13 Never Forget Mao

The Monumental as Radical Universal OR: The Making of a "Maoist Modern"

Barbara Mittler

At the end of an article on recent new iconoclasms, Cameron Hilditch writes:

> Grace should be given to men who move mountains, and damnation reserved for those who truly deserve it. But before those tasks can be attended to, a proper accounting of history in all its complexity must be undertaken. If the new iconoclasts are blind to the virtues of a Lincoln or a Churchill, they should at least make an attempt to correctly identify the vices.[1]

This essay speaks to such correct identification of vices.

In socialist countries like China, monuments of political icons, strategically placed and landscaped, with ideological and psychological as well as aesthetic considerations, are ubiquitous and universal. The monumental as a style is undoubtedly one of the most significant elements in the formal repertoire artists have developed in their modernist engagement with socialism. Yet, how to deal with the socialist hero once he dies and falls from grace? Stalin's statues are dismantled in a series of dramatic performances, Chiang Kai-shek's are relegated to large memorial parks. Mao's, on the other hand, have stayed to grow – in numbers, in size and in material variety and social use – and thus have become ever more visible, tangible, sensible and tactile – in China as well as abroad. The period in which monumental Mao played a significant role is not easily forgotten in China, as it cannot be relegated to the past but continues to the present. This is so, I have argued elsewhere, because it was not exclusively determined by "socialist realism," but by many other elements that also characterized the "global modern" and because it was thus not only "bleak" and "monolithic" but much more complex.[2]

I argue that the Maoist Modern, represented by Monumental Mao, has become a radical universal with global implications, and must be considered to dominate the iconography of the long twentieth century. As Monumental Mao takes in many elements, socialist realism in the special form of "revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism" as practiced in Mao's China and still continuing today, is just one of them. Thus, Monumental Mao, or the Maoist Modern, is also a product of the kinds of global artistic exchanges that are the focus of most other chapters in this volume. Accordingly, I will be addressing not just the question of "socialist realism" but the very meaning of a "global monumentalism" itself – by adding to it a Maoist tinge which has always been partially "global."

DOI: 10.4324/9781003450535-17

Statue-Mania I: The Controversy over the "Chinese" Martin Luther King

In January 2007, it was announced that sculptor Lei Yixin (1954–), an artist from the People's Republic of China, would create the centerpiece of a memorial devoted to Martin Luther King to be situated along the Tidal Basin as part of the National Mall Park, a complex that also houses the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC (Figure 13.1). There were a number of criticisms of this choice: the Chinese government had allegedly made a $25 million gift to help meet the projected shortfall in donations, the sculpture was to use white Chinese granite[3] mined by workers forced to toil in unsafe and unfair conditions,[4] and even when there had been written promises that in assembling the statue in the U.S., only local stonemasons would be used, it appeared that, again, Chinese laborers had been used who allegedly expected to be paid only when they returned home to China.[5]

"A Martin Luther King Jr. Statue 'Made in China'?"[6] the media would ask, and a petition entitled *King Is Ours* was initiated.[7] The question was why white granite for a black man, and why no American rock, no American artist had been chosen.[8] And there were many other critical issues. What was considered worst of all, however, was the fact that the memorial's sculptor, Lei Yixin, was allegedly "better known for his mammoth tributes to Chairman Mao," and, as an angry editorialist in *The Economist* opined, "Mr. Lei's pedigree comes through in his latest work. … King is depicted with a bit too much of a worker's-paradise seriousness."[9] The article then continues that having the King monument resemble Mao, one deadly dictator of the twentieth century:[10]

> … suggests a couple of things. First, … it suggests that monuments like this … are pieces of propaganda, attempts to manipulate a state's citizens … into parceling out honor, reverence, and esteem according to an "official" account of the country's history. This is a line of business most states are in, but … not a line of business … liberal states ought to be in, even if … they happen to exalt worthy heroes, such as … King. Second, not only is propaganda morally dubious, but it is almost always aesthetically repugnant. The "worker's-paradise seriousness" which some detect in Mr. Lei's work is a sign that the artist has no notable interest in his subjects, but is … a master of achieving a certain cheap effect, a vacuous sublimity easily mistaken for awed reverence, by means of a *formulaic*, emotionally rote approach to monumentality… Mr. Lei is a political bullshit artist, and it shows. That Chinese white granite is especially durable is a stupid reason to get stuck with this kind of soulless stone agitprop.

In fact, Mao statues are really not the bulk of Lei's work as a sculptor – allegorical women figures have more frequently been produced by him in white stone – and he has never been engaged in any major works of the sort, so to call him a "political bullshit artist" may not be quite correct.[11] However, what the angry editorialist criticized had already been denigrated by the United States Commission of Fine Arts, one of the many different agencies and bodies who, in 2008, had to approve the memorial and were concerned precisely about the aesthetics of the sculpture. They, too, had complained that "the colossal scale and Social Realist style of the proposed sculpture recalls a genre of political sculpture that has recently been pulled down in other countries."[12] While eventually they let pass the design – which, all in all, was not so different from that of other sculptures also to be seen in Memorial Park, as it adhered to something one could call a monumental universal in style, the suspicion that the National Mall monument of Martin Luther King would be "contaminated" through Lei's hands (as "soulless stone agitprop"),

Figure 13.1 Martin Luther King Memorial in the early evening. Photo by John Brighenti, 23 March 2018. Creative commons attribution 2.0 generic license.

allegedly trained on "Monumental Mao," continued for years. It was picked up in many caricatures at the time, for example American cartoonist Daryl Cagle's *Martin Luther King Memorial and China*, originally published on August 23, 2011, which shows Lei Yixin happily standing on top of a Mao statue, who holds his arms crossed and is clearly modeled on the Martin Luther King memorial, saying: "Yeah, it cost $120 million to make the Martin Luther King memorial statue …" and then continuing, in the next speech bubble, "but now that we have the molds, with minimal alterations, we can knock out these Mao memorials really cheap."[13]

Yet, why would Lei's King resonate with Monumental Mao or Mao with Monumental King? And why would the artistic style in which King was presented be narrowly defined as "socialist realist," when it shares the global monumental style of many of the other sculptures in Memorial Park and in similar places such as Mount Rushmore?[14]

I would argue that this criticism is a sign of the formidable grip of Monumental Mao or the Maoist Modern on the visual mindmap of the long twentieth century – one that is at times feared and thus often denied. This chapter attempts to show that both its genealogy and its legacy must be explained in more complicated ways than reducing it to alleged "socialist realism." In fact, the Maoist Modern is a radical universal transculturally co-produced and with global implications, that dominates the iconography of the twentieth century and beyond.

But back to Lei's *Stone of Hope*: why all the criticisms, why the controversies, why the emotional responses, the condemnations of having produced, with this statue, nothing

but "soulless agitprop"? Monuments of all sorts (out to "warn" or "recall," as in the Latin *monere*) are both troubled and troublesome. Monuments are "invasive," they restrict our movements, our actions, our visions: one cannot escape or avoid them.[15] This is why people react to monuments in a manner that is quite significantly different from their reaction to other, less boldly auratic objects. A monument is animated, for better or worse, with ever new claims on the present and the future released into public discourse – and thus, action. The monumental as radical universal thus has a powerful hold over the emotions of many – emotions that can change quickly, one reason why statues are almost as often toppled as they are erected.[16]

And accordingly, statues of Mao and King are set up as they are equally "halo-ed,"[17] and thus, monumentalized spirited visionaries – with their own dreams of moving mountains – fighting for the liberation of the suppressed.[18] In terms of their visions, there had been, in fact, close connections between Mao and King. Each in their own manner, they shared many ideas and thus, Mao had been one of the first, internationally, to respond to King's brutal death on April 4, 1968, in an address published not even two weeks later. Here, Mao would be identifying his own emancipation narrative with the black struggle in the U.S., in words that could well have been written by Martin Luther King himself, as a legacy leading up to "Black Lives Matter." Caricaturist Cagle and the other critics of the "Chinese" Luther monument were probably not aware of this resonance or chose not to make this link. But in 1968, Mao had written:[19]

> The Afro-American struggle is not only a struggle waged by the exploited and oppressed Black people for freedom and emancipation; it is also a new clarion call to all the exploited and oppressed people of the United States to fight against the barbarous rule of the monopoly capitalist class. It is a tremendous aid and inspiration to the struggle of the people throughout the world against U.S. imperialism and to the struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialism. On behalf of the Chinese people, I hereby express resolute support for the just struggle of the Black people in the United States.

