POLITICS ★ AND ★ AESTHETICS OF CREATIVITY

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City, Culture, and Space in East Asia

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Creative Industries in East Asia Series

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CHAPTER SIX:

(In)Dependence, Industry, and Self-Organization: Narratives of Alternative Art Spaces in Greater China

Elaine W. Ho

When director of the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA) Bartomeu Marí Ribas visited Beijing in the spring of 2013, he shared an account from his journey to China: during the casual protocol of friendly chit-chat with the passenger next to him on the flight, he was surprised by an unassuming inquiry on the status of the "art industry" in Spain compared to China.[1] This was not because of any particularly great lapse between the two, but because Ribas had never heard the term "art industry," the crux of his ignorance lying specifically in the juxtaposition of visual arts with the modes of industrial production. This naïveté seems like a form of deliberated idealism considering Ribas's position embedded within a high institution responsible for an important part of the circulation of art and cultural production in his own country and internationally. It asks us to recall a pre-Fordist mode of art-making, *pre*-institutional critique and *pre*-producer. But especially when considering the context of this journey to China, a transnational gathering aimed at feeding the engine of emergent Chinese art institutions, we can only claim Ribas's linguistic denial as weak at best. Where he may have attempted a form of resistance to art's full assimilation into the chain of creative industries, Ribas remains ingenuous to the mechanisms that have allowed this excursion to China—an interconnectivity between the realms of government policy, capital and creative labor which, in the Chinese language at least, falls under the extremely common terms 文化艺术企业 *wenhua yishu qiye* "art and

cultural enterprise" or 文化艺术产业 *wenhua yishu chanye* "art and culture industry."

In fact, Ribas's visit was part of a celebration of art and multitude in Asia, a conference held in conjunction with the newly announced Multitude Art Prize, co-sponsored by the Multitude Foundation and Wuhan Art Terminus (WH.A.T.). Not incidentally, both organizations are directed by cultural producer Colin Chinnery, who during the conference discussion modestly professed his motivation to seek guidance from the invited experts representing established institutions such as the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp, the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana and, of course, Ribas's organization, MACBA. Chinnery's one stone effectively moves private funding in service of an international platform of cultural knowledge production, inadvertently or not also placing China at the center of the action, both as a host for a global intellectual sphere and as a potential barometer of accumulated expertise in the form of a new art institution. The Wuhan Art Terminus, still under development, is one of several new, privately-owned art centers in the second-tier city, including the K11 Art Village and OCAT Wuhan, all supported by the incestuous dynamics of state-owned enterprise and property developer that befit the vocabulary of "art industry." These top-down expansions from the cultural centers of Beijing and Shanghai into the second-tier cities are part of an explicit schema of socio-economic development marked by urbanization and shifted emphasis towards service sectors and knowledge-based economies, including the arts. This is the contextual basis for the spectacular unfolding of the Chinese contemporary art industry in its making, offering the contemporary artist and art worker a wealth of resources and opportunities not so easily secured since the era of revolutionary art organized as labor in service of the party. But it is this correlation—from cultural propaganda to the drawing of socio-capitalist lines of production—from which the map of the mappable has already been drafted. Where the directive for Chinese "soft power" has already been implemented, the need for another tracing of the creative industries, even if adorned with "Chinese characteristics," has already been undone.[2]

New attempts to define and expose uncharted territories have only time and again found themselves in blind service of hegemonic structures. The "natural" character of Chinese characteristics, and even its introduction into

the contemporary lexicon, has been carefully handed down as a predetermined strategy and ideological principle based upon economic development. The fantastic rise of the Chinese art market parallel to such top-down molding in the last thirty years may be seen in certain senses as part of the success story, but the increasing complexity of socio-economic relations grounding contemporary artistic creation also appears to follow a path of the mappable, with keywords such as added-value, cultural district development and art superstars highlighting its legend. Underneath this map, however, is the enormous fissure between such top-down initiatives and another topology of grassroots intervention. Marked by ruptures in physical space and an ongoing play between autonomy and heteronomy, the perspective of a so-called "alternative arts practice" in China offers instead an image of the "unmappability" circumscribing a political, cultural, and economic flux. The following analysis seeks, therefore, to embrace the very contradiction that occurs with its production. Case studies of several artist-initiated practices will explore a politics and aesthetics in the making; that is to say, one which has yet to be, or one that defies the certainty of mapping and an art market categorization. What emerges therein is a politics of exception, whereby the complexities of Mainland sociopolitics cannot delineate a formula for artistic production but only be navigated as a realm of singularities, affects, and encounters. If this is a euphemism for Chinese characteristics, it is one that approaches an alter-linguistics similar to Ribas's incomprehension of an art industry. It remains a weak voice within the dominant landscape of artistic entrepreneurialism, and it is one both bound and enabled by such reified structures. But the particular circumstances which have led to the creation of spaces such as Womenjia Youth Autonomy Lab (Wuhan), WooferTen (Hong Kong), Lijiang Studio (Lijiang), and HomeShop (Beijing) exemplify such spontaneous modes of artistic practice. Their genealogies are traced here to highlight a micropolitics embedded within and counter to the prevailing forces of a socialist market economy. It is from within these structures that a meta-analysis will look beyond these groups as a pegged phenomenon and rather as a series of narratives involving practices, engagements, and relations that undo a common thinking of resistance.

Womenjia Youth Autonomy Lab: A Story from Sanctuary to Confinement

Figure 1: In September 2011, Beijing musician Xiao He and Wuhan-based Yao Shisan (*pictured*) held a series of live concerts at Womenjia. (photo courtesy of Womenjia Youth Autonomy Lab)

Since 2008, Womenjia Youth Autonomy Lab has operated as an open house, meeting place, music studio, and library for activists, artists, punks, and travelers, among others. Nestled amidst one of the increasingly rare undeveloped sections of Wuhan, this spatial experiment of leftist and anarchist culture is flanked on one side by farm plots and on the other by the city's botanical garden. This illusion of idyllic sanctuary can be attributed to its geographically peripheral location, which means low rental costs and the uncertain degree of autonomy offered by sociopolitical marginalization. Being less centrally located, and therefore less accessible and less visible, creates less direct provocation for policing authorities; but amidst a regulatory environment of relational repression, pressure is placed on the landlord to kick the so-called "reactionaries" out.[3] Womenjia is thus no sanctuary from the police state, and their activities, including citizen journalism, public screenings, and the hosting of research and dialogue on sensitive topics such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT), and urban renewal issues, have been

