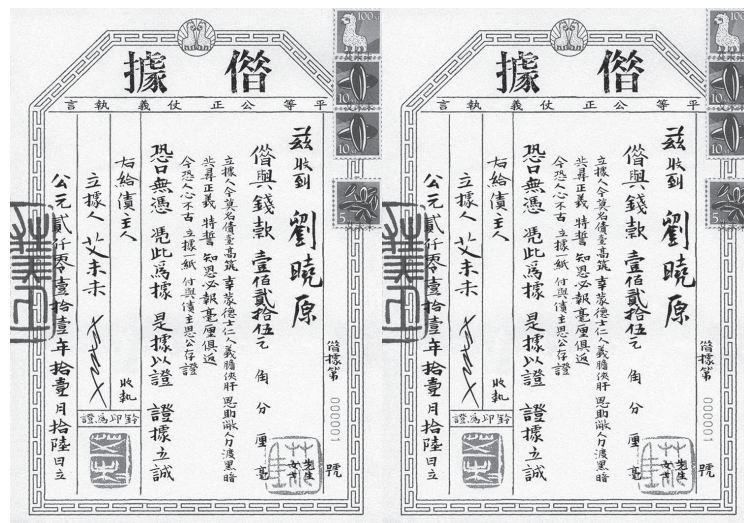


Problematizing the Politics of Transnational Community: *Xi Jinping's State Visit to the United Kingdom, the European Union and Attendant Cultural Myths*



This essay reflects critically on President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping's four day state visit to the United Kingdom from 19-23 October, 2015—the first by a head of state from the PRC in a decade—and two attendant myths: first, of traditional Chinese culture and society as essentially harmonious; and second, of the artist and denizen of social media Ai Weiwei as an exemplary political dissident. It also reflects critically with regard to the first of those myths on the para-myth of international 'brotherhood' underlying the stated aims of the European Union to achieve "ever closer union" amongst its peoples and member states. In each case myth-making is understood to dissemble more problematic contradictions in actual socio-economic and cultural relations. The essay concludes with some observations on the role of contemporary art as a locus of critical divergence in relation to currently prevailing socio-economic and cultural conditions.

I began this text as Xi's state visit to the UK came to an end and the initial media storm surrounding Ai Weiwei's major retrospective exhibition at London's Royal Academy of Arts—which coincided with Xi's visit—had begun to wane.¹ I am completing it in the immediate aftermath of the UK's referendum on whether to stay within or leave the EU. Since beginning this text it has become timely in the wake of the UK's EU membership referendum to explore tensions between cultural myth-making and socio-economic and cultural relations not only with regard to China's rise as an increasingly global economic and cultural power but also an apparently significant faltering of post-War European unity.

The significance of Xi's state visit and Ai's Royal Academy of Arts exhibition were widely contested in the media. For some, the UK government's reception of Xi was little short of a neoliberal kowtowing to growing Chinese geo-political influence that sought to promote economic collaboration at the expense of any direct criticism of China's human rights record while also glossing over the negative impact of China's economic policies on the UK. At the time of Xi's visit there were well-publicised concerns over job losses in the UK's steel industry brought about by China's dumping of underpriced steel on international markets. These concerns added to worries over the long-term relocation of manufacturing from the UK to China as a result of rapid industrialisation brought about by the latter's post-socialist policy of so-called Opening and Reform and the relatively low cost of Chinese labour.

For others—including then Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron, Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne and the leading architect of New Labour, Peter Mandelson—Xi's reception was a necessary acknowledgement of ineluctable tectonic shifts in East-West power relations conducive to progressive economic collaboration and political dialogue. Xi himself stated that his visit would lift UK-China relations to a "new height" and promote a "community of shared interests".² To give confirmation to this raising of UK-China relations Xi was welcomed by Queen Elizabeth during a ceremony held at Horse Guards Parade accompanied by a forty-one gun salute in nearby Green Park, and a state banquet held in his honour at Buckingham Palace. Xi also made a state visit to the Houses of Parliament. Against this spectacular history laden backdrop Chinese and UK government spokespersons were equally at pains to present Xi's visit as the start of a new "golden age" of transnational cooperation.

