

## ARTS &amp; BOOKS

THEY HELPED  
THE L.A. PHIL  
TAKE SHAPE

CLASSICAL  
MUSIC, E4

'MERRY'  
TIME, BUT  
NOT IN  
LONDON  
THEATER



A VISIT TO  
THE 'GREAT  
HOUSE' OF  
NICOLE  
KRAUSS  
BOOKS, E11



## ON VIEW

## China's sea changes

KAREN WADA

Sometimes, a litchi box is more than a litchi box. In a designer's hands, it can become a work of art, a cultural artifact or a piece of propaganda.

"Graphic design can be put to a number of services and uses," says Bridget Bray, assistant curator at the Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena, where an exhibition explores "the ways such artistry and relativity were in full effect in 20th century China."

"China Modern: Designing Popular Culture 1910-1970" features more than 160 posters, porcelain figures and everyday objects produced, says Bray, as the country moved from imperial dynastic rule to Western-influenced capitalism to communism under Mao Tse-tung. "There are limited times in history when such a large populace undergoes such a sea change in such a compressed period. The takeaway for our visitors is understanding how dynamic China is and how that shift from capitalism to communism felt day to day as seen in people's homes and through graphic designers whose goal was to sell something, either products or politics."

The show, which closes Feb. 6, was inspired by the 2004 book "Made in China" by Reed Darmon with assistance from Kalim Winata. Darmon, an Oregon collector and designer, lent many of the items on display. Winata, a San Francisco artist and independent curator, serves as guest curator.

"China Modern" examines advertising and packaging in Shanghai in the 1920s and '30s when foreign styles and lifestyles were promoted with images that blended Western marketing and Chinese aesthetics. One of the best-known examples is the *modeng xiaofei* ("modern miss"), the bobbed-hair beauty who adorned calendar posters and cosmetics containers.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the emphasis shifted from merchandise to Communism and Mao—who appeared on seemingly everything, including posters and teapots. Young women now were depicted as revolutionary heroines happily toiling away, often in jobs traditionally held by men.

The exhibition ends with a look at contemporary takes on retro themes by Asians and non-Asians, including Alan Chan's multimedia pieces, a Vivienne Tam textile and a Shepard Fairey print. "The Shanghai and communist-era styles were extremely strong," says Winata. "It's hard for a Chinese artist today not to have been exposed to these images. Even those not in China have found meaning in them."

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'HEROINE': Sculpture from 1960s shows a happy woman.



LITCHI BOX: A design from the 1930s and '40s reflects a Western influence.



ALBUM: In 1966, the shift away from merchandise and to Communism was well-established.

## JACKET COPY

## Filmland horror stories

Netflix's local feature shows what people in your city are watching more than in any other city, and right now, "Tales From the Script" tops the Los Angeles list.

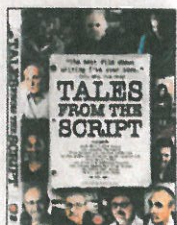
Released in 2009, "Tales From the Script" is a documentary that features working screenwriters talking about what it takes to be a screenwriter—sure, there's some craft, but the real attraction may be the Hollywood horror stories.

Screenwriters who appear in the film include Paul Schrader, author of "Taxi Driver" and "Raging Bull"; director John Carpenter, who scripted "Halloween"; Shane Black, who had a success with "Lethal Weapon" and less with "The Last Boy Scout"; Guinevere Turner, who co-wrote "The Notorious Bettie Page" and "American Psycho" with director Mary Harron (and a start from Bret Easton Ellis); and has horror stories from "BloodRayne"; Frank Darabont, who adapted "The Shawshank Redemption" from the Stephen King short story; and William Goldman, the author of "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," "Marathon Man," "All the President's Men" and "The Princess Bride."

For people who want more Goldman, he's also the author of "Adventures in the Screen Trade," one of the seminal works of Hollywood tale-telling.

There's even a book version of the film—"Tales From the Script: 50 Hollywood Screenwriters Share Their Stories"—co-edited by the documentary's director, Peter Hanson, and its writer, Paul Robert Herman.

—CAROLYN KELLOGG



DVD: Top writers offer tales from the trenches.