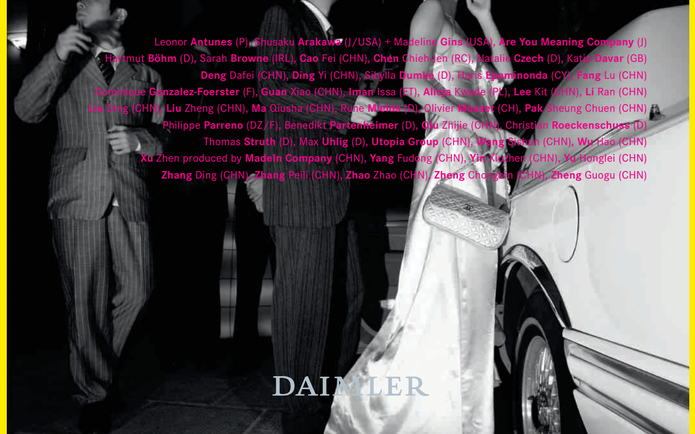
Daimler Contemporary
Potsdamer Platz Berlin



Leonor **Antunes** (P), Shusaku **Arakawa** (J/USA) + Madeline **Gins** (USA), **Are You Meaning Company** (J), Hartmut **Böhm** (D), Sarah **Browne** (IRL), **Cao** Fei (CHN), **Chen** Chieh-Jen (RC), Natalie **Czech** (D), Katie **Davar** (GB), **Deng** Dafei (CHN), **Ding** Yi (CHN), Sibylla **Dumcke** (D), Tiago **Esparinonda** (CV), **Fang** Lu (CHN), Dominique **Gunzalez-Foerster** (F), **Guan** Xiao (CHN), **Iman** Issa (ET), **Alicja Kwade** (PL), **Lee** Kit (CHN), **Li** Ran (CHN), **Liu** Ding (CHN), **Liu** Zheng (CHN), **Ma** Qiusha (CHN), Rune **Mields** (D), Olivier **Mosset** (CH), **Pak** Sheung Chuen (CHN), Philippe **Parreno** (DZ/F), Benedikt **Partenheimer** (D), **Qiu** Zhijie (CHN), Christian **Roeckenschuss** (D), Thomas **Struth** (D), Max **Uhlig** (D), **Utopia Group** (CHN), **Wang** Gongxin (CHN), **Wu** Hao (CHN), **Xu** Zhen produced by **Madein Company** (CHN), **Yang** Fudong (CHN), **Yin** Xiuzhen (CHN), **Yu** Honglei (CHN), **Zhang** Ding (CHN), **Zhang** Peili (CHN), **Zhao** Zhao (CHN), **Zheng** Chongbin (CHN), **Zheng** Guogu (CHN)

Chinese Contemporary Art

D
A C

CHINESE CONTEMPORARY ART

New Acquisitions of Chinese and International Contemporary Art for the Daimler Art Collection

Daimler
Art Collection

FROM A POEM TO THE SUNSET
May 1 – August 30, 2015

ON CURBSTONE JEWELS AND COBBLESTONES
November 13, 2015 – April 10, 2016

LAST NIGHT'S FORTUNE TELLER
March 31 – June 18, 2017

Three-part exhibition series with new acquisitions of Chinese and international contemporary art

Curated by Renate Wiehager, head of the Daimler Art Collection & Christian Ganzenberg
Curatorial advisor: Andreas Schmid

Daimler Contemporary
Potsdamer Platz Berlin

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A C

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Deng Dafei (CHN), **Ding** Yi (CHN), Sibylla **Dumke** (D), Haris **Epaminonda** (CY), **Fang** Lu (CHN)
Dominique **Gonzalez-Foerster** (F), **Guan** Xiao (CHN), **Iman** Issa (ET), **Alicja** Kwade (PL), **Lee** Kit (CHN), **Li** Ran (CHN)
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Thomas **Struth** (D), Max **Uhlig** (D), **Utopia Group** (CHN), **Wang** Sishun (CHN), **Wu** Hao (CHN)
Xu Zhen produced by **MadeIn Company** (CHN), **Yang** Fudong (CHN), **Yin** Xiuzhen (CHN), **Yu** Honglei (CHN)
Zhang Ding (CHN), **Zhang** Peili (CHN), **Zhao** Zhao (CHN), **Zheng** Chongbin (CHN), **Zheng** Guogu (CHN)

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A C

From a Poem to the Sunset

First part of an exhibition series with new acquisitions of contemporary Chinese and international art

May 1 – August 30, 2015

Shusaku **Arakawa** (J/USA) + Madeline **Gins** (USA), Sarah **Browne** (IRL), Natalie **Czech** (D)
Katja **Davar** (GB), Sibylla **Dumke** (D), **Guan** Xiao (CHN), **Lee** Kit (CHN), **Li** Ran (CHN), **Liu** Ding (CHN)
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Curated by Renate Wiehager & Christian Ganzenberg
Curatorial advisor: Andreas Schmid

Daimler Contemporary
Potsdamer Platz Berlin

›Fotografie: International‹, Daimler AG, Stuttgart-Möhringen 2015: Cao Fei

Why Chinese contemporary art? How does this art fit into the history and conception of the Daimler Art Collection? These questions were frequently posed during the run up to this exhibition. Since 2001 we have been steadily expanding the Daimler Art Collection—formerly a predominantly European art collection—by adding groups of artworks from all over the globe: from the USA, South America, South Africa, India, Asia, Australia—all of them nations in which Daimler/Mercedes-Benz is present in various ways, and nations which we visited during the Daimler Art Collection world tour that started in 2003. Our collection has now been expanded through the inclusion of around 40 artworks or artwork groups by some 20 Chinese artists, thus allowing us to reflect this very significant branch of international art.

The initiative to develop this new area for our collection followed naturally from our consistent long-term plan to make the collection more international—to match Daimler's status as an globally active company.

To begin with, these new acquisitions will be presented to the public for the first time in the three upcoming exhibitions at the Daimler Contemporary in Berlin. Part 1 will center on conceptual art strategies and on video artworks. Part 2, which will commence in September 2015, will focus on the artistic media of photography and sculpture. The exhibition series will conclude in March 2016 with part 3, which will bring together Chinese, German and international abstract works into one dialog. For the next stage, we are planning a comprehensive show of all of these artworks for Daimler's

Stuttgart-Möhringen site, to be held in 2016. Themed tours will be held; these will primarily be for invited Daimler employees from the Stuttgart area, although any external groups who register their wish to attend will also be welcome.
The artworks were researched and selected locally, within China, and were acquired primarily from Chinese galleries such as Shanghart, Magician Space, Antenna Space, and Vitamin Creative Space. If artists whom we had become acquainted with in China (such as Yin Xiuzhen and Guan Xiao) are represented by Berlin galleries, then we are also happy to acquire their works here in Berlin.
It should also be stated here that China represents an important market for Daimler. Around ten percent of our company's turnover is generated in China. Daimler is involved with all branches of the business in China: private vehicles, commercial vehicles and financial services – products are offered as import models, or are locally produced in the joint venture with Beijing Benz Automotive Corporation (BBAC).

Chinese art, viewed as an independent development, began in the mid-1980s—we have reflected this fact by purchasing an artwork by Zhang Peili (* 1957, CHN), a pioneer of concept and video art in China. *Brown Book No.1,* 1988, is a documentation of one of his early mail art projects. Further already established artists whose artworks (from the circa 1990-to-2010 period) have been acquired by us include Qiu Zhijie, Cao Fei, Yin Xiuzhen, Liu Zheng, and Ding Yi. Our acquisitions, however, are focused on contemporary young art from Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Guangdong (including Hong Kong), by artists born around 1980–1985.

From a Western perspective, Ai Weiwei's is likely to be the only familiar name. Naturally, however, some of the artists already named who now feature in our collection, from Zhang Peili to Liu Zheng—or younger artists such as Yang Fudong, Zheng Guogu or Xu Zhen and Zhao Zhao—have also addressed issues relating to Chinese politics and society, in subtle but clearly legible ways. Additionally, we have also acquired artworks in which artists interpret their own individual biographic influences, or the traditions of Chinese and Western art.

I have been to China several times since 2003. I have visited museums, galleries, artists and private collectors there in

order to gradually acquire an understanding of developments in Chinese art since the late 1980s. China's art scene undergoes changes every 2 to 3 years; in March 2015, I reacquainted myself with a number of new museums (some of them built by private collectors), discussed developments in art with collectors, with young gallerists and with artists, visited studios etc. Anselm Franke, curator of this year's Shanghai Biennale, succeeded in presenting a highly intelligent exhibition of post-1960s works of Western and Chinese art in dialogue, thus confirming our belief that our newly acquired works of Chinese art should not be discussed in isolation, but in the context of other recent areas of interest within our collection. Another recent development is the emergence of contemporary architecture of the highest quality in the context of museums and galleries, not only in Caochangdi in Beijing, or in the West Bund Cultural Corridor in Shanghai, but, more recently, also on the city periphery of Nanjing (www.sifangartmuseum.org/en/park.php)—a kind of Chinese Weißenhof Settlement—or outside the city of Guangzhou (Vitamin Creative Space).

The Chinese artists featured in our Berlin 'From a Poem to the Sunset' exhibition also currently figure in international art discourse in a number of contexts. In 2014, for instance, Guan Xiao received an award for her presentation at abc Berlin. She has also taken part in the much-discussed Triennial at the New Museum in New York (up to the end of May 2015). Her work has appeared in a number of international exhibitions: at the Museum of Modern Art in Antwerp, and at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary in Vienna. In 2013, Lee Kit provided an installation for the Hong Kong pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale entitled *You (you).*, from which one 'set' was acquired for the Daimler Art Collection. In 2015, works by Lee Kit will be exhibited by S.M.A.K. in Ghent, and at the Mother's Tankstation gallery in Dublin. In 2014, Li Ran won the prize for best artist at the 4th Moscow Biennale for young art. Liu Ding's artwork had already appeared in solo exhibitions across Europe, in Frankfurt, Lucerne, Milan and elsewhere. In 2015, his work is on show at the exhibition 'Collecting for Tomorrow' at the Museion Bozen, in Italy, in the context of the 2015 Istanbul Biennale as well as in the 'Do Disturb' show, Palais de Tokyo, Paris. In 2014, Pak Sheung Chuen took part in a group exhibition

›from Bauhaus to (now!)‹, Daimler Art Collection World Tour: MASP, Museu de Arte de São Paulo, 2007

entitled ‘Harmonious Society’ at the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art in Manchester. Qiu Zhijie’s work appeared in solo exhibitions at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2012), at the Querini Stampalia Foundation as part of the 2013 Venice Biennale and at Art Basel in 2014. Whilst the Daimler Contemporary exhibition is running, Xu Zhen’s artwork will also be on display in the Rhineland at an exhibition entitled ‘China 8,’ followed by a solo presentation at Kunsthaus Graz. In 2014/15, solo exhibitions of Yang Fudong’s artworks were held in Italy, Norway and Paris. In 2015, Zheng Chongbin’s artworks will be exhibited at the Venice Biennale 2015 (‘Personal Structures’).

The exhibition series on Contemporary Chinese Art at Daimler Contemporary in Berlin is accompanied by an extensive program of supporting events. At the heart of this is a series of talks: an autonomous forum on specifically Chinese themes that will bring together a selection of art protagonists from China, with the hosts acting in the role of moderator. The talks will concern the artistic background and ethos behind the presented artworks, alongside fundamental issues and current themes of cultural and social development in China. The discussions, lectures and performances will give the artists featured in the exhibitions the opportunity to speak. Furthermore it is planned to host a multi-day symposium in Berlin, which will bring together some of the most knowledgeable protagonists on this subject from international academia. The insights arising out of these events are going to be published online, and in an accompanying publication, which will be released at the beginning of 2016.

Renate Wiehager
Head of the Daimler Art Collection, Stuttgart/Berlin

Philippe Parreno, *C.H.Z. (Continuously Habitable Zones),* 2011

INTRODUCTION

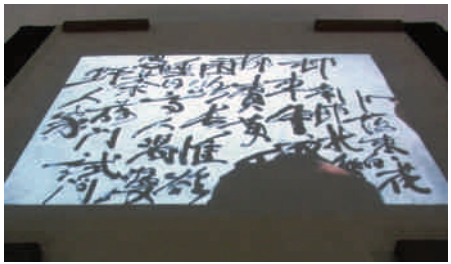
Christian Ganzenberg / Renate Wiehager

In 2013, the Daimler Art Collection began adding a significant new aspect to its international profile, with the acquisition of more than 40 artworks by about 20 Chinese artists. From this year on, these new acquisitions will be presented to the public in an exhibition series in Berlin. These works by Chinese artists relate well to the Daimler Art Collection's areas of special interest: the area of abstract and conceptual tendencies, and the 'new media' area. At the same time, they form a new complex of their own within the fabric of the collection, which is culturally and aesthetically distinctive. In choosing which artists and which movements to incorporate, the Daimler Art Collection focused on art trends in the major centers: Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangdong (incl. Hong Kong). A forward-looking purchasing strategy was

adopted, aided by in-depth research on location.
Major artworks by artists who are already internationally well-known were acquired, and artworks by members of the younger generation of artists (born circa 1980) who are as yet unknown in our country were also discovered. Taken together, these new acquisitions for the Daimler Art Collection offer an insight into a country—a country that is both fascinating and the subject of controversy—that will be of great critical and global significance to the 21st century: not only because of its thousand years of tradition, but, above all, because of its rapid economic and cultural development.
This exhibition series in Berlin will present the recent Chinese acquisitions in the context of the Daimler Art Collection. This 'dialogue' with international artistic concepts will bring out the unique qualities of the new acquisitions, but it will also bring out parallels and relationships in the form of shared artistic concerns. The first part of the exhibition—'From a Poem to the Sunset'—is primarily devoted to conceptual tendencies, which first became observable in contemporary Chinese art in the mid-1980s but which, notwithstanding this, form the basis of the working methods of many younger artists.

Natalie Czech, *A poem by repetition by Robert Creeley #2,* 2013

The prelude to this exhibition is provided by poems, chosen either as linguistic inspiration or as an artistic means of expression: Natalie Czech (* 1976, D) often references lyric texts. In her artworks, she explores the ways in which words can evoke images, and how minimal interventions in the text can create new meanings. In some respects, her working method is akin to traditional calligraphy, the 'methodology of writing.' In a series of artworks *Calligraphy of Written Backward,* Qiu Zhijie (* 1969, CHN) investigates the wider possibilities inherent in the backward writing of Chinese calligraphy, giving it something akin to a filmic visual language



Qiu Zhijie, *Calligraphy of Written Backward: Sand of Silk-washing Stream by Su Shi,* 2008 (Detail)

Sarah Browne, *Remembering Gray*
Haus Huth, Berlin, 2015
(preparatory study)

and combining it with a melancholy subject matter in the form of the thoughts of the banished poet Su Shi (1037–1101). The Irish artist Sarah Browne (* 1981, IRL) is represented by an artwork in several parts that the Daimler Art Collection commissioned her to create, in which she evokes memories of the designer Eileen Gray. For the conclusion of her works about the Irish designer Eileen Gray, the artist herself commissioned a poem. At every presentation of the project—this time in Berlin, for instance by the inclusion of carrier pigeons—this poem will take a new and autonomous form. In his artworks, the artist Zheng Chongbin (* 1961, CHN), who was born in Shanghai and lives in San Francisco, achieves the suspension of the polarity between the Chinese and Western art worlds. One way in which he does this is to work in ink and acrylic paint—in parallel and with equal intensity. He shares with the Dresden artist Max Uhlig (* 1937, D) a fascination with ink painting (both artists have spent many years engaging with this art form); additionally, both artists' artworks feature gestures with a pronounced actional character, oscillating between abstraction and representational, readable content. The works of the young, Berlin based artist Sibylla Dumke demonstrate an

Max Uhlig in his studio in Dresden, 2014

Philippe Parreno, *Opening Shot,* 2008, drawing for *C.H.Z.*

Sibylla Dumke, *Zebra (15.10–10.11., Seliana),* 2014

intensive activity with structures of nature. Her intuitive strokes and the delicate tracery of the ink reflect the artist's abilities of sensitive observations, interpreted in "a rhythmic movement" (S.D.).

Alongside artists who are concerned with what are regarded as the classic artistic media, the exhibition presents a number of complex installations in the area of new media. In the main space of the Daimler Contemporary, there will be a choreographically structured coming together of selected works by Yang Fudong (* 1971, CHN) and Philippe Parreno (* 1964, DZ/F); there will be showings of the films

Liao Garden Yangjiang, by **Zheng Guogu,** since 2000

Reversible Destiny Lofts, Tokio, by **Arakawa + Gins,** 2005

Philippe Parreno, *C.H.Z. (Continuously Habitable Zones),* 2011 (video still)

Continously Habitable Zones aka C.H.Z., 2011, by Philippe Parreno (commissioned by the Daimler Art Collection) and *Yejiang/The Nightman Cometh,* 2011, by Yang Fudong. Both artists analyze the properties of their chosen media and formats: Yang experiments with film and photography, whilst Parreno makes the 'exhibition' format itself the theme, designing 'choreographies of bodies in space' (P.P.).
The next part of the exhibition presents current conceptual tendencies in Chinese contemporary art, in the form of a group of artworks by Liu Ding (* 1976, CHN), and single works by Pak Sheung Chuen (* 1977, CHN) and Lee Kit (* 1978, CHN). Zhang Peili (* 1957, CHN) was undoubtedly a pioneer of Chinese conceptual and video art; his documentation of one of his early 'mail art' projects—*Brown Book No.1,* 1988—appears in the exhibition. The artist Zheng Guogu (* 1970, CHN) is similarly interested in modern China and its society. He is also known internationally as a member of the Yangjiang Group. His artwork is brought face-to-face with a work by Japanese-American artist couple Shusaku Arakawa (1936–2010) and Madeline Gins (1941–2014). Both artists are fascinated by the idea of a multifaceted Gesamtkunstwerk that incorporates society, architecture and the human body, poetry and philosophy. In the cabinet space of the Daimler Contemporary, *Mont Saint-Victoire,* 2012, by

Li Ran, *Mont Sainte-Victoire* (performance), 2012

Li Ran (* 1986, CHN), an installation in several parts, is presented. The artist seeks and formulates his own individual point of entry to the modernism buried by the Cultural Revolution by combining questions relating to the theory of art with his own personal experiences.
For the artists in the subsequent part of the exhibition the internet is the source and area of study: Both Katja Davar (* 1968, GB) and Guan Xiao (* 1983, CHN), who is represented in this exhibition by a 3-channel video and by the eponymous sculptural ensemble *Sunset,* construct and deconstruct their own real and virtual worlds and collect their references from different areas of knowledge, cultural contexts and epochs. A fundamental preoccupation for both artists is the question of how we, in our age, can evoke the past, the present and the future in thought.
The first part of the exhibition concludes with the *Physique of Consciousness Museum,* a kind of 'artist museum' by Xu Zhen produced by Madeln Company (founded in 2009 by Xu Zhen [* 1977, CHN]) that is dedicated to "human thought and action, and its body language." The way that the thinking behind this artwork spans cultures, religions and contexts makes it symbolic of the whole exhibition and its ethos; amid the diversity and individuality of the exhibited artworks, it tries to highlight unifying and meaningful analogies. In all sections of the show, one can make out ongoing arcs that trace the course of recent tendencies in art and in current events.

