

# Qiu Anxiong's art working

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The image is a screenshot of a web browser displaying the Metropolitan Museum of Art's website. The browser's address bar shows the URL [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org). The website's navigation menu includes links for [Visit](#), [Exhibitions](#), [Events](#), [Art](#), [Learn](#), [Join and Give](#), and [Shop](#). A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area features a search result for the artist **Qiu Anxiong**. The result is titled "Qiu Anxiong" and includes a "Go" button. Below the title, there are three entries for the artwork "New Classic of Mountains and Seas I" by Qiu Anxiong (Chinese, born 1972). A video link is also present, titled "Qiu Anxiong Discusses His Work in *Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China*". The background of the page shows a close-up of jewelry, including a chain bracelet and a pearl earring, displayed on a blue surface. The text "At The Met Breuer" is visible in the bottom left corner of the page.

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# Qiu Anxiong

Go

Artwork

**New Classic of Mountains and Seas I**  
by **Qiu Anxiong** (Chinese, born 1972)

**New Classic of Mountains and Seas I**  
by **Qiu Anxiong** (Chinese, born 1972)

**New Classic of Mountains and Seas I**  
by **Qiu Anxiong** (Chinese, born 1972)

video

**Qiu Anxiong** Discusses His Work in *Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China*

At The Met Breuer

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Qiu Anxiong ✕ →

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Artwork

**New Classic of Mountains and Seas I**



Qiu Anxiong (Chinese, born 1972)

|       |  |                   |             |
|-------|--|-------------------|-------------|
| Date: | Medium:  | Accession Number: | On View:    |
| 2008  | Portfolio of twelve woodblock prints; ink on paper | 2013.944a-1       | Not on view |

Collection of Metropolitan Museum of Art

## Artwork

### New Classic of Mountains and Seas I

Qiu Anxiong (Chinese, born 1972)

|       |                   |                   |             |
|-------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Date: | Medium:           | Accession Number: | On View:    |
| 2006  | Acrylic on canvas | 2016.576.1        | Not on view |



## Video

### Qiu Anxiong Discusses His Work in *Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China*

02:24



Qiu Anxiong discusses his works *New Classic of Mountains and Seas I, Video* (2006) and *New Classic of Mountains and Seas I, Woodblock Prints* (2008), as part of the artist...

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**Qiu Anxiong** ×

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The Collection  
**Qiu Anxiong. Hai Yun from New  
Classic of Mountains and Seas. 2008**

The Collection  
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**Qiu Anxiong**

*Ting Du from New Classic of Mountains and Seas*

2008

Not on view

Medium

This work is part of a



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**Qiu Anxiong**  
born 1972  
*新山海经 (New Book of Mountains and Seas 3)*, 2016  
single-channel HD black-and-white video with sound, 29 minutes, 30 seconds  
Courtesy of the artist  
Not on display  
EL2016.028  
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**Qiu Anxiong**

born 1972

*新山海经 (New Book of Mountains and Seas 2)*, 2007–2009  
three-channel black and white video with sound, 29 minutes 35 seconds

Courtesy of the artist

Not on display

EL2016.027

Loan: Not in the Spencer's collection

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**Qiu Anxiong**

born 1972

*新山海经 Xin Shanhai Jing 1 (The New Book of Mountains and Seas 1)*, 2006–2008

3-channel black-and-white video with sound, 30 minutes 15 seconds

Museum purchase: R. Charles and Mary Margaret Clevenger

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Not on display

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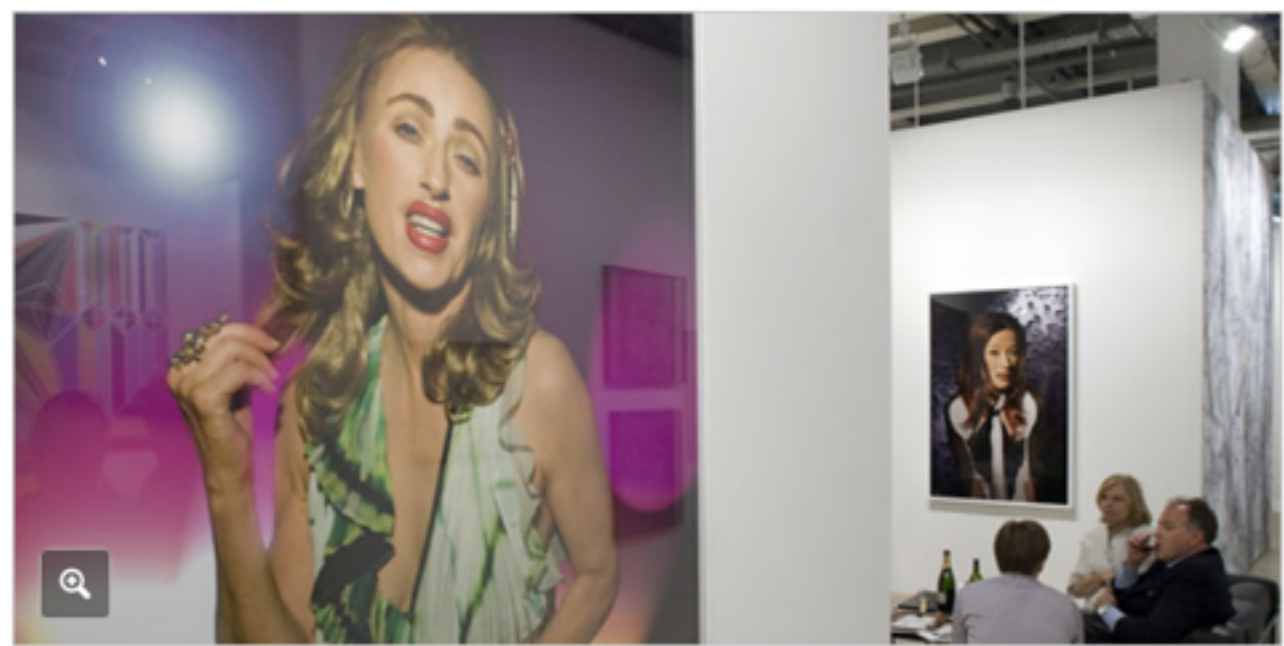


the work in Art Basel 2008

**BREAKING NEWS** "Game of Thrones" won the Emmy for outstanding drama series. "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" received five awards, including outstanding comedy. 11:18 AM

# At Art Basel, Old Names and Few Showstoppers

By CAROL VOGEL JUNE 5, 2008



A work by Cindy Sherman. Christian Filleri for The New York Times

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**BREAKING NEWS** "Game of Thrones" won the Emmy for outstanding drama series. "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" received five awards, including outstanding comedy. 11:18 AM

**ART & DESIGN** At Art Basel, Old Names and Few Showstoppers

BASEL, Switzerland — Twenty-four hours before [Art Basel](#)'s invitation-only opening on Tuesday, scores of the art elite gathered, sheeplike, on a wooden ramp at a related event in a cavernous installation space. Word had spread that there was something exciting to see: a dusty old train car whose windows flashed black-and-white images of troubled moments from China's past.

The work they were waiting patiently in line to view was "Staring Into Amnesia," an installation by Qiu Anxiong, a 36-year-old artist from Shanghai. A first-timer, he had traveled here to see what Art Basel, the legendary contemporary art fair, was all about.

"It's a piece devoted to memory — not what we remember but what we forget," said Mr. Qiu, who was clearly floored by the growing line of eager spectators.

"Staring Into Amnesia" was an instant hit for an audience hungry to make just such discoveries. But moments like these are scarce here this year. Although several satellite fairs dotting the city are devoted to emerging artists like Mr. Qiu, Art Basel 2008 primarily features examples of new works by the already-hot. Yet there are fewer showstoppers than usual, in part because such multimillion-dollar works are getting harder to find.

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solo show in NY was reported by <Art in America>2018



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interview by Paul Gladston <Eyeline>2012





WHERE I WORK

## Qiu Anxiong

BY MICHAEL YOUNG



Qiu Anxiong in his Shanghai apartment. Photo by Michael Young for ArtAsiaPacific.

**Zhongshan Park is a typical new Chinese residential area a few kilometers west of central Shanghai. There are several high-rise apartment blocks clustered around water features, mature trees and safe play areas for children.**

Balconies bristle with satellite TV dishes and security guards loaf on street corners. This is as middle-class as one can get in a rapidly modernizing China. The upper-level apartments here command premium prices for their views, but animation and installation artist Qiu Anxiong lives on the first floor, having recently bought into the complex based on the advice of his good friend and neighbor, filmmaker Yang Fudong.

It seems incongruous that an artist whose view of China's race toward commercialism is colored by an apocalyptic pessimism should live and work in such an environment. But Qiu points out that the location is five convenient minutes from East China Normal University, where he teaches art and animation. He lives here with his wife and their nine-year-old daughter, Zhi, in a three-bedroom apartment. One of the rooms—filled with computers, digital imaging equipment and other office paraphernalia—serves as Qiu's studio.

Greeting me dressed all in black, save for white sneakers, Qiu looks athletically lean. From his six years of study at Germany's Kunsthochschule Kassel, he apparently speaks fluent German, but we chat comfortably in English. There is a certain reflective quietness to Qiu, due in part, perhaps, to his Buddhist principles. On one of the bookshelves are several small statues of the Buddha. Qiu says he meditates here for an hour every day.

Fifty percent of the artist's working time is spent in this room, in front of computer screens. His films are precisely planned, their stories carefully evolving in the form of sketches in pen on A4 sheets of paper, like storyboards. There is little chance for serendipity here. When the narrative is fully developed, each image is painted onto a small canvas, from which the paint can be easily wiped away, either in part or completely, ready for the next image or element to be painted on top. Such obvious over-painting, or pentimenti, has come to form an integral element of Qiu's aesthetic. These are photographed and eventually animated on computer, using video editing software.

The paintings that he makes for films such as the three-channel works *New Book of Mountains and Seas Part 1* (2006) and *Part 2* (2007), using thousands of images, resemble traditional Chinese ink painting yet narrate thoroughly 21st-century environmental and political concerns. Qiu actually uses acrylics, because they can be quickly altered. Music and sound are also key components to his work, for which he collaborates with musicians.

*New Book of Mountains and Seas* visually echoes the classical Chinese text *Shan Hai Jing* ("Classic of the Mountains and Seas"), a fabled account of the geography and culture of pre-Qin China. In Qiu's version, however, idyllic landscapes are devastated by industry: dozing, prehistoric birds morph into warplanes, hills are leveled into oil fields, valleys are flooded to build dams; all that is good is consumed in the name of progress. Such bleakness would be depressing if not for Qiu's lightness of touch and inventive humor—elephants turn into tanks while retaining their large, flapping ears.

In June, Qiu was about to leave for Bologna, for an exhibition at the Marabini Gallery, housed in a 17th-century church. There he was showing a series of acrylic paintings of historically charged landscapes, and an earlier animation work, *Mileage Landscape* (2007), which is an exploration of the Republican period born in 1911.

Interestingly, Qiu plans to rent a studio space close to home after he returns, which will allow him to develop ideas for installations, a format he finds increasingly appealing. He wistfully refers to his work *Zoo* (2010), shown last year at Shenzhen's OCT Contemporary Art Terminal—a sprawling installation comprising paintings and animal sculptures set within cages, which investigates the meaning of captivity in different cultures. He will also begin collating ideas for the third part of his "Mountains and Sea" series, which will continue to explore values that Qiu thinks are fast disappearing from contemporary Chinese society.

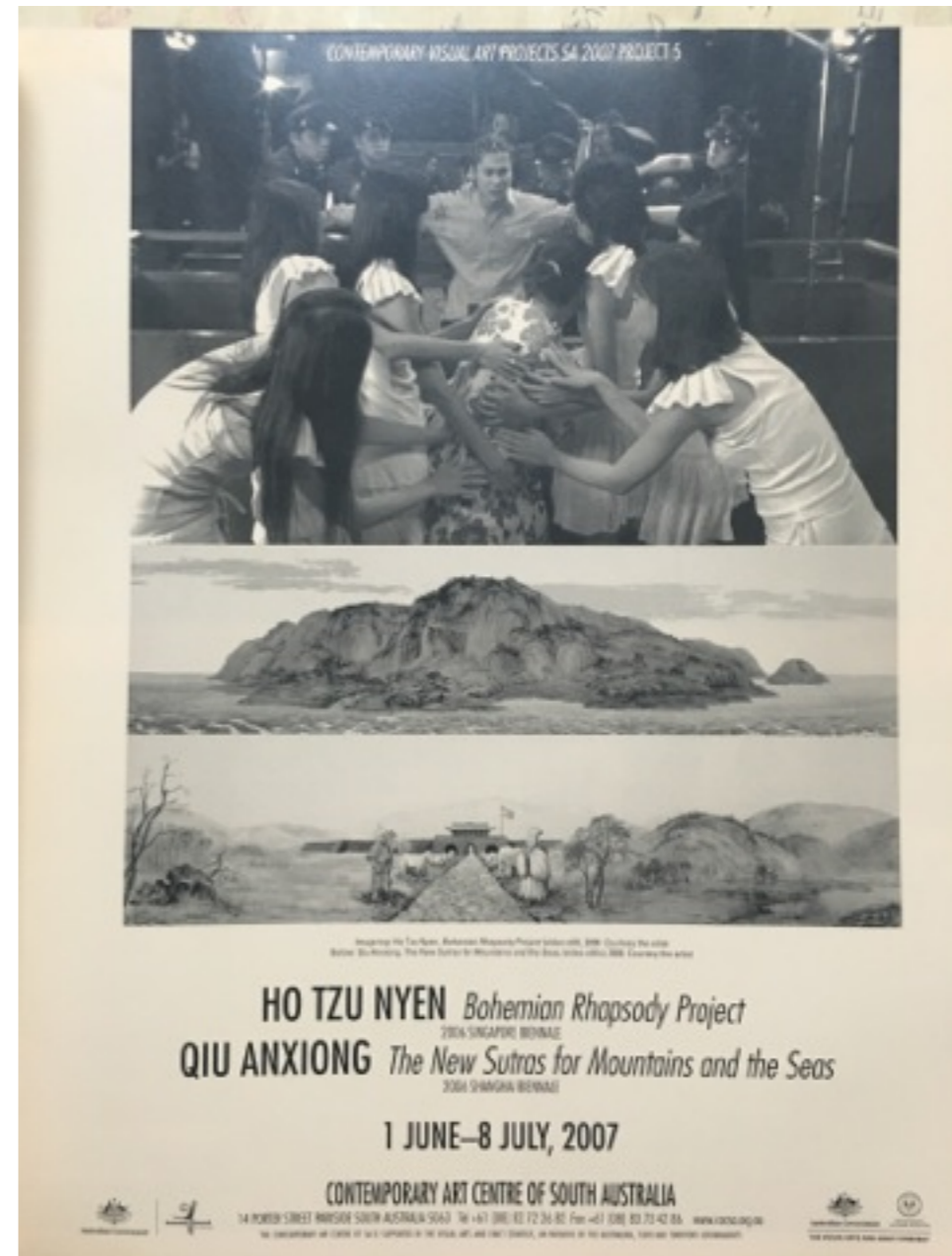
When his daughter comes in, the moment immediately belongs to her. Qiu tells me how she often sits quietly beside him when he is working on the computer, to watch his stories unfold. Utopia may be illusive in his art; but, says Qiu, "in life, parents give the best things to their children; and if all relationships were like that, I think it would be paradise."