continually questioned and monitored by surveilling bodies. This unwieldy relationship to spatiality as both refuge and confinement is exemplified in Womenjia's mixed identity—from one perspective an open door to the likes of young homosexuals who have been ousted from their family homes, and from another, it is exactly the resulting haphazardness of the community that traps the space within, inhibiting a broader dialogue with others. The energy and maintenance required to host a large space with continued traffic from "social refugees" who may share none of the sociopolitical motivations by which Womenjia was founded overwhelms the focus on more specific outputs of artistic and social practice. Thus, initiator Mai Dian's insistence on maintaining free housing in the manner of the European squatter movement from which he was inspired to begin Womenjia is a tremendous obstacle to the work they can do. Amidst the reality that such an occupation would not be tolerated in China in the same way that certain legal frameworks allow it to exist in Europe, Mai has ultimately taken sole responsibility for sustaining the albeit low, but not negligible financial costs. What he claims as trying his "best not to 'benefit' from a so-called 'radical politics'" is a crucial gift that subverts the relationship between economics and space; but it is a practical burden, and at times of internal conflict becomes a question of rights over a stated commons.[4] The common misunderstandings of an anarchist platform in the form of a dilapidated concrete structure housing punks and other outcasts has led, on occasion, to having to expel visitors from the space. And while this does not necessarily contradict from an anarchist practice, it does highlight the ambiguous and difficult margins between sanctuary and confinement. The "public ruins" that Womenjia chooses in form and voice are a commitment to autonomy by way of distancing oneself from the authoritarian-enforced mechanisms of progress as overhaul (Mai, 2014). The primary work, then, is the labor of self-maintenance that is Womenjia itself.

This struggle lies at an awkward position that is neither urban nor rural and perhaps, neither art nor activism. The hesitation to produce, either artistically or via direct political dissent, may be a result of the particular juxtaposition between stunted efficacy under group consensus and Mainland authoritarianism. However, as Taiwanese artist and activist Kao Jun-honn has described it, the project of Womenjia is indeed not about production and producing new relations, but about "establishing from within a complicated

structure an activist, subversive and educational zone and space of exchange" (2013).

Lijiang Studio: "Contemporary Art Episodes in Rural China"

Figure 2: The He family's grandmother helps a visitor try on traditional Naxi dress in their home. Behind, the mural painted by artist and project curator Lisa Li illustrates the He family tree. (photo by Elaine W. Ho)

Further remote from Wuhan's East Lake outskirts is Lijiang Studio in Yunnan province, ironically self-described by its founder Jay Brown as a "(voluntary) refugee camp" for itinerant artists.[5] What began thus in 2004 as a residency program for Chinese and foreign artists seeking an alter-space for thinking and learning has evolved into long-term relations between artists and a local Naxi family that helps to host and maintain the space. The studio's location outside the old town in a village of the Naxi, Lijiang's dominant ethnic culture next to Han Chinese, determines the greater part of its relationship to the environment and community. While Brown's long-time residence in China may not fully diminish his position as outsider, his adoption by the He family with which the studio shares space creates a different kind of internalizing process to nurture artistic creation. The Naxi villager as "host" to visitors

coming to Lijiang Studio generates an ambivalent relationship of hospitality and servitude (the He family prepares rooms and meals for guests, as well as coordinates local visits), but Brown's curatorial response encourages projects that are formed from the local environment and provide returns in service to the village. There is, admittedly, an ambiguity regarding the nature of the trade within this cultural exchange, but it is exactly the inability to quantify affective relations that offers Lijiang Studio another mode of resilience.

A particularly rich example is the *New Countryside, New Landscape* mural project initiated by artist Lisa Li in 2008. The title references the "new socialist countryside" directive from the central government, aimed at modernizing rural areas diminishing the incredible Gini coefficient figures that mark China's gap between urban wealth and the impoverished countryside.[6] Li's curatorial statement touches upon the ambiguities presented by such a policy, whereby Lijiang tourism and the fading of traditional farming practices create a dilemma for the cultural status of contemporary rural life. Her light-hearted response to this backdrop invites artists from the city "to help re-imagine the role of art in the countryside, which will add a publicly visible element to the various types of nonsense we have added to the village already". (Lijiang Studio, 2013). "Nonsense," here, is Li's clever acknowledgement of the tenuous concerns lying at the base of a foreign-supported platform transplanted into the village, and perhaps another aside to the nonsense of "new-style farmers" and "recycling agriculture" that tagline the new socialist countryside.[7] But opposed to the planned economy of rural reform, the Lijiang Studio mural project engaged Jixiang "Auspicious" Village with the light hearted intimacy of Li's personal efforts to meet and collaborate with local inhabitants for the painting of their homes. Over the course of three years, approximately twenty artists were invited to participate, and results ranged from pleasing portraits of Naxi families in domestic interiors to traditional landscape paintings and works of a more monumental nature, using the entire exterior wall of a building. Some of these included more controversial abstractions that led to occasions of tension between artists and villagers.

Figure 3: A landscape mural painting brings together the collaborative efforts of Manchu artist Na Yingyu, local Naxi artist Mu Wenzhang and Han artist Hu Jiamin. (photo by Elaine W. Ho)

In 2011, one year after the end of the project, Li returned to Lashihai and found that the murals had evolved, not only due to material deterioration, but in their owners' eyes as well. Even those previously most dissatisfied with the project became accepting and were interested in participating in future Lijiang Studio activities, and this progression can be read here as the continuously fluid nature of the discourse on community and social relations. Lijiang Studio's position in Lashihai is an aesthetic intervention in the countryside; but it is one that, much like the role of storytelling in traditional cultures, nurtures over time and binds rather than severs. Whether as memory among the participating groups, a story from the project documentation or in the present analysis, what emerges in the place of a faded mural is not necessarily a transformative sociopolitical relation, nor is it an idealized community. If anything, the re-imagination of art occurs here only in its occurring as a renewed potential. And that is to say, art here is navigated anew each time, as a dialogical practice of subjectivities rather than as a closed package of experience.

WooferTen: Hijacking and Community as Temporalities

Figure 4: WooferTen member Irene Hui takes WooferTen community-made bags and t-shirts out onto the sidewalk to raise funds for the Hong Kong dockworkers on strike in the spring of 2013. (photo by Elaine W. Ho)

If we are outlining each of these spaces in relation to modes of independent arts practice in China, Hong Kong's WooferTen presents the most established of the four case studies in the sense that the form of organization arose, next to the collective efforts of its initiators, in specific alliance with government funding from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC). Humorously rumored to be the Arts Council's "most regrettable decision ever," the original group of ten artists, curators, and educators have been explicit about their ambivalent relations to the artistic economy of Hong Kong. From its inception, WooferTen's activities have been artistically punctured by an attitude of "biting the hand that feeds it," whereby an otherwise strong focus upon the Yau Ma Tei community in which WooferTen is based can only rely upon support from a notably more conservative governing body whose chief priorities cannot stray too far from the municipal branding of Hong Kong as "Asia's World City." From distributing stickers with hacked versions of the HKADC logo to hosting the *Siu Sai Gual Bananale* (also known as the *Mini*

West Kowloon Biennale) as critical voice to the dubious development of the over HK$29 billion budgeted West Kowloon Cultural District next to Yau Ma Tei, WooferTen is highly aware of the precariousness of autonomy amidst the flows of global finance. But it is perhaps exactly this dialectical tension that one might say has been enabled by the insistence upon diversity and free artistic expression maintained by the HKADC, where grassroots artistic alternatives such as WooferTen are "tolerated" as a minority expression next to the world-class visions of the M+ Museum under development in West Kowloon.

