Introduction

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Surrealism is an inveterate staple of the western art historical canon, commonly couched in copious survey texts and university courses as a component of the European avant-garde. Indeed, the movement was formally founded in Paris in 1924 by French author André Breton (1896–1966) upon publication of the *First Surrealist Manifesto*. Here, Breton advocated the notions of psychic automatism (creating without forethought), Freudian psychoanalysis (manifesting the unconscious) and the reconciliation of dream and reality. The Second Manifesto (1929) espoused what has been termed the 'supreme point'[1] of Surrealism whereby 'there exists a certain point in the mind at which life and death, the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, cease to be perceived as contradictions'.[2] This resolution of opposing forces emanated from a Hegelian interpretation of dialectics which Surrealist scholar Eburne helpfully terms 'progress through disagreement'.[3] Hegel, situated as a forerunner of Marx, signalled a turn towards revolutionary politics as several adherents to Surrealism also joined the French Communist Party, calling for 'proletarian revolution for the liberation of mankind – the primary condition of the mind'.[4] Beyond this reconciliation of Freud and Marx, the Second Manifesto also introduced the realm of the occult, coalescing the psychic, political and spiritual realms of human existence. The text ardently condemned 'the baseness of western thought, if we are not afraid to take up arms against logic'.[5] Although Surrealism was conceived of in the West, one should emphasise that it thoroughly condemned the basis of western civilisation in its founding literature.

Nevertheless, the genealogy of the Surrealist movement has remained broadly anchored in western thought and iconography, traced back to the Early Renaissance and the work of Hieronymus Bosch (1450–1516) in MoMa curator Alfred Barr's exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* (1936).[6] This is not an erroneous conception by any means. Later, in 1957, Breton himself wholeheartedly praised Bosch's fantastical manifestations of Christianity as 'a strange marriage of fideism and revolt… the singer of the unconscious'.[7] Yet, beyond western boundaries, another marginalised trajectory unravels this occidental linearity of progress towards Surrealism as the apotheosis of all artistic endeavour transgressing the real. The very same year that Bosch is hailed as a pre-Surrealist, French Art Historian Georges Duthuit's *Chinese Mysticism and Modern Painting*, (1936) argues the Chinese were 'the first to track down the fugitive lands of the imagination'.[8] In this text, resonances between Picasso, André Masson, Joan Miró and Chinese traditional painting came to light. This was not an orientalist point of view exclusive to western art historians. Chinese calligrapher Chiang Yee, residing in Britain, wrote in 1938: 'A piece of our most ancient script composed

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perhaps 5000 years ago, and a Surrealist drawing of the twentieth century produce very similar aesthetic emotions'.[9] Hence, the idea of creation emanating from the imagination is envisaged as a Chinese invention.

Chinese painting, however, is not an atemporal entity. It has its own historical pivot points to consider. In particular, the genre of Chinese literati painting expresses inner emotions and imagined landscapes. Bush asserts that Chinese literati painting first appeared at the end of the eleventh century during the Northern Song period (960–1127), which paved the way for this movement to be considered the primary form of artistic expression in the later Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) wherein art's 'representational aspect was devalued',[10] moving beyond the mimetic. Chang Tan notes that 'in the theories of literati art, to capture the "spirit" or "essence" (*shen*) of the cosmos with a cultivated yet spontaneous sensibility was the ultimate goal'.[11] Literati painting abided by the six principles espoused by Xie He, a sixth century-Chinese critic, painter and writer, the foremost of which emphasised *qiyun shengdong* 气韵生动. This is a complex and polysemic term with innumerable different translations into English. The principle was cited by founder of Surrealism André Breton with regards to post-war Surrealist painter Jean Degottex (1918–1988).[12] As Breton understood it, this notion firmly resonated with Surrealist automatism and was used to rebut naysayers who believed painting as an art form was *a priori* impossible to achieve without forethought. It is worth quoting Breton in detail:

> I do not think that there is anything in the above to invalidate my own presumptions, originating in Surrealism and in close allegiance with automatic writing regarding the immediate, ineluctable development of painting despite the outcry we can expect from those who will allege that the supposed slowness of the mechanical operations involved would make such a process impossible to carry out. On the contrary, the degree to which the art of Degottex succeeds in capturing simultaneously what the Chinese call *chi'jun* (the expression of the artist's inner soul, revealed initially by his brushstroke) and what they call *sheng-tung* (movement of life, animation) succeeds in gratifying my wishes to the full on that score.[13]

Breton's understanding of *qiyun shengdong* emanates from a 1924 text *Le Lavis en Extreme-Orient* (Ink Wash Painting of the Far East) written by Sinologist Ernst Grosse and cited in the preface to Degottex's exhibition catalogue held at the Surrealist Gallery *L'Etoile Scellé* in 1955. The focus on the painter as individual is a rather western understanding of this cornerstone of Chinese thought. In fact, as recent scholarship by Xiaoyan Hu has shown, the notion is more all-encompassing in its remit and form as 'spiritual communion' between the painter, the object that is represented, the work as a whole and the audience themselves.[14] As *qiyun shengdong* is the focus of Hu's scholarship and they have assessed multiple variants of its translation, I abide by their definition of *qiyun shengdong* as 'spirit consonance engendering a sense of life'.[15] Perhaps then, *qiyun shengdong* is not just 'psychic automatism' but an automatism based on the stimuli of both internal and external factors. What is certain, however, is that spontaneity was vital to Breton and the Surrealist movement, key to his instrumentalisation of *qiyun shengdong* and calligraphy to reaffirm the existence of Surrealist automatism.

Chinese calligraphy asserts that spontaneity can be gradually attained through study[16] with certain script forms allowing for very loose relations to the original character. On this note, literati painter Su Shi (1037–1101) famously stated: 'the object of drawing is merely to express one's mood or feeling and the painting need

not be a slavish copy of reality. Such work should be done quickly, on the inspiration of the moment … To judge a painting by its verisimilitude shows the mental level of a child'.[17] This stance clearly harbours resonances with the Surrealist precepts of automatic drawing and writing *avant la lettre*.

The notion of whether there has been a form of home-grown realism in Chinese traditional art is a controversial one. It could be asserted that variations of realism within the Chinese art historical canon are a relatively recent import from France and the Soviet Union in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively. Concomitantly, during the early twentieth century (1910–1920), the popularity of Chinese literati art which had 'monopolised the discourse on art in imperial China'[18] was under threat. Wang draws attention to Realist painters at this juncture such as Xu Beihong,[19] who also invoked the Song dynasty, not that of the emergent literati, but rather a realistic tendency of this same era, drawn upon to portray a strong National spirit of China in the wake of the Treaty of Versailles (1919) where the Chinese territory of Shandong, occupied by Germany, was ceded by western powers to Japan instead of being returned to China. At this juncture, traditional Chinese concepts were seen to be stifling the country's development in contradistinction to western ideals of democracy and science,[20] in spite of western colonial practices. Indeed, western avant-garde art would enter China during the 1920s and 1930s, competing for recognition with western realism amongst Chinese artists.

Despite these undeniable intricacies, the *dominant* tendency of Chinese traditional painting throughout its imperial history and related scholarly tomes transgresses realistic representation. Although emanating from a non-western source, it appears just as philosophically, and historically, viable to posit for resonances between Chinese literati painting and Surrealism as it does the medieval metaphysics of Bosch. Indeed, Surrealism should not be confined to the realms of western art history given its empirical commitment to transcend geographical demarcations. The Surrealists commitment to the global is reified in 1929 by the infamous, yet anonymous, 'Surrealist Map of the World', which sized nations in accordance with their cultural production as opposed to political status (Figure 0.1). Here, China occupies a relatively prominent position, dwarfing its East Asian neighbours.

Breton's own art historical tome, *L'Art Magique* (1957), was certainly not confined to the realms of western art but rather engendered a spiritual art history transcending the hegemonic power dynamics of international relations. In particular, Surrealism employed the *yin* and *yang* of China's indigenous religion, Daoism, to form a more harmonious counterpoint to Hegel's dialectic, the 'supreme point', and its resolution of opposing forces.[21] The importance of the supreme point is emphasised in the *International Encyclopaedia of Surrealism* (2019) whose editors aptly note: 'This statement may be regarded as the determining point of Surrealism in practice, a statement that no Surrealist could disagree with and the one upon which one has to fall back in seeking to understand whether particular manifestations can be regarded as belonging to surrealism or not'.[22] Moreover, the Daoist notion of *wuwei* 无为 (non-action) was known to the Surrealists as early as 1925, chiming with the movement's revolution of the mind.[23] Many Surrealists, such as André Masson, Michel Leiris and Antonin Artaud, were aware of and sporadically cited such Daoist thought from the beginnings of the movement. However, a Surrealist interest in Daoism peaked after the Second World War (1939–1945), at which juncture Breton's interest was stirred. In sum, it is undeniable that there are a multitude

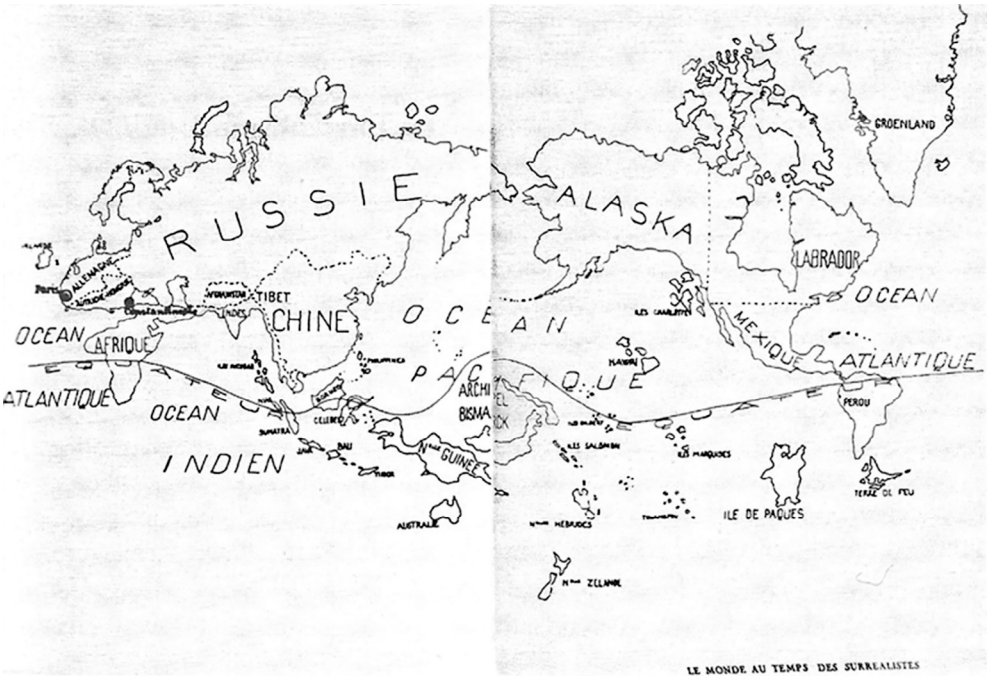

Figure 0.1 Anon. *The Surrealist Map of the World* in *Variétés* (1929): 26–27

of historically acknowledged yet conceptually intrinsic linkages between the traditions of Chinese thought and Surrealism which remain largely unstudied.

