

## Being, Becoming, Landscape: The Iconography of Landscape in Contemporary Chinese Art, Its Ecological Impulse, and Its Ethical Project

[Landscape] is never simply a natural space, a feature of the natural environment. Every landscape is the place where we establish our own human organization of space and time.<sup>1</sup>

Landscape (*shanshui*) is a highly popular subject matter in Chinese art and for many centuries traditional landscape painting (*shanshuihua*, literally “mountain and water painting”) has carried within its definition the presence of a metaphysical approach to the natural world, one heavily indebted to Daoist philosophy and well exemplified in the concept of *Tianren heyi* (harmonious unity between nature and man).<sup>2</sup>

Conceived in conceptual terms, *shanshuihua* has always been more concerned with the symbolic representation of the natural world than with the depiction of actual or specific natural scenery, and landscape theory has revolved around a totalizing vision of nature, perceived as a tangible manifestation of a dynamic and unitary principle that gives rise to and rules everything in the universe.<sup>3</sup> However, in the context of China’s serious environmental crisis, do these traditional notions still have a place in twenty-first century landscape depiction and theory? Since the start of economic reform, the rapid and remarkable growth of the Chinese economy has resulted in huge changes, provoking tremendous side effects in terms of environmental impact. As a direct consequence, some contemporary artists have started to give considerable attention to those ecological issues that are strongly transforming Chinese physical environment.

This significant change also was made possible by the driving force of new art forms, concepts, and images arising from the biennial boom, starting in China with the Third Shanghai Biennale (2000)<sup>4</sup> that “opened up the Chinese art world to international art forms and concepts still outside China’s official mainstream.”<sup>5</sup> Since then, a new context was provided for artists’ practice and what was very different within this context was that new concerns and content such as industrialization, urbanization, or environmental pollution started to have considerable impact on the conception of traditional landscape representation, leading many artists to rethink the role of *shanshuihua*, adjusting it to new current issues and exploring a new means of expression.

The twenty-first century is generally seen as the moment during which Chinese landscape painting has become “postmodern.” With this term, art

historians refer to a set of new ideas and aesthetic criteria which inform contemporary landscape depictions and it is usually used to indicate the passage from customary *shanshuihua*'s structures, based on the core characteristics of the scholars' tradition and imbued with traditional aesthetics, to contemporary perspectives, based on the idea of a deeply fragmented and anthropized spatial reality.<sup>6</sup>

Some art historians and critics have underlined how *shanshuihua* has been forced to expand its outlook in response to the environmental crisis, broadening its definitions of what landscape is in the context of contemporary Chinese art. For example, Wu Hung has noted that Chinese artists "are no longer interested in providing images of natural beauty in unproblematized ways, or in producing visual pleasure through the contemplation of harmonious, readily acceptable forms."<sup>7</sup> Yin Jinan, an authority on traditional Chinese painting, has stated that contemporary artists have transformed the depiction of nature into a "post-*shanshui* image in the postmodern era."<sup>8</sup> Gao Shiming has written that "what we see reflected in twentieth-century Chinese *shanshui* painting is the destruction and chaos wrought upon the natural landscape by the century's civilizational conflicts, and the resulting pandemonium of symbols and images."<sup>9</sup>

According to curator Lü Peng, Chinese artists are exercising "voluntary search for resources in Chinese traditional culture, even though they adopted their own contemporary perspective."<sup>10</sup> Traditional culture and contemporary perspectives are two concepts central to present-day *shanshuihua* and this idea implies new iconographic solutions that mix traditional landscape imagery with images related to the context of contemporary visual culture such as built environments, industrialized territories, and polluted places in order to reflect society's new sense of the landscape. At a time when China's push toward increased development and urbanization is invariably imprinted upon its landscape, some artists depict a wide range of new *shanshui*-types defined by the impact of human activity on natural ecosystems and based upon a documentary approach to landscape. However, in their works, the legacy of traditional *shanshuihua* is always present, although it appears reinvented in a variety of forms, altered in its symbolic and aesthetic values and reshaped according to current needs in order to "give rise to realist *shanshui* based on a backdrop of actualities," as Yongwoo Lee has pointed out.<sup>11</sup>

