INK BRUSSELS 2019
SEMAINE DE L’ENCRE
布鲁塞尔水墨周

OPENING        6       MAY 2019
WORKSHOPS     7 to  9    MAY 2019
TALKS          7 to 10   MAY 2019
ITINERARY       10     MAY 2019
LITHIC IMPRESSIONS 11   MAY 2019
EXHIBITIONS  until 30  MAY 2019
INK ART WEEK - A TRAVELLING EVENT

INK BRUSSELS 2019 (Semaine de l’Encre - 布鲁塞尔水墨周), to be held from May 6 to 12, combines conferences and workshops in the field of contemporary ink held in Auditoire Victor Bourgeois and Espace Architecture at the Faculté d’Architecture La Cambre-Horta ULB, place Flagey.

This week of theoretical and practical events investigates the quest for abstraction in the practice of calligraphy and painting with a specific angle on Chinese writing, offering the opportunity of direct contacts between the public and invited artists and scholars. This travelling event functions as a collaborative enterprise between ink artists, curators and academic or cultural institutions in the host country.

Paysage écrit/Ecriture peinte, a collective exhibition of 50 artists combining contemporary calligraphy and landscape painting, will be held in Espace Architecture from May 6 to 30, 2019. The show gathers artists from all origins who work with ink and paper as main media, (de)construct calligraphic geometries, engage in decoding and writing the landscape or experiment with language and gesture. A progressive itinerary looks at how each contemporary literati or letter artist departed from traditional artistic practices to explore the ways of abstraction. The exhibition unfolds in two parts, one devoted to nature and the other to culture, based on the basics of Chinese landscape painting: that a landscape is not to be seen or painted, but read or written. The versatility of nature, mountains and rivers allows Paysage écrit/Ecriture peinte to encompass a range of experiments dealing with the materiality, tools and gesture of writing, the limits of readability or perception, and geometries of ink and water.

Four satellite locations partner with INK BRUSSELS 2019: the gallery and art residency ODRADEK with Contemporary Inks, a collective show curated by Simone Schuiten and Kiran Katara on ink and intercultural dialogue between four practitioners of ink on paper East and West, the art spaces Garage Cosmos and ArtWeCare, as well as the Royal Museums of Art and History with Lithic Impressions, a display focused on epigraphy and rubbings, a technique of replication from stone carvings to ink on paper.

INK BRUSSELS 2019 team
Lia Wei (coordination), Zhang Qiang (academic supervision), Kiran Katara (Faculté d’Architecture La Cambre Horta ULB), Simone Schuiten (ESA St-Luc and ODRADEK), Nathalie Vandeperre (Royal Museums of Art and History), Vanessa Frangville (EAST/ULB).

Partners Belgium
Université Libre de Bruxelles (Faculté d’Architecture La Cambre Horta ULB, EAST/ULB, Institut Confucius ULB), Royal Museums Art & History (RMAH), Ecole Supérieure des Arts St-Luc, Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises (IBHEC), ODRADEK, Garage Cosmos, European Lettering Institute (ELI).

Partners China
Ink Art Research Centre 四川美院艺术学与水墨高等研究中心 (Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Chongqing), Centre for Contemporary Visual History 当代视觉史高等研究中心 (Taishan University, Tai’an), Renmin University of China (中国人民大学考古文博系).
Details of works by PENG Meiling, Frank VIGNERON, SHAO Yan and JIANG Hanxuan
PROGRAMME
6 to 12 May 2019

MONDAY 6 MAY: OPENING

18:00 Vernissage of ‘Paysage écrit/Ecriture peinte’ in Espace Architecture, Faculté d'Architecture La Cambre Horta (Place Flagey 19B)

TUESDAY 7 MAY: INK, NATURE AND CULTURE

Conference ‘Paysage écrit, Ecriture peinte’
Location: Auditoire Victor Bourgeois
Chair: Lia Wei

9:00 Experimental calligraphy
Zhang Qiang (Department of Art Theory, Sichuan Fine Arts Institute)

9:45 Materiality of Chinese writing: calligraphy, epigraphy and architecture
Lia Wei (Department of Archaeology and Museum Studies, Renmin University of China)

10:30 André Kneib (Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales) in dialogue with Jean-Marie Simonet

11:15 Sacred dimension in Chinese landscape painting: tradition and contemporary practice
Yolaine Escande (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique)

Workshop Tools for Writing
Time: 15:00 to 18:00
Location: Groundfloor, Espace Architecture, Faculté d'Architecture La Cambre Horta
Organisation: Lieve Cornil (European Lettering Institute)
Participants: teachers and students from the European Lettering Institute (ELI); invited artists; public

WEDNESDAY 8 MAY: INK, SIGN AND MATTER

Conference on Drawing & Making Landscapes
Location: Auditoire Victor Bourgeois
Chair: Thierry Kandjee

9:00 Revisiting & thickening the concept of palimpsest though ink drawing
Thierry Kandjee (Faculté d’Architecture, La Cambre Horta, ULB)

9:45 Affordance of Ink. How is memory embedded and transformed in rapidly changing urban landscapes?
Katrina Simon (RMIT University, Melbourne)

10:30 Covering and erasing. The emptied shapes of the Louvre-Lens park
Sonia Keravel (Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Paysage, Versailles)