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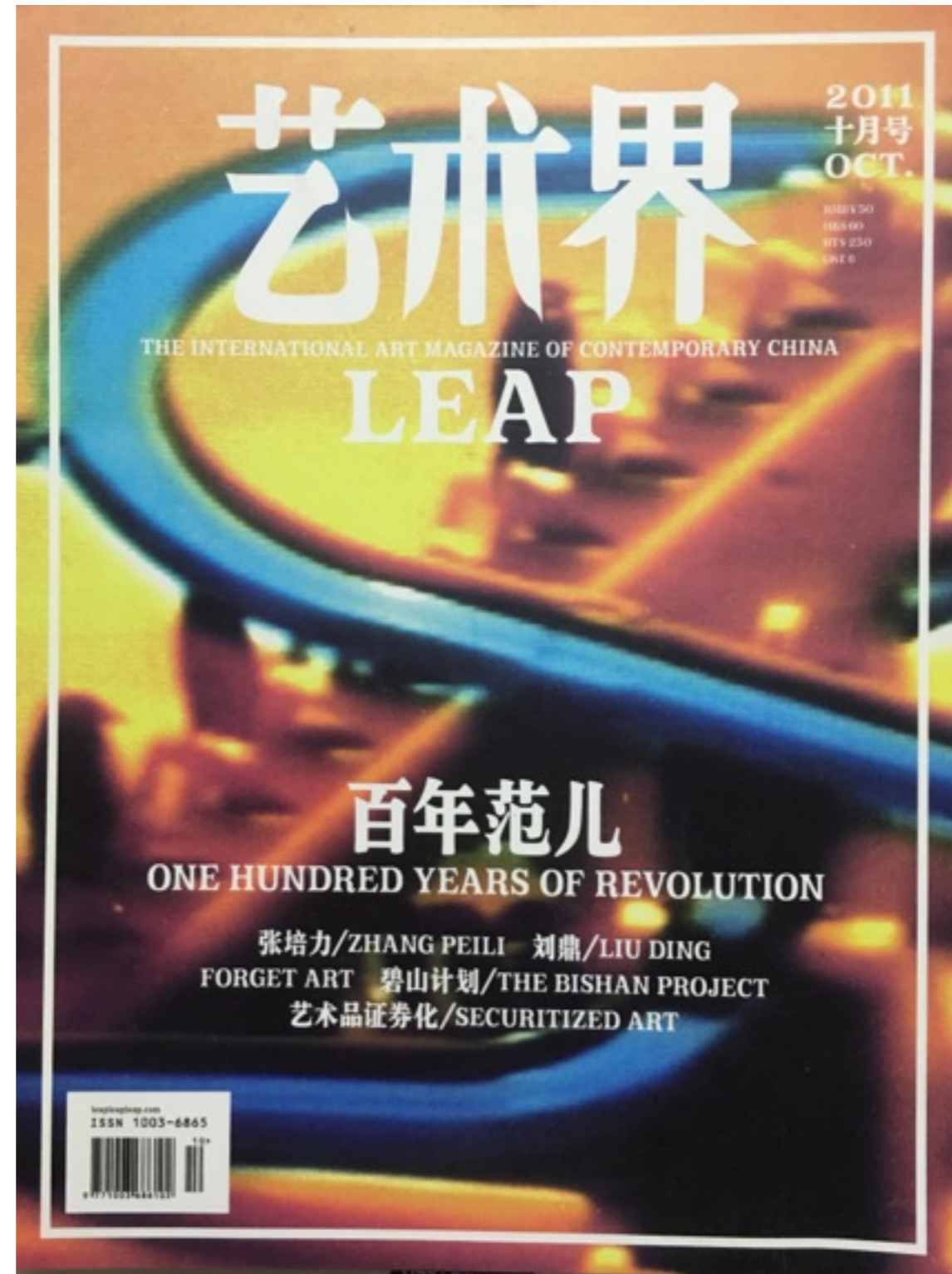
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report of <ART Asia Pacific>2012



<Broadsheet>2007



exhibition<Zoo> reported by <Leap>2011

邱黯雄：动物园  
QIU ANXIONG: ZOO



OCT仓库感的长廊展厅正中，两道弧形展墙隔开了特别为本次展览所创作的两件新作品：一件是模拟人体器官结构及循环系统的《解剖学》，另一件是马的影像与马的功能性附属品并置的《剩余价值》。两件作品在视觉上都呈现出某种怀旧的机械美学，又似乎是两份规整的达达主义提案。被封闭在了一种后工业社会对工业社会的想象之中，站在马匹奔跑着的投影前凝视，可能会听到并不存在的森林响动的声音。唯一对现实有所提示的是马鞍上仍然吊着的两个写有俱乐部和名字的吊牌。这个区域相对紧凑，也是整个展览的视觉中心，很明确地突出了本次展览与去年在Boers-Li画廊同名个展的区别。

系列中其他曾经展出过的作品包括《异常的权力》、《怀疑者》和《革命》等，以等腰三角式的分布形成一种整体的对称。一系列以动物园实拍场景为基本的美学补充了人的观看视觉，其中躲在一角的“熊”，仿佛是整个系列在情绪上内向性的起点，召唤着人类自身的怜悯。这种怜悯的出口集中地体现在位于展厅尽头的《莫名的幸福》当中。如果说“动物园”中的大部分作品对于人类和社会现状的隐喻都是同源的、文本性的，那么这“可爱的兔子一家”就是对中产阶级生活及其幻象的直接戏仿。关于艺术和生活质量的陈腔滥调，被禁锢在审美之中，甚至其中具体的场景都是

《莫名的幸福》  
2009年  
装置、综合材料  
尺寸可变

*The Unspeakable Happiness*  
2009  
Installation, mixed media  
Dimensions variable

粗糙的，并不试图掩盖语言的漏洞百出。相对而言，被白色绒布包裹的《豹》：无论从典故还是现场视觉体验上来说，都有点像一个外来者。正如艺术家本人所说：“整个展览当中唯一自由的部分是《迁徙》。它代表着某种不可抗拒的东西。”《迁徙》也是一组新作品，在形态上是一系列曲线，暗示着动物迁徙时的队列，又表现为相对独立的个体。这些成队的个体仿佛被“引领”向展厅的出口。然而由于动物的身体被抽象为支架，它们在视觉上垂直方向的不自由与想象中横向迁移的自由形成一种悖论。这种自由与不自由之间的博弈，可能比“囚禁”这一单一概念的本身，更反映展览的实质。

尽管《动物园》是提到“动物园”时反复被引用的文本背景，但这个系列中部分借用小说角色的典故，已经生出自己系统。它是一个带着反乌托邦外衣的个人乌托邦，以一个乌托邦式的人口，导向一种反乌托邦式的自省。以挪用作为创作的出发点，艺术家发展出的叙述总要被放回到一个更大的语境之内考察。包括这种叙述之上的元叙述，以及对此的批判与反思。如果说“乌托邦”就是这么一种元叙述的话，那么有各种乌托邦出现的时候，就会有各种反乌托邦的发生：这两者就像一枚钱币的两面，在被拼命地抛掷地面，并在空中翻转，那个张开手准备接住的人，并不知道落在地面上的会是哪一面？ 蔡影菁



In the vast, far-stretching OCT gallery space, curved walls separated two works produced for this exhibition of Qiu Anxiong's new work. The work *A Study in Autopsy* appeared to simulate the organs and circulatory system of a human body, while *Surplus Value* featured projected images of a running horse, accompanied by racing equipment. On a purely visual level, these two pieces seemed to hint at a nostalgia for a forgotten mechanical aesthetic; both also possessed a conventional Dadaist quality, albeit one trapped in an imagination of industrial society from a post-industrial perspective. Gazing at this projection of a horse in motion, one might mistakenly hear the sound of film running through a projector. Alas, the only acknowledgement of an immediate reality is found dangling from the horse's saddle: a tag displaying the horse's club name. The density of the exhibition's layout also served as its core, and clearly differentiates it from the artist's solo exhibition of the same name, and much of the same work, seen last year at Boers-Li Gallery in Beijing.

Works from this exhibition that have been shown before include *The Power of Heresy*, *The Sceptic and Revolution*; the arrangement of these three within the space formed a triangular symmetry. A series of figurative paintings based on photographs taken of zoos supplements the viewpoint of humans with the viewpoint of animals, the latter seemingly the focal point of the show. A bear lurking in the corner of one photograph at once demanded empathy and functioned as an introspective entry point to this series of images, the exit point for which is

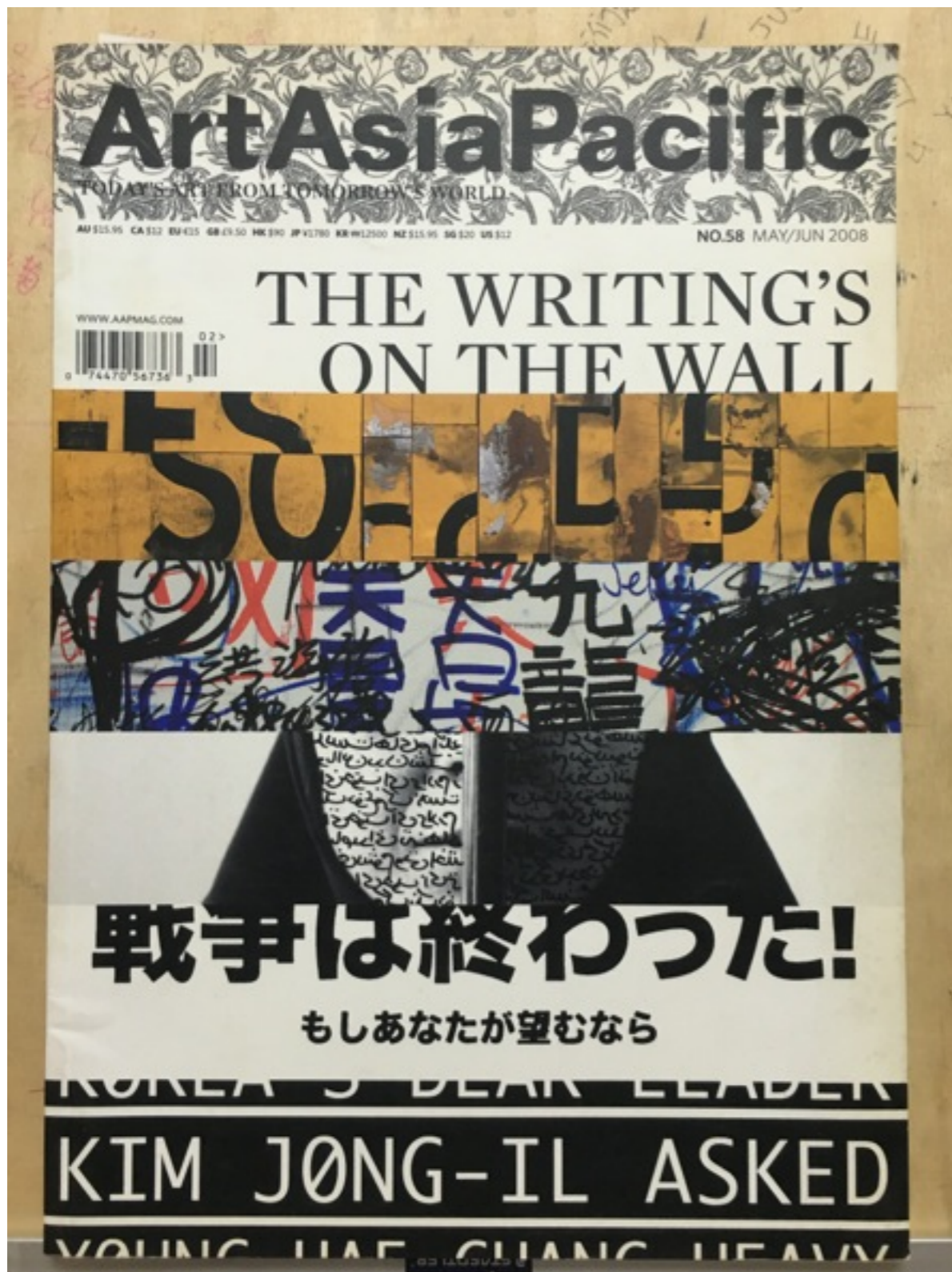
presented at the far end of the exhibition hall in one of the final works of on display, a piece titled *Unspeakable Happiness*.

If the majority of the metaphors contained within the works featured in "Zoo" function subtly, and textually, then *Cute Rabbit Family* is, conversely, a clear parody of middle-class life and its illusions. The cliché of art and "quality of life" is trapped inside a cage, such that even those idyllic scenes are rendered crude, incapable of concealing the myriad hypocrisies of lies.

Meanwhile, wrapped in white flannel, *Leopard Lair* visually and literally seemed like an outsider. As the artist said: "Of the whole exhibition, the only hint of freedom can be found in the piece *Migration*, which represents something irresistible and unavoidable." *Migration* is a set of new works consisting of deer antlers arranged to signify a group of animals in migration, it simultaneously portrays the very opposite, the independent individual. Here, this crowd of individuals eagerly crane their necks toward the gallery exit. Meanwhile, these "bodies" of animals, abstractly speaking, look like coat racks, visually stuck in place; their vertical immobility contradicts the imaginary freedom of horizontal migration. This paradox, a tug of war between freedom and non-freedom, perhaps reflects the essential ideas of this exhibition more clearly than does the notion of "captivity."

The novel *Animal Farm* has been mentioned more than once to be the background of "Zoo," but the allusions borrowed from the novel's characters here have developed their own distinct system: In "Zoo," personal utopia wears the camouflage of anti-utopian reality, and a utopian point of entrance leads the viewer to a dystopian exit. Using "appropriation" as its point of departure, the narrative developed by the artist has to be brought back to and investigated in a broader context, including the meta-narrative that hovers around it and the relevant critique and reflection. If here "Utopia" is the meta-narrative, then as various, distinct utopias emerge, so will their corresponding anti-utopias; as when a two-sided coin is suddenly tossed into the air, and the person waiting to catch it, hands outstretched, has no idea on which side it will land. Nikita Yingqian Cai (Translated by Dominik Salter Dvorak)

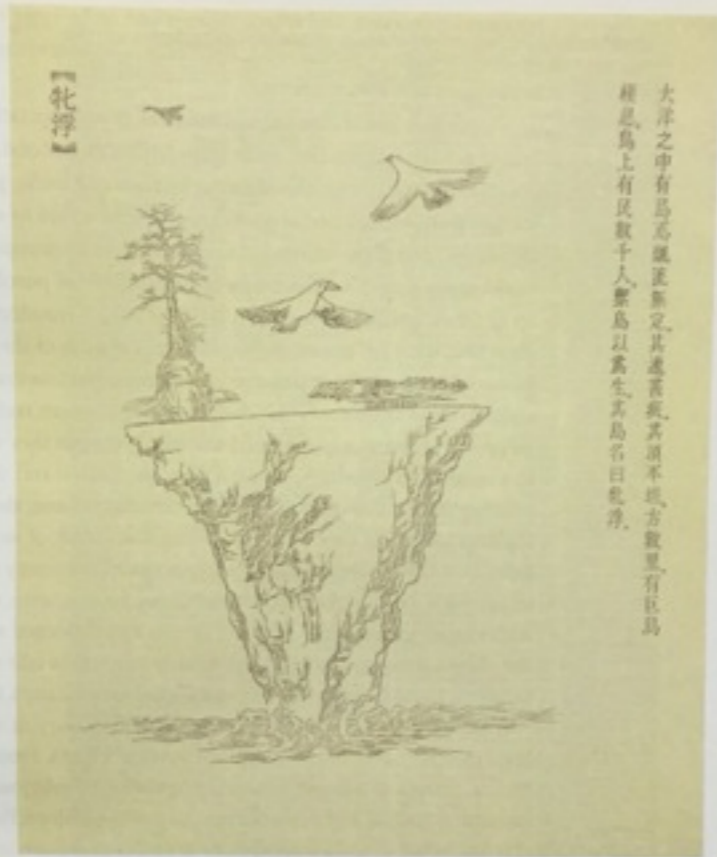
exhibition <Zoo> reported by <Leap>2011



solo show in Sydney 4A Art Center reported in <ART Asia Pacific>2008



text of Sarah Suzuki, curator from MoMA NY  
Qiu Anxiong's work of collections of MoMA



**Qiu Anxiong, Pin Fu** from *New Book of Mountains and Seas*, 2008, one of a portfolio of twelve woodcuts, 22 1/4 x 19 1/4 in. (57.5 x 49.1 cm), publisher: Boers-Li Gallery, Beijing, printer: Duo Yun Xuan, Shanghai, edition of 10. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Fund for the Twenty-first Century (artwork © Qiu Anxiong; photograph by John Wronn)

acteristic perspectival flatness. She mimics the palettes of these masters, scanning *ukiyo-e* woodcuts into her computer to capture their colors for the purpose of applying them to her own work. She embraces the traditional cast of characters from folklore, mythology, and erotica, depicting surreal ghosts, monsters, and hybrid creatures with a forthright approach to sexual and social mores. *Men's Bathhouse* depicts an amorous sumo embrace espied by a phallic turtle inside the quotidian setting of a neighborhood *seno*, or bathhouse, with Hokusai's memorable depiction of Mount Fuji in the background. This work is, in essence, a printed still from one of her video animations, but acts and looks like an *ukiyo-e* woodcut. Tabaimo has only more recently begun to explore actual printed formats—woodcut, lithography, and etching—in greater depth.

