

CHINA INSIDE OUT

What is the true story of contemporary Chinese literature? What role do poets and novelists play in representing their country to their fellow citizens, and to the outside world? And how accurate are the stories that we tell about China in the West? In a month when China is the Market Focus country at the London Book Fair, English PEN, the Reading Agency and Free Word host a fascinating day-long programme of debates, readings, film screenings and music which will aim to improve our understanding of the freedom to write, and the freedom to read, in China.

9am – Arrival and Welcome

9.30am – 11am Writing China

What is life really like for the writers of China? What stories do Chinese writers tell about their country and who are they writing for? How do the realities of Chinese writing differ from Western assumptions? Acclaimed writer, architect and director Ou Ning and fiction writer **Chen Xiwo** share their stories from inside China. Chaired by **Julia Lovell**.

11am – 11.15am Break

11.15am – 1pm Freedom to Write?

Is it always possible to say what you mean in China? The consequences for writers who choose to openly tackle controversial topics in their writing can be very severe. Ma Jian and **Li Jianhong** are both writers forced into exile as a direct result of their writing. They'll be discussing the constraints on Chinese writers, as well as the work of the Independent Chinese PEN Centre. Chaired by **Jonathan Heawood**.

1pm – 2.30pm – LUNCH

In the afternoon we have a series of seminars for you to choose from. From 2.30 – 3.30pm you can choose from seminars A, B & C. Then From 3.45 – 4.45pm our guest authors will be reading from their work and taking your questions in Meet the Author sessions D, E, F or G. Seminars will be introduced and 'steered' by a guest host but these are open discussion forums in which we encourage you to bring your thoughts, opinions and questions along with you to share and debate.

2.30PM – 3.30PM

SEMINAR A: Translating China

Translator **Nicky Harman** and founder of *Paper Republic* **Eric Abrahamsen** discuss the issues around translating and publishing Chinese literature. How can readers and publishers find out about great writing in Chinese and how can it be brought to a wider audience?

SEMINAR B: Reporting China

Reporting China, from both inside and outside the country, comes with its own special challenges. **Isabel Hilton**, founder and editor of chinadialogue.net, and **Deng Zhixin**, former editor at *Southern Metropolis Daily*, will be sharing their experience and offering insights into the world of Chinese journalism.

SEMINAR C: Marginal Voices

Chinese identity is an often fragmented and disputed idea. Professor **Harriet Evans'** work focuses on the position of women in Chinese society. **Kaiser Abdurusul ÖzHun** is President of the Uyghur PEN centre. They'll be discussing groups whose voices often go unnoticed in the drive towards modernisation in China.

3.45pm – 4.45pm

MEET THE AUTHOR Our acclaimed guest authors will give readings from their work and take questions

Session A: Diane Wei Liang Author of the Mei Wang detective novels including *Paper Butterfly*.

Session B: Ma Jian Author of books including *Red Dust* and *Beijing Coma*.

Session C: Kerry Young Author of the Costa First Book Award shortlisted novel *Pao*.

Session D: Ling Zhang Author of five novels including *Mail-Order Bride* and *Gold Mountain Blues*.

5pm – 6pm Meishi Street

Directed by **Ou Ning**, Meishi Street was made in 2006 and follows a group of Beijing residents protesting the planned destruction of their street prior to the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The filmmakers gave video cameras to the subjects and they were able to capture exclusive footage of the eviction process, allowing them a role in authoring their own stories. We'll be screening a short extract from the film, which will be followed by a Q&A session with filmmakers Ou Ning and **Jingjing Xie**.

6pm – Visible Chinese

Join us for a drink and an informal chance to discuss the day's activities. Acclaimed poet **Yang Lian** and translators **Nicky Harman** and **Stephen Watts** will be reading a short selection of Chinese poetry, including work from the forthcoming Bloodaxe anthology *Jade Ladder*. **Zoe Baxter** of Resonancefm's *Lucky Cat* show will be closing out the day playing us some of the best in contemporary Chinese music.