The first surviving text as part of the Western literary-intellectual tradition to present the concept of a golden age is Hesiod's epic didactic poem *Works and Days* (written c.700 BCE). Among other things, *Works and Days* narrates the classical Greek myth of the five ages of mankind, the first of which, after an initial state of chaos, is a harmonious 'golden age' of plenty and peace to which humanity continually strives to return. *Works and Days* takes the form of a farmer's almanac giving instruction in the agricultural arts. It was written at a time of agrarian crisis in Greece that resulted in attempts to establish greater food security through colonialist expansion. This historical context resonates with that surrounding present-day assertion of a 'golden age' of UK-China relations given that China's current economic expansion is itself predicated in part on a need to secure resources unavailable domestically. Within present-day China the Chinese imperial Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) is widely upheld as a historical golden age of cosmopolitanism, peace and prosperity to which post-socialist reform should ultimately aspire.

Predictably, Ai Weiwei's Royal Academy exhibition became a focus for renewed public debate on human rights in China. While China's authorities insist that established policies and enforcement measures within the country are sufficient to curb human rights abuses, other governments and non-governmental organisations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch disagree, citing numerous examples of extra-judicial detention and acts of suppressive state violence. Among these is Ai's own detention by the Chinese authorities in 2011 purportedly on grounds of illegal non-payment of taxes. As a consequence of the suppression of public protests against Xi's visit, that debate was extended to human rights issues in the UK. Reports in the media identify instances in which local uniformed and plainclothes police intervened during Xi's visit to stop public protests about China's treatment of minorities and political dissidents—interventions helped along by hordes of flag-waving 'rent-a-crowd' Chinese nationals all too eager to block those same protests and the suppressive actions of the UK police from the view of television news cameras.³

In the view of some mainstream art critics, including Mark Hudson writing in *The Telegraph*, Ai's Royal Academy exhibition provided a vital locus of cultural resistance to political authoritarianism not just in China but elsewhere⁴—an interpretation also supported, understandably, by the RA's public relations machine, which, among other things, posted filmed conversations between Ai and the cultural commentator Tim Marlow on the artist's influences as well as the supposedly dissident status of his work and activities on social media. For others, such as Matthew Collings writing in *The Evening Standard*, there are significant doubts about the technical/aesthetic quality and critical efficacy of art works produced by Ai.⁵ In Collings' view, the critical significances attached to art works included in Ai's RA exhibition are not performed convincingly by the works themselves, but have become attached in *post hoc* fashion as part of wider art world and public discourses—an argument that could be levelled convincingly at a great deal of post-Duchampian contemporary art. Colling's comments resonate with prior concerns about the artistic quality and critical efficacy of Ai's work put forward by a number of writers, including Jed Perl⁶ and myself.

At the centre and on the fringes of Xi's visit there were repeated reassertions of the Chinese government's stated neo-Confucian desire to promote social harmony, not only within the PRC but also internationally through the projection of 'soft power'. With the increasing ideological vacuum brought about by China's adoption of post-socialist Opening and Reform at the end of the 1970s, from the mid-