The Shanghai-based Qiu Anxiong likewise works primarily in video, but found a compelling conceptual reason to turn to traditional woodcut, a medium that originated in China in the ninth century. After graduating from art school in Chengdu, Qiu spent six years studying in the German city of Kassel. The sense of cultural dislocation he experienced there allowed him to look beyond Western influence and sparked a renewed interest in traditional Chinese culture, in Buddhism, Confucianism, and classical traditions of painting and poetry. He began developing his own technique and vocabulary for animated films that draw equally on East and West: ink wash painting (whose traditional form remains in

## Print People: A Brief Taxonomy of Contemporary Printmaking

"Aren't print people just the best?" So reads a T-shirt recently produced by Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE), one of the giants of American print publishing. Playing off one of the signature characteristics of numerous print techniques, the text on the shirt appears in reverse, printed against a dark ground whose irregular outline suggests a lithographic stone—one of those venerable slabs on which lithographs have historically been drawn. The message reveals itself when reflected in a mirror, or seen by those "in the know": the constellation of publishers, printers, papermakers, dealers, collectors, scholars, and curators who make up the so-called print world. ULAE's coded message reflects an often-repeated sentiment, one which suggests that the desirable qualities of the mediums to which we are devoted—democratic reach, earthbound price points, an inherently collaborative nature—are somehow reflected through us.

Print people occupy one circle in the Venn diagram of global contemporary art, positioned just on the edge of its charged nucleus, ever combating the idea that a print is not an original work of art, or explaining how an etching is made, or debating the merits of one impression over another. Within some quarters, this state of affairs may contribute to the sense that the print world is perennially on the verge of obsolescence, fighting for relevancy, as professionals sift through countless sheets of plastic-sheathed etchings with loops in hand; float through dark, low-ceilinged galleries coexisting with yellowing folios; or rail against the dwindling numbers of those practicing some esoteric version of waterless lithography.

It is certainly true that printed art has its own trajectories and histories that both align with and deviate from the arc of the history of art, and that print people must protect these specific legacies and preserve them. But rather than seeing this as a moribund effort, I would argue that printmaking is currently experiencing something of a stealth renaissance, finding ways of insinuating itself into

continuous practice, and whose themes and techniques have also been co-opted by many contemporary artists), the Chinese animation tradition, and William Kentridge's hand-drawn films.

Qiu's *New Book of Mountains and Seas* takes as its inspiration an ancient Chinese text of the same name that dates from before the second century. The source comprises a taxonomic classification of flora and fauna, geography, accounts of foreign peoples, and herbal medicine, but also serves as a repository for myth, ogy, fables, and ghost stories—a compendium of information about the known world at the time. The idea of the book as a kind of portable universe is taken up in Qiu's updated version. In a series of twelve woodcuts, the artist distills his ideas into what are essentially pages for his version of the *New Book*. Like those of the source text, Qiu's pages set out to document natural and scientific information of the known world, here presenting modern technologies like aircraft carriers and genetically modified animals as though they were mythical creatures in a postmodern bestiary. On each page, the natural and the otherworldly collide, existing side by side as they did in the ancient volume, though all of Qiu's seeming impossibilities have a basis in reality. The choice of woodcut is paramount here, as it allows Qiu to maintain a conceptual proximity to the original, evoking its age with a technique practiced in China for centuries, while emulating its style with elegant curving line work set against an unadorned white ground. Together, the images present a satirical and smartly humorous take on environmental degradation, social breakdown, and unchecked urbanization in contemporary society.

Qiu's work also fits within a historical trajectory in which printmaking has been closely connected to social and political efforts. From the distribution of biblical images to a largely illiterate population of religious pilgrims, and the customary ballads and penny odes of José Guadalupe Posada in the nineteenth century, to the guerilla screenprints of *Atelier Populaire* in Paris 1968, prints have long been pressed into moralizing, agitational, or propagandistic roles. Particular densities of politically engaged printmaking often align with artistic interest in social and political causes and movements, from the examples above, to the environmentally engaged works of Robert Rauschenberg in the 1970s, to the AIDS awareness of General Idea in the 1980s. The political impulse continues in the contemporary moment, with artists using the democratic reach of editioned projects to send their messages out into the world.

While renowned for his critical, institutional, and commercial practices, the

**Luis Camnitzer, detail of *Monnet***  
one of a portfolio of 100 digital prints,  
2014, 11 x 17 1/2 in., publisher and  
print, edition of 2 (artwork © Luis C.



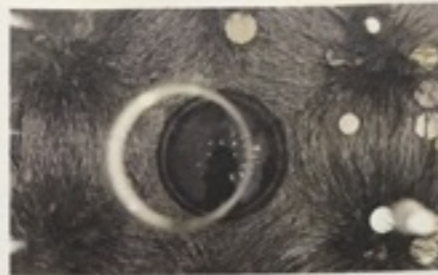
Best of 2011, <Art Forum>



# Lee Ambrozy



Lee Ambrozy is editor of Artforum.com.cn, Artforum International's Chinese-language website, and a lecturer at Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Arts. She recently edited and translated the book *Ai Weiwei's Blog* (MIT Press, 2011).



2. Above: Tallur L. N., *Apocalypse (The Coin Polisher)* (detail), 2010, electromagnetic polishing system, coin, cage, wall text, 82 1/2 x 82 1/2 x 70 1/2". From "Place, Time, Play: India-China Contemporary Art Exhibition."

3. Right: View of "Pattern-Vortex-Encounter: Museum of Unknown," 2011, Space Station, Beijing.



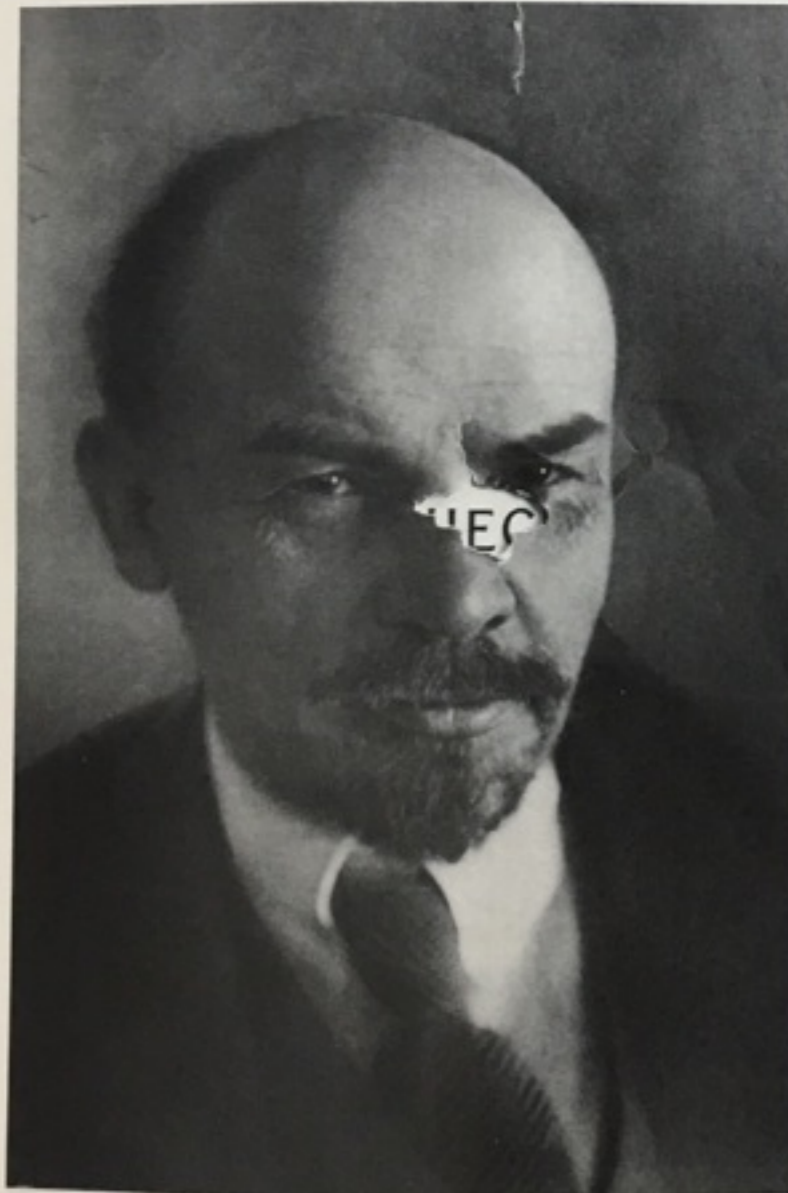
1  
**"MY COMMUNISM: POSTER EXHIBITION"** (TOP Contemporary Art Center, Shanghai; curated by Yang Zhenzhong, Zhou Xiaohu, Xu Zhen, Jin Feng, Lu Xinghua, Ding Li, Shi Qing, and Philippe Pirotte) The title of this show was left out of press releases, lest it raise eyebrows, but the articulation of "My Communism" was clear in the 128 posters, by some fifty artists, that filled the repurposed factory and enormous white gallery of TOP in suburban Shanghai. Created by Chinese and international participants alike, the designs speak to experiences of living under socialism and engage in a range of social critiques, the cacophony of styles suggesting a kind of utopian collectivism. In his wall text, cocurator Lu Xinghua proposes an "art internationale" that would "meet contemporary Chinese artists' desires for both local uniqueness and global universality." I hated myself for just wanting to buy a book.

2  
**"PLACE, TIME, PLAY: INDIA-CHINA CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION"** (various venues, Shanghai; curated by Chaitanya Sambrani) This exhibition of artists from India and China was mounted under the auspices of West Heavens, a multipronged effort (initiated by the Institute of Visual Culture at China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, and Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong) to ameliorate the lack of intellectual exchange between these two Asian powers. Noncommercial

encounters with Indian artists on the mainland are rare, so the opportunity to see such works as Tallur L. N.'s impressive *Apocalypse (The Coin Polisher)*, 2010, was a treat. After one drops a coin into the doughnut-shaped apparatus, thousands of swirling electromagnetic fibers polish the metal to a smooth, anonymous surface, "civilizing" it by erasing its distinguishing marks—a subversive warning about Westernization to which both civilizations can relate.

3  
**MUSEUM OF UNKNOWN** Quite simply, museums in China are nothing like what you'd expect. State museums operate like galleries with wall space for rent. Private museums, for their part, aren't much better. In response, Qiu Anxiong and five others created Museum of Unknown, an itinerant series of lectures and installations that explore the ways in which museums impact the reception of art and imagine an institution oriented purely toward artistic production. Their respect for the unknown and utter abandonment to process is akin to a spiritual journey.

4  
**"THE THIRD PARTY—AN EXHIBITION IN THREE ACTS"** (Platform China, Beijing; curated by Beatrice Leanza) Unfolding in three "acts," this research-driven exhibition examined individual history, collaboration, and the archive. Each iteration of the show featured adaptable hexagonal cardboard modules designed by Li Naihan, which served as pedestals or makeshift walls. Collectively titled *The Beehive*, 2011, these units encouraged a reading of the exhibition as practice—rather than object—



1. Above: Pavel Büchler, *Report on Damage* (Poster), 2011, silk screen on paper, 70 1/2 x 47 1/2". From "My Communism: Poster Exhibition."

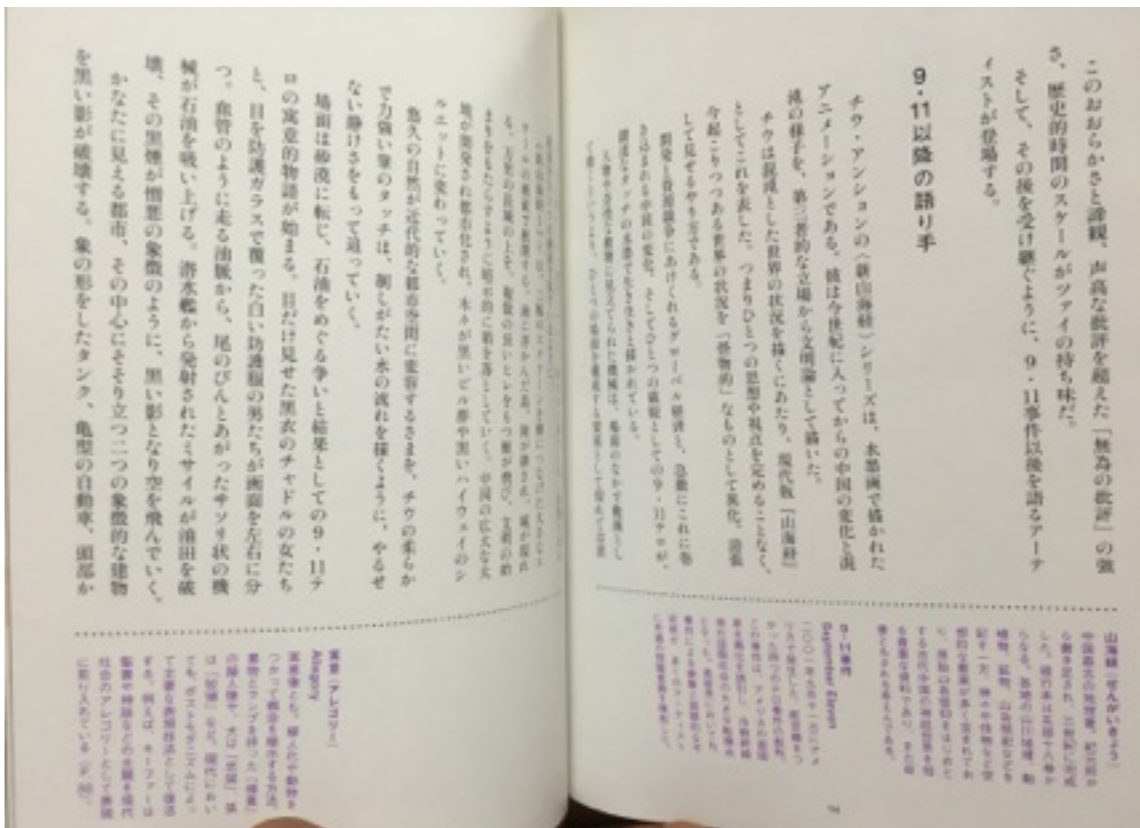
4. Right: View of "The Third Party—An Exhibition in Three Acts," 2011, Platform China, Beijing. From left: Li Naihan, *The Beehive*, 2011; Yan Lei, *Whoever You Don't Know Is Art*, 2010.

as the Funder and organizer of Museum of Unknown, organized the exhibition of Museum of Unknown, and as artist in other 2 best exhibition 2011 in China