This volume, the first full-length monograph dedicated to Surrealism and China in any language[24], will argue that these fundamental echoes between Surrealism and Chinese traditional thought are augmented by historical vicissitudes that catalysed recourse to the movement. In so doing, Chinese artists interculturally express their psychological disposition amidst a staggering trajectory of regime change from colonialism to communism and capitalism over the course of a century (1924–2024), Surrealism having now celebrated its centenary year. Consequently, there are two distinct levels of Surrealist reception in China: intrinsic conceptual ties in terms of automatism, transgressing the real, dialectics, spirituality and psychological interiority as well the historically contingent: revolutionary fervour, indirect critiques of authority, assertions of freedom, artistic experimentation and the processing of trauma. These factors have spurred the enthusiastic reception of Surrealism in China that has nevertheless been marginalised in terms of the movement's cultural memory.

Analysing Surrealism in a Chinese context bolsters an ever-growing literature on international Surrealism of which the recent exhibition *Surrealism Beyond Borders* (2021, Tate Modern/MoMa) was instrumental in fomenting. That said, Chinese Surrealism has heretofore been ignored in favour of its neighbour Japan, with several book-length studies on the topic,[25] something this project shall redress. In the recent *International Encyclopaedia of Surrealism* (2019), despite the truly impressive scope of the publication, the editors note: 'in Asia, Japan apart, it (Surrealism) has only had sporadic resonance'.[26] There is no section dedicated to China, but one entry written

on Daoism.[27] Conversely, I hope to show that Surrealism has resonated with China over the course of a century. The presence of Surrealism in East Asia, while contributing to global non-western narratives, has been largely confined to a nation that oppressed and partially colonised China. Nevertheless, many Japanese Surrealists became critical of their nation's colonial endeavours and engaged in indirect critique countering the occupation of Manchuria in Northern China from 1932 onwards. Yet, as Chinghsin Wu has noted, the influence of Japanese Surrealists was largely omitted by early Chinese Surrealists owing to rising anti-Japanese sentiment at the time.[28] In a post-war context, art histories on Surrealism published in China, the 1980s being a boom period in this respect, were largely predicated on western, and occasionally Latin American, contributions to the movement.

Research on European Surrealist visions of China destabilises outmoded visions of core and periphery in favour of cross-cultural exchange. In this multilingual study, unexploited archival and primary sources are consulted in Chinese, French and English to form the first monograph on Surrealism in the People's Republic of China, building upon my previous research addressing Chinese Surrealism in the Republican era (1911–1949). This work will challenge the canon that situates Surrealism within a lineage of purely Western thought, arguing that whilst western in origin, Surrealism chimed with many elements of Chinese concepts, traditional (Daoist) and, from certain quarters, political (Maoist). Equally, this volume expands upon canonical, orthodox uses of the term 'Surrealism' in the early-to-mid twentieth century to account for a diversity of interpretations beholden to its international expanse.[29] Finally, whilst Surrealism was an anti-colonial movement, staging an exhibition in Paris on this theme in 1931, Surrealism's cultural memory necessitates decolonisation, the majority of research in the field still revolving around Euro-American artists.

Legacies of Early Chinese Surrealism: triangulating colonialism, capitalism and communism

The reception of western-born Surrealism in China can be traced back to the Republican Era (1911–1949) during the 1930s and Shanghai's Former French Concession as explored in my previous volume *Surrealism from Paris to Shanghai* (2024). Whilst Surrealism was a fervently anti-colonial movement, it is somewhat ironic that it gained ground in China within the artistic infrastructure of a colonial entity. The former French Concession was a hub for artist studios, the francophone Aurore University, publication houses and exhibitions with relaxed regulations surrounding censorship. Many Chinese artists chose to study abroad in France and Japan, coming into direct contact with Surrealism, converging upon Shanghai's French concession after their return. There were two art collectives of particular importance in this respect, the Storm Society (1932–1935) and the Chinese Independent Art Association (1934–1935). The Storm Society was founded in Shanghai by Pang Xunqin (who studied abroad in Paris) and Ni Yide (who studied abroad in Japan). Their manifesto, written by Ni, advocated for 'the desires of surrealism'.[30] Furthermore, many contemporaneous commentators couched Pang Xunqin's work as Surrealist.[31] The Chinese Independent Art Association was founded in Tokyo by Zhao Shou in 1934 as a group of study abroad classmates. Upon returning to China, the group held exhibitions in Guangzhou and Shanghai whilst Zhao translated Breton's first Surrealist manifesto into Chinese as part of the group's special edition of *Yifeng* magazine in 1935. Here, several articles were published to introduce Surrealism to a Chinese audience.

This group, particularly their leader Zhao Shou, believed that Surrealism 'combined an Eastern spirit with western techniques'.[32] Beyond these groups, Surrealism was widely disseminated and could equally be found in fine art photography as well as *manhua*, the Chinese cartoon medium, with periodicals being an important receptacle for a visual and theoretical encounter with the movement.

Whilst I have given a detailed history of Chinese Surrealism in Republican era Shanghai through my previous book, here I expand upon the unremitting legacy left by Chinese Modern artists in an existence triangulated by three ideological frameworks: colonialism, communism and capitalism. Indeed, Chinese Modern artists reflected on the rise of communism while operating in a capitalist society with semi-colonial concessions. The Japanese occupation of Manchuria (1932) served as a precursor for coveting the entirety of the nation under the yolk of the so-called 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere', fully fledged war with Japan breaking out in 1937. At present, China is a nation ruled by a Communist Party which embraces a market economy with state oversight whilst accusations of neo-colonial foreign policy abound regarding China's Belt and Road Initiative (2013 to present),[33] although this stance largely emanates from western nations.

In 1928, the brutal Shanghai massacre took place, where, in cahoots with colonial concessions, the ruling Nationalist party massacred thousands of Chinese Communist Party members who had been unionising, a debacle which led to their enforced ruralisation. It follows that expressions of communist sympathy were dangerous and largely confined to either the indirect or the underground. For example, one could view Storm Society member Pang Xunqin's *Composition* (1935) through a revolutionary Surrealist prism (Figure 0.2). Here, the head of a peasant women is ensconced

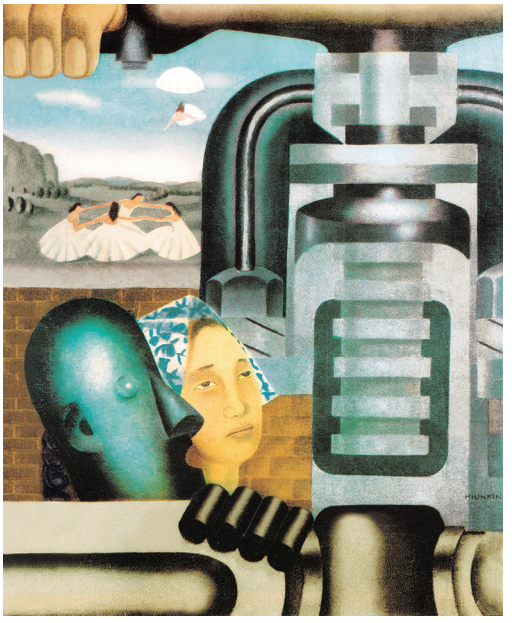

Figure 0.2 Pang Xunqin (1935) *Untitled* (Composition) (oil on canvas). Work destroyed in 1966, available as the front cover of *Duli Manhua* (Independent manga), October 1935, Issue 4. Courtesy of Pang Hiunkin (Pang Xunqin) Archives at the Li Ching Cultural and Educational Foundation

amidst machinery, whilst the symbolism behind the work is described by Pang himself in his autobiography: 'The Robot symbolises the advanced industrialisation of the capitalist countries, the peasant woman symbolises he backward Chinese Agrarian society and the three fingers stood for the forces of imperialism, reactionary politics and feudalism'.[34] Moreover, a palpable oneirism pierces the piece; Pang positions a parachuting dancer, ostensibly indicating the hedonistic desires of China's middle class, as a contrapuntal element to offset the disembodied head pertaining to the proletariat. As such, Pang's *Composition* gestures towards a reconciliation between Freud and Marx in Republican era China.

In 1930, friends who were part of the Taimeng painting society with which Pang was associated were found in possession of Japanese Communist Party materials and arrested. Later that year, Pang was also detained by French concession police operating on behalf of the Nationalist government, but he managed with legal intervention to temporarily leave Shanghai,[35] demonstrating the precarious conditions Chinese left-wing artists were operating under even in the more liberal concession areas. The Taimeng painting society disbanded at that point[36] as a mere association with communism was incredibly perilous.

Criticism, directly or indirectly, of western cultural impositions from the concession system, can be found in many works of this era. This was not something that the Nationalist government sought to suppress given their anti-colonial stance and impetus to abolish the unequal treaties. Pang's *Such is Shanghai* (1932) is a case in point. Here, superimposed signifiers of gambling and vice commingle with vestiges of Chinese culture embodied by a Chinese opera singer (Figure 0.3). Moreover, the work *A Gentleman's Leisure* (1931) is set in a casino wherein Western gambling paraphernalia coalesces with Mah Jong tiles (Figure 0.4). A florally embellished opium pipe bisects the composition, clutched by an inebriated prostitute who brandishes traditional long-pointed nails to brazenly invoke wealth. Unlike *Such is Shanghai,* more attention is paid to facial expression, shaping and coloration. The gentleman gazes downwards in self-pity whilst the lurid countenance of the prostitutes highlights the

Figure 0.3 (Left) Pang Xunqin (1932), *Such is Shanghai* (watercolour on paper). Lost in 1937. Courtesy of Pang Hiunkin (Pang Xunqin) Archives at the Li Ching Cultural and Educational Foundation

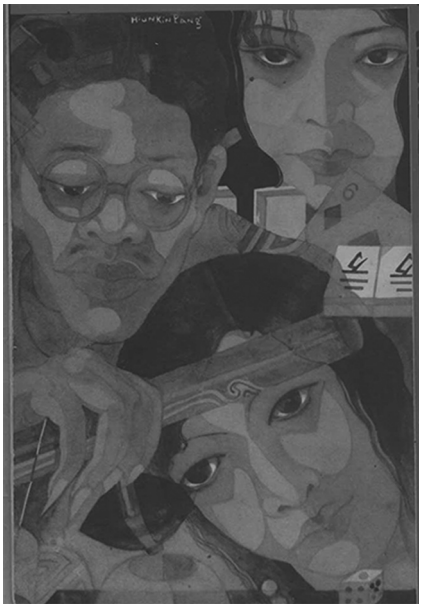

Figure 0.4 (right) Pang Xunqin (1931) *A Gentleman's Leisure* (watercolour on paper) Available as front cover of *Manhua Shenghuo* (Manga and Life) 1934, Issue 4. Courtesy of Pang Hiunkin (Pang Xunqin) Archives at the Li Ching Cultural and Educational Foundation

lasciviousness of the scene. Globular daubs of light permeate the protagonist's faces, to mirror a quasi-hallucinogenic, disorientating, shape-shifting effect borne out of the intoxicating nature of opiate substances. Indeed, the First Opium War (1839–1942) induced the creation of foreign concessions. The government of the Qing dynasty attempted to ban this illicit substance owing to the damage it caused to the health of its citizens. However, cognisant of an economic downturn, western powers spearheaded by Britain entered into conflict with China granted the financial losses banning opium would entail, resulting in the enforced establishment of treaty ports. Pang, in an ostensibly anti-colonial gesture, is visualising the human cost of such a subjugating power dynamic.

