China-Europe Forum – October 4th & 5th
Maison Jean Vilar workshop
The place of artists in European and Chinese societies

General problematics proposal (After Pierre Calame's introductory lines)

Art and artist maintain some inextricable bonds with society. Whether they obey to the king, to the market, or reject any type of complacency, their fate is intimately entwined with social, economic and geographic reality. Therefore, one might say that an artist's fate lies in their culture, just like the ancients used to say that a man's fate lies in their character.

A work of art cannot be understood through its author's biography alone, it cannot escape the roots of its birth in a singular place that shall become common place once the world's experience gained. *Simul et singulis* is the motto of a great theater, both national and international for it is no other than the Comédie française: "together and individually". Recently, some so called "modern" romantic doctrine proclaimed itself as "solitary solidary"…

Now we reach a whole new world, both magical and terrifying. The acceleration of communication tires communication out. The world is my village, but I'm lost in it so I huddle myself up in my village, my identity, my fear of "mixities", otherwise said, impurities.

The question of pure and impure is source to contemporary tragedies and one can't help worrying: do we only have a choice between a globalised, unilingual (basic English) world, and a Balkanised world? In Europe, in ex-Yugoslavia to be precise, a model of religious cohabitation and coexistence, which turned into an ethnic hell, has been witnessed to collapse. In USSR too, a single-ideology empire has been seen to shatter against the aspiration for modernity. Some rejoiced prematurely without giving any thought to the continuation of History, the which never ends unlike what was attempted to make us believe during this joyful observation of the death of ideologies: how to modernise modernity today? Through the medium of technology? But is it not equally clear that technology is inhuman in a way that makes us wonder: are humans inhuman?

How are artists to occupy the space, to cast barbarity out and create the critical tools that shall subdue technology to civilising, pacific society goals? We will attempt to answer those questions while listening to testimonies from both sides of the world, studying particular cases, experiments in various disciplines, mixing (or disjoining) technology and living arts.

This is how we envision those two work days (at the Senate in Paris), preparatory to the two plenary days in Brussels.