

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), **Deng Dafei** (CHN),
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

D

A C

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



Installation view '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 differ-

ent 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

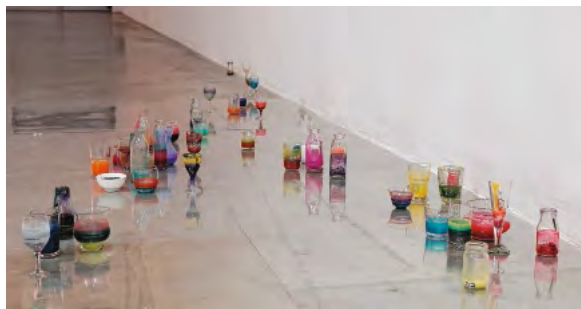
Yin Xiuzhen is a concept artist who works with fabric. She creates abstract portraits of great cities of all nations packed into suitcases (*Portable Cities*) from items of clothing collected in the cities themselves. Her 'clothing psychograms' or 'identity blends' (*One Sentence - No. 40, 78, 86*) combine 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



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

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 contra-

dition 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.

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 oeuvre 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



Installation view, Daimler Contemporary Berlin:
Yin Xiuzhen (CHN), Zheng Guogu (CHN), Are You Meaning Company (J)



Installation view, Daimler Contemporary Berlin:
Liu Zheng (CHN), Leonor Antunes (P)



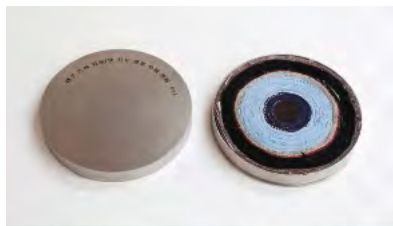
Yang Fudong, *Yejiang/The Nightman Cometh*, 2011.

Installation view 'From a Poem to the Sunset,' Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015

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

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.



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, craft-work, 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.

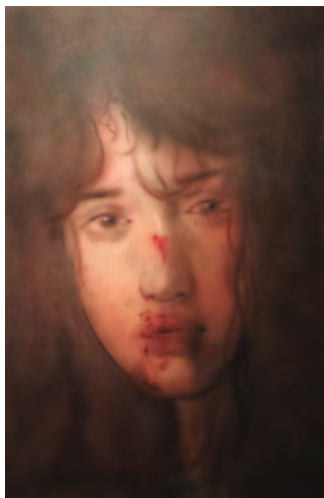
**Leonor Antunes, *a secluded and pleasant land, in this land I wish to dwell*,
Exhibition view, Berlin Biennale, 2014**



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.



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 Bathhouse, Datong, Shanxi Province, 1998

From the series: *The Chinese, 1994–2002*



Installation view, Daimler Contemporary Berlin:
Liu Zheng (CHN), Ma Qiusha (CHN)



Installation view, Daimler Contemporary Berlin:
Wu Hao (CHN)



Li Ran, *Mont Saint-Victoire*, 2012

Installation view 'From a Poem to the Sunset,' Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015

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, Beijing, 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

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



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

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



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

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.'

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 architectural 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



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

other communication media to accompany the exhibitions (as per March 2015).

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 sus-

tainability 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 Architecture 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)



Installation view, Daimler Contemporary Berlin:
Wu Hao (CHN), Ma Qiusha (CHN), Benedikt Partenheimer (D), Liu Zheng (CHN)



Installation view, Daimler Contemporary Berlin:
Cao Fei (CHN), Alicja Kwade (PL)



Cao Fei, from the series: *My Future is not a Dream*, 2006
Installation view 'Fotografie: International,' Daimler complex Stuttgart-Möhringen, 2015

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



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

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.



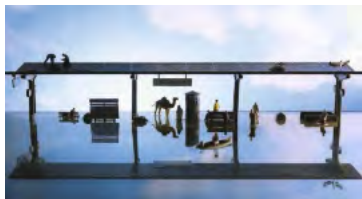
Cao Fei, *My future is not a dream #3*, 2006

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.

R.W.



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.

R.W.



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?