Xu Zhen produced by MadeIn Company, *Physique of Consciousness Museum, Exercise No. 9, Gesture 10 (Apsara),* 2013–2014 (detail)

›From a Poem to the Sunset‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015: Natalie Czech, Sibylla Dumke, Qiu Zhijie

›From a Poem to the Sunset‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015: Yang Fudong

›From a Poem to the Sunset‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015: Sibylla Dumke, Qiu Zhijie, Max Uhlig

›From a Poem to the Sunset‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015: Liu Ding, Natalie Czech

Sarah Browne

In *Remembering Gray,* 2015, Sarah Browne's long lasting engagement with the Irish designer Eileen Gray finds its preliminary poetic conclusion. Her occupation with Gray goes back to Browne's project *Carpet for the Irish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale,* 2009, where a hand-knotted carpet from Donegal Carpet was commissioned and presented, which had been produced only from the surplus wool stocks remaining at the factory—the remnants of other carpets made for Irish embassies and political spaces at home and abroad. Initially, not the design by Eileen Gray was decisive for this project, but Browne's ongoing interest in modes of invisible, marginal and gendered labour, tied in this case to the question of 'national representation.' In 2010, the Daimler Art Collection commissioned Browne to continue the research on Eileen Gray and her legacy, out of which the artist book *From Margin to Margin (Looking for Eileen)* and the three-part stainless-steel sculpture *Doorstops for the Daimler Art Collection,* both 2010, originated. The proceeds from the sale of the book have been treated as a fund 'to be used in the service of the memory of Eileen Gray.' Browne commissioned a poem from the poet Alice Lyons, titled *something permanent,* which exists in lieu of any formal eulogy or obituary for Gray. The poem has not only a performative potential but also the capacity for distribution in multiple, minimal forms. After being initially transmitted as Morse code on a temporary shortwave radio station (Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2013) and as light signal (Kunstverein Graz, 2013/2014), for the exhibition at Daimler Contemporary in Berlin the poem will be distributed by carrier pigeons. Again the work utilises a WWII era communication technology with both military and poetic connotations, treating the gallery site as a signaling point. The pigeons, which are released regularly from the balcony of Haus Huth, are carrying a printed version of the poem on a 7.5 x 7.5 centimeter sized paper in their foot ring.

C.G.

Sarah Browne, *Remembering Gray,* Haus Huth, Berlin, 2015
Special thanks to Werner Damerow, Berlin
(Verband Deutscher Brieftaubenzüchter e.V.)

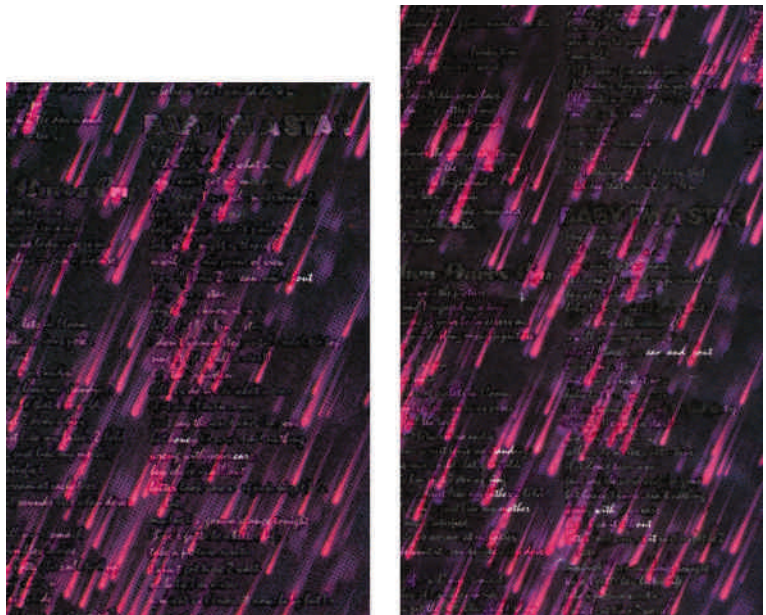
Sarah Browne, *From Margin to Margin (Looking for Eileen),* 2010

Natalie Czech

In her series, *Poems by Repetition,* Natalie Czech relies on the stylistic tool of repetition, which for her implies echo, music, rhythm and beat. In doing so, she focusses on objects from the field of music, which she photographs for her works. The genre of pop music is of particular interest to Czech because various forms of repetition—such as the repetition of text in the refrain, for example—crop up in it. The work displays an 'All Over Pattern' of writing and color, which is created by the close-up of the disc inlays of Prince's 'Purple Rain.' Through the close-up one can also simultaneously see the pattern of the original print pattern of the original album cover. Both parts of the diptych show extracts of the songs 'When Doves Cry' and 'Baby I'm A Star' and Natalie Czech allows the 'superfluous' words of these to become the original background pattern, i.e. the 'purple rain' by coloring them the same color. This is an extremely painstaking task. This visual and verbal 'flow' also becomes thematic in the visualized poem by the American author Creeley: "Out one / ear and / in the / other ear / and out / without it."

F.H.

Prince, *Purple Rain,* 1984 (Plattencover)



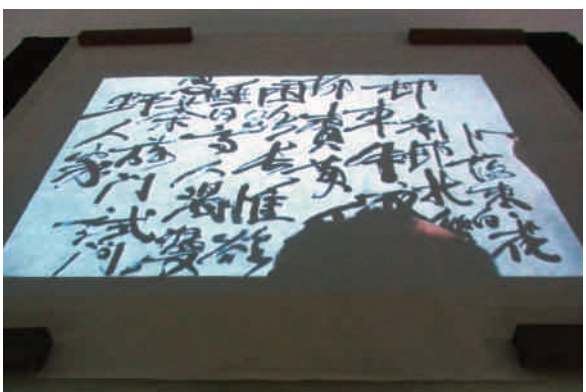
Natalie Czech, *A poem by repetition by Robert Creeley #3,* 2013

Qiu Zhijie

The Chinese concept artist, author and curator Qiu Zhijie acquired the ability to write calligraphy backwards autodidactically (that is, by teaching himself) and applied this to the artwork *Calligraphy of Written Backward: Sand of Silk-washing Stream by Su Shi,* 2008. It consists of a table with a monitor set into the tabletop, and a scroll which hangs on the wall. The video shows the artist tracing the calligraphy of the poem *Sand of Silk-washing Stream* by the Chinese poet, painter, calligrapher and politician Su Shi (1037–1101) on paper. Su Shi lived a long period of political exile due to his criticism—partly in terms of poems—on Wang Anshi's reforms during the Song Dynasty. As the video is played backwards, Qiu creates the impression that the black lines of calligraphy on the paper are being erased, stroke by stroke, by the brush, however, the ink continues to be visible on the paper. In this artwork, the artist brings together a multiplicity of themes relating to art and to art history: the juxtaposition of centuries-old processes with contemporary techniques, masterly craftsmanship and the application of new technology, the perfected artwork form and the processual quality of artistic work.

N.B.

Qiu Zhijie, *Calligraphy of Written Backward: Sand of Silk-washing Stream by Su Shi,* 2008



Max Uhlig

Line and form provide the basis for Max Uhlig's extensive œuvre of paintings and drawings. Taken together, they constitute an unmistakable dramatic effect. The process of finding the appropriate form—which always involves a direct interaction with the motifs, figure, still-life scene or landscape in question—is an intensive one; the artist interprets recurring themes in constantly new ways and experiments with nuances of expression, energy and manifestation. He uses classic art media such as charcoal, chalk drawings, prints, watercolors and painting to penetrate his subjects' elementary structures, in order to find the ideal ultimate form for each individual motif.

The artwork entitled *Große Buschformation, bewegt* [Large bush formation, in motion], 1993, is one of a series of extreme horizontal-format landscape depictions, first embarked on circa 1970. The overlapping line structures and the lively gesture of the brushstrokes are reminiscent of Abstract Expressionism. Unlike the exponents of Action Painting, however, Max Uhlig regards the tension associated with encounters between art and nature as of the most fundamental importance—the business of responding in an unmediated way to the changing factors of atmosphere, wind, light, shade etc. The proud traditions of Chinese calligraphy and landscape painting form a further source of lifelong inspiration for Max Uhlig.

R.W.

Max Uhlig, *Große Buschformation, bewegt,* 1993

Yang Fudong

Narrative imagery and memorable motifs, a classic black-and-white aesthetic, photographic series as filmic sequences and films that form photographic seen moments into a story, the transformation of critical themes, and luxuriantly poetic, almost meditative images—all of this could be said of the artwork of Yang Fudong (and all of it would be equally controversial). To accompany the film *Yejiang / The Nightman Cometh,* 2011, the artist created a series of eight large format black-and-white photographs, which encapsulate, as it were, the atmosphere, motifs and scenic configurations, and the gaze directed at the individual protagonists, without any intention of providing "stills" that render the events of the film comprehensible. The two photographs which have been acquired for the Daimler Art Collection present us with the four protagonists of the film. Photograph *#1* places the young woman in the cheongsam—a classic Chinese style of dress, which is historically associated with Shanghai's colonial era in the 1930s—in the center stage. It is unclear whether the woman is posing dreamily or is staring far away with faint alarm. Photograph *#5* brings together all four people. At its center, the woman in the classic white dress looks out silently at the viewer.

R.W.

Yang Fudong, *Yejiang/The Nightman Cometh #5,* 2011

›From a Poem to the Sunset‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015: Guan Xiao, Katja Davar

›From a Poem to the Sunset‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015:
Xu Zhen produced by MadeIn Company

Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing, 2015

Exhibition of Artist Group ‘Big Tail Elephant‘, Guangzhou, 1992

ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE ART SINCE 1979

Andreas Schmid

The recent history of Chinese contemporary art is as surprising as it is unusual. From out of nowhere, China has become one of the most talked-about nations in terms of art production, the art market, and art auctions—inside of just 35 years. From a social point of view, no niche existed for independent artists in China in the period stretching from the founding of the People’s Republic of China in the year 1949 to the end of the Cultural Revolution in October 1976. Artists, like intellectuals, were expected to further the goals of China’s socialist society, thus preserving the primacy of politics. This was the norm from the 1950s up until the year 1978, but especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). It was at around this time that the ‘wall newspapers’ or ‘dazhibao’ (later misleadingly known as the ‘walls of democracy’) gave the population of Beijing their first opportunity to name the wrongs of

Zheng Chongbin, 1985

Zheng Chongbin,
Another State of Man, 1985

the Cultural Revolution era in public. It was also during this brief period—from November 1978 to December 1979—that the first loose associations of independent art activists appeared. The artists were largely autodidacts from various professions, as most of the art academies had been partially closed owing to the disruptions of the Cultural Revolution. Additionally, calligraphy and classical Chinese philosophy—both are inherent to Chinese culture—were prohibited. The artist group 'Without Names' and the newly-founded 'Stars' group (1978/1979) staged art action events to reach a public audience. The latter group did succeed in getting its artwork exhibited—a short time later, however, persecution resumed. By 1984, the group and its members had nearly entirely been driven out of China.

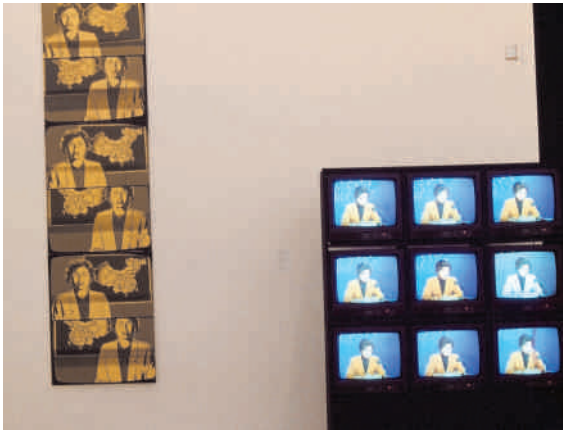
Cultural Policies between Control and Liberalization after 1978

Hope returned with the rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping and his announcement of the "Four Modernizations," plus the re-opening of institutions of learning in the early 1980s. Cautious but perceptible increases in openness and liberalization were to follow. Official cultural policy remained extremely conservative, alternating between prohibition and cautious relaxations throughout the 1980s: experimental and opinionated art and artists were still being explicitly rejected well into the 1990s. There was no officially approved way of accessing information on contemporary art developments and their protagonists outside of China—through books or magazines, for instance. In the 1980s, galleries were practically non-existent.

Gu Wenda in front of his ink wash paintings on Xuan paper, Hangzhou, 1986

On the other hand, when the national gallery in Beijing staged the first ever official Chinese exhibitions of original paintings by, for instance, the German Expressionists and the artist Pablo Picasso, they drew enthusiastic crowds. The Robert Rauschenberg exhibition in 1986, which was the first solo exhibition of work by the American contemporary artist (and was paid for by the artist himself) exerted a tremendous influence on a young generation of artists looking for new approaches. The recently reopened art academies also played a major role, since they were the only places where individual experimental artists could venture to display their ideas to the public in a 'protected space.' In the 1980s, the academy at Hangzhou was particularly significant, turning out a number of talented artists such as Zhang Peili, who, with his 'Pond' group, created a sensation. In 1988, the 'Pond' group produced the first artist videos and experimental conceptual actions. Zhang's works were extremely high-risk and could not be officially exhibited. Zheng Chongbin developed experimental figurations that were critically looked at; in the late 1990s, however, he took the chance to emigrate to the USA.

Since 1986 inspirations from outside of China, primarily from the western nations, were soaked up eagerly—especially the artwork of Joseph Beuys and Marcel Duchamp. The recently translated works of Nietzsche, Freud and Foucault also had a major influence on the young generation and their works of experimential character.



Installation view 'China Avantgarde,' KunstHal Rotterdam, 1993:
Zhang Peili, *Standard pronunciation from 1989,* 1990, oil on canvas (left),
Ci Hai, *Standard pronunciation,* 1992, Video (right)

Especially in the mid-1980s these developments gave rise to a large number of artworks which were very different in character: art media now included traditional expressive artworks, conceptual artworks, art photography (now that photography had acquired a new artistic status), video and performance art, and art action events. This movement, which played out in a wide variety of media and led to the formation of very different but networked art groups in Shanghai, Hangzhou and Wuhan, was dubbed the '1985 Movement,' or 'New Wave Movement' (Xinchao Yundong). In various Chinese provinces—generally in the large cities—art teams and art groups formed for the purposes of activism and of discussion. These groups operated actively in a practical as well a theoretical manner (by putting out art magazines, for instance). Like Deng Xiaoping, the artists were working to 'modernize' society except that they wished to achieve this through art. However, they were not about total opposition to the state, but about achieving greater freedom of expression, without hindrance, and forming a uniquely 'Chinese' identity. As it turned out, however, the state was by no means willing to concur with these aims. Instead, it perceived the experimental artists as a danger to the party. Many attempts to stage public exhibitions were abruptly blocked, and many exhibitions were simply prohibited ahead of time, whilst artists also came under pressure. In spite of the degree of opposition they faced and their financially impoverished circumstances, many artists showed great

inner strength. Money was virtually unimportant; for this generation, what really mattered was an idealistic devotion to the cause.

As for the classical arts, Chinese calligraphy and study of the classic works of Lao Tze and Dong Zhongshu had been banned during the Cultural Revolution. By 1986, study of these arts was once again officially permitted. Many artists, however, had become alienated from their own cultural roots and as a result only a few artists (such as Gu Wenda and Xu Bing), chose to re-engage with their own nation's traditions. In 1989, the first major overview exhibition of a decade of art was held; this exhibition was pushed through against the resistance of the cultural administration by the united independent forces of the academies and of the artists themselves. The exhibition 'China/Avantgarde' at the National Gallery in Beijing ran for less than two weeks, and was characterized by spectacular interruptions (the artist Xiao Lu actually shot at her own artwork). In spite of this, the exhibition was a highly significant liberating act, and a symbolic expression of a new self-confidence in art. The massacre of Tiananmen Square, which happened just a few months later, brought this development to an abrupt and painful halt, and a campaign against the '85 Movement' followed. Massive changes were made to academy curricula, and controls were tightened. Many of those responsible for the 'China/Avantgarde' exhibition (Gao Minglu, Fei Dawei,

Installation view 'The Last Exhibition oft the Year 1986,' Hangzhou Public Art Gallery, 1986: the exhibition right after its closing

Xu Bing, *A book from the sky,* 1988, National Gallery Beijing

Hou Hanru) left China. Some artists who were outside of China at the time, such as Huang Yongping and Yang Jiechang, chose not to return. The events at Tiananmen Square may have put a stop to the '85 Movement,' but they did not prevent the emergence of Chinese contemporary art—a development whose motor was now well and truly fired up.

By the late 1980s, a younger generation had grown up whose styles and ways of thinking were opposed to those of the 'idealists' of 'New Wave.' This generation was characterized by a withdrawal into individual experience. Working largely in the medium of painting, they chose to orient themselves towards everyday reality that surrounded them and made use of some elements of the socialist realism style. Artists such as Yu Hong, Liu Wei (the elder) and Fang Lijun gave their interpretations of everyday life in China, sometimes with biting irony. This trend became known as 'China Pop,' and as 'cynical realism.'

Fang Lijun, *Series 1, No. 3,* 1990, oil on canvas

The 1990s—Public Perception and Rapid Internal Development

In 1993, there were two early international exhibitions of contemporary art from China that were to be especially influential. Firstly, there was the exhibition held by the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin of art created during the 1987–1992 period, which referenced the 1989 Beijing exhibition 'China/Avantgarde.' The other, more comprehensive show was entitled 'China's New Art, Post 1989,' and offered

Installation view ‘China Avantgarde,’ Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin 1993:
Huang Yongping, Yan Peiming, Ni Haifeng, Yu Youhan

Invitation card (cover) of
the artist group ‘Big Tail Elephant’

Artists from 'East Village' (Dong Cun) artistic community, 1997,
f.l. Ma Liuming, Rong Rong, Liu Zheng

a selection of the art created in the early 1980s–1992 period in Hong Kong. Both exhibitions were prepared and implemented on an unofficial basis; both were rejected by the Chinese government. These exhibitions, plus a further exhibition featuring art by artists living in exile in the USA ('Fragmented Memory,' Ohio, 1993), provoked great interest from curators and from gallerists.

