1.5 m²

GUANG CHANG WU MONUMENT

WU PAI

If you use the search term “Guang Chang Wu” (Chinese for “square dancing”) on Baidu (China’s version of Google), you will get about 184 million items of news, 4,665 hits in music, 777 dancing groups, and numerous comments either supporting or disapproving of the activity. Guang Chang Wu is a collective public dance, which has been estimated to have 100 million participants in China; most of the participants are retired middle-aged and elderly women. It has become a social phenomenon and represents the collective aspect of Chinese culture. Despite this popularity, Guang Chang Wu has been labeled as “noise pollution” and “public-space occupation”; the negative effects of Guang Chang Wu and its participants are often topics of focus for the media and in society. Based on research and analysis of Guang Chang Wu, this project investigates the past and present conditions that have facilitated its development: from the Cultural Revolution to the Chinese economic reforms and opening-up policy; from birth encouragement to the one-child policy; from retrogressive to rapid urbanization; and the power relationship between old and new generations. These aspects result in conflict and stigmatization.

Alois Riegl defined a monument as follows: “A monument in its oldest and most original sense is a human creation, erected for the specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events alive in the minds of future generations” (Alois Riegl 1903). Monuments commemorate not only “intentionally”—as buildings or sculptures—but also “unintentionally,” via later inscriptions and any event with “age value” that involves the monument. The term “age value” is used to describe the most modern value and the one that will guide the conservation of the monument in the future. Guang Chang Wu has been assigned a special age value by its female participants, who have a complex cultural and social background.

According to statistics from the Chinese government, in 2015 the per capita space available for sports was 1.5 m^2. This explains how Guang Chang Wu conflicts with an increasing desire for a less chaotic urban lifestyle as public spaces are squeezed by development. This Guang Chang Wu monument tries to express that in this contemporary society.

Time weekly, (2013). *Guang Chang Wu, Collectivism.* [image] Available at: http://www.time-weekly.com/story/2013-12-03/131678.html [Accessed 10 Aug. 2015].

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to the Guang Chang Wu participants I interviewed. They were kind and friendly in helping me finish my research. I am deeply appreciative of my professor Paul Petritsch for his support, advice, and guidance. I'd like also to express my gratitude to my advisers Nina Herlitschka, Katrin Hornek, and Ralo Mayer for their patience, motivation, and professional knowledge. Without their genuine and generous help and guidance at all times during my project, I would have had a much more complex and challenging working process.

Definition of "Guang Chang Wu"

“Guang Chang Wu”—in Chinese, 广场舞 —literally means “square dancing.”
When you walk in any public space in China during the early morning or evening, you will get a view of Guang Chang Wu. It is a collective activity accompanied by recorded music, and the participants are mostly middle-aged and senior women. The dance styles of Guang Chang Wu are diverse, both local and global. The music the participants choose includes Chinese pop songs, folk songs, and Western pop music.