During the early-to-mid 1930s, Western capitalist excess was often juxtaposed with the looming threat of Japanese totalitarian desires to colonise the entirety of China as these two competing forms of colonialism jostled for space. A work by Lang Jingshan (Figure 0.5), a fine art photographer influenced not only by Chinese literati painting but also Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp, was printed in the periodical *Shidai* (Modern Miscellany) (1933).[37] This photomontage unambiguously juxtaposes voyeurism with militarism: a Chinese nude *in lecto recumbit* and a contingent of marching Japanese soldiers depict the contradictions of Chinese society at the time. The soporific nude suggests a flagrant naïveté apropos the possibility of conflict, yet the thinly veiled theatrics of semi-colonial hedonism would soon come to an end.

In September 1938, the Parisian Surrealists collectively penned a tract entitled 'Ni de Votre Guerre ni de Votre Paix' (Neither Your War nor Your Peace), written in response to the Munich accords where France, Italy and the UK credulously attempted to subdue Hitler through the relinquishing of Czechoslovakian territory to Germany. Rather than distinguish fascism, here, the entirety of Europe is couched as totalitarian owing to its

Figure 0.5 Lang Jingshan *Untitled* (Photomontage) in *Shidai Huabao* (Modern Miscellany) Volume 4 Issue 5 Courtesy of Lang Yuwen

admittedly unrelenting imperialism. The 1919 Treaty of Versailles is cited as evidence in this respect, tarnishing European nations with the epithet of 'pseudo-democratic'.[38] From a Chinese perspective, Shandong, instead of being retroceded to China was transferred from the aegis of Germany to Japan, provoking widespread protests amongst Chinese peoples. The Surrealists directly reference this event noting 'ils livrent la Chine à l'impérialisme japonais' (They have delivered China into the hands of Japanese Imperialism).[39] Here, the Surrealists appear to argue that through establishing a semi-colonial presence in China via concessions, forcing the signing of unequal treaties as a corollary of defeat in the Opium Wars in 1842, western powers ostensibly legitimised and paved the way for Japan's desires to colonise the entirety of China. In China, the Treaty of Versailles sparked off the May 4th movement wherein, dissatisfied with a fledgling government unable to overturn such a decision, a rejection of Confucian values towards authority paved the way for a blossoming of individual rights. The Surrealist group also note that ambivalence towards the Spanish Civil War catalysed the rise of fascism owing to Europe's fear of a proletarian revolution and call for the liquidation of capitalism. Yet, the overarching same-ification of Europe in this Surrealist tract has been rightly critiqued by José Pierre who notes 'a strange blindness' vis-à-vis the threat imposed by Hitler.[40]

After the Second Sino-Japanese war broke out in 1937, the rationality of realism was propounded by former Storm Society member Ni Yide as the most appropriate way to tackle the Japanese menace.[41] However, the psychological effects of conflict could not be fully suppressed. Chinese Independent Art Association member Liang Xihong and He Tiehua created a mural entitled *Rebuild the Nation* (1939), which has been compared with both Japanese and French Surrealist works, notably collage elements from Koga

Harue's *Sea* and Pierre Roy's *Honour to Unlucky courage*, which was on display at the Paris/Tokyo exhibition in Japan in 1932 that Liang would have seen first-hand.[42] There are indeed some similarities in terms of an emphasis on factories and construction in both works and a lighthouse in the case of Harue. The vertiginous collage becomes flooded with ciphers of the modern city, notably rebuilt with western architectural tropes, superimposed skyscrapers and bridges, whilst a towering protagonist stares forthrightly into the distance, hinting that the western world continued to be perceived as synonymous with 'progress' as opposed to traditional Chinese culture. Concurrently, by metaphorically 'building upon' Surrealist imagery from Japanese and French sources, such practice intimates anti-colonial intent through reclaiming the colonisers' iconography. Collage elements agglomerate in a dreamlike vision of China's rebirth and triumph over tragedy, combining avant-garde techniques with a didactic message.

In a Chinese context, the end of the Second Sino-Japanese war and a global World War Two in 1945 failed to mark a denouement in domestic conflict. The Nationalist and Communist Parties had unfinished business to attend to. Amidst the Civil War (1945–1949), the artist Huang Xinbo, commonly known for his socialist woodblock prints, succumbed to painting a Surrealist composition entitled *Seeds* (1947)[43] (Figure 0.6). Amidst a barren landscape populated by carcasses of rotting trees, a hyperbolically enlarged man outstretches his arms, his inflated body gesturing towards extreme anxiety, yet he can but cling to the vapour of the clouds. To offset this tragedy, another pair of outstretched hands emerges from the rubble in a motion of redemption. As Welsh notes, Huang Xinbo was a follower of left-wing intellectual Lu Xun and during the Sino-Japanese war worked in Yunnan province where he made anti-Japanese propaganda.[44] Yet, during the Civil War, his turn towards Surrealism was reviled by the Chinese Communist Party, which met in 1948 to criticise his works given their deviation from accepted norms.[45] Before the founding of the PRC in 1949, Maoist Communist Party officials were already passing judgement on the appropriateness of artworks, enacting censorship.

As the case of Huang Xinbo demonstrates, the legacy of Chinese Modern artists who encountered Surrealism before the founding of the People's Republic of China is complex.

Figure 0.6 Huang Xinbo (1947) *Seeds* (oil on canvas), The Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Works considered to be modernist or avant-garde were roundly condemned as 'Formalist Art of the Modern Bourgeoise' in a 1958 Article by Wang Qi, with Surrealism one of the movements mentioned. Beyond reducing a philosophy to formalism, a fundamental misreading of Surrealism is espoused as the author states for the Surrealists there are two separate worlds: 'Beyond the real world, there is another unreal world which for the Surrealists takes precedence'.[46] In fact, as per the 'supreme point' of Surrealism, the real and the imagined are not contradictions. The revolutionary facets of Surrealism are completely omitted from the article, and the movement's cosmopolitanism (along with other avant-garde movements) is also denounced as serving capitalism through the erosion of national characteristics.[47] There were, however, some notable exceptions to the rule during the Maoist era. Here, I focus on one example.

Archival documentation demonstrates that co-founder of the Storm Society and writer of their manifesto, Ni Yide, gave a series of lectures at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing between 1962 and 1963 which were recorded in writing.[48] Ni Yide's own art was more in keeping with Post-Impressionism than Surrealism, but he had written some important articles introducing the movement to a Chinese audience given his role as an art critic as well as a painter. A question was asked to Ni Yide regarding how one should respond to artists of the past. Ni replied that detailed research on our predecessors would sharpen one's own abilities and discernment. His response mentioned the work of Van Gogh, Impressionism and Picasso. Picasso had joined the French Communist Party in 1944 and as such a curated version of him was tolerated in the early years of Maoist China. In the official arts journal *Meishu*, his Surrealist-inflected works *Guernica* (1937) and *Massacre in Korea* (1951) were published in 1961.[49] Evidently, both works chimed with Communist Party ideals vis-à-vis the Spanish Civil War against fascism and anti-American sentiment during the Korean war, where Chinese troops had been sent into battle.

Craig Clunas kindly drew my attention to another periodical entitled *Meishu lilun ziliao* (Fine Art Theory Reference Materials), which in 1957 contained a thorough entry on the various aspects of Surrealism translated from the *American Encyclopaedia of Art*, published in 1946. Other entries were drawn from the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*. [50] However, as Clunas informed me, a caveat to the issue noted 'this US material is particularly problematic, it should be compared with the relevant entries in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, for purposes of criticism',[51] somewhat giving the authors a 'get out of jail free card' for publishing the entry. Criticism of modern art movements enabled publication of materials about them in the early years of the Maoist era, which may, paradoxically, have kept the flow of information going counter to common scholarly *table rase* notions that modernism died a death upon the founding of the PRC, only to be resurrected after the end of the Maoist era. In his lectures, Ni even dared to question the strength of Soviet Union paintings, instead advocating for works of Chinese traditional painting such as that of Shitao, who had combined what we would anachronistically refer to as abstraction with realism in his *10,000 Ugly Inkblots* as early as 1685. In this work, a countryside dwelling surrounded by trees becomes increasingly difficult to decipher as the figurative descends into abstract gestures of the brushstroke.[52] The selective tolerance of modern artists during the early Maoist years, Ni Yide becoming a Communist Party member upon the founding of the People's Republic of China, became extremely strained during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Ultimately, Ni passed away in 1970 as a result of torture. The leader of the Chinese Independent Art Association, Zhao Shou, continued his Surrealist practice during the Maoist era, only to be sentenced to reform through labour in 1958, painting clandestinely thereafter. His experience forms a case study in Chapter 1.

In a post-socialist context, most Chinese artists became *au fait* with the works of western, and occasionally Latin American, Surrealists, long before Chinese Surrealist activities in the 1930s revealed themselves. That said, articles pertaining to the Storm Society occasionally appeared in periodicals during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. For example, in 1978, the official government arts journal *Meishu* (Fine Arts) published a small paragraph commemorating Ni Yide and the work he had done for the Communist Party in an act of posthumous rehabilitation within the artistic community, condemning his persecution.[53] In 1981 an article was published in *Meishu* (Fine Arts) entitled 'Ni Yide's Oil Painting and the Storm Society'. The article broadly lauded Ni's work but noted that his contributions to the expression of social context were limited owing to his residing in semi-colonial Shanghai,[54] the influence of western art undermining his communist credentials. Upon Pang Xunqin's death in 1985, a tribute focussed on his time in the Storm Society was written by cartoonist Huang Miaozi.[55]

When interviewing avant-garde artists active during the 1980s, the reaction was somewhat lukewarm or vague apropos their 1930s predecessors. For example, Huang Rui, organiser of the Stars collective who mounted the first avant-garde exhibition in post-Socialist China, commented 'I didn't have a particularly great interest, they were already outmoded, we were not only concerned with art but with the spirit so our attitudes were not the same as theirs',[56] which seems to hint that the reception of these artists was limited to art for art's sake. Owing to a lack of press coverage surrounding their exploits, 1980s artists were not fully aware of the extent of dangerous political activity and societal engagement of their predecessors during the 1930s and this was not something reported by art journals in the 1980s. Admittedly, the political activity of the avant-garde of the 1930s was highly encoded compared with more outspoken collectives of the 1980s. Moreover, some of these artists later works, notably, Pang Xunqin, became more conservative during the Maoist era. In 1950, he denounced his former modernist activity in an act of self-criticism at the Hangzhou Art Academy.[57] Yet, an argument can be made that avant-garde artists during the post-socialist 1980s were operating with much greater levels of freedom than those active amidst the 1930s and the political complexities of semi-colonialism, anti-communist measures and rising tensions with Japan.