In June 1993, several Chinese artists were invited to be guests at the Venice Biennale: a further exhibition to complete a whole series for which the time had clearly come. Throughout the 1990s, significant exhibitions of Chinese contemporary art took place in diverse European cities, all responding to the most recent developments in the People's Republic of China. Up until the mid-1990s, there were still too few art galleries within China itself, mostly concentrated within major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. In the 1990s, Beijing developed into an art center for China. Now as in the past, many artists from the provinces come to Beijing following their studies. Some studio communities—such as, for instance, 'East village' (Liu Zheng, Rong Rong, Zhang Huan, Ma Liuming et al.) have become very well-known, although they are not officially accepted. The diversity of the artistic activities rose unchecked, whilst the number of active contemporary artists increased rapidly.

In 1991, the group 'Big Tail Elephant' was founded in the southern Chinese metropolis Guangzhou. This group would rent large factory halls at their own expense and would use their imagination and practical expertise to transform them, filling them with installations composed of architectural set pieces, light and paintings. They brought a new freshness into internal discussions. In 1994, the artist Chen Tong opened his alternative bookshop 'Libreria Borges' where he primarily sold Chinese translations of 20th-century French literary and philosophical works: this also created the potential for discussions, and prompted the translation of literary works. In 1994–1997, the art scene was dramatically enriched by the arrival of performance art (Zhang Huan, Ma Liuming, and Song Dong in Beijing), art photography (Zhang Haier, Liu Zheng, Rong Rong, Zhang Hui, Zheng Guogu et al.) and, from 1997 onwards, video art (Qiu Zhijie, Wang Gongxin, et al.)—in spite of official resistance. At the same time, artists were exploring new themes: the body, eroticism and sexuality—and, in this context, the beautiful and the ugly as

concepts—were being addressed by many artists in a wide variety of media. These media like cameras and camcorders were becoming more affordable all the time, and the artists were gaining a corresponding mastery of the techniques. Additionally, Chinese artists were increasingly invited to feature in significant exhibitions and solo presentations.

In China, artists were addressing previously neglected topics such as themes of role and gender (Jiang Jie, Zhang Xin, Lin Tianmiao). They were also examining the demolition of the inner cities. In Chengdu in 1995, Yin Xiuzhen (*1963) initiated a spectacular action event: the washing of the frozen, dirty water of a river by the citizens. She created her own artworks dealing with social change with critical undertones. After 1994, artists living outside China returned, or commuted back and forth to China (Xu Bing, Yuan Shun, Qin Yufen). Others returned from abroad in the mid-1990s and produced (underground) magazines, such as Ai Weiwei, or turned their own private premises into part-time exhibition spaces (Lin Tianmiao, Zhu Zhinshi): 'Apartment Art' was born. The explosion in economic prosperity brought further development of the gallery system, and of the Chinese art

Chen Tong's book shop 'Libreria Borges,' 2011, Guangzhou

system. A number of galleries were set up in Beijing (Red Gate Gallery, Gallery Urs Meile, Beijing Commune, Boers Li Gallery), and Shanghai (ShanghArt 1996, BizArt 1998), and non-Chinese curators from all over Asia, from the USA, and from Europe came to take part. In 1997, the artists Wang Jianwei and Feng Mengbo succeeded in presenting their

Ai Weiwei in Peking, 1994

Yin Xiuzhen, Cleaning the River, 1995
Action und documentation 2/4

artwork at documenta. In 1998, Dutch curator Hans van Dijk and artist Ai Weiwei opened a gallery and archive institution: 'China Archive and Warehouse' in Beijing. In the late 1990s, movements arose whose aim was to oppose the painting styles then successful outside of China, and the increasingly market-oriented, superficial output of many successful artists. This resulted in the provocative exhibition Post-sense sensibility, 1999 (which featured, for instance, artworks created using human fat and animal embryos). This development, however, was relevant only to artists working in the major cities of east and south China—their contemporaries in the southwest and west of the country and in rural areas were excluded and detached from these developments for a long time. At the end of the 20th century, ink wash painting began to play a major role once again.

Around 2000: Changes in Cultural Policy and its Consequences

Circa 2000, the Chinese state abandoned its blanket policy of opposition to experimental artists, and began to take a hand in cultural activities. For instance, the state gave its official

Qiu Zhijie, *Tattoo I,* 1997, C-Print

Guangdong Museum of Art, 2008: Opening of the 3rd Guangzhou Triennale:
'Farewell to Post-Colonialism'

support to the exhibition 'Living in Time' at Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2001, and instituted the setting up of a large and financially supported department for video art in Hangzhou (Zhang Peili), and for experimental art (Qiu Zhijie) at the Academy. The Shanghai Biennale became an international art event for the first time, but also found itself confronted by a counter-exhibition that ran simultaneously, which was entitled 'Fuck off,' and was curated by Feng Boyi and by Ai Weiwei. There were art fairs in Guangzhou, Beijing and Shanghai, with the latter being the most international art fair. Biennales were also organized in Beijing and Shenzhen, whilst a Triennale was organized in Guangzhou.

In 2001, Chinese artists took over an area in outer Beijing—a former weapons factory with Bauhaus architecture by GDR architects. The exhibitions (by the Lu Jie, Long March Space et al.) rapidly proved to be good attractions, prompting an additional influx of very diverse national and international galleries. The so-called 798 gallery district quickly became famous and highly desirable. An imitation project was started in Moganshan Street in Shanghai. Just a few years later, 798 had become largely commercialized, with the original artists forced out into outlying areas. Many artists and galleries found a new place to settle in Caochangdi, which is near to the 798 district. In this small village located in the direction of the airport, a whole series of modern studios and gallery spaces appeared—some of which were planned by Ai Weiwei, who moved here in 2000, and set up the architecture studio FAKE Design in 2003. Today, the Caochangdi Art District is the place to be for contemporary art in Beijing. The gallery Vitamin Creative Space opened in Guangzhou. Small, but with an extremely progressive philosophy, in just a few years it became an internationally known location. Participation was not confined to Chinese artists from the south (Zheng Guogu, Yangjiang group, Cao Fei, Xu Tan, Chen Shaoxiong); for some years now, western artists have also been invited to presentations. In parallel, new exhibition formats and artist books were being developed.

In 2000, the first Asian Art Archive (AAA) was founded in Hong Kong by private initiative, which initially focused on Chinese art. It is, to date, the only institution dedicated to the systematic collection of publications and material relating to Asiatic contemporary art (catalogues, newspapers,

Times Museum, architect Rem Koolhaas, Guangzhou 2008

Gallery space at the 798 Art District, Beijing

Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai 2011

magazines, recordings), endeavors to put into an organized form and to make it accessible to the public online.
In 2005, Chinese contemporary art reached a high point in terms of international auctions, sales, and profits. The academies were swamped with applicants wishing to enter such a lucrative profession. Even the 2007/2008 crisis did not seriously endanger the art market, or the growing strength of art commerce. Uli Sigg, the most prodigious collector of Chinese contemporary art, exhibited some of the artworks from his enormous collection in Bern and Hamburg with great success. In the 1990s, Sigg was perceptive enough to realize that the Chinese state was not fulfilling its role with relation to contemporary art; he therefore took on this role himself, acquiring historic works of art created from the 1980s onward for his collection. In 2014, he transferred over 1500 of his collected artworks to the M+ museum in Hong Kong, which is to open in 2017.
A few years ago, China started to consider culture as strategically important and today it plays in China and abroad a vital role (Confucius Institutes). The number of private collectors increases. (Private) Museums have been founded, but often they lack substantial long-term concepts.

Today, artists working in China have a large degree of freedom, and also have plenty of opportunities and resources; it is simply that they may not exhibit their art at any time or in any place they wish. With the exceptions of pornography and anti-state propaganda, however, it is frequently unclear what is and is not impermissible—presumably intentionally so.
The state takes actions when there is 'danger' of artists activating different parts of society and causing social or political movements, as Ai Weiwei did with his blog. The artists who live most dangerously are the ones who—either in their artworks or in person—attack failings such as corruption, or advocate for climate change prevention or for the rights of the disenfranchised: in these cases, the state's response is rapid and unforgiving, even though the state itself has officially pledged to battle corruption.

›From a Poem to the Sunset‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015: Guan Xiao

›From a Poem to the Sunset‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015: Pak Sheung Chuen, Liu Ding

Liu Ding

In *Evidence,* 2012, Liu Ding addresses his own education, or cultivation, as an artist. He placed various Chinese art magazines dating from his student days together on a shelf. These are juxtaposed with articles, depictions and diapositives from the Western art world—an art world which was encountered primarily in an academic environment. Also included are Liu's own paintings and drawings, plus artworks collected by him. *Evidence* grants the viewer a glimpse of the image cosmos of a Chinese art student of the 1990s who, in retrospect, admits that his most significant influences are not restricted to the classical canon of art historiography: they also include certain references "that cannot be erased from our memory and experience of art. They are equally important and relevant although they've somehow resided in the periphery of the main value system. I want to understand how they relate to my own thinking today." (L.D.) Liu Ding believes that this foundation is not shaped by individual experience alone: it is also determined by norms of the time and by opportunities within the individual's immediate surroundings. In this sense, *Evidence* represents a personal look back over the circumstances of recent Chinese art history.

C.G.

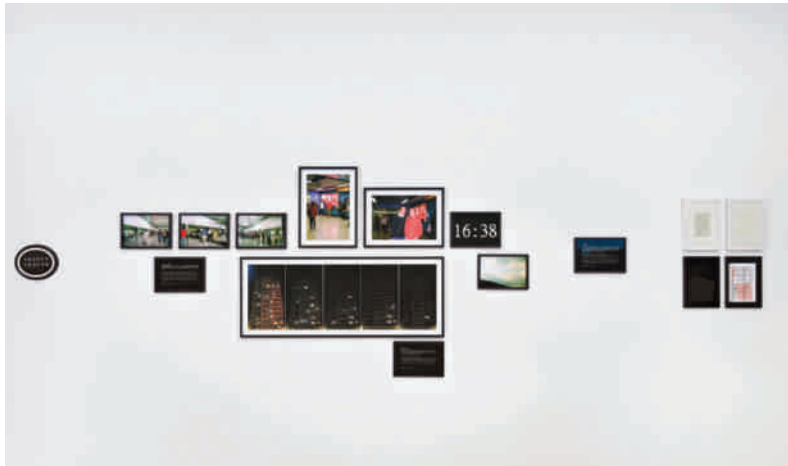
Liu Ding, *Evidence,* 2012

Pak Sheung Chuen

Time plays a special role in Pak Sheung Chuen's work. The complete and updated version of *Waiting for a Friend (without Appointment),* 2006/2014, that has been acquired for the Daimler Art Collection, is a six-part composition of framed texts, handwritten notes and photographs, in which the artist, laconic and motionless—inter alia in waiting for a not appointed meeting with a friend—ascertains his coexistence with other individuals. Pak's self-experiments take place in a large number of places, forming a wide and continuously expanding net depending upon where the artist is located, which also expands through the addition of new media and methods: the everyday can be enhanced by art anywhere. This results in a kind of art that no longer believes in the collective, and yet remains accessible and comprehensible for individuals. If aesthetic experiences of this kind can now barely be distinguished from reality, then such a personal artistic approach can only be understood politically.

The presentation form and the nature of the collection form are a fixed part of the concept. The individual elements of the installation expand on the event mentioned in the title, placing it within a network of multiple connections, of multiple meanings or interpretations: Starting with the religious motif of the parable of the Good Samaritan, the section ends with a poem, which defines the artwork's key conceptual factor in poetic terms: "Time justifies its existence in the process of waiting..."

J.M.M.



Pak Sheung Chuen, *Waiting for a Friend (without Appointment),* 2006/2014

Zhang Peili

Zhang Peili, *Brown Book No. 1,* 1988 (detail)

In Zhang Peili's *Brown Book No. 1,* 1988, a painterly assignment is addressed in a conceptual and performative manner, and is distributed among a number of potential participants. The structure of this artwork is based upon the rationalization of structures of bureaucratic working processes. In total, nine photographs, framed letters and an original surgical glove with its packaging: the artwork documents an activity by the artist in which he sent letters to randomly selected students in which the recipients were required to paint the surgical gloves included with the letters. Gloves are a recurring motif in Zhang's artworks, relating first and foremost to current state-imposed hygiene measures. *Brown Book No. 1* marks Zhang's official 'departure' from painting, as he chose to shift his focus from painterly expertise to the conditions (verbal and infrastructural) under which art is produced. He refrains from postulating the approach of the end of the era of painting, instead causing painting to appear 'obsolete' through a transfer into a new or changed model of experience or understanding.

J.M.M.

Zhang Peili, *Brown Book No. 1,* 1988

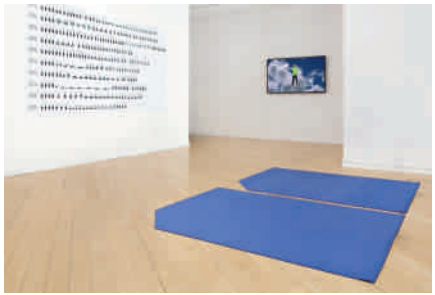
Guan Xiao

Guan Xiao's works are characterized by references that range widely in space and time, configured together to form an amalgamated aesthetic. The installation entitled *Sunset*, 2013, consists of a light box, animated by the sky colors associated with a sunset, plus two humorous sculptures made of polyurethane-clad wood that appear to be intrinsic to it, tire rims with Google lettering and artificial floral decorations. For Guan Xiao, the surfaces of the light boxes (or monitors) are the preeminent interfaces for the meeting of material and non-material, online and offline worlds. The artist presents us with an arrangement of light that appeals to our senses, one that touches on the worlds of romantic feelings, that also causes past and future to come together, metaphorically. The question of what the objects and the image combinations actually mean is left to the viewer. We decide what we are seeing, what we want to see—and how we see. That is the implicit, humanist message of these semiotic core-drillings by Guan Xiao.

C.G.

Guan Xiao, *Sunset,* 2012

Xu Zhen produced by MadeIn Company



Xu Zhen produced by MadeIn Company, *Physique of Consciousness,* 2011

The glass cabinet acquired by the Daimler Art Collection presents a glimpse of the collected research of a 'Research Organization' founded by MadeIn and given the name *Physique of Consciuosness Museum,* described by the artist himself as "the first museum dedicated to human thinking, acting and body language." This research endeavor originated with a "cultural fitness exercise" which is the object of the simultaneously acquired video (and poster). This exercise brings together diverse human movements from very different contexts. "The whole series is composed of more than two hundred steps and moves inspired from a hundred ceremonies, worships and traditions accumulated through the history of humanity." (MadeIn) This glass case shows *Apsara (Gesture 10) from exercise 9*. In Hindu and Buddhist mythology, the apsaras (also known as 'heavenly women' or 'heavenly dancers'), are female cloud and water spirits. Xu Zhen's museum, however, is daring in that it questions our accustomed way of seeing things and our (generally rather one-sided) worldview in an up-to-date way, by offering us a wide-ranging panorama of humanity's spiritual and religious heritage, and by enquiring into "the nature and source of our ideologies" (MadeIn).

C.G.

Xu Zhen produced by MadeIn Company, *Physique of Consciousness Museum, Apsara (Exercise No. 9, Gesture 10),* 2013-2014

Shusaku Arakawa
(1936 Nagoya, J – 2010 New York City, USA)

Madeline Gins
(1941 New York City, USA – 2014 New York City, USA)

Morning Picture, Portrait of a Civilization, 1969
Oil on canvas
120 x 184 cm
Acquired 2005

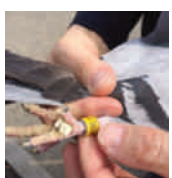
Sarah Browne
(* 1981 in Dublin, IRL – lives in Dublin, IRL)

Door stops (Eileen Gray), 2010
Stainless steel
3 parts,: A: 2,9 x 15,9 x 2,9 cm
B: 2,5 x 15,2 x 4,5 cm
C: 2,6 x 13,5 x 5,9 cm

From Margin to Margin (Looking for Eileen), 2010
Artist book, Ed. 1/200
21 x 16 cm, 46 pages,
Leporello: 21 x 736 cm

Both acquired 2010

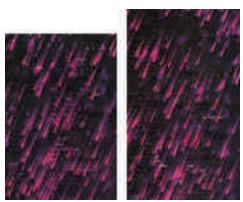
Remembering Gray, Haus Huth, Berlin, 2015
In collaboration with Alice Lyons
Printed text distributed by carrier pigeons, Ed. unlim.
Courtesy Sarah Browne, Dublin



Natalie Czech
(* 1976 in Neuss, D – lives in Berlin, D)

A poem by repetition by Robert Creeley #2, 2013
2 parts, C-prints
Each 70,5 x 72,8 cm
Ed. 5 + 2 AP

A poem by repetition by Robert Creeley #3, 2013
2 parts, C-prints
113,9 x 76,3 cm, 130,6 x 76,7 cm
Ed. 5 + 2 AP



Both acquired 2015

Katja Davar
(* 1968 in London, GB – lives in London, GB)

The Dog Walkers of Statistic Fields, 2007
Pencil and graphite on paper
127 x 237 cm
Acquired 2009

Sibylla Dumke
(* 1981 in Münster, D – lives in Berlin, D)

o.T. (28.6., Boppstr., Berlin), 2013
Ink on wood
192 x 40 x 34 cm

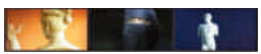
o. T. (26.2., Kamari), 2014
Ink on paper
94,1 x 62 cm

Both acquired 2015

Guan Xiao
(*1983 in Chongqing, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

Sunset, 2012
LED light box, artificial flower, colored metal, (wheel) rim, resin
Light box: 308 x 158 cm
small sculpture: 50 x 45 x 40 cm
large sculpture: 80 x 55 x 55 cm
Ed. 2/3 + 1 AP

Action, 2014
HD videos, 3 channel
10:00 min, Ed. 4/5 + 1 AP



Both acquired 2015

Lee Kit
(*1978 in Hong Kong, HK – lives in Hong Kong, CHN and Taipei, TW)

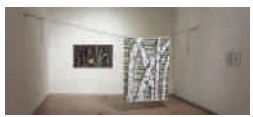
'You (you).', set 7, 2013
Acrylic, emulsion paint and pencil on wooden boards, readymade objects
Acquired 2014