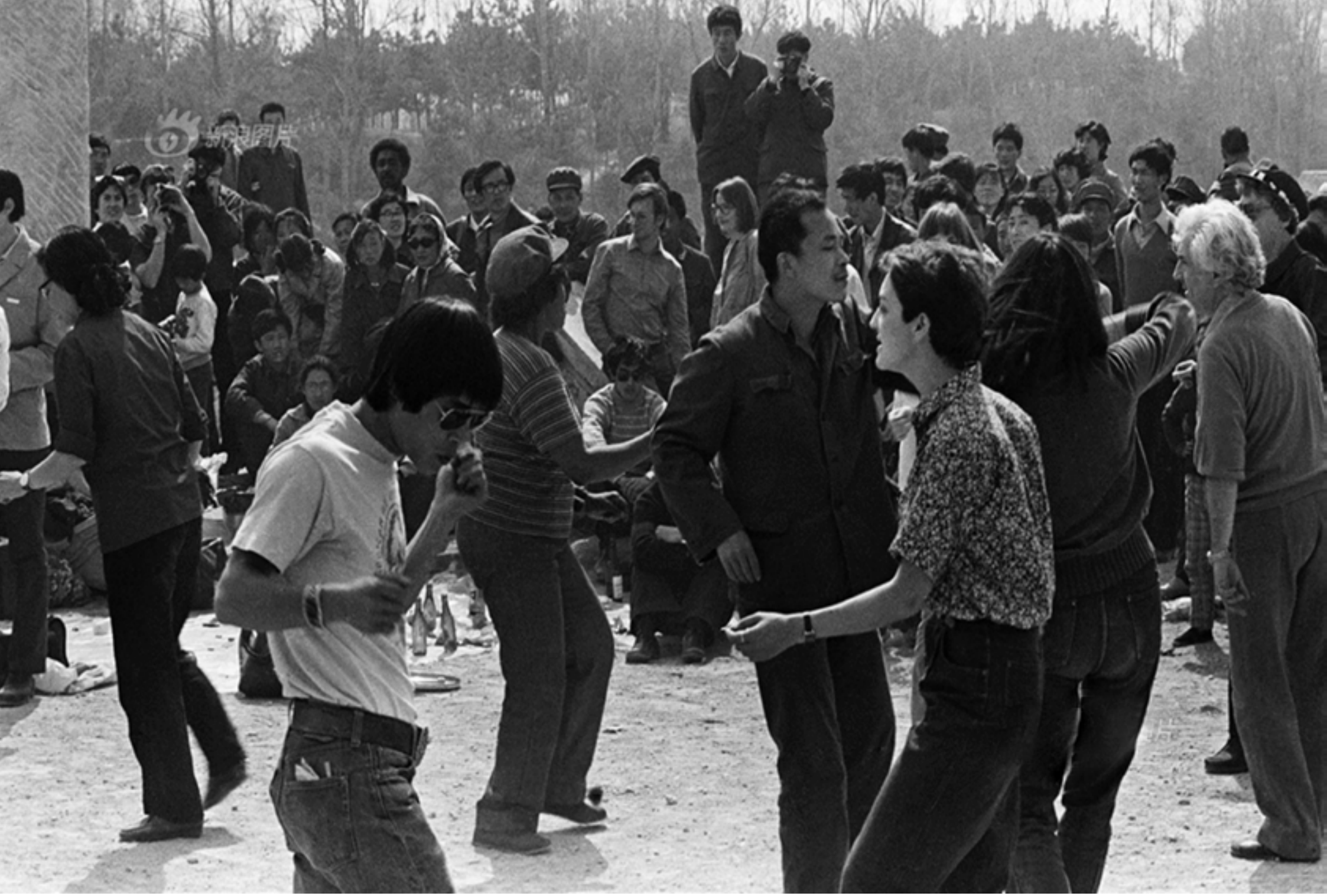
The name Guang Chang Wu came from the term “Guang Chang,” which is Chinese for “square.” This name was given because Guang Chang Wu initially began in a square. Since the number of participants is increasing dramatically and due to the rapid urbanization process of China, those squares are no longer large enough for the demand. The individuals have to dance in parks or in any public spaces they can find. However, the name has remained Guang Chang Wu.

QQ news, (2013). *Guang Chang Wu, Collectivism.* [image] Available at: http://news.qq.com/a/20131124/000588.htm [Accessed 10 Aug. 2015].

History of Dancing in Public Spaces

From 1960 to 1970, during the Cultural Revolution, many people danced in public spaces. The name of that dancing was Zhong Zi Wu, which was assigned for propaganda purposes and to reflect loyalty to the revolution and the leader of the time. The dance moves were very easy to learn, so that everyone could participate. In the early 1980s, during the initial stages of reform and opening up, disco started getting popular in China. Since 2005, “National Fitness Programs” have been introduced across China to promote participation in sports, which has resulted in the dissemination of Guang Chang Wu.

Weifeng, Q. (2010). Zhong Zi Wu is the symbolize of Maoist. [Blog] *Blog china*. Available at: http://hajkj.blogchina.com/944706.html [Accessed 6 Sep. 2015].



Baidu tieba, (2013). *Disco in Beihai Park*. [image] Available at: http://tieba.baidu.com/p/1331128022 [Accessed 10 Sep. 2015].

Chuqin news, (2013). *Dama Guang Chang Wu.* [image] Available at: http://news.cnhubei.com/ctdsb/ctdsbsgk/ctdsb41/201311/t2765774.shtm [Accessed 14 Sep. 2015].

Dancing grannies (Dama 大妈)

According to the provisional regulations about retirement and discharge of workers approved by the State Council of China, the mandatory age for female retirement is 50 years old. The growing legion of grannies whom the government has forced into retirement in their mid-50s has fed the Guang Chang Wu ranks. These grannies mostly suffered through the Cultural Revolution and the one-child policy when they were young.

Guang Chang Wu in Jinzhou, (2015). Photography.

