



# **The Other Kang Youwei: Calligrapher, Art Activist, and Aesthetic Reformer in Modern China (Modern Asian Art and Visual Culture)**

*Aida Yuen Wong*

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*The Other Kang Youwei* is the first in-depth study of the art historical importance of Kang Youwei (1858-1927). The most prominent constitutional monarchist who served as Emperor Guangxu's advisor during the Hundred Days Reform of 1898, he has been discussed in previous scholarship largely as a political figure. Less well known are his achievements in calligraphy and calligraphy theory (he wrote the most comprehensive and widely-read guide to the Stele School in his day), as well as his efforts in making art a powerful instrument for national transformation. He advocated East-West synthesis, especially the adoption of Renaissance plasticity and Song Dynasty-style verisimilitude. This book evaluates his extensive and controversial impact on pictorial realism in a variety of genres: human figures, horses, landscapes, and bird-and-flower subjects (the last developing in close step with Japanese trends). Besides providing an objective assessment of his legacy in the art world, *The Other Kang Youwei* offers a rare integrated treatment of Chinese calligraphy, painting, and art theory of the twentieth century."

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