It appears clear that, in the field of Chinese landscape studies, environmental issues are gaining increased consideration as a new research subject, although scholarly studies of *shanshuihua* from an ecocritical point of view are extremely few.<sup>12</sup> This new organization of knowledge explains how the ideas of ecocritics can be used in relation to *shanshui* depiction, framing in large part the thinking of a new genre of contemporary *shanshuihua* in which landscape becomes a powerful metaphor for documenting China's environmental degradation, stimulating discussion about the exploitation of nature, and documenting artists' engagement in social critique. Some artists are essentially using landscape as a new

construct in which nature, ecology, and ethics appear strongly interwoven and whose symbolic meaning lies in the project for more sustainable development. This clearly exemplifies how the conceptual horizon of *shanshui* has moved from aesthetics to ethics.

### New Iconic Elements for a New Landscape Identity

The role of visual culture in communicating issues about ecology is also important. Independent documentaries,<sup>13</sup> short films,<sup>14</sup> advertising spots,<sup>15</sup> and artistic performances<sup>16</sup> have been used as tools for promoting environmental awareness, while some artists and others in the creative field have preferred to foster public debates by using landscape as a visual construct to represent and symbolize the altered state of the physical environment. For example, in their music video “Drop in,”<sup>17</sup> the folk rock band Second Hand Rose (*Ershou meigui* 二手玫瑰) shows a landscape littered with mountains marked with the red character *chai* 拆

(pull down), the same that is widely seen on the walls of traditional houses slated for demolition. MAD Studio’s architects Chen Bochong and Ma Yansong have launched a sustainable urban development project inspired by the aesthetics of traditional Chinese landscape painting in which the quality of a modern and efficient urban environment, whose architectural and design philosophy follows the concept of “lofty mountains and flowing water,” is improved by contact with the natural world.<sup>18</sup> (image 2) The CCTV New Year’s Gala also has underlined the importance of environmental protection with a special performance entitled *Beautiful Mountains and Rivers of China* (*Shanshui Zhongguo mei* 山水中国美), in which the three singers, each personifying elements of landscape, sung about the enchanting natural heritage of China.<sup>19</sup>

These images, emerging from the context of Chinese contemporary visual culture, make clear the new conceptual implications of the landscape phenomenon, leading to key questions: Can we use ecological issues as a theoretical framework to examine the new ideas and values within landscape representation? How do these issues recontextualize and reframe traditional *shanshuihua*’s iconography? How do artists turn them into iconographic elements?

Using different strategies and media to conceptually innovate the idea of landscape representation and give it a new iconographic identity that merges traditional sensibilities with contemporary perspectives, landscape for some



Second Hand Rose, video still from *Drop in*, 2011, 6 mins.



Ruby Lin, Gigi Leung, Liu Tao, *Beautiful Mountains and Rivers of China*, 2015, 6 mins., video still from CCTV New Year's Gala.



MAD Studio, *Shanshui City Project: Model of Nanjing Zendai Himalayas Center*, 2014, Venice Architecture Biennale.

artists now consists of a new visual construct defined by the impact of human activities on natural ecosystem, activities that have altered the environment so extensively.<sup>20</sup> In order to represent and better highlight contemporary concerns about man's increasing detachment from nature, artists use visual elements that recall the imagery of traditional landscape painting, although revealing contemporary man's dysfunctional relationship with nature, thematizing today's threat to the natural environment. This new figurative mode creates a strong visual dissonance and is intentionally used to highlight the marginality of nature in a formally naturalistic representation, perfectly illustrating the documentary impulse of this new artistic genre in which the approach to landscape is more moral than metaphysical.



Top: Liu Wei, *It Looks Like a Landscape*, 2004, photograph, 306 x 612 cm. Courtesy of Liu Wei Studio.

Bottom: Zhan Wang, *Garden Utopia*, installation view, The National Art Museum of China, 2008. Courtesy the artist and Long March Space, Beijing.

Next page: Feng Mengbo, *Wrong Code Shanshui*, 2008, 1800 x 240 cm, exhibition view, Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague, Czech. Courtesy of the artist.

