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Creating Publicness in China

In 2005 Wu Wenguang helped ten farmers to produce their own documentaries on village governance; in 2006 Ou Ning gave cameras to Beijing residents facing relocation to defend their rights by publicizing their struggles; in 2008 I organized discussions with the queer community in Beijing to rethink sexuality in an imaginary island with reversed time. In front of the video camera and inside the exhibition space, reasoning publics came into being to engage in public dialogues about the exercise of political, economic, and cultural power. The rise of the public sphere in China is insuppressible, and socially engaged art is an integral part of this grassroots transformation.