Welcome to the March issue of our newsletter.

Spring looks to be just around the corner, with the magnolias beginning to bloom and the weather growing warmer. Along with the new season comes a whole host of activities here at RAS, including heritage walks, a brace of Lectures and Weekenders, and some fantastic Focus Group events for you to look forward to.

城春草木深 - 杜甫

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
MARCH 2014
LECTURES & WEEKENDERS
Thurs 20th – Diana Yeh – The Happy Hsiungs
Tuesday 25th – Michael Kahn-Ackermann – Contemporary Ink Art: Cultural Tradition vs. Modernity

SPECIAL EVENTS
Weds 12th – Andrew Field’s Mu Shiying at Shanghai Literary Festival

FOCUS GROUPS
Study Group: Mon 10th & 24th
Book Club: Mon 17th – Anchee Min ‘Becoming Madame Mao’
Art Focus: Sun 16th – Yayoi Kusama at MoCA
Documentary Group: Wed 26th – ‘DOWN: Indie Rock in the PRC’
Film Club: Sun 23rd - ‘Apart Together (Tuan Yuan)’

FORTHCOMING
April 5th – Weekender: Hans van de Ven - Breaking with the Past: The Maritime Customs Service and the Global Origins of Modernity in China
April 8th – Lecture: Non Arkaraprasertkul – Housing and Heritage: Political Economy and Urban Space in Shanghai Lilong Neighbourhoods
April 26th – Weekender/M Salon – Edward Denison Book Launch: Lu Qianshou
May/June – Paul Veysseyre Heritage Walks with Spencer Dodington

RAS Monographs for sale at the Shanghai International Literary Festival book shop.

A Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland
January and February Happenings & March News

We kicked off our 2014 lecture programme with a presentation from award-winning British photographer Liz Hingley (pictured right). Liz has produced the Shanghai edition in the Portraits de Villes series, and led us through the processes she went through to take and collate her images. Liz’s unique idea was to capture Shanghai through glimpses of its outer reaches, travelling to the ends of each Metro line to photograph the people and things she found there. After the lecture, Liz joined a group of RAS members and friends for a very cordial dinner where we talked more about her work.

January and February were relatively quiet months for the Programme on account of Western and Chinese New Year, with many people out of town for extended holidays. However, our Focus Groups continued, with Book Club discussing James McGregor’s No Ancient Wisdom, No Followers. It was a small but dynamic group that gathered at Glo London to talk about McGregor’s theories on Chinese economics. His idea of ‘authoritarian capitalism’ had us chatting well into the evening. The tome of choice for February’s Book Club was Yu Hua’s Chronicle of a Blood Merchant, which also spurred ripe discussion. For March we have chosen Anchee Min’s Becoming Madame Mao. We have decided to switch venues since our Library is in full working order now, and it seems like the perfect locale for our literary endeavours. Book Club events from March onwards will be held among the stacks.

Our Art Focus group went to OCAT in January to walk through the Degeneration exhibition with curator Mariagrazia Constantino and our convenor Julie Chun. Julie led a keen group through the Kusama show at MoCa in February, and also lectured for us at the Radisson Xingguo’s Li Ballroom on February 25th, about public sculpture in Shanghai and beyond. In an impressive historic sweep that took us from the earliest origins of sculpture in antiquity to the ways public art is used in modern Shanghai, Julie (pictured left) led us through the many facets of her métier with panache. The wealth and breadth of audience questions was a testament to the interest her lecture piqued among members and guests.

Another popular feature of our Programme is Ad Hoc Study Group led by Kate Baker. Since Kate mainly screens documentaries, we have decided to rename this monthly session Documentary Group. We screened Steven Schwankert’s Poseidon documentary on February 19th, and Kate has some great choices lined up for the coming months including Andrew Field’s DOWN: Indie Rock in the PRC (March 26th), the Jones brothers’ A Farewell Song (April 16th) and Sylvie Levey’s The Unique Destiny of Colonel Jin Xing (May 21st).

Pictured right: Kate with Steven Schwankert and the brothers Jones.

Coming up in March we have some great lectures and Focus Groups that you can read about over the coming pages. Looking further ahead, we are planning a series of heritage walks in May and June with architect, writer and Shanghai expert Spencer Dodington, in conjunction with his recently published book Paul Veysseyre: Shanghai’s Art Deco Master. While less vaunted than some of his contemporaries, Veysseyre was responsible for many of the stunning Art Deco buildings that are familiar to Shanghai residents, not least the Cercle Sportif Français – now the Okura Garden Hotel.