長谷川祐子

# 女の子のための 現代アート入門

MOTコレクションを中心に



Modern Art for Women  
by Yuko Hasegawa

award



# 2006 CCAA中国当代艺术奖



Art China: young artist of year 2007

# 2011 Outlook Magazine

Artist of new media



# 2007 Lianzhou Photo Festival

award of median comment





# National Art Magazine: Award of year 2018

[http://yiker.trueart.com/20147096/article\\_item\\_81068\\_1.shtml](http://yiker.trueart.com/20147096/article_item_81068_1.shtml)



catalogue of exhibitions

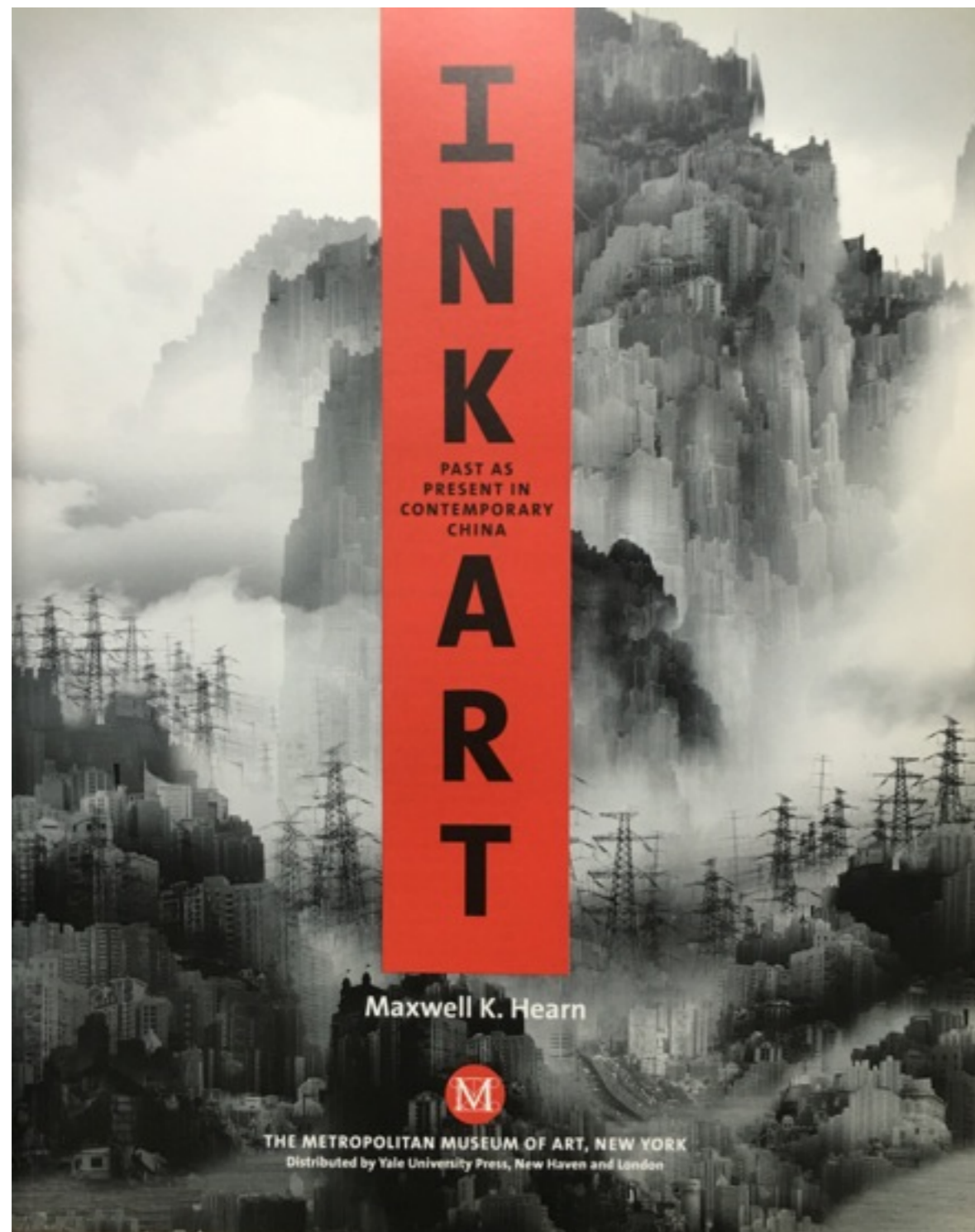


Fig. 3. Qiu Anxiong (b. 1972). Still from *New Classic of Mountains and Seas* (2006). Three-channel animated video with sound; 30 min. Collection of the artist [Exhib.]

practitioners are now active across the globe, and forms of expression no longer develop solely from Western artistic traditions or from the preceding modernist past.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, while it is no longer possible to understand contemporary Chinese art without recognizing its practitioners' awareness of Western concepts and art forms, one cannot ignore the culturally specific traditions from which it developed.

As Chinese artists began to show their work at the Venice Biennale, they attained a new global stature that has since been confirmed by commercial success (FIG. 4).<sup>8</sup> Yet most of the artists considered in this book have not been widely collected by Western museums, suggesting that their work, which continues to espouse distinctly Chinese themes arising from either the ancient or the recent past, possesses an identity that is less accessible to Western critics and collectors. As such, it has been harder to integrate their production into exhibitions of global contemporary art.

During the three decades chronicled in this volume, China has undergone an astonishing economic and political transformation, emerging as the world's second largest economy and as a military and political force that cannot be ignored. These dramatic changes often have appeared contradictory—most notably the unique fusion of Marxist philosophy and capitalist economics that Deng Xiaoping labeled “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” But while China has absorbed many

Western technologies and methodologies, their application will inevitably be shaped by the unique features of China's land and people.

So too in the arts, the past thirty years have witnessed many bold appropriations of and experiments with Western concepts and techniques, as well as an ongoing interest in self-definition. As Chinese artists have become fully conversant with global art trends, some have demonstrated a desire to explore and reinvigorate the cultural memories and heritage that continue to define China and its people. The artists presented here cannot be fully explained or understood by a single set of criteria; many may be viewed with equal validity as “ink art” innovators and as international artists. Either way it is hoped that this assemblage of works will provide a sense of the creative potential embedded in a tradition that has never been dormant, and that is constantly being reimagined and reborn.

<Ink Art>, Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY 2013

Kassel (1998–2004) afforded him the opportunity to reflect further on what it meant to be a Chinese artist: "Modern society is under the rule of Western society. . . . The best thing I could do to keep my own identity was to begin reading Nan Huaijin's books and learn traditional things."<sup>79</sup> At Kassel Qiu came into contact with new media and was particularly inspired by the hand-drawn, black-and-white animations of the South African artist William Kentridge (b. 1955), whose *Shadow Procession* of 1999 appeared at the 2000 Shanghai Biennale.<sup>80</sup> Returning to China in 2004, Qiu took a teaching position at Shanghai Normal University and immediately plunged into the production of a series of animations that pointedly evoke the traditional idiom of ink painting. He did not, however, work in ink on paper but instead developed a method of painting in water-soluble acrylic on canvas. This palimpsest medium emulated some of the effects of ink wash but also allowed him to rework the surface of a single composition by adding to, overpainting, or erasing his marks.<sup>81</sup> Photographing each changed state, he reassembled and manipulated these photographs on a computer to create a sequence of moving images to which he then added a soundtrack.<sup>82</sup> Qiu's method of inserting and removing semi-transparent layers of acrylic underscores an underlying message in all his works—the "impermanence of the material world and the inevitability of change."<sup>83</sup>

In the next three years, Qiu produced three allegorical fables cautioning against ungoverned modernization. *In the Sky*, completed in 2005, pictures a landscape shaped by tectonic forces—thrusting mountains like Chinese garden rocks and erupting volcanoes—that emerge and disappear until the growth of a modern cityscape and its accompanying mound of garbage point to humankind's adverse impact on the earth (fig. 93). The video ends as grass and trees begin to sprout from the mountain of refuse.

*Flying South* (2006), which contrasts migrating geese with a caged dove, confronts humankind's ultimately futile efforts to manipulate nature and curtail individual freedoms (fig. 94). Accompanied by the sounds of Hitler addressing a Nazi rally, the dove dies, books tumble from shelves and are burned, and what appears to be a gas chamber filled with struggling beings in bags is emptied into a burial pit.<sup>84</sup> The sounds of explosions signal revolt and change. The video ends with books flying back onto the stacks accompanied by a cheering crowd: a new cycle has begun.

The most ambitious of Qiu's early videos is *New Classic of Mountains and Seas I*, completed in 2006 (fig. 95).<sup>85</sup> The title and content are inspired by *Classic of Mountains and Seas*

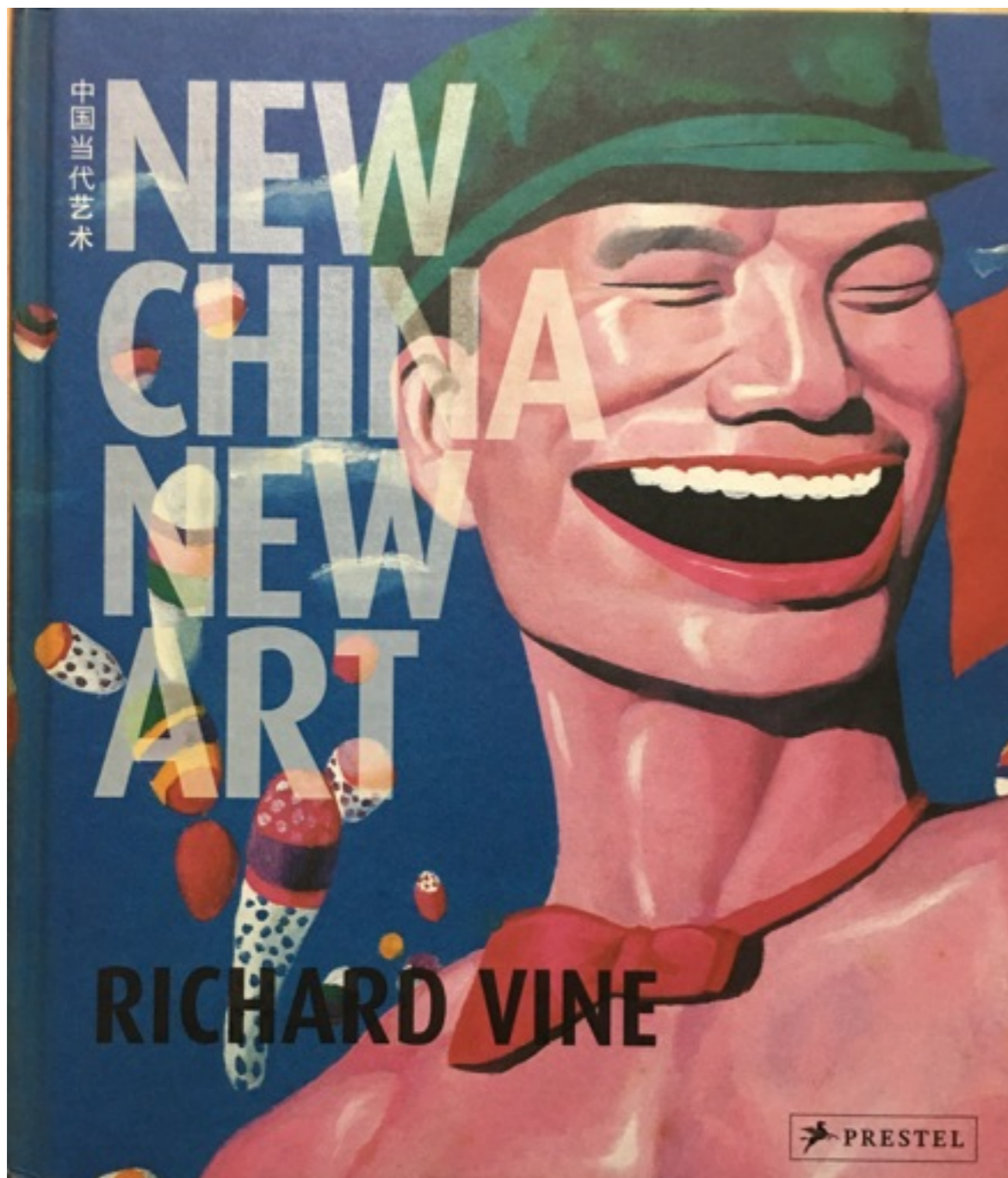
(*Shanhaijing*), an ancient encyclopedic cosmography "encompassing religion, mythology, geography, flora, fauna, minerals, and medicine," as well as many strange imaginary creatures.<sup>86</sup> In his video, Qiu conjures up nothing less than a vision of the birth and death of civilization. A pristine world surrounded by a vast sea is gradually altered by farms, dwellings, a walled town, and the Great Wall. In the early stages of this evolution, Qiu includes references to a number of classical Chinese paintings that further identify this landscape as China.<sup>87</sup> When a Pandora's box is dropped into this premodern world, a strand of DNA is released, initiating change. Explosive urbanization chokes the landscape until it is abandoned and overgrown. In subsequent scenes, Qiu portrays the ruthless exploitation of natural resources as the greatest threat to civilization. A desert inhabited by camels and chador-clad women is transformed into a vast oil field that feeds an array of mutant beasts—the machines of modern life. War prompts the creatures to devastate the oil fields, but out of the ruined land emerge figures draped in black. Two of them fly to a city where a pair of soaring buildings is destroyed. Shortly thereafter, a mushroom cloud leaves only a wasteland with a lone figure as witness to a postapocalyptic world.<sup>88</sup>

In 2008 Qiu followed the creation of his *New Classic* bestiary with a series of prints that simulate a traditional woodblock-printed text with accompanying illustrations. Each image bears a title with the creature's name—a thirty-syllable phonetic equivalent of its name in English—and an enumeration of its salient characteristics. The "aotuo," for example, is an automobile-like creature that has on its back "a glass-like shell, eyes as big as torches, and feet that run like a whirlwind. It does not eat, but drinks oil and can travel a thousand li in one day" (fig. 96). Commenting on these strange beasts, Qiu explains, "I have been upset by the chaotic situations of the world today and found it difficult to reconcile what is happening around me. As satire, I have set eyes on modern life's ingenious inventions and clever stratagems as though I was a naive observer, and looked upon them as exotic monsters."<sup>89</sup>

Although this postmodern morality tale has resonant in both China and the West, Qiu focuses his critique on contemporary China, where misconceptions about East and West, new and old, still abound. In his preface to the series, Qiu addresses the issue directly: "While China actively sought modernization, it simultaneously became critical of tradition, going so far as to completely repudiate it. China's modernization was based on a superficial misreading of Western culture. In its overzealous and unlimited appropriation of all things Western, it buried this fundamental fallacy for future



Fig. 93. Qiu Anxiong (b. 1972). Stills from *In the Sky*, 2005. Single-channel animated video with sound; 8 min, 17 sec. Collection of the artist [Kahib.]