11:15 ‘Weather’ in choreography, architecture and landscape
Georges Pirson (Faculté d’Architecture, La Cambre Horta, ULB)

Workshop Materiality/Writing (with) the Earth
Time: 15:00 to 18:00
Location: Groundfloor, Espace Architecture, Faculté d'Architecture La Cambre Horta
Organisation: Kiran Katara, Thierry Kandjee and Georges Pirson (Faculté d'Architecture, La Cambre Horta, ULB)
Participants: students and teachers from Faculté d’Architecture, La Cambre Horta, ULB; invited artists; public

19:00 Keynote Lecture. Landscape: a mesh to capture phenomena
Catherine Mosbach (Landscape Architect, Mosbach Paysagistes)
THURSDAY 9 MAY: INK, BODY AND GESTURE

Conference on Gesture, Composition and Improvisation
Location: Auditoire Victor Bourgeois
Chair: Françoise Lauwaert

9:00 Writing the body and the written body in Chinese painting
**Françoise Lauwaert (Laboratoire d'Anthropologie des Mondes Contemporains, EAS/ULB)**

9:45 Cosmological gesture and ‘phenomenology’ of reality. Spontaneity in aesthetics and philosophy of nature in Early Medieval China
**Raphael Van Daele (EAS/ULB, CECMC- Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales)**

10:30 Plucked landscapes: merging tradition and innovation with improvised *qin* music
**Jacob Alfred Garcia (Beijing Conservatory of Music)**

11:15 From the ‘Music of Changes’ to the ‘Music of Ink-Ching’. An ambitious comparison?
**Silvio Ferragina (Politecnico di Milano)**

Workshop Synaesthesia
Time: 15:00 to 17:00
Location: Groundfloor, Espace Architecture, Faculté d'Architecture La Cambre Horta
Participants: Jacob Alfred Garcia (workshop co-organiser, *qin* player and composer); Jiang Hanxuan (body and ink painting); Shao Yan (syringe writer); Silvio Ferragina (performance of musicaligraphy); Casimir Liberski (workshop co-organiser, pianist and composer).

18:00 Opening of *Contemporary Inks* at ODRADEK (35 Rue Américaine)

FRIDAY 10 MAY: INK ART IN CONTEXT

Roundtable of Ink Artists and Curators
Location: Auditoire Victor Bourgeois
Chair: Simone Schuiten

9:00 Invited curators: Simone Schuiten (Ecole Supérieure des Arts St-Luc, ODRADEK), Kiran Katara (Faculté d'Architecture, La Cambre Horta, ULB); Rosalie Fabre (Garage Cosmos).

10:30 Invited artists: Brody Neuenschwander (Three calligraphic traditions: a few observations on Chinese, Latin and Arabic script); Jiang Hanxuan (Ink painting and distance); Zhu Pengfei (The sub-structure of language: calligraphy and landscape painting); etc.

Guided Tour of Main Venue and Satellite Shows
14:00 Espace Architecture, Faculté d'Architecture La Cambre Horta (19 Place Flagey)
16:00 ODRADEK Résidence (35 Rue Américaine)
18:00 Garage Cosmos (43 Avenue des Sept Bonniers)

SATURDAY 11 MAY: LITHIC IMPRESSIONS
Location: Royal Museums of Art and History, Cinquantenaire

10:30 Gallery talk and rubbing session of a Tang dynasty epitaph in the Chinese Galleries
*by Lia Wei (Renmin University of China) and Zhang Qiang (Sichuan Fine Arts Institute)*

12:00 Open day of Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises (IBHEC)

14:00 A report on the rubbing field school in Mount Tai, Shandong province
*by Simone Schuiten (ESA St-Luc, ODRADEK) and the students and teachers in graphic design, illustration, calligraphy and Chinese painting from ESA St-Luc and IBHEC, in collaboration with the Centre for Contemporary Visual History, Taishan University.*

20:00 Musical Meditation on a ‘Scholar Rock’. Concert by Casimir Liberski in ArtWeCare (18 Rue De Praetere)

SUNDAY 12 MAY: A DAY IN Bruges
A day of meeting and exchange for invited artists and curators organised by the Confucius Institute HOWEST in Bruges.
PAYSAGE ECRIT/ECRITURE PEINTE

6 to 30 May 2019

Opening hours: 12:00 to 19:00, Tuesday to Sunday
Location: Espace Architecture, Faculté d'Architecture La Cambre Horta, Place Flagey 19
Curatorial team: Kiran Katara, Lia Wei, Zhang Qiang, Simone Schuiten
Artists: BARON Leo, BELGONNE Gabriel, BIFACE GRAPHY, CAO Ying, CHEN Honghan, CHEN Jinchao, CHEN Muju, CHOU Li Chiang, CONG Peibo, CORNIL Lieve, DE LA FAYE Niko, ESCANDE Yolaine, FERRAGINA Silvio, GARCIA Jacob C. Alfred, HOU Guangfei, IKHLASSI Mouna, JIANG Hanxuan, KATARA Kiran, KNEIB André, KOKKINOS Niki, LIBERSKI Casimir, LIU Tanyu, LIU Yi, LIU Yun, LOU Meng, LV Zizhen, MA Kun, MA Yuanyuan, MERTENS Tristan, NEUENSCHWANDER Brody, PENG Meiling, PLISSART Marie-Françoise, SHAO Yan, SIMONET-LIN Rosa, TANG Kaizhi, VALKENBORGH Anne, VAN DE VEL An, VANDENHAUTE Jan, VIGNERON Frank, WANG Ruqing, WEI Lia, WOUTERS Carry, XU Demin, YU Li, ZHANG Dawo, ZHANG Qiang, ZHANG Wenhai, ZHONG Ruoyi, ZHU Pengfei, ZHU Tianmeng