The handful of articles published during the 1980s relating to the Storm Society[58] or its protagonists is far outweighed by articles re-introducing western Surrealism, something that will be expanded upon in Chapters 4 and 5. The reasons for this are multifarious: many Chinese modern artists who remained in China upon the founding of the People's Republic, at least theoretically, supported Maoism (particularly during the more optimistic years of the Chairman's first five-year plan), despite the debacle of the Cultural Revolution and limitations on freedom of creative expression. This may not have appealed to the new generation for whom post-socialism granted greater freedom. For example, during the Maoist era Pang Xunqin accepted a faculty university position and threw himself into apolitical forms of design, destroying many of his earlier works, which could explain Huang Rui's reticence towards the 1930s avant-garde. Other artists of this era also decided to remain apolitical for self-protection. Secondly, Chinese artists of the 1980s wanted to forge a distinct identity to their 1930s predecessors, gaining revolutionary status as opposed to being erroneously historicised as a mere continuation of what had happened 50 years ago. Furthermore, 1930s Chinese Surrealists were working in a colonial context which brings back negative memories of the 'century of humiliation'.

Surrealism and the historical conditions of the People's Republic of China (1949 to present)

This volume charts Surrealist practices pertaining to the People's Republic of China (1949 to present) further to my previous short-form monograph on *Surrealism from Paris to Shanghai*, which focussed on Chinese Surrealism in the 1930s during the Republican era (1911–1949) after the fall of dynastical rule. Granted this is the first volume on the subject, a traditional approach of a historical chronology is likely to be the most informative for the reader. Firstly, I hope to prove that Chinese Surrealism during the Maoist era surprisingly chimed with revolutionary ideals yet jarred with the prevailing aesthetic regime which limited artistic freedom of expression. During the Second Sino-Japanese War, Mao's 'Yan'an Talks on Art and Literature' (1942) affirmed cultural forms must be 'fundamentally one of serving the masses'.[59] Mao's text was revised in 1953 with the notable inclusion of the term 'socialist realism' as opposed to his original term 'proletarian realism',[60] referring to a specific Soviet concept of didactic revolutionary art that Mao would later remould into a home-grown form of 'revolutionary romanticism'. This was 'no longer a realism that was naturalist in tendency. Rather, it gained spiritual connotations and provided a blueprint for the political vision of Socialism'.[61] Revolutionary romanticism became the mainstream trajectory of art practice during the Cultural Revolution. Yet there were nevertheless 'artists and cultural organisers who sidestepped the official taboo on modernism'.[62] International exchange continued with western countries during the Mao era and, referring to the 1970s when a spate of normalised international relations with China occurred, Andrews notes 'diplomatic concerns seem to have outweighed the artificial rules of soviet socialist realism'[63] on certain occasions.

Surrealism had its own role to play as a modernist undercurrent amidst communist hegemony. Interestingly, Mao notes in the Yan'an talks that 'one fundamental idea in Marxism–Leninism is that the objective determines the subjective; that is, the objective reality of class struggle and national struggle determines our thoughts and feelings'.[64] Interestingly, the Surrealists reversed this Marxist–Leninist dictum in accordance with their Freudian heritage through founder André Breton's notion of 'objective chance'. As Kadri lucidly puts it 'the notion of objective chance represents an acceptance of the fact that we have a responsibility for the world while also contributing to the production of the beautiful'.[65] Indeed, objective chance represented a combination of societal concerns and Freudian psychoanalysis. Breton noted that 'chance is the form making manifest the exterior necessity which traces its path in the human unconscious'.[66] As opposed to class struggle assuming the fulcrum of subjectivity, the psyche, for the Surrealists, constitutes the origin of an individual's world view. This is something that Breton explicates in his 1936 novel *Mad Love* as he relates objective chance to desire as a fundamentally individual yearning. Breton speaks of a 'grid which tells us in advance of our own acts'.[67] It is instructive to view this grid as our societal framework of reference, which from a stylistic and ideological standpoint in the Maoist era was socialist realism. Yet, as Kadri draws attention to, Breton declares 'objective chance which makes a mockery of what would have seemed most probable. Everything that human beings might want to know is written upon this grid in phosphorescent letters, in letters of desire'.[68] Hence, objective chance advocates that our individual subjectivity can ultimately undermine the governing forces of an era.

Love is represented the apotheosis of desire in Surrealism, yet Mao holds steadfast in his relation of love to class only; any other form of love such as 'love in the abstract' is denounced as 'influenced by the bourgeoise'.[69] As such, Surrealism advocated that

individual desire was the pathway towards collective revolution whereas Mao argued that any form of subjectivity must emanate from class struggle, representing an insuperable aporia between Surrealist thought and Maoist praxis. Yet, as Andrews convincingly argues, this continued latency of modernism in socialist China 'laid the groundwork, at least to some extent, for the explosion of the new art in the 1980s and thereafter'.[70]

This book, as opposed to jumping from the 1930s to the 1980s, dedicates three chapters to Mao-era Surrealism. Western Surrealist engagement with China was thoroughly split at this juncture between Dao and Mao. We will discuss European Surrealists who aligned Chinese traditional culture with Surrealist principles of automatism whilst Daoism provided a harmonious reinvigoration of Hegel's dialectic. In the wake of World War Two, it could well be that Daoism's cyclical vision of history rather than Hegel's insistence on linear progression appealed to the mood of the 1950s. We will also discuss figures such as Michel Leiris who attempted to relate traditional Chinese culture to Maoism, referencing notable instances of the Chinese Communist Party co-opting Daoist folklore in an appeal to the masses. Leiris visited China during Mao's First Five Year Plan, wherein huge economic progress was made. During the Cultural Revolution, however, the notion of 'spirit' would be transferred to the party itself, effectively banning all forms of religious practice.

Moving into the 1980s, an emphasis on repressed desires and the spiritual aspects of Surrealism came to the fore in what I believe formed a camouflaged riposte to the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), a form of 'psychological scar art'.[71] In 1982, the new constitution of the People's Republic of China deemed that 'ordinary people should enjoy freedom of religious beliefs'.[72] However, all Chinese Communist Party members, to this day, are forbidden from practising any religion as the party is officially atheist.[73] As such, the 1980s turn towards spirituality situated Surrealism as a practice that was tolerated yet not within mainstream official discourse. Gao Minglu, a curator and key cultural actor during the 1980s, termed a strand of artistic practice during this era as a form of 'metaphysical modernity' which he related to 'humanism' defined as 'an idealistic hope of producing a spiritual order in which a new future would be built'.[74] That said, Gao firmly dismisses 1980s artistic tendencies towards Surrealism noting:

> The unreal or dream scenes in the works of surrealism convey an irrational critique of the idealistic, progressive capitalist social modernity that had caused unprecedented human disasters, including the world war. This reversal between real and unreal, ideal and nonideal, cannot be found in the rationalist painting of China, for the latter conveys an integrative pursuit of the ideal in a harmonious but 'transrealistic' scene.[75]

Rationality, of course, is a western phenomenon decried by the Surrealists on multiple occasions as something that limits the imagination and does not appear to aptly convey 1980s artistic tendencies. Moreover, it is widely acknowledged that dreams contain elements of reality. As such, the 'unreal' is not equivalent to a 'dream'. Whilst Gao Minglu's pivotal insider role as a cultural actor and important scholarship should be thoroughly acknowledged, I instead argue for Chinese Surrealist artworks of the 1980s to be both highly socially contingent and spiritually invested. In a Surrealist dialectic, social reality was infused with imagination to enable a transgression of the real.

Mainstream artistic expression in China's post-socialist era was indeed typified by the reification of rationality: notably Deng Xiaoping's propagation of the 'Four Modernisations' in the fields of agriculture, industry, science and technology. These facets are

largely absent from Surrealist works of the 1980s as desire and spiritual beliefs take precedence. The 'Four Modernisations' were initially attributed to Zhou Enlai in 1964. After the Cultural Revolution, the political priority for Deng Xiaoping was economic development, which was considered more important than party ideology. In particular, the rehabilitation of intellectuals was vital in kick starting the knowledge economy and many restrictions were eased, helping stimulate a nascent, independent creative scene. However, the 1980s were not an era of untrammelled liberty. Between 1978 and 1979, the Democracy Wall movement emerged in Beijing whereby citizens put up posters in public to express societal and political critique. Initially condemning the 'Gang of Four',[76] infamous for political purges and their stranglehold on power during Cultural Revolution, Deng had tentatively supported activities surrounding the Democracy Wall as many of the texts recommended reforms to the existing system rather than its abolition. However, Wei Jingshen, a former Red Guard, argued that the 'fifth modernisation' should be that of democracy. Personally villifying Deng Xiaoping led to Wei's arrest and he was sentenced to 15 years in prison. This showed early in Deng's tenure that there were red lines that could not be crossed in spite of opening up.

Nevertheless, avant-garde art groups such as The Stars (1979–1983) and their leader Huang Rui were daring enough to mount their paintings and sculpture outside the National Art Gallery in Beijing before it was shut down after just three days. The banners they held up alongside their artwork were strident in tone: 'We want political democracy! We want artistic freedom!'[77] Their artworks did not envisage Deng's four modernisations, rather Surrealism played an important part in this early eschewal of political orthodoxy through employing the spiritual and desire-led aspects of the movement. In other collectives such as the Southwestern Art Association (1986–1988), a notable tendency towards animist belief systems of China's ethnic minority peoples provided a disconnect from rational economic imperatives whilst Surrealism's indirect character evaded censorship.

Other events would destabilise the relative liberalism of the 1980s. Firstly, the anti-spiritual pollution campaign (1983–1984) aimed to combat rising levels of western influence in China. It became clear that China's open-door policy to the West was intended for economic trade as opposed to a trade in ideas, yet the two are inevitably intertwined. The campaign led to fears regarding a resurgence of the Cultural Revolution, whilst foreign businesspeople doubted the stability of their investments; hence it soon came to an end.[78] As such, the anti-spiritual pollution campaign did accentuate censorship in artistic circles, but its ephemeral lifespan failed to stem the flow of western cultural influence during the 1980s when Surrealism reached its peak in China. The anti-bourgeois liberalisation campaign (1986–1987) was catalysed by the resignation of party general secretary Hu Yaobang, blamed for a rise in student protesters who rallied for further political freedoms. Such concessions could have derailed Deng's commitment to preserving communist ideology. Again, the movement was short-lived but student protests campaigning for democracy did not cease and ended in the cataclysmic events of Tiananmen Square (1989), where military suppression occurred, sparked off by Hu's death. Throughout the 1980s, a spiritual form of Surrealism rarely enabled direct commentary on these political issues but nevertheless pushed the limits of artistic freedom of expression in a fraught ideological environment oscillating between reform and constraint. In short, during the 1980s, Surrealism countered economic and political hegemony with the spirit through an anti-rational imperative, counter to Gao Minglu's nomenclature.

