

山水

SHANSHUI

Preface

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PREFACE

If the mountain once stood as a monument to permanence, silence, and spiritual ascent, the waters that surround, carve, and sustain it tell a different story—one of movement, adaptation, and interconnection. At a time when the certainties of the Anthropocene give way to the unpredictability of ecological collapse, the Shanshui Projects' 2nd International Symposium, *The Shape of Water*, invites us to turn our gaze from the peaks to the rivers, from the solid to the fluid. Water, in its endless metamorphoses, becomes both metaphor and material for rethinking our place within the natural world.

Unlike the mountain's vertical defiance of the sky, water flows horizontally, eroding boundaries and dissolving hierarchies. It is the principle of life, the medium of memory, and the mirror of climatic turmoil. As glaciers retreat, seas rise, and droughts reshape landscapes, water confronts us with the urgency of ecological justice while offering a poetics of becoming—a reminder that form is never fixed, but perpetually in relation to force, pressure, and time.

This volume brings together multidisciplinary contributions that explore water not only as a subject of artistic and literary representation, but as a catalyst for ethical and ecological imagination. From the rhythms of tides to the architecture of rivers, from ancestral hydrologies to contemporary art practices, the essays and artworks gathered here trace the contours of a new aesthetic sensibility—one that embraces uncertainty, interdependence, and the wisdom of flow.

Organized by Shanshui Projects in collaboration with the College of Fine Arts of Huaqiao University and the Academy for West-Eastern Dialogue of Cultures (Akademie für west-östlichen Dialog der Kulturen), this second symposium continues our commitment to bridging cultures, disciplines, and ways of knowing. If the first symposium sought a poetics of silence in the mountain, this second edition asks: what might a poetics of fluidity teach us about survival, care, and co-creation?

Water does not speak in monologues; it murmurs, surges, and seeps. It carries voices across continents, mingling the local with the global, the past with the possible. In this spirit, we offer these proceedings as an invitation to listen—to the currents of rivers, the whispers of rain, and the quiet persistence of life in the margins. For in the shape of water, we may yet find the shape of a more responsive, more humble, and more relational future.

The Editors
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