## New China New Art



29th Biennale Sao Paulo 2010

## Qiu Anxiong

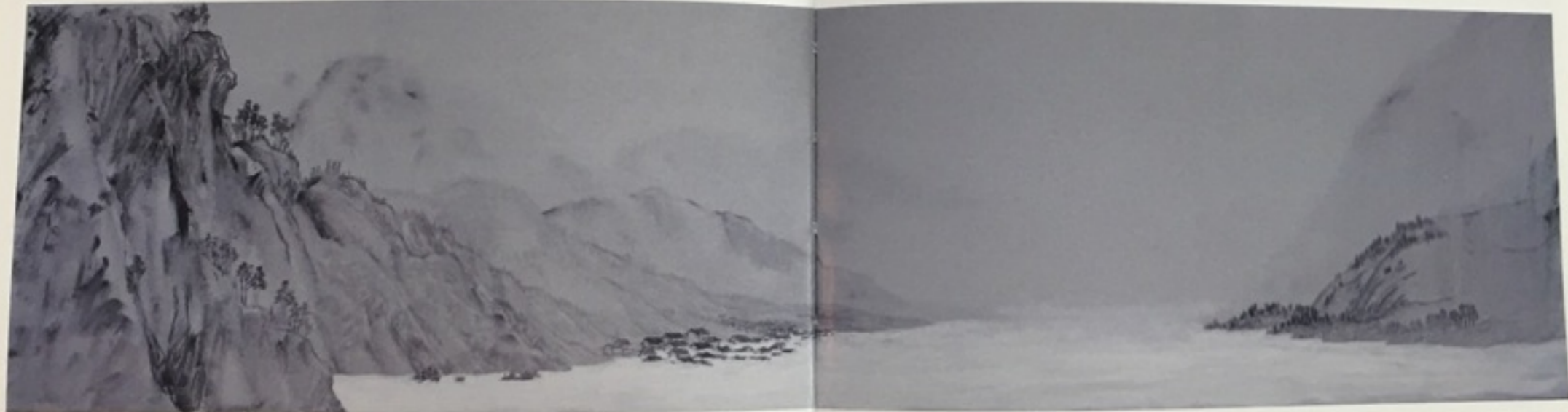
Sichuan, China, 1972. Lives and works in Shanghai, China. Qiu Anxiong is part of a new generation of artists dealing with the hiatus between the mystical, traditional China of a millennial past and the new nation generated by decades of socialist government. Through his pictorial production, he takes the Chinese landscape as the setting for allusive and fantastical narratives, allying traditional drawing techniques with tools of contemporary illustration. **In *The New Classic of Mountains and Seas, 1 & 2*, roughly six thousand original black and white drawings are animated into a fable**

**about the production of space by man and his technique. He reconstructs the birth, life and decline of an invented civilization, whose history coincides with recent global media events.** Anxiong questions the validity of reason and information as the bases of our knowledge of the order of things, and repositions myth, the uncanny and the fantastical side by side in the real world.

## The New Classic of Mountains and Seas – part 2

2009  
frame

335



We had now been about ten minutes upon the top of Helseggen, to which we had ascended from the interior of Lofoden, so that we had caught no glimpse of the sea until it had burst upon us from the summit. As the old man spoke, I became aware of a loud and gradually increasing sound, like the moaning of a vast herd of buffaloes upon an American prairie; and at the same moment I perceived that what seamen term the chopping character of the ocean beneath us, was rapidly changing into a current which

set to the eastward. Even while I gazed, this current acquired a monstrous velocity. Each moment added to its speed – to its headlong impetuosity. In five minutes the whole sea, as far as Vurrgh, was lashed into ungovernable fury; but it was between Moskoee and the coast that the main uproar held its sway. Here the vast bed of the waters, seamed and scarred into a thousand conflicting channels, burst suddenly into phrensiad convulsion – heaving, boiling, hissing – gyrating in gigantic and innumerable

29th Biennale Sao Paulo 2010



# WANDERING EYES

## VIDEOKUNST AUS SHANGHAI

LANDESGALERIE LINZ

### *Das Neue Buch der Berge und Meere*

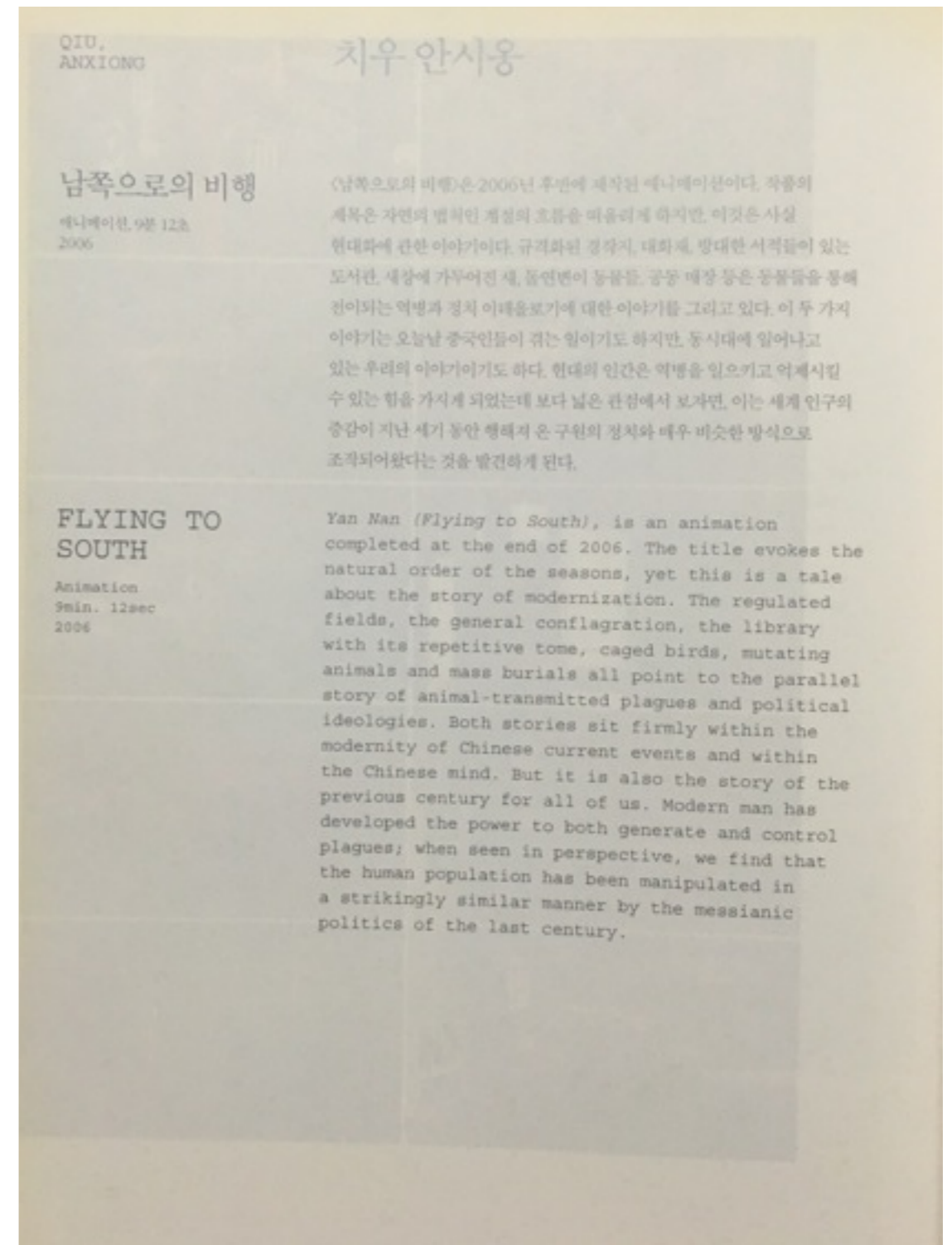
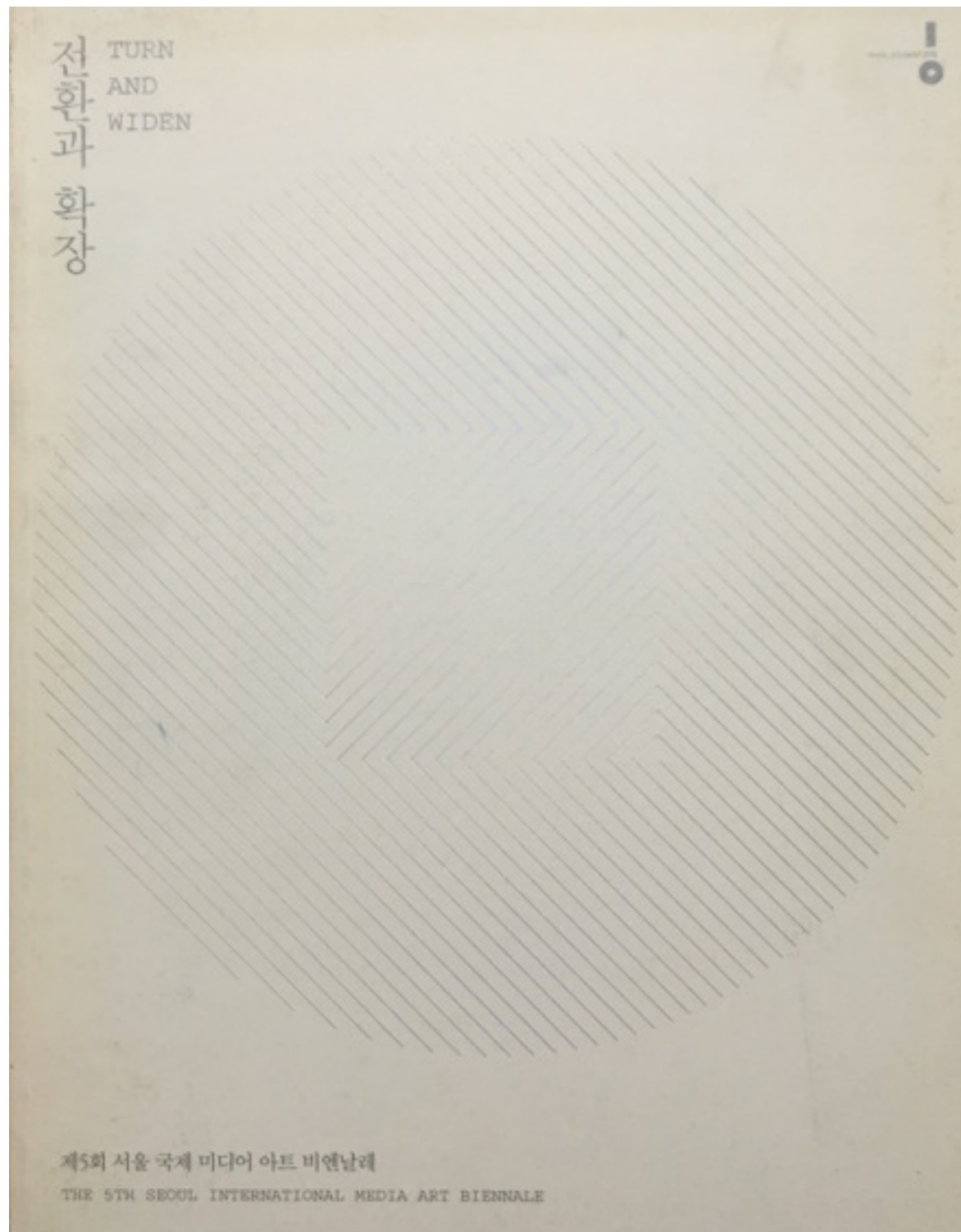
*Das Neue Buch der Berge und Meere* (Teil 1) ist eine Animation, die aus Tuschezeichnungen zusammengesetzt wurde. Der Titel des Werkes bezieht sich auf den chinesischen Klassiker *Das Buch der Berge und Seen*, das älteste überlieferte Werk der chinesischen Mythologie. Es geht bei dieser Arbeit nicht nur um die Erforschung der Beziehung zwischen klassischer und moderner chinesischer Kultur: *Das Neue Buch der Berge und Meere* weist auch eine traumähnliche Qualität auf, und die Bilder, die schier unglaubliche, aber sehr lebensnahe Szenarien beschreiben, sind Fantasien über die uns umgebende Welt.

Die Arbeit klagt die sich verschlechternden Umweltbedingungen, den gesellschaftlichen Kollaps und die massive Urbanisierung an. Indem Qiu Anxiong Konnotationen zu realen Gegebenheiten herstellt, erhält die Arbeit eine stärker politisch gefärbte Aussage. Im Unterschied zu anderen jungen Künstlerinnen thematisiert Qiu Anxiong in seinen Werken nicht unseren Alltag mit seinen materiellen Annehmlichkeiten, sondern nutzt eine Vielfalt von skurril anmutenden, historischen Materialien als Ausgangspunkt für seine Arbeiten.

*The New Book of Mountains and Seas* (Part 1) is an animation put together from ink paintings. The title of the work relates to the Chinese classic *The Book of Mountains and Seas*, the oldest traditional work of Chinese mythology. In this work it is not a question just of researching the relationship between classical and modern Chinese culture: *The New Book of Mountains and Seas* also displays a dreamlike quality, and the pictures, which describe the sheer unbelievable but very realistic scenarios, are fantasies about the world around us.

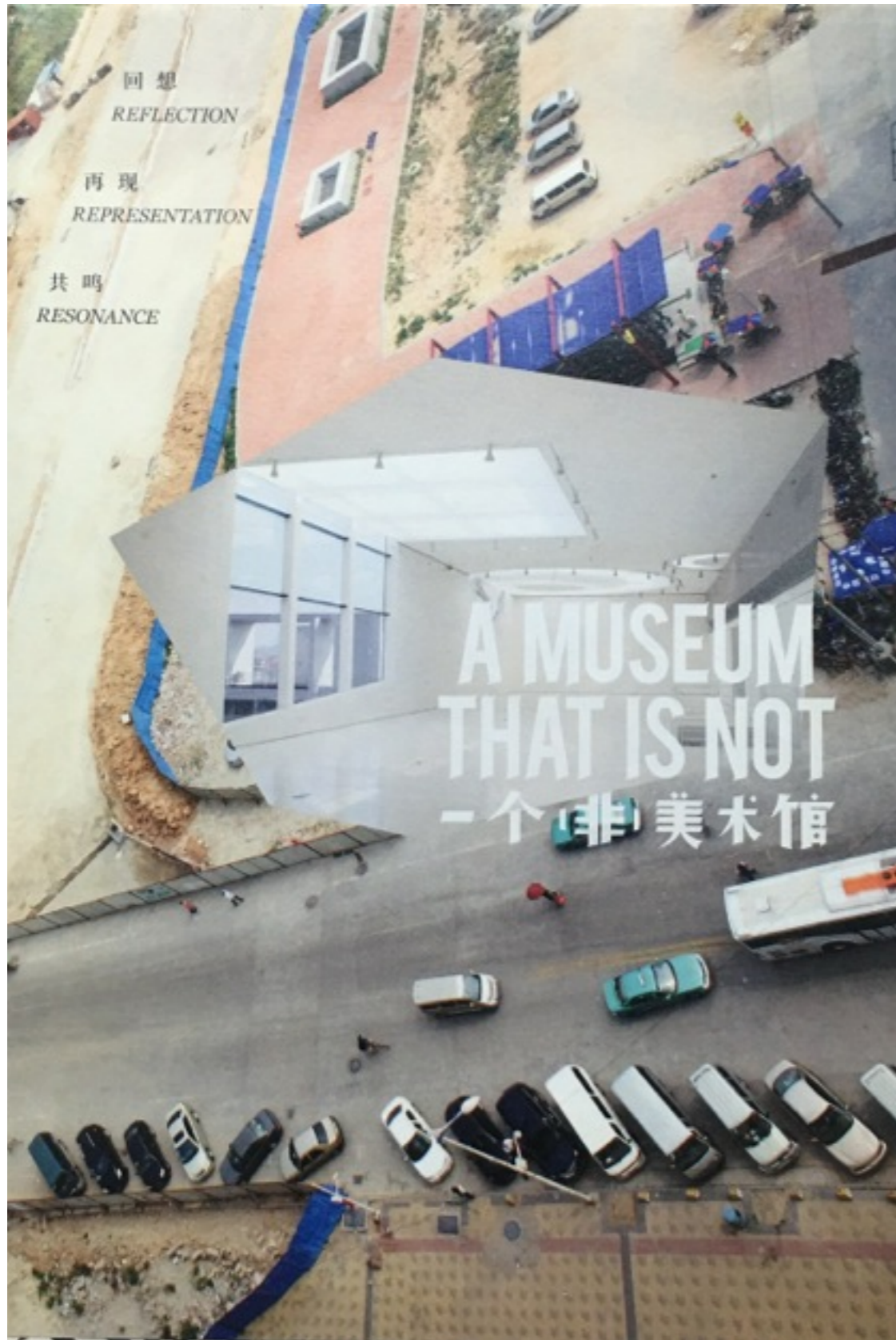
The work complains about the worsening environmental conditions, social collapse and massive urbanization. Inasmuch as Qiu Anxiong produces connotations to real circumstances, the work acquires a strongly politically colored statement. In contrast to other young artists, in his works Qiu Anxiong does not address our everyday life with its material comforts, but uses a wide range of apparently abstruse historical materials as the starting point for his works.