Conflict and Stigma over Guang Chang Wu

“Noise pollution” and “public-space occupation” have become labels of Guang Chang Wu. In 2013, an elderly man in Beijing seeking to chase off retirees dancing near his home was arrested after he fired a shotgun into the air and set three Tibetan mastiffs on the group. That same year in the city of Changchun, angry neighbors banned Guang Chang Wu from taking place in front of their residences. In 2014, in Wenzhou, residents pooled $42,300 to buy a sound system to blare warnings to dancers about violating noise-pollution laws.

Qianzhan news, (2014). *The disturbances of Guang Chang Wu.* [image] Available at: http://www.qianzhan.com/news/detail/367/140331-78360ca2_2.html [Accessed 14 Jul. 2015].

Beijing news, (2014). *The disturbances of Guang Chang Wu.* [image] Available at: http://epaper.bjnews.com.cn/html/2014-04/04/content_504187.htm?div=-1 [Accessed 14 Jul. 2015].

“Guang Chang Wu represents the collective aspect of Chinese culture, but now it seems that the overenthusiasm of participants has dealt it a harmful blow in disputes over noise and venues,” Liu Guoyong, chief of the General Administration of Sport of China’s Mass Fitness Department, told China Daily. Developed as a positive form of exercise, Guang Chang Wu has sparked heated debates within contemporary society.

Xinhua news, (2014). *Angry neighbors banned Guang Chang Wu from taking place in front of their residences.* [image] Available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/2014-10/09/c_1112756634_2.htm [accessed 20 Jul. 2015].

“When public spaces are successful […] they will increase opportunities to participate in communal activity. […] People from different cultural groups can come together in a supportive context of mutual enjoyment” (Carr, Francis, Rivlin, and Stone 1993). In China, because of the rapid urbanization process, more and more public spaces are being squeezed by development. Sufficient space for Guang Chang Wu is lacking. Many argue that these grannies monopolize public spaces and ignore others’ demand for it—that, in fact, the expanding of private space is taking up public space.

Hinews, (2013). *Dancing Grannies taking up the public space*. [image] Available at: http://www.hinews.cn/news/system/2013/12/24/016326351.shtml [Accessed 14 Dec. 2015].

Aesthetic and Moral Criticism

Besides the disturbances, Guang Chang Wu is also often considered morally and aesthetically unacceptable. According to a questionnaire about Guang Chang Wu by the South China People Weekly and the website Sina, 56 percent of those polled think that Guang Chang Wu is “funny, weird, and unreasonable”. Moral judgment is easily affected by aesthetic distaste.

163 news, (2014). *The disturbances of Guang Chang Wu*. [image] Available at: http://ent.163.com/14/0519/10/9SJQ885G00031H2L.html [Accessed 14 Dec. 2015].

Motivations for Dancing (Interviews)

1. Health and Fitness

2. Symbol of the Cultural Revolution

3. Loneliness Is an Important Reason

4. Dance Creates Alternative Social Relations

Health and Fitness

Pan Wenyuan, 65 years old:

“Square dancing is part of our daily routine; bodily exercise is very good for health.”

Li Xiulian, 54 years old:

“I feel really relaxed when I’m dancing; I think a good mood makes a good body.”

With China’s fast development, elderly people have better living quality than before, and more and more of them are becoming careful about their health. As the participants said, Guang Chang Wu keeps them active and healthy.

Hinews, (2013). *Dancing Grannies.* [image] Available at: http://www.hinews.cn/news/system/2013/12/24/016326351.shtml [Accessed 15 Aug. 2015].

Symbol of the Cultural Revolution

Liu Jilu , 66 years old:

“Guang Chang Wu reminds me of my younger years, when I did similar dances during the Cultural Revolution. I feel the same kind of spirit and emotions.”

Zhang Jierong, 63 years old:

“It always reminds us of what the Chinese leaders did for us to have a good life today and how they fought hard for ordinary people in China.”

Guang Chang Wu reminds these grannies of Mao-era collectivism at a time when old neighborhoods have been replaced with high-rise living. Guang Chang Wu shows how propaganda can seep into grannies’ minds. They are immersing themselves in the music and nostalgia of their past.

Ma Que. (2012). Revolutionary Dance in Cultural Revolution. [Blog] *163 Blog*. Available at: http://chenmodemaque.blog.163.com/blog/static/163892129201291132535l4/ [Accessed 22 Oct. 2015].