What is at stake in WooferTen's efforts is a fundamental questioning of local culture and identity in the making of Hong Kong post-1997. With Hong Kong's colonial history making the city a longtime international gateway into China (e.g., in terms of smuggled goods and popular culture), the return to the mainland marks a reversal of such globalization from influx to outflow; Hong Kong becomes a spectacular playground and haven for mainland-managed politico-economic activity (consider the full gamut of implications implied by "Special Administrative Region"). The question of "What is Hong Kong culture?" therefore, is paraphrased in the oft quoted analogy of a frog placed in a pot of water who does not know it is being boiled alive. Yet it is exactly this kind of cynicism that is intertwined with the renewed cultural energy noted by WooferTen's name, literally translated as "living room of revitalization." Cultural critic and curator Kinwah Jaspar Lau notes 2003's climactic July 1 rally, polarized by public opposition to proposed anti-subversion legislation, as the late arrival of "the real 1997" (2012); and the marked increase of initiatives stressing participatory action and local, community-based practice since that time has been continually infused, if not led by contributions from artists.[8]

This background leading up to WooferTen's inception in 2009 is thus a uniquely Hong Kong one, demanded from the specific circumstances that have ignited its artists to consider their roles among a broader motivation for social change. While WooferTen co-founder Chin-wai Luke Ching admits having been influenced by "space hijacking" interventions that he had seen from abroad, one must also consider the particular politics of public space in Hong Kong, a city known as Margaret Thatcher's testing ground for neoliberal policy and where nearly all "public" space—such as pedestrian overpasses, rest areas, and transportation networks—is privately owned (Ching, 2013). The collusion between government and private development results in what Ching

calls a "violent policy on space" infiltrating behind the ever-present shopping malls and banners of peace and harmony: "hawkers are driven away in the name of hygiene; the right of abode is seized for the sake of easier ruling; old districts are erased for development" (2008).

The hijacking of space is arguably played in rounds by all actors, from developer to government to citizens, but WooferTen artists' adoption of such confrontational ethics takes on an altogether different temporality since collectively and spatially rooting themselves in an aging, old neighborhood in Kowloon. The politics of hijacking as event are made even more intricate with the slow-kneaded processes of community development and an ongoing exchange of awarenesses and possibilities of art with a non-art public. While humor, "a grassroots neighborhood tone," and an "avant-garde approach" remain, WooferTen has grown to allow for a different nurturing of the processes of "attention, participation, cooperation and interaction in matters of political aesthetic principles" (Lau, 2011). Activities are divided into three categories: a "Special Topics Program" of one-time artist projects; the "Never in Vain Program" of ongoing activities such as a series of workshops entitled "Dare to Teach You if U Ar Willing to Learn" and the monthly Woofer Post community bulletin; and the "Program of Mutual Support," which opens WooferTen's resources to the public as an open platform for collaboration. It is crucial to note, on the other hand, that whatever clarity WooferTen has managed in its organizational representation is a likely adjunct to its means of support. Successful application to a bureaucratic funding body such as the HKADC requires a coherence of form and planning unnecessary for a self-run space such as Womenjia, and it is, ironically, the two-year funding scheme of the Arts Council that has both sustained and strangled WooferTen. Upon the completion of its second term in 2013, the precarious relation snapped, and WooferTen was formally dismissed from the Shanghai Street space in Yau Ma Tei. While the reasons for HKADC's decision are dubious and unclear, supporters point out the politico-ethical contradictions of putting a time limit on the idea of community. Most ironically, then, is WooferTen's great final hijack—itself. Under their self-titled occupation of the space, continued critical dissent and a bureaucratic stalemate, WooferTen has managed to continue its activities on Shanghai Street, albeit struggling under enhanced financial and organizational pressure.[9]

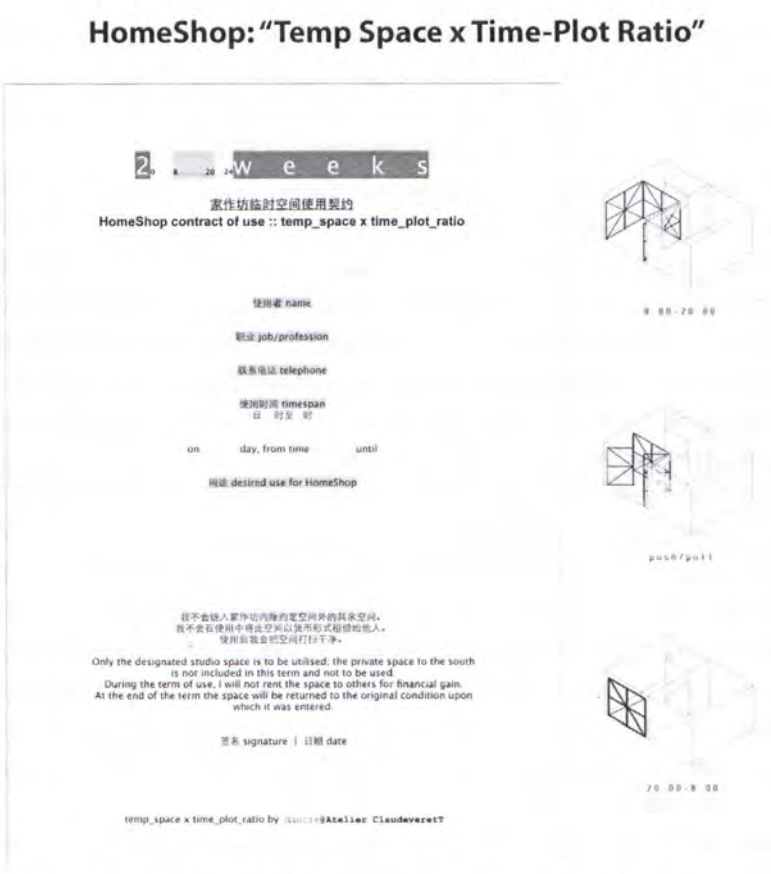

Figure 5: Diagrams of HomeShop and a user's contract made by architect Claude Tao for the "Temp Space x Time-Plot Ratio" project in 2009. (images courtesy of Claude Tao)