Animation, 30:15 min, 2006



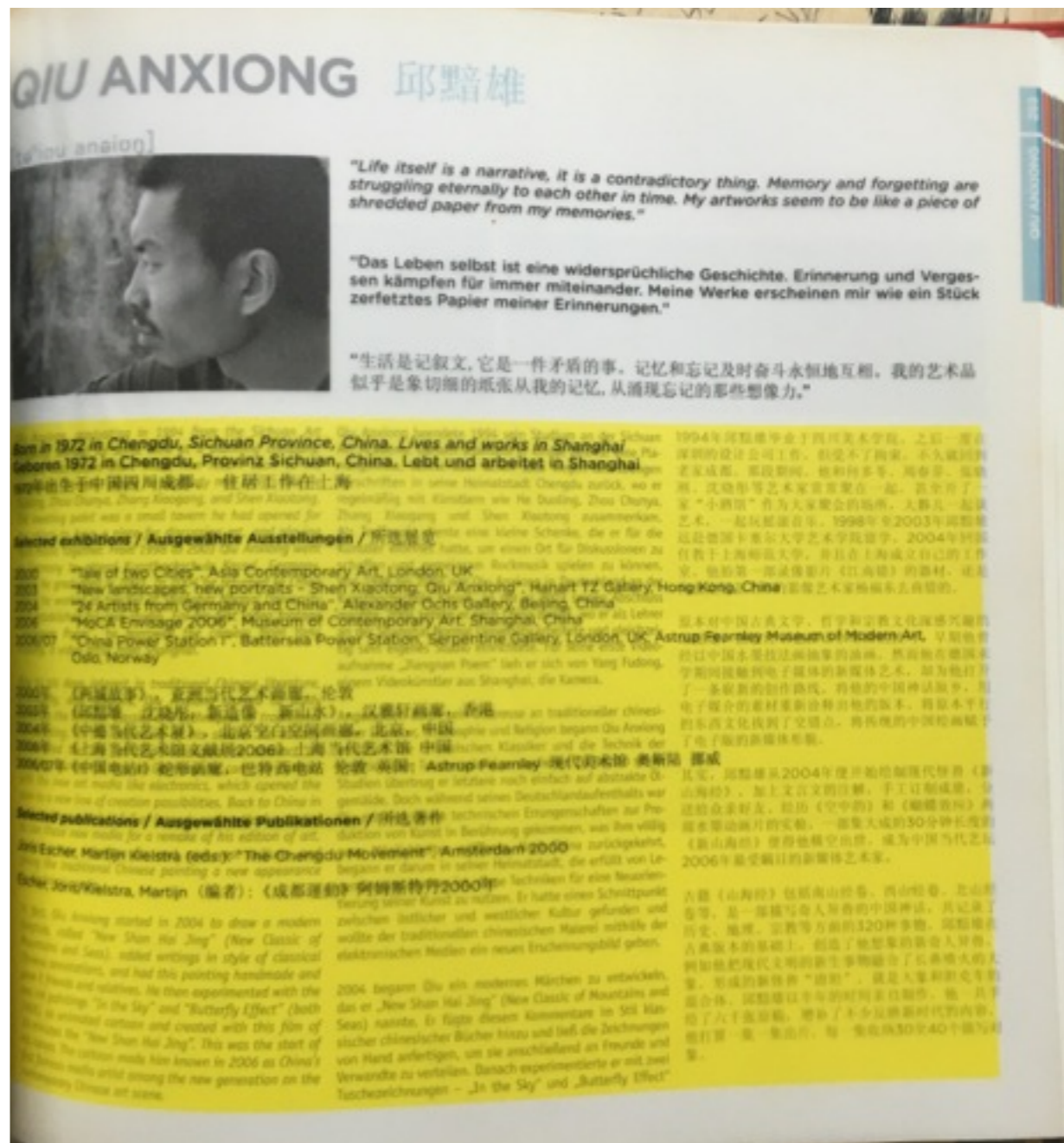
The 5th Seoul International New Media Art Biennial



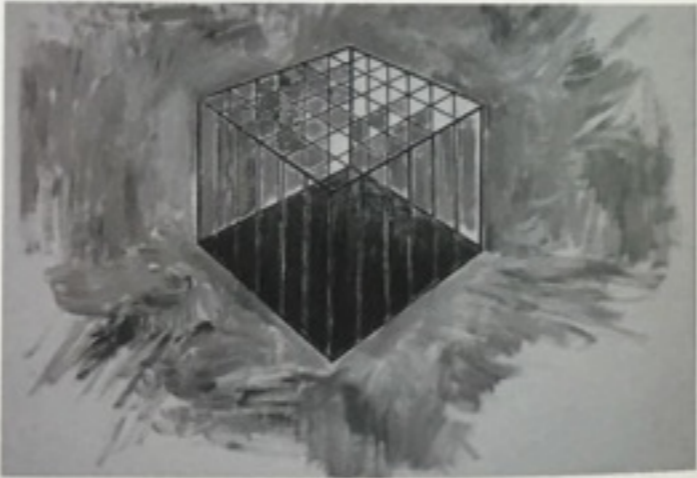


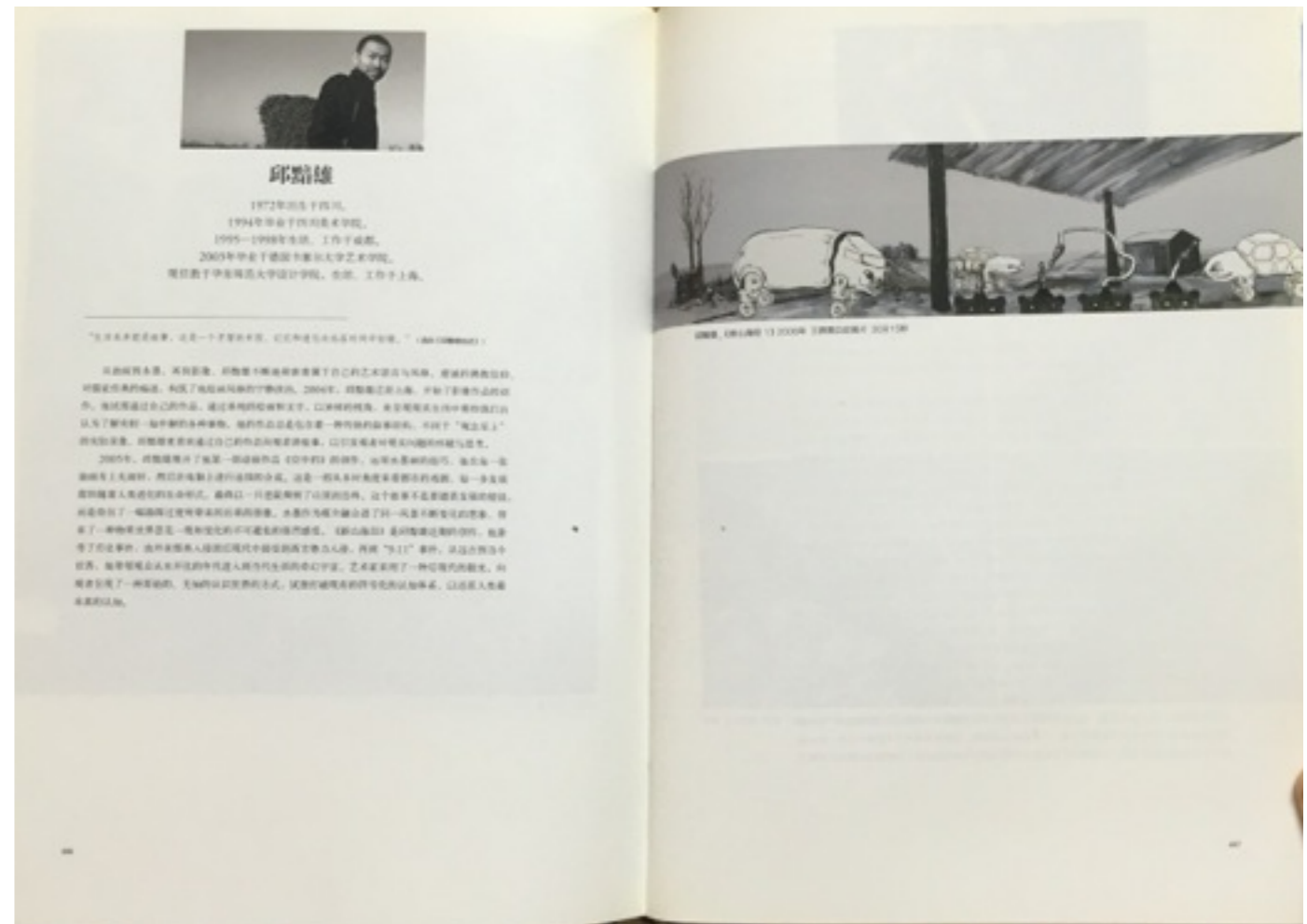
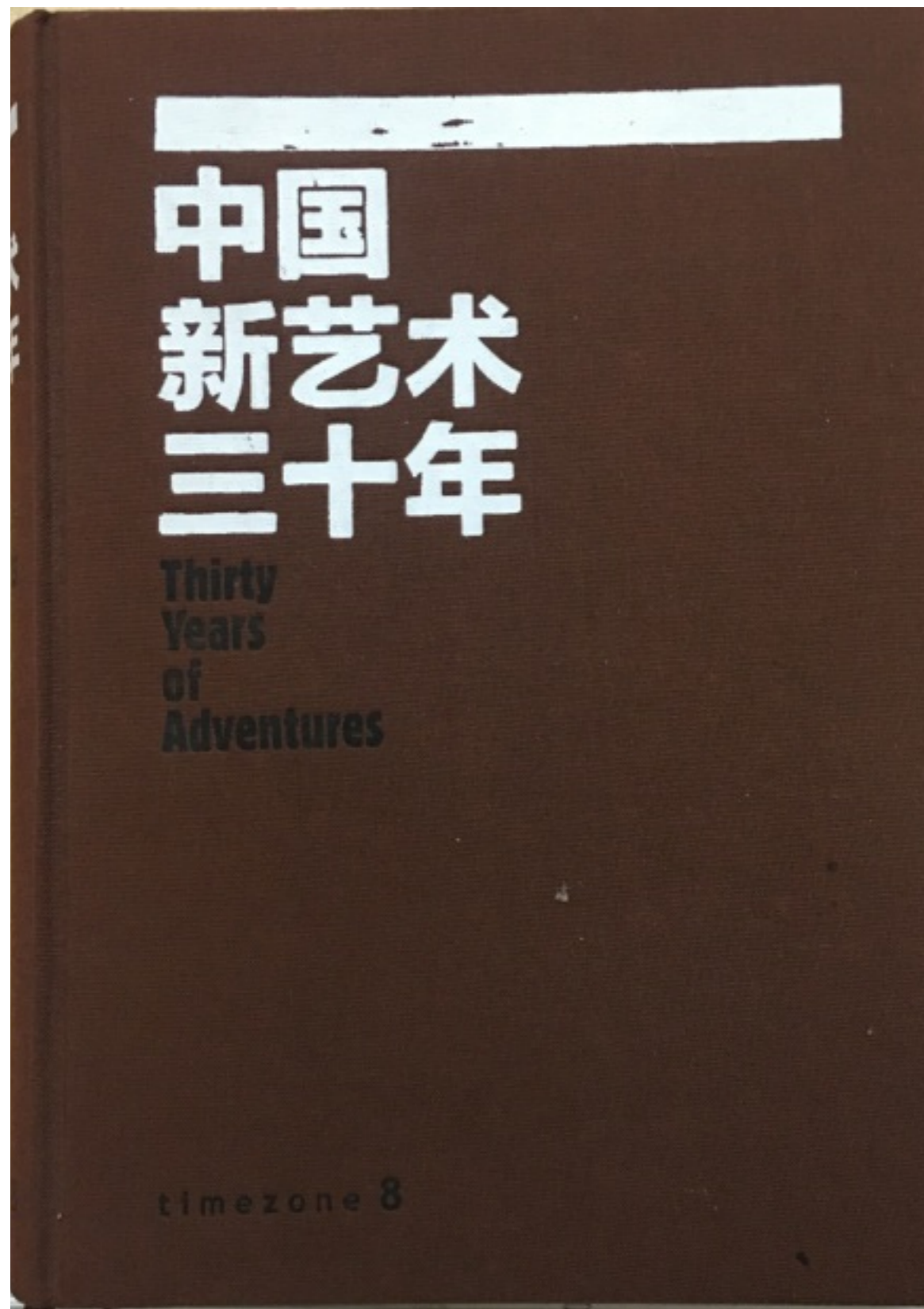
Museum of Unknown comes from the reflection of the museum as an institution on the one hand and the thinking toward what is yet unknown on the other. If a museum in the traditional sense functions through the collection of pre-established cultural and artistic facts from history, then in its particular manner of dissemination as a means of education/edification of the people, the museum is, structurally speaking, an authoritarian value system with a rigid and conservative standard. In addition, this pedagogical function along with the objective parameters with which academic works can be evaluated are absent from the Chinese museum system. This deficiency is, on the one hand, caused by the lack of foundational philosophical insights that originated from an indigenous context, while on the other hand, the public perception of art is still manipulated by financial interests that simultaneously corrupt academic integrity. Yet value judgments of art today are heavily reliant on the western art system, thus in response to this hegemonic tendency, Museum of Unknown intends to create its own criteria of valuation, a way of questioning that engages our current condition, and an attitude that fears not error but conformity. We have respect toward the things unknown, rather than giving an authoritative answer which simply affirms or negates, we prefer understanding and the process of arriving at it. The main task of Museum of Unknown is not the collection of existing objects, but the exploration of the unknown. It is devoted to the occurrence of thinking rather than the compilation of answers. Museum of Unknown is a process of growth and change, it has no stable form. It is the totality of questions, discussions and actions which can not be reduced to an unmediated outcome. Museum of Unknown co-originate with its activities and events; once an event is over, it will once again conceal itself in returning to the unknown. When someone becomes interested in the unknown and begins to think, the museum comes into being, it is free from substantial existence and institutional maintenance. It exists in the spiritual introspection/reflection of the participant. Museum of Unknown is a meaningful journey of the spirit to anyone who is passionately