Mao, in this essay, makes a point of global importance, one that resonated very much with King's agenda, much disliked at the time in U.S. conservative circles.[20] He speaks in support of all those suffering under what he calls U.S. imperialism, be they in the U.S. or in Vietnam. Many Chinese propaganda posters supporting this claim were produced, at the time, for export to the U.S., which is clear from their English-language quotes stemming from Mao's address, such as the following: "The evil system of colonialism and imperialism arose and throve with the enslavement of negroes and the trade in negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of the black people."[21]

Despite the fact that such posters and their message did make their way to the U.S. (some of them can be found, for example, in the Berkeley Digital Poster Collections), and despite many important models for the different "liberation movements" in the U.S. being provided by Mao, as Lovell demonstrates,[22] the purely negative reflections on the Chinese sculptor of the King monument and the direct link to the Maoist mold should not be too surprising.

This is because King had been promoted from a radical and confrontational figure to a "sanitized" or halo-ed national hero, part of a political consensus that spanned several legislatures and presidencies, both Democrat and Republican, that accompanied the 15 years that the statue was in the making.[23] The reception of Mao and his visions, on

the other hand, had radically changed in mainstream political thinking outside China ever since his death – if not inside. It is this shift in attitude which explains why the King monument is repeatedly accused of epitomizing a specific artistic style ("socialist realism") which, in the minds of those who criticized the statue, was associated with Mao's "dictatorship" and which was thus considered "bleak" and "monolithic," characterized by a closed aesthetics and mirroring an oppressive politics.[24] These critics connect this style with China, and thus, by implication, with Lei Yixin as a Chinese artist, even though the monumental style – the Maoist Modern – is quite radically universal, in the sense that it is practiced and seen not just in countries like China but equally in "liberal states."

Indeed, focusing on the National Mall where *Stone of Hope* would come to stand, it is dominated by the Lincoln Memorial which, in 1976, became the blueprint for the Mao Mausoleum. The architectural design of each of these two memorials supports the haloing effect that is connected with both Lincoln and, by implication, Mao, who becomes intervisually related to the Lincoln mold.[25]

The white, seated Mao in the entrance hall of the Mao Mausoleum was supported by "people's heroes" raised on a stele outside the Memorial as if living forever. Jointly with Mao, inside the Mausoleum, they were facing Tian'anmen, the imperial palace and the seat of political power, as potential remonstrators. In the words of Rudolf G. Wagner,

> the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial assume a similar function to the stele and the Mao Memorial in Peking. They stand there as a double reminder to Congress: to keep in mind the freedom of the new nation, liberated from colonial domination (Washington Monument), and to maintain the commitment to equality of all citizens symbolized by Lincoln and the text written on the wall inside the Lincoln Memorial. The two monuments in Washington, D.C., thus share the remonstrative purpose of their Chinese equivalents.[26]

What we see here are the intricacies of a monumental universal in the making, and this is co-produced transculturally.

Mao's white seated statue – in a style that has been called "socialist realist" – can thus be interpreted along the lines of European artistic traditions, depicting the seated bourgeois educated gentleman – the mold used for the Lincoln statue – but it is also related to Chinese traditions of depicting venerable rulers, gods and monks, especially highlighted by the landscape painting in the background of the statue – the vastness and sublimity of nature reflecting upon the greatness of the person depicted – a synesthetic trope that Mao himself frequently takes up in his poetry, as we will see below.[27]

If Monumental Mao had been the mold for Martin Luther King, then, this Monumental Mao, following the iconic traditions of Washington, Lincoln, and the like, was always already infused by cultural artistic flows that had gone back and forth, or "shot/reverse-shot,"[28] between China and the Western world. It is this transcultural aspect of the Maoist Modern that I would like to highlight further in this chapter.

The Maoist Modern – Rethinking "Socialist Realism" and the Monumental Universal

I began with a statement by Cameron Hilditch addressing recent iconoclasm against statues of Churchill and Nixon, among others: "Grace should be given to men who move mountains, and damnation reserved for those who truly deserve it. But before

those tasks can be attended to, a proper accounting of history in all its complexity must be undertaken."[29] This comment is useful in rethinking the criticisms of the King statue in the making – where iconoclasm was practiced before the fact, so to speak. To be sure, Lei Yixin must be called a sculptor trained in a (not "the") socialist realist style. Even though Mao rejected socialist realism openly, at least from the 1950s, he called for its continued practice under the special label of "revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism." This style – informed by socialist realism – is the backbone of what I call the Maoist Modern.[30]

In the remainder of this chapter, I will argue that behind the controversy over the alleged socialist realist Maoist mold influencing the Martin Luther King memorial is the global traffic (and power) of the Maoist Modern artistic style, which is not quite adequately described as "socialist realism." This Maoist Modern builds on ideas voiced by Mao Zedong himself in his *Yan'an Talks* of 1942.[31] It developed in China and has traveled globally ever since Mao first became an iconic figure in the 1930s, reflected in the work of photographers and filmmakers such as Edgar Snow, Walter Bosshard, Henri Cartier Bresson or Joris Ivens,[32] and again in the 1960s, through the artistic oeuvre of a Gerhard Richter, an Andy Warhol or an Erro, and ever more forcefully since the Pop and Avant Garde Art movements in China of the 1990s, which have an increasingly global market.[33] One of the most evident examples of the Maoist Modern is the making and the perpetuation (even *ex negativo*) of global Monumental Mao, as the case of Lei's *Stone of Hope* and the discussion about its alleged Maoist influence clearly shows.

Yet, as noted earlier, Lei Yixin in fact has not actually produced much Monumental Mao sculpture – the number of Maos in his oeuvre are minor. He more often than not appears in groups as a rather small figure, seldom monolithic and singular, and rarely carved in white stone or granite.[34] Mythical and allegorical white stone beauties, on the other hand, are much more frequently found among his works.[35]

The style of Lei Yixin is eclectic, to say the least, and ranges from elements of (revolutionary) romanticism, with Dunhuang-inspired dynamic flowing clothes and hairstyles, to Cubist and realist works. Like many artists in China, he thus sculpts in that broadly informed and eclectic style that I call the Maoist Modern. I will now illustrate the presence and impact of this Maoist Modern as it becomes visible in the continuous remaking of Monumental Mao – ubiquitous in China and elsewhere, in many other shapes and sizes.

To China first: the period in which Monumental Mao played a significant role is not easily forgotten in China, as indeed it cannot be relegated to the past but continues in the present. Its Maoist Modern style is eclectic, taking in "socialist realism," "modernism" (often a combination of impressionist elements, fifteenth-century Zen-styles such as those by Sesshū discussed by Effie Yin, and Cubist elements that we see in works by Lei Yixin), and "traditionalism" (whether Chinese-style brushwork and calligraphy – which Mao himself practiced – and the freestyle *xieyi* philosophy that went along with it,[36] Soviet Historical Oil Painting, or Dunhuang-inspired painting styles amongst others). Monumental Mao thus already contains the global and temporal artistic exchanges that are the focus of this volume. And because of its richness as a globally informed – and resonating – monumentally universal style, the Maoist Modern continues to be so powerful even today.

Mao's Yan'an talks have memorable lines to this effect and these explain why we can observe a proliferation of styles in Maoist Modern art that was made to "serve the people" and thus "politics." For example, Mao says: "We certainly may not reject the ancients and foreigners as models, which means, I am afraid, that we must even

use feudal and bourgeois things."[37] And thus, the Maoist Modern is not exclusively determined by "socialist realism," but by many other elements that also determined the "global modern."[38] One might even take a Raphael Madonna as one's model and still produce one of the most iconic (and never forgotten) images of the Maoist Modern – as did Liu Chunhua, with his *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan*.[39] Even the most orthodox monumental portrayals of Mao were thus a product of a country that may have blocked itself off but still remained part of a transcultural practice.

