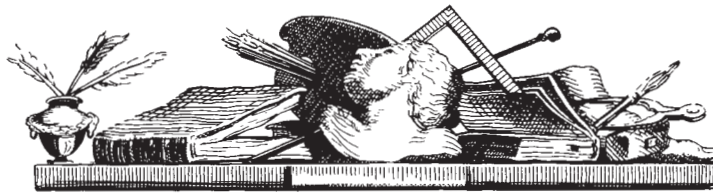


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## China opens its door wider

Foreign artists make their museum debuts – with a little help from their dealers

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

**Beijing.** The demand for international contemporary art in mainland China is still evolving, as Western dealers at Art Basel in Hong Kong this week are well aware. But the current flurry of major museum exhibitions in Shanghai and Beijing suggests that institutional appetite is growing, particularly in the country's new private museums.

The Los Angeles-based artist Mark Bradford has a show at the Rockbund

Art Museum (RAM) in Shanghai (until 3 May). The New York-based artist Sean Scully is exhibiting at Beijing's state-run Central Academy of Fine Arts (until 23 April), after the show opened at the Shanghai Himalayas Museum, which is now showing work by London-based Michael Craig-Martin (until 31 March). All are the artists' first solo shows in China.

There is more to come. Beijing's Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) is planning a retrospective of the South African artist William Kentridge (27 June-30 August), and



Vik Muniz's *Forbidden City (Postcards from Nowhere)*, 2014, at Ben Brown Fine Arts (3E15). Chinese collectors bought work by the artist soon after his first solo show in China last year

the Museum of Contemporary Art (Moca) Shanghai is previewing its forthcoming solo show of the Italian artist Oliviero Rainaldi (10 April-24 May) at its stand at the fair (P9).

Samuel Kung, the owner of Moca, says: "I feel that Chinese institutions, private and public, and audiences and collectors are very receptive to Western artists, who are keen to come

to China, given the power of its art market." This extends to Asian names as well: Moca's Yayoi Kusama show last year attracted more than half a million visitors. Kung anticipates that such shows will increase in number.

In most cases, the artists' galleries – which have all made visible efforts in Hong Kong to introduce their artists to China's collectors –

have been instrumental in securing the exhibitions. This has included bringing works to this fair, mounting exhibitions in their Hong Kong outposts and building relationships with institutions, as well as organising and providing funds for the museum shows themselves. This also helps to fill China's growing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Artist has mountain space in his sights

### JAPAN

**Odawara.** The Japanese photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto is planning to open an ambitious art complex in the dramatic setting of Sagami Bay in eastern Japan by 2017. The facility will house the Odawara Art Foundation, a non-profit organisation established by Sugimoto in 2009. "Nestled against the sheer outer rim of the Hakone Mountains, the Enoura district of Odawara City is one of great unspoiled natural beauty. This will be the site of the Odawara Art Foundation's Enoura complex," a statement says.

A spokeswoman for Sugimoto says: "The Odawara Art Foundation preserves and exhibits art objects

and other items, from prehistoric to contemporary; works to convey traditional performing arts to younger generations; and contributes to the vitality and development of contemporary art." She declined to comment on the exhibition programme, but said that "it is not planned at this stage to show Sugimoto's 'Seascapes' series [began in 1980] in the complex".

The centre (left, detail) will incorporate a tunnel from which visitors can view the sunrise during the winter solstice, a thatched-roof Noh theatre, a Muromachi-period (around 1333-1568) gate, a garden and offices. The cost of the new complex, and funding details, are undisclosed. **Gareth Harris**



### TALKING POINTS AT ART BASEL IN HONG KONG



**Philippe Parreno**  
*Fraught times, for eleven months of the year it's an artwork and in December it's Christmas, (March), 2009, around €600,000, Esther Schipper (1D04)*

**Brancusi**  
*Le Poisson, 1926, \$3m, Paul Kasmin Gallery (3D16)*



**Sam Jinks**  
*Untitled (Standing Pietà), 2014, \$155,000, Sullivan + Strumpf (3C12)*

## Giant 'octopus' swims to Macau

A solo show dedicated to the Portuguese artist Joana Vasconcelos opened in Macau's MGM casino complex this week (until 31 October). Vasconcelos is showing a monumental, site-specific work weighing 1,200kg. *Valkyrie Octopus* (below), which is made of more than 4,000 metres of coloured fabrics, 3,100 metres of electric cable and thousands of beads, refers to Portugal's historic presence in Macau. **G.H.**