Actually, the idea of landscape as a new artistic category typified by characteristics that invite investigation in terms of environmental issues came to prominence in the early 2000s when some Chinese artists began to develop new ways of depicting nature. Qiu Zhijie's series *Points of the Landscape* (2001), Liu Wei's series *It looks Like a Landscape* (2004), Xu Bing's series *Background Stories* (2004), Feng Mengbo's *Wrong Code Shanshui* (2007), Zhan Wang's *Garden Utopia* (2008), Ni Youyu's *Landscape Case* (2009), just to mention few, are all representative examples of how ecology has had a great impact on the traditional Chinese way of perceiving and representing landscape. In these works, *shanshui* appears as the product of the new socio-cultural perception of the natural world,<sup>21</sup> essentially based on the idea of alienation from nature.



In order to understand this new ideological context, it is important to make a visual analysis of some of the images produced by artists such as Liu Xiaodong, Cai Guo-Qiang, Yang Yongliang, Yao Lu, and Qiu Anxiong, and to consider how they present to the public their new ideas about depicting the landscape. In some cases, environmental concerns can be represented in literal and concrete ways. Liu Xiaodong, an artist with a highly critic documentary style, has reflected many times on Chinese natural disasters<sup>22</sup> and in his oil painting entitled *Into Taihu* (2010), he draws inspiration from a nature increasingly dominated by pollution. This work, with its flying

Liu Xiaodong, *Into Taihu*, 2010, oil on canvas, 300 x 400 cm. Courtesy of the artist.

cranes that remind us of a painting realized by the Song dynasty emperor Huizong in 1112, depicts a group of boys inside a boat moving on the polluted water of Lake Tai (Taihu) in which the green colour alludes to a disaster caused by human actions that have been able to transform nature. This kind of depiction, that actually is a description, suggests an idea of the artist as a witness of his time, intent in gathering source materials for his work by exploring and collecting a series of visual data that are then transposed into visual elements of the painting. From this perspective, the artist's experience becomes a kind of active environmental engagement mediated by an artistic approach, and the intent is to document the bare reality of the visual forms and denounce the lack of care and responsibilities that are necessary for ecological sustainability. Moreover, in documenting environmental problems, Lu Xiaodong creates a landscape in which social and political potential is implicitly present.

In the context of China's serious environmental crisis, another internationally renowned artist, Cai Guo-Qiang, also turns his attention to ecological issues. For his retrospective exhibition held in 2014 at the Power Station of Art in Shanghai, the artist realized *Silent Ink*, an installation grounded in contemporary visual reality that gives considerable attention to the effects of water pollution, in order to stimulate discussion about the exploitation of nature. Excavating a large convex depression in the floor of the museum, Cai Guo-Qiang filled it with liquid ink used for traditional painting and then has surrounded this artificial and black pond with the concrete rubble removed from the floor. The symbolism is unmistakable. This pile of rubble takes the form of artificial hills and the pond is a reminder of the water represented in traditional *shanshuihua*, thus Cai Guo-Qiang creates a juxtaposition of symbolic and contradictory references. He juxtaposes the present day man-altered environment with the suggestion of ancient imagery of landscape based on the idea of harmony between man and nature, conveying a deep sense of alteration to this long-standing relationship.

In other cases, some artists approach the landscape through more subjective figurative modes, although still depicting a contemporary *shanshui* that evokes the physical interaction with an altered environment.<sup>23</sup> Yang Yongliang's landscapes mix visual elements borrowed from contemporary urban reality with traditional landscape imagery. The first step in this artist's creative process is to collect photos of cityscapes that then serve as materials for his composite digital photomontages.<sup>24</sup> They are imaginary landscapes that evoke a seemingly naturalistic and traditional scenery made of mountains, rivers, waterfalls, fog, and vegetation. However, closer observation reveals the real visual content that comprises the composition; elements of man-made panoramas such as architectural structures, skyscrapers, electric pylons, and traffic jams that substitute and thus are transformed into natural elements. Formally, this reminds us of the composition, techniques, and aesthetic vision of traditional *shanshuihua*, and this suggestion is further enhanced by the use of red seals and a scroll-like structure. Yang Yongliang's work focuses on the social impact of China's



Cai Guo-Qiang, *Silent Ink* (detail), 2014, concrete fragments, steel bars, insulation, water pump, pond: 20,000 liters of black ink. Commissioned by the Power Station of Art, Shanghai. Collection of the artist. Photo: Zhang Feiyu. Courtesy of Cai Studio.