This collective exhibit gathers 50 artists who weave the ideas of writing, text, landscape, cartography and gesture, mostly in ink on paper or silk. The show at Espace Architecture takes advantages of the building’s dichotomic, entwining structure, to construct a narrative based on twin itineraries: Paysage écrit and Ecriture peinte - respectively devoted to painting and writing.

The two itineraries merge in a continuous progression that steps from one artist to the next, along a series of themes: from text to characters, strokes, dots, textures and surfaces… to colour, maps, patterns, lines and the shapes of nature. Some degree of porosity is preserved between writing and painting, as the paths meet on an intermediary landing devoted to mapping.

The entrance hall is flanked by a monumental pair of steles by Niki Kokkinos and a pair of scrolls by Biface Graphy. On the white wall in the center, a video by Marie-Françoise Plissart is projected, at the interface between script and landscape. The installation delimits the space devoted to workshops on materiality, landscape and gesture.

Behind the screen, a display of stones made out of ink, paper, clay and plastic by Ke Jipeng, Niko de la Faye and Zhang Qiang face the beginning of the itinerary. Inscribed chunks of matter, kernels of ink and paper, they conflate script and landscape into a single origin. A seven-meters scroll bearing a single stroke by Shao Yan marks the beginning of the itinerary.
Ecriture Peinte starts with a seven meters long grass script horizontal scroll, syringe-written by Shao Yan, followed by the work of calligrapher Brody Neuenschwander, where gesture gains in readability. Follow a series of contemporary calligraphers (Chen Honghan, Tang Kaizhi, Xu Demin, Hou Guangfei and Lou Meng) who revisit the notion of text by inventing their own archaic writing, or playing on composition and painterly effects to alter the readability of text. The eye gradually focus on single characters with the structural works of Liu Tianyu and the talismanic assemblages of Lv Zizheng, down to the character’s components with exercise sheets by Zhu Tianmeng and Chen Jinchao. Kiran Katara’s dots share the landing with the aerial pointillisme of Mouna Ikhlassi or Liu Yun’s zenithal views of hills and paddies, across the landing.

After this first encounter with nature through cartographic experiments, the nature of stroke and gesture is questioned through the work of young Chinese ink painter Cao Ying and her homologues in Belgium, the letter artists An Van de Vel, Jan Vandenhaute and Carrie Wouters, as well as French calligrapher André Kneib. Leo Baron’s large formats, alternating textured surfaces and monochromes, share a wall with Liu Yi’s wide brushstrokes, produced with flat brushes. Follow Cong Peibo’s twisted surfaces and contours. Ecriture peinte ends with the works of Yolaine Escande, where poetry and Chinese calligraphy merge with the shapes of nature. A map of the whole itinerary is located on the landing at the summit of the structure.

Paysage Ecrit starts with a section dedicated to colour, after a transition through the work of Zhu Pengfei, halfway between writing and painting. Pigments and surfaces are privileged in the work of two Taiwanese painters and their Belgian teacher (Peng Mei-Ling, Chou Li-Chiang and Gabriel Belgeonne), a Taiwanese painter and her Belgian student (Rosa Simonet-Lin and Lia Wei), as well as Chinese painter Ma Yuanyuan. Follow the zenithal views of Liu Yun leading back to the aerial cartographies of Mouna Ikhlassi, where landscape meets with writing, across the landing.

From the same landing, one reaches the architectural elements of Lieve Cornil and Silvio Ferragina. Tristan Mertens and Justine Richelle’s brushes in dialogue are followed by calligraphic or swarming lines by Frank Vigneron and Zhang Qiang. Starting with the layered horizons of Ma Kun, shapes of nature unfold with Zhang Dawo’s meditative sketches and Yu Li’s brushless stones, leading to the spectral works of Belgian painter Luis Pôle. Zhong Ruoyi’s spiralling paintings executed with bare hands and Jiang Hanxuan’s seven meters long full body imprint mark a point of contact with the human body in this itinerary devoted to nature. With the fragmented stones of Chen Muju breaking through solid black, the illusionist folded paper of Zhang Wenhai, and the hyperrealist prints and etchings of Ann Valkenborgh and Wang Ruqing, one lands back on grass and hay.

The Itinerary ends (or starts) here.
7 to 9 May 2019

**Tools for Writing**
Date: 7 May 2019
Time: 15:00 to 18:00
Location: Groundfloor, Espace Architecture, Faculté d’Architecture La Cambre Horta
Organisation: Lieve Cornil (European Lettering Institute)
Participants: teachers and students from the European Lettering Institute (ELI), Brugges; invited artists coming with their ink, inkstones, paper and brush; public

Learning how to master traditional writing tools is still the crucial part in becoming a calligrapher. In studying the past, students discover movements, gestures, techniques they can start experimenting with once a certain skill level has been obtained. At the European Lettering Institute, we encourage our more mature students in making their own writing tools, which will oblige them to discover new gestures, resulting in the reaction of new letterforms. We are happy to share part of this research and journey with the public. Four stations of demonstration by calligraphers from the European Lettering Institute introduce writing techniques to the public, with a fifth station where one is invited to construct one’s own tools for writing with balsa wood, metal and plastic.