ENGLISH
PEN

“
FREEWORD
”

THE
READING
AGENCY

PARTICIPANTS

Kaiser Abdurusul ÖzHun is an artist and art appraiser specializing in Silk Road art, as well as a writer and literary critic focusing on Uyghur culture. He was born October 11, 1969, in Atush, East Turkistan (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomy region). He is a 1994 graduate of the Fine Arts Department of Xinjiang Pedagogic University and MA of FA central art Academy. From 1994 - 1999 he worked as a documentary and film producer and journalist at Xinjiang Central TV. Since 1999 he has undertaken graduate studies in languages and fine arts in Malaysia, Sweden and the UK. He is the founder of Uyghur PEN and was General Secretary of the Uyghur PEN Centre from 2006-2009. He was elected President of Uyghur PEN in August 2009.



Eric Abrahamsen is a literary translator and publishing consultant who has lived in Beijing since 2001. He is the recipient of translation grants from PEN and the US National Endowment for the Arts; his most recent translation is "Notes of a Civil Servant", by Wang Xiaofang, to be published in late 2012. He runs Paper Republic (<http://paper-republic.org/>), a company that promotes Chinese literature abroad, is one of the editors of Pathlight magazine (<http://paper-republic.org/pathlight/>), a new literary journal of translated Chinese fiction, and has written commentary on Chinese culture and society for the International Herald Tribune and Foreign Policy.



Flora Drew is the translator of Ma Jian's *Red Dust*, *The Noodle Maker*, *Stick Out Your Tongue* and *Beijing Coma*, and is currently working on the translation of Ma Jian's latest novel.



Professor Harriet Evans is the former Head of the University of Westminster's Chinese Section, the current co-ordinator of Asia Studies research at CSD, and of the MA and MPhil/PhD programmes in Contemporary Chinese Cultural Studies and International Studies. Her publications include *Women and Sexuality in China: Discourses of Female Sexuality and Gender since 1949* (Polity Press, 1997), and *Picturing Power in the People's Republic of China: Posters of the Cultural Revolution* (co-edited with Stephanie Donald, Rowman and Littlefield, 1999); *The Subject of Gender: Daughters and Mothers in Urban China* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2007). She was President of the British Association for Chinese Studies (2002-5), has served on the Executive Committee of the Universities' China Committee in London, and was recently invited to join the editorial board of *The China Quarterly*.



Ophelia Field is a former Director of English PEN's Writers in Prison Programme, before which she worked in the refugee and human rights field for over a decade, primarily as a policy analyst and consultant to the European Council on Refugees and Exiles, Human Rights Watch and UNHCR. She is the author of two British historical biographies, teaches biographical writing, and regularly reviews both fiction and non-fiction for the *Sunday Telegraph* and *Observer*, amongst others. She is currently collecting a library of international essays for a new British publisher, Notting Hill Editions.



Nicky Harman lives in the UK. She has worked as a literary translator for a dozen years and, until the spring of 2011, also lectured at Imperial College London. Now, in addition to translating, she organizes translation-focused events and mentors new translators from Chinese. She led the Chinese-English group at the British Centre for Literary Translation Summer School from 2009 to 2011 and in 2011 was Translator-in-Residence at the London Free Word Centre. Authors she has translated include Zhang Ling (*Gold Mountain Blues*); Yan Geling (*Flowers of War*), Han Dong (*A Phone Call from Dalian: Collected Poems*, and *Banished! A Novel*), Hong Ying (*K - The Art of Love*) and Xinran.



Jonathan Heawood has been Director of English PEN since 2005, having previously worked at the Fabian Society and The Observer. He has led English PEN's campaign to reform English libel law, which was shortlisted for a Liberty Human Rights Award, and he sat on the Ministry of Justice Libel Reform Working Group. Jonathan wrote the Introduction to George Orwell: the Observer Years and contributed an article on censorship to the Blackwell Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Fiction and a chapter on offence to a forthcoming volume on Religion and the News. He has a PhD on seventeenth-century closet drama from Cambridge University.