CPD news, (2014). *Beijing Guang Chang Wu 'Dama'*. [image] Available at: http://news.cpd.com.cn/n203193/c23825533/content.html [Accessed 15 Jun. 2015].

Loneliness Is an Important Reason

Zhao Fengling 56 years old:

“I felt lonely and sometimes even depressed before I joined the square-dancing group. My husband worked in another city, and my daughter got married and has her own family now. When I participate in square dancing with the other women, I feel relaxed and forget all the annoyance.”

Zhang Xiufang, 51 years old:

“I have nothing else to do but Guang Chang Wu. My husband works in another city, and my child also studies in another city, so going to dance every day as a routine is just like going to ‘work.’”

The dissemination of Guang Chang Wu is an expression of social change. Because of the one-child policy and the ongoing economic liberation, many grannies can be considered as “the first generation of lonely mothers” (Wang 2015, p. 106). They are in need of healing and find it among their peers in the dancing ranks. Meanwhile, Guang Chang Wu reflects the existing social structures and creates new possibilities.

Wang, Q. (2015). *Guang Chang Wu: An Ethnographic Study of Dance in Public Space*. Master. The Chinese University of Hong Kong. [image] Available at: http://www.academia.edu/13708792/ [Accessed 9 Jul. 2015]

Dance Creates Alternative Social Relations

Zhao Lanxing, 52 years old:

“I moved to this city just two years ago. At first I didn’t have any friends and I felt uncomfortable when I stayed at home—it was like being in jail. But now that I have met many new friends, it is much better.”

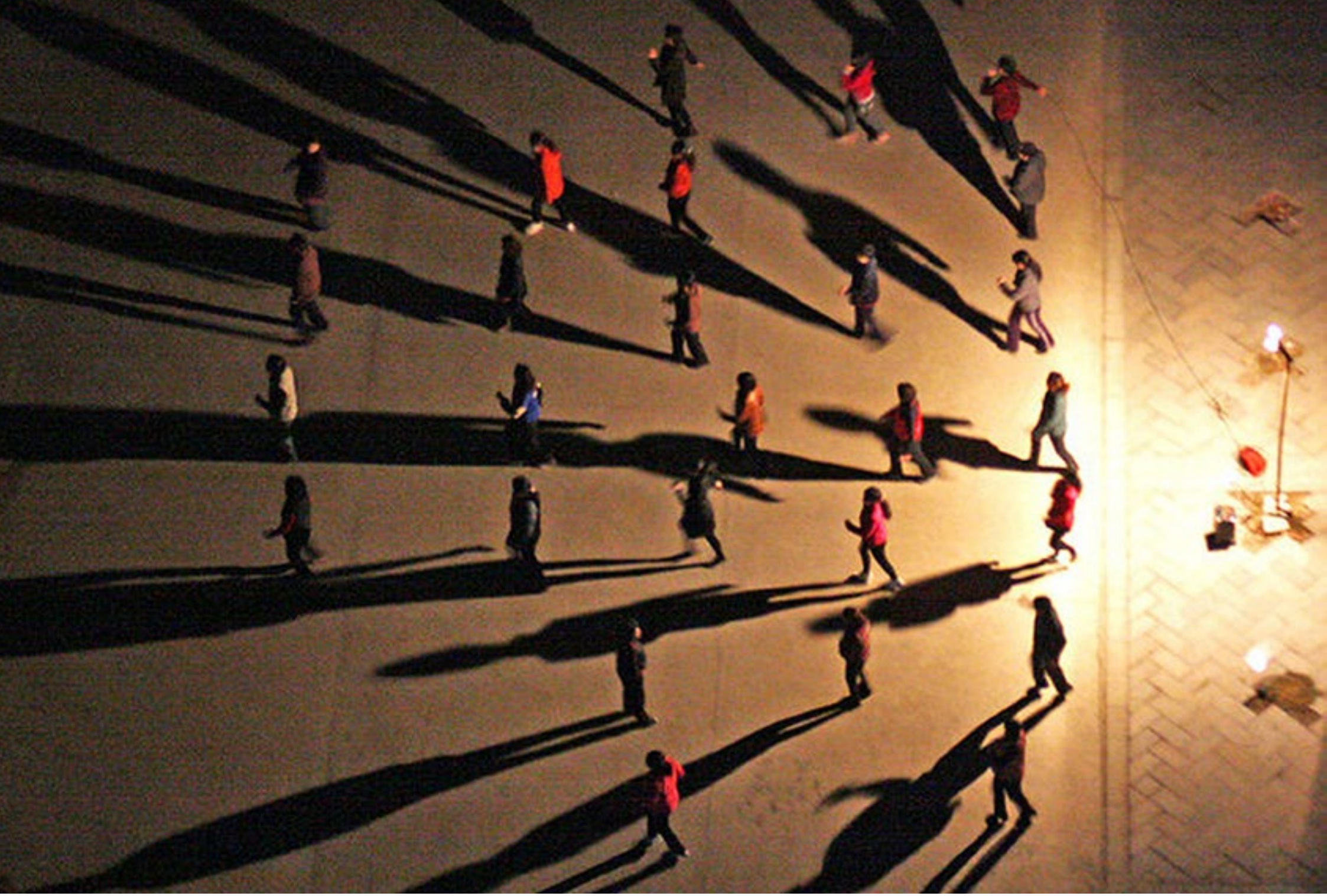
Wu Yuhua, 60 years old:

“When I was in a rural area, I knew everyone in our small town, but after one year of living in this tall building, I still don’t even know my neighbor yet.”

Loneliness is an important reason for why these grannies dance as a group. In other words, they need their own social relations. The rapid changes in Chinese society have begun to influence those of the “old generation.” These grannies have fewer and fewer choices for their sociality.

Sina weibo, (2014). *The history of Guang Chang Wu*. [image] Available at: http://www.weibo.com/p/1001603728384789249069 [Accessed 8 Dec. 2015].

The reform and opening-up policy and the resulting fast social transition gave these middle-aged women a special cultural background. "Guang Chang Wu is a complex product subject to traditional, Maoist, and Western influences. The mix has resulted in conflict and stigma" (Wang 2013, p. 132).



Beelink, (2015). *What is Guang Chang Wu*. [image] Available at: http://news.beelink.com/html/20150803/content_533989.htm [Accessed 9 Dec. 2015].

1.5 m^2

GUANG CHANG WU MONUMENT

1.5 m^2

According to statistics from the Chinese government, in 2015, the per capita sports space available for sports was 1.5 m^2. This explains how all of the benefits of Guang Chang Wu conflict with an increasing desire among many for a less chaotic urban lifestyle as public spaces are squeezed by development. “The exuberance of this communal culture is being hushed and the modern idea of what a city should be is taking its place.” (Chen 2014)

国务院关于印发全民健身计划2015的通知

国发〔2015〕5号

各省、自治区、直辖市人民政府，国务院各部委、各直属机构：

现将《全民健身计划 2015年》印发给你们，请认真贯彻执行。

国务院

二〇一五年十月五日

全民健身计划

全民健身关系人民群众身体健康和生活幸福，是综合国力和社会文明进步的重要标志，是社会主义精神文明建设的重要内容，是全面建设小康社会的重要组成部分。为进一步发展全民健身事业，广泛开展全民健身运动，加快体育强国建设进程，制定本计划。

一、指导思想

深入贯彻落实科学发展观，坚持体育事业公益性，逐步完善符合国情、比较完整、覆盖城乡、可持续的全民健身公共服务体系，保障公民参加体育健身活动的合法权益，促进全民健身与竞技体育协调发展，扩大竞技体育群众基础，丰富人民群众精神文化生活，形成健康文明的生活方式，提高全民族身体素质、健康水平和生活质量，促进人的全面发展，促进社会和谐和文明进步，努力奠定建设体育强国的坚实基础。

二、目标任务

到2015年，城乡居民体育健身意识进一步增强，参加体育锻炼的人数显著增加，身体素质明显提高，形成覆盖城乡比较健全的全民健身公共服务体系。

（一）经常参加体育锻炼人数进一步增加。城乡居民体育健身意识和科学健身素养普遍增强，体育健身成为更多人的基本生活方式。每周参加体育锻炼活动不少于3次、每次不少于30分钟、锻炼强度中等以上的人数比例达到32%以上，比2007年提高3.8个百分点；其中16岁以上（不含在校学生）的城市居民达到18%以上，农村居民达到7%以上，分别比2007年提高4.9和2.9个百分点。学生在校期间每天至少参加1小时的体育锻炼活动。提高老年人、残疾人参加体育锻炼人数比例。

（二）城乡居民身体素质进一步提高。城乡居民达到《国民体质测定标准》合格以上的人数比例明显增加。在校学生普遍达到《国家学生体质健康标准》基本要求，其中达到优

The state council and the people's republic of China, (2015). *National fitness programs of China*. [online] Available at: http://www.gov.cn [Accessed 20 Sep. 2015].