Likewise, the Maoist Modern cannot just be limited to 1949–79, as many chapters in this volume also illustrate. By expanding our lens and zooming out from these three decades to earlier and later, and in thus reconsidering the Maoist Modern as a style that determines and is informed by China's long twentieth century and its exchanges with other artistic traditions, we are clearly not just addressing the question of "socialist realism" but the very meaning of the "artistic modern" itself.

Statue-Mania II: Controversies over Devotional Imperatives, Fatherly Bodies, and Wavy Hair

The oil painting *Father*, created Luo Zhongli (1948–) in 1980, was considered a milestone in the history of Chinese contemporary fine arts, and won the Gold Award in the Chinese 2nd National Youth Fine Arts Exhibition, becoming part of the collection of the National Fine Arts Museum in Beijing.[40] It shows a poor Chinese peasant with sunburnt wrinkled face wearing a white cloth turban, holding a bowl of soup in his gnarled hands, looking out at the viewer. The painting and the controversy surrounding it provide a typical example demonstrating that controversies over Monumental Mao and its Maoist Modern style were not only encountered outside China. Indeed, the debate over this monumental painting was very similar to that surrounding Lei Yixin's Martin Luther King sculpture. They reflect upon the power of Mao's monumental image, in a manner nicely summarized by journalist Xu Zhiyuan:

> I have heard that if you belittle Mao in front of a person from Changsha, you'll find yourself in a very heated argument. Even though daily life may be happy for people focusing on worldly things, sometimes deceased leaders are their only source of meaning. When people revere nothing, what they really want is an idol to cling on to.[41]

Photorealist in style, Luo's work openly denies the orthodox aesthetics of revolutionary romanticism and realism by citing them *ex negativo*: this is 1980, after all. This portrait of a Chinese peasant, his skin extremely dark, his mouth open with chapped lips, his eyes exuding worry and exhaustion, gullied wrinkles carving his face, sweat beads everywhere, the turbid tea in a bowl in his rough hands, certainly does not adhere to the tenets of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism that had persisted until the end of the Cultural Revolution. The official English-language newspaper *China Daily* quoted those who hailed the portrait as an artwork which "for the first time, … featured the true color of laboring people, who used to be only painted in a bright way…, a breakthrough in social ideology."[42] Others, however, committed to the tenets of revolutionary realism and romanticism, asserted that this painting in its modernist, photo-realist style, "smeared the image of the peasants."[43]

While this was not the first time that such an image of the laboring people was presented in Chinese art, Luo's painting was particularly sensitive for another reason: the painting

is huge (1.50m x 2m). Everyone who looked at it, therefore, must have seen it as modeled on those huge frontal portraits of Mao that, in the words of Chinese art historian Wang Yuejin, Chinese "eyes had been tuned to" for decades. These portraits, according to Wang, had been imbued "with a devotional imperative."[44] Luo Zhongli's immense portrait of a peasant replays the rhetoric of Monumental Mao, the ultimate nourishing "Father" of China's people, by substituting him with an anonymous farmer – who, by standing in his place, somehow did not manage to eradicate Mao's after-image. The image of a "Father" obviously echoed and was modeled upon that one "Monumental" father, Mao. As the image inscribes itself in the visual mindmap and the mold of this Monumental Mao, it becomes a counter-monument. Indeed, the parody is quite harsh – especially as it is informed by the global style of photo-realism. Luo explains that his core idea was to show that "the time of God has passed, and here comes the time of man, upon whom our livelihoods really depend."[45] As in the case of Martin Luther King, (God-like) Monumental Mao is the backdrop that further enhances the emotional impact of the artwork.[46]

Indeed, Mao had long since been deified as he who would shine as the sun from everywhere, from a large poster wall to that of a small kitchen, and this did not end with his death. While Wang Yuejin argues that "the death of Mao marked the end of the age of icons,"[47] it appears to me that this age has not ended, even to this day, and instead it has gone viral globally. Even though Mao's death, soon to be synchronized with the end of what would be called, in the Party Resolution of 1981, the "Ten-Year-Disaster" of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, came at a moment of disenchantment with Mao and his radical politics – yet, in China, Mao's statues did not fall. To the contrary, recent years have seen ever more numerous and massive portraits and statues appearing everywhere.

To name but two significant (and, again, controversial) Monumental Maos, one was built between 2007–9 in his home province of Changsha, some 32 meters high (a monument discussed below); and another, even larger, in a most unlikely place, Zhushigang in Henan, the province that was hit most severely by the Great Famine of the late 1950s after the Great Leap Forward. The latter was under construction from 2014, reaching a height of 37 meters at a cost of 430,000 Euro, but was finally demolished by official orders in 2016.[48] Clearly, the Age of Icons is *not* over – even if attempts have been made gingerly, time and again, to bring it to an end.

Some of the official orders for dismantling Mao statues had to be recalled in 1980 already, as their removal had frequently caused public outrage.[49] If, over the following decades, Mao's statues diminished in numbers and some have disappeared from factories, museums and university campuses, this would usually occur under the pretext of conducting renovation works. Mao's monumental image had left its imprint and remained too powerful to be removed completely.[50]

This was so because, when Mao died on September 9, 1976, there was no-one sufficiently charismatic to follow.[51] Mao and his memory, therefore needed to be kept alive and it was done in a manner well known to people ever since Mao had come to prominence in China in the 1930s – he continued to be there, as image and metaphor, the nourishing parent (father and mother at the same time) and sun which would rise again every day, for ever and ever, little different from during his lifetime.[52] He thus continued, alive and aloof, an absent presence while the spectacular staging of his death and veneration of his body in the Mao Mausoleum became part of the decisive story of legitimacy for the Chinese state, and revelatory of the charismatic powers of Monumental Mao.

Mao's continuous "sovereign" presence in different media, art, music, films and sculpture, during and after his lifetime, has resulted in the consolidation of the kind of monumental mythical or metaphorical body politics that he once helped establish and that itself inherited ideas from traditional Chinese lore of good rulership.[53]

What I am arguing, then – inspired by the central image of the ruler's twin natures established in Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies* – the *body natural* and the *body politic* (or, in other words, Mao, the individual and Mao Monumental, the Communist icon), is that Mao's affective hold over the Chinese has made it impossible for a distinction of these two bodies to ever work in China: "The King (the individual) is dead, long live the King (the idea/institution)" was not a possibility.[54] Individual and institutional bodies could not be separated as Mao died. Put differently, to keep and embalm his individual body to represent the longevity of the institutional/ideal body was the only way to ease legitimate succession which, however, always only amounted to succession but never real substitution. Mao's imaged and embalmed body always already constituted both *body natural* and body *politic* – a Monumental Universal.

A tripartite painting, *Without Title* by Huang Yan (born 1966), produced in 2005, speaks precisely to this absent presence and thus invokes, once again, the visual mindmap in which Monumental Mao has engraved himself, one which, as we have argued, also travels globally.[55]

Huang's painting offers three well-known, iconic vistas of the Chairman – except that his bodily contours are very hard to see: they are completely out of focus. There are clear intervisual references to Gerhard Richter's murky Mao of 1968, one of the first images to begin the artistic reflection of the Maoist Modern in a global context.[56]

In Huang Yan's piece, not unlike Richter's earlier work, one perceives but the outlines of Monumental Mao. Nevertheless, this is enough to immediately recognize Mao's characteristic features – his halo-ed charismatic *Gestalt*. He appears in this painting – as in Richter's – in the form of some of the most iconic Monumental Maos. Read Chinese-style, from right to left, the painting combines, first, a full-body portrait of the young Mao in the form of a fogged-over black-and-white rendering of that well-rehearsed model image, *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan*. This image was itself informed by a combination of Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* of 1512/13 (for the folds in Mao's long gown), Chinese landscape painting and ideas of *xieyi* (for the rugged mountain background), and Caspar David Friedrich (for the transcendent foggy mountain setting – familiar from his *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* of 1818).[57] It is thus testimony to an eclecticism typical of works in the Maoist Modern – produced millions of times during the Cultural Revolution – and promptly found its global repercussions in Icelandic painter Gudmundur Erro's (1932–) work *Chairman Mao's Long Journey*, a painting series first begun in 1967.[58] Since then, it has been reworked and reprinted down to the present – more than half a century later – including, amongst others, a series of parodies of Liu's iconic image of Mao recently displaced onto San Marco in Venice.[59]