Also faced with dissolution in 2013 was Beijing-based HomeShop, the self-described "storefront residence and artist initiative" that had for the prior five years been an experiment with space, community, and the possibilities of artistic collaboration.[10] What began as a personal exploration responding to the array of ambiguities blurring public and private space in China emerged as a collaborative platform defined by these polarities, both in terms of its organization, as an internally binding agent, and representation, as an external one (I will return to this crucial point later). Located in one of the traditional *hutong* alleyways distinguishing Beijing's city center, the daily *mise en scène* here played out in the tensions between old world Beijingers and the influx

of young migrants seeking work in the capital, in the residential versus commercial land-use disputes, and in the exponential increase of cars and commercial development in areas that are of historical cultural significance. HomeShop's alternating series of ethnographic fieldwork, artist interventions, and discursive activities were a direct play with the particularities of this village-in-city scenario offered by Beijing's urban dynamic. Its premiere as an alternative countdown to the mega-spectacle of the 2008 Olympics perhaps then set the tone for its future as a marginalized arts practice, and since then, HomeShop balanced a widely diverse community of audiences and participants that distinguished it from the insularity of Beijing's artistic and cultural establishment. This was apparent in its geographic location outside the safe-zone of the city's art enclaves in Dashanzi or Songzhuang, but also in its approach to pursuing forms of representation outside of traditional exhibition practices. Where its glass storefront fa☒ade was always intended as a form of display, this was from its inception conceived as an interface for dialogue rather than spectatorship or consumption. The possibilities of the community, therefore, move beyond mere observer or buyer towards neighbor, friend, participant, and collaborator. Earlier activities such as Claude Tao's "Temp Space x Time-Plot Ratio" (2009) and Elaine W. Ho and Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga's "I Love Your Home" (2010) were intentional leaks of the private space of a *hutong* dwelling into the public environs occupied by passersby, onlookers, and potential users. In the former project, the twenty-six square meters of HomeShop was reapportioned as a time slot–distributed free space open for use by anyone from the public. "I Love Your Home" turned HomeShop into a mock real estate agency that freely distributed a catalog of available courtyard spaces, simultaneously offering open access to an alternative map of Beijing real estate and subverting the exploitative practices of property agents.

After two years, the move to HomeShop's second location in a large *hutong* courtyard approximately ten times the size of its previous space served to feed a larger community of possible contributors back into the intimate time-space of living and working together. Financially sustained via the occasional anywhere-capital of grants and a co-working model where participants served simultaneously as supporters, users, and sometimes managers of the space, HomeShop etched out an active but bare survival that finally still remained prey to the devouring mechanisms of the Beijing real estate market. The three-

year lease of HomeShop's Beixinqiao location expired at the end of 2013, and in the end, it was a triple rent hike and the western-styled café which took HomeShop's place that had the last laugh.

Of course, this would not have inhibited HomeShop's continued efforts at another location, yet the seven co-organizers in HomeShop's 2013 configuration left Beixinqiao with a mutual agreement to disband the project. The reasons for this are numerous, among them diverging interests and the departure of several co-organizers from Beijing. However, what is more notable in this analysis is the opening up of a broader discussion on the illusions of what curator Carol Lu Yinghua describes as a "self-practice" that attempts "to transcend determination by these boundaries and gradually create self-contained systems based on internal motivation, independent thinking and constant self-appraisal" (Lu, 2011). As part of Lu's ongoing research and discovery of a new mode of "little movements" in contemporary art, HomeShop managed to serve a fleeting moment of interest in the bill for alternative spaces that emerged after 2008 and the subsequent dip in the Chinese art market.[11] As Mai Dian warned, however, "this overlapping of what in China *looks like* different forms of production and political organization" (*italics mine*) actually conceals something hardly different from the territory of immaterial production and hijacked knowledge sharing that characterizes post-Fordist production (2012: 66-7). Both HomeShop's practice (as contribution to a kind of urban cultural gentrification) and its co-optation by institutionalizing theoretical discourses are vulnerable here (Lu has since been named head curator and art director of OCAT Shenzhen; HomeShop reemerged at the end of 2014 with an appearance in a group exhibition held at one of the most established commercial art galleries in the 798 arts district), and it is from this conceptual rut that this paper should begin to necessarily undo itself.

Resistance Undoing or Undoing Resistance

Figure 6: A 2013 participant of WooferTen's annual bicycle procession to commemorate June Fourth. (photo by Elaine W. Ho)

The implication here is that these minor forms of artistic and creative autonomy will be subsumed by their narration into a commodified discourse of resistance. Resistance against whom? The Communist state? Neoliberal capitalism? Art history? Slavoj Žižek is not light-handed in his criticisms of the contemporary Left, precisely because nothing has, of yet, emerged that has not already been renewed and reincorporated by the hegemonies in power. That would in this context most likely include, yes, a totalitarian state, neoliberal capitalism, and even the dogmas of a modernist art historical trajectory that insist upon describable packages of movements and stylistic periods. With the question of "Where are we now?" plaguing cultural studies and the discourse of creative practices, it seems that those protagonists of the new politics of resistance still find themselves, via their critique and counter-cultural strategies, in unwitting service to the dominant disciplinary frameworks. The immaterial labor and knowledge production turns "Where are we now?" into a global network of the avant-garde, propped up by "neo-management" (Mouffe, 2007) and "managerial capitalism" (Žižek, 2012) on one end of the hierarchy and low- or

no-wage labor on the other (think of the slew of "glamour-wage" internship positions that populate the creative industries).[12] Both this hierarchy of labor and its byproducts describe a psychology of flailing urgency permeating artistic and cultural production as a whole. Answers to "Where are we now?" seek strategies of resistance only to be continuously fixed as coordinates of creativity for re-appropriation and control. The resulting cat-and-mouse game is a play of transience, like that between netizens and censors or trendsetters and marketing researchers.

At the same time, perhaps, it is only within the confines of ephemerality that any kind of autonomy can exist. Anarchist writer Hakim Bey's theory of the Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ) thrives upon the temporality of the moment and the interstice spatiality of the fissures between hegemonic structures (1991). Initially written as a response to the "'anarchist dream' of free culture," Bey's ideas form an interesting juxtaposition with the "anarchist spirit" of China as described by novelist Yu Hua in his musings on the *shanzhai* phenomenon.[13] Returning to the four spaces presented in this paper, any illusions of anarchy, especially in the example of Womenjia, must be tempered by the tension between independence and autonomy. Does maintaining relative degrees of autonomy insinuate independence in the sense of an autarkic defining of borders? If all of these groups are working with *the community*, so to speak, the question must inevitably turn to the real distribution of so-called independence and the limits of these communities. That is to say, what are the communal parameters of a *we*? Where HomeShop and WooferTen make expressed attempts to address local publics with a mind to actively building new senses of community, it can be said they become ensnared in a socioeconomic framework that overwhelms such community, especially in the urban context. WooferTen's foundation as a government-supported entity implies a certain tenuousness with the alignments and/or frictions of belief and ideology, and the termination of their contract is, although not directly stated by the HKADC, contestably a political issue.

