

Acknowledgments

It is now nearly a decade since I first noticed the rich afterlives of historic photographs in China and began to wonder what these images might mean in the here and now, and why they have been repurposed in such profusion by makers of culture. The more I looked for these images, the more I found. But it took me some time to understand that the stories they told were essentially about those strange limbo histories that are remembered all too well but that people are not supposed to discuss. It was in many ways due to the insights of others that I began to make sense of this, and I am very happy to have the chance to thank those people now.

Several of the artists whose work I discuss in this book kindly submitted to my questions, and I am very grateful to Badiucao, Lily and Honglei, Sheng Qi, Xu Weixin, Zhang Dali, and the late Chen Shaoxiong for so freely sharing their thoughts with me. Those interviews were inspirational for me.

Many friends and colleagues invited me to give talks on parts of this book while it was in progress, and they offered feedback that was often transformative. I thank Kevin Cawley, K. C. Choi, Craig Clunas, Heather Inwood, Francesca Kaufman, Paola Iovene, Richard Howells, Erin Huang, Song Hwee Lim, Nikky Lin, Barbara Mittler, Ankhi Mukherjee, Laikwan Pang, Carles Prado-Fonts, Carlos Rojas, Lionel Ruffel, Shu-mei Shih, Mark Smith, Hans van de Ven, and Julian Ward. Nicole Huang, K. C. Lo, Wang Youqin, and Wu Hung kindly gave me materials or put me in touch with artists. Tarryn Chun, Peter Ditmanson, Michel Hockx, Chloe Starr, and Patricia Thornton generously read parts of the manuscript and gave me illuminating comments. Many of these same people, as well as Chow Yiu Fai, Rossella Ferrari, Wendy Larson, Xiao Liu, Angus Lockyer, Chris Lupke, Jason McGrath, Xavier Ortells-Nicolau, Nicolai

Volland, and Jiwei Xiao, have offered me advice, kindness, and ideas both recently and over the years. My colleagues in Oxford, particularly Rosanna Gosi, Hu Bo, Pamela Hunt, Dirk Meyer, and Justin Winslett, have made our department a warm and collegial place. Jonathan Service very gently told me where I was going wrong with this book a few years back, and he has been an exceptional friend and confidant ever since.

I thank the Art and Humanities Research Council in the U.K. for a grant that supported both research leave and extensive fieldwork in China; the British Inter-University China Centre for funding two international conferences related to this project, one on “Photography and the Making of Modern Chinese History” in 2012 and the other on “Digital Culture in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan” in 2015; and Rana Mitter, Director of the China Centre at Oxford, for providing support for several events connected to my research. An earlier version of chapter 4 appeared in the *Journal of Visual Culture*. I thank the publishers for permission to reuse that material.

At Duke University Press, Ken Wissoker has been an insightful, open-minded, and incisive editor, and Josh Tranen and Jessica Ryan have been exemplary in their efficiency and advice. I owe special thanks to Carlos Rojas, who as series editor really championed this book—putting it through his own remarkably rigorous review, zeroing in on problems, offering terrific ideas, and giving much-appreciated encouragement.

My close friends and family have sustained me during the time I have spent working on this book. Thank you to Andrew, Nick, and especially Batul for over four decades of friendship. Finally, I am more grateful than I can say to my parents and sister, Ruth, who have supported me without end; to my sons, Sam, Max, and Alex, who have given me so many happy distractions from this project; and to my husband, Tom, who has always had faith in me and who has been the best possible companion throughout. I dedicate this book to him.