Throughout the 1990s, Chinese artists had recourse to Surrealist incongruous juxtapositions which were employed to parody increasingly polarising societal contradictions

between communism and capitalism. Owing to unrelenting commercialism, Gao Minglu boldly proclaims 'Modernism, the pursuit of spirit since the 1980s, died'.[79] My position is less absolutist here, following Rosella Ferrari's assertion that:

> The avant-garde is not dead. It has just – and justly – evolved. All we need is to acknowledge this transformation and reconceptualize our theoretical constructs as at once flexible and dialectical, and responsive to a dynamic of perpetual flux.[80]

The formal establishment of a 'socialist market economy' occurred in 1992. Moreover, the Chinese contemporary art market was established during the 1990s with the first auction held in 1996. Wu notes most of the buyers were 'foreign diplomats and expatriates who were living in China at the time'.[81] As such, it could be said that Chinese contemporary artists wanted to cater to western tastes at this juncture, something Shanghainese artist Shi Yong was not afraid of candidly admitting in an interview with me.[82] Yet, it does not follow that modernism ceased to exist, rather it transmogrified into a hybrid entity both complicit in and critical of the capitalist system it was subsumed by.

In the case of Surrealism, I argue that the movement combined the interiority of Freudian psychoanalysis with the commodity fetishism of pop art at this juncture. In the wake of Deng's infamous saying as part of his southern tour (1992) 'to get rich is glorious', capitalist signifiers were incongruously juxtaposed with Mao's image, perhaps indirectly parodying Deng's bifurcation from Mao's socialist legacy. Such tendencies also manifest the fact that a traumatic era of history, the Cultural Revolution, was still being psychologically processed. However, the focus on Mao equally reveals western audiences' limited framework of reference in relation to the People's Republic of China, largely confined to its founder. Indeed, the 1990s cemented China's status as a post-socialist society which comparative literature scholar Zhang deftly summarises as 'a tension-charged reality of mixed modes of production and value systems'.[83] Surrealist dialectics are utilised by Chinese artists to work through these multifarious paradoxes.

Finally, as China enters the twentieth century, Chinese contemporary art becomes institutionalised in the nation's increasing swathes of museums,[84] wherein it is deradicalised and contained. Equally, China is 'institutionalised' as a key figure on the world stage, becoming a member of the World Trade Organization in 2001 as well as hosting the Beijing Olympics in 2008. As Goldkorn notes 'In the first decade of the twenty-first century, China became the world's second-largest economy and the world's largest goods exporter. The country experienced the fastest growth in GDP per capita of any major economy in human history'.[85] Economic development did not, however, translate into prosperity for all. Premier Hu Jintao (2002–2012) conceived of a 'harmonious society' to tackle China's widening economic divide between rich and poor. The expansion of the middle class was accompanied by the plight of migrant labourers. Surrealism, which advocated the only form of worthwhile labour was that which is creative,[86] was reified by artist Cao Fei's dreamlike interventions into the factory space during the 2000s. Here, Chinese artists purported embrace of the West comes under scrutiny, directly subverting many Surrealist artworks. A pastiche of references becomes apparent within which Surrealism plays a prominent role. Surrealism, of course, had a long history of subverting the art historical canon and Chinese artists appear to be using Surrealist techniques to ironically assert their independence from the western avant-garde.

The Olympics of 2008 led to what Goldkorn terms 'an unprecedented amount of unsupervised intellectual and cultural activity'.[87] However, peaks are offset by troughs and soon the internet would be subject to intense censorship as all foreign social media was banned in 2009. When Xi Jinping came to power in 2013, Yang summarises his approach as 'freedom to make money and enjoy yourselves, so long as you keep out of politics'.[88] Surrealism, I would argue, provides a means for Chinese artists to make money, have fun (humour a key concept of the movement) and enact indirect inferences through recourse to the indistinct referents of the psyche. This enables contemporary Chinese artists to comment on a myriad of socio-political issues facing present day China in terms of pollution, international relations, AI, virtuality, the Chinese dream and national identity. In relation to the latter, Pollack astutely affirms that post-millennial Chinese artists are beginning to question being labelled by the nation state to which they belong as citizens.[89] Surrealism itself was a thoroughly cosmopolitan movement. In an early tract entitled 'Revolution Now and Forever!' the Parisian Surrealist group assert 'What sickens us most is that the idea of the nation state is so beastly, the least philosophical idea with which we try to reconcile our spirit'.[90] Chinese artists want to be perceived as more than a product of a particular cultural system and deal with global issues that transcend cultural specificity.

The advent of the internet, whilst subject to censorship in a Chinese context, nevertheless opens the door to the global art world ushering in a flood of information. Myriad artistic movements from all geographies are available at one's fingertips, engendering cross-pollination between Surrealism and Contemporary Chinese Art. Moreover, a future-facing form of Surrealism becomes apparent whereby new uses of the movement's original principles come to the fore; AI dialogues with Surrealist automatism, Daoism's 'following nature' 顺其自然 (*shunqi ziran)* is instrumentalised as a plea to save the environment, jet-propelled flight inaugurates an airborne urban *flâneur* and notions of 'chance encounter' become the preserve of omnipotent search engines.

Ultimately, my research has identified two diverse strands of the reception of Surrealism in the People's Republic of China: an art historical journey from revolution, spirituality, parody to anti-canonisation and an intrinsic relationality with Chinese traditi onal culture, albeit a historically recognised one, together paving the way for multiple hybrid creations. As such, I assert that the reception of Surrealism vis-à-vis China can be distilled in the terminology 'historico-intrinsic relations'.

Chinese Surrealism beyond style

Studying Surrealism in a global context inevitably leads to introspection on fundamental definitions of the movement. André Breton originally defined Surrealism as

> psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express – verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner- the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.[91]

Most Surrealist scholars would hereby concur that Surrealism is not a style as one could perhaps argue for an 'ism' such as Cubism, but rather a philosophy in its own right. Indeed, the second definition Breton gives of Surrealism is classified as 'ENCYCLOPEDIA, *philosophy*' stating the movement is:

> based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought. It tends to ruin once and for all other psychic mechanisms and to substitute itself for them in solving all the principal problems of life.[92]

Indeed, in the relatively recent *International Encyclopaedia of Surrealism* (2019), possibly the most ambitious and comprehensive survey of Surrealism to date, the editors together note it is:

> not enough for an artist to evolve a supposedly Surrealist style, since besides all else, such a thing is contrary to the very spirit of Surrealism itself, which calls for constant invention: one can only be Surrealist if one pushes the boundaries of what Surrealism has been in order to advance the notion that Surrealism is not what *is*, but rather what will *be*.[93]

I hope to prove that, whilst stylistic borrowing has undoubtedly occurred, Chinese artists have pushed the boundaries of the movement by commingling traditional culture with a revolt against historical circumstance concluding in a thoroughly future-facing iteration of the movement as we will see in the final chapter.

Yet, in terms of their rapport with the western avant-garde, Chinese contemporary artists have been heretofore accused of 'copying'. During the Republican era, certain authors such as Crozier argued against its influence in Republican China, stating 'it did not catch on', relating it mostly to stylistic borrowing and couched it as part of the 'ransacking the field of European modernism'.[94] Thankfully, beyond my own book, there are others who have noted the influence of Surrealism at this juncture in all its conceptual expanse; Bevan has addressed the *manhua* (cartoon medium) in periodicals and its propensity towards Shanghainese social satire.[95] Schafer has explicated how Surrealism was utilised in the short stories of Shi Zhecun through the Freudian Uncanny and use of montage to generate a sense of 'spatial displacement' in Shanghai.[96] Wu has deftly charted the Chinese independent art association (1934–1935) and their linkages with, yet repression of, Japanese Surrealism through their experience of studying abroad in the context of tensions before the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War.[97]

There is scant extant literature to date concentrating on Chinese Surrealism in a post-1949 context. However, that which has been heretofore produced appears to view Surrealism as merely a vehicle for stylistic borrowing. Beyond my own work, the most comprehensive overview of Surrealism in a Chinese context to my knowledge, is a 100-page Chinese-language PhD thesis covering the 1930s to 1999 by Minjung Joo, which is entitled 'Chinese Surreal visual language: modern art knowledge generation research' (2016). Here, Chinese Surrealism is analysed in accordance with Alfred Barr's table produced in the catalogue of his aforementioned exhibition 'Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism', which summarises Surrealist artistic techniques.[98] Of these, Zhu concludes that the notions of 'floating' 悬浮 (*xuanfu*), 'exaggeration' 夸张 (*kuazhang*) and 'metamorphosis' 变形 (*bianxing*) underpin works of the 'Chinese surreal'[99] concluding that 'floating' is the most important as she cites 'bird, cloud and other natural symbols, spaceships, planes and other symbols of technological development, as well as traditional myths such as flying apsaras etc promote discussion on the many possibilities of Surreal language'.[100] This is an interesting discovery, and whilst I do not wish to invalidate such an approach, a singular focus on the stylistic attributes of Surrealism does not attest the range and reach of

the movement in a Chinese context. There are clearly conceptual resonances between Chinese and European Surrealists. This present volume naturally references style in relation to canonised Surrealists that Chinese artists became au fait with but does not regard it as a focus. The original Parisian group were a heterogenous coterie in this respect, signature tropes ranging from cloudscapes to melting clocks.

The majority of Joo's thesis focusses in on what she has rightly termed the apogee of Surrealist activity in China: the 1980s with a particular focus on the work of Wang Guangyi.[101] Unfortunately, no key primary texts that provided the philosophical basis for Surrealism beyond the first manifesto are cited alongside just seven periodical articles from this key decade. There is not much historical context present in the work compounded by a somewhat unilateral statement that 'Chinese Surreal Artistic language comes from the West'.[102] What Zhu's thesis does however, is move beyond notions of a 'generalised modernism' vis-à-vis contemporary Chinese art. Casual statements such as Yi Ying's belief that 'During the 1980s, the modern art movement copied western modern art'[103] and Gao Minglu's more ardent stance affirming 'in actual practice, the predominant ideology was "importism", the borrowing, copying and outright theft of ideas from western art'[104] need to be thoroughly questioned. Many discussions focussed on 1980s China seem to adopt such an erroneous stance which again, much like the 1930s, leads to accusations of pillaging rather than making concrete and informed choices amongst a flurry of information pertaining to different artistic currents emanating from the West. Chinese artists clearly sieved through this information which both explained Surrealist principles as well as reinvigorating certain visual stimuli of western Surrealist artworks. As we shall see, during the 1980s, particular collectives harboured preferences for specific facets of Surrealism and I would venture to add that out of all western avant-garde movements, Surrealism was that which that chimed most convincingly with traditional Chinese thought.

