

Topic: Contemporary Chinese Art – What is “Contemporary”?

Truly “Contemporary Art”, according to some art historians, is art that is de-“ideologicalized.” Ever since 1980, the Chinese Contemporary Art movement has been centered on one issue, the conflict between the official ideology (“the state institution in its own interests, produces a purposely misinterpreted conception of reality and endows it with the status of the ‘truth’, making it the official discourse”) and the unofficial ideology (the motivation shared by avant-garde artists of the 1980s to break down the constraints of the authority of official discourse and reclaim freedom of expression). The continuous existence of ideologic-centricism lies in the prevailing antagonist way of thinking; the real “task” for the Contemporary artists is to carry out an “un-unofficial” art, which breaks out from the ideologic-centricism, and which encourages real freedom of creation.⁹

⁹ Hou Hanru, “Towards an ‘Un-Unofficial Art,” *On The Mid-Ground* (Hong Kong: Timezone 8 Ltd., 2002).

Adapted from:

Lu, Ning. “How Chinese Art Became Contemporary.” Artnet News, March 11, 2013.
<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/how-chinese-art-became-contemporary-50469>