**Materiality/Writing (with) the Earth**
Date: 8 May 2019
Time: 15:00 to 18:00
Location: Groundfloor, Espace Architecture, Faculté d’Architecture La Cambre Horta
Organisation: Kiran Katara, Thierry Kandjee and Georges Pirson (Faculté d’Architecture, La Cambre Horta, ULB)
Participants: students and teachers from Faculté d’Architecture, La Cambre Horta, ULB; invited artists; public

Following a site survey, this workshop proposes the collective construction of a monumental landscape, in ink on silk and paper. Mineral pigments and brushes will be available in situ. In addition to the tools produced during the previous workshop, techniques are to be invented by the participants. Invited calligraphers and landscape painters share their experience of the calligraphic brush, and invite the participants to formulate their own ‘texture strokes’, which compose the encyclopedic repertoire of landscape in Chinese culture.

**Synaesthesia**
Date: 9 May 2019
Time: 15:00 to 18:00
Location: Groundfloor, Espace Architecture, Faculté d’Architecture La Cambre Horta
Organisation: Jacob C. Alfred Garcia
Participants: Jacob Alfred Garcia (qin player and composer); Shao Yan (syringe writer); Silvio Ferragina (performance of musicalligraphy); Jiang Hanxuan (body and ink painting); Casimir Liberski (pianist and composer)

The interplay between ‘tradition/innovation’, and ‘composition/improvisation’ are central themes to be explored in this afternoon’s performance. This jam session will bring together musicians, performers and calligraphers to navigate and delve into these relationships. The search for commonalities that arise when performers of different backgrounds (music, theater, film or photography) interact with calligraphy will form a unifying objective as a method of cross-disciplinary collaboration. Likewise, calligraphers will be searching for echoes in their gestural and compositional practice as a means of establishing dialogical feedback within the performance. Jacob C. Alfred Garcia will provide a thread to the afternoon with his qin, with responses from Casimir Liberski. The calligraphers and performers will tune themselves on the ongoing musical conversation.
Biface Graphy (Lia WEI + ZHANG Qiang), SHAO Yan, JIANG Hanxuan, LIU Yi, ZHONG Ruoyi and Kiran KATARA at work...
10 May 2019
Guided tour of the exhibits in presence of the artists and curators of Espace Flagey (Kiran Katara, Lia Wei and Zhang Qiang), Odradek (Simone Schuiten), Garage Cosmos (Rosalie Fabre)

14:00  **Espace Architecture, Faculté d’Architecture La Cambre Horta (19 Place Flagey, 1050)**

Curatorial team: Kiran Katara, Lia Wei, Zhang Qiang, Simone Schuiten
Theme: Paysage écrit/Ecriture peinte
Artists: BARON Leo, BELGEONNE Gabriel, BIFACE GRAPHY, CAO Ying, CHEN Honghan, CHEN Jinchao, CHEN Muju, CHOU Li Chiang, CONG Peibo, CORNIL Lieve, DE LA FAYE Niko, ESCANDÉ Yolaine, FERRAGINA Silvio, GARCIA Jacob C. Alfred, HOU Guangfei, IKHLASSI Mouna, JIANG Hanxuan, KATARA Kiran, KE Jipeng, KNEIB André, KOKKINOS Niki, LIBERSKI Casimir, LIU Yun, LOU Meng, LV Zizhen, MA Kun, MA Yuanyuan, MERTENS Tristan, NEUENSCWANDER Brody, PENG Meiling, PLISSART Marie-Françoise, SHAO Yan, SIMONET-LIN Rosa, TANG Kaizhi, VALKENBORGH Anne, VAN DE VEL An, VANDENHAUTE Jan, VIGNERON Frank, WANG Ruiqing, WEI Lia, WOUTERS Carry, XU Demin, YU Li, ZHANG Dawo, ZHANG Qiang, ZHANG Wenhai, ZHONG Ruoyi, ZHU Pengfei, ZHU Tianmeng

17:00  **ODRADEK Résidence (35 Rue Américaine, 1050)**

Curator: Simone Schuiten and Kiran Katara
Theme: Contemporary Inks
Artists: Charley CASE, ZHU Tianmeng, Oliver PESTIAUX, ZHAO Qiong

18:30  **Garage Cosmos (43 Avenue des Sept Bonniers, 1060)**

Curator: Rosalie Fabre
LITHIC IMPRESSIONS

11 May 2019

Location: Royal Museum of Art and History (RMAH), Cinquantenaire park
Organisation: Nathalie Vandeperre (RMAH), Lia Wei (Renmin University of China), Simone Schuitens (ESA St-Luc), Peng Meiling (IBHEC)

Lithic Impressions: From Stone to Ink on Paper is an itinerant project that departed from the wish to explore the toolkit of the Chinese antiquarian, especially the technique of full scale replication by rubbing. This second edition of Lithic Impressions will be the occasion to display the result of a rubbing workshop held in April 2019 in the surroundings of Mount Tai in present day Shandong province by a group of 42 students and teachers from Ecole Supérieure des Arts St-Luc and Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises (IBHEC). Similar to the ‘Records of Metal and Stone’ (jinshilu 金石錄) compiled by Chinese antiquarianists from the Song to the Qing dynasty, the participants to the workshop were given the opportunity to roam and map the ravines, passes and villages in search for a written trace or an interesting texture. The workshop was hosted by the Institute of Fine Arts and the Institute for Advanced Study on Contemporary Visual History at Taishan University. The hall leading to the China Galleries at the RMAH exhibits the result of this fieldtrip.