Isabel Hilton is a London based writer and broadcaster, and founder and editor of www.chinadialogue.net, an innovative, fully bilingual Chinese English website devoted to building a shared approach on climate change and environmental issues with China. Based in London, with offices in Beijing, Delhi and San Francisco, *chinadialogue* launched in 2006 and is now recognised as a unique, independent source of information on



environmental and climate issues, widely read in China, South Asia and in more than 200 countries around the world. She was appointed OBE in 2009 for her contribution to raising environmental awareness in China.

Ma Jian was born in Qingdao, China in 1953. He is the author of *Red Dust*, *The Noodle Maker* and *Stick Out Your Tongue*. His most recent novel, *Beijing Coma* examines the Tiananmen Massacre of 1989, and was awarded the TR Fyvel Book Award and the Athens Prize for Literature. His books have been banned in China since 1987, and since 2011 he has also been barred from entering the country. He now lives in London.



Li Jianhong (pen-name 'Xiao Qiao') was born in Anhui Province, China in 1968. Li was a leading Shanghai-based dissident and advocate for freedom of expression in China before 2008. In August 2002 she founded and edited an independent Chinese website Qimeng Luntan (Enlightenment Forum), followed by Ziyou Zhongguo Luntan (Free China Forum), both of which were blocked by the Chinese authorities. She has been subject to intense police harassment since January 2005 for her critical writings published online and peaceful dissident activities. She has suffered numerous brief detentions and interrogations, repeated periods of house arrest, and several dismissals from posts of employment. She was awarded the 2007 Lin Zhao Memorial Award by Independent Chinese PEN (ICPC). In April 2008 she was banned from returning to China after spending time as a Guest Writer of Stockholm. Her application for refugee status was approved by the Swedish Immigration Board in December 2009 and she now works as co-ordinator for the Independent Chinese Centre of PEN Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC).



Xie Jingjing works as Film Curator at China Culture Connect, the organisation responsible for the 1st London Chinese Visual Festival in 2011. Before moving to London in 2009, she worked for four years as the Screening Programmer and Assistant to Festival Director at Guangzhou International Documentary Film Festival, China. XieJingjing studied English Language and Culture for both her BA and MA degrees in China. She has been working as a freelance translator and interpreter for over a decade, mainly in film subtitling and art project translation. Her most recent subtitling work includes the films *Dragon Boat* (2010), *Father's Journey* (2008) and *Transitional Period* (2008).



Yang Lian, a prize winning Chinese poet, was born in Switzerland, grew up in China and now lives in London. He has published 10 volumes of poetry, 2 volumes of prose as well as 1 volume of essays. His work has been translated into more than 20 languages and he has travelled around the world to give readings and lectures. His representative works include *YI, Where the Sea Stands Still*; *Concentric Circles*; *Riding Pisces: Poems from Five Collections*; *Lee Valley Poems...* etc. His works have been reviewed as "like MacDiarmid meets Rilke with Samurai sword drawn!", "one of the most representative voices of Chinese literature" and "one of the great world poets of our era". Yang Lian was elected a board member of International PEN in 2008.

Julia Lovell teaches modern Chinese history and literature at Birkbeck College, University of London. She is the author of *The Politics of Cultural Capital: China's Quest for a Nobel Prize in Literature*, *The Great Wall: China Against the World* and *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China*. Her several translations of modern Chinese fiction include Han Shaogong's *A Dictionary of Maqiao* (winner of 2011 Newman Prize for Chinese Literature), Zhu Wen's *I Love Dollars*, and Lu Xun's *The Real Story of Ah-Q*, and *Other Tales of China*.



Ou Ning's cultural practices encompass multiple disciplines. As an activist, he founded U-thèque, an independent film and video organization and Bishan Commune, an intellectual group who devote themselves to rural reconstruction movement in China; As an editor and graphic designer, he is known for his seminal book *New Sound of Beijing*; As a curator, he initiated the biennale exhibition *Get It Louder* (2005, 2007, 2010) and launched the sound project in China Power Station, a touring exhibition co-organized by Serpentine Gallery, London and Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo; As an artist, he is known for the urban research projects such as *San Yuan Li*, commissioned by 50th Venice Biennale (2003), and *Meishi Street*, commissioned by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes(2005). He is a frequent contributor of various magazines, books and exhibition catalogues and has lectured around the world. He's based in Beijing, and is the director of Shao Foundation and member of Asian Art Council 2011 at Guggenheim Museum.