- organized the exhibition of Museum of Unknown 2011 Times Museum Guang zhou



China Art Book

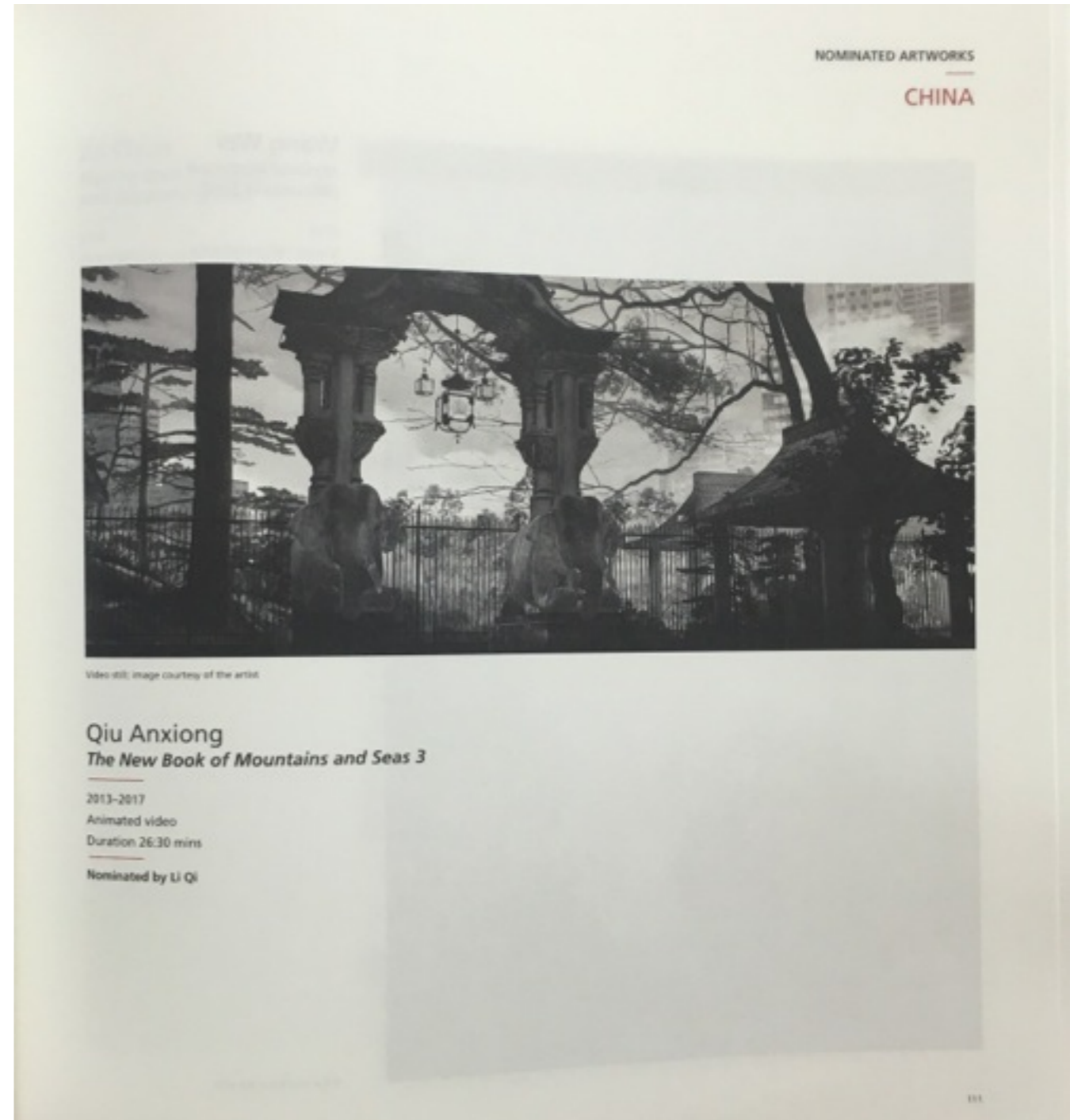




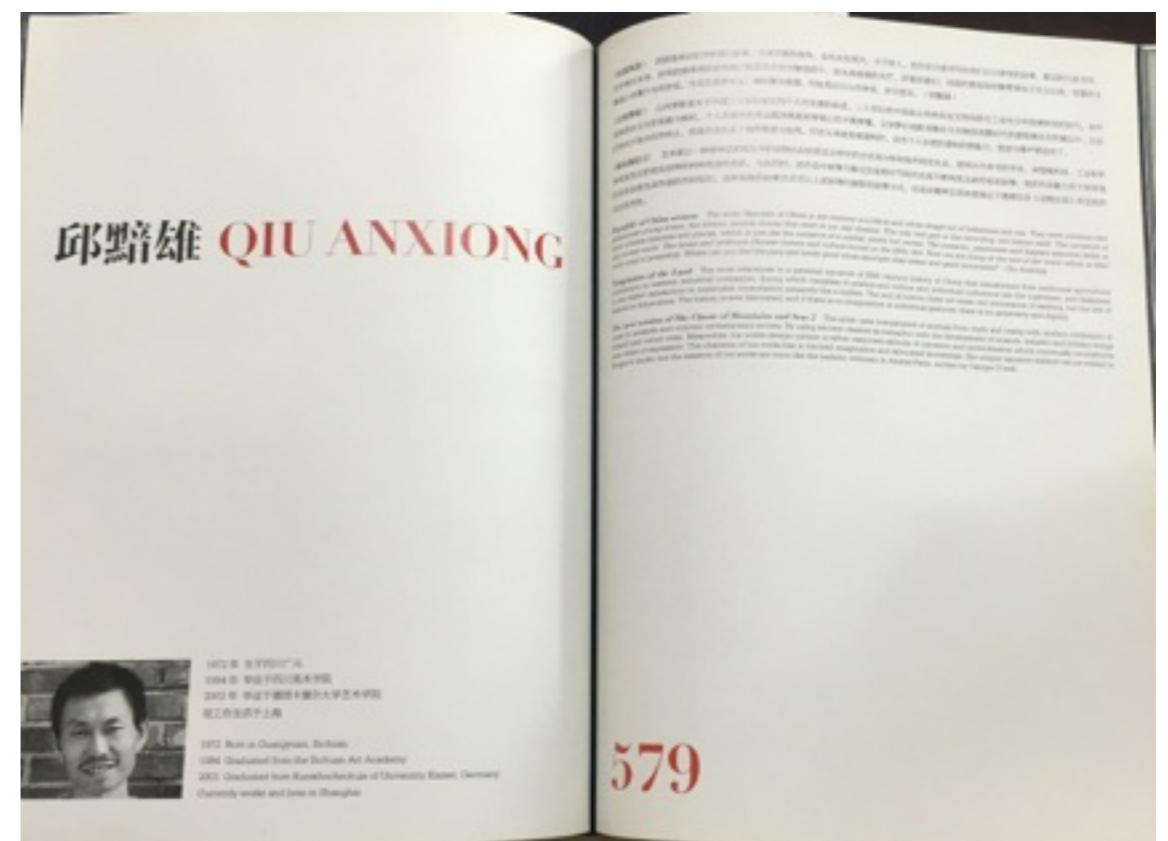
<Thirty Years of Adventures> 中国新艺术30年



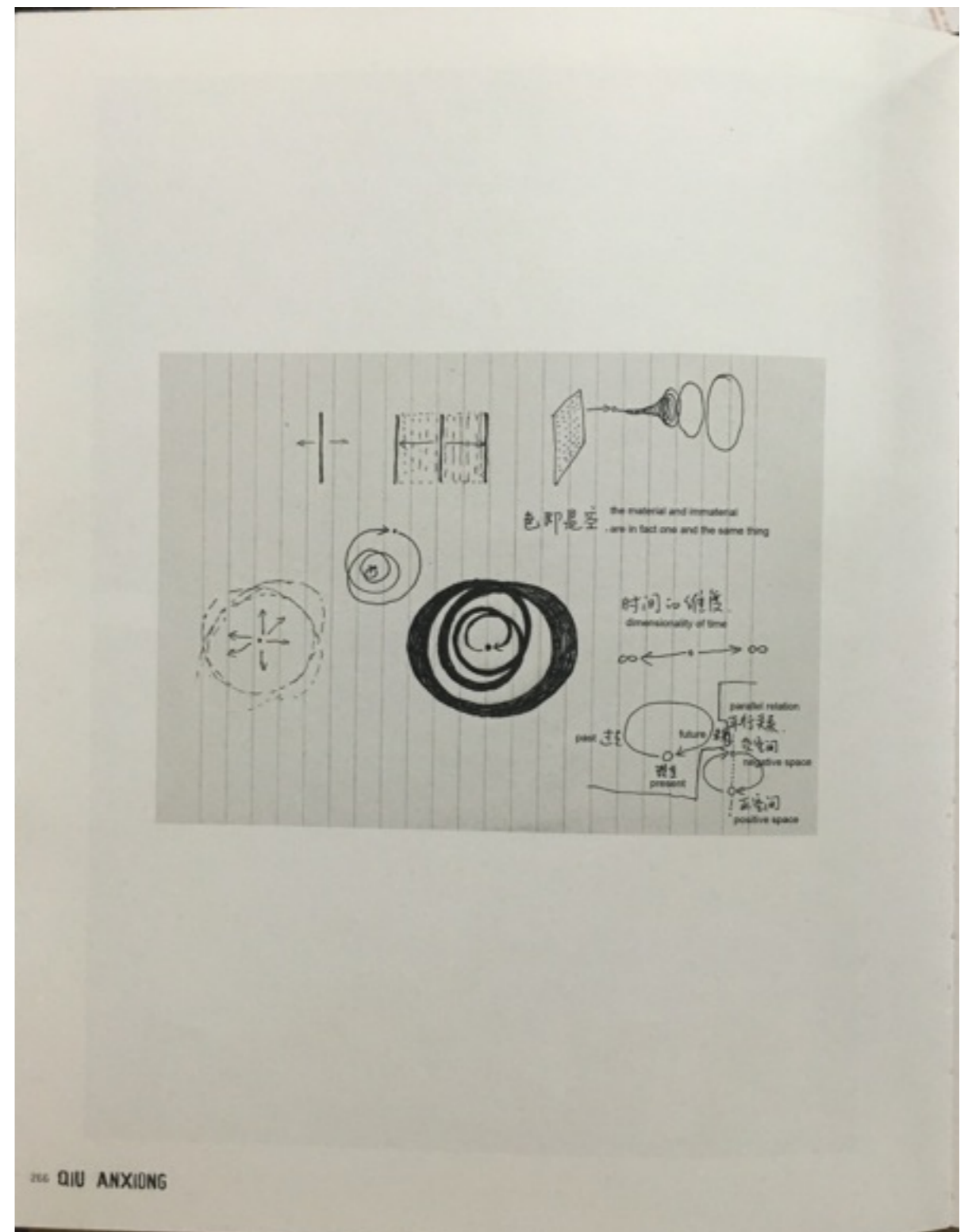
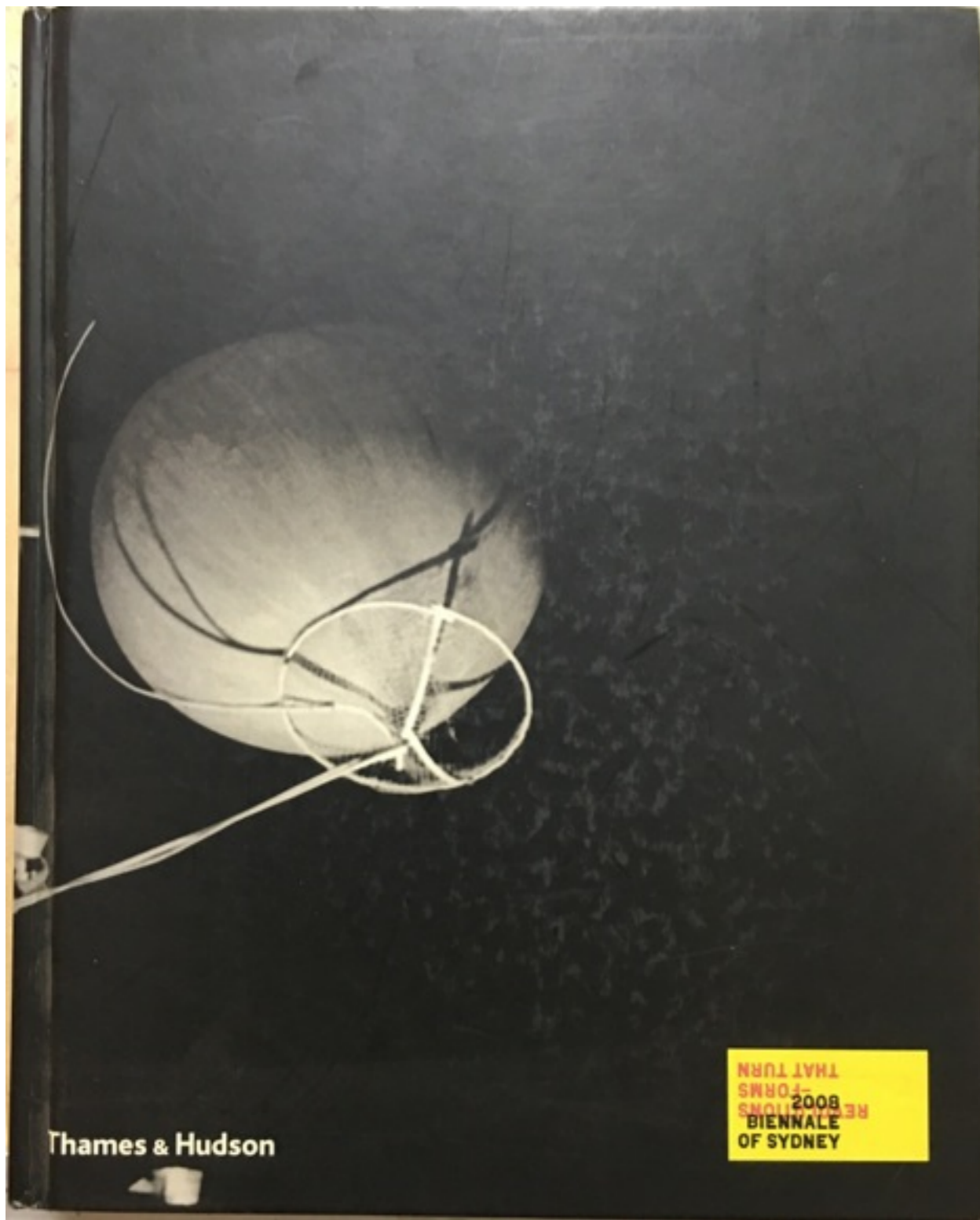
Bushan Biennale 2010