10:30 Gallery talk and rubbing session of a Tang dynasty epitaph
Location: Chinese Galleries, Royal Museum of Art and History
by Lia Wei (Renmin University of China) and Zhang Qiang (Sichuan Fine Arts Institute)

This talk presents a series of steles collected by the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels, in dialogue with rubbings by Lia Wei and Zhang Qiang from similar periods and different contexts. The category of ‘steles’ is here taken in a wide sense, encompassing early imperial funerary carvings, medieval pictorial steles, 7th century epitaphs and even funerary bricks. Several types of script will be encountered, each adapted to a certain format, function, time period or geographic provenance: the free-style engraved characters of Eastern Han funerary monuments that differs from strict clerical style practiced in the Imperial capital, the dynamic, axe-cut style of the Northern dynasties, usually found in dedicatory inscriptions accompanying the production of Buddhist images, and the regular, carefully balanced script of the great Tang, in the classical format of epitaphs. Pictorial and epigraphic carvings from the field, rubbed from unmoveable cliffs and caves, are compared to the more standardised production of steles.

At the occasion of Lithic Impressions, 7th century epitaph on display in the galleries will be rubbed, for the public to better understand the technique and its cultural underpinnings.

12:00 Open day of Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises (IBHEC)
Location: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises China Library, Royal Museum of Art and History

At the occasion of its 90th anniversary, IBHEC opens its doors to the public. An ideal way for one to discover the Institute’s well-provided library on the visual arts and material culture of ancient China, Chinese literature, philosophy, Buddhism and Taoism, as well as its archive of rare books and manuscripts. Over the years, IBHEC has continuously provided library services, conferences, courses of Chinese language, calligraphy or painting, as well as the publication of the Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques

14:00 A report on the rubbing field school in Mount Tai, Shandong province
Location: Salle de Conférences, Royal Museum of Art and History
Simone Schuiten (ESA St-Luc), PENG MEiling (IBHEC)
Students in graphic design and illustration from the Ecole Supérieure des Arts St-Luc
Students in calligraphy and Chinese painting from Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises

20:00 Musical Meditation on a ‘Scholar Rock’.
Concert by Casimir Liberski in ArtWeCare (18 Rue De Praetere)
Lithic Impressions I: open workshop in Campo de’ Gesuiti, Venice, Italy. April 2018.
Photographic credits: Emanuele Farmer d’Ancona
Experimental calligraphy  
**Zhang Qiang (Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Chongqing)**

Experimental calligraphy is a way of re-visiting the history of calligraphy, in the hope to build a self-standing system of values that differs from classical Chinese aesthetics. Experimental calligraphy is both a historical and a cultural quest, because the art of writing, being a universal experience, transcends cultural boundaries.

When questioning our ways of perceiving and expressing reality, we should embrace the new dimension brought about by the art of writing in East Asia. An important step for doing so would be to look for the contribution of Eastern calligraphy to Abstract Expressionism. The latter managed to operate a shift between the concerns of classical western art, directed towards the conquest of space and the understanding of light, towards a quest for movement, temporality and gesture in visual arts. While Paris and New York have long been considered as the capitals of this new abstract wave, the Eastern principles that inspired these movements and the mechanisms of influences between cultures and between disciplines remain obscure.

Since 1985, experiments in modern calligraphy have multiplied in China, where the practitioners slowly constituted a discipline of their own. In contemporary art shows today, ink art now has a place in both collective and individual exhibits, and this talk looks at how contemporary ink art is, in its turn, influencing the international contemporary art scene.

Materiality of Chinese writing: calligraphy, epigraphy and architecture  
**Lia Wei (Archaeology and Museum Studies Department, Renmin University of China)**

This talk, in contrast to the focus kept by mainstream ancient and modern art history on the art of the brush, the ink stroke and the heroic figure of the single author, chooses to replace the Chinese art of writing in its material context.

By sense of identity, quest for exoticism or for other reasons, ink art has been considered as a funnel-shaped quest, a highly de-contextualised endeavour resulting in monochrome takes on immutable conventions. But when looking at the history of calligraphy, one realises how material culture as a whole constantly injected new shapes, content and values into calligraphy, despite the latter’s constant effort in maintaining its dominant position among artistic disciplines. While capturing monuments and inscribed stone surfaces on to paper through rubbing techniques, scholar artists have been carefully selecting and re-shaping the past: this goes far beyond replicating existing types of writing to be copied and studied.

The invention of ‘texture strokes’ (cunfa 剛法) in landscape painting is but one example of how common tools and materials create permeability between artistic disciplines. Seal carving, half-way between literati art and craft, is another domain which deserves our full attention when looking for ways to expand the vocabulary of ink art.