Joo prefers the term 'Surreal' as opposed to 'Surrealist'. There is not scope in this present volume to explore works that align with the term 'surreal'. Zhu views the 'surreal' as a style or a 'language' 语言 (*yuyan*) to use her own terminology. Carroll goes further and has described this term helpfully as follows:

> to be surreal in the appropriate critical sense, the image or object is not simply weird or out of the ordinary. It also involves an incongruous juxtaposition that is somehow uncanny: oneiric, incredible, astonishing, otherworldly (…) affectively arresting and somewhat mesmerising. These are the marks of the surreal as an aesthetic predicate: they do not amount to necessary and sufficient conditions but interestingly they do accord with the way in which the twentieth century Surrealists thought of the aesthetic experience.[105]

I am not in any way against utilising the 'surreal' as a method through which to analyse modern and contemporary Chinese visual culture broadly conceived, moving beyond the limitations of style. I am particularly interested in how a 'surreal' method, combined with historical analysis, subsumes contradictions at various historical junctures in a Chinese context. In fact, this has been the subject of my recently edited volume *Magical Metropolis: The Shanghai Surreal*, which places the cityscape in dialogue with the surreal as a methodology to work through the dialectical contractions that have typified Shanghai's dynamic development over the course of a century.[106]

An important Chinese-specific example of the 'surreal' is postulated by Joo through a propaganda poster from the Great Leap Forward (1958–1962) where communes collectivised agricultural production. In order to meet unattainable production targets, crop yields were exaggerated by local cadres whilst food supplies were mismanaged by commune leaders. Soviet experts also gave poor advice and together these factors led to a horrific famine. Joo gives the example of hyperbolically enlarged corn[107] as an 'ideal' 理想 (*lixiang*).[108] This sort of artistic practice could certainly be viewed as 'surreal', but it was neither the intention of the propaganda poster maker to dialogue with the art-historical movement of Surrealism (as did underground modernists during the Mao era), nor was it supposed to be viewed in such a way by the masses. This particular volume focusses on the evidentially Surrealist as a fundamental basis for further, broader research. It is worth briefly glossing the Chinese term for Surrealism 超现实主义 (*chaoxianshizhuyi*), which literally translates as beyond-reality-ism whereas Surrealism is a reconciliation of the real and the imagined. This can often lead to substantial mis-readings.

It could of course be argued that nothing about socialist realism or revolutionary romanticism was in fact realistic at all and the same premise could be applied to all forms of propaganda. As such, whilst certainly meriting analysis within the purview of the 'surreal', the notion of a 'Chinese Surreal', falls outside the remit of this present volume but should perhaps be considered as a methodological prism of analysis in the same way that Surrealism could be utilised as an urban theory.[109] Instead, the volume is the first dedicated to explicating a largely unchartered path of engagement between art historical Surrealism and China, which can subsequently serve to contextualise a broader expanse of activity in the realm of visual culture that embodies the 'surreal'.

Beyond Joo's thesis, there are other authors who have mentioned the phenomenon of Surrealism in the PRC but not in a sustained way. There does, however, aside from Gao Minglu, appear to be a scholarly consensus that Surrealism was influential during the 1980s with Chinese art historian Lu Peng commenting that it was 'universal' at this juncture.[110] In the context of European Surrealist engagement with China, there has not been a systematic review of Surrealism's engagement with Daoism vis-à-vis primary sources, although Guy Girard has written a useful primer on conceptual resonances between Daoism and Surrealism.[111] Although brief, the rapport between Surrealism and Chinese calligraphy has recently gained ground through the efforts of Didier Ottinger's exhibition catalogue,[112] whilst Peng Feng has coined the concept 'Surrealist Pop', although he situates this phenomenon in the 2000s whereas I conceive of it in the 1990s.[113] Yet, beyond these nascent contributions, there has been no substantive analysis dedicated to revealing the rapport between Surrealism and the PRC at large.

This volume draws upon a holistic, mixed methods approach principally underpinned by primary content as opposed to the superimposition of extraneous frameworks. This is supplemented by archival research in Brussels, Paris and Hong Kong. Primary source materials generally emanate from contemporaneous periodicals until the 1990s, written largely in either French or Chinese, before the internationalisation of the 'global contemporary' promoted a greater amount of English language scholarship. Artist interviews were conducted primarily in person (Beijing and Shanghai) where possible but online where circumstances could not allow. Interviews were largely conducted in Chinese but also one in French and one in English. Understandably, there is a lot of extant literature that pertains to the activities of discrete Surrealist groupings throughout the world. The only two Surrealist groups to be identified per se in a Chinese context are the Chinese Independent Art Association (1934–1935) and

the Jiangsu Surrealist Group (later Red Travels) (1986–1988). However, this is not a limiting factor; Surrealism becomes a common bond between many Chinese artists expressing both intrinsic linkages to traditional culture whilst reacting to their contemporaneous circumstances, a red thread through all the chapters of this volume.

To move beyond notions of Chinese Surrealism as pure style, each chapter of the book chimes with a core Surrealist concept, charting the metamorphosis of Surrealism in China to meet the demands of different historical eras, in ascending order: objective chance, automatism, revolution, desire, spirituality, dark humour and critiquing the art historical canon. Beyond these seven core tenets of Surrealism, holistically speaking, the other overarching Surrealist principle that is key to this volume is the movements international expanse. In 1936 at the International Surrealist Exhibition in London, Breton proclaims: 'Under the banner of Surrealism, the aspirations of innovative writers and artists from all countries hope to be unified. This unification, far from being a unification of style, responds to a new common consciousness of life itself.'[114] As such, international Surrealism is not intended to be predicated on stylistic similarities but of resonances at a philosophical level. Interdisciplinary secondary literature is drawn from cosmopolitan political theory, global art history, French studies, Chinese studies and Surrealist studies to aptly reflect Surrealism's expansive but diffuse influence in a Chinese context and the global significance of this. In particular, I have previously utilised cosmopolitan political theory as a prism through which to analyse global Surrealist photographic practice,[115] and this approach remains highly relevant a Chinese context. One of the main tensions in the field of international Surrealism I have identified vacillates between universality and cultural specificity and the same applies to cosmopolitan political theory. There is a notable division between a Kantian 'principal of humanity as an end in itself'[116] and contemporary cosmopolitan theorists such as Seyla Benhabib who focus on the 'concrete other' and the idiosyncratic lived experience of people from different cultures.[117] The same endgame plays out in the field of contemporary Chinese art.

Chinese Surrealism: Dao, Mao, now

Chapter 1 considers clandestine and unofficial Surrealist practices by artists who had direct encounters with Surrealism through study abroad during the Republican Era, Zhao Shou (Japan) and Sha Qi (Belgium). Their work is considered through the Surrealist concept 'objective chance' relating individual subjectivity and societal concerns. Situated in the context of a burgeoning literature on modernism the Mao era, this chapter questions how Surrealism countered socialist realism whilst ideologically remaining aligned with socialist principles. Parallels with the stance of Latin American Surrealist-affiliated artists are forwarded, Diego Riviera's arguably Surrealist murals being shown in Maoist China in 1956. Chapter 2 unearths tensions in post-war European Surrealism between Maoism and a craze for traditional Chinese thought. Breton's engagement with Daoism is traced alongside his refutation of Mao. Calligraphy, traditionally practised by many Daoist and Buddhist monks is aligned with the Surrealist concept of automatism and *qiyun shengdong*. I chart three waves of Surrealist calligraphic practice. The first are ancient Chinese calligraphers cited by Surrealists themselves whose wild cursive script bore only a tentative relation to the character. The second wave constitutes European Surrealists, who experimented with Chinese calligraphy in a post-war context through the creation of illegible characters. Finally, the third wave constitutes contemporary Chinese artists who, referencing Surrealism, continue to create pseudo characters,

represented by Gu Wenda and Gu Gan. Chapter 3 examines two European Surrealists who were granted rare access to Maoist China, Michel Leiris and Marcel Mariën. Leiris travelled to China in the 1950s and lauded the industrial rebuilding of the nation and the betterment of the masses. He attempted to reconcile this with mythologies of traditional China whilst Mariën, travelling in the early 1960s, became rapidly disillusioned with the regime owing to the constraints placed on individual expression. Comparing both authors enables the envisaging of how revolutionary Surrealist concepts fared against the empirical praxis of Communism in a Chinese context.

Chapters 4 and 5 both consider how Contemporary Chinese artists unearthed the past trauma of the Cultural Revolution whilst reacting to newfound societal freedoms. Chapter 4 forms an overview of Surrealist activity in the 1980s which is couched as the expression of repressed desire after the Cultural Revolution in the broadest sense: political, physical and metaphysical. Many Surrealist works and related writings could be found in a burgeoning periodical press not dissimilar to the 1930s in an era of relative liberalism. Chapter 5 focusses on two particular art collectives the 'Red Travels' 红色旅 (*Hongse lu*) and 'The Northern Art Group' 北方艺术群体 (*Beifang yishu qunti*), who made consistent use of Surrealism from a spiritual perspective counter to the modernising tendencies of the 1980s but also as a riposte against the repression of religion during the Cultural Revolution. A move away from viewing these groups as 'rational' as per Gao Minglu's nomenclature is promoted.

Chapter 6 considers the emergence of a hybrid avant-garde genre termed 'Surrealist Pop' where the psyche aligns with consumer imperatives. The term 'Surrealist Pop' has already been proposed by Peng Feng in relation to similarities between artists of the 2000s and an underground scene in Los Angeles which Peng admits is purely coincidental.[118] However, from an art-historical perspective, the advent of 'surrealist pop' during the 1960s in a western context is compared with a resonating tendency in 1990s China, combining a direct political critique of commerciality and stardom with Freudian psychoanalytic elements. I assert that the legacy of the Cultural Revolution and a critique of the Western art market are equally apparent. Chapter 7 demonstrates how Chinese Surrealist artists begin to use the techniques of Western Surrealism against itself in anti-canonical gestures, the presence of Chinese artists becomes more globally recognised. Much like famous Surrealists such as Duchamp[119] took aim at Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (c.1503–1506), and Man Ray Ingres' *The Valpinçon Bather* (1808), Chinese artists, in turn, begin to parody the canonical status of Surrealist artworks through methods of subversion that undermines western Surrealist canonicity. Moreover, I analyse how the cultural memory of Surrealism is becoming curatorially framed in a Chinese context. For example, Marxism and Dali's shameless commerciality, two polarising aspects of Surrealism, have been utilised depending on the nature of the institution. Finally, Chinese Surrealism remains a method of enacting societal critique, dialoguing with contemporary urgencies in a post-socialist Chinese society, stemming not from class struggle as a point of departure but rather the desires of the individual psyche.

Notes

1 See Richardson, Michael. 2016 'The Supreme Point' in Fijalkowski, K. and M. Richardson eds. *Surrealism: Key Concepts*. London: Routledge, pp.248–255.
2 Breton, André, Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane. 1972. *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 1st ed. as an Ann Arbor paperback ed. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
3 Eburne, Jonathan. 2016 'Heraclitus, Hegel and Dialectical Understanding' in Fijalkowski, K. and M. Richardson *Surrealism: Key Concepts*. New York: Routledge, p.30.