Rebecca Swift worked at Virago Press before co-founding The Literary Consultancy, the UK's leading editorial assessment service, in 1996. She has published as editor two books with Chatto & Windus, poems in various anthologies including *Vintage New Writing Six*, an opera libretto 'Spirit Child' (Jenni Roditi & Lontano Ensemble, Ocean, Hackney 2001) and *Dickinson: Poetic Lives* (Hesperus Press 2011). She is also a Hawthornden Fellow and a trustee of Writers' Centre Norwich and The Maya Centre.



Diane Wei Liang was born in Beijing. She spent part of her childhood with her parents in a labour camp in a remote region of China. A graduate of Beijing University, Diane took part in Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. Diane has a MBA and a PhD in Business Administration from Carnegie Mellon University, USA. She was an award-winning business professor in the US and the UK. Diane is the author of *Lake With No Name* (memoir) and three novels: *The Eye of Jade*, *Paper Butterfly* and *The House of Golden Spirit*. Her novels have been translated into over 20 languages. She lives in London.



Chen Xiwo (陈希我) teaches comparative literature at Fuzhou Normal University and has published seven major novels. Due to his refusal to compromise about the style or content of his writing, it was nearly 20 years before his books could be published in China. In 2010, Asia Sentinel described Chen Xiwo as 'one of China's most outspoken voices on freedom of expression for writers.' One recurring theme in Chen's fiction is the relationship between sexual and social corruption and perhaps his most famous work, the novella 'I Love My Mum,' (遮蔽,) explores incest and S&M as metaphors for a dysfunctional society. His works have been nominated for several prizes and in 2001 he won the Chinese Literature Media Prize, with *Dissipation* (我们的苟且.). Today Chen Xiwo is one of contemporary China's most acclaimed authors. In 2010, an English translation of 'I Love My Mum' was released by Make-Do Publishing. His novel "Irritation" (抓痒) was published in a French translation by Editions Reflets de Chine (2009.)



Kerry Young was born in Kingston, Jamaica, to a Chinese father and mother of mixed Chinese-African heritage. She came to England at the age of ten. Kerry's background is in youth work where she worked both locally and nationally, and has also written extensively. She has Master's degrees in organisation development and creative writing, and a PhD in youth work. Kerry's first novel *Pao*, inspired by her early life with her father, was published by Bloomsbury and Bloomsbury US in 2011. It was shortlisted for the Costa First Novel Award in 2011. She is currently completing work on *Gloria* her second novel for Bloomsbury.



Ling Zhang was born and raised in China before she moved to Canada in 1986. She obtained a B.A. in English Literature at Fudan University in 1983, a M.A. in English Literature at University of Calgary in 1988, and a M.A. in Communication Disorders at University of Cincinnati in 1993. In the course of past fourteen years, Ling has published five novels, including *Mail-Order Bride* and *Gold Mountain Blues*, and four collections of novellas and short stories. In 2009, Ling's novella, *The Aftershock*, was made into China's first Imax movie achieving huge box office success. Ling's literary works have won her numerous prestigious awards including the title of Novelist of the Year (2010) by Chinese Media Literature Awards.



Deng Zhixin has served as a senior editorial-page editor of Southern Metropolis Daily/NanfangDushiBao for the past eight years. NanfangDushiBao is a leading mass daily published in Guangdong Province, China, with a well established reputation for investigative journalism and provocative commentary. He joined NanfangDushiBao in August 2003, after his previous newspaper, *21st Century World Herald*, was shut down by the authorities because of its outspoken call for political reform. Deng has spoken about China new media and internet issues at Hong Kong University. He is also a contributing writer to various publications including Hong Kong based newspaper Mingpao with a focus on Chinese new media development. He received a Jefferson Fellowship in Fall 2006 and he is currently undertaking postgraduate study on nationalism and ethnicity at London School of Economics and Political Science as a Chevening scholar.

