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The Focus

Artistic Alternatives in East Asia

29-30 Introduction by Minna Valjakka

This special issue examines the artistic and creative practices emerging in East Asia and how they are gaining prominent status, not only in the art scene, but in society as a whole. Rather than mirroring social transformations, these groundbreaking practices initiate thought-provoking alternatives for both art and life. They have become instrumental for bringing forward new subjectivities and reshaping the intrinsic values of social and cultural well-being.

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Wei Hsiu Tung explores the extent to which the Taiwan participatory project *Art as Environment: A Cultural Action at Plum Tree Creek* has a sustainable social impact on the local community by inducing aesthetic environmental awakening.

32-33

Meiqin Wang discusses the work of a number of contemporary Chinese artists who address the problem of waste in relation to the social and environmental downsides brought about by China's rampant urbanization and consumerism.

34-35

By taking the case of the *Dongdaemun Rooftop Paradise*, a community-engaged, collaborative, and collective art practice in Seoul, **Hong Kal** explores how artists seek to intervene in the hegemonic politics of spectacles in urban redevelopment and what kind of space is imagined to become a 'paradise' within the unjust city.

36-37

Xi Jinping's 'China Dream' finds its materialization in Beijing in speedy ring roads, fancy buildings designed by starchitects, and green parks. This dream is quite firmly located within the fifth ring road. As shown in this article by **Jeroen de Kloet and Deng Liwen**, the art of Ma Lijiao intervenes, challenges and interrupts such dreams.

38-39

Bigotry and nationalism are rife in Japan's digital-media dominated landscape. What methods are needed to achieve suitable media literacy in the 21st century? **Shin Mizukoshi** presents the case for 'digital storytelling' as one promising method. This article examines the possibilities of people's story-interweaving activities.

40-41

Even though 'hacking' the urban infrastructure may also cause conflicts, new agencies and strategies of urban creativity have a growing ability to raise awareness of socio-political issues. Two case studies presented by **Minna Valjakka** show how the provocation of contradictory views can initiate new subjectivities and ways to employ the public space.



Wang Jiuliang, one piece from *Beijing Besieged by Waste*, 2009, photography. Courtesy of Wang Jiuliang. See pages 32-33.