Next to *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan*, Huang's triptych includes in radiant blue and yellow a very blurry version of another extremely well-known Monumental Mao, the fourth and last standard full-faced portrait of Mao, produced in 1964; a continuous visual presence to this day, as it is repainted regularly and suspended in the heart of China's capital at the Gate of Heavenly Peace in Beijing, Tian'anmen Square, facing Mao's white statue in the Mao Memorial, and thus has become an integral part of the city's landscape. This guarantees that huge numbers of people are familiar with his image – Andy Warhol among them, who made this portrait the template for his many colorful Pop Mao prints

begun around 1972, an act which immediately provided Mao with the aura of a global monument, or a "global classic" next to Mona Lisa and Marilyn Monroe. It is further evidence for the powerful impact of the Maoist Modern on a global scale.[60]

The triptych is completed, finally, by the two-dimensional reproduction of one of the most frequently reproduced statues, or statue types (most often seen in white – not unlike the Martin Luther King memorial – to be seen, for example, in Chengdu, Shanghai, Shenyang, Tangshan, Kashgar, etc.). It is a variation of Mao waving with his right hand, molded on his plump body in his best years, with hat in hand, wearing bulky trousers and a large coat, which in some of the variations flaps slightly in the wind. In Huang's reconception, the statue appears out of focus, just like the other two images, but painted glistening white – not dissimilar to Lei's *Stone of Hope*.[61]

Huang Yan, who is well known for his body paintings in the style of Chinese landscapes (with which he has ornamented other globally iconic faces such as those of Barack Obama and Lady Diana, among others) deliberately blurs the viewer's sight. He does so knowing full well, however, that Mao's face and body shape remain recognizable and distinct even while willfully obscured. Monumental Mao is here – an (almost) absent presence – as he is always already imprinted in everyone's mind even when he is blurred, as part of a Global Monumental iconography. The artistic rendering thus plays with and, at the same time, acknowledges, the build and bodily features of the charismatic icon and its global image; it cites the distinctive elements of Monumental Mao, even while deliberately taking them out of focus.

If, unlike Luo's *Father*, Huang's hidden or obscured Monumental Mao did not cause much bewilderment among the audience, as everyone was well familiar with Mao's classic outlines, the response was very different with a huge monument unveiled on Orange Island, west of Changsha, on 26 December 2009, to mark the 116th anniversary of Mao Zedong's birth. Around 32m tall, this enormous sculpture has been wrongly attributed to Lei Yixin by at least one student of art, who may have been too much taken in by the idea that Lei was indeed a sculptor of white granite Monumental Maos, and who may have noticed some of the similarities in Mao's dynamic hairdo to some of Lei's allegorical women. The monument was actually designed by Li Ming (1957–), himself originally from Changsha but later president of the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts and vice president of the China Sculpture Institute.[62] Mao's monumental head, made from more than 800 tons of granite transported from Fujian Province, can be read as a perfect match to the dynamic youthful bodily image that Mao developed in one of his first published essays which appeared, significantly, in the flagship publication of the New Culture Movement, *New Youth* (*Xin Qingnian*, XQN), in April 1917, entitled "A Study of Physical Education/Bodily Training."[63] Indeed, in October 2019, ten years after the monument's inauguration and to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the green space around the huge, romantic sculpture of this strong and youthful Mao was ornamented with a set of characters made of blooming flowers, reading "the Chinese ought to toughen themselves up." This slogan evokes the ideas voiced by Mao a century earlier in his essay on physical education.

And yet, the dynamic statue caused controversy. Although *China Daily* reported: "In Changsha, a young Mao Zedong inspires with his example of turning ideals into reality,"[64] apparently, the sculpture, with its "full mane of wind-swept hair,"[65] shocked Chinese audiences – as it appeared so different from traditional depictions of Monumental Mao. Chinese journalist Xu Zhiyuan (born 1976), in a series of essays entitled *Paper*

Tiger: Inside the Real China published in 2015, echoes the astonishment at seeing this new kind of "cool" Mao sculpture:[66]

> **A night at Orange Isle, 10 July, 2011.**
>
> In some respects, the Young Mao Zedong Statue is just an extension of the city's "entertainment forever" spirit. Built in 2009, it is very different from the typical Mao statue. Rather than the old statesman standing and waving at the viewer, it captures a youthful, handsome Mao, his hair parted and flowing to one side. He looks like the Beethoven of the East. The bust stands on a giant granite base, its outline resembling the sphinxes of Egypt. It is so unexpected and bizarre that instead of calling it a unique expression of art, it makes more sense to call it a preposterous fantasy resulting from arrogance and stupidity.

Xu's evaluation echoes the tone of some of Lei's critics in the U.S. He evokes a number of associations to global artistic heritage (Beethoven as the romantic hero, the sphinxes of Egypt as the signs of an age-old civilization) that are indeed typical of the Maoist Modern. Their inspiration can also be rooted otherwise, however, in Chinese ideas that were another important feature of the Maoist Modern: the statue was erected precisely at the spot where Mao often went with his classmates to swim to "toughen their body and willpower"[67] during his studies at Hunan First Normal School between 1913 and 1918. This is also the place where he first developed and put into practice his ideas of physical exercise published in his early essay. These ideas recur – in lyric transfiguration – in a poem simply entitled *Changsha*, which served to inspire the sculpture and which Mao wrote in 1925, then himself a "budding revolutionary,"[68] allegedly standing at the very spot where his statue is now located:

> To the tune of *Spring in Pleasure Garden* – CHANGSHA[69]
> Alone I stand in the autumn cold
> the Xiang (river) flowing northward;
> Past the tip of Orange Island.
> I see ten-thousand hills all tinged in red,
> Tier upon tier of woods dyed in colour,
> And on the waters, so crystal blue,
> A hundred barges, jostling float.
> Eagles soaring in the air,
> Fish gliding among the shallows,
> Ten-thousand creatures under freezing skies are striving for freedom.
> Brooding this immensity,
> I ask the boundless blue, the great earth,
> Who is the master of the rise and fall (of things in this world)?
> With hundreds of companions, roaming,
> I recollect those eventful times, so lusty,
> All of us students, young in years,
> Our bearing proud and energetic,
> upright and vigorous.
> Pointing at these hills and rivers (our land),
> Impetuous in our words,

As dung and dirt, we abused the landlords.
Do you remember?
When reaching midstream, we struck the water,
How the raging waves dashed against the speeding boat?

The sculptured face of the statue, with its "full mane of wind-swept hair,"[70] echoes the rebellious, if "pensive," mode in this old-style poem.[71] The huge and stately make-up of the statue reflects the lone figure of the poet, standing before the autumn floods, absorbed in the boundless hills of his native land (the mountains [*shan*] and waters [*shui*] that we have seen included in the Mao Mausoleum as well, as a backdrop to the white seated statue of Mao, the great thinker and statesmen), observing the red maples, the blue torrents, the eagles and the fish, all struggling for survival and freedom at the expense of one another. In the poem, these scenes of unceasing natural struggle are reflected in that single lone human being, in a typical pose which Mao's iconic record replicates endlessly. He spoke of himself quite frequently as standing alone (noble and heroic), firm in his convictions, just like he would in the white marble statues, the standard portraits, and in *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan*, all of which are part and parcel of iconized Monumental Mao.

