



COVER SHEET

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Special issue: Creative Industries and Innovation in China

Edited by Michael Keane and John Hartley

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Editorial

Creative Industries and Innovation in China

- John Hartley and Michael Keane

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This special issue of *IJCS* will be of value to readers who are interested in the development and renewal of cultural studies, as well as those with a direct interest in cultural and scholarly developments in China. Cultural studies has always been an interdisciplinary, inter-sectoral and international colloquy. It is also an adventurous intellectual enterprise, seeking to understand the relations between cultural (symbolic) and economic-political values in modernising countries. In that spirit, the issue is devoted to papers and interviews arising from the first-ever international conference held in mainland China on the theme of the creative industries and innovation. It was the brainchild of John Hartley and was planned by a group of researchers working at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), as part of an Australian Research Council ‘Discovery’ grant to investigate the internationalisation of the creative industries in light of China’s accession to the WTO. It was held in Beijing, July 7-9 2005.¹

The forum was addressed by central government ministers from both China (Dr Wu Qidi, PRC Vice-Minister for Education) and Australia (Senator Rod Kemp, Federal Minister for Arts and Sport). Both were upbeat about creative industries and their presentations may be read herein. The forum brought together four ‘constituencies’:

- *Policymakers* in national, regional and local government and development agencies;
- *Entrepreneurs* with cutting edge products, services or business solutions in creative innovation;
- *Creative professionals* with new applications for traditional artistic talents;
- *Academic researchers* and scholars with an interest in the creative industries and in China.

This was the first event to discuss the theme of creative industries and innovation in China. Until that point the concept of the *cultural* industries, especially large-scale publishing and broadcasting, had not been integrated with commercial creativity in such sectors as digital content, design, and performing arts and music. Nor had much thought been given to the importance of the *knowledge* economy and *service* sectors in the Chinese context. China was generally viewed in terms of its astonishing growth as a manufacturing economy. But a focus on the creative industries brought knowledge, services, individual creativity and small-scale enterprise into the analytical frame, revealing a dynamic, forward-looking, and hitherto neglected scene that would repay the attention of government, business, creative professionals and academics, in terms of policy, investment, innovation and research (Hartley, 2005). A shift was already evident from cultural institutions (*wenhua shiye*) to cultural industries (*wenhua chanye*). Would the next iteration be creative industries (*chuangyi chanye*)?

Establishing the concept of the creative industries in the context of China raises important issues; not just the perennial question of Chinese exceptionalism (whatever the concept, it must have ‘Chinese characteristics’), but also important questions for state, commercial and critical agencies. They include intellectual property and copyright law, regulation, education, regional and enterprise development, consumer activism, and the fundamental tensions within the creative industries between individual imagination and industrial scale, between ‘public’ culture and ‘private’ profit, and between critical arts and commercial exploitation. Such issues form a recurrent theme in the papers that follow. The convergence of large-scale cultural industries with SME-led entrepreneurial creativity also raises questions of the role of individual imagination and micro-businesses in the development of the Chinese economy and society, and the pros and cons of thinking about China as a ‘creative economy’ in the international environment of globalised content marketing and national branding.

In the pages that follow we have sampled the contributions made to the forum together with some that enrich the theme but were not delivered on the day. The reader will notice straight away that the papers vary in tone, style and purpose. They are not intended to be a collection of purely academic papers but to represent a conversation among government, business, creative and scholarly positions. They represent also a mix of disciplinary, sectoral and national contexts which we have not attempted to homogenise. Part of our purpose in holding the forum was to show how important it is to connect different perspectives. So this special issue of the *IJCS* is an experiment too, because the usual tunnel vision of specialised refereed scholarship is not well-suited to capturing the

overall process of relationship-building and concept-formation on the fly, which is what was occurring both in the forum and in the interconnections among the papers presented here.² Subsequently the concept of the creative industries – almost unheard in China in the lead-up to the forum – has taken root in policy, academic and entrepreneurial circles and is now a buzzword in many of the big cities, with further events held in Beijing, Shanghai and elsewhere devoted to the development of both the concept and the sector within the Chinese context.

This issue of the *IJCS* opens with the addresses by ministers Wu and Kemp. The remaining papers fall into four loose ‘clusters,’ addressing broad themes as follows:

- *The shift towards a creative or innovation-based economy*, however construed: Zhang Xiaoming, Michael Keane, Justin O’Connor & Gu Xin, Su Tong.
- *Regional aspects of creative industries* in China and Hong Kong: Desmond Hui, Kin-Wai Mok, Eric Ma, Wu Jing.
- *Sectors within the creative industries*: Hung Huang, Jerry Wang, Wu Qiongli.
- *Specific issues* – copyright, IP law, education – that apply to creative industries and innovation generally: Han-Teng Liao, Lucy Montgomery & Brian Fitzgerald, Terry Flew.

Authors range from government ministers (Wu Qidi and Kemp) to creative entrepreneurs (Su, Wu Qiongli) and CEOs (Huang, Wang). They include scholars working in mainland China (Zhang, Wu Jing) Hong Kong (Hui, Ma, Mok), Taiwan (Liao), the UK (O’Connor & Gu) and Australia (Keane, Montgomery & Fitzgerald, Flew). The issue as a whole may be understood as a further elaboration of ideas that were broached and debated in a

previous special issue of this journal, *IJCS* 7:1 (2004), *The New Economy, Creativity and Consumption*.

Reference

John Hartley (ed.) (2005) *Creative Industries*. Oxford: Blackwell. This book is published in Mandarin by Tsinghua University Press (2006), translated by Cao Shule, Li Hui and Bao Jiannu.

Note

¹ The ARC research team is John Hartley, Michael Keane, Stuart Cunningham, Stephanie Donald, Christina Spurgeon and Terry Flew. The ARC's financial support is gratefully acknowledged. The forum was co-sponsored by QUT Institute for Creative Industries & Innovation, Chinese Academy of Social Science Humanities Research Centre (Zhang Xiaoming), and Renmin University of China Humanistic Olympics Research Centre (Jin Yuanpu). It was supported by the Administration Committee of Zhongguancun Science Park, the Home Affairs Bureau of the Government of Hong Kong SAR, Tsinghua Technology Park Co. Ltd. and the Queensland State Government, with financial assistance from the Hon. Anna Bligh, Minister for Education and the Arts. People who contributed to the success of the forum (beyond those published here) include Stuart Cunningham (cirac.qut.edu.au/asia/reports/Cunningham%20address.pdf), Jerry Watkins, Bao Jiannu, Li Hui, Leila Wu from QUT; Su Tong from the Created in China Industry Alliance; Steve Copplin, CEO of CIP Pty Ltd; Jenny Spark from the Australian Embassy Beijing; Cao Shule from the Beijing Film Academy; Zhang Zijian and Nina Shen from the Queensland trade mission in Shanghai. Presenters representing over sixty organizations and universities were attracted from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Australia, the USA and Britain.

² Papers by scholars have been double-blind refereed, but those by ministers and CEOs have been edited by the issue editors. Ministerial speeches are published here by kind permission of the Ministers, but should be checked against delivery.