Li Ran
(*1986 in Hubei, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

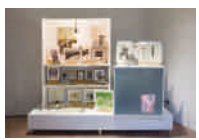
Mont Sainte-Victoire, 2012
HD video (color/sound), 35:35 min, 240 slides (35mm), 3 slide projectors
Acquired 2014

Liu Ding
(* 1976 in Changzhou, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

A Story Told to Me by Wang Luyan, 2012
Photograph, text, oil on canvas, rope, painting, text
Various dimensions



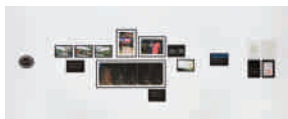
Evidence, 2012
Mixed Media
approx. 200 x 240 x 120 cm



Both Acquired 2014

Pak Sheung Chuen
(* 1977 in Anxi, CHN – lives in Hong Kong, CHN)

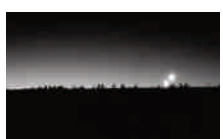
Waiting for a Friend (without Appointment), 2006/2014
Multi-part photo installation, photocopies, handwritten notes, photos, text, various dimensions, unique
Acquired 2014



Philippe Parreno
(* 1964 Oran, DZ – lives in Paris, F)

6:00 P.M., 2001
Chromojet print on carpet
Installation, dimensions variable
Acquired 2002

Speaking to the Penguins, 2009
Silver gelatin print
63 x 89 cm, Ed. 3/10 + 2 AP
Acquired 2014



AC/DC Snake, 2010
Various electrical plugs and adapters
27,5 x 41,5 x 18,5 cm
Acquired 2010

C.H.Z., 2011
HD Color film, sound mix 5.1,
13:03 min. Ed. 1/3
Acquired 2011

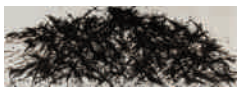
Qiu Zhijie
(*1969 in Zhangzhou, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

Calligraphy of Written Backward: Sand of Silk-washing Stream by Su Shi, 2008
Ink on paper
Paper scroll: 97 x 108 cm
Video: 8:29 min
Acquired 2014

Max Uhlig
(*1937 in Dresden, D – lives in Dresden, D)

Halbfigur/Sitzender junger Mann (S.M.), 1991
Ink, brush on fleece fabric, overlaid, surrounded by framing strip
140,3 x 100,3 cm

Große Buschformation, bewegt, 1993
Brush, gray and black ink, on Hahnemühle handmade paper
107 x 305,5 cm



Bewegte Baumkronenreihe, 2011/12
Brush, gray and black ink, on Hahnemühle handmade paper
96,5 x 181,3 cm

Baumreihe – dunkel, 2012
Brush, gray and black ink, on Chinese paper
96,5 x 177 cm
All acquired 2015

Xu Zhen produced by MadeIn Company
(MadeIn Company founded in 2009)
Xu Zhen (*1977 in Shanghai, CHN – lives in Shanghai, CHN)

Physique of Consciousness, 2011
Single channel video, poster
52 min, Ed. 4/10
Poster: 100 x 150 cm

Physique of Consciousness Museum, Exercise No. 9, Gesture 10 (Apsara), 2013–2014
Wood, glass, C-prints, acrylic glas
170 x 170 x 100 cm

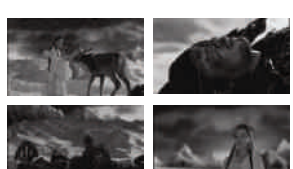
Both acquired 2015

Yang Fudong
(*1971 in Beijing, CHN – lives in Shanghai, CHN)

Ms. Huang at M last Night #5, 2006
Inkjet print
120 x 180 cm, Ed. 7/10

The Fifth Night, 2010
Inkjet print
180 x 120 cm, Ed. 9/10

Yejiang / The Nightman Cometh, 2011
35mm black-and-white film transferred to HD
19:21 min, Ed. 4/10



Yejiang / The Nightman Cometh #1,
2011
Inkjet print
120 x 180 cm, Ed. 7/10

Yejiang / The Nightman Cometh No.5,
2011
Inkjet print
120 x 180 cm, Ed. 7/10

All acquired 2014

Zhang Peili
(* 1957 in Hangzhou, CHN – lives in Hangzhou, CHN)

Brown Book No. 1, 1988
Photography, ink on paper, a rubber surgical glove and its packaging
Dimensions variable, Ed. 5/5
Acquired 2015

Zheng Chongbin
(* 1961 in Shanghai, CHN – lives in Shanghai, CHN and San Francisco, USA)

White Reflection, 2012
Ink, acrylic on Xuan paper
272 x 68,5 cm
Acquired 2014

Zheng Guogu
(* 1970 in Yangjiang, CHN – lives in Yangjiang, CHN))

The Aesthetic Resonance of Chakra No. 1, 2013/2014
Oil on canvas
173 x 134 cm
Acquired 2014

›On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015:
Are You Meaning Company, Yin Xiuzhen

On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones

Second part of an exhibition series with new acquisitions of contemporary Chinese and international art

November 13, 2015 - April 10, 2016

Leonor **Antunes** (P), **Are You Meaning Company** (J), **Cao** Fei (CHN), **Chen** Chieh-Jen (RC)
Dominique **Gonzalez-Foerster** (F), Alicja **Kwade** (PL), **Liu** Zheng (CHN), **Ma** Qiusha (CHN), Benedikt **Partenheimer** (D)
Thomas **Struth** (D), **Wang** Sishun (CHN), **Wu** Hao (CHN), **Yin** Xiuzhen (CHN), **Zhao** Zhao (CHN), **Zheng** Guogu (CHN)

Curated by Renate Wiehager, head of the Daimler Art Collection & Christian Ganzenberg
Curatorial advisor: Andreas Schmid

Daimler Contemporary
Potsdamer Platz Berlin

Liu Zheng, from the series: *The Chinese,* 1994–2002

China can no longer be thought of as separate from the rest of the world: within the art industry, as booming economic zone and global actor—China is on the up. Recent Chinese developments that relate more readily to the international context often overshadow China's traditional core—the nation's cultural history, which bears the mark of dramatic sociopolitical upheavals. Still, here we can see an accumulation of intellectual and artistic assets with significant historical determining factors coming into play. In-depth study is well worthwhile: it enables one to draw individual and specific conclusions about the rapidly-changing status quo. Our series of exhibitions in Berlin, which consists of three exhibitions over a period running from May 2015 to summer 2017, is dedicated to a dialogue between Chinese contemporary art and examples of art movements from other nations. Accompanied by a diverse program of events, it will offer a space for discussing controversial aspects of China's past and present. A total of 40 artworks by approximately 20 Chinese artists expand the Daimler Art Collection's international profile, continuing on from the acquisition of artworks from the world tour destinations of South Africa, Latin America, Australia, India, and Asia since 2003.

China is a significant trade partner and production location for Mercedes-Benz and Daimler. Our focus on China offers an expanded cultural exchange; it provides multiple perspectives and opens up discussion on the complex linkages, divergences, and entanglements that exist between Chinese and Western-style contemporary art.

The artworks by the Chinese artists relate to the chief focal points of the Daimler Art Collection: Abstract and Conceptual Art, and new art media. At the same time, these artworks constitute an entirely new and distinct complex of works within the collection—both culturally and aesthetically. The first part of the exhibition—'From a Poem to the Sunset' (May 1 – October 18, 2015)—was concerned with conceptual approaches, installation, and video artworks, focusing on the significance of artistic traditions and on the collision of diverging cultural, media and art-material worlds. The current exhibition, 'On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones' (November 13, 2015 – April 10, 2016), emphasizes artworks from the field of sculpture and photography. The artists are not only in search of their own individual means of expression—with particular reference to the details of their own biographies—but they also formulate answers to the essential questions of our age. Their artistic responses to these questions may take the form of constructed parallel worlds, artwork documentations, or portraits, but also of specific, concerted attempts to influence the society behind their own life influences. The artworks on display make plain the fundamental changes within the worlds in which we live, give expression to existing stereotypes and judgments (or prejudices) about 'the other,' and deal with the social and political consequences of globalization. The third and final exhibition in this series, beginning in summer 2017, will be a 'discussion' between primarily Abstract Art tendencies of China, Germany, and other nations. The next stage will be a complete exhibition of all our newly acquired Chinese artworks at our Daimler site at Stuttgart-Möhringen for 2016. It is intended primarily for our employees in the Stuttgart area who will be invited to attend themed tours, but external groups are also welcome, provided that they register in advance.

The brochure produced to accompany the first exhibition in the series, entitled 'From a Poem to the Sunset,' featured an essay by Andreas Schmid, advisor and China expert for our exhibition series, on the development of contemporary Chinese art post-1976. The current brochure for part two, 'On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones,' contains a text by Christian Ganzenberg, co-curator of this series of exhibitions, on the theme of current trends in the museum scene of contemporary art in China.

The three-part exhibition series at the Daimler Contemporary Berlin is accompanied by an extensive program of events. During the run of the exhibition series various discussions will take place with the aim of providing an independent forum on specific China-related themes and of bringing together a selection of significant figures from China with the host serving as moderator. Artistic background factors and approaches of the exhibited artworks will be discussed as will fundamental questions and topical themes relating to cultural and social developments in China. The artists featured in the exhibitions will speak at discussions, lectures, and performances. Additionally, an all-day symposium was held with Chinese, European, and American experts on September 15 and 16, 2015, where current trends in the various different artistic media, together with cultural production conditions in China, were discussed in a concentrated and condensed form. The research work produced at these events will be made available online and in an accompanying publication. Further on, there will be an ongoing communication program with regular weekend themed tours and workshops for children.

As a nation of economic growth, China is becoming increasingly central to international interests. In this light, it is becoming ever more apparent how little we actually know about this nation's specific, typical character. The various different approaches embodied by the works of Chinese contemporary art newly acquired for our collection—including those by the younger generation of artists—enable memorable and multi-faceted insights into Chinese culture and history, and allow us to cast an eye over the social and artistic developments of recent times. They do not represent ready-made opinions, but they offer us plenty of opportunities to form our own opinions.

Renate Wiehager
Head of the Daimler Art Collection, Stuttgart/Berlin

›From a Poem to the Sunset‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015: Guan Xiao, Katja Davar

Christian Ganzenberg / Julia Martha Müller

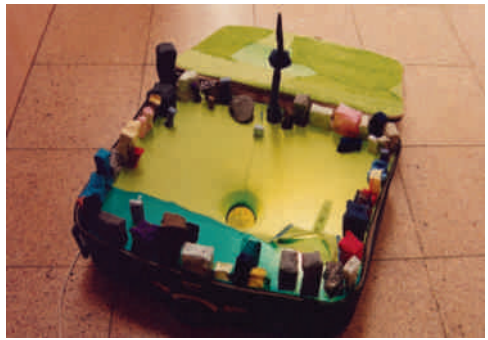
Whereas the first part of our series of exhibitions of Chinese contemporary art, which was entitled 'From a Poem to the Sunset,' specifically focused on conceptual trends in video art and installation art, the exhibition entitled 'On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones' focuses on the juxtaposition of sculptures and installation pieces with photography. The photographs, which are somewhere between documentary, artificial composition and fiction, are presented on the walls around the interior stairwell to serve as a continuous photographic connection with reality, while the sculptures, art objects and occasional whole-space installations are arranged along their own meandering course through the Daimler Contemporary. This dialogic interchange gives a structure to the whole of the exhibition's open space, thereby enabling different viewing perspectives. This exhibition of a total of 24 artworks by twelve artists from seven nations outlines aspects of human communities in densely populated urban areas, and in the rapidly growing great cities of China in particular. How should we respond to the sociopolitical transformations brought about by increasing urbanization worldwide? What forms might best allow one to express the social changes that go hand-in-hand with these tendencies? In what ways do our shifting living conditions alter learned, accustomed values and patterns of behavior, role models and traditions? And, last but not least, what artistic visions of the present-day and of the future can be created as a result of observing these transformations of human existence?

Are You Meaning Company, *Two Getting Along Project,* since 2001

The exhibition begins with a playful dialogue—which nonetheless repeatedly strikes a serious note—between the Japanese artist Ayumi Minemura, who lives in Berlin and produces art under the label Are You Meaning Company (AYMC), and two Chinese artists: Yin Xiuzhen and Zheng Guogu. Minemura's transport-form, mobile, multi-part, small-scale sculptures are her response to the problem of defining individuality in an age of urbanization and global travel links. Her interactive artwork entitled *Two Getting Along Project,* and the AYMC's multicolored paper *Are You Meaning Houses* (mass-produced, but handmade), cause the viewer to reflect on human relationships, and on diverse forms of dwelling and inhabiting—as applied to standardized one-room apartments and modular buildings.

Are You Meaning Company
Are You Meaning Houses, 2003

Yin Xiuzhen, *Portable City: Berlin,* 2005



Yin Xiuzhen, *Portable City: Beijing,* 2000

Yin Xiuzhen is a concept artist who works with fabric. She creates abstract portraits of great cities of all nations packed into suitcases (Portable Cities) from items of clothing collected in the cities themselves. Her 'clothing psychograms' or 'identity blends' (*One Sentence – No. 40, 78, 86*) combine production and personality, everyday materials and everyday reality with both a sharp critical eye, and plenty of humor.

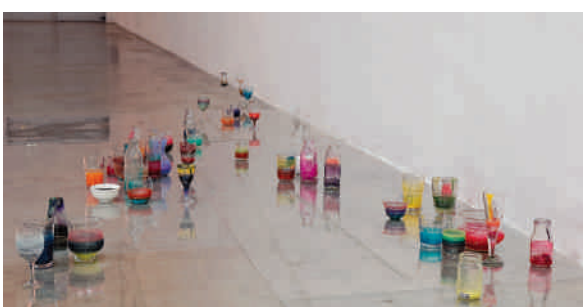
Zheng Guogu's early photographic work in this space formulates questions of identity within society that are opened up again in numerous ways throughout the exhibition. In order to create *Me and My Teacher,* Zheng spent several months accompanying a mentally handicapped homeless man through the streets of Yangjiang, using his camera to record scenes from his companion's everyday life. The resulting 'docu-fiction' photography series shows us how the photographer—through the eyes of his subject—wants to see the world: unprejudiced, and free from conventions.

It is only a short step from the delicate material of Yin Xiuzhen's works to the spatial installation entitled *a secluded and pleasant land, in this land I wish to dwell* by Leonor Antunes, which is the product of research by the artist into the cultural, craftworking and architectural traditions of Brazil, and, more specifically, of her research on a building by the architect João Batista Vilanova Artigas. The characteristic range of materials used by the artist, many of which are organic—exotic woods, cotton, leather equestrian tack, but also bamboo, and hemp—combine to create sculptures that are symbols and icons of utopian locations. Its 'ambient' of crossing temporal paths is based on a processual understanding of art and design.

The artworks of the Chinese artist Wu Hao also describe a specific place—Wuhan, the artist's home city in central China. In addition to his painting *I pity you No. 3,* 2014, the exhibition includes two other artworks by Wu Hao that cannot be allocated to or filed under any single media heading or genre. *Rolling Gate No. 6*, a 'rolling gate ready-made' taken from an everyday context and featuring abstract streaks of color, sprayed-on telephone numbers and other signs left by Chinese jobseekers to advertise their services, can be read equally well as a painting or as a political statement. Dried traces of paint in containers produced by the artist's activities in his workshop (*Watermarks Project: Wuhan*) emphasize, as materializations of the painting process and its key medium, the temporal factor of their 'self-acting' origin. The end result is a 'collaborative project' with contributions by the artist himself, by the urban environment and by its inhabitants. Side-by-side with these artworks are 30 photographs from the markedly conceptual *The Chinese* (1994–2002) series by Liu Zheng, with its very moving subject matter.

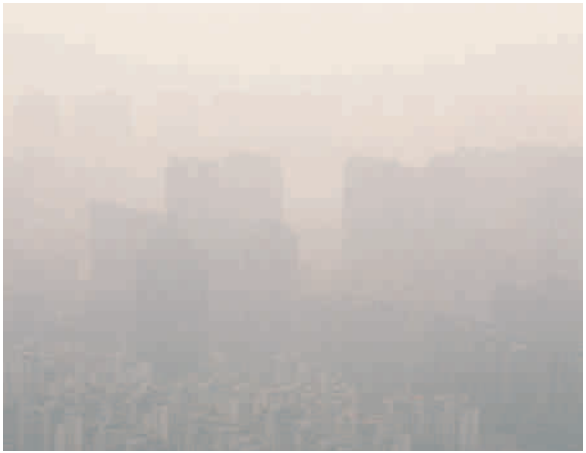
Without any claim to encyclopedic completeness, Liu, in the 1990s, documented a section of the Chinese population that had hitherto been largely invisible, both in society and in the media, and the conditions in which these people lived. In doing so, he succeeded in conveying an impression of the rapid and dramatic sociopolitical upheavals of that time, with an unsparing eye.

Alicja Kwade's decorative item and Wang Sishun's lead sculpture only superficially appear to constitute a contradiction in this context—in fact, both artworks teach us to truly perceive without jumping to premature conclusions. Despite its prestigious and expensive-looking form and elegant presentation gesture, the raw material of Kwade's *Bordsteinjuwelen (Brunnenstraße),* 2008, was a pebble found on a Berlin street and subsequently polished. This artwork's theme, pointed up by the way it has been processed, is its own status as a thing of value. Wang Sishun is also interested in analyzing the principles of economic standardization, and their consequences as expressed in industrial manufacturing and processing techniques. His folded metal sculpture *The Indeterminate Boundless No. 5* was created specifically to be practical for presentation in a gallery context; seen from this perspective, the sculpture is a commentary on the entanglements of art with the economy.



Wu Hao, *Watermarks Project: Wuhan,* 2014-2015

As one moves through the exhibition, one reencounters the recurring concept of thematic and media interrelatedness: Benedikt Partenheimer's series *Particulate Matter* replicate, in a painterly aesthetic reminiscent of the works of William Turner, the dense smog of urban landscapes—putting one in mind of Bruce Nauman's conceptual approach to the subject



Benedikt Partenheimer, *AQI 360, Shijiazhuang 2014,* 2014

in *L.A. Air;* these images express an unrestricted interest in human beings, and in humanity's living conditions. A cold reality lies behind these romantic photographs—a reality that is often censored out of the media for the benefit of economic interest groups, and of members of the Chinese government.

The break between the visual appearance and the hidden causative factors of an image also plays a role in the œuvre of the Chinese artist Ma Qiusha. Ma Qiusha's artworks usually begin with the artist's personal surroundings and specific living conditions. They visualize themes that may be taboo, emotional or familiar. In the video artwork *All my sharpness comes from your hardness,* the viewer experiences a symbolic, ambivalent and acoustically forceful image: the impression produced by the brutal wearing-down—and simultaneous sharpening—of skate runners by the passage of the skates over hard ground. Looking at the images entitled *Fog No. 6* and *You (Kaleidoscope No. 2),* it is as if one can still hear the squeal of metal on asphalt: a tearing through the planar surface occasioned by a psychological force, or a resistance.