Even when "bathing in the crowds" (and the poem mentions his "hundreds of companions," scholarly in spirit, yet fearless and frank), Mao appears aloof, almost otherworldly. One is reminded of the image that Malraux draws of Mao, in his *Anti-Memoirs* – another piece of evidence for the global repercussions of Monumental Mao.[72] The lonely poet embodies both *wen* (the civil) and *wu* (the martial), braving, like eagle and fish, the waters and winds: a true hero.[73] But in this loneliness, he is still seen to be one with the people.[74]

Situating the heroic poet on Orange Island in Changsha, Hunan, Mao's native province, a place legendary for its fairies (that Lei Yixin also depicts in his sculptures) is also a symbolic choice. It is the land of the ancient state of Chu where Qu Yuan (ca. 340–278 BCE), typifying the clean, righteous and defiant remonstrating intellectual stood "alone, unyielding against the vulgar tide" (like the orange tree), and drowned himself in banishment rather than swimming with the dirty stream and following a ruler he rejected.[75]

Sturdiness and strength were built on savage exercise and perseverance, something Mao evidently practiced during his time in Changsha, and something which is successfully translated into the Orange Isle sculpture. They also appear in the last verse of the poem, as the students hit the waves and waters, which clearly builds on the ideas of strength and savagery that Mao developed in his essay on physical education. The youngsters he describes in his poem are budding heroes, inspired by his readings of Chinese literature, especially the *Sanguozhi yanyi* (The Romance of the Three Kingdoms), many of whose characters were deified after their death – not unlike Mao.

If it appears, then, that the Changsha statue is to embody this heroic type – a stormy mover of mountains – it is also clear that this type is trimmed and somewhat sanitized in the act of translation into sculpture. While the rugged facial features suggest a body with strong bones and muscles as Mao prescribes in his essay, steeled through physical exercise – a heroic body type epitomized in the popular prints or propaganda posters of Mao's age[76] – his body is not actually shown. Monumental Mao never quite took on the same muscled look of his propaganda posters, and the proper appropriation of masculine *wu* elements for Mao Zedong has frequently caused controversy. Yet these muscly dynamics are hinted at already in that "full mane of wind-swept hair," and this is why

the Changsha statue "caught the country by surprise,"[77] or even shock – just as the somewhat aggressive arm gestures of the Martin Luther King statue did in the U.S..

Thus, the Changsha Mao is already transgressive, as it does not depict the type of body that everyone associates with Monumental Mao. It is not his regularized iconic image that we see here. Much more iconic (as rehearsed in the record of public statues, propaganda posters and school textbooks, for example) are portraits of the face and stature of a plump Mao in his best years: the standard portrait on Tiananmen and the white statue of a waving Mao, both cited in the triptych by Huang Yan and picked up by Andy Warhol and Gerhard Richter.

The somewhat crude romantic hero Mao built by Li Ming, just like the counter-monument by Luo Zhongli or the hidden monument by Huang Yan, is testimony of some of the more open interpretations of Mao and his significance, something that the critics of Lei Yixin would not assume was possible for a Chinese artist. Li admits that, indeed, his primary concern in producing the sculpture had been "uniqueness and artistry." Even with the competition he participated in, "it was no longer a political assignment. We were free to let our creative juices flow and we were particularly concerned with differentiating it from past images." And thus, his intention was "to present the young Mao as a cool, good-looking idealist, rather than a god on a pedestal."[78]

Conclusion: The Global Monumental as Radical Universal? A Transcultural Perspective

In socialist countries like China, monuments of political icons, strategically placed and landscaped, are ubiquitous and universal – they are to be seen everywhere. It would be rare never to have encountered such a heroic monumental presence. The statue of the iconic leader is undoubtedly one of the most significant elements in the formal repertoire artists have developed in their engagement with socialism – but not only in socialist nations. Indeed, I have argued that there is a monumental universal that travels globally and is informed by socialist styles, the Maoist Modern significantly among them.

In this chapter, I explore some of the particular qualities of the Mao Monumental style, which developed throughout China's long twentieth century and was itself informed by numerous global artistic exchanges, the Lincoln memorial on the National Mall, Washington DC, which became the blueprint for the Mao Mausoleum, being one prominent example. This style has in turn informed a monumental universal with transcultural dimensions, as seen in the debates over the Martin Luther King statue *Stone of Hope* located on the same National Mall.

I have attempted to show how this monumental universal has, time and again, interacted with the Maoist Modern and how the iconic images of Monumental Mao – even *ex negativo*, as in the case of the *Stone of Hope*, Luo's *Father*, and Huang's Triptych of iconic but blurred Maos – register, reflect and embody the pressures of historical actuality. In trying to bring complexity to this history, I have argued that while China probably never can or will forget Mao, the statue-tory effect of this Mao Monumental as part of a broader Maoist Modern also has significant global repercussions – especially in these days when statues of once well-established figures like Churchill or even Lincoln are being pulled down.[79]

I have emphasized the symbolic or theatrical dimensions of Mao's somatic powers as monument, in an attempt to uncover how they play out in different forms through Mao Monuments – and thus, by derivation, transculturally and globally. It is my argument

that through the merging of the two bodies, Mao becomes part of a monumental universal (as does Martin Luther King and perhaps any of those who find themselves put on a monumental pedestal) – where the halo-ed monument comes to stand, in Kantorowicz's terms, with its "halo of perpetuity" for a "supra-individual idea or general notion"[80] that, as the case of Mao shows, is quite adaptable individually. In other words, Mao's (dead) body is used to further consolidate the myth of Mao's omnipotence – not as man or as god, but as metaphor – and the performances of Mao's death in monumental form are some of the essential steps in manufacturing and furthering this myth. This myth has in turn circumnavigated the world to become part of a Monumental Universal, and is one reason why Lei Yixin's statue of Martin Luther King – made of Chinese marble, but by someone who had not even created significant molds of Monumental Mao – could cause such controversy.

To reiterate, monuments are both troubled and troublesome, they are "invasive," restricting our movements, our actions, our visions.[81] This is why people act and react to monumental objects in a manner that is quite significantly different from their reaction to other, less auratic objects. The controversial discussions over Monumental Mao, as Martin Luther King, as Father, as Beethoven, as Mona Lisa of the World Revolution, as Dictator,[82] both inside and outside China, illustrate some of the "paradoxical dimensions of the 'monumental' as a political and aesthetic concept," or, indeed as a "material one" – a radical universal – and its powerful hold over the emotions of many people.[83]

This chapter therefore serves as a reflection on what has been called the "Statuemania" of great dictatorships and great democracies alike in the long twentieth century – but also well beyond. Monumental Mao, which takes a myriad of forms across a large variety of media, provides us with a glimpse of the more or less unconscious impressions and experiences of some Chinese artists, and artists/audiences in the world at large. Probing the visual has enabled us to capture a world of mentalities and emotion. Measured by empirical, realistic criteria, this aesthetic world is a world of appearance alone; but taking account of the material existence and efficacy which constitute the world of magic, myth and emotions, it enables a new understanding of historical experience, and a new conception of the Maoist Modern as Radical Universal informing the Global Monumental.

Notes

1 Cameron Hilditch, "The New Iconoclasts," *National Review*, June 9, 2020, www.nationalreview.com/2020/06/the-new-iconoclasts/

2 Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Asia Center, 2012).

3 Clarence Page, "Give King Memorial a Chance," *Chicago Tribune* August 28, 2011; and for the controversy and its implications, see Kevin Bruyneel, "The King's Body: The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial and the Politics of Collective Memory," *History and Memory* 26, no. 1 (2014): 75–108, https://doi.org/10.2979/histmemo.26.1.75

4 Ann Lau, "Dissing MLK: A Sculptor of Mao Becomes a Sculptor of America's Civil-Rights Hero," *National Review*, September 18, 2007, https://web.archive.org/web/20071223134010/http:/article.nationalreview.com/?q=YTMzNWM3NjdiNjU2MTU2NDI0N2ZiMzllYTRiMTc2MmY= .

5 Annys Shin, "As Chinese Workers Build the Martin Luther King Memorial, a Union Investigates," *Washington Post*, November 23, 2010, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/23/AR2010112304298.html.