1990s onwards the Chinese government has sought to promulgate neo-Confucian values of familial and state piety as a means of upholding social cohesion in the face of the disruptive impact of modernisation. Promotion of these values was very much to the fore at a China-Britain culture dialogue forum held at Trinity College, Oxford on 23 October as part of a wider 2015 UK-China Year of Cultural exchange⁷; to which the present author was an invited speaker. At the Oxford forum, Qi Ming-Qiu of the Soong Ching Ling Foundation, for example, argued that Daoist thinking and practice—which is a formative constituent of Confucianism—supports the notion that social harmony is an outcome of reciprocity between relative differences rather than absolute uniformity. Such assertions, which resonate strongly *prima facie* with contemporary Western notions of difference and multi-culturalism, are clearly intended to present an essentially non-threatening view of contemporary China whilst also asserting the values associated with Chinese civilisation-specific identity. Assertions of this sort not only strike the post-critical turn (deconstructively-minded) consciousness as unjustifiably idealistic, but may also be seen as being very much at odds with the facticity of China's increasingly assertive presence on the world stage: to whitt its growing military standing in the Asia-Pacific region (not least the heavily contested area of the South China Sea⁸), arguably neo-colonialist excursions into Africa and—in spite of official protestations to the contrary—continuing subordination of minorities to majority Han domination within China itself. Similar criticisms of the promotion of dissembling soft power could, of course, be launched at the UK and the USA, not least in relation to allied military action in the Middle East since the turn of the millennium. With regard to China, however, differences between assertions of the inherently harmony-seeking nature of traditional Chinese culture as part of the projection of soft power and the *réalité* of a rather more fractured, unequal and outwardly confrontational Chinese society are thrown into particularly sharp relief by the Chinese government's persistent inward suppression of political free speech and public debate: a situation significantly heightened by the tightening of Xi's grip on political power since his installation as China's President in 2013.

Seen in this light, official assertions of China's traditional tendencies towards harmony are open to interpretation as little more than an ideological means of upholding the continuity of state power in the face of persistent social divisions and conflicts. Xi's assertion as part of his address to the UK parliament that China has a much longer, several-thousand-year history of putting political power at the service of the people than that claimed by the United Kingdom—as the notional 'home of democracy'—does little to detract from the expansionist as well as internalised violence of current Chinese *realpolitik*, nor indeed does the recent awarding of China's Confucian Peace Prize to Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe. Assertions of China's supposed tendencies towards social and cultural harmony are thus open to interpretation as being passive-aggressive rather than non-threatening.

Indicative of tensions pervading the purportedly smooth progress of China-UK 'golden age' relations is a leaked video of a conversation at a Buckingham Palace garden party between Queen Elizabeth and Metropolitan Police Commissioner Lucy D'Orsi, in which the former registers her displeasure at the UK Ambassador to China, Barbara Woodward's reportedly rude treatment by Chinese officials as part of the planning for Xi's visit. Government spokespersons in China and the UK were swift to uphold the current state of UK-China 'golden age' relations in response to the leak. Nevertheless, the mythical status of those relations had been pushed back to reveal a far less harmonious state of affairs than that claimed by both governments.



As I completed final revisions to this text a post-Brexit vote, Conservative government lead by new Prime Minister Theresa May has raised further questions over the gilded status of UK-China relations by delaying the signing of an international agreement on the construction of new nuclear reactors in the UK, including one at Hinkley Point in Somerset, in which the Chinese government has a significant financial as well as technical investment. The UK government's unexpected decision to review the agreement has been seen by some as something of a rowing back on its previously stated position that post-Brexit Britain is very much open to global business and inward investment, not least from China.

Ai's interventions on the fringes of Xi's visit to the UK, while arguably effective as a focus for media debates about human rights, are neither an index of successful resistance to authority nor wholly representative of the wider landscape of artistic criticality within China. As I have argued in a series of articles from 2011 onwards⁹, the projection of Ai's media image as a political dissident is more of a sop to liberal conscience outside China than an indicator of any significant critical impact on society and governmental authority within. Ai's often bombastic and simplistic oppositional view of artistic-critical intervention—which has always been projected far more vehemently in 'safe' conditions outside China—is embraced enthusiastically within Western(ised) discursive contexts nostalgic for abstract Romantic (pre-critical turn) notions of heroic critical-artistic agency. As such, Ai's projected media image as a dissident *non plus ultra* has been used to buttress an abstract dialectic pitting authoritarian China against a supposedly free West in a manner that resonates strongly with the assertively oppositional politics of the Cold War.