Figure 7: Passersby pause in front of HomeShop on the opening of the "Ten Thousand Item Treasury" public library. (photo courtesy of HomeShop)

For HomeShop, it may be very likely that the co-working framework it employed to sustain the space altered the field of locality first addressed by its being embedded within the *hutong*. A gated courtyard in its second Beixinqiao space and the steady stream of Chinese and foreign 文藝青年 *wenyi qingnian*, or "arty youth," displaced the initial focus, and HomeShop's members are very aware of being implicated in the "gentrification disco" of a creative Beijing. But like the discussion on the topic presented on HomeShop's blog or elsewhere, it is not enough to transplant urban concepts like gentrification and simply add Chinese characteristics (Eddy and Ren, 2013).

Womenjia, the most directly influenced by anarchist ideas of all the spaces, further complicates the question of resistance. Wuhan's notoriety as the birthplace of punk in China is no small impact on the space, but as Mai Dian laments, it is in reality the destabilizing noise of punk that has most ingeniously become a point of consensus between liberals and the state.[14] The gathering of massive crowds for the now common sight of music festivals in China is both a "collaboration between local governments' economics departments and the

music industry," and it is one of the rare moments in which such large-scale public gatherings can be tolerated. In the widely circulated images of young Chinese punks in a mosh pit, "faces flush and passion rushes. In this sense, China has to a whole new level *shanzhai*'ed the West. In other words, it has learned and very well applied a 'flattening' government rule by hormones."[15] Womenjia's observation of such trends validates the further peripheralizing of itself in its own autonomy and explains the decreasing amount of visible activity in the space. In reflection, Mai asks, "How does 'anarchism' become popular in the tense moments of the anti-powers that be? How is combination or collaboration in the name of 'guerrilla' activity between creatives and those explorers who have realized the economic dynamics of mobility and transience in yet to be artistic spaces a new aesthetic? How could it become possible that we all, collectively, strayed away from production, or from the fact that we are part of the production of an artistic life?".[16]

Whether their manifestations in the making are directly informed by a mode of anarchism or not, it may be possible to say that the subjectivities of a Chinese anarchism have imposed itself on the daily life of these spaces. This is the same fractured time-space of Bey's TAZ subjectivity, in an era striated by the sedimented hegemonic practices of a state "simultaneously riddled with cracks and vacancies" (Bey, 1991). It is an inter-subjectivity founded upon rupture, not only from the dominant consensus but from the very notion that there is any "deeper objectivity exterior to the practices that bring it into being" (Mouffe, 2007). Theorist Chantal Mouffe's key point here is the lack of an outside to the *mise en abyme*; the only way through is via tactics, strategies, and practices, where community, independence, and exclusionism are agonistic struggles that layer over time. In this sense, autonomy and resistance are never ends in and of themselves, nor are they claims or monikers to which we must adhere. Instead, the "laboratory" of Womenjia and these other spaces exists as a series of experiments that examine, test, and re-test the validity of our existing sociopolitical concepts. Terms like "one country, two systems," "harmony," and "commons" may be used as forms of repression, but they may be just as much reactivated, and the flux in their understanding and usage is, of course, the same cat-and-mouse game that characterizes the ambivalence of resistance for each of the four spaces. The example of weak denial by Bartomeu Marí Ribas in the introduction of this text is a semantic resistance that

inhabits the same micropolitically variable realm as Lijiang Studio, Womenjia, HomeShop, and WooferTen. In one sense, they are each exceptions to their immediate contexts, but what they offer are the slowly revealed processes of alter-rendering the sensible.

Figure 8: In September of 2011, Womenjia Youth Autonomy Lab hosted an activity to discuss the "Everyone's East Lake" project initiated as an open call for artistic interventions to raise awareness of questionable development along the perimeter of Wuhan's major body of water. Postcards were distributed with images of artworks and interventions from the project, co-organised by artists Li Juchuan and Li Yu. (photo courtesy of Womenjia Youth Autonomy Lab)

Sense of a Story: Forms of Representation

The international art world has welcomed the sensibilities of Jacques Rancière in recent years, with his texts on politics and aesthetics being widely circulated in tandem with the heightened interest in socially engaged and/or politically motivated art practices. It is Rancière's crucial idea of *le partage du sensible* that forms the link between aesthetics and politics, and it is the movement from "sense" to "sensibility" by which art and literature can expand and transform our perceptions of the world, forming propositions that maintain or challenge

existing orders. Mouffe supplements this argument by placing such practices at the level of the psychic, whereby the political is precisely constituted by the "symbolic ordering of social relations" via human reciprocity, power, and aesthetic practices (2007). But indeed, is not the very tailoring of experiences and lifestyles by the creative industries the exact form of immaterial production that Žižek describes as "bio-political, the production of social life" (2012)?

What HomeShop, Lijiang Studio, Womenjia, and WooferTen have in common as opposed to more official institutions and emblematic forms of industry is a particular mode of self-organization and the self-representation that accompanies it. As mentioned previously in this essay, organization occurs here as an internally binding agent, and representation as an external one. What Mouffe places at the realm of the symbolic occurs just as much in the real space-time of living and working together. Even in the cases of WooferTen and Lijiang Studio, paper ties to the State in the form of municipal funding or tax-deductible status are forms of bureaucracy on paper that in many ways do not say much about the more spontaneous, ad-libbed manners of working that occur in the daily life of these spaces. And these narratives will vary continuously depending upon which aspect of organization is being examined. The modus operandi by which things get arranged—in the planning of a program, the sedimentation of old hierarchies during weekly meetings, or in the answers to Art & Labor activist Annie Shaw's simple yet challenging question, "Who does the dishes?"—all speak of organization at the levels of both the political and the aesthetic. They are political in that they determine, by a measure of internal to external differentiation, the bureaucratic distances of each of these spaces to other entities in society, namely government, funding bodies, and others in the local environment. A group becomes a group insofar as there is a relative consensus on a manner or attitude of affiliation that distinguishes it from others. Whether formalized or not, these affiliations and modes of collaboration also reveal the kind of power relations and inequalities that can, unfortunately, penetrate even an art-activist sphere.