6 Ariana Eunjung Cha, "A Martin Luther King Jr. Statue 'Made in China'?" *The Seattle Times*, August 18, 2007, www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/a-martin-luther-king-jr-statue-made-in-china/
7 See the Petition Site by Dwayne Amon-Ra to the National Memorial Project Foundation, www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/131/480/161/.
8 W.W., "A Blockheaded Memorial," *The Economist*, August 30, 2011, www.economist.com/democracy-in-america/2011/08/30/a-blockheaded-memorial.
9 W.W., "A Blockheaded Memorial"; cf. Page, "Give King Memorial a Chance."
10 W.W., "A Blockheaded Memorial."
11 Cynthia Gordy, "The MLK Memorial's Complicated History," *The Root* (online magazine), August 22, 2011, www.theroot.com/the-mlk-memorials-complicated-history-1790865442, speaks of a dozen or so Mao statues among the 150 and more statues Lei had carved at that point. For further details, see my discussion of Lei's work below.
12 See Shaila Dewan, "Larger Than Life, More to fight Over," *New York Times*, May 18, 2008, www.nytimes.com/2008/05/18/weekinreview/18dewan.html; and "Fine Arts Commission Approves King Statue Redesign," *Artinfo*, June 20, 2008, www.artinfo.com/news/story/27926/fine-arts-commission-approves-king-statue-redesign/. See also Ann Althouse, "Does This Statue of Martin Luther King Jr. Look Too Much Like That Statue of Saddam Hussein We Pulled Down in Baghdad?" *Althouse*, May 9, 2008, http://althouse.blogspot.com/2008/05/does-this-statue-of-martin-luther-king.html.
13 Daryl Cagle, *Martin Luther King Memorial and China*, August 23, 2011, www.cagle.com/daryl-cagle/2011/08/martin-luther-king-memorial-and-china.
14 For the important variations in socialist realist style in different socialist countries, and the many possibilities for modernist, romanticist or other styles to enter the game, see, for music, Dorothea Redepenning, "Der Sound der Oktoberrevolution 1917 is 1927," in Felicitas Fischer von Weikersthal, Tanja Penter, and Dorothea Redepenning, eds., *Oktoberrevolution 1917: Ereignis, Rezeption, künstlerische Deutung* (Heidelberg: Winter Verlag 2020), 251–65; for art, see Christine I. Ho, *Drawing from Life: Sketching and Socialist Realism in the People's Republic of China* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press 2020); and for literature, Nicolai Volland, *Socialist Cosmopolitanism: The Chinese Literary Universe, 1945–1965* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2017).
15 Tonio Hölscher, "Töten und Vergessen," unpublished paper presented in the AG Ikonoklasmus, Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, 4–5.
16 These formulations are inspired by a mission statement by Sumathi Ramaswamy for a Slow Reading Salon on Monumentality, July 2019.
17 The phrase is taken from Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1957), 78–79, cited in Bruyneel, "The King's Body," 76.
18 For Mao's speech on the Foolish Old Man who wanted to move mountains, see chapter 4 in Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution*.
19 A translation of this "Statement by Comrade Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, in Support of the Afro-American Struggle Against Violent Repression" (by Mao Zedong) can be found in *Beijing Review* 16 (April 19, 1968), 5–6.
20 Bruyneel, "The King's Body," 77.
21 This excerpt from his 1963 statement in support of the Afro-Americans in their struggle against discrimination in the US, can be seen on a propaganda poster showing American (black) demonstrators to be found in the Chinese Political Posters collection at Berkeley: "Zhongguo gong chan dang zhong yang wei yuan hui zhu xi Mao Zedong tong zhi zhi chi Meiguo hei ren kang bao dou zheng de sheng ming: 1968 nian 4 yue 16 ri" (Statement by Comrade Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, in Support of the Black American Resistance: April 16, 1968), https://digicoll.lib.berkeley.edu/record/122383#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&r=0&xywh=-4508%2C-992%2C23457%2C13800.

22 Julia Lovell, *Maoism: A Global History* (London: Bodley Head 2019), chapter 8, elaborates on how Mao's message of supporting anti-colonial armed struggles, guerrilla warfare, building a vanguard party and defying both Cold War superpowers was especially attractive to these movements.

23 See Patrick Hagopian, "The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial and the Politics of Post-Racialism," *History and Memory* 32, no. 2 (2020): 36–77, doi:10.2979/histmemo.32.2.03, 36; and Bruyneel, "The King's Body," 79–80. The project was originally conceived in 1996.

24 This formulation follows the program note to the 2020 conference on Global Art Exchange and Modernism in Socialist China (1949–1979), Simon Fraser University, Canada, see www.sfu.ca/davidlamcentre/news-events/past-events/2020/global-art-exchange.html

25 See further, Rudolf Wagner, "Reading the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall in Peking: The Tribulations of the Implied Pilgrim," in Susan Naquin and Chun-Fang Yu, eds., *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1992), 378–423, 399 & 405; Lothar Ledderose, "Die Gedenkhalle für Mao Zedong: Ein Beispiel von Gedächtnisarchitektur," in Jan Assmann and Tonio Hölscher, *Kultur und Gedächtnis* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag 1988), 311–39, 332; on the statue and its political implications, see also Daniel Leese, "A Place Where Great Men Rest? The Chairman Mao Memorial Hall," in Marc Andre Matten, ed., *Places of Memory in Modern China* (Leiden: Brill 2011), 91–129, 117–18. Wagner (399) argues that while the front of the Lincoln memorial became the architectural model for the facade of the Mao Memorial Hall, "the inside with the statue of Lincoln sitting in his chair was the precedent for the entrance hall of the Mao Memorial with its statue of Mao." The Lincoln Memorial connection is first addressed by Ellen Johnston Laing, in *The Winking Owl: Art in the People's Republic of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 93, figs. 107–110.

26 Rudolf Wagner, "Reading the Chairman Mao Memorial," 396–7.

27 Ledderose, "Die Gedenkhalle für Mao Zedong," 332.

28 For Washington as the ultimate model, reproduced in China, see Rudolf G. Wagner "Living up to the Image of the Ideal Public Leader: George Washington's Image in China," *Journal of Transcultural Studies* 10.2 (2019), 18–77, https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.jts.2019.2.24035
I am indebted to Anne Kerlan (EHESS) and her research group Champ-Contrechamp which first introduced me to rethinking transcultural comparison along the lines of shot-reverse shot.

29 Cameron Hilditch, "*The New Iconoclasts*" *National Review*, June 9, 2020, www.nationalreview.com/2020/06/the-new-iconoclasts/

30 For the 4Rs, see Yang Lan, *Chinese Fiction of the Cultural Revolution* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press 1998), and for the continuing existence of socialist realist style in China under a different name, see Ho, *Drawing from Life*.

31 For an English translation of Mao Zedong's Yan'an Talks, see Bonnie S. McDougall, *Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art": A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1980).

32 These are discussed in Barbara Mittler, *Reading Mao: The Making of a Global Icon*, forthcoming from Bloomsbury Academic, London.

33 Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution*, chapter 5; and Mittler, *Reading Mao*.

34 I have found a few exceptions, one, evidently an early work, as the artist is still very young in the photo which accompanies an article in the Chinese *Voice of America*, www.voachinese.com/a/article-20110817-interview-with-mlk-sculptor-lei-127980533/786331.html (accessed October 27, 2023), another depicting a young Mao, see image 8 at https://moment.rednet.cn/pc/content/2019/04/24/5352400.html (accessed October 27, 2023)

35 See, for example, his *Mid-Autumn Festival* (Zhongqiu) as discussed in the "Introduction to the 2016 Culture Sculpture Art Festival in Changsha," http://news.changsha.cn/html/100743/20161011/467004.html (accessed October 27, 2023).The interview record in *Voice of America* cited in the footnote above, also contains a number of examples.

