
THE MIRROR IMAGE OF CHINESE CONTEMPORARY ART: A STUDY OF THE HISTORICAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTAL PATH OF SONGZHUANG ARTS VILLAGE

Qin Wanxin* & Dzul Afiz Zakaria**

*First author, **Corresponding author

Visual Art and Culture Studies, Faculty of Creative Arts,
Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
(rva180011@um.edu.my, dzulafiz_zakaria@um.edu.my)

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Abstract

This paper takes Songzhuang arts village as the object of study, to sort out its historical changes since its formation and use it as an entry point to observe the development of Chinese contemporary art. The study adopts the narrative inquiry approach, through in-depth interviews with four artists who have lived in Songzhuang at different stages of its history, and combines archival research and field work to analyze the relationship between individual experience and the development of contemporary art in China. With the help of Pierre Bourdieu's *field* theory, this paper considers Songzhuang as an art field, revealing the evolution of its internal structure. By analyzing Songzhuang as a spatial sample, this paper attempts to provide a new perspective for understanding the mechanisms and paths of contemporary art development in China, and to envision the potential role of Songzhuang arts village in China's art ecology in the future.

Keywords: Chinese contemporary art history, Arts village, Songzhuang arts village, Chinese contemporary artists, Field theory

Introduction

Songzhuang arts village, which is known as *Huajia* village or *Yishu* village in Chinese, had embraced its first batch of artists in 1993 (JianHua Kong, 2017) since Yuanmingyuan painter's village, the first arts village in China, was demolished by the local government. Since Yuanmingyuan painter's village was demolished in early 1990s, there were multiple arts villages gradually formed all over China. Among all the arts villages, Songzhuang arts village is "China's largest original art cradle"¹. It

1. Data accessed from official website "Creative Tongzhou", Tongzhou District People's Government of Beijing