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RGC Reference HKU701-HSS-13
<i>please insert ref. above</i>

**The Research Grants Council of Hong Kong
Prestigious Fellowship Scheme under the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel
Completion Report**

(for completed projects only)

Part A: Project and Award Holder

1. Project Title

Art in Twentieth-century China

2. Award Holder and Academic Department/Unit Involved

Name/Post	Unit/Department/Institution	Contact Information
David Clarke, Professor	Department of Fine Arts, School of Humanities	dclarke@hku.hk

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Part B: The Report

5. Workplan

5.1 Workplan as per original application

1. Drawing on current art historical methodologies, to research and write in English an authoritative history of Chinese art in the twentieth century.

2. That book-length study should provide a legible synoptic overview of its topic which will be of use to both those with a specialist interest in modern Chinese art and those whose address is to modern art in general.

3. ...My aim is to publish the book with either one of the few university presses that have made Chinese art history their specialty, or else with one of the top specialist art history publishers capable of bringing it to a wide scholarly readership..

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5.3 Realisation of the workplan

(maximum 2 pages; please state how and to what extent the work as stated in the workplan has been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

Work on the project proceeded smoothly. To research and write a sole author book within the space of one year is a major task, but the uninterrupted time provided by this fellowship did allow concentration on such a single task that would be impossible in the normal course of things due to the time taken up by teaching and administration. Without this fellowship it would have been impossible to undertake this task – the book would simply not have been written. The main body of the research and writing was undertaken during the time of the fellowship itself, but a small percentage of the writing was completed in the second half of 2015, partly because I found that it was a necessary part of my working process to leave a draft to sit for a while and then come back to it with fresh eyes to make revisions. Since the end of 2015 I have started looking for a publisher for the manuscript, and while I have seen some interest the book is not yet under contract. It is normal for the process of bringing a completed manuscript to publication to take time, and the exact time scale is beyond my personal control since it depends on the publishers' speed of response and work patterns, and that of their reviewers. I have focused on trying to find a publisher who can deliver the book to a wider audience interested in modern art as a whole but would also consider a publisher who specializes in Chinese art history.

I offer here a brief synopsis of the manuscript I have written:

My book begins with an introduction, which offers an overview of the period as a whole, looking for common threads, and also provides background information on Chinese art and history in the period which led up to it. Following this are six full-length chapters. The first ('Ink painting and the modern world') looks at some of those artists from the earlier part of the twentieth century who retained a strong relationship in medium, style and subject with Chinese art of earlier eras. This is followed by a chapter discussing those early twentieth-century artists who made a more conscious break with the Chinese artistic heritage, primarily looking to the West for resources with which to reform their country's visual culture ('Looking West'). My third chapter ('Art and politics') considers that art of the later Republican period which had a more directly political nature, and also looks at art in the People's Republic (where political considerations were never far away), focusing on the period up to 1976, the year which marks the end of the Cultural Revolution. By contrast, the following chapter ('The new internationalism: Chinese art outside the People's Republic') will consider the contribution of overseas Chinese artists, as well as those based in Hong Kong and Taiwan. I return to Mainland China in the chapter which follows ('Art after Mao') to consider the transformations of art in the period following the death of Mao Zedong, focusing on the 1980s. Major social and economic changes in that period created opportunities for the development of a new artistic culture, more autonomous and experimental than any that had been seen before in China and more deeply in contact with the outside world. The last full chapter ('Chinese art on the global stage') considers trends in Chinese art from the beginning of the nineteen-nineties. It begins with Mainland China, but also looks at Hong Kong and Taiwan to examine to what extent art in those locations can be mapped onto the same story (a determination not to forget the contribution of Chinese artists based outside the People's Republic is one thing that makes my account of

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the art of this period distinctive from many others available). Finally a short epilogue considers recent trends in art, taking stock from the present moment, at a point where China has grown to become one of the very largest economies in the world and a major international force in an increasingly globalized era.

- 6.3 Realisation of the dissemination plan
(maximum 2 pages; please state how and to what extent the output as stated in the dissemination plan has been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

For a project of this kind the dissemination plan is quite straightforward. I plan to publish the research as a full-length sole-author book. I am on schedule to do this but of course it was never the intention that dissemination would happen during the time of the fellowship itself – that time was wholly taken up with research and writing. The process of finding a suitable publisher and bringing the book to print is a time-consuming one and the time scale is outside my personal control (unlike that of research and writing) since it involves other parties. Based on my previous track record of publication I envisage no likely obstacles to seeing the work into print in due course.

7. **Other impact** *(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, knowledge transfer, etc.)*