At the occasion of the Ink Art Week 2019, a dialogue is opened between Chinese calligraphy or landscape painting, and the theory of landscape and architecture. This reminds me of Delahaye’s early analogy between ink painting and architecture: ‘The first landscape painters where animated by the same spirit as the builders of cathedral in the medieval West’ (Delahaye 1981:131). This talk attempts to throw a few bridges between the art of writing, material culture and the built environment.

Sacred dimension in Chinese landscape painting: tradition and contemporary practice  
**Yolaine Escande (Directrice de recherche, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique)**

Can we talk about a sacred dimension in the Chinese landscape tradition, and in its contemporary practice? In which sense, then, can we talk about the “sacred”, and can it be applied to landscape? For an instance, the “Five Sacred Mountains” in China are such because they have received an imperial cult, intimately linked to writing. Though, so far, they became “landscapes” only recently,
while the empire vanished and the dawn of the Republic appeared in 1911, just as if sacred and landscape could not coexist. After an attempt for some definitions, the paper will examine in which sense the landscape can be considered or not as sacred on the Chinese territory during the 20th century and in today China, in light of the literati’s tradition. It will also scrutinise if in any way Chinese “landscape culture” can be related to some form of sacredness that leads to its patrimonialisation.

Revisiting & thickening the concept of palimpsest though ink drawing
Thierry Kandjee (Landscape Chair, Faculté d’Architecture, La Cambre Horta, Université Libre de Bruxelles)
What is the role of drawing to register and anticipate the effects of time upon landscapes? What knowledge is actually created within those drawing processes? This enquiry will be explored through a critical reflection upon explorative practices engaging in design through the medium of ink drawing. Doing so, we wish to highlight and discuss how landscape architects acknowledge and act upon landscapes as a cultural production. We look for synthetic and holistic approaches of landscape, ultimately revisiting and thickening the very concept of palimpsest.

Covering and erasing. The emptied shapes of the Louvre-Lens park
Sonia Keravel (Maître de conférences en théorie et pratique du projet de paysage, Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Paysage, Versailles)
The importance of emptiness in pictorial art is an ancient device. In East Asia, certain works of art are occupied up to two thirds by the void, the non-painted space (yubai 餘白). In presence of such artworks, any viewer can feel that the empty space is not inert, but inhabited by a certain tension. Even though this feeling can remain fogged, the viewer understands that the empty space functions as a bone structure, as it puts the different elements of the composition into relation. Matter originates from the void and vice versa. Emptiness is not mere nothingness, it is no entity but an operating factor, which allows energy and breath (qi 氣) to circulate through the painting. But what about landscape? What can play the role of emptiness in the landscape, become its operating force? The Louvre-Lens park, designed by landscape architect Catherine Mosbach in collaboration with the architecture practice SAANA, will bring a few elements of response to this question.

Talking about the affordance of ink. How memory is embedded and transformed in rapidly changing urban landscapes?
Katrina Simon (Associate Dean, Associate Professor in Landscape Architecture at RMIT University, Melbourne)
How is memory embedded and transformed in rapidly changing urban landscapes?
The idea of landscape is deeply entwined with the production and deployment of images of apparently quite different characters. These include pictures that depict the atmospheric and experiential qualities of landscape as scenery, and maps that depict the physical and material conditions of landscape as territory. In her research, Prof Katrina Simon investigates the nature of maps as a particular class of image that appears to resist the inherent slipperiness of landscape as idea and way of seeing. The research, examines ink drawing as a sequence of performative acts, leads to a new concept for considering landscape images, that of cartography. If historiography attends to the telling of history, cartography attends to the making of spatial inscriptions, with all of the ambiguity, interference and instability that this necessarily implies.

“Weather” in choreography, architecture and landscape
Georges Pirson (Faculté d’Architecture, La Cambre Horta, Université Libre de Bruxelles)
This paper aims to give a narrative about a two steps workshop around the concept of ‘weather’. This workshop’s project follows the one organised in January 2018 with the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts (ISAC-ARBA) and the Faculté d’Architecture La Cambre Horta in Brussels. For this new episodes, we imagined gathering students in architecture and landscape from La Cambre Horta and going on further with students in graphic design, architecture and landscape from the Gengdan School of Art in Beijing.
Lanscape appears as a precious field for observation, research and work. It is a commun field for students and researchers from distinctive disciplines such as choreography, architecture or landscape architecture. In this field, the concept of ‘weather’ reveals a sensitive depth, present and transparent at the same time, available and elusive. The ‘weather’ supports a vertical dimension, ascending as descending, transportant a space for a contemporary proto-writing. Moreover, the transparency of the ‘weather’ suggests this dimension without covering those horizon’s scopes where the landscape is generally designed. Between ‘the blank page’ and the scenic space, the ‘weather’ opens many ways of perception, many ways of creation.