I look forward to seeing you in the weeks ahead!

- Susie Gordon (Hon Programme Director)
Lectures

RAS Lecture
Thursday 20th March, 7pm
RAS Library
DIANA YEH:
The Happy Hsiungs

bookings@royalasiaticsociety.org.cn

RAS Lecture
Tuesday 25th March, 7pm
RAS Library
MICHAEL KAHN-ACKERMANN:
Contemporary Ink Art: Cultural Tradition vs. Modernity

bookings@royalasiaticsociety.org.cn

Focus Group Meetings

RAS Art Focus
10:30am Sunday 16th
at MoCA Shanghai,
231 Nanjing Xi Lu, near Huangpi Lu
南京西路231号

“Beyond the Dots”
Understanding Yayoi Kusama

Following last month’s oversubscribed Kusama talk, we continue our “Insights into Chinese Contemporary Art” series to understand the phenomenon behind the hype and the mystic surrounding the state of current art in China.

Suggested donation: members 20 RMB – guests 50 RMB
(plus gallery entry 50 RMB)

RSVP is essential as space is limited
artgroup@royalasiaticsociety.org.cn

Convenor: Julie Chun

RAS Book Club
7pm Monday 17th
at RAS Library,
Sino-British College,
1195 Fuxing Zhong Lu, near Shaanxi Lu
上海市复兴中路1195号

“Beyond the Dots”
Understanding Yayoi Kusama

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RSVP is essential as space is limited
artgroup@royalasiaticsociety.org.cn

Convenor: Julie Chun

Becoming Madame Mao
Anchee Min

Members - 20 RMB, Guests 50 RMB
RSVP is essential as space is limited
bookclub@royalasiaticsociety.org.cn

Convenor: Sandy Strand
RAS Study Group
7pm for 7.15pm
Monday 10th
at Melange Oasis, Jiashan Market, 550 Shaanxi Nan Lu, No. 37, Building D
陕西南路 550 号，近嘉善路

The Fall and Rise of China
(part of the Great Courses series)


Members and friends are welcome to join us for dinner before the session. Suggested donation: members - 20 RMB, guests – 50 RMB

studygroup@royalasiaticsociety.org.cn
Convenor: Linda Ferguson

RAS Documentary Group
7pm for 7.15pm
Wednesday 26th
at The Apartment, 47 Yongfu Lu, near Fuxing Xi Lu
永福路 47 号，近复兴西路

DOWN: Indie Rock in the PRC

Andrew Field will present his documentary charting the history of indie rock in China.

Suggested donation: members - 20 RMB, guests – 50 RMB

adhocstudygroup@royalasiaticsociety.org
Convenor: Kate Baker

Full details of our events can be found at: www.royalasiaticsociety.org.cn

LIBRARY NEWS

MARCH

Opening Hours

Wednesdays 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th
Saturdays 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th
2pm – 5pm

Members may borrow two books
Refundable Deposit: 500 RMB (cash)

Hon Librarian: Ed Allen
E-mail: librarian@royalasiaticsociety.org.cn

The Sino-British College, USST
1195 Fuxing Zhong Lu,
near Shaanxi Lu
Shanghai, 200031 PRC

上海市复兴中路1195号
上海理工大学中英国际学院
RAS China Monograph Series 3
Hong Kong University Press
OUT NOW

Mu Shiying
China's Lost Modernist: New Translations and an Appreciation
Andrew David Field

When the avant-garde writer Mu Shiying was assassinated in 1940, China lost one of its greatest modernist writers while Shanghai lost its most detailed chronicler of its demi-monde nightlife. As Andrew David Field argues, Mu Shiying advanced modern Chinese writing beyond the vernacular expression of May 4 giants Lu Xun and Lao She to even more starkly reveal the alienation of the cosmopolitan-capitalist city of Shanghai, trapped between the forces of civilization and barbarism.

Each of these five short stories focuses on the author's key obsessions: the pleasurable yet anxiety-ridden social and sexual relationships of the modern city and the decadent maelstrom of consumption and leisure in Shanghai epitomized by the dance hall and the nightclub. This study places his writings squarely within the framework of Shanghai's social and cultural nightscapes.