36 See Ledderose, "Die Gedenkhalle für Mao Zedong," 332.

37 McDougall, *Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference,"* 69.

38 Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution*, chapter 5.
39 For a thorough discussion that also refers back to the important writings by Julia F. Andrews, Elizabeth Perry, Zheng Shengtian, Wang Mingxuan, Yan Shanchun and many others, see Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution*, 275–8.
40 The painter posing with the image appears in Zhang Zixuan "Agrarian Art" *China Daily*, *23.3.2012*, http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201203/23/WS5a2f3d1fa3108bc8c672215f.html (Last Accessed, 27 October, 2023).
41 Xu Zhiyuan, *Paper Tiger: Inside the Real China* (Head of Zeus, 2015).
42 Critic Shao Dazhen is cited in Zhang Zixuan, "Agrarian Art" *China Daily*, March 23, 2012, http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201203/23/WS5a2f3d1fa3108bc8c672215f.html.
43 An anonymous critic cited in Zhang, "Agrarian Art."
44 Wang Yuejin. "Anxiety of Portraiture: Quest for/Questioning Ancestral Icons in Post-Mao China," in Liu Kang and Tang Xiaobing, eds., *Politics, Ideology, and Literary Discourse in Modern China: Theoretical Interventions and Cultural Critique* (Durham: Duke University Press 1993), 242–72, 243.
45 Luo Zhongli is quoted in Zhang, "Agrarian Art."
46 The Luo Zhongli painting has fascinated art historians since it was first exhibited. A superb study of its impact by a scholar who first saw it then in Beijing is Jane DeBevoise, "The Debate over Luo Zhongli's 'Father'," ch. 2, pp. 47–69, in DeBevoise, *Between State and Market: Chinese Contemporary Art in the Post-Mao Era* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).
47 Wang, "Anxiety of Portraiture," 244.
48 For a thorough discussion of these sculptures, and their demolition, see Mittler *Reading Mao*, Chapter 1.
49 Barmé, Geremie R., *Shades of Mao: The Posthumous Cult of the Great Leader* (New York: M. E. Sharpe 1996), 134 n. 6.
50 Some "disappeared" Mao statues were also recovered more recently, as Tang recounts in her 2017 documentary: Louyi Tang, *Chairman Buddha* (Tiger Butterfly Films 2017), http://chairmanbuddhathefilm.com/
51 This is true until today, even if Xi Jinping is trying hard to inherit Mao's power: see Barbara Mittler "Dein Bild in meinem Auge oder: Die Genese des 'chinesischen Traums' – China und Europa im langen 20. Jahrhundert," in *Europa – Realität und Vision (Studium Generale 2016/17)* (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing 2019), 81–120, esp. 111, https://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de/journals/index.php/generale/article/view/24043; DOI: https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.studg.2019.0.24043
52 For the sun motif, see Barbara Mittler, "After the Sun: Slow Hope? Rethinking Continuous Crisis Through China's Revolutions," forthcoming in *The Palgrave Handbook of Left-Wing Extremism*, vol. I, chapter 9 (José Pedro Zúquete, ed.)
53 For a more complete reading of the significance of Mao's Death in the making of Mao as a global icon, see Mittler, *Reading Mao*, chapter 3.
54 Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*. For a similar interpretation, see Leese, "A Place Where Great Men Rest?" 91–129, 107–8.
55 The image can be found on Artnet: www.artnet.com/artists/huang-yan/senza-titolo-triptych-pVu2Voxa_NZP_-MdX4TDBg2 (accessed, October 27, 2023).
56 Gerhard Richter, *Mao*, 1968, 83.9 cm x 59.3 cm, Editions-WVZ: 13; Lichtdruck auf Halbkarton, see http://projects.zo.uni-heidelberg.de/continuousrevolution/main.php?part=3&chapter=5&setname=5.31
57 For the reference to the Raphael, see Julia F. Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China, 1949–1979* (1994), p. 339.
58 See a 2003 version of Erro's work here, http://projects.zo.uni-heidelberg.de/continuousrevolution/main.php?part=3&chapter=5&img=220.
59 See "*Chairman Mao's Long Journey" San-Marco*, 2020, Monotype on canvas 46 1/2 × 35 2/5 in (118 × 90 cm), www.artsy.net/artwork/erro-chairman-maos-long-journey-san-marco, and

the recent exhibit, www.artsy.net/show/galleri-gkm-chairman-maos-long-journey-by-erro?sort=partnershowposition.

60 The portrait and the photographic material used to produce it are discussed in detail in chapter 4 of Mittler, *Reading Mao*, see also Gerhard Paul, “Das Mao-Porträt. Herrscherbild, Protestsymbol und Kunstikone,” in: *Zeithistorische Forschungen / Studies in Contemporary History* 6.1 (2009): 58–84.

61 The painting can thus be read from right to left, viewing Mao from youth to old age, but there are other orders in which the triptych has been hung and read as well.

62 For the faulty attribution in this student blog, see “Artist Response Five: Lei Yixin,” in Kyle’s Art Crit Blog 18 April 2013, http://are200kyle.blogspot.com/2013/04/artist-response-five-lei-yixin.html.

63 Mao Zedong, “Tiyu zhi yanjiu” (A Study of Physical Education), *Xin Qingnian* XQN (March 2, 1917): 52–62. Mao used his pen name “student of 28 brushstrokes” to sign this essay. A full discussion of the essay is to be found in Mittler, *The Art of Reading Mao*, Chapter 2.

64 Li Jing, “The legacy of Chairman Mao,” *China Daily,* July 31, 2011, www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-07/31/content130175412.htm.

65 Li, “The legacy of Chairman Mao.”

66 Xu, *Paper Tiger*.

67 Mao is quoted in the *People’s Daily* editorial (July 16, 1967) on the anniversary of Mao’s 1966 swim across the Yangtze River, discussed in chapter 3 of Mittler, *The Art of Reading Mao*.

68 See C. N. Tay, “Two Poems of Mao Tse-tung in the Light of Chinese Literary Tradition,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 29.3 (1970), 633–55, at 633.

69 The translation is my own; it closely follows Willis Barnstone and C. N. Tay, “Two Poems of Mao Tse-tung.”

70 Li Jing “The Legacy of Chairman Mao.”

71 Characterization by C. N. Tay, “Two Poems of Mao Tse-tung,” 642.

72 André Malraux, trans. Terence Kilmartin, *Anti-Memoirs* (New York: Holt Rhinehart and Winston, 1968) (orig. *Antimémoires*, 1967).

73 These words paraphrase a eulogy by Tang Dynasty writer Han Yu, as noted in Tay, “Two Poems of Mao Tse-tung,” 636.

74 Rudolf Wagner, “Reading the Chairman Mao Memorial,” 396–7.

75 Cf. Qu Yuan, “In Praise of the Orange Tree,” in David Hawkes, *Ch’u Tz’u, The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1959), 77.

76 See, for example, “Heroes who do not fear: American imperialists, get out of South Korea!” Propaganda Poster, Shanghai, July 1965 at *Chineseposternet* (Stefan Landsberger, ed.) https://chineseposters.net/posters/g2-684, accessed October 27, 2023. The propaganda poster shows a muscular young Chinese man wearing a yellow bandana grabbing hold of a barbed wire fence and urging his followers to advance with him to “get the American imperialists out of South Korea.”

77 Li, “The legacy of Chairman Mao.”

78 Li, “The legacy of Chairman Mao.”

79 Cameron Hilditch “The New Iconoclasts” *National Review,* June 9, 2020, www.nationalreview.com/2020/06/the-new-iconoclasts/.

80 Cf. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies*, 78–79 as aptly used in Bruyneel, “The King’s Body,” 76.

81 Tonio Hölscher, “Töten und Vergessen,” unpublished paper presented in the AG Ikonoklasmus, Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, 4–5.

82 Gerhard Paul, “Das Mao-Porträt: Herrscherbild, Protestsymbol und Kunstikone,” *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, Heft 1 (2009). DOI: https://zeithistorische-forschungen.de/1-2009/4634.

83 These formulations were originally inspired by a mission statement by Sumathi Ramaswamy for a Slow Reading Salon on Monumentality, July 2019.

Bibliography

Online sources have been archived in an Online Citation Repository in DACHS: www.zo.uni-heidelberg.de/boa/digital_resources/dachs/citation_de.html

Althouse, Ann. "Does This Statue of Martin Luther King Jr. Look Too Much Like That Statue of Saddam Hussein We Pulled Down in Baghdad?" *Althouse*, May 9, 2008. http://althouse.blogspot.com/2008/05/does-this-statue-of-martin-luther-king.html.

Amon-Ra, Dwayne. "KING IS OURS." Petition Site by the National Memorial Project Foundation. www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/131/480/161/.+

Andrews, Julia F. *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China, 1949–1979*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Barmé, Geremie R. *Shades of Mao: The Posthumous Cult of the Great Leader*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1996.