Landscapel : a mesh to capture phenomena
Catherine Mosbach (Landscape Architect, Mosbach Paysagistes)
What you call writing is defined as a mesh finely woven to capture phenomena and, if possible, to record them, to re-transcribe them in material and make them available to people. It is a mesh, like a fishing net thrown into the sea in the hope of harvesting some small wonders of the world. I must say that many times I have been rewarded beyond my hopes. Our imagination is far from exhausting all possibilities and we must seize the chance to be surprised by what we do not yet know and what we could intuitively achieve. These are the foundations of an always open dialogue, exposed to temporalities - in the sense of the weather and the passing of time - and to the appetit of curious small creatures, who, like me, can grab.
Writing is a tool but not an end in itself. It also carries with it the contradiction of wanting to ‘master’ vast territories and in the end leaving them open to biological impromptu. Drawing is the filter or script that allows a particular organism of developing to be displayed and spread. For the slowness of living processes to be identified as such, it is to be highlighted with contrasting, accelerated rhythms. It is appreciated and evaluated by the differential that it opposes to other rhythms. It is this condition in which one appreciates the progression of vegetal formations of several natures which together set up the different environments.

Writing the body and the written body in Chinese painting
Françoise Lauwaert (Laboratoire d’Anthropologie des Mondes Contemporains, Université Libre de Bruxelles, EASt/ULB)
A traditional view on Chinese art tends to oppose the ‘Great Tradition’, of which the highest manifestations are landscape painting and...
calligraphy, and the ‘small tradition’, more trivial and related to craft, where realistic representations of human and animal bodies are frequently encountered. Just like all stereotypes, this fact must be replaced in the political, intellectual and social context of literati culture, which has exerted its influence on artistic practice and theoretical discourses for more than a millennium. Let us look for nuances to attenuate the stereotype. Landscapes where no human or animal figure is present are rare, and literati painting has left some place, albeit small if compared to Western painting, for the human figure. Some figure paintings are uncontested masterpieces. The human body also serves as a metaphor for the appreciation of calligraphic art, which are supposed to have bones, flesh and breath. The most abstract of all arts is articulated on an incarnation, while the artist’s gesture is incorporated in the succession of strokes. Finally, the body nourishes cartographies in medicine and internal alchemy, it becomes a graph in talismanic scripts, and as shown by several recent artworks by contemporary artists, becomes a written landscape.

Cosmological gesture and the “phenomenology” of reality. Spontaneity 自然 in aesthetics and the philosophy of nature in China

Raphael Van Daële (EAST/ULB, CECMC- Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales)

In Chinese thought, the word ziran 自然 has been used both about “nature”, namely the ontological realm which emerges and operates without the support of human will or action, or about some specific kind of human activity. In this second sense, the best illustration of such an activity is the artist’s gesture, whether he is a painter or a calligrapher. Ziran is often translated as a stative verb meaning “(being) by itself so”; by extension, it refers to what is “natural” and “spontaneously”, i.e. what produces itself or realizes itself without any external intervention and without any considered action. In the texts, it appears that the word ziran is used in two types of discourse: on the one hand, it is used in what could be regard as a “metaphysical” discourse, seeking to describe the way things arise and exist; on the other hand, it is used in aesthetic, describing the modes of the artistic gesture and the way it creates something. A difficulty arises here: if we can, as some Chinese thinkers did, consider that the then thousand things are not produced by some external cause, being “by themselves so”, how could we believe that an artwork has not been produced by any artist? Should we then consider that there are several ways of using the same word in different contexts? In this case, are those frame heterogeneous to each other? Or should we consider that, in Chinese though, it exists a conceptual continuity between metaphysics and aesthetic? The later hypothesis is the one we will follow in our study. By reading together speculative texts written by the thinkers of the school of mystery (玄學 xuanxue) and theoretical texts about art, we could draw a coherent philosophical reading of the concept of ziran. In order to show the meaning of ziran within traditional Chinese aesthetic, we will analyse what Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133-192) said about it in his essay: The Nine Effects (九勢 jiu shi). We will next move to the texts of two leading thinkers of the school of mystery: Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249) and Guo Xiang 郭象 (252-312). By reading those texts, we will attempt to show that the role played by the concept of ziran in those two contexts does not affect its semantical and philosophical coherence. On the contrary, bringing together aesthetic and metaphysics should allow us to set up a comprehensive perspective toward the concept of ziran. Another premise of our study is that, in China, theoretical texts about art could be regard as one of the textual genres in which philosophical thoughts are expressed, in the same way that poetry is.

Plucked landscapes: merging tradition and innovation with improvised qin music

Jacob C. Alfred Garcia (quqin player and composer, Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing)

This presentation explores systematic and trainable approaches to improvisation on the qin that build upon aesthetics and forms found in Chinese artistic traditions. Over the last decade, the qin has increasingly integrated into mainland China’s conservatory system. These institutions follow in the western classical tradition introduced by Soviet scholars during the mid-twentieth century. As such, this conservatory model places a heavier educational focus on European classical traditions, particularly romantic-era music, nationalist music and expressionism. Furthermore, the division between Chinese and western music departments inside the conservatory are steadily dissolving. These developments have had heavy influence on the types of qin music that are composed and performed, both in the conservatories and state-owned concert halls.

The qin tradition is far removed from western music practices in terms of repertoire, composition and performance. The current trends in the development of modern qin music have been a ‘pulling westward’ of the instrument, into the space of western art music. I am interested in supplementing the instrument’s new found position with methods of composition, and performance that reach into the qin’s own tradition, as well as methodologies for artistic creation present in other Chinese traditions including landscape painting and calligraphy.