Some of Ai's interventions prior to his arrest and indictment for "tax evasion" by the Chinese government in 2011—such as the lists of names of victims of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake posted at the offices of FAKE Design in Beijing in 2009—have been interpreted beyond the great Chinese Internet firewall as having a direct critical impact on the authorities in China. However, that impact as a matter of singular cause and effect is far from being conclusively proven beyond assertions by the artist and his supporters backed up by a body of largely circumstantial evidence. An article by Katherine Grube for *Art Asia-Pacific* typically asserts the critical impact of Ai's work as an artist on the Chinese government while failing to provide any substantive evidence in this regard. Grube also qualifies her assertion by listing other more likely sources of critical pressure on the actions of the Chinese government.¹⁰

In addition to which, Ai's media presence has of late been characterised by a string of highly embarrassing attention grabbing stunts—such as postings of 'selfies' with Paris Hilton and the restaging of a photograph of a drowned Syrian child refugee on the shores of Greece, with Ai taking the place of the child¹¹—that have significantly devalued his international reputation. Moreover, recent comments by the painter Sean Scully have cast doubts over the veracity of Ai's account of his detention by Chinese authorities.¹² And yet, many in the West—both on the left and right—continue to uphold Ai unequivocally as a beacon of resistance in the struggle between freedom and authoritarianism.



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Within China, Ai is viewed in a markedly contrasting light to that internationally. For the vast majority of Chinese, with little or no interest in high culture, he is either invisible or an irrelevance. Many, if not most, culturally informed others repudiate Ai's critical stance towards the Chinese government as a co-opting of Western values against China's collective national interests. Ai has stoked such internal criticisms by disingenuously upbraiding curators and fellow artists working within China for what he claims is their craven supplication to state power—an accusation that could just as easily be levelled at Ai himself, given that in the wake of his detention and indictment by the Chinese authorities Ai's critical attacks on state power within China have become noticeably less frequent and more oblique. Indeed, Ai's projected media image as a dissident outside China may well be considered a useful one by the Chinese government, adding as it does to an externally supported sense of antagonism around which the Chinese people have been made to coalesce in resistance to what is seen as continuing Western imperialism (a Chinese 'project fear', if you will). Positive Chinese government support for such a resistant nationalistic stance in the contemporary cultural sphere can be found in relation to the Chinese Communist Your League's promotion of the rap group CD Rev, whose lyrics and media interviews seek to instil foreign wariness of the now re-awakening Chinese dragon.¹³

While Ai's detention and indictment in 2011 is perhaps evidence of governmental displeasure with the artist's previously relatively open criticism of the Chinese state, he is certainly not among those democracy activists, journalists and lawyers considered a direct threat to China's established political and legal structures; some of whom, including the writer and former university professor Liu Xiaobo, have been subjected to repeated detentions. Ai himself is now no longer subject to state detention and is free to travel outside China, making it possible for him to take up a professorship in Berlin. The production and exhibition of post-Duchampian art of indeterminate significance alongside social-media rantings against power in the context of a still predominantly culturally conservative and economically focused Chinese society is, given Ai's undoubtedly unsympathetic domestic profile, far from being an immanent and effective intervention on the socio-political *status quo* in China.

In this regard one might look instead to a younger generation of artists, including Chen Tianzhou, Peng Yun, Tan Lijie and the duo Birdhead (Song Tao and Ji Weiyu), whose ostensibly politically disengaged, but cosmopolitan and new technology-savvy outlook arguably contributes far more, and in a distinctly subversive rather than oppositional way, to progressive social changes in China only partially subject to the auspices of the state. Birdhead's work as photographers, video makers and installation artists, for example, addresses itself primarily to a localised Shanghai cultural scene, referred to by the artists as 'Birdworld', that is neither wholly consensual in its identity nor explicitly antagonistic towards authority. Like other contemporary Chinese art collectives, including avant-garde groups active during the 1980s such as *Chi She* (the Pond Association), Birdworld is a loosely configured and shifting social network constituted not by explicitly shared aims and goals but by an implicit (high-context) desire to interact socially in a manner only nominally anchored by the representational cultural practices of Birdhead themselves. In doing so, it can be interpreted as a performative non-conforming intervention that simultaneously remains immersed within wider Chinese society and its limiting-enabling discursive conditions.¹⁴ Work by this younger generation of artists is integral to major shifts in socio-cultural positioning, taking place particularly within China's major urbanised centres, that significantly problematise authoritarian notions of a homogenous Chinese neo-Confucian culture by

