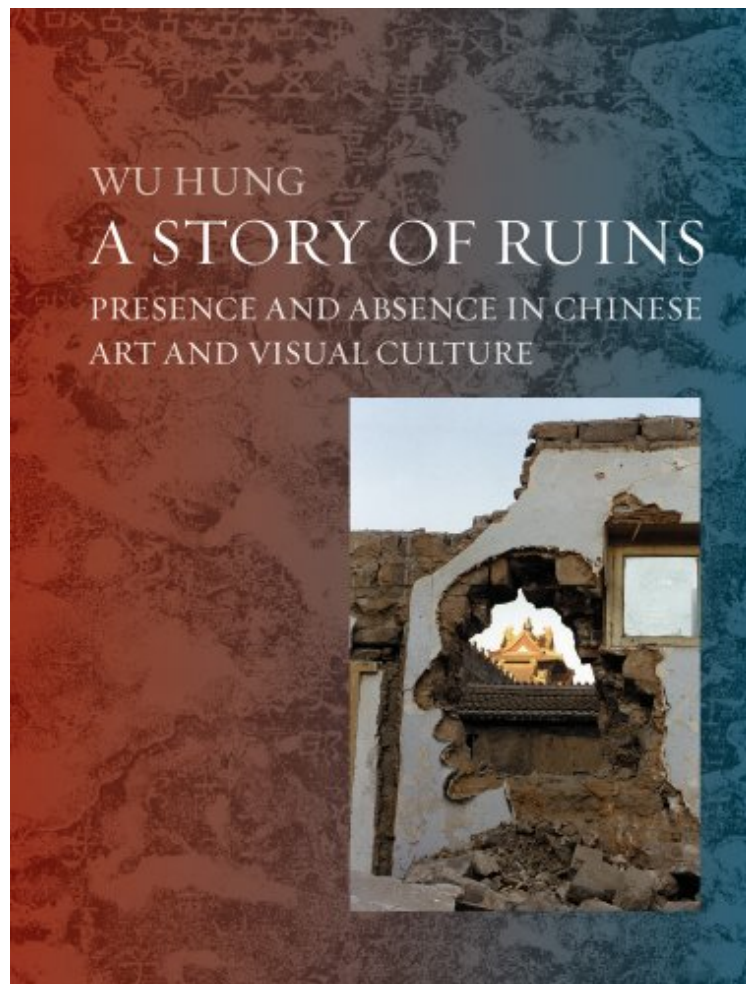


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# A Story of Ruins: Presence and Absence in Chinese Art and Visual Culture

Wu Hung

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This richly illustrated book examines the changing significance of ruins as vehicles for cultural memory in Chinese art and visual culture from ancient times to the present. The story of ruins in China is different from but connected to 'ruin culture' in the West. This book explores indigenous Chinese concepts of ruins and their visual manifestations, as well as the complex historical interactions between China and the West since the eighteenth century. Wu Hung leads us through an array of traditional and contemporary visual materials, including painting,

architecture, photography, prints and cinema. *A Story of Ruins* shows how ruins are integral to traditional Chinese culture in both architecture and pictorial forms. It traces the changes in their representation over time, from indigenous methods of recording damage and decay in ancient China, to realistic images of architectural ruins in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to the strong interest in urban ruins in contemporary China, as shown in the many artworks that depict demolished houses and decaying industrial sites. The result is an original interpretation of the development of Chinese art, as well as a unique contribution to global art history.

About the Author Wu Hung is Harrie A. Vanderstappen Distinguished Service Professor in Chinese Art History at the University of Chicago. He is the author of many books, including *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting* (Reaktion Books, 1996), *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space* (Reaktion, 2005) and *The Art of the Yellow Springs: Understanding Chinese Tombs* (Reaktion, 2010).