The artworks of Cao Fei are also fed by observations of the smallest social unit—the individual, with his or her individual needs—further on, by observations of macrostructures that bring about existential changes in everyday life—at work, and in social relationships. For her eight-part photographic series acquired for the Daimler Art Collection, which is entitled

Alicja Kwade, *Kreisel (Inception),* 2012

My future is not a dream, 2006, the artist's subject is the impenetrable world of industrial production in China. Her photos—the product of weeks of discussion and workshops with the workers of an Osram factory in Foshan—show the collision of maximized market efficiency in the form of anonymized production processes, and the intimate real-life worlds and utopias of the factory workers. This photographic series is Cao Fei's attempt to provide an artistic space for these people's wishes for self-fulfillment and self-representation, which are rarely put into words or depicted.

In the cabinet space, this photographic series comes face-to-face with another artwork by Alicja Kwade: *Kreisel (Inception)* presents a scene from the final sequence of the blockbuster film of the same name by Christopher Nolan: an iconic image symbolizing the deceptiveness of media realities, and the fluid transitions between our 'waking' and 'sleeping' consciousness. These works have plenty of thematic connections to the nearby artworks by the French artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and the Taiwanese artist Chen Chieh-Jen in the next room. The Japanese and Chinese neon sign of 'Dream' condenses Gonzalez-Foerster's alienating—poetic and filmic—experience of major Asian cities. Chen re-composes specific biographical events (which are often tragic or traumatic) in the form of photographic re-enactments. He turns material from contemporary history into a 'timeless' image which parallels the traditional genre of historical painting—as can be seen from this image from the series entitled *Friend Watan.* Individuals or specific sectors of

Thomas Struth, *Zhejiang Zhong Lu, Shanghai,* 1997

the population that appear in his photographs and films are regarded critically in relation to their wider social context—in relation to Taiwan, to China, or beyond.

In the final room, we present Cao Fei's film *La Town,* an impossible love story in a mysterious setting frozen in time, a world built from the figures and buildings of model railway enthusiasts. At the end of the film, the life and history of *La Town* appear sealed in glass museum cases, with historical 'patterns' becoming an authoritarian, selective interpretation of the history of this fictional city. The dreamlike dialogue of the two off-screen voices, inspired by Marguerite Duras' 'Hiroshima mon amour,' escapes from the visual impressions gained from the images, counteracting the horrors of the post-apocalyptic images with the intimacy of a conversation between lovers. Reality and construction, forgetting and remembering, life and death enter into a sinister entanglement in *La Town*.

'On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones' concludes with a dialogue between works by Thomas Struth and the Chinese concept artist Zhao Zhao, whose artwork inspired the title of the exhibition. These two artworks were created ten years apart—a timespan during which tremendous changes took place in the political agenda and geopolitical significance of China. Struth's 1997 artwork documents a Shanghai street

scene relatively objective and emotionless, but the cobblestone glued to the surface of Tiananmen Square by Zhao Zhao must be seen as a subtle, barely perceptible but unmistakable politically-motivated intervention. In an era of individual and social restrictions and a seemingly unstoppable rush toward globalization, Zhao Zhao reveals to us a nonconformist perspective on China's authorities, and their paradoxical system of values. Both photographs confront us with the tension between art and life, but they also remind us, once more, just how much views of China have shifted over the past two decades.

Zhao Zhao, *Cobblestone* (detail), 2007

›On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015:
Yin Xiuzhen, Zheng Guogu, Are You Meaning Company

›On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015: Liu Zheng, Leonor Antunes

›On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015: Are You Meaning Company, Yin Xiuzhen

Yin Xiuzhen

In her multimedia artworks Yin Xiuzhen frequently uses found objects. She arranges old clothes, shoes, furniture, and simple construction materials to create complex installations that focus on issues surrounding the construction of history and memory. She makes use of the idea of clothing as a medium of individual memories in her series of artworks entitled *One Sentence:* 108 individual objects, each consisting of a stainless steel tin. For each of these, she uses some used clothes from a friend which she cuts into 35 mm-wide strips and lays in the can in a circular configuration: in each case the fabric strips begin at the center with underwear fabric and end with the outer clothing. A description of the clothing, its sequence, and its numbering are stamped on the lid of the tin in Chinese characters. The colors, patterns, and materials produce an abstract portrait. The seemingly simple title—*One Sentence*—suggests a structural analogy with grammar: a sentence—which is a closed unit of language composed of smaller units—is formed by means of a process.

F.H.

Yin Xiuzhen, *One Sentence – No. 40, 78, 86,* all: 2011

Yin Xiuzhen

For her series *Portable Cities,* the artist Yin Xiuzhen designs abstract models of international metropolitan cities in a standardized suitcase format. She collects pieces of clothing from the depicted city in order to sew souvenir textile items that are shaped by her memories of the specific location. Based on typical buildings—local sites such as the main station (Hauptbahnhof), the Staatsgalerie, and the Mercedes-Benz Museum—the model in the Daimler Art Collection can readily be recognized as Stuttgart. Out of brightly colored fabrics from Stuttgart residents, she sculpts a new and not necessarily coherent ensemble: an eclectic but at any rate striking miniature city that makes no pretense of being a to-scale reproduction. In spite of the souvenir potential and the dainty materials, this artwork series may also reveal certain implications that are critical (of consumerism). Painstakingly handmade from old items of clothing, these sculptures contrast directly with industrial mass-produced textiles, whose production in China often involves unacceptable working conditions. Additionally, Yin Xiuzhen archives sound: one hears the sounds of the city rising out of the suitcase.

F.H.

Yin Xiuzhen, *Portable City: Stuttgart,* 2010

Zheng Guogu

S.Zheng Guogu's artworks recurring themes include the reinterpretation of traditional Chinese art and culture, and their transference into a post-modern language of images and forms informed by Asian cultural contexts. At the beginning of his career in the 1990s, Zheng worked primarily in the medium of photography– at a time when few Chinese artists were interested in this medium. *Me and My Teacher,* 1993, is one of his early artworks. For six months, Zheng accompanied a homeless man with learning difficulties through the streets of Yangjiang, using his camera to record scenes from his companion's day-to-day life. What primarily fascinates Zheng is the young man's view of the world around him which is unprejudiced and free from conventions. As the title of the artwork implies, this made the subject into a kind of mentor for the artist. *Me and My Teacher* was followed by a series of photographic works in which Zheng reinterprets the relationship between fiction and reality. In their aesthetic language, these artworks are reminiscent of documentary photography: they are, in fact, 'docu-fictions.'

A.S.S.

Zheng Guogu, *Me and My Teacher,* 1993

Leonor Antunes

In terms of its diverse references to architectural history and culture the multimedia installation *a secluded and pleasant land, in this land I wish to dwell,* 2014, reflects Leonor Antunes' key method of using the replica and the duplicate as an implied criticism of modernism. The multimedia installation is the result of an intensive research process into culture, craftwork, and architecture in Brazil. For example, Leonor Antunes measured the house of the architect João Batista Vilanova Artigas and used the proportions and measurements to create a sculpture. The measurements of the blackish-red linoleum floor space correspond to those of the terrace where Artigas and his Communist friends met to conspire together during the era of the military dictatorship. Furthermore the central factor is provided by Antunes' study of the female architect, designer, and curator Lina Bo Bardi. Two space dividers composed of vertically-cut wenge-wood rods are united by a white cotton line to create a free-standing three-dimensional structure. This construct echoes the dimensions and ornamental features of a wall structure created by Bo Bardi in 1988 for the Casa do Benin in northeast Brazil. The hemp rope that hangs in form of a rectangular grid shape beneath the ceiling and the three nets hanging up from the hemp rope reference to the practices of the indigenous people.

R.W.

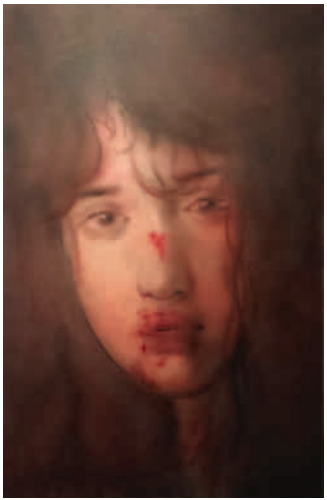
Leonor Antunes, *a secluded and pleasant land, in this land I wish to dwell,*
Exhibition view, Berlin Biennale, 2014

Wu Hao

In the work series *Rolling Gates* Wu Hao analyzes the (unintended) existence and materiality of abstract painting in the urban space. All of the gates included in this group of artworks are from Wuhan, a city with a population of millions in the province of Hubei in central China. Like many of China's industrial cities, Wuhan is experiencing a rapid but precarious boom that not only unbalances the economical situation but also leaves deep marks in social structures. The artist bought the rolling gate from a shop-owner in Wuhan. With the exception of the addition of his signature, he left it completely unchanged. This object that has been converted into an image attests to the fight for control between the public authorities and the population of Wuhan: people looking for work have left their telephone numbers on the gates for anyone who might be interested in their services. These have been scratched off or painted over in broad strokes by the guardians of order. This cat and mouse game, which plays out over weeks and months, creates plenty of rather colorful layers of paint, which are regularly covered over by columns of numbers.

Wu Hao bases his large-format figural paintings on 'screenshots' from international film productions. *I pity you No. 3,* 2014, shows a close-up of Briseis, one of the female characters in the blockbuster film 'Troy,' 2004. Inspired by Homer's 'Iliad,' the historical epic tells the story of the mythical battles of the Greeks against the ancient city of Troy. Wu Hao's painting style blurs the sharp outlines of these high resolution Hollywood images, lending them a certain air of nostalgia. Wu Hao records a brief and atypical emotional situation, as Briseis violently stabs her tormentor, at the same time losing Achilles, the man she loves.

C.G.



Wu Hao, *I pity you No. 3,* 2014

Wu Hao, *Rolling Gate No. 6,* 2014

Wu Hao

In the sculptural work created by Wu Hao, the temporal and the ephemeral have a significance that should be emphasized. For his temporal-spatial installations *Watermarks Project,* Wu Hao allows a mixture of acrylic paint and water in a variety of porcelain and glass vessels to evaporate—taking more than half a year in each case. In implementing his plans, the artist relies upon the assistance of third parties. In workshops, he teaches them how to handle and conserve the vessels and about the background of his work. Not until the actual installation of his artworks, which can be flexibly adapted to the relevant exhibition spaces, does Wu Hao intervene, selecting, combining, and arranging the vessels.
After their 'production period' these vessels reveal more than just watermarks from the sediments of the original acrylic paint mixtures—they also give indications of the weather, the seasonal humidity, and the air quality of the different cities.
Wu Hao's *Watermarks Projects* are a complex, performative 'community project' created jointly by the artist, by each individual city and its inhabitants. They tell of different urban environments and can also be understood as a subversive/poetical statement; only by seeing 'watermarks' yet possible interpretations of a sociological, ecological and political character are opened up.

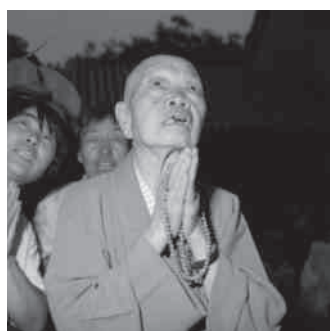
C.G.

Wu Hao, *Watermarks Project: Wuhan* (selection), 2014–2015

Liu Zheng

At the heart of Liu Zheng's *The Chinese* photographic series, which was created over the space of seven years, is the human being—both its appearance and its immediate surroundings, which are like an extension to the cosmos of the individual's identity. Liu Zheng was prompted by his distrust of the highly tendentious official version of history—in a time of radical upheaval and rapid social movement—to create his own historical narrative, in the form of images. Liu's development as an artist coincided with the 'New Documentary' generation and its trends: an approach distinguished by a conceptual, experimental mode of expression with the photographer's interest shifted away from formal reporting and toward a more personal and unsparing view of China's population and their living conditions. Liu Zheng has espoused this approach since the mid-1990s, as part of a rigorous artistic strategy. The fragile, decaying, unforgettably displayed, defiant bodies in his photographs are witnesses to shifting power structures. They are like human memorials to China's recent history—and to China's exhausted ancient traditions, which Liu Zheng's *The Chinese* series protects from being forgotten amid all this rapid change.

J.M.M.



Liu Zheng
Clockwise:
Two Dancers, Beijing, 1999
A Taoist Priest Wearing a Ragged Robe, Beijing, 1995
Old Nun, Beijing, 1996
Two Miners in Public Bathouse, Datong, Shanxi Province, 1998
Aus der Serie: *The Chinese,* 1994–2002

›On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015:
Liu Zheng, Ma Qiusha

›On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015: Wu Hao

›From a Poem to the Sunset‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015: Li Ran

A TIGER'S LEAP INTO THE FUTURE

Christian Ganzenberg

China's cultural landscape is booming. For some years now, the People's Republic of China has been building more museums than any other nation in the world. According to the official figures produced by the Chinese National Bureau of Statistics, approximately 2,000 new museums were built between the dawn of the new millennium and the year 2012. Today, the statistics indicate that more than 4,000 museums are in existence, and it appears that the year 2013 alone saw the founding of 451 new museums.[1] These impressive figures bear witness to an almost uncanny rise in museum numbers over a very short period of time: a rise that, in the medium term, does not look as though it will end soon. So, why is this? First of all, China still lags behind other nations in terms of museum density: China currently has one museum per 350,000 inhabitants and the authorities envisage achieving a ratio of 1:250,000. Approximately 30,000 further museums would have to be built over the next few years in order to achieve the density seen in other nations. Aside from this, plenty of other factors continue to exist to drive these developments forward.

Growing Cultural Consciousness

When one looks back at the historical development of the museum scene in China—focusing solely upon art institutions—what one notices first is that they are a very recent phenomenon—as, indeed, is the emergence of modern and

National Art Museum of China, Peking, 2014

contemporary art in itself. The first Art Museum in China opened in the 1930s. By the mid-20th-century, there were approximately twenty-five such museums in the whole country. The National Art Museum of China in Beijing, China's national flagship institution, was completed in 1958. These early art museums were rather more like exhibition halls. They would frequently be used to host Chinese shows of international art of all kinds (including applied art), and their facilities would also be used for other functions. In the 20th century, very few of China's political leaders recognized the potential value of these institutions: this attitude, however, was to undergo a fundamental transformation at the onset of the 21st century, as the government came to accept that not just the nation, but also every city and every region should become more culturally aware, and should put on displays of its own tradition and culture to celebrate the values that the culture embodies ('soft power of culture'). This was done partly in order to entertain the vast numbers of Chinese tourists who explore their own country. In order to achieve this, museums, concert halls, opera houses, public libraries and cultural centers of all kinds were built in China's many millions-strong cities.

However, since no official cultural support existed, it was generally private entrepreneurs and real estate projects who took on responsibility for the creation of these institutions. The design of these projects may have varied, but they were almost all founded on the same identical principle. One of the challenges faced by the recent boom is that many of

these institutions, when they first open, have no collection of their own, and have little in the way of content suitable for display that would give them a distinctive identity. Sadly, this has not led to the museums being flexibly structured or being built on a readily comprehensible scale; instead, what appears to matter most is sheer size and architectonic magnetism.[2]

New National Art Museum of China, Beijing,
(Architect: Jean Nouvel, 2014, under construction)

MOCA Chengdu—Outpost in the West

As example in this new museum development, one could name the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Chengdu. In addition to being one of West China's most important transport hubs, Chengdu is an economically significant location, a city where 200 of the 500 largest companies in the world are said to be based. The city's only museum dedicated to contemporary art is located approximately 15 kilometers outside of the city center, within one of the largest software office parks in Asia. The Chengdu High-Tech Investment Group—the partially state-owned firm that operates this 'city district,' with its hundreds of thousands of homes and workplaces—had this museum built (construction period: 2011–2013). The museum regards itself as a "multi-functional non-profitable art museum open to all society that plays an important role in building a 'Humanistic High-tech Zone.'"[3]

It is run by the well-known Chinese art historian Lü Peng, who has more than 3,000 square meters of exhibition space to hold up to six exhibitions per year. In spite of its high level of initiative and enterprise, MOCA Chengdu suffers

from a series of problems. In addition to having no budget for exhibitions and acquisitions, the newly-founded museum lacks an operating budget, and therefore has no means of building up a body of competent staff to maintain the building's infrastructure (which is already in need of repair). In addition to this, it is unclear what target group the museum intends to attract, and what role it might play in the social life of the city. Other activities that form the bedrock of Western museum life—collection work, conservation work, research work and publishing work—are therefore unthinkable at present. In this respect, the MOCA Chengdu is a perfect example of the kind of museum that has sprung up over the past few years: pseudo-ambitious items of cultural decoration spawned by giant property projects. Failure to think the concept through plus hurriedly constructed infrastructure make these museums largely unfit to fulfill their classic tasks; instead, they have simply provided the state-backed real estate developers with an argument to justify the acquisition of larger plots of land, and to thereby raise the value of their properties.

Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Chengdu, 2013
(Architecture: Jiakun Architects, Chengdu)

OCAT—a Museum Concept as Role Model

The OCAT museums, however, give us an example of the more promising models that exist. The OCAT—OCT Contemporary Art Terminals—are named after a city district in Shenzhen, the 'Overseas Chinese Town' (OCT), where the first OCAT opened in 2005. The aim of these institutions—which

OCT Contemporary Art Terminal (OCAT), Shenzhen, 2014

now also exist in Shanghai (founded in 2012), Xi'An (founded in 2013), Wuhan (founded in 2014) and Beijing (currently under construction)—is to serve as "international terminals for contemporary art."[4] The idea was to enable and to promote exchanges between the Chinese art scene and the art scene outside of China. The great advantage of the OCAT approach is its professionalism; it incorporates an explicit commitment to sustainability, and handles local and global developments on an equal footing. The English art historian Karen Smith, who has been director of the OCAT Xi'an since 2013, describes this approach as follows: "We care about what the local audience is interested in: we want to find a way to show them an art form with which they are familiar, but of a type they might not have considered. [...] Furthermore we do some smaller programs, which are primarily about education, in which I want to bring an artist group here to do crazy stuff with kids. We will also make a project with Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts, perhaps with students of the new media department—they do amazing work—alongside another artist projects. Eventually we are going to bring in the first international artist to Xi'an."[5] Although the business group behind OCAT is also partly state-owned, the OCAT museums nonetheless serve as a kind of role model for how the deficient museums in China's millions-strong cities might be successfully built up in a suitably ambitious and sustained way.