MUNIZ AND TALKING POINTS: NORDA WIRNIAK; SUGIMOTO: © HIROSHI SUGIMOTO/NEW MATERIAL; RESEARCH LABORATORY: VASCONCELOS; LUÍS VASCONCELOS/COURTESY OF UNIDADE INFINITA PROJECTS; WECHAT: APRESS/ASSOCIATION IMAGES; FRANCE: COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CHINA; UMBRELLA: © TORANE SUBREITERS

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GERMANY >>>

China survey along the Rhine

A museum in Germany's Rhine-Ruhr region will exhibit Chinese contemporary photographs before they have been seen in China. "Works in Progress: Photography from China" (15 May-13 September) at the Folkwang Museum in Essen is part of "China 8", Germany's biggest survey of Chinese contemporary art to date. The images, all produced or first published in 2015, will then travel to venues in China. The "China 8" shows will take place across eight cities in the region, including the Lehbruck Museum in Duisburg, the NRW-Forum in Düsseldorf and the Folkwang. "China 8" is supported by the Brost Foundation and Evonik Industries, among others. (Above, Cai Dong Dong's *The Photographer*, 2014.) J.Mi.



CHINA >>>

New Beijing HQ for Chinese auction house

China Guardian, the country's second-largest auction house, has unveiled plans for its new headquarters in Beijing. The Guardian Art Center (below, rendering), which has been designed by the German architect Ole Scheeren and is due to open in 2016, will include two below-ground auction rooms. These will be dwarfed by a 120-room hotel, several restaurants and a 1,700 sq. m exhibition and event space. The building, which will be two blocks from Beijing's Forbidden City, will "explicitly [pay] respect to its context and location", says Chen Dongsheng, the chairman and founder of China Guardian. Chen says that the mixed-use building will "embody the nature of an auction house at the intersection of culture and commerce". M.G.



# Seeking out Southeast Asia

As curatorial interest in the region grows, will more collectors follow?

ANALYSIS

**Hong Kong.** There is an extraordinary diversity of art by Southeast Asian artists at Art Basel in Hong Kong this year, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the countries that make up the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean). Although artists and dealers proclaim their cultural individuality, they also feel a strong affinity with their regional identity.

The fair features 22 galleries from Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia, including dealers with outposts in Singapore, and work by the region's artists is also available on other stands. A Salon event on Sunday 15 March seeks to deepen collectors' understanding of art from the region.

Institutions in the West are looking towards the region

Institutions in the West are looking eastwards. Richard Armstrong, the director of the New York-based Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, who was at the fair for the BMW Art Journey award, visited Bangkok last September. The Tate in London launched its South Asian Acquisitions Committee in 2012, and the Istanbul-based Arter Foundation brought contemporary art from Southeast Asia to the Turkish city this January.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong's M+ museum plans to collect in this area, and the new National Gallery Singapore, due to open in November, will display historical Southeast Asian art.



One of Jakarta-born Bagus Pandega's "portraits" at the fair, with ROH Projects (1B34)

One of the most unusual offerings at the fair is in the Discoveries section, where Jakarta's ROH Projects (1B34) has four "portraits" by the Indonesian artist Bagus Pandega, made up of mirrors, guitars or spinning LPs combined with found objects (\$6,000-\$7,500 each).

Steady growth

Portraits of another kind feature at Manila's 1335Mabini (1C26), where

Poklong Anading's lightboxes feature people photographed in different settings, holding up mirrors against their faces to reflect the sun (\$3,500-\$35,000). "Initiatives such as the Guggenheim's exhibition 'No Country' and regional biennials have had a huge share in terms of providing platforms to exhibit Southeast Asian artists in institutional contexts," says the gallery's Birgit Zimmermann. Indonesian artists are among the

best known in the region. Singapore and Berlin-based Arndt (3C30) sold Eko Nugroho's embroidery *Anarki Moral*, 2014 (priced at \$38,000), as well as his large work from "Encounters", *Lot Lost*, 2015, which was bought by an Australian museum at the fair for \$330,000.

At Gajah Gallery (1C38), three editions of sculptures by Yunizar sold for \$62,000 each. "We saw extraordinary growth in this market four to five years ago, and then it slowed a bit, but prices are still very reasonable," says the gallery's Jasdeep Sandhu.