An aesthetic understanding of an organization occurs in the tracing of activity towards the realm of representation. This occurs, of course, in the form, appearance, and structure of its activities as they are carried out and directly experienced, but it is also inherently tied to the politics of media and the increasing circulation of institutions and cultural activities via the internet

and other forms of networked discourse. The organization of representation, as such, has become a highly sophisticated form of public relations that deals with the face of an organization in ways that are not necessarily tied to its actual, internal ways of working. This distance between the forms by which individuals and groups organize their practices as a daily actuality and the way this becomes manifested in a press release, artist talk, or Facebook page is an aesthetically mediated one, because it deals with language, the poetics of translation, and the creation of an image. It is narrative in the sense that there is a crucial time-space to be navigated in this distance. How one imagines an organization to be in the dreaming, brainstorming, and gathering of it evolves, for better or worse, in the actual realization of it over time. Whereas official institutions such as museums and commercial galleries are accountable to their constituents (e.g., the public and a board of trustees), self-initiated groups like Womenjia and HomeShop only need to qualify such relationships insofar as they feel personally interested and/or responsible. Representation, therefore, is not so much a matter of economic transparency, but of actively attempting to negotiate the boundaries between the internal and the external. To declare oneself as an "open platform" as these spaces often do is an uncertain extension of one's practices to an uncertain body of the public, beginning with the community and all the distraction that may include. As Mai Dian describes, "Once the gate is open, all kinds of disguised gods visit and declare their truths."[17]

Figure 9: In March 2011, members of the cycling circus troupe 2wheels4change opened Womenjia's gate to the public with their performance "金猴闹春 (*Jinhou Nao Chun*) The Golden Monkey's Spring Mischief." (photo courtesy of Womenjia Youth Autonomy Lab)

If this sounds frustrated, is the only recourse to return to a hermetic closing of the gate? How does one speak in a manner that gathers the kind of community one desires? And if such a community is honestly as open as one claims, how to represent the highly multiplicitous and divergent voices that gather? In the case of WooferTen, the professed dedication to the local community becomes a source of conflict when members disagree about the curation of activities. On one hand, "the local" stakes a limit on a geographically situated public, working with and for those in the immediate neighborhood of Yau Ma Tei, and within a realm of discourse pertinent to a Hong Kong identity. On the other hand, WooferTen's other emphasis upon art-activism opens a conceptual dialogue on the issue which is regional/global in nature, as per their East Asia Multitude series of symposia and invited residencies. What WooferTen's internal debate fails to resolve, then, is the pluralism inherent in the conception of the local, where a meaningful and engaged discourse with

others addressing a similar set of issues, such as urban development and the threats of nuclear energy, can also comprise a contained locality.

In a similar logic, all four of the case studies presented in this analysis reveal a complex tension between understandings of local to non-local. Perhaps amplified by a "China versus the world" complex, all four groups can actually be regarded at least as Western-influenced explorations of collaborative practice (to what degree they may be labeled as *shanzhai* will be left to the reader), from the backgrounds of HomeShop's and Lijiang Studio's organizers to WooferTen's aesthetic referencing of space hijacking interventions abroad and Mai's conceptual nod to the European free-housing-for-all movement.[18] But to leave a reading of these practices at that, of course, does an immense disservice both to the work itself and the transcultural mediation of it. Referring again to Yu Hua's rescue of *shanzhai* culture, a copy, evolution or spin-off reveals that conceptual transplantations are never merely such; as much as critics deride copycatters' exploitation of originals (in the design sphere, for example), any attentiveness to the concept of origins, already diluted at best, cannot understand these initiatives without, admittedly, an acknowledgement of some sort of Western influence, but just as importantly, the entire other array of influences shaping what these spaces become. These are neither typologies, trends nor categorical phenomena. For each of the groups, there is a particularity of the local context, a mediated acculturation and a manner of representation. This is the subtle articulation of a sociopolitical position; it questions "how we work and participate in both the art world and public life," and it is a process of negotiation that makes up a movement rather than the solidity of a plaque and fixed form of representation; the two-way dialogue between organization and representation shifts in shape, in time, and in voice (Abu ElDahab et al., 2011).

Lijiang Studio's extremely detailed documentation of the mural project, while taking on the fixed format of a publication, is one such example by which the work may be actually more crucially revealed as processes of dialogue between organization and representation. The published volume, fittingly subtitled *Contemporary Art Episodes in Rural China*, includes personal reflections and negotiations between artists, curator, and locals, and reads more as a travelogue or series of short stories than an art catalogue (Li, 2012). At the time of its preparation, three years after the last mural project residency,

Li's return tour of the village revealed that several of the paintings had not survived weathering or their owners' aesthetic preferences, and perhaps just as well. A review of this project could never be summed up via a quantified value of each mural as a finished artwork, and it is just as problematic to turn the experiences between artist and farmer into a criterion for judgment. To do so would only allow a datafication of these relationships conducive to the stratified systems of non-stop production that Lijiang Studio tries to evade. Thus, it is exactly far away from the typical art-consuming audience that these works can only become narrated as a series of encounters and dialogues. Even where marks and comments from village householders are recorded and compared in the book, they serve more as nodes for discussion than fixed value judgments or systematized critique. He Simei, a teenaged villager who was vehemently opposed to the airplane Shanghai-based artist Liu Bin wanted to paint on their home, protested that her family would be ridiculed by others. But approval from He Simei's father and Liu's persistence led to the finished mural, which received a compliment from one of Simei's friends.

Figure 10: The airplane mural proposed by artist Liu Bin became a contested issue for the He family. (photo by Elaine W. Ho)

Liu interestingly observes Simei's tacit acceptance by the changes in her aesthetic sensibility; by the time he departs from Lijiang, she is experimenting with the cosmetic addition of "knickknack earrings, lipsticks and eyebrow pencils provided in a local snack package" (Liu, 2012: 81). After two years' time and having seen many similar paintings in the neighboring prefecture of Chuxiong, He Simei is finally able to convey to the curator her upgraded response: "It's not bad" (199).

This incident cannot reduce the artwork and these projects as a whole to a question of authenticity, where form would always equal content and a direction could be easily highlighted as the nostalgic return for something more "real."[19] In fact, it is that the scales are constantly shifting and should be continually challenged. When Mai serves as the primary representative of Womenjia, are we being misled by the "we" of Womenjia ("Womenjia" literally translates to "our house"), and what power structures come into play by this invitation? The same can be said of HomeShop, which began as the personal living space of a single artist experimenting with the seepage of a private space into the public sphere. But when the platform and the public space necessarily include participation from others, what questions of authorship emerge, and to what degree are individual subjectivities lost by old hierarchies and the sometimes tyranny of consensus? How much of the process of "commoning" is the use of a rhetorical language, and—as a manner of understanding pronouns, historicizing, and the simple expressing of desire—what does it return to an understanding of small-scale organization?