asserting regionally inflected and culturally pluralistic sub-cultural identities. Ai's now well-nigh mythical media presence as an oppositional dissident does little to foster discussion of the critical impact of such a counter-authoritarian sub-cultural approach. If we wish to support contemporary critical-artistic culture then we should, of course, adopt a position of basic solidarity with Ai's sceptical stance towards authority. However, on multiple counts the supposed social relevance and critical impact of Ai's art must be heavily qualified. It is almost certainly one of symbolic rather than directly engaged resistance.

Attendant upon Xi's visit to the UK are thus two mythical abstractions: first, China's desire to promote harmonious social relations at home and abroad supposedly rooted in long-standing Chinese cultural tradition; and second, the perceived status of Ai Weiwei as an exemplary, socially-engaged political dissident. Both are misleading and serve to obscure far more complex, less clearly delineated and comforting discursive practical inter-relationships between culture, politics and society within and outside China.

In the context of the outcome of the UK's recent referendum on whether to leave or remain within the European Union such observations of the tensions between political myth-making and the pervasive heterogeneity of actual socio-economic and cultural relations can be readily extended. After decades of being ignored and condescended to by successive ruling parties dedicated to the progress of the neoliberal project, the English working classes (such as they can still be described) have helped to deliver a (deconstructively) seismic shock to the UK's and Europe's political hegemony by tipping the result of the referendum to leave. Like the financial crisis of 2008, that shock has cracked open—if only momentarily—the mythically smooth carapace of triumphant post-Cold War international capitalism to reveal, yet again, a durably pervasive economic and social inequality as well as related political antagonisms. As I write, the Conservative Party has established a new Brexit-oriented cabinet under the leadership of Theresa May, Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn has lost a vote of no confidence among his parliamentary colleagues and is now embroiled in a leadership contest with challenger Owen Smith, increased acts of deplorable racist violence and abuse are being widely reported in the media and sizeable activist gatherings in support of Corbyn and against Brexit have taken place outside the Houses of Parliament, all against the backdrop of thinly veiled threats from other EU governments that the process of Brexit will not be made easy. As part of and running ideologically counter to these ruptures in the socio-political fabric is continuing, highly vocal support for the UK's continued membership of the EU. It is ironic, however, to see on social media and elsewhere that many of those previously critical of neoliberalism have registered their horror and indignation at the result of the referendum. Instead of solidarity with a justifiably disaffected proletariat theirs seems to be with an institution, the EU, demonstrably dedicated, in the final analysis, to the interests of international capital over those of actual people and their communities—*viz.* the imposition of unbearable austerity as a remedy for continuing financial instability in Greece.

Such solidarity with the EU is informed by yet another myth: that of inevitable progress towards ever greater union—as signified by the EU's choice of the music to the final movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony of 1823, *Ode to Joy* as its anthem: originally a musical setting of Friedrich von Schiller's idealistic poetical vision of human 'brotherhood' *An die Freude* of 1785. This post-Enlightenment European myth of international sister/brotherhood is arguably a par-myth to that of Chinese-Confucian projections of social and cultural harmony. Both are Romantically appealing but ultimately vacuous in their respective gross abstractions and glossing over of persistent social and cultural antagonisms. Both provide the malleable substrate against which bourgeois interests are able to roam this way and that while asserting moral and political correctness. Institutionalised



postmodernist indeterminacy—not least in relation to glib managerialist conceptions of difference and the politics of identity—has come to legitimise the former, while the latter appeals—after the cultural iconoclasm of the Maoist revolutionary era—to resurgent notions of civilisation-specific identity. The politically suppressive as well as collectively comforting effects of both are arguably much the same.

