

CALL FOR PAPERS

Chinese Dreams and Nightmares: Perceptions from Visual Arts, Literature and Vernacular Culture in the Sinosphere

**Chair of Chinese Culture and Society,
University of St. Gallen, Switzerland
5-6 December 2024**

We invite paper proposals on the topic of the 'Chinese Dream' and Chinese Nightmares as represented in visual arts, literature and vernacular culture in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and other parts of the Sinosphere.

The two-day event at the University of St.Gallen, Switzerland, from 5 to 6 December 2024 will bring together Swiss-based and international leading and early-career scholars to examine China's dreams, including its aspirations, utopias, anti-utopias, and nightmares from interdisciplinary perspectives. Using a two-pronged angle of analysis, this project proposes to examine not only the many Chinese Dreams but also nightmares, by analysing perceptions from the people in the visual arts, literature and vernacular culture, including blogs, microblogs and digital media.

Ever since Xi Jinping announced the concept of the 'Chinese Dream' as his political slogan in 2012, the Chinese government has been using it to promote its vision of the future presenting China as a rising superpower. While the scope of the Chinese Dream has puzzled scholars in international studies, geopolitics, economics and area studies, its artistic, literary and cultural dimensions still await detailed investigation. This conference aims to redress this shortfall by exploring perceptions of the Chinese Dream in the visual arts, literature and vernacular culture.

Originally defined as the 'rejuvenation of the Chinese nation', the Chinese Dream extends to Xi Jinping's aspirations across the globe while pushing the frontiers in space. It spans topics from the renewed interest in the ancient concept of 'All Under Heaven' (*tianxia*) to the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the worldwide Belt and Road Initiative launched in 2013. The Covid-19 pandemic and the Russo-Ukrainian war, on the other hand, may count among Xi Jinping's nightmares. Besides the official narratives propagated by the state, Sinophone writers, artists and netizens create many unofficial narratives expressing Chinese dreams and nightmares from the bottom-up perspective. The conference invites participants to explore how writers, artists and netizens offer their perceptions of Chinese dreams and nightmares to shed light on the fears, desires and challenges faced by China and the world.

Topics for papers include, but are not limited to, for example:

- Visual art narratives on Chinese dreams and nightmares
- Poetic and literary narratives on Chinese dreams and nightmares
- Multi-media narratives on Chinese dreams and nightmares
- Utopia under Xi Jinping in arts and literature
- Anti-utopia under Xi Jinping in arts and literature
- Modern and contemporary dream narratives in Chinese art and literature
- Metamorphosis of Chinese dream narratives in different historical contexts
- Dreams and nightmares in Chinese popular fiction
- Intertextual studies on Chinese dream narratives

PAPER SUBMISSION PROCEDURE:

All proposals should include: (1) name(s), (2) affiliation and contact details (email), (3) title of paper, (4) abstract of up to 300 words max., and (5) short bio info.

All proposals should be submitted **BY 18 AUGUST 2024** to daria.berg@unisg.ch.

We plan to publish the papers in a special issue for an international peer-reviewed academic journal.

The conference will take place at the University of St. Gallen. A limited number of bursaries will be available. If you require financial assistance, please let us know when submitting your proposals.

ORGANISERS:

Prof. Dr. Daria Berg, Chair of Chinese Culture and Society, University of St. Gallen

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