The Illusions of Autonomy: A Meta-Analysis

In the field of organization theory, the meta-theoretical analysis is one that pays close attention to these so-called intervals between form and representation. Sometimes noted as a "textual strategy" and at others a "rhetorical repertoire," institutional theorist Barbara Czarniawska makes an anachronistic leap to refer to the "styles of organization theory" (2003: 237-61). Where an initial dictionary comprehension of the term *style* points merely to formal qualities as elaborated in a sense of "elegance, refinement or excellence of manner, expression, form, or performance," the meta-analysis points towards those

spaces between forms and their expression, revealing another pivot point between the politics and aesthetics of such artistic practice.[20] In this sense, the focus of the following analysis is not about the actual output of each organization, but the manner in which those outputs are voiced, and how that reflects back upon the nature of what is being said. Convoluting the discussion in this manner serves a twofold purpose: one, it deters any possible over-simplification by the comparative analysis of the four case studies presented; and two, it makes "stylistic" reference to the precise tensions that weigh upon the marriage of art and politics.

Bey refers to the livelihood of the Temporary Autonomous Zone as a clandestine operation carrying on underneath the nose of a state primarily concerned "with Simulation rather than substance" (1991). If so, WooferTen's highly visible participation on social media platforms, often to a great degree of simultaneity between activities and their documentation, concurs with their relationship to the state, in the sense that the highlighting of spectacle doubly serves as the kind of justification that funding bodies require. While this may certainly shift WooferTen outside of the TAZ, it is actually through WooferTen's consistently subversive use of media that we witness an extremely sophisticated rendition of "style as voice" in what Czarniawska very interestingly notes as both a political and an emotional sense (2003: 239). Although critics may point to the self-referentiality of these artists, highly complicit in the exhibition of art-activism without any real efficacy, the background of Hong Kong's relationship to the mainland must again be acknowledged in parallel to the very rise in mass-scale protests since 1997, often with artist-led participation.[21] With current political suspense mounting towards the constitutionally ambiguous movement towards universal suffrage for Hong Kong citizens in 2017, such a consideration of the voice is political, emotional, *and* literal.[22] Their performances in the theatre of representation are imperative because it is representation itself which is at stake. WooferTen's annual costumed bicycle procession on June Fourth may be a simple and crude upholding of a visual mimesis, but its power lies in the collaborative jolting of collective memory in public space where it does not exist elsewhere.

Figure 11: Participants gather outside of WooferTen (*at left*) before the annual bicycle procession from Yau Ma Tei to Victoria Park on June 4th, 2013. (photo by Elaine W. Ho)

Rancière's discussion on the dual autonomy and heteronomy of the artwork is pertinent here, for it is not the mode of presentation (individuals dressed as mainland students from the 1980s) which makes the work, but the particular undoing between individuals, "in that zone before representative sequences, where other modes of presentation, individuation, and connection operate" (2004: 148). Where such an experience has been maligned by cynics as the useless exception of a 364-day annually numbed population, perhaps it is precisely the persistence of WooferTen's activities within a dueling two systems that should be regarded as the starting point of evaluation.

Such a direct gathering of the voices of dissent is, of course, not a possibility for the other three groups based inside the mainland, and the dispersed appearances of Lijiang Studio, Womenjia, and HomeShop across the country can be likened to micro-zones of fortitude amidst the hegemony of market socialist-approved cultural industries in the PRC. The ambivalence of their modes of representation (Womenjia stays largely off the radar of the Internet and social media; Lijiang Studio's website was inactive for over one year, since hacked by spammers; and HomeShop very often conscientiously employs an ambiguous artistic language in its self-representation) is the crux of a dialectic

between autonomy and heteronomy, art and politics. As singular efforts that weave through the loopholes in the blanket of overhead systemic issues, they are forms of production that insist upon maintaining a degree of autonomy while being simultaneously cognizant of the ineffability of certain ineludible frameworks. Narratively speaking, this manner of operating communicates out of error and in difference. Womenjia and HomeShop speak from the place of idealism, yet they acknowledge their explorations serve in no way as utopian models. Lijiang Studio is perhaps more modest in its ambitions to make "art that is as interesting to the visiting artist as it is to local people as it is to us," but this relaxed parlance is carried out by the same efforts to expand and disturb existing forms of discourse in its community (Li, 2012: ii). There is a lapse traversed when, as artist-writer John Miller says, "Direct experience migrates into representation," (2012: 342) and the style that emerges amidst these exchanges happens as change in relation; it is the active process of autonomy in discussion with heteronomy. In other words, it is about understanding WooferTen, Lijiang Studio, HomeShop, and Womenjia in terms of the on-going relations between the work itself and the means of engaging it. What Czarniawska describes for the work of literature applies equally to the work of art: "Style is the writer's awareness of being engaged in writing, incorporated into the text itself" (2003: 240). If these groups in some ways fit categorical bills for TAZ or "self-organized," "alternative" forms of "social practice," it must also be acknowledged that each of these terms cannot simply be analyzed from a global perspective. And where art historian Maibritt Borgen recognizes a more complicated reality of self-organization by its inner and outer forms, the emphasis in this reading goes further to meander parallel to the movements between, around, and through these skins (2013: 37-49). To ambiguously say, "they have style" refers to Rancière's theoretical torus, whereby

> Literature is produced by making itself invisible, by combining the molecular music of affects and free percepts with the molar schemes of representation. The literary power of style thus becomes, in the final analysis, identical with the art of the Aristotelian mimetician, who had to know how to hide himself in his work. Here it is literature itself that hides its labor by accomplishing it, that makes indifferent the difference that

> results from the principle of indifference, from the principle of non-preference (Rancière, 2004: 151).

The conclusion refers back to the openness of these considerations, despite the distinctions made to pinpoint them. On one hand, we can consider all four of the case study initiatives as a form of social practice in China. But they are considered here post-mortem, or with an undefined experience of what the work actually is. The politics of this practice, can perhaps only be lived through experience, rather than issued as a statement. They are creative practices mapped only perhaps as the telling of an infinitely detailed story, where the dialogical practice of stirring modes of community is intricately linked with their representation and the politics of their aesthetics. In this sense, the "story" is not simply a manifesto or the moral we are left with at the end; it is the active, ongoing process of the telling and re-telling of stories as the sometimes fluent and sometimes incomprehensible narration of allegories—sometimes also jokes. Where the creative industries fall prey to the market is the inevitable valuation that occurs amongst all the different "stylizations," but the counter-punchline here is a passing of time that refuses the equivalency of meaning and value. As even the anarchist Mai Dian admits, the unprecedented wealth of resources (e.g., labor and private finance) to support the circulation of artistic production in China today means that its participants are almost always both resistors *and* clients. This falls in line with Diedrich Diederichsen's analysis of artistic *mehrwert*, which "yokes together two different things: on the one hand, the conceptual accreditation of artistic movements that abstract concrete objects and introduce the resulting abstractions into critical projects; on the other, the instrumentalization of these abstractions by an abbreviating culture of communication" (2008: 27). The implication is a heady realization: we are at once the exploited and the exploiters, the characters in the story as well as the storyteller.

