring what it means to be making art in society today.

Each of the first four texts in *Yishu* 35 address this particular historical moment relative to contemporary art in mainland China. Some of the ideas and approaches presented may appear unfamiliar, unformulated, or even naïve, but they are ideas in process and very much connected to their communities, and that is what makes them provocative, exciting, and part of an inevitable ongoing evolution. Biljana Ciric organized a conference that brought together primarily younger artists who are proposing alternative strategies within the current mainland Chinese art system; Meiqin Wang explores the significant influence that independent curators wield within the art world and questions where that influence currently resides; Robert C. Morgan offers a reminder about the role connoisseurship can play regardless of the tenuous thread that appears to keep its existence intact, and Danielle Shang challenges an often leaden view of contemporary Chinese art that exists in the West and how the new generation of artists and the current art system needs to be acknowledged as it really exists.

A number of the issues brought forth in these texts resonate in the artist features that follow. In their artwork, as varied in aesthetic and intent as it may be, Li Dafang, Gao Weigang, Shu Yong, Xu Jiang, Gao Shiqiang, and the collective WAZA all address a post-Cultural Revolution reality and ways that history, the issues that exist in its wake, and the changing social structures play into contemporary Chinese experience.

Keith Wallace

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YISHU: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art

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DESIGN AND PRODUCTION	Leap Creative Group
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CREATIVE DIRECTOR	Raymond Mah
ART DIRECTOR	Gavin Chow
DESIGNER	Philip Wong

WEBMASTER	Website ARTCO, Taipei
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PRINTING	Chong-yuan Image Ltd., Taipei
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ISSN 1683-3082

Yishu is published bi-monthly in Taipei, Taiwan, and edited in Vancouver, Canada. The publishing dates are January, March, May, July, September, and November.

All subscription, advertising, and submission inquiries may be sent to:

Yishu Office
200-1311 Howe Street
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Phone: 1.604.649.8187; Fax: 1.604.591.6392
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Web site: www.yishujournal.com

Subscription rates:

1 year (six issues): \$84 USD (includes \$24 for airmail postage);
in Asia \$78 USD (includes \$18 for airmail postage).
2 years (twelve issues): \$158 USD (includes \$48 for airmail
postage); in Asia \$146 USD (including \$36 for airmail postage).

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