

**ART AND CHINA AFTER 1989: THEATER OF THE WORLD
OPENS AT SFMOMA ON NOVEMBER 10, 2018**

**One of the Largest Exhibitions of Contemporary Art from China
Presented in North America**



SAN FRANCISCO, CA (June 27, 2018)—Bracketed by the student protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989 and the spectacular pageantry of the Beijing Olympics in 2008, *Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World* presents an extensive survey of an historical period of Chinese contemporary art. It looks at the bold movements that anticipated, chronicled and agitated for the sweeping social transformation that brought China to the center of the global conversation. The exhibition was previously presented at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. The show's West Coast debut examines how Chinese artists have been both critical observers and agents of China's emergence as a global presence through a concentration on the conceptual and performative practices and social and political critiques of two generations of artists.

SFMOMA has a long history of presenting exhibitions of important contemporary Chinese artists. The museum organized *Inside Out: Chinese Art* in 1999—the first exhibition in the United States dedicated

to featuring works created since 1986 by artists from mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong as well as artists who emigrated from China. It has also presented *Half-Life of a Dream: Contemporary Chinese Art from the Logan Collection* (2008) and *Photography Now: China, Japan, Korea* (2009).

“*Art and China after 1989* brings together a dynamic group of two generations of artists who were active during a transformative period within the history of China and Chinese art. This exhibition updates our audiences from where our watershed exhibition in 1999, *Inside Out*, left off and highlights the importance of continuing to challenge our assumptions about Chinese artistic traditions and the global impact that they and China have made on our world,” said Gary Garrels, Elise S. Haas Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Featuring the work of more than 60 key artists and artist groups living in China and abroad during the onset of globalization, *Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World* presents over 100 works of photography, film, video, painting, sculpture, ink, performance, installations and participatory social projects. These works from private and public collections around the world will be displayed in six thematic chapters that fill SFMOMA’s seventh-floor contemporary galleries.

Visitors will have their first encounter with *Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World* upon entering the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Atrium off the museum’s Third Street entrance. There, artist Chen Zhen’s dramatic *Precipitous Parturition* (2000), an 85-foot long writhing dragon sculpture created from found materials including bicycle inner tubes, bicycle parts and toy cars will be displayed suspended from the ceiling. The work offers a sly commentary on China’s dramatic transition from an analog nation of bicycles into a highly industrialized nation whose cars emerge from the belly of the dragon.

Organized in six chronological, thematic sections, the exhibition includes:

- **1989: No U-Turn** – The first section focuses on the exhibition *China/Avant-Garde* that opened at the National Art Gallery in Beijing in 1989 and presented performance art, installation and ink abstractions that defied easy explanations but announced a new direction for modern art in China. It also features work addressing the Tiananmen protest movement that arose within months of that show, and the June 4th massacre that ended the 1980s decade of liberal reform.
- **New Measurement: Analyzing the Situation** – In the aftermath of the events of 1989, artists experienced a crisis of confidence towards authority systems, bureaucracy, language and ideology and turned towards conceptualist practices to expose processes that perpetuate structural authoritarianism.
- **5 Hours: Capitalism, Urbanism, Realism** – Impacted by the sweeping changes brought about by economic liberalization, urbanization and globalization in the early 1990s as China turned from socialism towards free-market capitalism and morphed into “the world’s factory,” artists responded with a resurgence of realism creating work that explores the conditions of daily life in China.
- **Uncertain Pleasure: Acts of Sensation** – Artists looked beyond China as they began to participate in international biennials and reconnect with contemporary currents through travels and publications. This section focuses on the development of extreme durational performance art and video art as key tools to explore the tension between individualism and collectivism during the mid to late 1990s.

- **Otherwhere: Travels Through the In-Between** — This section explores the parallel history of Chinese artists working abroad during the 1990s and early 2000s as they master the “transexperience” of living between multiple cultures and worldviews, and those within China who begin to critique their own complicity in a newly global art world.
- **Whose Utopia: Activism and Alternatives circa 2008** — When skepticism of the validation generated by the awarding of the Beijing Olympics in 2001 combined with the catastrophic events of the Sichuan earthquake and the global financial collapse of 2008, it yielded concerted social activism in the form of multi-year, utopian-themed projects. Facilitated by the Internet, artists, collectives, activists, critics and curators sought to take art outside museums and galleries and into society itself, restoring the revolutionary purpose of art to change society.

The titular work of the exhibition, Huang Yong Ping’s two-part installation *Theater of the World* (1993) and *The Bridge* (1995) opens the exhibition on the seventh floor. This two-part sculptural installation is a metaphor for accelerating globalization and explores the duality between social chaos and coexistence through a presentation of insects and reptiles inhabiting a cage-like version of the panopticon, an 18th-century structure created for omnipresent surveillance. SFMOMA’s installation of *Theater of the World* and *The Bridge* will replicate the altered presentation at the Guggenheim Museum in New York where, in response to vociferous protests, it was displayed without live insects and reptiles and with an accompanying artist statement. Two historic video works in the exhibition, Xu Bing’s *A Case Study of Transference* (1994), and Sun Yuan and Peng Yu’s *Dogs That Cannot Touch Each Other* (2003) also will be presented in deactivated states as in the New York presentation and will be accompanied by artist statements as gestures memorializing the works. Now part of the history of the exhibition and of the three works, these artist gestures contextualize the way in which the art works were met with criticism and protest prior to their actual display in New York.