"Better than that of any other writer, Mu Shiying's fiction encapsulates the cosmopolitan life of 1930s Shanghai (with its foreign concessions, cinemas, cafes and cabarets) that underlay modernist Chinese writing. Andrew Field's book is exciting not only because it is a new appreciation of this writer but because, through its translations of Mu's stories, it reveals the extent to which Shanghai-based writing was inspired by the styles of international modernism." - Lynn Pan, author of Shanghai Style and Old Shanghai: Gangsters in Paradise.

RAS China Monograph Series 4
OUT NOW

The Happy Hsiungs
Performing China and the struggle for Modernity
Diana Yeh

‘Try Something Different. Something Really Chinese’

The Happy Hsiungs recovers the lost histories of Shih-I and Dymia Hsiung, two once highly visible, but now largely forgotten Chinese writers in Britain, who sought to represent China and Chineseness to the rest of the world. Shih-I shot to worldwide fame with his play Lady Precious Stream in the 1930s and became known as the first-ever Chinese stage director to work in the West End and on Broadway. Dymia was the first Chinese woman in Britain to publish a fictional autobiography in English in the 1950s. Through exhaustive research and fieldwork among surviving family members and friends, Diana Yeh traces the Hsiungs’ lives from their childhood in Qing dynasty China and youth amid the radical May 4th era to Britain and the USA, where they became highly celebrated figures, rubbing shoulders with George Bernard Shaw, James M. Barrie, H.G. Wells, Pearl Buck, Lin Yu Tang, Anna May Wong and Paul Robeson among others. Though feted as 'The Happy Hsiungs', their lives ultimately highlight a bitter struggle in attempts to become modern.

"Thanks to the phenomenal success of his play Lady Precious Stream, Shih-I Hsiung was a household name in the US and UK during the 1930s. The Happy Hsiungs tells the story of how Hsiung and his writer wife, Dymia, came to be feted across three continents, enjoying celebrity as part of a global cultural elite that included George Bernard Shaw, J. M. Barrie, H.G. Wells, Pearl Buck, Anna May Wong, Paul Robeson, Lin Yu Tang, and Chiang Yee. Yeh explores their role in representing China and Chineseness to the rest of the world forcing us to rethink our vision of the British Chinese as invisible and insular, with little social, cultural or political impact on wider society.” —Dr Anne Witchard, University of Westminster and author of Lao She in London and Thomas Burke's Dark Chinoiserie.
Both *Lao She in London* by Anne Witchard and *Knowledge is Pleasure* by Lindsay Shen are now available on Amazon Kindle.

Hard copies are available for purchase at RAS events and during library opening hours. To reserve your copies email enquiry@royalasiaticsociety.org.cn putting “Monographs” in the subject box.

**RAS China - Monograph Series 1 & 2**

with Hong Kong University Press

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**RAS CHINA JOURNAL**

2013

*(Vol 75 No 1)*

*Now published!*

Our most recent journal includes a wealth of articles including peer reviewed work by Paul Hansen, Ian Gow, Paul French and Tess Johnston, as well as essays by Jeffrey Wasserstrom and Peter Hibbard, plus book reviews of *Décadence Manchoue* and *Midnight in Peking*.

RAS members receive one free copy available for collection at RAS events and the RAS Library. Further copies are available at 80 RMB.

Special thanks go to all contributors and to Earnshaw Publishers, for their support in delivering this issue.
RAS Council Members 2013 - 2014

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2007-2011 – Peter Hibbard MBE
MEMBERSHIP FORM
NEW [ ] RENEWAL [ ]

MEMBERSHIP Number: .................
QUARTER DUE: .................

TITLE: Mr - Ms - Dr - Professor .................
FAMILY NAME: .................
FIRST NAME: .................
NATIONALITY: .................
E-MAIL ADDRESS: .................
MOBILE No: .................
PROFESSION: .................
AREAS OF INTEREST and EXPERTISE: .................
WOULD YOU be willing to help with RAS matters? .................
SIGNED: ................. DATE: ....
MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY ................. FEE PAID. ....RMB

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Residing in China:

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MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Any foreign passport holder interested in Asian culture and in promoting the aims of the Society may apply for membership. (PRC law prohibits us from admitting Chinese nationals.) The Society operates a rolling membership system – membership is valid for one year from the date of registration. Payments are only possible in cash – please remit your fee and completed form to a Council member at one of our events.

membership@royalasiaticsociety.org.cn