Cai Guo-Qiang, *Silent Ink*, 2014, concrete fragments, steel bars, insulation, water pump, pond: 20,000 liters of black ink. Commissioned by the Power Station of Art, Shanghai. Collection of the artist. Photo: Wen-you Cai. Courtesy of Cai Studio.





aggressive urbanization and are powerful images that convey the artist's desire to raise awareness, as well as to raise a change in people's attitude towards nature.

Yang Yongliang, *Artificial Wonderland II—Taigu Descendants* (detail), 2016, installation, 100 x 1063 cm.



Addressing the landscape with an antithetical iconographic structure and centred on current environmental issues is also found in Yao Lu's works, which are stylistically similar to those of Yang Yongliang, although he is not as well known among the Western public.

Yang Yongliang, *Artificial Wonderland II—Taigu Descendants*, 2016, installation, 100 x 1063 cm.

Yao Lu photographs landfills and rubble and then, through photomontage, he digitally creates his images in which mounds of garbage or debris covered in green or black protective nets are assembled in the form of mountains, cliffs, and hills covered in mist to evoke the iconography of traditional landscape painting. The green or black protective nets are something that can be seen everywhere, as much as garbage and debris in today's China, symbolize the ubiquity of construction sites and the idea of China's drive to modernity. Moreover, Yao Lu's photographs represent landscapes that at first sight allude to beauty, but, ultimately, they are decidedly ugly. As critic and curator Gu Zheng has pointed out: "His works create an illusion of beauty with ugliness. By transferring ugliness to an aesthetic target, the former provides the gun powder for possible criticism and reflection of beauty itself while becoming a new aesthetic target."<sup>25</sup>

Qiu Anxiong reflects on the human relationship with the natural environment through works that incorporate painting, photography,

Yao Lu, *Fishing Boats Berthed by the Mount Yu*, 2008, chromogenic print, 60 x 50 cm. Courtesy of Galerie du Monde, Hong Kong.



Yao Lu, *The Beauty of Kunming*, 2010, C print, 120 x 90 cm. Courtesy of Galerie du Monde, Hong Kong.



Qiu Anxiong, still from *Temptation of the Land*, 2009, animation, 13 mins.



and video, in which landscape is conceived as the conceptual background of the development of China's political history. The artist paints his compositions in acrylic on canvas and then, through photography and the use of a stop-motion technique, combines them into an animated video. His image sequences are populated by juxtaposed iconographic elements derived from multiple and contrasting visual sources such as landscapes and urban sceneries, natural features and architectural elements, and their function being

to narrate, like Yao Lu, China's rapid process of modernization that has led to an aggressive territorial transformation. In *Temptation of the Land* (2009), Qiu Anxiong depicts images of former idyllic natural landscapes turned into anthropic scenarios marked heavily by a human presence. He captures and represents the degeneration of the natural environment where the landscape largely has been obliterated and this serves as a metaphor for expressing its marginality in contemporary urban life, as well as contemporary society's dysfunctional relationship with nature.

### The Ethical Function of Contemporary Landscape

In depicting landscape, each of these artists comment on the altered environmental conditions now irremediably imprinted upon the Chinese landscape and artistically describe how human activities have reconfigured it. Partially following the aesthetic of traditional *shanshuihua*, they produce a complex and layered narrative in which landscape belongs no more to the realm of the metaphysical. It becomes a kind of "descriptive dystopia" that, by using traditional imagery to highlight the current state of the natural environment, evokes in a quite surrealistic manner the possibility of the worst environmental condition. This enables us to consider the ethical function of contemporary landscape, now conceived as a genre that should generate explicit rules to regulate, conduct, and restore the appropriate natural order of things.

Contemporary *shanshui* depiction appears as a subjective vision combined with the moral standings assigned to ecology. Just as ancient literati painters

used landscape imagery to transmit moral values, in the context of today's increasingly urbanized society, some artists use landscape to highlight environmental values such as ecology and sustainability, stressing the reality of the altered natural environment and their emotional relationship with it in order to raise critical awareness on China's serious environmental crisis. Society and nature are inextricably linked, but, in contemporary times, this seems lost, and in the works of these artists, man and nature are presented in opposition. In their *shanshui* depictions, landscape no longer possesses a philosophical dimension that requires a totalizing or highly symbolic representation of nature, but is conceived as an arena of human action, a space in which this human action that is so severely transforming nature is blamed.