Zhao Zhao, *Cobblestone*, 2007



Installation view, Daimler Contemporary Berlin:
Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (F), Chen Chieh-Jen (RC), Liu Zheng (CHN), Deng Dafei (CHN)



Installation view, Daimler Contemporary Berlin:
Cao Fei (CHN), La Town, 2015

List of Works

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

**Deng Dafei**

(* 1975 Jinzhou City, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN)

Dark Utopia II, 2014

HD-Video, 6min42sec

Courtesy of the artist

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

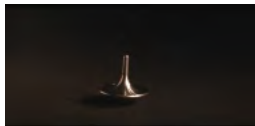


Kreisel (Inception), 2012

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)

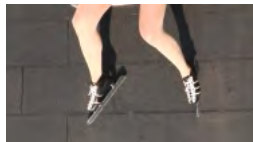
All my sharpness comes from your hardness, 2011

1-channel HD video with sound

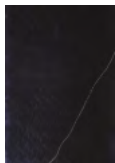
25:29 min, Ed. 5/6

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



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



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



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



Philippe Parreno, *6:00 P.M.*, 2001.

Speaking to the Penguins, 2009.

AC/DC Snake, 2010.

Installation view 'From a Poem to the Sunset,' Daimler Contemporary, Berlin 2015



IMPRINT

Editor:

RENATE WIEHAGER for DAIMLER AG

Curated by:

RENATE WIEHAGER, CHRISTIAN GANZENBERG
in co-operation with ANDREAS SCHMID, artist/curator, Berlin

Texts:

CHRISTIAN GANZENBERG (C.G.), NADINE HENRICH (N.H.), FRIEDERIKE
HORSTMANN (F.H.), JULIA MARTHA MÜLLER (J.M.M.), ASTRID
SCHÖNHAGEN (A.S.), RENATE WIEHAGER (R.W.)

Editing:

JULIA MARTHA MÜLLER, LIZA MÜLLER

Text editing and copy editing:

NADINE BRÜGGEBOERS, ANDREAS SCHMID

Exhibition Berlin:

WIEBKE HAHN, KATHRIN HATESAUL, IRINA HIEBERT GRUN, LIZA MÜLLER

Design:

SUPERFANTASTIC, BERLIN

Printed by:

ELANDERS GERMANY GMBH, WAIBLINGEN

Photos:

Jürgen Altmann, Stuttgart: p. 50. Nick
Ash: pp. 27, 72 l. Courtesy Boers-Li
Gallery, Beijing: back cover. Courtesy
Beijing Commune, Beijing: pp. 55,
74 b.r., 75 t.l.+m.l. Courtesy Blindspot
Gallery, Hong Kong: pp. 2, 33, 74 t.r.
Christian Ganzenberg, Munich: pp. 38,
41, 43. Hans-Georg Gaul, Berlin: pp. 6,
16, 17, 18, 34-36, 48, 49, 70, 71, 72 b.r.,
74 t.l., 78 r., 79. Courtesy Dominique
Gonzalez-Foerster & Esther Schipper,
photo: Andrea Rossetti: pp. 67, 73 b.r.
Jiakun Architects, Chengdu: p. 40.
Kokaistudios, Shanghai: p. 45.
Courtesy König Galerie, pp. 13, 74 b.l.
Courtesy Alicja Kwade & König Galerie,
photo: Roman März, p. 63 l. Courtesy
Long March Space, Beijing: 53, 65,
73 t.r., 76 t.l. Marko Mikrobi, Tokyo:
p. 8 t.l. Aurelien Mole: pp. 11, 76 t.r.
Studio Jean Nouvel, Paris: p. 39.
Courtesy Alexander Ochs Private: pp.
15, 21, 69, 77 b.l.+t.r.+b.r., 78 t.l.+m.l.
Courtesy Alexander Ochs Private &
Collection Caspar H. Schübbe, Switzer-
land: p. 9 l.

Courtesy Benedikt Partenheimer:
pp. 12, 75 b.l.+t.r. Mathieu Ridelle,
Brussels: p. 42. Uwe Seyl, Stuttgart:
pp. 8 b.r., 23, 25, 72 t.r., 77 t.l.
Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing: p. 44.
Courtesy Sigg Collection, Switzerland:
p. 9 t.r.
© Thomas Struth: pp. 14, 75 b.r.
Courtesy Vitamin Creative Space,
Guangzhou: cover, pp. 57, 73 t.l.+b.l.,
78 b.l. Courtesy Cao Fei & Vitamin
Creative Space, Guangzhou, pp. 59, 61
Kiki Zhu, Beijing: pp. 29, 31, 76 b.l.+b.r.
© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2015:
Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster
© Daimler AG, the artists, authors
and photographers

Daimler Art Collection
Daimler AG
HPC 1017
70546 Stuttgart
T +49-711+17-92150, F-94141
art.collection@daimler.com
art.daimler.com