Bruyneel, Kevin. "The King's Body: The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial and the Politics of Collective Memory." *History and Memory* 26, no. 1 (2014): 75–108. https://doi.org/10.2979/histmemo.26.1.75.

Cagle, Daryl. "Martin Luther King Memorial and China." *DarylCagle*, August 23, 2011. www.cagle.com/daryl-cagle/2011/08/martin-luther-king-memorial-and-china.

Cha, Ariana Eunjung. "A Martin Luther King Jr. Statue 'Made in China'?" *The Seattle Times*, August 18, 2007. www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/a-martin-luther-king-jr-statue-made-in-china/.

Chinese Political Posters from China's Cultural Revolution. https://digicoll.lib.berkeley.edu/record/122383#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&r=0&xywh=-4508%2C-992%2C23457%2C13800

DeBevoise, Jane. *Between State and Market: Chinese Contemporary Art in the Post-Mao Era*, Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Dewan, Shaila. "Larger Than Life, More to Fight Over." *New York Times*, May 18, 2008. www.nytimes.com/2008/05/18/weekinreview/18dewan.html.

Erro. "Chairman Mao's Long Journey." San-Marco, 2020. Monotype on Canvas, 46 1/2 × 35 2/5 in (118 × 90 cm). www.artsy.net/artwork/erro-chairman-maos-long-journey-san-marco.

Fine Arts Commission Approves King Statue Redesign. *Artinfo*, June 20, 2008. www.artinfo.com/news/story/27926/fine-arts-commission-approves-king-statue-redesign/.

"Global Art Exchange and Modernism in Socialist China (1949–1979)." Workshop, Simon Fraser University, Canada. October 30–1, 2020. Program Note. www.sfu.ca/davidlamcentre/news-events/past-events/2020/global-art-exchange.html

Gordy, Cynthia. "The MLK Memorial's Complicated History." *The Root*. August 22, 2011. www.theroot.com/the-mlk-memorials-complicated-history-1790865442. .

Hagopian, Patrick. "The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial and the Politics of Post-Racialism." *History and Memory,* 32, no. 2 (2020): 36–77. doi:10.2979/histmemo.32.2.03.

Hilditch, Cameron. "The New Iconoclasts." *National Review*, June 9, 2020. www.nationalreview.com/2020/06/the-new-iconoclasts/.

Ho, Christine I. *Drawing from Life: Sketching and Socialist Realism in the People's Republic of China*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2020.

Hölscher, Tonio. "Töten und Vergessen." Unpublished Paper Presented at the AG Ikonoklasmus, Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, 4–5.

Kantorowicz, Ernst Hartwig. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Kyle. "Artist Response Five: Lei Yixin." *Kyle's Art Crit Blog*, April 18, 2013. http://are200kyle.blogspot.com/2013/04/artist-response-five-lei-yixin.html.

Laing, Ellen Johnston *The Winking Owl: Art in the People's Republic of China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Lau, Ann. "Dissing MLK: A Sculptor of Mao Becomes a Sculptor of America's Civil-Rights Hero." *National Review*, September 18, 2007. https://web.archive.org/web/20071223134010/http:/article.nationalreview.com/?q=YTMzNWM3NjdiNjU2MTU2NDI0N2ZiMzllYTRiMTc2MmY=.

Ledderose, Lothar. "Die Gedenkhalle für Mao Zedong: Ein Beispiel von Gedächtnisarchitektur." In *Kultur und Gedächtnis*, edited by Jan Assmann and Tonio Hölscher. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1988, 311–39.

Leese, Daniel. "A Place Where Great Men Rest? The Chairman Mao Memorial Hall." In *Places of Memory in Modern China*, edited by Marc Andre Matten. Leiden: Brill, 2011, 91–129.

Li, Jing. "The Legacy of Chairman Mao." *China Daily,* July 31, 2011. www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-07/31/content_13017541.htm.

Lovell, Julia. *Maoism: A Global History*. London: Bodley Head, 2019.

Malraux, André. *Anti-Memoirs*. Translated by Terence Kilmartin. New York: Holt Rhinehart and Winston, 1968. (Original edition: *Anti-mémoires*. Paris: Gallimard, 1967).

Mao, Zedong "Statement by Comrade Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, in Support of the Afro-American Struggle Against Violent Repression." *Beijing Review* 16, April 19, 1968: 5–6.

———. "Tiyu zhi yanjiu" (A Study of Physical Education). *Xin Qingnian*, March 2, 1917: 52–62.

McDougall, Bonnie S. *Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art": A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1980.

Mittler, Barbara. "After the Sun: Slow Hope? Rethinking Continuous Crisis Through China's Revolutions." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Left-Wing Extremism*, vol. 2, edited by José Pedro Zúquete. London: Palgrave 2023, 159–184.

———. *The Art of Reading Mao: The Making of a Global Icon*. Manuscript in progress.

———. *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Asia Center, 2012.

———. "Dein Bild in meinem Auge oder: Die Genese des 'chinesischen Traums' – China und Europa im langen Jahrhundert." In *Europa – Realität und Vision (Studium Generale 2016/17)*, edited by Barbara Mittler. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2019. https://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de/journals/index.php/generale/article/view/24043.

Page, Clarence. "Give King Memorial a Chance." *Chicago Tribune*, August 28, 2011.

Paul, Gerhard. "Das Mao-Porträt. Herrscherbild, Protestsymbol und Kunstikone." *Zeithistorische Forschungen / Studies in Contemporary History* 6, no. 1 (2009): 58–84.

Qu, Yuan. "In Praise of the Orange Tree." In *Ch'u Tz'u, The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology*, translated by David Hawkes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959, 77.

Redepenning, Dorothea. "Der Sound der Oktoberrevolution 1917 is 1927." In *Oktoberrevolution 1917: Ereignis, Rezeption, künstlerische Deutung*, edited by Felicitas Fischer von Weikersthal, Tanja Penter, and Dorothea Redepenning. Heidelberg: Winter Verlag, 2020, 251–65.

Shin, Annys. "As Chinese Workers Build the Martin Luther King Memorial, a Union Investigates." *Washington Post*, November 23, 2010. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/23/AR2010112304298.html.

Tang, Louyi. "Chairman Buddha." Tiger Butterfly Films, 2017. http://chairmanbuddhathefilm.com/.

Tay, C. N. "Two Poems of Mao Tse-tung in the Light of Chinese Literary Tradition." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 29, no. 3 (1970): 633–55.

Voice of America, "Diaoguo Mao xiang de 'Zhongguo lei' diaosu Mading Lude Jin zhuanfang Lei Yixin tan neimu lichen" (The "Chinese Lei/Thunder" who has sculpted Mao busts now sculpts Martin Luther King. A behind the Screens Interview with Lei Yixin): *Meiguo zhi yin* (*Voice of America)*, August 17, 2011. www.voachinese.com/a/article-20110817-interview-with-mlk-sculptor-lei-127980533/786331.html.

Volland, Nicolai. *Socialist Cosmopolitanism: The Chinese Literary Universe, 1945–1965*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017.

Wagner, Rudolf. "Living up to the Image of the Ideal Public Leader: George Washington's Image in China." *Journal of Transcultural Studies* 10, no. 2 (2019): 18–77

———. "Reading the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall in Peking: The Tribulations of the Implied Pilgrim." In *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, edited by Susan Naquin and Chun-Fang Yu. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, 378–423.

Wang, Yuejin. "Anxiety of Portraiture: Quest for/Questioning Ancestral Icons in Post-Mao China." In *Politics, Ideology, and Literary Discourse in Modern China: Theoretical Interventions and Cultural Critique*, edited by Liu Kang and Tang Xiaobing. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993, 242–72.

W.W. "A Blockheaded Memorial." *The Economist*, August 30, 2011. www.economist.com/democracy-in-america/2011/08/30/a-blockheaded-memorial.

Xu, Zhiyuan. *Paper Tiger: Inside the Real China*. Head of Zeus, 2015.

Yang, Lan. *Chinese Fiction of the Cultural Revolution*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1998.

Zhang, Zixuan. "Agrarian Art." *China Daily*, March 23, 2012. http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201203/23/WS5a2f3d1fa3108bc8c672215f.html.