nominated Signature Art Prize 2018

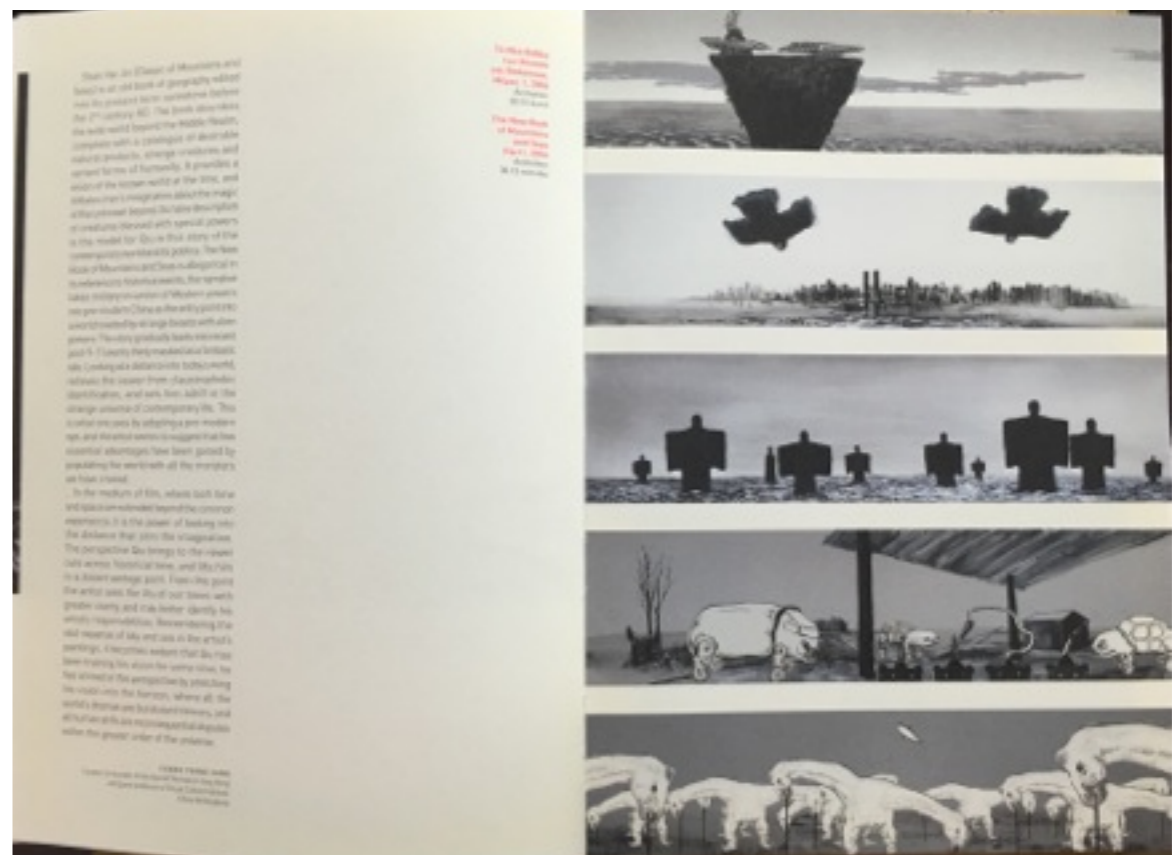
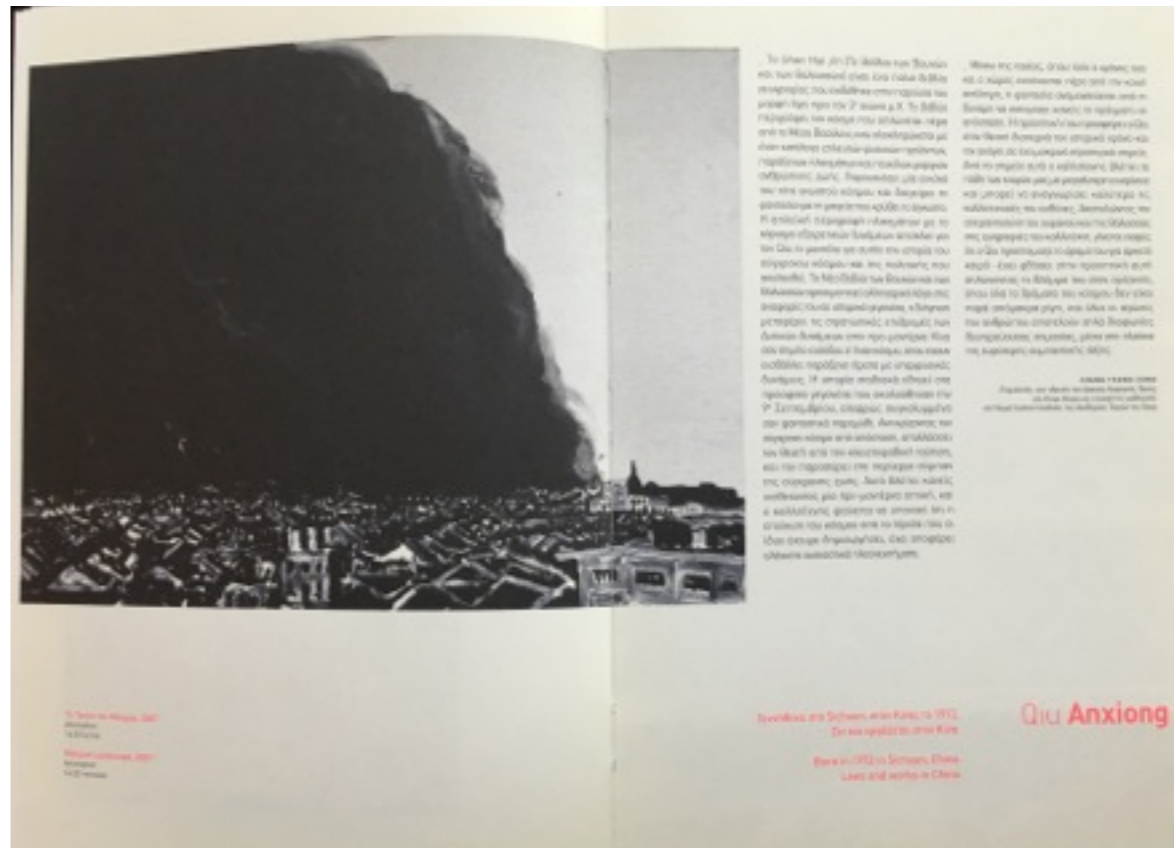
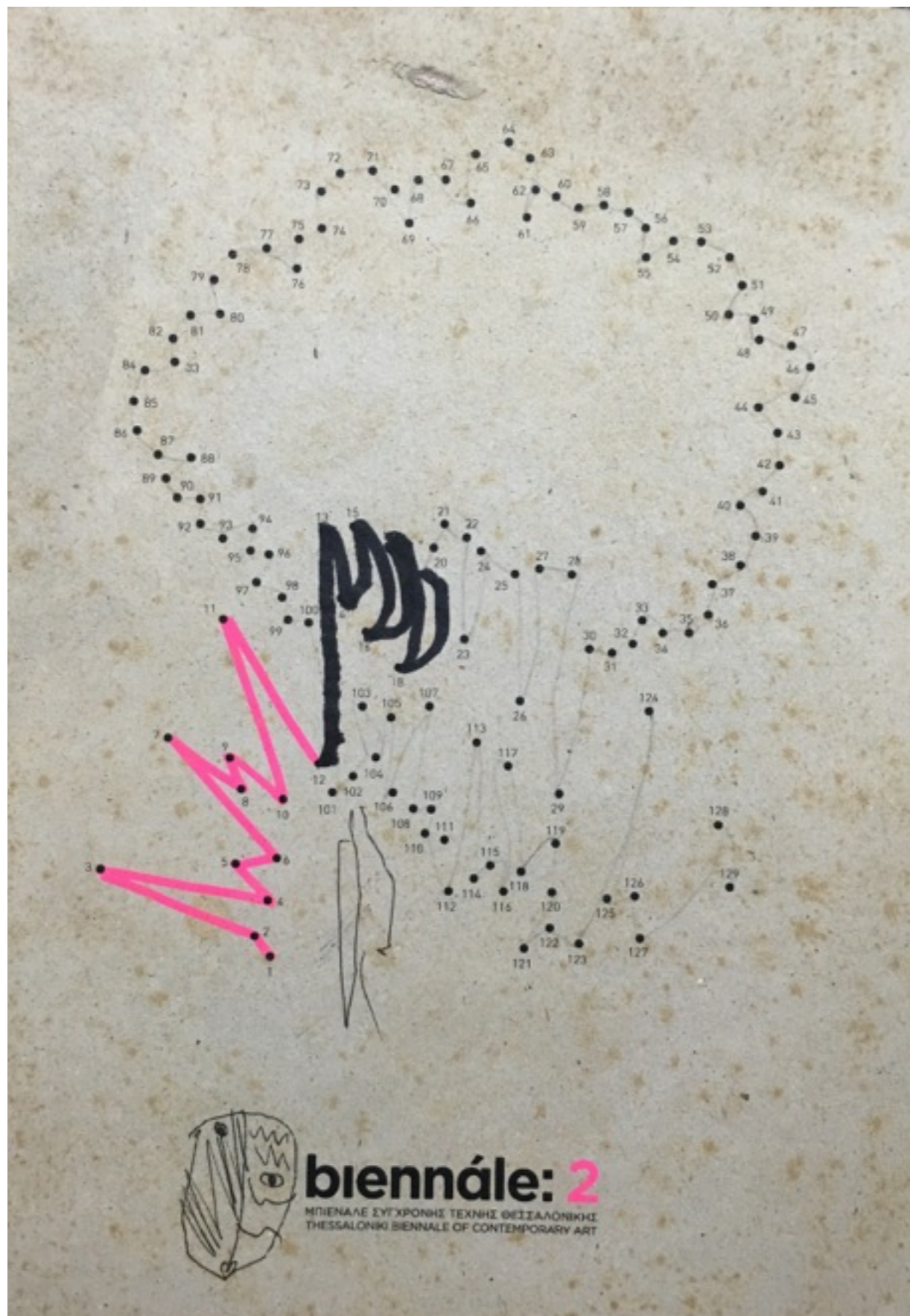


Moving Image in China: 1988-2011,  
Minsheng Museum Shanghai

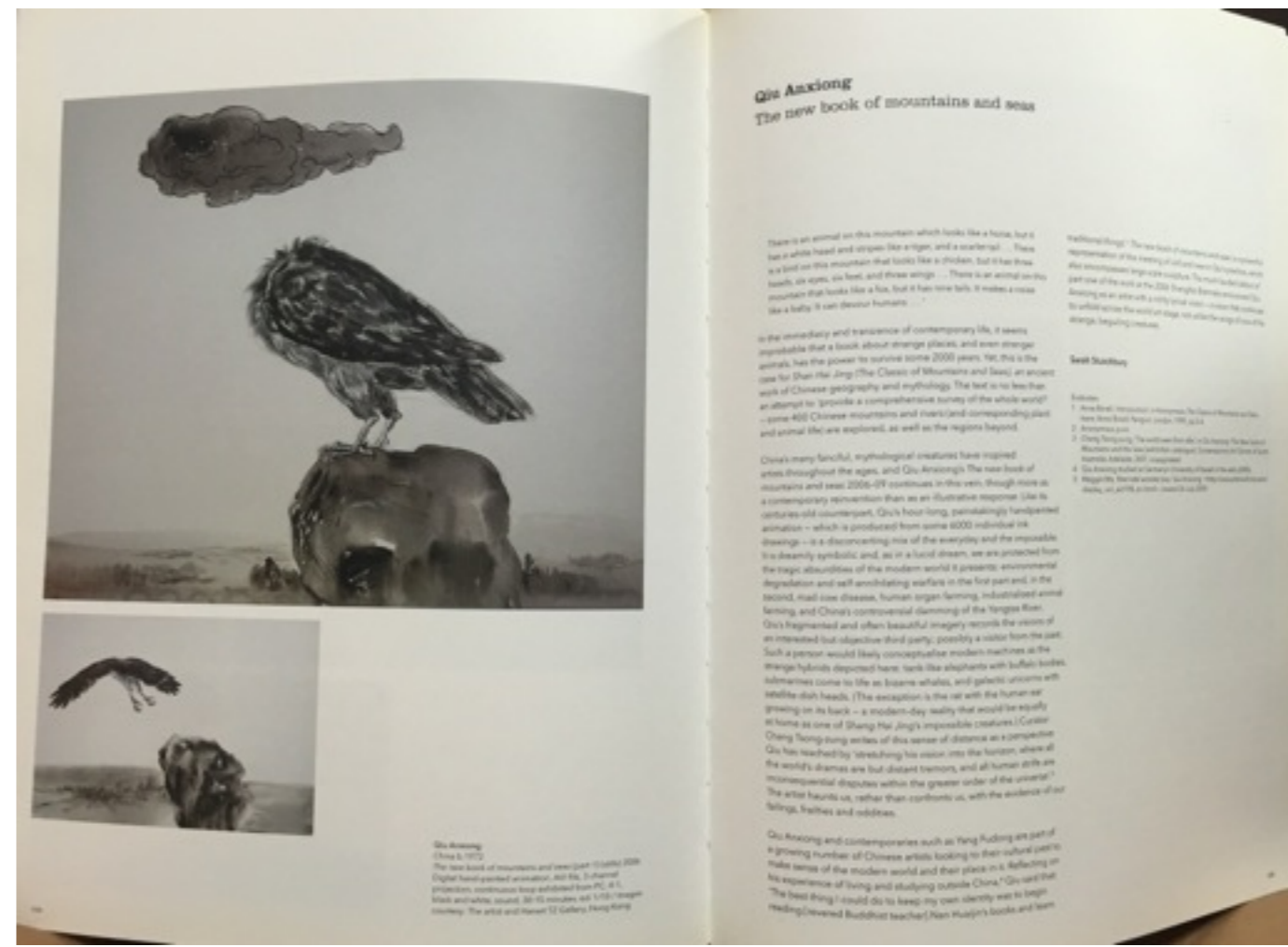
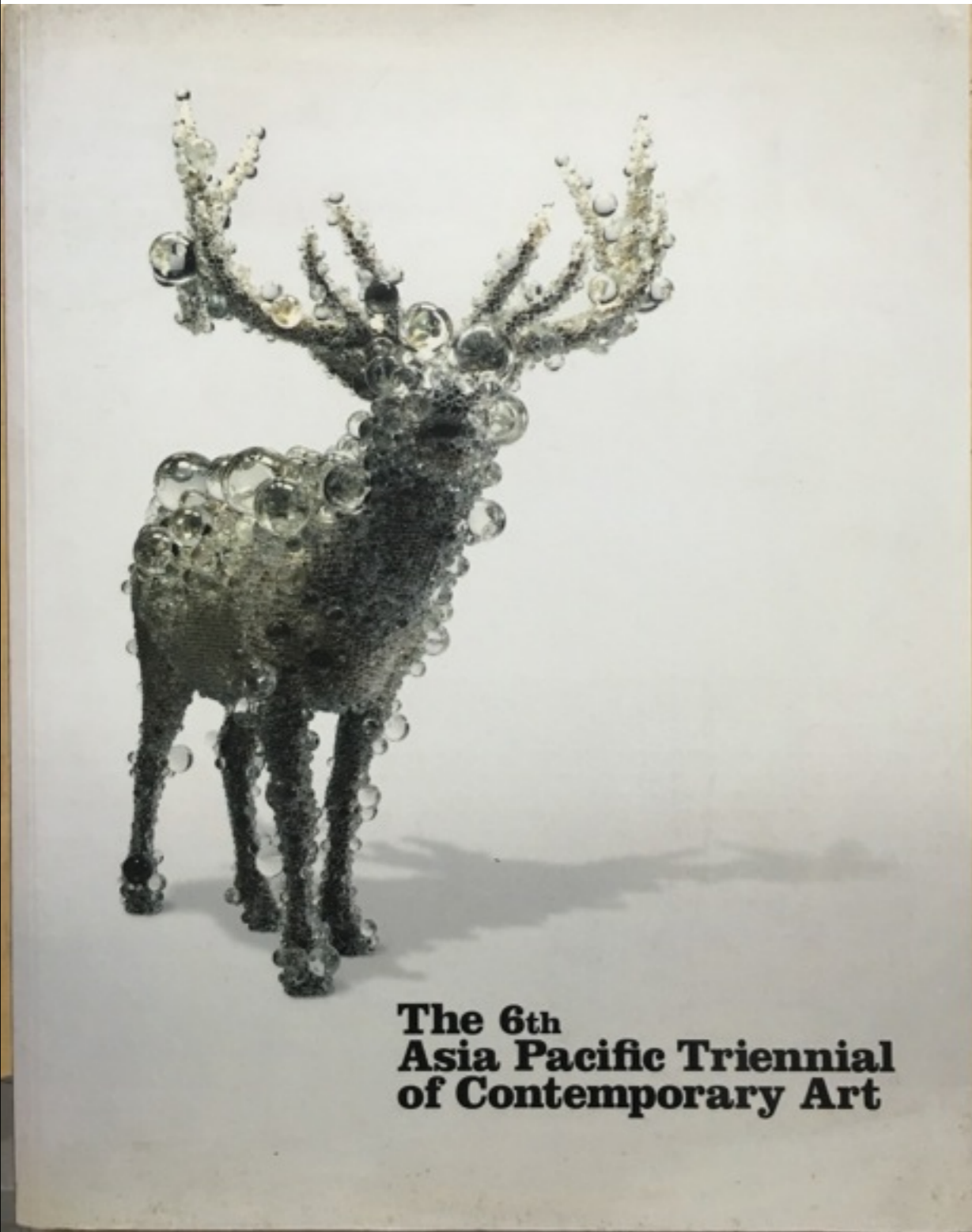


2008 Biennale of Sydney





Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art 2010, Greece



The 6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art 2009