This is not to deny the pragmatics of transnational-community as a notional focus for socio-political cohesion. Rather, it is to acknowledge that such notions of community are bought—like others—at the price of the suppression (or more accurately, under current conditions, the political management) of inevitable differences and antagonisms, and moreover, that the upholding of myths in support of particular socio-politically invested notions of transnational-community is not based on a universal conceptual abstraction but is ultimately a matter of cultural parallax (that is to say, how they have been constructed and subsequently viewed from a particular historical-cultural perspective).

As John Roberts—a durable Marxian critic of the abstractions of institutionalised postmodernism—has observed, historically the bourgeoisie has been more than happy to sing paeans to notions of unity in difference while continuing to serve and replicate their own class interests¹⁵—for example France's *juste milieu* of the nineteenth century. That observation seems to be borne out by the fallout from the UK referendum with many on the bourgeois left and right continuing to side with the safety of neoliberal economic consensus under the guise of Romantic international collectivism over the particularities of class antagonism. While social justice may remain an ultimate political goal for those on the Left and Centre Right (as made clear by Theresa May's conciliatory Downing Street accession speech as Prime Minister), a post-referendum recourse to the notional sanctuary of the EU in the face of supposedly proletarian 'irrationality' would seem—particularly for those of agonistic pluralist political tendencies—to be a thoroughly unconvincing dogleg towards its realisation.

With regard to all of which, it becomes necessary to speculate on the international Western(ised) art world's widespread espousal of Claire Bishop's critical identification of a confirmatory relationship between the inherent communitarianism of relational aesthetics and a suppressive consensus-seeking neoliberalism.¹⁶ While Bishop's critique is openly aligned with Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's post-Marxist conception of a radical (antagonistic pluralist) democratic politics¹⁷ (a significant intellectual contribution to now established Western[ised] discourses on the value and importance of a pluralistic multi-culturalism in the negotiation of hegemonic power), it is by no means clear how that alignment can be squared entirely satisfactorily with the widespread desire within the liberal international art world, as made evident on social media, to support the UK's continuing membership of the EU along with the abstraction of its foundational myth of international brother/sisterhood and promotion of an undifferentiated neoliberal economic agenda.

Contemporary art in Europe is largely in thrall to dominant discourses that inform the conduct of the EU, whose cultural policy after the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 promotes and requires of projects that it funds conformity to the enshrined values of the EU. Although the EU's Strategic Framework for Culture expressly acknowledges the possibility of and need to address conflict within cultural difference, that acknowledgement is effectively trumped by its commitment to Romantic notions of brother/sisterhood in the service of neoliberal goals. To gain art world acceptance and funding artists are compelled—as a matter of political correctness—not to adopt positions fundamentally opposed to that notional unity for fear of being dubbed prejudicial or worse.

While these institutionalised values may be admirable in an abstract ('motherhood and apple pie') sense, cultural policy dedicated to their promotion and its direct ties to the funding of cultural activity have an inevitably disciplining effect on the arts—one that limits their critical range. What has emerged is not an uncritical culture *per se*—many artists openly and actively criticise historical and contemporary social inequality and the perfidious nature of global neoliberalism—but one supported, sponsored and consequently defused by a political union that itself ultimately seeks to gloss over certain kinds of antagonism in pursuit of its economic goals. The outcomes are in their own way no less coercive than the Chinese government's promotion of neo-Confucian harmony.

The European Union has, like the global socio-economic mainstream in general, effectively recuperated the possibility of a critical art to itself—and arguably in a much more effective manner than in China, where crude forms of suppressive political violence still abound. How artists—already up to their necks in this multi-mythical mire, as Ai Weiwei's bathetic progress shows—might respond critically to the seismic shock inflicted by Brexit remains to be seen. The example of a younger generation of critically immersed artists in China may prove instructive.