秀标准的人数比例超过20%，耐力、力量、速度等体能素质明显提高。

（三）体育健身设施有较大发展。全国各类体育场地达到120万个以上，人均体育场地面积达到1.5平方米以上。市（地）、县（区）、街道（乡镇）、社区（行政村）普遍建有体育场地，配有体育健身设施。50%以上的市（地）、县（区）建有"全民健身活动中心"。50%以上的街道（乡镇）、社区（行政村）建有便捷、实用的体育健身设施。有条件的公园、绿地、广场建有体育健身设施。改善各类公共体育设施的无障碍条件，各类体育设施的开放率和利用率有较大提高。形成各级各类体育设施布局合理、互为补充、覆盖面广、普惠性强的网络化格局。

The per capita sports space available for sports was 1.5 m²

（四）全民健身活动内容更加丰富。大力开展田径、游泳、乒乓球、羽毛球、足球、篮球、排球、网球等竞技性强、普及面广的体育运动项目，广泛组织健身操（舞）、传统武术、健身气功、太极拳（剑）、骑车、登山、跳绳、踢毽、门球等群众喜闻乐见、简便易行的健身活动。

（五）全民健身组织网络更加健全。市（地）、县（区）普遍建有体育总会、单项体育协会、行业体育协会及老年人、残疾人、少数民族、农民、学生等体育协会。社区体育俱乐部、青少年体育俱乐部、妇女健身站（点）有较大发展。80%以上的城市街道、60%以上的农村乡镇建有体育组织。城市社区普遍建有体育健身站（点），50%以上的农村社区建有体育健身站（点）。形成遍布城乡、规范有序、富有活力的社会化全民健身组织网络。

（六）全民健身指导和志愿服务队伍进一步发展。获得社会体育指导员技术等级证书的人数达到100万人以上，获得社会体育指导员国家职业资格证书的人数达到10万人以上。社会体育指导员综合素质和服务水平显著提高。广泛组织优秀运动员、教练员、学校体育教师开展义务健身辅导，培育全民健身骨干，形成组织落实、结构合理、覆盖城乡、服务到位的全民健身志愿服务队伍。

（七）科学健身指导服务不断完善。大力宣传推广科学健身方法，积极开展体质测定、运动能力评估。通过对公民进行日常体质测试，依据个人体质状况提供有针对性的科学健身指导服务，增强全民健身的吸引力，提高全民健身质量和水平。

（八）全民健身服务业发展壮大。形成规范有序的体育健身休闲市场，城乡居民体育健身消费意愿明显增强，体育健身服务从业人员较大增加，培育和形成一批实力雄厚、技术力量强的体育健身服务企业和品牌。研发推广适宜青少年、老年人、残疾人健身的便于进入家庭的健身设备器材。

三、工作措施

The state council and the people's republic of China, (2015). *National fitness programs of China.* [online] Available at: http://www.gov.cn [Accessed 20 Sep. 2015].

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Alois Riegl defined a monument as follows: “A monument in its oldest and most original sense is a human creation, erected for the specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events alive in the minds of future generations” (Alois Riegl 1903).

Commemorative values of the Moument

Age Value

The age value of a monument reveals itself at first glance in the monument's outmoded appearance.

Historical Value

The historical value of a monument is based on the very specific yet individual stage the monument represents in the development of human creation in a particular field.