Prominent collectors

The Jakarta-based Nadi Gallery's stand (3C26) features detailed and delicate works by Handi Wirman Saputra (\$150,000 and \$250,000) and a large abstract work by Arin Dwi Hartanto Sunaryo. The well-known collector Deddi Kusuma is a fan of both artists, and he is expected to visit the fair, along with other prominent VIPs from the region, such as Petch Osathanugrah, Jean-Michel Beurdeley, Dr Oei and Rudy Akili.

Philippines-based Silverlens (1D43) features a "scarf" with shoes as a motif—a reference to the Marcos era—by Pio Abad (*Every Tool is a Weapon if You Hold it Right XXI*, 2015, \$7,000), as well as Yee I-Lann's installation *Tabled*, 2013 (\$29,000), which consists of plates fired in Indonesia with photographs from across Asia. It was shown in the Museum Van Loon in Amsterdam and sold in a Manila and Singapore gallery—a fitting example of the diverse nature of the art on show.

Georgina Adam

• Salon, Sunday 15 March, 6pm-7pm; SEA: Social Engagement Artists, Southeast Asia and Beyond

## China opens its doors wider

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

number of private museums.

The reaction to overseas artists has so far been positive, in terms of both exposure and sales. London-based Timothy Taylor, whose gallery (1B11) is among those that represent Scully, says that the artist's show "generated massive interest" in Shanghai (he cites 150-plus reviews). Scully was interviewed this week on China's leading television station, CCTV.

The dealer Ben Brown says that mainland Chinese collectors bought work by Brazilian-born Vik Muniz "as a direct result" of the artist's solo show at the Long Museum last year. But he adds that it is still early days in terms of institutional independence. "The best and probably only way to get a show off the ground [in China] is to get someone to pay for it," Brown says. (His gallery footed some of the bill.) Costs can be particularly prohibitive in a country where, in addition to the usual shipping and insurance charges, there is also a potential



US artist Mark Bradford (centre) at Shanghai's Rockbund Art Museum

Customs deposit of around 25% of a show's insurance cost. Bank guarantees and temporary visas are ways to get around this, but these can still be costly. Philip Tinari, the director of UCCA, says that dealers are often the only people with enough liquidity to cover the (albeit recoverable) charge.

Galleries can be, or rather have to be, very involved when it comes to getting the show on the road. In his catalogue foreword to the Muniz exhibition, Brown thanks the Long Museum for "trusting us to create"

the show—although the institution describes itself as the curator, according to a spokeswoman. The Himalayas Museum's webpage for the Craig-Martin show says that it is organised "in collaboration with Gagolian Gallery and Holtermann Fine Art".

Philip Dodd, the chairman of the London-based agency Made In China, who has organised the Scully shows, says that, even though commercial galleries are helping exhibitions come to fruition (as they do to a degree elsewhere), China's prominent museums are not passive partners. "Everybody is knocking on China's door, and China knows that it is the biggest game in town. [Its museums] are deeply and properly sceptical of people's intentions and are not

after a one-night stand," he says.

Tinari says that the process has to begin somewhere. "China's institutional architecture is still bare-boned, so it falls on the shoulders of a few private museums to mount international shows."

Exposure in Hong Kong

Galleries at this year's Hong Kong fair are hoping to build on their artists' exposure in mainland China. Works by Scully are on several stands, including Timothy Taylor Gallery, which has brought four new, large-scale pieces, one of which sold on Friday (these generally sell for around \$800,000). Ben Brown Fine Arts (3E15) has brought *Forbidden City (Postcards from Nowhere)*, 2014, by Muniz, priced at \$58,000 (edition of six, two sold by Saturday afternoon); White Cube (1D12), has two works on paper by Bradford (both *Untitled*, 2006, \$125,000 each); and Alan Cristea Gallery (3C23) has brought a set of four screenprints by Craig-Martin, *History*, 2001, priced at

HK\$64,000 (\$8,250). Marian Goodman Gallery (1C07) has several pieces by Kentridge (\$25,000-\$200,000).

Mary Sabbatino of Galerie Lelong (3D08), Scully's gallery in France, says that he "has universal appeal". Deeply conceptual works are not the order of the day in China—yet. Cheng Xixing of Shanghai's Don Gallery (not showing at the fair) says that Western artists appeal to young collectors as an instant way to give a veneer of "internationalism".

Whether or not these artists' solo shows in China—experimental and essentially loss-leaders for their galleries—will develop into a bigger trend remains to be seen. Tinari says: "Nobody wants a project that is transparent in its motivation. It should be about the public and what is relevant to the life experience of the museum-goer, not just a potential gallery client." *Melanie Gerlis and Julia Michalska, with additional reporting by Lisa Moviis*



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