Inquisitive Ink. A Study of Contemporary Practices of Calligraphy in China
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This study investigates contemporary practices of calligraphy in China. It starts by locating calligraphy, approached as both an act of writing and an art-form endowed with cultural and historical significance, in a precarious position as people are increasingly writing less due to digitization. At the same time, I demonstrate how calligraphic practices are increasingly prevalent due to current governmental directives that promote “creativity” as a powerful discourse contributing to economic and urban development. The consumption of calligraphy is further dispersed due to increased demand for nostalgic calligraphic content and private calligraphy education as well as the development of vernacular practices of calligraphy that are sprouting up in the grassroots. In this context, this dissertation unfolds how calligraphy is imagined, negotiated and performed in five different visual cultural fields in China: calligraphy education, water calligraphy in public parks, modern calligraphic art, digital calligraphy APPs, and WeChat groups and calligraphic font design.