Up and Coming: Private Collections of Contemporary Art

The private sector has made an additional contribution to the Chinese museum boom by producing a number of collectors' museums of its own. The quality and direction of these private art collections varies—just as it does in Western cultural circles. Chinese art first came to international attention in the post-2000 period, with the first generation of collectors making possible the rapid rise of the Chinese art market: now, there are a large number of ambitious newcomers—the much sought-after 'young collectors,' who offer new ideas and smart art system concepts. I should begin by mentioning, however, that whilst China has a well-observed tradition of 'noble' collecting, actual philanthropic patronage—a private art collection being displayed for the benefit of the public, for no financial gain—is extremely rare. Non-commercial investments in projects for the benefit of society have thus far not been encouraged by the central government, and have found no place in the materialistically-oriented context that exists in China. This is owing to the significance of the classic principle of jiaguo—jia means 'family,' and guo refers to the state. In addition to this, no officially recognized space for cultural activities has hitherto existed. It is similarly telling that the Chinese character signifying 'collector' (shoucangjia) derives from 'obtain/receive,' and 'hide/conceal.'

Long Museum West Bund, Shanghai, 2015
(Architecture: Atelier Deshaus, Shanghai)

This makes it all the more worthy of note that a number of remarkable collectors have chosen to depart from this tradition and to build their own museums—quite a few of them on a Pinault-like scale. Notable figures among these pioneers include Budi Thek (YUZ Foundation, Shanghai), Yan Shijie (Redbrick Museum, Beijing), Chen Dongsheng (Taikang Art Space, Beijing), Lu Jun and his son Lu Xun (Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing), and collector couple Liu Yiqian and Wang Wei (Long Museum, Shanghai). This first generation of major Chinese collectors—people who are basically responsible for their own wealth—focus primarily on the classical and contemporary art of their own nation. The dimensions and architectonic ambitions of the museums—the hardware—are generally impressive (after all, the yardsticks that exist in China are different). Many of these institutions, however, are lacking in the department of software: there is a lack of professionalism and functionality, and of watertight, forward-looking concepts. The Long Museum West Bund in Shanghai, which was completed in 2014, may boast a whole bevy of renowned 'academic advisors' to provide curatorship advice and to assist with the accumulation of a first-rate collection, but there is no will to, for instance, bring in audio-guides or other communication media to accompany the exhibitions (as per March 2015).

YUZ Museum, Shanghai, 2015
(Architecture: Sou Fujimoto, Tokyo)

Additionally, the collection museums still have close ties to—not to say a dependency on—their patron collectors. The YUZ Museum, which opened in May 2014, is run and financed by the eponymous YUZ Foundation. This private

foundation covers all the operating costs; the plan is that, in a second phase, companies will be found to act as sponsors, and that, ultimately, income will be derived from ticket sales and other allied sources (such as the restaurant and museum shop). This form of institution financing is helpful at the outset, but it offers little in the way of sustainability, since it is dependent upon the goodwill and the financial fortunes of the patron collector.

Young Collectors & Bold Entrepreneurs

The most recent member of the new generation of Chinese collectors is between thirty and forty years old. These collectors generally come from a 'good' family, and have usually studied abroad; this allowed them to gain their first experience of the international art scene. A striking example is provided by Lu Xun, who, with the support of his father, created the Sifang Art Museum in Nanjing, 2013. The museum, which was built by the American architect Steven Holl, is at the heart of a large-scale project, which is descriptively titled 'China International Practical Exhibition of Architecture.'

Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing, 2015 (Architect: Steven Holl, New York)

It comprises twenty-four buildings in total: hotels, conference rooms and artist residences, designed by a number of prominent international architects.[6] The exhibition program for the museum (with its almost 2,000 square meters of space) has a similarly international scope, bringing together

K11 Art Mall, Shanghai, 2014
(Architect: Kokaistudios, Shanghai)

Chinese artists like Zhang Peili, Yang Fudong and Zhang Enli and Western art superstars. As this example shows, one of the most striking things about these young collectors is their international attitude. This impression is reinforced by the young, Beijing-based collector Lin Han, who states that: “Our attitude toward nationality is the key difference. The older generation buys mostly Chinese art, but for our generation, nationality doesn’t mean a thing.”[7]

Adrian Chang, who founded the K11 Art Foundation in 2010, is working toward the same ‘international’ vision. His activities are at their most visible in the glamorous environments of the K11 Art Malls in Hong Kong and Shanghai: he enables the artists he supports to make use of a shop display window in these commercial surroundings. Whilst this ‘art for the masses’ concept has thus far met with questionable success, the vision espoused by the K11 Art Foundation is certainly ambitious: “We aim to be a sustainable incubation force in the global ecosystem of art, design and creativity, and to create strong public desire for the local contemporary art scene.”[8] Chang, who is thirty-four, has developed a whole series of instruments for achieving this goal: the K11

Art Space Workshops, the K11 Art Village, Artist-in-Residence program, the Artist Klub, MusiK11 and, last but not least, the K11 Collection. He has also initiated international collaborations with the Palais de Tokio and with the Armory Show.

A further excellent example of this new interest in creating the necessary infrastructure for contemporary art is provided by the young entrepreneur David Chau (known in China as Zhou Dawei), who is from Shanghai. In addition to collecting contemporary art Chau finances two young galleries (Leo Xu and Simon Wang's Antenna Space), and is the founder of a promising Chinese art fair (Art 021). "If I lived in the United States or Europe, my main focus could be collecting, but here in China, if I'm not helping out galleries and supporting an art fair, who would do it?"[9] says Chau. He is one of the first collectors to recognize that China does not necessarily need new museums so much as it needs a more differentiated art system. In the wake of the art market boom and the rise in the number of museums in the last decade, there is now an urgent need for China to focus on developing the infrastructure that has been created: on support for artists, curators and critics, on ensuring the sustainability of institutional concepts, and, above all, on building up an audience for art. The professional ambitions that evidently exist and the international networks of young collectors give us cause to hope that we will be seeing more 'software'-based investments of this kind in the near future. Perhaps the new generation is recalling the wisdom of Lao Tse, who, in the 6th century BC, came up with the following description of art as a phenomenon that exists somewhere between the material and the abstract:

Thirty spokes share the wheel's hub;
It is the center hole that makes it useful.
Shape clay into a vessel;
It is the space within that makes it useful.
Cut doors and windows for a room;
It is the holes which make it useful.
Therefore benefit comes from what is there;
Usefulness from what is not there.

Lao Tse: Tao te king, Chapter 11
(translated by Gia Fu Feng)

1 More facts and details on:
http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/
(as per June 15, 2015)
2 Some examples are New Century Museum City in Chengdu (approx. 40,000 qm), the National Art Museum of China in Beijing (approx. 40,000 qm +127,000 qm [the new building]) or Shanghai's Power Station of Art (41,200 qm).
3 http://www.chengdumoca.org/en/index.html
(as per June 15, 2015)
4 http://www.ocat.org.cn/index.php/About?lang=en
(as per June 15, 2015)
5 http://www.randian-online.com/np_feature/karen-smith-on-taking-the-reins-at-ocats-frontier-outpost/
(as per June 15, 2015)
6 In addition to major international figures such as Steven Holl, SANAA, Odile Decq, Ettore Sottsass, Arata Isozaki and David Adjaye, the architects commissioned to design these buildings included a number of Chinese stars, such as Zhan Lei, Amateur Archtitecture Studio and Liu Heng. More information available online:
http://www.sifangartmuseum.org/en/park.php
(as per June 15, 2015)
7 http://www.artnews.com/2014/10/21/new-generation-of-chinese-art-collectors/
(as per June 15, 2015)
8 http://www.k11artfoundation.org/en/about-us/
(as per June 15, 2015)
9 http://www.artnews.com/2014/10/21/new-generation-of-chinese-art-collectors/
(as per June 15, 2015)

›On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015:
Wu Hao, Ma Qiusha, Benedikt Partenheimer, Liu Zheng

›On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015:
Cao Fei, Alicja Kwade

›On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones‹, Daimler Contemporary: Leonor Antunes, Wu Hao, Liu Zheng

Wang Sishun

The multimedia artworks of Wang Sishun originate significantly in his analytical approach to economic principles, and in the industrial manufacturing and processing procedures that result from them—and in how these procedures are optimized and standardized. It is from this perspective that Wang investigates subjects such as the deep-seated entanglements that exist between commerce and the art market.

For pragmatic reasons, his gallery requested a "not too big" sculpture for display at the Art Basel event in Hong Kong. This prompted Wang Sishun to create a series consisting of several artworks, entitled *The Indeterminate Boundless.* The critical context for this group of sculpture is provided by the increased influence of the art market on the genesis of artworks. What role does the spatial extension of an artwork or the dimensions of the exhibition venue play in its commercial attractiveness? To what extent do the maxims of the art market directly influence the artistic decision-making process? An advanced context is given through Wang's studies of the theses of the pre-Socratic philosopher Anaximander, who attributed the arising of everything in existence to a primal, metallic substance.

N.H.

Wang Sishun, *The Indeterminate Boundless No. 5,* 2013

Ma Qiusha

The Chinese artist Ma Qiusha has at her disposal a wide range of differentiated pictorial media languages, her videos are generally accompanied by watercolor pictures or by collages. In the video artwork *All my sharpness comes from your hardness,* 2011, the viewer looks down upon the artist's pure white ice skates, which scrape across the asphalt backwards and at great speed, grinding forcefully. In this combined audiovisual presentation, the naive, childlike subject matter is juxtaposed with a hard, uncomfortable soundscape, creating a powerful mixture of beauty and discomfort. The ice skates and the road inflict wear and tear on one another reciprocally: the blades are sharpened or blunted and at the same time they scratch the asphalt. Given its autobiographical links to the artist's childhood, this artwork can be read as a multilayered metaphor for early impressions and for personal development within a family.

You (Kaleidoscope No. 2), 2013, appeals explicitly to—the viewer's—personal memories and sensations. Even the title of the artwork indicates its participation-related aspect. When one looks more closely, the subject matter of the artwork—a solidly linear, urban architecture that is reminiscent of Peter Halley's paintings of abstract urban surfaces—transforms into a surreal and dreamlike depiction. The artist is not concerned with real architectures; instead, her creations are based upon indistinct memory images. Thereby she works with reflective paper, which she cuts to size and sticks to a basic structure that is architectonic, and is painted in watercolors to create shimmering 'window surfaces.' Appearing as a lifeless, aesthetically perfected skin, one cannot imagine any human life existing behind this surface.

N.H.

Ma Qiusha, *You (Kaleidoscope No. 2),* 2013

Ma Qiusha, *All my sharpness comes from your hardness,* 2011

Cao Fei

Cao Fei's artworks describe the "politics of intimacy" (Hou Hanru) for Generation Y—a generation which is exposed to the consequences of globalization and whose identity has been deeply affected by this. In the eight-part photograph series entitled *My future is not a dream,* 2006, Cao Fei addresses the hard-to-understand world of industrial production. At the invitation of the Siemens Arts Program, Cao spent a number of months at a Foshan-based factory, used by the OSRAM company to produce light bulbs for the global market. The photographs show workers dancing to music of their own choosing, moving through the factory in their costume, posing as music bands, or standing immobile at their working station whilst the production process continues around them. These are touching, cheerful and thought-provoking pictures of people attempting to find their own identity in a thoroughly rationalized and anonymous setting that is governed by technology. The realistic representation of these working worlds, and the open conflict between the market economics-based structures of the company and the more intimate worlds of the lives of the workers, are significant themes in the photo series *My future is not a dream.*

C.G.

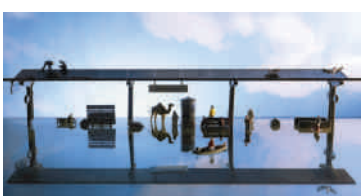
Cao Fei, *My future is not a dream #3,* 2006

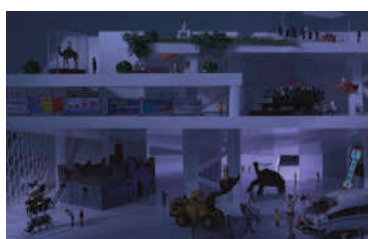
Cao Fei

Cao Fei's multifaceted and multimedia artwork is based on close observation and a critical, inquisitive attitude as regards her immediate surroundings. She begins with the everyday and mundane, the personal, the supposedly intimate. One of her reoccurring themes is the city and the living together in urban environments: From 2007 to 2010 she has created a complex, virtual city—*RMB City*—in the realms of 'Second Life' and in 2013 Cao Fei conceived *Haze and Fog,* a new type of Zombie film set in modern China, and only last year she finished another film about a mythical post-apocalyptic metropolis, called *La Town.* These projects are related not only to Cao Fei's principal examination of basic human conditions but also to a conceptual shift of perspective—a zoom from virtuality to a close-up of 21st century Beijing and back to an imaginary Sci-Fi view.

When we watch Cao Fei's video *La Town,* she places us right in the midst of her images of an envisaged, incipient, recently past or threatening—perhaps we don't know?—catastrophe. In the first section of the film, the camera, as it moves through the pitch-black streets of *La Town,* shows signs of destruction, but the human figures within the scenes appear unaffected. In the second part of the video, we see daylight, a playground, classical-looking fountain statues, a funfair. In the film's third part, the camera roves through homes in an apartment block—a reference to Cao Fei's film *Haze and Fog.* Here, the normality of ordinary everyday life prevails. Only in the final part does the scene acquire a mood of apocalyptic destruction: demonstrators, injured people, fire, sirens.

C.G.





Cao Fei, *La Town* (stills), 2014

Cao Fei

Cao Fei takes the pleasant model railway world and uses it as the basis for a human community, a 'world community'—reduced down to a miniature scale as *La Town,* where a happy coexistence is no more than a promise, a brief interlude in the unrelenting tide of a violent, destructive history. Her model adapts two other artworks with a spiritual affinity to her own ideas that have provided her with inspiration—the literary/filmic reflexive art of Duras/Resnais, and Italo Calvino's model utopian cities. She transposes these artworks out of their original context in 20th-century Europe, and into our present-day globalized world. The search for authenticity (so often futile in reality), memory as the imparter of meaning, and the viability or otherwise of political and social utopias: all of these find a temporary place in the 'Night Museum,' the museum that Cao Fei takes us to visit in the film's final sequence. When one considers that the policymakers of China are building thousands of new museums in an attempt to compensate the hundreds and thousands of people who work in the factories in China's great cities, with their populations of millions, for the terrible fears with which their everyday lives are filled, one is uncertain whether the final image offered to us by Cao Fei is intended to be seen as a utopia, or as a manifestation of trauma.

C.G.

Cao Fei, *La Town* (still), 2014

Alicja Kwade

Alicja Kwade's video artwork entitled *Kreisel (Inception),* 2012, is a reworking of the final sequence of Christopher Nolan's blockbuster movie 'Inception,' 2010. At the end of the movie Dom Cobb once again spins the spinning top that tells him whether he is in the real world or in somebody else's dream. Shown in a repeating loop, her silvery spinning top spins on a dark floor: it rotates and weaves, gliding, gleaming, elegantly decelerated. By replaying the final sequence over and over, Kwade causes the spinning top and its filmic significance to take ever further turns: after all, the top's state of endless rotation also means that it might fall at any minute. The endlessly extended, decelerated spin suggests a dream, but whether we are witnessing a dream or reality remains unresolved as long as the top keeps spinning, making it impossible to draw a distinction between the different levels of reality. First, the film was shot on 16 mm using a special high-speed camera. It was then blown up to a bigger format size and played at normal speed. This leads to a retardation and a contradiction in what we see that counteracts our expectations and the whole notion of authenticity. By detaching the spinning top from the film and its plot, Kwade begins by restoring the top's material character as an object. The camera technique, however, moves to a pace of its own: it creates a slowed and slightly distorted perspective, accompanied acoustically by the stretched-out sound of the spinning top.

F.H.

Alicja Kwade, *Kreisel (Inception),* 2012
Installation view König Gallery, 2012

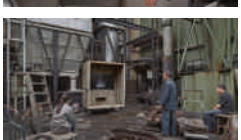
Alicja Kwade, *Kreisel (Inception),* 2012

Chen Chieh-Jen

The Taiwanese artist Chen Chieh-Jen reconstellates concrete historical, biographical, emotional, and (frequently) tragic or traumatic events and social upheavals. In his photographs, Chen positions individuals or 'invisible' groups of the population within the immediate environment that they interact with and impact on, and links his images to society as a whole, and to a legibly political context.

Friend Watan–5 is from a six-part photographic series that was created to accompany a film of the same name. Watan is an Atayal family name, the Atayal being Taiwan's second-biggest indigenous ethnic group. The picture shows the man standing silently on the collapsed, overturned roof; now, with light entering from above, it is the flooring of a light-filled atrium. In his hands, he holds a pile of items of clothing from the opened suitcase directly in front of him. He displays these items reverently, as if they were someone's last personal possessions, but there is no indication as to their origins. The building looks as though it has been shaken by an earthquake; it contains damaged ladders with broken rungs that permit no ascent to or descent from the abandoned rooms (in the direction of the brightening light). This highly compressed—almost religious looking—theatrical scene is intended to be decoded by the recipient: a number of different in potentia discourses can be 'decompressed' from it. Thereby the details of the photograph create a narrative, and the relationships between the individual elements in the picture create a drama. Watan, who is posed in the center of the picture like a Redeemer figure, transfixes the viewers with a direct gaze.

J.M.M.



Chen Chieh-Jen, *Friend Watan–1,2,3,4,6,* 2013

Chen Chieh-Jen, *Friend Watan–5,* 2013

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster

An interdisciplinary practice is essential to Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's artistic approach: she is interested in situations rather than objects. The neon symbol installation, which appears like an isolated impression excerpted from everyday Asian life, is presented here as a site-specific image (this is achieved by the blue background). The diagonal top line causes it to engage in a relationship with the surrounding space that is full of tension. Unlike the conceptual—and often tautological—language and neon artworks of Laurence Weiner and Joseph Kosuth, this character artwork is not self-referential; instead, it rather references 'the other.' The Japanese Chinese-derived character or pictogram '夢/mèng' ('dream') can mean a number of different things, depending on the context and on the combination of words used. It is composed of abstract elements but also includes a kind of schematic representation or depiction of the thing that it describes. In the case of the dream symbol, the upper part of the character indicates the eyebrows, the central part suggests the roof of a house or a bed, and the lower section signifies 'evening.' When interpreted as a fantasy, a daydream or fiction experienced in the waking state, '夢/mèng' implies a psychoanalytic reading with associations with imagined, desire-ridden, subjective notions of objects, or relationships to objects, or with a conscious or unconscious process of self-deception and repression.