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Notes

¹ This article revises and expands an editorial by the present author published in the *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art* 2 (2+3), 2016, 'Xi Jinping's state visit to the United Kingdom and attendant cultural myths'

² Anon, 'Xi Jinping visit: UK-China ties "will be lifted to new height"', BBC News online, 20 October, 2015, accessed 20 October, 2015; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34571436>

³ Op cit.

⁴ Mark Hudson, 'Ai Weiwei, Royal Academy, review: "immensely impressive"', *The Telegraph*, 15 September, 2015, accessed 15 October, 2015; <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/art/what-to-see/ai-weiwei-royal-academy-review/>

⁵ Matthew Collings, 'Ai Weiwei, exhibition review: High on spectacle but light on substance', *Evening Standard*, 15 September, 2015, accessed 15 October, 2015; <http://www.standard.co.uk/author/matthew-collings>

⁶ Jed Perl, 'Noble and Ignoble – Ai Weiwei: wonderful dissident terrible artist', *New Republic*, 1 February, 2013, accessed 20 October, 2015; <http://newrepublic.com/article/112218/ai-wei-wei>

⁷ See '2015 UK-China Year of Cultural Exchange', British Council website, accessed 12 July, 2016; <https://www.britishcouncil.cn/en/programmes/arts/2015YOCE>; and '2015 UK-China Year of Cultural Exchange', Gov.UK website, accessed 12 July, 2016; <https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/2015-uk-china-year-of-cultural-exchange>

⁸ See Anon, 'Why is the South China Sea contentious?', BBC News online, 12 July, 2016, accessed 20 July, 2016; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349>

⁹ Paul Gladston, 'The Double Way: contemporary Chinese art and the waning of criticality', *Contemporary Visual Art+Culture Broadsheet*, 40.3, 2011, pp. 175-77
_____, 'Silence and Recuperation: the pitiable sacrifice of the artist Ai Weiwei', *Contemporary Visual Art+Culture Broadsheet*, 40.3, 2011, pp. 178-81
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_____, 'The (Continuing) story of Ai—from tragedy to farce', *Randian-online*, accessed 15 October, 2015; http://www.randian-online.com/np_feature/the-continuing-story-of-ai-from-tragedy-to-farce/

¹⁰ Katherine Grube, 'Ai Weiwei Challenges China's Government over Earthquake', *Art Asia Pacific* 84, accessed 20 October, 2015; <http://artasiapacific.com/Magazine/64/AiWeiweiChall>

¹¹ Sarah Malm, "'Lazy, Cheap and Crass": Ai Weiwei is condemned for "disrespecting" the memory of Syrian migrant Alan Kurdi by recreating haunting photograph of his washed up body', *Mail Online*, 1 February, 2016, updated 4 February, 2016, accessed 1 March, 2016; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3426557/Chi>

¹² See Laurence Mackin, 'Sean Scully: "I don't lie on a chaise longue with a cigarette holder and a glass of champagne"', *The Irish Times*, 11 April, 2015, accessed 20 July, 2016; <http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/art-and-design/sean-scully-i-don-t-lie-on-a-chaise-longue-with-a-cigarette-holder-and-a-glass-of-champagne-1.2171867>; and Mark Lawson, 'Sean Scully: "My therapist sent me away"', *The Guardian*, 7 January, 2015, accessed 20 July, 2016; <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/jan/07/sean-scully-painter-interview>

¹³ See Anon, 'Meet China's patriotic Rap Group CD Rev', BBC News online, 2 August, 2016, accessed 3 August, 2016; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-36924071>

¹⁴ For a more detailed discussion of Birdhead's work in this regard, see Paul Gladston, "'Besiege Wei to Rescue Zhao": Cultural Translation and the Spectral Condition(s) of Artistic Criticality in Contemporary China', *Modern China Studies* 23:1, 2016, pp. 95-119

¹⁵ See John Roberts, *Art has no History!: the making and unmaking of modern art*, London: Verso, 1994

¹⁶ See Claire Bishop, *Installation art: a critical history*, London: Tate, 2005, pp. 120-122

¹⁷ See Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, London: Verso, 1985