Deliberate Commemorative value

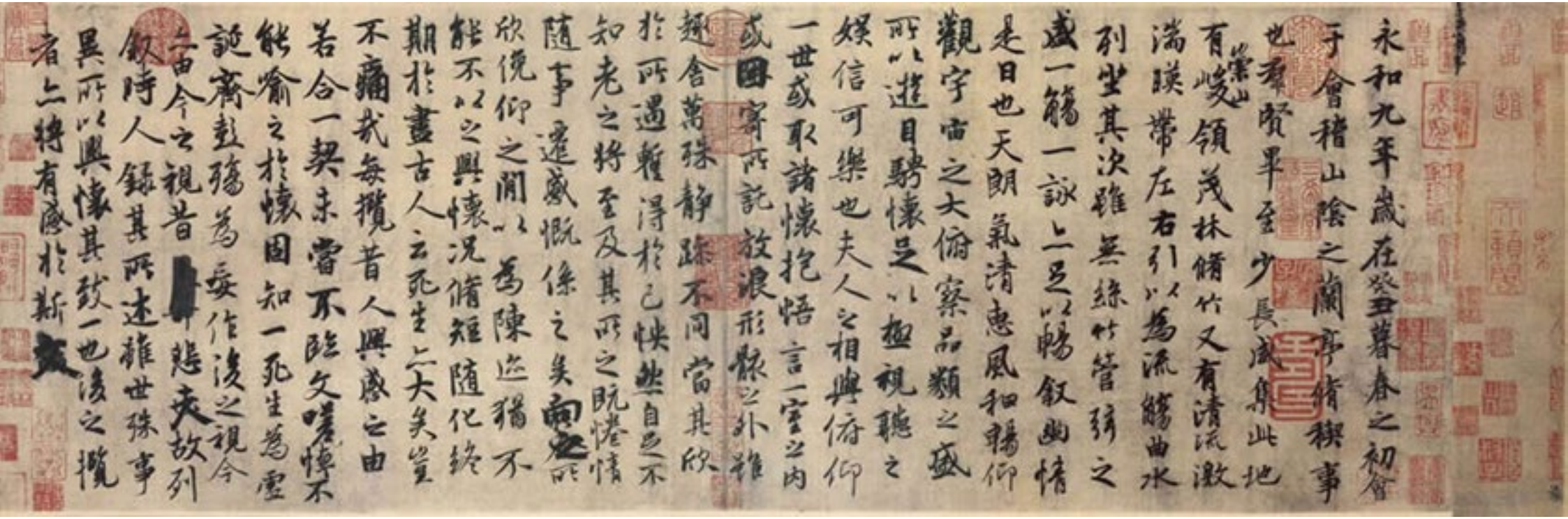
In contrast to age value, which appreciates the past for its own sake, historical value has had the tendency to select a particular moment from the developmental history of the past and to place it before our eyes as if it were part of the present.

Chinese Monument

In China, a monument is a stone tablet constructed to commemorate a celebrity or an event. In the past, such monuments mostly gave priority to a calligraphic inscription written by the current emperor, which let people remember the past and the contribution that the emperor made to the nation. So the characters have a close connection to power. The calligraphy and characters are at the core of traditional Chinese culture.

Tian kong. (2011). Sheng De Monument. [Bolg] *Sina Blog*. Available at: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_507392eb0100s7mf.html [Accessed 23 Nov. 2015].

CNR, (2013). *Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge Monument*. [image] Available at: http://travel.cnr.cn/list/201312/t20131226_514496969.shtml [Accessed 23 Nov. 2015].



