

China Modern

Designing 20th Century Popular Culture



Fook Loong Advertisement, Paper and Ink, circa 1930, Courtesy of Nick Carter



Travelling Through Space (detail), Xin Hwa Printing, HeBei, 1979, Poster, Courtesy of Reed Darmon

China transformed dramatically in the 20th century. From 1912 to 1949, China's government changed from a monarchy to a republic to a communist state. *China Modern* chronicles the country's changing character by celebrating its 20th century graphic art and material culture. The more than 180 objects in the exhibition explore the rich tradition of Chinese designs and styles in advertising, packaging, and promotional art for cinema, music, comic books, pulp fiction, fashion, games and toys.

As China opened its ports and took on new trading partners, Chinese society was infused with Western ideas and artistic

expression. Particularly in Shanghai, a major commercial center, Chinese and Western companies looked for new ways to engage customers with product promotion. With the introduction of Western lithograph printing, advertising art flourished—handbills, posters, calendars, trade cards, produce wrappers, and packaging with Chinese themes proliferated. Ellen Johnston Laing, author of *Selling Happiness*, wrote that as many as 700,000 posters and calendars were printed during the first three decades of the 20th century, and most were produced in Shanghai. *China Modern's* iconic images of the 20th century illustrate the country's changing identity and its transition to a giant, commercial superpower.

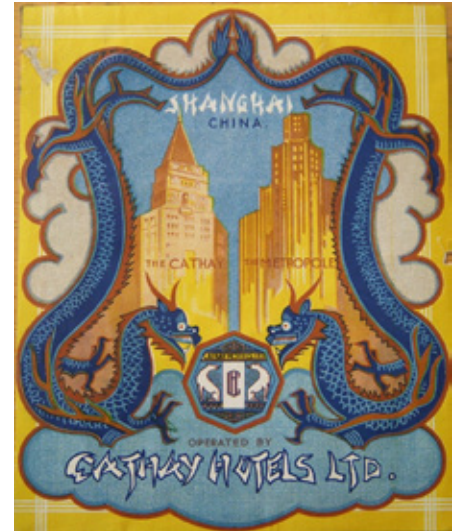
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China Modern was developed by, and debuted at, the Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena, California. The exhibition is organized into 4 sections: 1) A Graphic Tradition: Popular Design from Late Qing to Early Republic; 2) Cosmopolitan Capitalism: Shanghai Under the Republic; 3) A Revolution in Culture: Designing the People's Republic, and; 4) The Aesthetics of Nostalgia.

A Graphic Tradition: Popular Design from Late Qing to Early Republic, serves as a prologue to the exhibition, featuring prints of household gods and New Year's Day-themed imagery. The prints form the roots of the graphic culture that blossomed in the 20th century. **Cosmopolitan Capitalism: Shanghai Under the Republic**, highlights the commodities sold in pre-Revolutionary China, giving viewers an understanding of the international scope that informed Shanghai's commercial art advertisements. **A Revolution in Culture: Designing the People's Republic** uses propaganda materials to showcase the impact of the Cultural Revolution and Maoist ideology on Chinese culture—on its art, advertising, and household goods. **The Aesthetics of Nostalgia** acts as an epilogue to the exhibition, emphasizing the continuing effect of China's graphic art tradition, and politically permeated culture, on art production today.

The exhibition contains powerful objects that are iconic in Chinese culture, but which can also be universally appreciated. American audiences will enjoy and connect with China's visual art, as we have also been raised in a graphic art environment. *China Modern* brings a greater understanding of China's political, commercial, and artistic transition to the modern era, giving audiences a new appreciation for the country and its richly evolving cultural canvas.



Luggage label: Cathay Hotel (Sasson's House), built 1929, c. 1930, Anonymous Lender



Calendar detail (Woman with tiger), c. 1920, Courtesy of Reed Darmon

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A Healthy Beauty (detail), Da Hwa Offset Press, artist: Sze Ying. c.1930, Poster, Courtesy of Reed Darmon



Porcelain Figurine of Revolutionary Heroine (detail), c. 1960, Courtesy of Reed Darmon

