

Global China Seminar

Modern Art for a Modern China: A Chinese Intellectual Project

Date: Thursday 25 March 2021

Time: 5–6pm

Venue: AM105, Kelburn Campus

In-person attendance: [Register Here](#)

Online attendance: [Zoom Link](#)



Cai Yuanpei



Lu Xun



Xu Zhimo

(Source: Wikicommons)

Abstract

It has been a long, cherished Chinese cultural tradition that the visual and the textual interact and intersect. Modern Chinese art history would have been very different without the proactive engagements of the intellectuals. This presentation will demonstrate the crucial leadership of three leading public intellectuals in China's art reform in the initial decades of the twentieth century: Cai Yuanpei, Lu Xun and Xu Zhimo. It will also discuss how and why the Chinese intellectuals were involved with art reform, and how and why they connected China's modernisation with modern art practice. On the basis of those art historical events, I will make three arguments: first, art reform was a state project administered by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China with the aim to create modern art for a modern China; second, the intellectual leadership was crucial in the rapid development of modern art and modern art practice in China; third, colonialism evoked China's national awareness and gave rise to both nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

About the speaker



Yiyan Wang is Professor of Chinese at the School of Languages and Cultures, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Her research is primarily in the areas of modern Chinese literature and modern Chinese cultural history. Her most recent publication is *Modern Art for a Modern China: the Chinese Intellectual Debate, 1900-1930*. London: Routledge, 2021.

Routledge Contemporary China Series

**MODERN ART FOR A
MODERN CHINA**

THE CHINESE INTELLECTUAL DEBATE, 1900–1930

Zoom URL: <https://vuw.zoom.us/j/94484776600>