We are here in the presence of a vision of nature that creates new values and links landscape's essence to ethics.<sup>26</sup> This new conceptual trend is indicated by "iconic elements" that function as ethical pointers and relate landscape to the new visual context in which a well defined genre of contemporary *shanshuihua* develops.

These artists address real ecological problems in their works and invite us to re-envision our faith in unfettered progress, where human dominance over nature is deemed legitimate. From this perspective, landscape can act as a platform for critical thinking, helping people to envision a better future.

It is precisely this profile that makes the artist focusing on contemporary landscape so compelling: it is the idea that life is incomplete without close contact with nature, that the artist's use of landscape fosters critical thinking and raises questions about sustainability, and that the attempt to work in this way defends a landscape in which disharmony and ugliness have become a new aesthetic canon. Undoubtedly, this research constitutes an exemplification of the artist's moral choices.

In twenty-first century China, the representation of landscape has changed in correspondence with the natural surroundings and the cultural perspectives that have changed parallel to it. The natural environment is so highly polluted that artists have felt the moral urge to integrate environmental degradation into their artistic research to such an extent that this perspective is emerging as an independent artistic genre. This means that, besides rethinking *shanshuihua*'s role, adapting it to new current issues and exploring new means of expression, artists also have readjusted their social role and, in the context of contemporary Chinese art, they work as activists.

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#### Notes

1. John B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 156.
2. See Li Shenzhi, "Reflection on the Concept of the Unity of Heaven and Man (*Tian ren he yi*)," in *Chinese Thought in a Global Context: A Dialogue Between Chinese and Western Philosophical Approaches*, ed. Karl-Heinz Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 115.

