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Creativity, Governmentality and the Rise of a New China: A Study of the Art Zones 798 in Beijing and Cattle Depot in Hong Kong

This paper analyses articulations and contestations of the rhetoric of the perpetually new that dominates popular discourse in China. It takes as its focus the emergence of creative zones in Beijing – 798 – and Hong Kong – The Cattle Depot. In particular 798 illustrates how the globalized ideology of the creative city is appropriated by the Chinese nation-state in order to construct a showcase of a new, open and progressive China. Art practices in Hong Kong point at the importance of materiality, the lack of space necessitates different and more conceptual works of art. The in-between position of Hong Kong artists hints at the problematics of Chineseness, as indicated by a hegemonic global art world that privileges Mainland art as the ‘authentic’ index of Chineseness. Fortunately, the art works themselves resist such hegemonic articulations of China and Chineseness.