CATALOGUE

Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World is accompanied by a 324-page catalogue published by the Guggenheim Museum and features essays from curators Alexandra Munroe, Philip Tinari and Hou Hanru, and annotated descriptions of the works on view with interpretive analysis by the curators and scholars Katherine Grube, Lu Mingjun, Stephanie H. Tung and Xiaorui Zhu-Nowell. It also includes an exhibition history of the period under consideration prepared by Anthony Yung and Jane DeBevoise of the Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong.

EXHIBITION VENUES AND DATES

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum	October 6, 2017–January 7, 2018
Guggenheim Museum Bilbao	May 11–September 23, 2018
SFMOMA	November 10, 2018–February 24, 2019

SUPPORT

Major support for SFMOMA’s presentation of *Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World* is provided by Susy and Jack Wadsworth. Generous support is provided by Akiko Yamazaki and Jerry Yang.

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ORGANIZATION

Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World is organized by The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York.

This exhibition is organized by Alexandra Munroe, Samsung Senior Curator, Asian Art, and Senior Advisor, Global Arts, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and guest co-curators Philip Tinari, Director, UCCA, Beijing; and Hou Hanru, Artistic Director, MAXXI, National Museum of 21st Century Arts, Rome. At the Guggenheim, Xiaorui Zhu Nowell and Kyung An provided curatorial research and support.

The curators worked with an international advisory committee that has met under the auspices of the China Academy of Art, Huangzhou, and the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing.

SFMOMA's presentation is organized by Rudolf Frieling, curator of media arts; Gary Garrels, Elise S. Haas Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture; and Eungie Joo, curator of contemporary art.

HOURS AND ADMISSION

Open Friday–Tuesday 10 a.m.–5 p.m. and Thursday 10 a.m.–9 p.m. Closed Wednesday.

Annual membership begins at \$100, and members enjoy free admission. Adult general admission to SFMOMA is \$25; admission for seniors 65 years and older is \$22; and admission for visitors ages 19 through 24 is \$19. Visitors aged 18 years and younger receive free admission to the museum, including special exhibitions.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

151 Third Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

SFMOMA is dedicated to making the art for our time a vital and meaningful part of public life. Founded in 1935 as the first West Coast museum devoted to modern and contemporary art, a thoroughly transformed SFMOMA, with triple the gallery space, an enhanced education center and new free public galleries, opened to the public on May 14, 2016. In its inaugural year, the expanded museum welcomed more than 1.2 million visitors.

Visit sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

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IMAGE CREDIT

Cao Fei, *RMB City: A Second Life City Planning by China Tracy (aka: Cao Fei)*, 2007. Color video with sound, 6 min. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Purchased with funds contributed by the Young Collections Council, with additional funds contributed by Shanghai Tang. © Cao Fei

ART AND CHINA AFTER 1989: THEATER OF THE WORLD ARTISTS ON VIEW

INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

Ai Weiwei
Cai Guo-Qiang
Cao Fei
Chen Chieh-jen
Chen Shaoxiong
Chen Zhen
Ding Yi
Geng Jianyi
Gu Dexin
Hong Hao
Huang Young Ping
Hung Liu
Kan Xuan
Kwan Sheung-chi
Li Shan
Liang Juhui
Lin Tianmiao
Lin Yilin
Liu Xiaodong
Liu Zheng
Liu Wei
Lu Jie
Ma Liuming
Ou Ning
Ellen Pau
Qiu Zhijie
Rong Rong
Shen Yuan
Song Dong
Wang Gongxin
Wang Guangyi
Wang Jianwei
Wang Xingwei
Wenda Gu
Wu Shanzhuan
Xiao Lu
Xu Bing
Xu Tan
Xu Zhen
Yan Lei
Yang Fudong
Yang Jiechang
Yin Xiuzhen

Yu Hong
Yu Youhan
Zhang Huan
Zeng Fanzhi
Zheng Guogu
Zhan Wang
Zhang Nian
Zhang Peili
Zhang Xiaogang
Zhao Bandi
Zhou Tiehai
Zhu Ming
Zhu Jia

ARTIST GROUPS

- East Village (Cang Xin, Duan Yingmei, Gao Yang, Ma Liuming, Ma Zhongren, Wang Shihua, Zhang Binbin, Zhang Huan, Zhu Ming and Zuoxiao Zuzhuo)
- New Measurement Group (Chen Shaoping, Gu Dexin and Wang Luyan)
- Tactile Sensation Group (Gu Dexin and Wang Luyan)
- Xijing Men (Chen Shaoxiong, Gim Hong-sok and Tsuyoshi Ozawa)
- Yangjiang Group