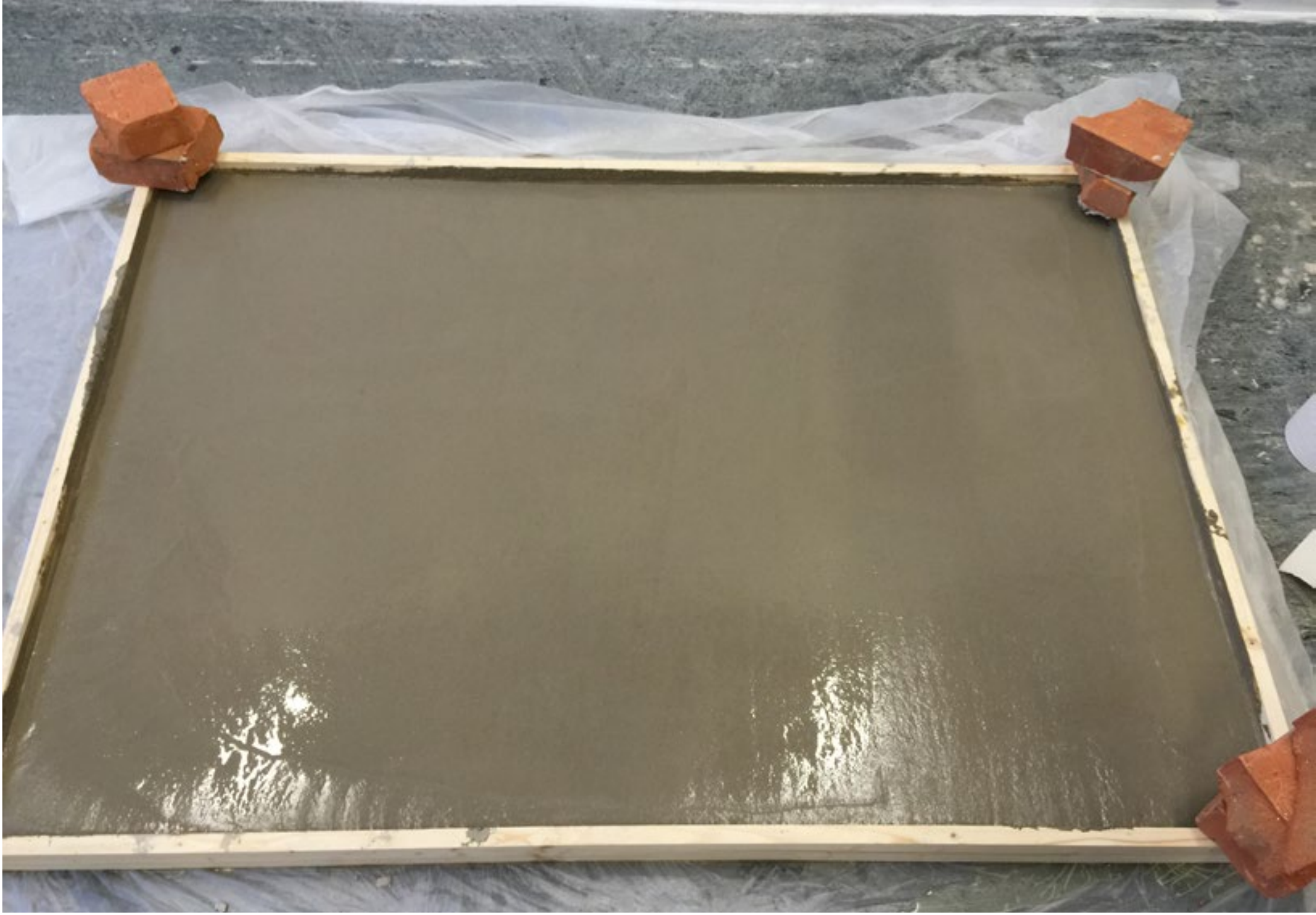
永和九年歲在癸丑暮春之初會于會稽山陰之蘭亭脩禊事也羣賢畢至少長咸集此地有崇山峻領茂林脩竹又有清流激湍映帶左右引以爲流觴曲水列坐其次雖無絲竹管弦之盛一觴一詠亦足以暢敘幽情是日也天朗氣清惠風和暢仰觀宇宙之大俯察品類之盛所以遊目騁懷足以極視聽之娛信可樂也夫人之相與俯仰一世或取諸懷抱悟言一室之内或因寄所託放浪形骸之外雖趣舍萬殊靜躁不同當其欣於所遇暫得於己快然自足不知老之將至及其所之既倦情隨事遷感慨係之矣向之所欣俯仰之間以爲陳迹猶不能不以之興懷況脩短隨化終期於盡古人云死生亦大矣豈不痛哉每攬昔人興感之由若合一契未嘗不臨文嗟悼不能喻之於懷固知一死生爲虛誕齊彭殤爲妄作後之視今亦由今之視昔悲夫故列敘時人録其所述雖世殊事異所以興懷其致一也後之攬者亦將有感於斯文

The paper, (2015). *Lan Ting Ji Xu, Calligraphy, Wang Xi Zhi.* [image] Available at: http://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1292390 [Accessed 25 Nov. 2015].

1.5m^2 Concrete Tablet

In 2014, the total global demand for cement was 4.18 billion tons. In that year, China consumed 2.47 billion tons of cement, an amount that will increase in 2015. (China Cement Research Institute, 2014).

China consumes more than 50 percent of the world's cement. The installation uses concrete as its material to reflect China's rapid urbanization process.



Concrete Tablet, Angewandte Kunst, (2015). Photography.

These Guang Chang Wu grannies, who have a special social and cultural background, “write” their presence with their dance steps that belong to their age; the footprint they unintentionally but effectively leave in public space is their dialogue with urbanization and social development, just like the “unintentional” inscriptions that give “age value” to a monument.

Guang Chang Wu Monument, Angewandte Kunst, (2015). Photography.

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Josh Chin 2014, “In China, Retirees Dancing in Public Raise a Ruckus,” Wall Street Journal, March 26, http://wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304250204579433473042852570.