

**ERC Starting Grant 2020
Research proposal [Part B1]**

**New Forms of Calligraphy in China:
A Contemporary Culture Mirror**

WRITE

Cover Page:

- Name of the Principal Investigator (PI): **Adriana lezzi**
- Name of the PI's host institution for the project: **Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna, Dipartimento di Interpretazione e Traduzione (DIT).**
- Proposal duration in months: **60 months**

Calligraphy is a central tenet of Chinese civilization. The whole history of China is strictly linked to the history of its writing and calligraphy. In contemporary times Calligraphy has undergone a radical change and it has evolved into new forms in all fields of visual and performing arts. WRITE will explore how all these forms emerged in: (F1) "fine and contemporary arts" where it became a naïf painting made of pictographic shapes of characters, an abstract combination of dots and lines, a "light-calli-photograph," an artistic video based on digital strokes; (F2) decorative and applied arts, where the characters lost their connection with the linguistic meaning to become decorative elements used for commercial scopes or to design architectures; (F3) performing arts, where the rhythm, dynamism and harmonic movement of calligraphy became a choreographic gesture of a contemporary ballet or an improvised jazz song; (F4) graffiti art, where the presence of calligraphy along the streets evolved from Maoist propaganda posters into graffiti pieces made of wild-style characters or cursive tags. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, WRITE will analyze how these new forms have been transforming not only the creative practice of contemporary artists but also the language about calligraphy and art (F5/F6), reflecting new socio-political (F7) and economic (F8) orders. WRITE will examine the innovative ways in which these new forms of calligraphy have responded to, subverted or reinterpreted traditional idioms to define a modern artistic identity that exists comfortably within the global art world while remaining indelibly Chinese. By looking at contemporary calligraphy, WRITE will reveal how these new forms powerfully resonate with China's rich and enduring cultural tradition and at the same time mirror the sweeping social and economic changes that have taken place in China during the last four decades.