4 Breton, André, Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane. 1972. *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, p.153.
5 Ibid. p.128.
6 See the exhibition catalogue Barr, Alfred ed. 1936 *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
7 Breton, André. 1957. *L'Art Magique* (Magic Art) Paris: Club Francais du Livre.
8 Duthuit, Georges. 1936. *Chinese Mysticism and Modern Painting*. Paris/London: Chroniques du jour; A. Zwemmer, p.23.
9 Chiang Yee. 1973. *Chinese Calligraphy: An Introduction to its Aesthetic and Technique*, third revised and enlarged edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 108.
10 Bush, Susan. 2012. *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037–1101) to Tung Ch'i-Ch'ang (1555–1636)*. 2nd ed. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
11 Tan, Chang. 2016. 'Landscape Without Nature: Ecological Reflections in Contemporary Chinese Art'. *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art* 3, no. 3, pp.223–241.
12 Breton, André. 1955. 'L'Épée dans les nuages.' (The Sword in the Clouds). Exhibition Catalogue. The words *chi'jun* and *sheng-tung* used by Breton correspond to *qiyun shengdong* (pinyin) but simply use a different system of romanisation (wade-giles).
13 Sarré, Marie, Béatrice André-Salvini, Louvre Abu Dhabi, and Centre Georges Pompidou. 2021. *Abstraction and Calligraphy: Towards a Universal Language*. Edited by Didier Ottinger. Translated by Simon Knight. London: Scala Arts & Heritage, p.213.
14 Hu, Xiaoyan. 2021. *The Aesthetics of Qiyun and Genius: Spirit Consonance in Chinese Landscape Painting and Some Kantian Echoes*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, ebook, nb. Craig Clunas has also lucidly traced the translation of *qiyun shengdong* in a western context in the recent work *The Echo Chamber* (2024), Craig Clunas trans. Xiao Liang. 2024. *The Echo Chamber: Transnational Chinese Painting 1897–1935* Shanghai: renmin chubanshe.
15 Ibid. p.285.
16 Silbergeld lucidly summarises 'In Calligraphy, one trained by repetitive imitation until every twist and turn of the brush, every motion of the model was mastered, comfortable and natural, and then spontaneity could begin to emerge and imitation turn to emulation. Such was the irony, the inner tension of calligraphic practice, one gave up freedom to attain freedom.' Silbergeld, Jerome. 2014. 'Calligraphy and Painting are One, but Sometimes Two or Three' in Wen C. Fong. *Art as History: Calligraphy and Painting as One*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p.5.
17 Lin Yutang. 1967. *The Chinese Theory of Art: Translations from the Masters of Chinese Art* (New York: Putnam Sons), p.13.
18 Wang, Cheng-Hua. 2011. 'Rediscovering Song Painting for The Nation: Artistic Discursive Practices in Early Twentieth-Century China'. *Artibus Asiae* 71, no. 2, pp. 221–246. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23350215, p.225.
19 Xu Beihong would later become a core representative painter prized by the Communist Party after the founding of the People's Republic of China. This status is clearly aligned with his predilection for realism.
20 Wang, Cheng-Hua. 'Rediscovering Song Painting for the Nation'.
21 Unlike the conflictual nature of Hegel's dialectic, 'Yang and Yin originated from geographical observation, indicating the sunny and shady sides of a hill. From there they acquired a series of associations, bright and dark, light and heavy, strong and weak, above and below, heaven and earth, ruler and minister, male and female and so on (…) It may at first glance seem that Yang is "better" than Yin. In the Chinese view, neither is better stronger, brighter or more preferable, and the two forces do not represent good and evil. On the contrary, the yin aspect of things is just as important as the yang, because one cannot be without the other. They are not opposites but complimentary phases of *qi*-flow, one bringing forth the other in close mutual interdependence.' Kohn, Livia. 2009. *Introducing Daoism*. London: Routledge, pp.81–82.
22 'Introduction' (2019) in Richardson, M., D. Ades, K. Fijalkowski, S. Harris and G. Sebbag (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Surrealism Volume 1: Movements*. London: Bloomsbury, p. xvi.
23 *Wuwei* is first mentioned through a Surrealist prism one year after the founding of the movement in Lessing, Theodore. 1925. 'L'Europe et L'Asie' (Europe and Asia). *La Révolution Surréaliste* (The Surrealist Revolution) no. 3, p.30. Michel Leiris notes that he first discovered Daoism at the beginnings of Surrealism in Michel Leiris and Lydia Davis trans. 2017. *Fibrils*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 6. Artaud imagined himself reincarnated as

founder of Daoism Lao Zi, when interned at a mental health facility during the 1930s. Florence de Mèredieu. 2006. *La Chine d'Antonin Artaud* (The China of Antonin Artaud). Paris: Blusson, p. 60. Masson first read the Dao De Jing, the founding book of Daoism, before the advent of the Surrealist movement in 1913. Marguerite Hui Müller-Yao. 2015. *The Influence of Chinese Calligraphy on Western Informal Painting*. Hamburg: Dietger Müller, p.192.

24 I have previously published a short-form monograph entitled *Surrealism from Paris to Shanghai* (Hong Kong University Press/Fondation Giacometti, 2024). This text tackles Republican-era Surrealism in China.

25 Clark, John. 1997. *Surrealism in Japan*. Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute. Sas, M. 2001. *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Japanese Surrealism*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Munro, M. 2012. *Communicating Vessels: The Surrealist Movement in Japan, 1923–1970*. Cambridge: Enzo Press. StojkovIic, J. 2020. *Surrealism and Photography in 1930s Japan: The Impossible Avant-garde*. London: Bloomsbury.

26 'Introduction'. 2019. *International Encyclopaedia of Surrealism Volume 1: Movements*, p.xv.

27 Girard, Guy. 2019. 'Daoism'. *International Encyclopaedia of Surrealism Volume 1: Movements*, pp. 308–311.

28 Wu, Chinghsin. 2014. 'Reality Within and Without: Surrealism in Japan and China in the Early 1930s'. *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 26, pp.189–208.

29 It should also be noted that the original Parisian Surrealist group was far from being a stable entity with frequent 'purges' of group members.

30 'Juelanshe xuanyan' (The Storm Society Manifesto). 1932. *Yishu Xunkan* (Art Trimonthly) 1, no. 5. Original Chinese: 超现实主义的憧憬.

31 For example, the editor of *Xiandai* (Les Contemporains) magazine, Shi Zhecun, noted that the works that Pang Xunqin brought back from Paris during his stay between 1925 and 1929 were 'almost all Surrealist' (尤其是庞薰琴, 他带回来的作品, 几乎都是超现实主义的风格). Shi Zhecun. 1996. 'Milo de hua' (Miró's painting) 1995', in *Shi Zhecun qishinian wenxuan* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe). In 1935, the painter and critic Chen Baoyi notes that Pang's composition exhibits a 'surreal tendency' (超现实的倾向). See Chen Baoyi. 1935. Guan juelanhuazhan hou' (After Visiting the Storm Society Exhibition), *Libao* no. 2, 28 October. Earlier in 1932, Chen notes that Pang has gone through 'Surrealist processes' (超现实主义的过程) in Sun Chuntai and Li Baoquan. 1932. 'Pang xunqin huihua zuotan' (A Roundtable discussion on Pang Xunqin's Paintings) in *Wenyi Chahua* (Tea-Time Literature and Art Discussions), pp.1–3.

32 Wu, Chinghsin. 2014. 'Reality Within and Without', p.203.

33 The Belt and Road Initiative (2013–) refers to a cornerstone of Chinese foreign policy whereby the country invests in global infrastructure, aiming to total 150 countries, as both a diplomatic strategy to yield greater influence and for access to natural resources.

34 Zhu Xiaoqing. 2009. 'Pang Xunqin (1906–1985): A Chinese Avant-Garde's Metamorphosis 1925–1946 and Questions of "Authenticity"'. Phd Dissertation. University of Maryland College Park.

35 Pang Xunqin. 1988. *Jiushi zheyang zouguo laide* (Such was the Path I Travelled). Beijing: Shenghuo, dushu, xinzhi sanlian shudian, pp.120–123.

36 Ibid.

37 *Shidai Huabao* (Modern Miscellany) 4, no. 5. Ge and Lin note that in Lang Jingshan's archive photographs of Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray can be found. Moreover, correspondence with Man Ray, whom he would eventually meet in Paris after World War Two are also present. See Ge Siming and Lin Mingmei. 2015. *Mingjia mingliu mingshi: Lang jingshan shishi nian zhounian sheying jinian* wenji (Famous faces: Essays on Photography to Commemorate the 20th Anniversary of Lang Jingshan's Passing). Taibei shi: Guoli lishi bowuguan, p.18.

38 Tracts Surréalistes Tome I, 1938, *Mélusine*. Available online at: https://www.melusine-surrealisme.fr/site/Tracts_Surrealistes/Tracts_Surrealistes_1938.

39 Ibid.

40 Suleiman, Susan. 1994. 'Between the Street and the Salon: The Dilemma of Surrealist Politics in the 1930s' in Castaing-Taylor, Lucien., *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays from V.A.R, 1990–1994*. New York: Routledge, p.158.

41 Lu Pan. 2021. *Image, Imagination and Imaginarium: Remapping World War II Monuments in Greater China*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p.66.

42 Cai Tao. 2016. 'Xianggang lingying zhongxue de "kangzhan", "jianguo" bihua (1939) jianlun hangzhan shiqi meishujie de meijie jingzheng xianxiang' (The Murals 'War of Resistance' and 'Rebuild the Nation' at the Hong Kong Lingying Secondary School: Analysing the phenomenon of media competition in the art world during the Sino-Japanese War Period). *Meishu Xuebao* (Art Journal) no. 1.
43 Cai Tao has also read some of Huang Xinbo's woodblock prints as inspired by Japanese Surrealism and Mexican Muralism. See Cai Tao, cited by Hu Bin. 2024. 'A Battle for Two Paths of Art? Huang Xinbo and Modernism during his Hong Kong Period' in Kong, Shuyu, Julia Frances Andrews, and Zheng Shengtian (Eds.), *Art and Modernism in Socialist China: Unexplored International Encounters, 1949–1979*. New York: Routledge, p.200.
44 Welsh, Eduardo Pedro. 2002. 'Negotiating Culture: The Discourse of Art and the Position of the Artist in 1980s China'. PhD dissertation, University of London.
45 Ibid.
46 Wang Qi. 1958. 'Xiandai zichan jieji de xingshizhuyi yishu' (Formalist Art of the Modern Bourgeoise) *Meishu Yanjiu* (Fine Art Research), Vol. 1, p.48 Original Chinese: 除了这个现实的世界以外, 也有一个非现实的世界, 也即是超现实主义者们所认为是主要的世界.
47 Ibid. p.60.
48 Professor Ni Yide's Talks about Art Education between 1963 and 1963, Tao Yongbai Archive 1979, Asia Art Archive. Available online at: https://aaa.org.hk/en/collections/search/archive/tao-yongbai-archive–texts-25879/object/professor-ni-yides-talks-about-art-education-during-1962-63-1962-1963.
49 Ai, Zhongxin. 1961. 'Zhu Bijiasuo bashi dashou' (Congratulating Picasso on his Eightieth Birthday), *Meishu* (Fine Arts) no. 5, pp.45–48.
50 Clunas, Craig. Email to the author 27 September 2023.
51 *Meishu Lilun Ziliao* (Fine Art Theory Reference Materials) 15 September 1957. The translation was kindly provided by Craig Clunas.
52 This work is explored further and reproduced in Chapter 2 in relation to Jean Degottex.
53 'Xiao'. 1978. 'Ni Yide tongzhi zhuidaohui zaihang juxing' (Memorial Service for Comrade Ni Yide held in Hangzhou), *Meishu* (Fine Arts) no. 6: 44.
54 Zhu Boxiong and Chen Ruilin. 1981. 'Ni Yide yu youhua yu juelanshe' (Ni Yide's Oil Paintings and the Storm Society), *Meishu* (Fine Arts) no. 6.
55 Huang Miaozi. 1985. 'Menghen jianshi dao Pang Xunqin' (Collecting the traces of Dreams: Remembering Pang Xunqin). *Qunyan* (Popular Tribune), no. 3, pp.46–47.
56 In person interview with Huang Rui at his Beijing residence 23 January 2024. Original Chinese: 我不是特别的有兴趣, 我觉得他们已经过时了。我们是在当时是不仅是艺术前面儿也是精神前面儿, 跟他们的态度不是很一样。
57 Shui Tianzhong. 1986. 'Mosheng de lishi' (Forgotten History). *Zhongguo meishubao* (Fine Arts in China), no. 28, p.1.
58 Incidentally, I cannot find scholarly articles relating to the Chinese Independent Art Association until the 2000s.
59 McDougall, Bonnie S., and Mao Zedong. 2020. *Mao Zedong's 'Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art'*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, p.63.
60 Ibid. p.19.
61 Liu Ding and Carol Yinghua Liu. 2014. 'From the Issue of Art to the Issue of Position: The Echoes of Socialist Realism Part II'. *Eflux Journal*, no. 56.
62 Andrews, Julia. 2024. 'Introduction' in Kong Shuyu, Julia Frances Andrews, and Zheng Shengtian (Eds.), *Art and Modernism in Socialist China: Unexplored International Encounters, 1949–1979*. New York: Routledge, p.1. This is the first book to explore Chinese Modernism during the Mao Era.
63 Ibid., p.9.
64 McDougall, Bonnie S., and Mao Zedong. 2020. *Mao Zedong's 'Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art'*, p.62.
65 Kadri, Raihan. 2016. 'Objective Chance' in Fijalkowski, Krzysztof, and Michael Richardson (Eds.), *Surrealism: Key Concepts*. 1st edn. New York: Routledge, p.144.
66 Breton, André, and Mary Ann Caws. 1988. *Mad Love*. Lincoln, (NB): University of Nebraska Press, p.23.
67 Ibid. p.87.
68 Kadri, Raihan. 2016. 'Objective Chance', p.153.