Perhaps these contradictions are just more of the clichés to be added to the list of Chinese characteristics. At the same time, it is not the aim of this paper to color the map that is independent arts practice in China today. WooferTen, Lijiang Studio, HomeShop, and Womenjia are four examples, but they are depicted as narrative springboards for thought rather than offerings to dissect a market-socialist phenomenon. The spontaneous forms of agency and

innovation to have emerged from these spaces must be emphasized inasmuch as they can be experienced. Hardly a call to the commodification of experience, these spaces may just as well transform and/or dissolve into other trajectories, associations, and stories. In the same manner that they have come about in rupture and displacement from an existing set of political and aesthetic arrangements, they disrupt their own modes of working in search of other methods. Whether this entails future forms of rupture in physical space, the stakes of discourse and autonomy within art, or an "aesthetic rearrangement" of social hierarchies has yet to be seen. And that is to say, it explores politics and aesthetics as that which has yet to be mapped, where industry points to processes rather than products and a description portrays what it is never capable of fully depicting. There is a stake on unnamed potentialities and the fallout that ensues from its misinterpretation. And Ribas may very well be aware of that.

Figure 12: The WooferTen neighbour known to the community by the name "Fred Ma" distributes free food to visitors. (photo by Elaine W. Ho)

Notes

1. Recorded on the occasion of the Multitude Art Prize Discourse Series held at Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing, April 28, 2013. For more information and full documentation from the conference proceedings, please visit *www.multitudefoundation.org/conference.html.*
2. In his keynote speech to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in October of 2007, President Hu Jintao stressed the importance of Chinese culture and the cultural industries "as part of the soft power of our country to better guarantee the people's basic cultural rights and interests."
3. The term "relational repression" refers to a common technique of "soft" repression that combines state and personal social relations to diffuse dissent and protest. See further information in Yanhua and O'Brien (2013: 533-52.)
4. Mai, e-mail message to author, 7 October 2013.
5. Brown, e-mail message to author, 9 September 2013.
6. For further reading about visions for the new socialist countryside and the New Rural Reconstruction Movement, please see texts by Renmin University School of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development dean Wen Tiejun; an overview in English can be found at "Building a New Socialist Countryside": *http://www.china.org.cn/english/zhuanti/country/159776.htm.*
7. "Foreign-supported platform" refers to Lijiang Studio's status as a 501c3 not-for-profit foundation in the United States and, for the purpose of institutional equivalency in China (a requirement for American non-profit organizations to be able to transfer funds abroad), the Lijiang Association for Cultural Research and Development in the city of Lijiang.

8. See a detailed contemporary history of politically-charged Hong Kong art in Lau (2012).
9. Under the terms of agreement with the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, WooferTen should have evacuated 404 Shanghai Street in the autumn of 2013, but at the time of this writing in the winter of 2014-2015, members have yet to clear from the space.
10. I will begin this introduction with the disclosure that my position as initiator of HomeShop will alter the subjective positioning of it relative to that of the other spaces presented in this paper, but I hope that will not diminish the value of its bearings within the larger discussion of artist-run spaces in China. In some respects, the later discussion on narrative forms of representation is also relevant to my role as author of this reading. More information about HomeShop and some of its projects can be found at *www.homeshop.org.cn*.
11. It is interesting to note that the term "alternative" to describe art spaces was inadvertently declared dead already in the West by 1985, per artist-writer Julie Ault's analysis of the New York art scene in her book *Alternative Art New York, 1965-1985*. Why it would be picked up again by Chinese art circles in the 2000s is partially cliché, though partially also a discrepancy in translation.
12. Ironically, Žižek credits the Chinese socialist market economists with being "the most efficient managers of capitalism because their historical enmity towards the bourgeoisie as a class perfectly fits the tendency of today's capitalism to become a managerial capitalism without a bourgeoisie—in both cases, as Stalin put it long ago, 'cadres decide everything.'"
13. "It would not be going too far to say that 'copycat' (*shanzhai*) has more of an anarchist spirit than any other word in the contemporary Chinese language." Yu (2012: 181-182).
14. Mai was the editor of the independently produced leftist zine 冲撞 (*Chongzhuang*) *Chaos* (2001-2005) and member of several punk bands in Wuhan, the most recent of which is called 犯罪想法 *(Fanzui Xiangfa)*, meaning "Criminal Thoughts."
15. Mai, e-mail message to author, 7 October 2013.
16. Mai, *ibid.*

17. Mai, e-mail message to author, 6 October 2013.
18. Lijiang Studio was established by American Jay Brown, and HomeShop was initiated by Chinese-American Elaine W. Ho, co-organized since 2011 by artists Michael Eddy (Canada), Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga (Greece), and Emi Uemura (Japan), and theorist/cultural workers Ouyang Xiao (China/USA), Twist Qu (China) and Cici Wang (China).
19. As an aside, it is also interesting to note that the valorizing idea of authenticity is much more so a Western concept, and as an example, the prevalence of the *shanzhai* phenomenon in China bequeaths authenticity passionately in favor of what Yu Hua describes as "revolutionary action initiated by the weak against the strong." This is evidenced by everything from *shanzhai* entrepreneurialism by small-scale production (everything from electronic goods to luxury products and toilet paper) to *shanzhai* pop culture that, thanks to the internet, makes stars of its protagonists.
20. *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) in Czarniawska (2003: 239).
21. One of the most visible examples of such show without "real efficacy" was the highly media-focused spotlight of Choi Yuen Village during the 2009-10 protests against the development of the Guangzhou-Hong Kong high-speed rail. While the actions at that time catalyzed many of the relationships and strategies important for Hong Kong's artists and activists since then, it failed to achieve the stated goal of saving the village from demolition.
22. Hong Kong's Chief Executive is currently elected by an Election Committee composed of voters from the functional constituencies, religious organizations, and municipal and central government bodies, though the increasing infusion of a pro-Beijing electorate has led to widespread controversy over the possible reform hinted at in Article 45 of Hong Kong's Basic Law, which claims universal suffrage for the Chief Executive as an ultimate goal. Wikipedia contributors, "Politics of Hong Kong (section Universal suffrage)," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Hong_Kong#Universal_suffrage* (accessed 18 October 2013).

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