J.M.M.

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *Dream,* 2001

Zhao Zhao

Zhao Zhao is a politically-minded concept artist. An assistant of Ai Weiwei, he belongs to the younger generation of Chinese artists. Zhao Zhao's minimalist/conceptual language makes the influence of the dominant political power structures palpably apparent through seemingly small gestures—seemingly trivial interventions by the artist in his direct environment, intended to destabilize politically imposed, vast systems of order.

The early artwork entitled *Cobblestone* (previously exhibited by the artist in 2008, during the Beijing Olympic Games) consists of two photographs that record a performance from the year 2007, in which Zhao Zhao used an insoluble aircraft component adhesive to glue a cobblestone to the paving in Tiananmen Square. The square is considered to represent China's political heart. This glued-on, protruding cobblestone appears in a vast sea of ordered, standardized cobblestones: it is a minimal unevenness that might be described as an "affront to order," as an individual irregular element that does not fit in. The guardians of order in the square greeted it with puzzlement: what did it mean, and how should they respond appropriately to this infraction?

N.H.

Zhao Zhao, *Cobblestone,* 2007

›On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015:
Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Chen Chieh-Jen, Liu Zheng, Deng Dafei

›On Curbstone Jewels and Cobblestones‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015: Cao Fei

Leonor Antunes
(*1972 in Lisbon, P – lives in Lisbon, P and Berlin, D)

a secluded and pleasant land, in this land I wish to dwell, 2014
Linoleum, hemp rope,
brass, wenge wood, cotton rope,
nylon, brass and iron lamps, electric cable, light bulb
Dimensions variable
Courtesy Gallery Luisa Strina,
São Paulo

Are You Meaning Company
Founded 1999 by
Ayumi Minemura
(*1976 in Nagoya, J – lives in Berlin, D)

Are You Meaning Houses, 2003
3 sets, each 1 linen case with
50 paper-made houses
Suitcase: 36 x 26 x 12 cm
Acquired 2004
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

Two Getting Along Project, since 2001
Drawings, color pens, sharpener,
leaflets, suitcase, DVD, table, chairs
100 colored ink jet prints
Sometimes lovers #1-50,
Sometimes friends #1-50
Each 21 x 14.8 cm, Ed. 1/3
Acquired 2004
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

Cao Fei
(* 1978 in Guangzhou, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

My future is not a dream, 2006
8 C-prints, each 120 × 150 cm,
Ed. 2/12
Acquired 2015
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

La Town, 2014
1-channel video, 16:9, color/sound
41:56 min, Ed. 3/10
Courtesy Vitamin Creative Space,
Guangzhou/Beijing

Chen Chieh-Jen
(* 1960 in Taoyuan, RC – lives in Taipei, RC)

Friend Watan–5, 2013
Inkjet-print
Image: 85 x 150 cm
Sheet: 109 x 174 cm, Ed. 5 + 1/2 AP
Courtesy Long March Gallery, Beijing

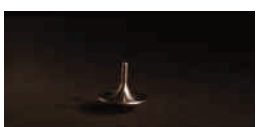
Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster
(* 1965 in Strasbourg, F – lives in Paris, F and Rio de Janeiro, BR)

Dream, 2001
High-voltage neon tubes, transformer, colored wall
Wall painting: 180/220 x 400 cm
Neon: 50 x 33 cm
Ed. 2/3 + 1 AP
Courtesy Gallery Esther Schipper, Berlin

Alicja Kwade
(*1979 in Kattowitz, PL – lives in Berlin, D)

Bordsteinjuwelen (Brunnenstraße)
2008
Cut pebble, pedestal
Stone: 2 x 3.8 x 2.6 cm
Pedestal: 92 x 26 x 25 cm
Acquired 2008
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

Kreisel (Inception), 2012
HD video with sound
2:19 min, loop, Ed. 3 + 1 AP
Courtesy König Galerie, Berlin

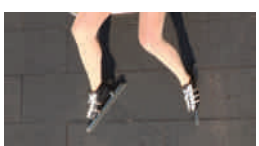


Liu Zheng
(*1969 in Wuqiang Hsien, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

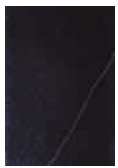
The Chinese, 1994–2002
30 inkjet-prints
Each 35 x 35 cm, Ed. 18/20
Acquired 2015
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

Ma Qiusha
(*1982 in Beijing, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

All my sharpness comes from your hardness, 2011
1-channel HD video with sound
25:29 min, Ed. 5/6
Acquired 2014
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin



Fog No. 6, 2012
Watercolor on paper
152 x 98.5 cm
Acquired 2014
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin



You (Kaleidoscope No. 2), 2013
Watercolor and mixed media on paper
102 x 152.5 cm
Acquired 2014
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

Benedikt Partenheimer
(* 1977 in Munich, D – lives in
Berlin, D)

AQI 330, Forbidden City, Beijing 2014, 2014
C-print
96 x 120 cm, Ed. 1/5
Courtesy of the artist

AQI 360, Shijiazhuang 2014, 2014
C-print
96 x 120 cm, Ed. 2/5
Courtesy of the artist

Thomas Struth
(* 1954 in Geldern, D – lives in Berlin
and Düsseldorf, D)

Zhejiang Zhong Lu, Shanghai, 1997
C-print
40 x 56 cm, Ed. 3/10
Acquired 1999
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

Wang Sishun
(* 1979 in Wuhan, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

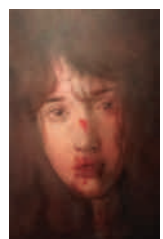
The Indeterminate Boundless No. 5
2013
Lead
52 x 125 x 0.3 cm
Acquired 2014
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

Wu Hao
(* 1985 in Wuhan, CHN – lives in Wuhan, CHN)

Rolling Gate No. 6, 2014
Rolling gate
263 x 242 cm
Acquired 2015
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

Watermarks Project: Wuhan, 2014–2015
Mixed Media
About 70 pieces, dimensions variable
Acquired 2015
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

I pity you No. 3, 2014
Acrylic on canvas
200 x 130 cm
Acquired 2015
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin



Yin Xiuzhen
(* 1963 in Beijing, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

Portable City: *Stuttgart,* 2010
Suitcase, second hand clothes, sound installation
120 x 140 x 85 cm
Acquired 2014
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

One Sentence – No. 40, 2011
Second hand clothes, stainless steel
Height: 4.7 cm, Ø 29.8 cm
Acquired 2014
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

One Sentence – No. 78, 2011
Second hand clothes, stainless steel
Height: 4.7 cm, Ø 31 cm
Acquired 2014
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

One Sentence – No. 86, 2011
Second hand clothes, stainless steel
Height: 4.7 cm, Ø 37 cm
Acquired 2014
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

Zhao Zhao
(* 1980 in Xinjiang, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

Cobblestone, 2007
C-print
2 parts, each 40 x 60 cm
Ed. 3/6 + 1 AP
Acquired 2014
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

Zheng Guogu
(* 1970 in Yangjiang, CHN – lives in Yangjiang, CHN)

Me and My Teacher, 1993
C-print
180 x 270 cm, Ed. 10 + 1/3 AP
Acquired 2015
Daimler Art Collection,
Stuttgart/Berlin

›From a Poem to the Sunset‹, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015:
Philippe Parreno

Last Night's Fortune Teller

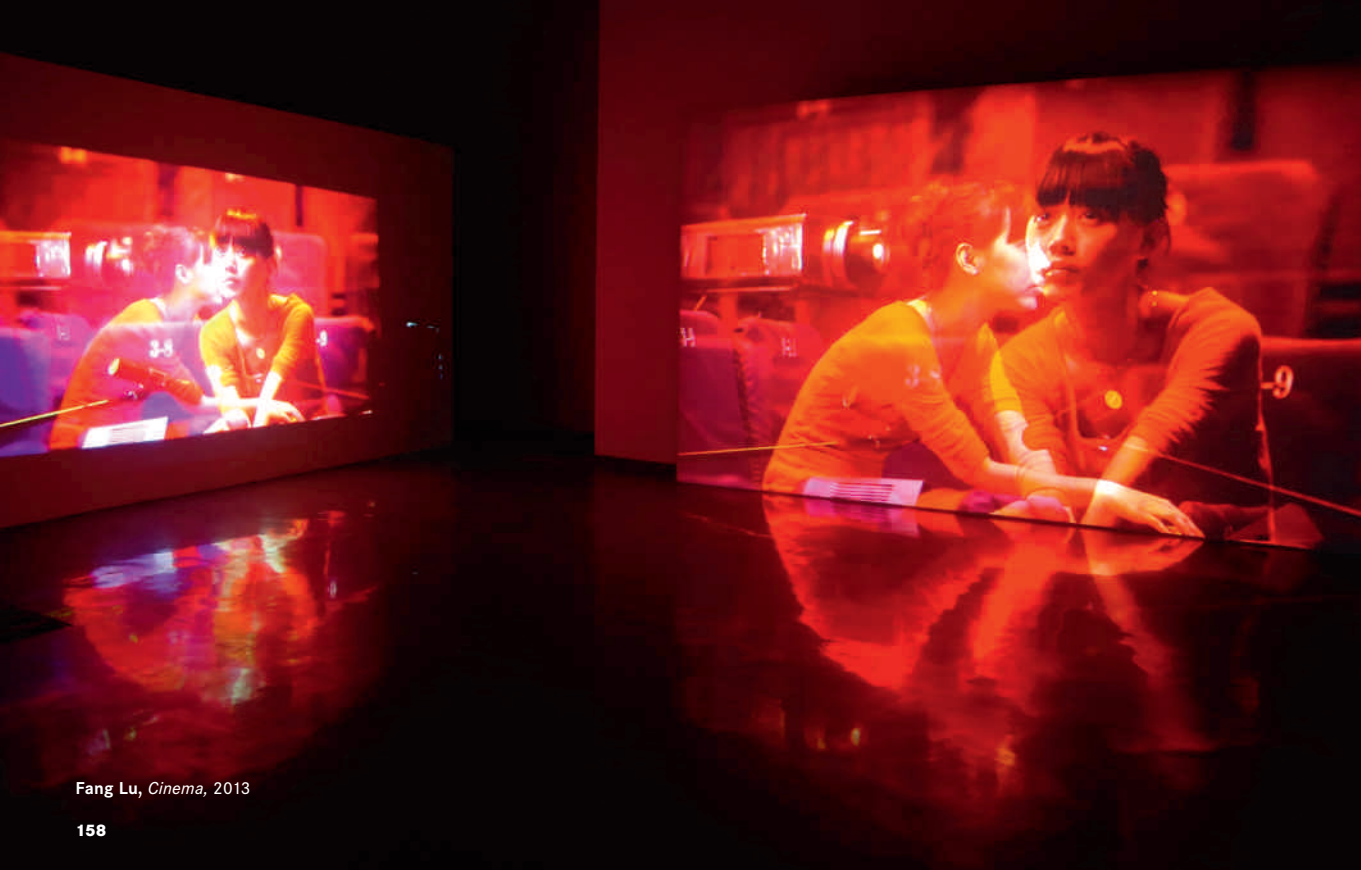
Third part of an exhibition series with new acquisitions of Chinese and international contemporary art

March 31 – June 18, 2017

Hartmut **Böhm** (D), **Ding** Yi (CHN), Haris **Epaminonda** (CY), **Fang** Lu (CHN), Iman **Issa** (ET)
Rune **Mields** (D), Olivier **Mosset** (CH), Christian **Roeckenschuss** (D), **Utopia Group** (CHN), **Yang** Fudong (CHN)
Yu Honglei (CHN), **Zhang** Ding (CHN)

Curated by Renate Wiehager, head of the Daimler Art Collection & Christian Ganzenberg
Curatorial advisor: Andreas Schmid

Daimler Contemporary
Potsdamer Platz Berlin



Fang Lu, *Cinema,* 2013

Since 2013, the Daimler Art Collection has strengthened its international profile by adding to it a significant new aspect of global contemporary art—through the acquisition of more than 40 artworks by approximately 20 Chinese artists. Beginning in 2015, these newly acquired artworks are shown in a number of exhibitions in Berlin and Stuttgart. The exhibition entitled 'Last Night's Fortune Teller,' continues the exhibition series with new acquisitions of Chinese and international art at Daimler Contemporary Berlin.

The Chinese artworks relate to a number of areas of special interest of the Daimler Art Collection, among others especially in terms of abstract and conceptual art tendencies as well as in new media forms. At the same time, these artworks represent an entirely new and distinctive complex within the collection—both culturally and aesthetically. The selected acquisitions of the Daimler Art Collection are centered around artists from the key regions of Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Renate Wiehager
Head of the Daimler Art Collection, Stuttgart/Berlin

Yang Fudong

The photographic work *Ms. Huang at M last Night # 5,* 2006, is one element in a 5-part photographic series, which, like his 2010 *International Hotel* series, is solely a photographic series, with no accompanying film. Both series pose questions about the role of women as the objects and projections of masculine wish-fulfillment in contemporary Chinese urban society. In *International Hotel,* young women pose in bathing costumes in the dark interior of a hotel pool, while 'Ms. Huang' appears as a kind of decorative object for the evening entertainments of two young business people. The photograph in the Daimler Art Collection takes the voyeuristic fetishism a step further, showing only the body, confined between the status symbols of the masculine image—between suit and automobile. Even here—in the photograph's carefully calculated black-and-white aesthetic, the framing of the image, the dramaturgy of the characters, the light and shadows—an aesthetic of the image asserts itself that is characteristic of many of Yang Fudong's later films: a fusion of everything from early modern European expressionism to trivial Shanghai films from the colonial days of the 1930s, American film noir and Italian Neo-Realism of the 1940s/1950s, up to affinities with film auteurs of the present-day such as Wong Kar-Wai, Jim Jarmusch and Lars von Trier.

R.W.

Yang Fudong, *Ms. Huang at M last Night # 5,* 2006

Yang Fudong

Yang Fudong's films and photographic series, which never stray from the context of Chinese culture and of Chinese urban life, possess distinctive qualities of discretion and of secrecy, and occasionally of parodic theatricality. Critics have spoken of a 'time outside of time,' a 'historical present,' where Fudong's fable-like plots can unfold within our own era, or vice versa. The photograph *The Fifth Night,* 2010, was created to accompany a film with the same title, and is also part of a series. The seven projections of the film's video installation show an artificial setting in an old part of Shanghai. Within the urban environment of a small plaza, Fudong has placed a platform, a table on which glass objects are standing, and an afunctional spiral staircase. On the edge of the scenery, a tram is being repaired. Between these objects, seven persons are in motion—autistic, searching, uncontrolled, clearly lacking any choreographic directions. The Daimler Art Collection photograph shows a young female protagonist of the film on the spiral staircase: a scene which does not, in fact, appear as part of the film. The photograph excludes the urban environment, concentrating on the woman's attitude, expressiveness and physiognomy.

R.W.

Yang Fudong, *The Fifth Night,* 2010

Yang Fudong

The photography *The Coloured Sky: New Women II, No. 4* is part of a photographic artwork series, and, like many of Yang Fudong's series, developed in parallel with the video installation of the same name. This large-format color photograph depicts a night-time scene with rain, dominated by blue-black tones. A woman dressed in a blue 1940s-style swimsuit stands in the foreground of the picture in a river-like puddle, stretching both her arms away from herself. Wooden lattices and palm trees can be seen in the middle ground of the picture. In the background, there is the silhouette of a hilly sandscape. Behind the range of sand dunes, the fantastic yellow-orange-tinged glow of a sunset or sunrise is perceptible as the only warm light source in the scene. In the closing scene of the film—to which the photograph belongs—the mood shifts completely from cheerful, playfully childlike beauty to uncertainty and abandonment.

In a compelling further development of previous approaches, Fudong's newer artworks also question the role of women, investigating constructions of femininity and idealized images of women in film, advertising and popular culture. The glowing, apparently unnaturally heightened colors of these artworks represent a new development; Fudong is using color, rather than black-and-white, for the first time. Rather than making use of color in order to consolidate realism, he uses an iridescent colorfulness to aggressively reveal artificiality.

F.H. & L.M.

Yang Fudong, *The Coloured Sky: New Women II, No. 4,* 2014

Hartmut Böhm

The artwork of Hartmut Böhm reflects some of the most important art movements of the second half of the 20th century: 'readymade' art, constructive/concrete art, Zero, minimalist art, and conceptual tendencies. These movements—both their utopias and their failures—influenced him, just as he in turn has influenced them through the artworks that he has produced over more than five decades. In his drawings and picture objects, and in his wall-based and room-based installations, Böhm analyzes the formal and material vocabulary that underlies these artistic developments, their interdependency, and their transitional zones. His artwork deals with serial formations, scale, proportion, and the translation of everyday materials into mathematical/artistic, balanced constructions. His artwork is concerned with sculptural-aesthetic concepts, and with how their differentiated scale systems oppose the disorder of the world, confronting it with the ethos of an intellectual will that utilizes suitable materials in the search for a disciplined form composition.
Böhm conceived the idea for his new group of artworks *Tischstücke* (Table Pieces) in 2013. He arranges found objects from his studio—drawing utensils, working materials, working tools, adhesive tape rolls, card index boxes, invitation cards, and brochures—on unadorned tables in such a way that the individual object becomes part of a strict formally elaborated vocabulary, a visually composed arrangement. Commissioned by the Daimler Art Collection, Böhm has created a 7-meter-long whole-space sculpture based on this principle. This spatial sculpture portrays a number of the different developments Böhm's œuvre has undergone since 1960.

R.W.

Hartmut Böhm, *or-or (Tischstück # 7),* 2016

Rune Mields

Rune Mield's artistic activities focus on analyzing orders by pictorial and painterly means. She assembles studies and bundles existing systems in order to lay their structures open to visual experience in her pictures. Alongside mathematical systems from a wide variety of high cultures, she studies central questions posed by geometry, and those relating to the magic square, central perspective, number systems in China, Babylon and Egypt and primal order in various creation myths. Here the central reference points are arithmetic and geometry, in other words the representation of numbers of flat basic forms. The artist writes as follows about how her work *In memoriam Tschu Schi-ki,* which exists in various versions, came into being: "The philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal died in 1662. His estate was found to contain the so-called Pascal's triangle, which was to become very important for mathematics. Tschu Schi-ki's mathematics book appeared in China in 1303. In it he referred to an unknown 12th century master as the discoverer of this triangle, and illustrated it in his work." (R.M.)

N.B.