Exhibition Design and Educational Materials

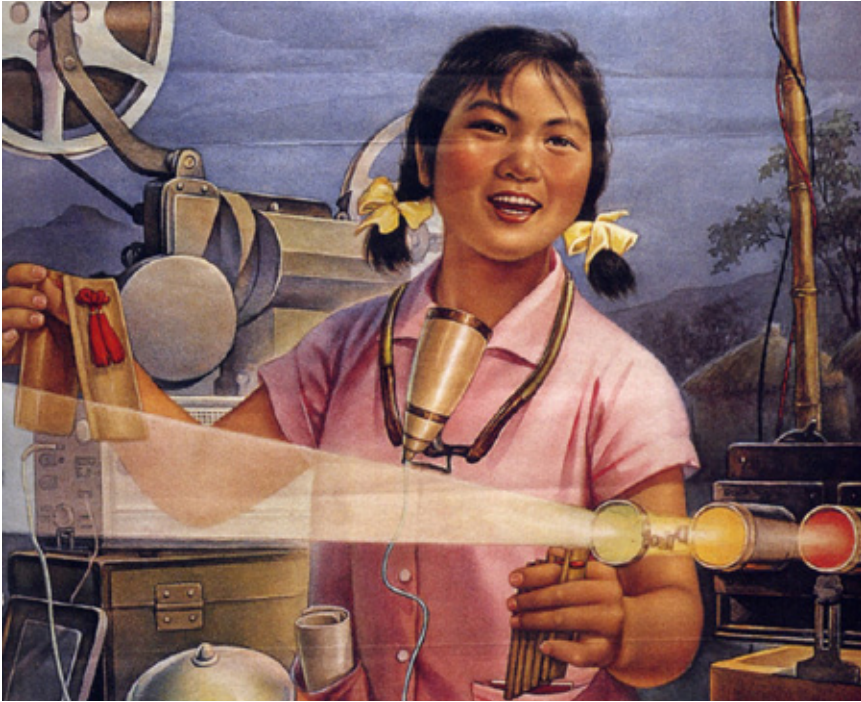
Exhibition design and installation is flexible and can adapt to each venue's particular gallery settings. There are traveling mounts for several pieces. Some objects are well-suited for a mock, shop-like display for various products from the 1930s. Building a village wall for the Mao-era posters is also encouraged. Didactic labels and wall panels, a family guide and speakers list accompany the exhibition.

About the Curator

Kalim Winata is an independent scholar specializing in print and popular cultures of the 20th century, with a focus on Asia. Earning a Master of Fine Arts from the Academy of Art in 2000, he worked closely with collector Reed Darmon to produce *Made in China*, published by Chronicle Books. Kalim curated an accompanying exhibition, *Made in China: A Visual Feast of Color and Design*, in 2006. He co-authored the book *Made in India* in 2008.

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Rural Portable Theater (detail), 1966, Poster, Courtesy of Reed Darmon



Long Live Chairman Mao for over 10,000 Years, c. 1960, Bust, Courtesy of Reed Darmon

EXHIBITION SPECIFICATIONS

Number of Works: 175 works including silk screen prints, digital prints, lithographs, posters and propaganda items

Curator: Kalim Winata, independent curator

Requirements: Moderate security, approximately 2,500 square feet

Participation Fee: \$18,000 plus outgoing shipping (please inquire for discounted fee from mid-July 2012 to August 2012)

Booking Period: 12 weeks

Availability:
Mid-July 2012 to August 2012
January 2013 to March 2014

Shipping: IA&A makes all arrangements; exhibitors pay outgoing costs within the contiguous U.S.

Contact:
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Installation at the Pacific Asia Museum, August 4, 2010 to February 6, 2011

A Graphic Tradition: Popular Design from Late Qing to Early Republic



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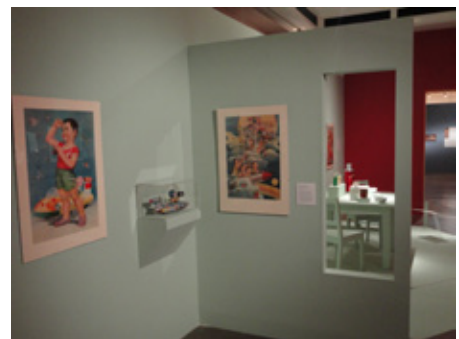
Cosmopolitan Capitalism: Shanghai Under the Republic



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A Revolution in Culture: Designing the People's Republic



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The Aesthetics of Nostalgia