In this presentation I will demonstrate three methods for the integration of improvisation in both performance and composition of qin music. These methods can help solidify the instrument’s footing in both western and Chinese traditions as it navigates this musical renaissance. The first method focuses on improvising the classical repertoire of the instrument, re-imagining these melodies as mutable standards, rather than a fixed repertoire. The second focuses on the incorporation of improvisation within the compositional process, creating newly composed works that draw upon the success of a repertoire that has spanned three millennia, and blur the distinction between performer and composer. The last approach is a series of techniques for the creation of freely improvised musics. These techniques build upon traditional Chinese aesthetics and forms while placing the creational process fully in the hands of the performer. These techniques are trainable solutions to encourage the creation of new qin music that maintains foundations in both Chinese and western traditions while carving out a new space in the world of contemporary music.

From “Music of Changes” to “Music of Ink-Ching”. An ambitious comparison?

Silvio Ferragina (calligrapher, engineer at Politecnico di Milano)

John Cage’s Music of Changes (1951) is a forty-minute piano piece that was written based on a compositional system in which all musical elements such notes, durations and pitches, was based on the hexagrams correspondent obtained by launching six times the three coins of the classic I-Ching. Music of Ink-Ching (2018) is a series of musical pieces deriving from the transposition of the 64 Chinese characters of the I-Ching into music according to the translation system Musicalligraphy which is based on direct correspondence between types of calligraphic strokes and musical notes. Each unique sequence of calligraphic strokes that determine the single Chinese character will correspond to a single well-defined sequence of notes that will produce the melody corresponding to the character itself.
So, where is the ambitious comparison? Surely on the fact that, although following different compositional philosophies, the resulting score is in both cases «random» and therefore abstracted from the subjective taste of the composer. The a priori indetermination of musical events from which follows a non-compositional choice of the sound / emotion link in both cases brings the listener closer to a «natural» sound, a sound that is devoid of the composer’s attempt to predetermine and «guide» the emotions of the listener. The presence of the classic I-Ching in both situations is interesting and significant, even if with different roles. In fact, in the first case this is the «system» that determines the composition of the musical piece of John Cage while, in the second case, this becomes the origin from which derive the songs produced through the Musicalligraphy theory.

Cross-cultural encounters, transfer and inculturation process
*Simone Schuiten* (*ESA St-Luc, ODRADEK*)

Because ink art is the background of the Chinese culture, we will open a dialogue between the past, tradition and the contemporary new gambles. We need to communicate about our cultural differences and develop the ongoing process and use of ink. What we want to focus on in China’s and Western countries 20th century history are the changes experienced by the population, changes integrated and highlighted by the intellectuals and artists who had the opportunity to encounter each other from far away or close-up. To be more precise we will point out the phenomenon of transfer that occurs when artists meet. This experience of cross-culturalism enables us to regard this Other as a source of inspiration. It is from this point of view that I return to the great meeting between China and the West at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Three calligraphic traditions: a few observations on Chinese, Latin and Arabic script
*Brody Neuenschwander (artist)*

Chinese, Latin and Arabic script are arguably the most important writing systems in the world today. These three scripts have very different origins and historical trajectories. In this lecture we will examine where the three scripts come from and where they might be going. We will look at the influence each system had on its transition to print, on historical processes and on artistic expression. Do the three scripts represent necessary and logical responses to the languages they record? Are they equally efficient when written by hand, printed, read? And how have the three scripts adapted themselves to the digital age? These issues are currently being investigated by Brody Neuenschwander for the making of a three-part documentary for Arte and the BBC. In his lecture, Dr. Neuenschwander will give a few insights from his research.

The sub-structure of language: calligraphy and landscape painting
*Zhu Pengfei (artist)*

The epiphany of Zen is an explosion coming from the interior of language: the void is crushed, the earth is soaking flatly, and one envisions the sub-structure of language. Freedom of speech is based on the latter’s ineffectiveness. Writing is not only an obstacle, but also a way to understand the Way and its laws. This liberates the act of writing. If we go further into the internal gesture of calligraphy, we find the spiraling movement of writing (temporality) and structure (spatiality) that constructs our psychological time and space. This is how our minds are both validated and transcended. Here also resides the impassable limit of ink painting. The obstacle is here, but also the breakthrough. Whether it is the conventions of classicism or the formal structure of modernism, when it comes to the power of human nature, the writing subject is not only a rational builder, but also a great conclusion. Therefore, the vision of the language’s sub-structure is gazing again at original spiritual life after modernism, with a strong sense of beauty.

Ink painting and distance— the past and present life of contemporary ink painting
*Jiang Hanxuan (artist)*

Firstly, what is the source of eastern landscape ink painting?

Ink painting originated from the eastern philosophy, life, natural landscape, which constitute oriental cosmology (heaven, earth, human). I will discuss the artistic approaches from ink painting techniques to eastern spiritual modernity.

Second, how do young painters face old topics?

Although many people are being trained in the traditional art of ink painting, it is clear that their young eyes and minds are no longer using ink as the ancients did, because their perception of the world has been completely changed. I am an example of this change.

Discussion based on my works:

1. The image of things, the spirit of things to think about, the question of life
2. Eye imitation, field selection, and environment conversion
3. The connection between the body and ink painting

Thirdly, the transformation of eastern and western contexts

What are the differences in cultural difference and artistic context between the east and the west? How can ink carry this proposition?
For more informations, pictures, or for any other enquiry, in English/French/Chinese language, please write to:

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