69 McDougall, Bonnie S., and Mao Zedong. 2020. *Mao Zedong's 'Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art'*, p.62.
70 Andrews, Julia. 2024. 'Introduction' in *Art and Modernism in Socialist China: Unexplored International Encounters, 1949–1979*, p.12.
71 Scar Art refers to a realist tendency in the late 1970s which portrayed suffering during the Cultural Revolution.
72 Pew Research Center. 2023. 'Government Policy Towards Religion in the People's Republic of China – A Brief History', 30 August. Available online at: https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/08/30/government-policy-toward-religion-in-the-peoples-republic-of-china-a-brief-history/.
73 Ibid.
74 Gao, Minglu. 2011. *Total Modernity and the Avant-Garde in Twentieth-Century Chinese Art*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, p.170.
75 Ibid. p.171.
76 The appellation 'Gang of Four' refers to Jiang Qing (Mao's last wife), Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongren. This political faction was ardently against moderate-leaning members of the Chinese Communist Party who did not agree with the class-based purges of the Cultural Revolution and its associated violence. Intellectuals particularly suffered in the hands of the Gang of Four.
77 Huang Rui. 2019. 'We Want Artistic Freedom' in Li Xianting and Huang Rui (Eds.), *Stars 79–80*. Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong University Press, p.26.
78 See Wang, Shu-Shin. 1986. 'The Rise and Fall of the Campaign against Spiritual Pollution in the People's Republic of China'. *Asian Affairs* 13, no. 1, pp.52–53.
79 Minglu, Gao. 2012. 'Changing Motivations of Contemporary Chinese Art Since the Mid-1990s'. *Journal of Visual Art Practice* 11, nos 2–3, pp.211.
80 Ferrari, Rossella. 2012. *Pop Goes the Avant-Garde: Experimental Theatre in Contemporary China*. London: Seagull Books, p.xvii.
81 Wu, Kejia. 2023. *A Modern History of China's Art Market*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp.36–37.
82 In-person interview with Shi Yong, Blacksheep Espresso, Shanghai, 9 January 2024.
83 Zhang, Xudong. 2008. *Postsocialism and Cultural Politics: China in the Last Decade of the Twentieth Century*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, p.11.
84 Zhou, Yan. 2020. *A History of Contemporary Chinese Art: 1949 to Present*. Singapore: Springer, p.673.
85 Goldkorn, Jeremy. 2021 'The 2000s: Jiang Zemin and the Naughty Aughties', in Cheek, Timothy, Klaus Mühlhahn, and Hans van de Ven (Eds.), *The Chinese Communist Party*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.193–210, at p.199.
86 See Susik, Abigail. 2023. *Surrealist Sabotage and the War on Work*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
87 Goldkorn, Jeremy. 2021 'The 2000s: Jiang Zemin and the Naughty Aughties', p.202.
88 Yang, Guobin 2021. 'The 2010s Guo Meimei: The Story of a Young Netizen Portends a Political Throwback' in Cheek, Timothy, Klaus Mühlhahn, and Hans van de Ven (Eds.), *The Chinese Communist Party*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.211–230.
89 See Pollack, Barbara. 2019. *Brand New Art from China: A Generation on the Rise*. 1st edn. London: I.B. Tauris. Pollack believes contemporary artists from China should be ascribed a 'post-passport identity', pp.6–8.
90 'La Révolution d'Abord et Toujours' (Revolution Forever and Always) in *La Révolution Surréaliste* (Surrealist Revolution) 4 (July 1925), p.31.
91 Breton, André, Richard Seaver and Helen R Lane. 1972. *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, p.26.
92 Ibid.
93 'Introduction'. 2019. In Richardson, M., D. Ades, K. Fijalkowski, S. Harris and G. Sebbag (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Surrealism Volume 1: Movements*, p.xvi.
94 Crozier, Ralph. 1991. 'Post-Impressionists in Pre-war Shanghai: The Juelanshe (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China' in Clark, John (Ed.), *Modernity in Asian Art*. Sydney: Wild Peony, pp.134–154.
95 Surrealism is mentioned in Bevan's two monographs, firstly, Bevan, Paul. 2016. *A Modern Miscellany: Shanghai Cartoon Artists, Shao Xunmei's Circle and the Travels of Jack Chen, 1926–1938*. Leiden; Brill; and secondly, Bevan, Paul. 2020. *'Intoxicating Shanghai' – an Urban Montage: Art and Literature in Pictorial Magazines during Shanghai's Jazz Age*. Leiden: Brill.

96 Schaefer, William. *Shadow Modernism: Photography, Writing, and Space in Shanghai, 1925–1937*, pp.126–127.
97 Wu, Chinghsin. 2014. 'Reality Within and Without'.
98 Joo, Mijung. 2016. *Zhongguo chaoxianshi yuyan yu xiandai meishu zhishi shengcheng yanjiu yi 1931 nian dao 1999 wei lie* (Chinese Surreal Visual Language: Modern Art Knowledge Generation Research: An Example from 1931 to 1999). PhD thesis, Central Academy of Fine Arts Beijing, pp.45–46. Joo describes Barr's work as an important foundation (zhongyao jichu) of her thesis. She has also written a short Master's thesis comparing 1980s Chinese 'Surreal' works with those of Korea. This will be cited later in the volume when appropriate.
99 Ibid. p.108.
100 Ibid., p.109 Original Chinese: 鸟, 云等自然的象征物 飞船、飞机等科技的发展以及传统神话的飞天等讨论了超现实艺术语言的另类可能性。
101 Ibid., p. 109.
102 Ibid., p.4. Original Chinese: '中国超现实艺术语言来自西方'.
103 Yi Ying. 2011. 'Political Pop and the Crisis of Originality' in Liu, Yuedi and Mary Bittner, Wiseman. *Subversive Strategies in Contemporary Chinese Art*. Leiden: Brill, p.27.
104 Gao, Minglu. 1993. 'The 1985 New Wave Art Movement', in Doran, V.C. (Ed.) *China's New Art, Post-1989, with a Retrospective from 1979 to 1989*. Hong Kong: Hanart TZ Gallery, p.104.
105 Carroll, Noël. 2022. 'Surrealism' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, doi:10.4324/9780415249126-M076-1..
106 Walden, Lauren. 2024. 'Magical Metropolis: The Shanghai Surreal'. *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art* 11, no. 2/3, pp.119–126.
107 Joo, Mijung. 2016. *Zhongguo chaoxianshi yuyan yu xiandai meishu zhishi shengcheng yanjiu yi 1931 nian dao 1999 wei lie* (Chinese Surreal Visual Language: Modern Art Knowledge Generation Research: An Example from 1931 to 1999), p.95.
108 Ibid., p.93.
109 For example, see Wilson, J. 2023. 'Apocalyptic Urban Surrealism in the City at the End of the World', *Urban Studies* 60, no. 4, pp.718–733.
110 Lu Peng. 1992. *Zhongguo Xiandai Yishushi 1979–1989* (A History of Modern Chinese Art 1979–1989). Hunan Meishu Chubanshe.
111 Girard, Guy. 2019. 'Daoism' in *International Encyclopaedia of Surrealism Volume 1: Movements*, pp. 308–311. London: Bloomsbury
112 Sarré, Marie, Béatrice André-Salvini, Louvre Abu Dhabi and Centre Georges Pompidou. 2021. *Abstraction and Calligraphy: Towards a Universal Language*.
113 Peng Feng. 2010. 'Chaoxianshi bopu: dangdai yishu de yizhong xin yangshi' (Surrealist Pop: A New Mode of Modern Art) in Bao Yu *Chaoxianshi bopu*. Nanchang: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, pp.3–5.
114 Breton, André. 1988. *Oeuvres complètes 3* (Complete Works Volume 3). Paris: Gallimard, p.661. Original French: 'Le surréalisme tend à unifier aujourd'hui sur son nom les aspirations des écrivains et des artistes novateurs de tous les pays … cette unification, loin d'être seulement une unification de style, répondant à une nouvelle prise de conscience commune de la vie.'
115 Walden, Lauren. 2019. 'Cosmopolitan Surrealism: an investigation into photographic circulation and the intercultural relations of an avant-garde movement'. PhD thesis, Coventry University. Available online at: https://pureportal.coventry.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/cosmopolitan-surrealism.
116 Kant, Immanuel. 2008. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Durham: Yale University Press, pp.48–49.
117 Benhabib, Seyla. 1987. 'The Generalized and the Concrete Other: The Kohlberg–Gilligan Controversy and Feminist Theory' in Benhabib, Seyla, and Drucilla Cornell (Eds). 1987. *Feminism as Critique: On the Politics of Gender*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, pp.96–110.
118 Peng Feng. 2010. 'Chaoxianshi bopu: dangdai yishu de yizhong xin yangshi' (Surrealist Pop: A New Mode of Modern Art), pp.3–5.
119 Although originally associated with Dada, Duchamp also worked with Surrealist artists and took a leading role in mounting some of their exhibitions.