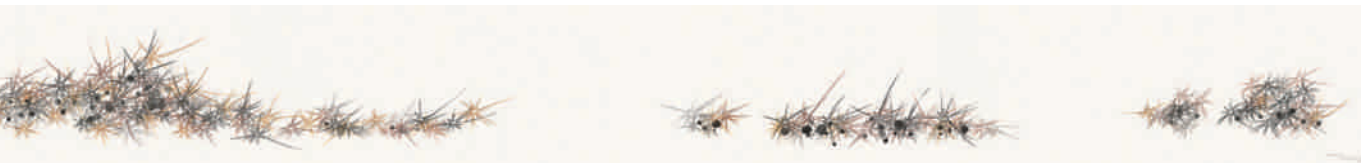
Rune Mields, *In memoriam Tschu Schi-ki,* 1980

Ding Yi

Since the mid-1980s, Ding Yi's work provides a significant contribution to the reformulation of an independent abstract painting in China. *Geometric Grid,* 2011, alternates between text and drawing, with Ding Yi using a text and format that references China's ancient writing tradition. The picture's extremely long, narrow format references the Chinese tradition of scroll pictures, whilst the technique of painting in ink on rice paper references Chinese calligraphy. The gestural, delicate, almost ornamental language of shapes used for the cross motif has associations with handwriting techniques. The title of the artwork, rendered in calligraphy, is situated within a vertical field that marks the termination of the right hand side of the picture. Ding Yi's artworks grow, as it were, out of a time-consuming by-hand process, which allows the cross shape to emerge as a visually and graphically variable raw material. Each of his pictures is a fragmentary extract of a grid network that extends beyond the edges of the picture: an idealized, imagined hyperstructure, which offer a time-suspended, ideology-free space for the communication between artist/author and viewer/reader.

I.H.G.

Ding Yi, *Geometric Grid,* 2011

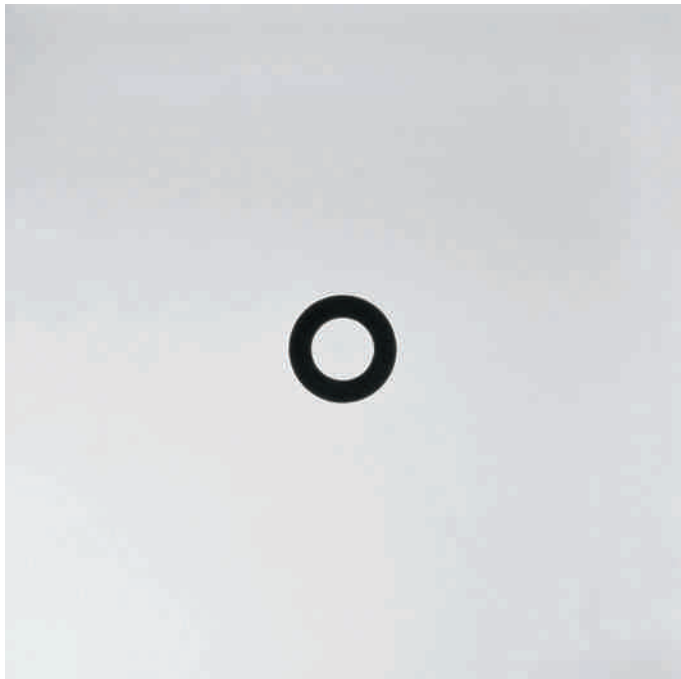


Ding Yi, *Geometric Grid,* 2011

Olivier Mosset

A group of artists united in the revolutionary heated Paris of 1966: Daniel Buren, Olivier Mosset, Michel Parmentier and Niele Toroni. Their declared objective was to neutralize art and make it anonymous until it finally would disappear from the art market and art history. The group published pamphlets and carried out public painting actions with the intention of doing away with the traditional concept of painting. Its members tried to establish connections between the concept of a new, or radical, work of art and its political impact. Its members concentrated on incorporating a Minimalist formal language into their work: circles (Mosset), stripes (Buren and Parmentier) and brush strokes (Toroni). Olivier Mosset exhibited his first Circles pictures in 1966, of which there were 200 identical works by 1974. There is no need for any anecdotes or dialectic in relation to the Circles pictures. Their unchanging nature has robbed them of any suggestion of further development; they know neither past nor future. In the never-ending repetition of their motif, a symbolically charged sign as the circle, they destroy any artistic aura, negating originality and authenticity.

F.N.



Olivier Mosset, *Ohne Titel,* 1974

Zhang Ding

The Chinese Artist Zhang Ding emerged to an international audience through his multimedia, performative spatial configurations with religious motifs and spiritual themes.
The two canvas wall pictures entitled *Venus* were originally part of a space installation consisting of five paintings, and two black steel sculptures, which were positioned at the entrance of the installation like ancient sentinel figures. For the acrylic pictures the artist chose in the first version of the installation, that was exhibited at the New York Armory Show in early 2014, a dark-red background, which binds with the emblematic presence of the reddish-yellow arrow-like forms to create a spatial movement. He restricts the colors to black, grey, red and yellow, and uses minimal graphic language: in this respect, the picture conforms to conventional astronomical visualizations of the phases of Venus. However, Zhang Ding also takes the scientific models a stage further, extending them to those aesthetic, symbolic and spiritual dimensions that are fundamentally true for all human beings.

R.W.

Zhang Ding, *Venus 3/5,* 2014

Zhang Ding, *Venus 5/5,* 2014

Haris Epaminonda

Haris Epaminonda formulates a syntax of remembered stories. Making the act of remembering itself the subject and the content of her artistic thought, she creates loose structures from photographs, images, books, films and sculptures. She frequently works with found materials, with faded travel photographs, pages from antiquated nature magazines, ethnographic artifacts, classical sculptures and film materials from old television series. From these props, she assembles complex ensembles that have the look of exhibits, constructing associative paper, film and spatial collages that bring together places and eras that are poles apart. By means of visual connections and conceptual correspondences, the discards of everyday culture as it is lived coalesce to become fragments of stories, in order to open up a narrative with open boundaries and to establish a poetic cartography.

F.H.

Haris Epaminonda, *Untitled #4 t/f,* 2014

Haris Epaminonda

Haris Epaminonda's installations can be read as memory images in which moments out of history are laid down like sediment, and come together in associative fashion to form narrative threads. In *Untitled #20 t/f,* 2014, she uses a minimalist language of forms: close to a corner of the room, two rectangular panels lean against the wall. The smaller of the two is covered with gold leaf (in transverse format). It is almost entirely overlaid by a black panel resting on its short edge. In front of these monochrome color surfaces, a small gold-covered pyramid is placed. Epaminonda combines these geometrical forms with an archaeological image. The framed black-and-white image hung in the corner shows the plaster impression of a couple from Pompeii, who died in the eruption of Vesuvius in the year 79 AD. In its interplay of a vocabulary of sober, abstract-geometrical forms and charged content, this installation moves between memory and its dissolution. The forms and colors can be read as abstractions of natural catastrophes: the golden pyramid can be seen as a glowing Vesuvius, the monochrome panels can be seen as layers of glowing lava and of black ash. The radical subtraction involved, however, means that these possibilities for meanings remain intentionally fragmentary, unstable and imaginary. Instead, this very precise presentation transports the story far into the realms of the imagination.

F.H.

Haris Epaminonda, *Untitled #20 t/f,* 2014

Yu Honglei

The artist Yu Honglei, who originally trained as an animator, uses object-based sculptures and multimedia arrangements to create spatial situations that seek to disrupt the seeming familiarity of everyday objects. He achieved international fame through his installation artwork *Everything is extremely important. There is nothing that will not come back again,* 2013, a two-part installation consisting of a situation created by an arrangement of sculptural objects, and a video projection that references it.

The objects are commonplace items in Chinese culture. They usually appear twice, but not with the same identical appearance. Through this aesthetic strategy of alienation and decontextualising, Yu Honglei empties them of their original function and meaning, thereby animating viewers to create their own narrative.

Rather than revealing the meaning, the accompanying video increases the sense of disruption. It constructs—or rather, it deconstructs—two (non-identical) narrative or memory situations as committed to memory by two people, one of whom is Yu Honglei. The doubling of objects in the arrangement of the spatial installation therefore corresponds to the doubling of the narration. This is the artist's playful way of finding an apt form for the "breaking loose on the part of the object toward the infinitely subjective" (Roland Barthes).

A.S.S.

Yu Honglei, *Everything is extremely important: There is nothing that will not come back again,* 2013

Utopia Group

The young artist group Utopia Group repeatedly address themselves to political relationships in (post)totalitarian societies, primarily in Asia. In 2013, the duo, consisting of Deng Dafei and He Hai, faked a North Korean film festival, intended as a parody of the official Pyongyang International Film Festival. For their *North Korea International Microfilm Festival,* they produced a concept paper, in which they called on the internet community to submit music videos, cartoons, film scripts and short films that related to North Korea in some way. A team of curators awarded prizes to the most interesting submissions: 'Best Microfilm,' 'Best Performance,' 'Best Creativity,' 'Best Script' and 'Best Music Video.'
The artwork acquired by the Daimler Art Collection is an anthology of ten films, produced by Deng and He, along with the accompanying (advertising) posters for the festival. Ostensibly, the artist duo is undermining the cult of personality around Kim Jong Un, the current ruler of North Korea, and his predecessors Kim Il Sung, and Kim Jong Il. If one takes a closer look, however, it is revealed that the real theme of the video is the individual's response to a totalitarian regime (such as the Communist regime of North Korea), and propaganda's affective appeals to body and spirit–which, ironically, do not exclude the rulers.

A.S.S.

Utopia Group, *North Korea International Microfilm Festival,* 2013

Fang Lu

The artwork of Fang Lu is among those positions in art that operate by questioning and expanding production, reception, communication and interaction in a field of its own that borders on theater, performance and video art. The artwork *Cinema,* also, has as its theme the transcending of genre boundaries. In spite of the title, it presents us with a theater space rather than a conventional cinema space. Four cameras are trained on the actions of a female protagonist, who also takes on the roles of producer and recipient. It is not only the production that is governed by changes of perspective: the views from the differently positioned cameras are presented in three large-scale projections and on four televisions.
We have no way of knowing whether the actions of the performer during this process of interactive image generation are improvised or staged, or to what extent the movements of her body and her adjustments to the console are influenced by concerns as to how her image appears and the internalizing of the gaze of others. As a digital panopticon with multiple visual relationships, what the complex observation scenario of *Cinema* really shows us is an ambivalent freedom that oscillates between self-empowerment and self-regulation. *Cinema* makes it all too clear that new image technologies do not just process effects and affects—they can also constitute a monitoring regime of the gaze.

F.H.

Fang Lu, *Cinema,* 2013

Iman Issa

For her ongoing series entitled *Lexicon,* which began in 2012, Iman Issa begins with existing artworks dating from the second half of the 20th century—preferably artworks with single-word titles. Issa creates contemporary remakes for each of these titles using new materials and forms. In doing this, she endeavors to expose the ideas, significances, and different readings inherent in the single word of the title.
Her artwork, whose starting point was an original artwork entitled *Labouring* dating back to 1964, is called *Labouring (study for 2012)*. Issa's interpretations are not defined as ultimate solutions, but as an investigation, as a possibility. The title of the artwork articulates its status as a study. By incorporating the phrase 'study for' and giving the date, Issa marks the temporal status of her remake, the historicity of the translation process. It is a double cone form, made from mahogany and standing on a round pedestal. The points of the two cones are aligned toward one another, and the shape is rather like a sand timer. In the context of the title 'Labouring,' this elegantly rendered, minimalist object becomes an interrelated and allusive sign, beginning to take on significances, referring maybe to the measuring of working hours, payroll accounting or the perfect crafting of the wood.

F.H.

Iman Issa, *Labouring (Study for 2012),* 2012

Iman Issa

Surrounded by a dark black surface, a pale circle of light can be seen in the center of the picture field of the remake entitled *Fortune Teller (study for 2013)*, 2013—perhaps a light bulb, or a searchlight, or the sun, or even the crystal ball of a fortune teller? A slightly curving line is illuminated by this light from above. The scene appears mysterious, and simultaneously peaceful and threatening. The title of the photograph—*Fortune Teller*—has a certain charge, calling an event to memory, and initiating a narrative. The relationship between text and object is difficult to determine. Her focus is a paradox: language forms and art forms invariably produce their own, distinct content. The complete and full translation of an idea or a thought image into the form of an artwork, and its subsequent translation back to language, is a contradiction in terms, because distance is the foundation for the existence of both values. This is the cause of the abundance and openness that exists in every kind of image—whether it is produced from physical materials, or linguistically.

Issa's artworks are originals, but they are also concepts retained from existing ideas that she has translated, reinterpreted, and reshaped. They oscillate between text and image, between old and new, between memory and its disintegration.

F.H.

Iman Issa, *Fortune Teller (Study for 2013),* 2013

Iman Issa

The artworks of Iman Issa bring peripheral spaces into the center. In her multiple displays, she connects images with language, using a language of minimalist forms featuring narrative/descriptive texts and titles. The Egyptian artist often examines the aesthetics of memorials and monuments, and how they are instrumentalized by ideologies.
In *Prayer (study for 2014),* 2014, a white metal sculpture is presented on a whitewashed wooden pedestal. Inside the circle, an LED light has been secured; it creates a circle of light on the wall. Optically, Issa's sculptural reinterpretation has nothing to do with the scene described on the panel of text: there is no kneeling man with a disproportionately long upper body, no faceless red-haired girl, no black cat. Issa has replaced the artwork's figurative imagery and deep color tones with a slender construction, and with unadorned materials. Its connection with the title and with the text on the sign gives this sober abstract-geometrical form language a narrative: does the light that shines from the metal sculpture reference a spiritual enlightenment? Does the angular silhouette represent a praying figure?

F.H.

Iman Issa, *Prayer (Study for 2014),* 2014

Hartmut Böhm
(* 1938 in Kassel, D – lives in Berlin, D)

or-or (Tischstück # 7), 2016
Mixed Media, wooden tables, Perspex
140,5 x 769 x 60,5 cm
Acquired 2016

Ding Yi
(* 1962 in Shanghai, CHN – lives in Shanghai, CHN)

Geometric Grid, 2011
Artist book, color pencil and ink on rice paper
35 x 675 cm, unique
Acquired 2015

Haris Epaminonda
(* 1980 in Nicosia, CY – lives in Berlin, D)

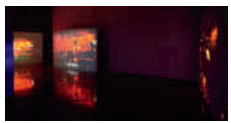
Untitled #4 t/f, 2014
Off-white pastellone, freestanding iron structure, metal frame
12 x 90 x 150 cm

Untitled #20 t/f, 2014
Framed found image, iron plate, wooden plate with gold leaf and black pastellone, wooden pyramid with gold coating
Framed image: 31,6 x 24,8 cm, iron plate: 75 x 54 cm, wooden plate & black pastellone: 27 x 20 cm

Both acquired 2015

Fang Lu
(* 1981 in Guangzhou, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

Cinema, 2013
7 channel video installation, sound
19:19 min, Ed. 3/5
Acquired 2014



Iman Issa
(* 1979 in Cairo, ET – lives in Cairo, ET, and New York, USA)

Labouring (study for 2012), 2012
Mahogany, text panel under glass, white plinth
39,4 x Ø 18 cm, 95,2 x Ø 30 cm, Ed. 1/4 + 2 AP

Fortune Teller (study for 2013), 2013
C-Print, framed, text panel under glass
54,3 x 80,7 cm, Ed. 1/4 + 2 AP

Prayer (study for 2014), 2014
Metal, LED light, text panel under glass
61 x 63,8 cm, 95 x 20 x 20 cm, Ed. 1/4 + 2 AP

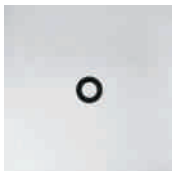
All acquired 2015

Rune Mields
(* 1935 in Münster/Westphalia, D – lives in Cologne, D)

In memoriam Tschu Schi-ki, 1980
Ink on canvas
250 x 140 cm
Acquired 2008

Olivier Mosset
(*1944 in Bern, CH – lives in New York City, N.Y., USA)

Untitled, 1974
Acrylic on canvas
100 x 100 cm
Acquired 2002

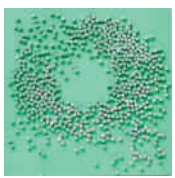


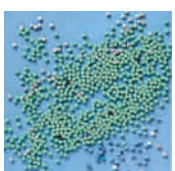
Christian Roeckenschuss
(1933 Dresden, D – 2009 Berlin, D)

Ohne Titel (grün), ca. 1966
Oil, wood, chipboard
65 x 65 cm, unique

Ohne Titel (grau-grün), ca. 1966
Oil, wood, chipboard
65 x 65 cm, unique

Both acquired 2015





Utopia Group
(Founded in 2008 by Deng Dafei and He Hai)
Deng Dafei
(*1975 in Jinzhou, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)
He Hai
(*1974 in Zhengzhou, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

North Korea International Microfilm Festival, 2013
1 bronze statue (16 x 3 x 3 cm),
1 certificate (29,5 x 41,5 cm),
10 wood engraving poster
(each 78,5 x 108,5 cm),
1 preview video (4:17 min),
10 videos (different length)
Acquired 2015

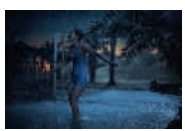
Yang Fudong
(* 1971 in Beijing, CHN – lives in Shanghai, CHN)

Ms. Huang at M last Night # 5, 2006
Inkjet print
120 x 180 cm, Ed. 7 / 10

The Fifth Night, 2010
Inkjet print
180 x 120 cm, Ed. 9 / 10

Both acquired 2014

The Coloured Sky: New Women II, No. 4, 2014
Inkjet print
on Hahnemühle paper
120 x 180 cm, Ed. 9 / 10 + 2 AP
Acquired 2016



Yu Honglei
(* 1984 in Inner Mongolia, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

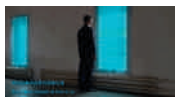
Everything is extremely important: There is nothing that will not come back again, 2013
Multi-part installation, objects and video:

Childhood, 2013
Bronze on wooden box
48 x 95 x 55 cm

First into the Mist, 2013
Bronze, taxidermy animal
183 x 10 x 10 cm

In the midst of the blooming flowers, she smiles & Gravity, 2013
Mirror, stainless steel, metal chain
35 x Ø 2 cm

Everything is extremely important, there is nothing that will not come back again, 2013
HD video, color/sound
15:39 min



All acquired 2014

Zhang Ding
(*1980 in Lanzhou, CHN – lives in Shanghai, CHN)

Venus 3/5, 2014
Acrylic on canvas
102 x 195 cm

Venus 5/5, 2014
Acrylic on canvas
168 x 150 cm

Both acquired 2014

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Stuttgart-Möhringen

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RENATE WIEHAGER

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RENATE WIEHAGER, CHRISTIAN GANZENBERG
In co-operation with ANDREAS SCHMID, Artist/Curator, Berlin

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