3. On the close relationship between Daoist metaphysics and ink painting, see Zhou Jiyan 周积寅, *Zhongguo hualun jiyao* 中国画论辑要 (Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 2005), 1–60. See also Xu Fuguan 徐复观, *Zhongguo yishu jingshen* 中国艺术精神 (Guilin: Guangxi Shifan daxue chubanshe, 2007), 33–42.
4. On the importance of the Third Shanghai Biennale, see Wu Hung, “The 2000 Shanghai Biennale. The Making of a Historical Event,” *Art Asia Pacific* 31 (2001), 41–49.
5. Julia F. Andrews and Shen Kuiyi, *The Art of Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 284. On the same topic, see also Paul Gladston, *Contemporary Chinese Art: A Critical History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 240.
6. For an overview of works and styles related to conventional contemporary *shanshuihua* see Zhang Dachuan 张大川, Deng Jiade 邓嘉德 and Sun Ling 孙菱, *Zhongguo dangdai huajia tudian: shanshui juan* 中国当代画家图典: 山水卷 (Chengdu: Sichuan meishu chubanshe, 2001). See also Guo Guixing 郭贵兴, *Zhongguo dangdai huihua jingdian xilie: qinglü shanshui* 中国当代绘画经典系列: 青绿山水 (Zhengzhou: Henan meishu chubanshe, 2010).
7. Wu Hung, “Neither Heaven nor Home: Representing Landscape and Interior Space in Contemporary East Asian Art,” in *Making History: Wu Hung on Contemporary Art*, eds. Angie Baecker et al. (Hong Kong: Timezone 8, 2008), 235.
8. Yin Jinan, “The Evolution of Chinese Contemporary *Shanshui*,” in *Shanshui: Poetry Without Sound? Landscape in Chinese Contemporary Art*, ed. Peter Fischer (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2011), 45.
9. Gao Shiming, “The Crisis of Landscape,” *Artlinkart*, [http://www.artlinkart.com/en/artist/txt\\_ab/fd3arulpeadrtn/](http://www.artlinkart.com/en/artist/txt_ab/fd3arulpeadrtn/).
10. Lü Peng, *Fragmented Reality: Contemporary art in 21st Century China* (Milan: Charta, 2012), 411. For a review of the exhibition, see Lü Peng and Bai Hua, *Pure Views: Remote from Streams and Mountains: New Painting from China* (Milan: Charta, 2011).
11. Yongwoo Lee, “Shan-shui and the Customs of Contemporary Real Landscapes,” in *Humanistic Nature and Society (Shan-Shui). An Insight into the Future*, ed. Wong Shun-Kit (Shanghai: Shanghai Himalayas Museum, 2015), 10.
12. The most significant study on ecological consciousness in Chinese contemporary art regards Chinese cinema. On this topic, see Sheldon H. Lu, “Introduction: Cinema, Ecology, Modernity,” in *Chinese Ecocinema: In the Age of Environmental Challenge*, ed. Sheldon H. Lu and Mi Jiayan (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 1–14.
13. Wang Jiuliang 王久良, *Beijing besieged by waste (Laji weicheng 垃圾围城)* (documentary, China, 72 mins., 2011), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WT3eKAjyNXs/>. Wang Jiuliang has also directed *Plastic China (Suliao Zhongguo 塑料中国)*, 2015. Chai Jing 柴静, *Under the dome (Qiāngding zhi xià 穹顶之下)*. (documentary, China, 104 mins., 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6X2uwlQGQM&gt/>.
14. Jia Zhangke 贾樟柯, *Smog journeys (Ren zai mai tu 人在霾途)* (short film, China, 7 mins., 2015), <http://youtu.be/zfF7ZmKMUX/>.
15. Xiaozhou 小竹, *Breathe again (Bie rang weilai zhixi 别让未来窒息)* (advertising spot: China, 54 secs., 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e1qGc66W9k/>.
16. On this topic, see Tom Phillips, “China’s vacuum-cleaner artist turning Beijing’s smog into bricks,” *The Guardian*, December 1, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/01/chinese-vacuum-cleaner-artist-turning-beijings-smog-into-bricks/>. See also Samuel Spencer, “Zhang Zhenyu Turns Pollution Into Paintings at Yallay Gallery,” *Blouinartinfo*, April 11, 2016, 2016, <http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/1372964/zhang-zhenyu-turns-pollution-into-paintings-at-yallay-gallery/>.
17. Second Hand Rose (*Ershou meigui* 二手玫瑰), *Drop in (Chuan men 串门)* (video clip, China, 6 mins., 2011), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VF8Jwg\\_o8Aw/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VF8Jwg_o8Aw/).
18. See Dai Zhikang 戴志康, *Shanshui chengshi: weilai dushi shenghua meixue: Sikao yu shijian* 山水城市. 未来都市生活美学: 思考与实践, (Shanghai: Shanghai Himalayas Museum, 2015), 33–37.
19. CCTV *Chunwan*—CCTV 春晚, “2016 Yangshi Chunwan gequ ‘Shanshui Zhongguo mei’ Lin Xinru, Liang Yongqi, Liu Tao,” 2016 央视春晚歌曲《山水中国美》林心如, 梁咏琪, 刘涛 (video: China, 6 mins., 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DORjVgmdSAV/>.
20. On this topic, see Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 2.
21. On this topic, see Shen Kuiyi, “Shanshui: Reinterpreting and Reconstructing a Cultural Consciousness in Contemporary Chinese Art,” in *Ershi shiji shanshuihua yanjiu wenji* 二十世纪山水画研究文集, ed. Huang Jian 黄剑 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2006), 284–86.
22. Among his most famous documentary works, there is the series centered on the Three Gorges Project. For an analysis of his works related to the dam’s project, see Thomas Christensen, *The Three Gorges Project: Paintings by Liu Xiaodong* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2006). On the same topic, see also Wu Hung, *Displacement: The Three Gorges Dam and Contemporary Chinese Art* (Chicago: Smart Museum of Art, 2008).
23. On this topic, see Pauline J. Yao, “The Expanded Aesthetic: Landscape and Contemporary Art in China,” in *Ershi shiji shanshuihua yanjiu wenji*, *op.cit.*, 358–59.
24. See Alessandra Alliata Nobili, “Tearing Down the Past to Build the Future: Yang Yongliang, Chinese Artist Interview,” *Art Radar Journal*, April 1, 2013, <http://artradarjournal.com/2013/04/01/tearing-down-the-past-to-build-the-future-yang-yongliang-chinese-artist-interview/>.
25. Gu Zheng, “Concealment is the Essence of Reality: Yao Lu’s New Landscape,” *798 Photogallery*, [http://www.798photogallery.cn/en/exhibition\\_view.asp?id=75/](http://www.798photogallery.cn/en/exhibition_view.asp?id=75/).
26. On the relationship between landscape and ethics, see Massimo Venturi Ferriolo, *Etiche del paesaggio: Il progetto del mondo umano* (Roma: Editori Riuniti, 2002), 15.