

À L'EST DU SUD DE L'OUEST / À L'OUEST DU SUD DE L'EST

As part of the "Années croisées France Chine/Intersecting Years France China" 2004/2005, two art centres in the south of France are joining forces to put on a two-part exhibition, first from **17 April to 3 June at the Villa Arson (Nice)**, and then from **18 June to 12 September at the CRAC (Centre régional d'art contemporain, Sète)**.

Opening: Friday 16 april 2004, at 6 pm

Laurence Gateau (Nice) and Noëlle Tissier (Sète) are keen to mix any form of exchange involving movement and sharing with their thinking about Hou Hanru, art critic and freelance curator.

Hou Hanru was born in China, but has lived and worked in Paris since 1990. He has put on many international exhibitions, including in particular: *Zone of Urgency* (50th Venice Biennale, 2003), the Gwangju Biennial (South Korea, 2002), the Shanghai Biennial (China, 2000), *Living in Time* (Berlin, 2000), and *Paris pour escale* (City of Paris Museum of Modern Art, 2001).

Chinese contemporary art is complex and varied, and probably one of the most energetic of current art scenes. Several generations of artists, from different regions, influenced by diverse cultural, historical, geographical, social and economic traditions, but to some extent stemming from a common past, are part and parcel of this new reality. Amid the upheavals of a country in the thick of change, today's artists are extremely productive, in every field, not least in reaction to situational changes. The quest for new kinds of individual freedom, and a refusal to be perceived as representatives of a national culture, together represent a stance and a strategy shared by those involved in the contemporary Chinese scene.

Internationalization is one of the most typical aspects of their artistic language and their individual positions. Many artists have emigrated, while others are often avid travellers. These experiences are a unique and enriching resource for many Chinese artists, and play a decisive part in the construction of a determinedly global art world, with influences extending as far as the remodelling of western societies. It is also noteworthy that the situation within China itself is advancing in an encouraging way towards greater openness. Many events (Shanghai Biennial, Shenzhen international exhibition of public art, Guangzhou Triennial, etc.) are now listed among major international shows. This process of opening-up is prompting artists to pit their works against the world, geopolitics, the realities of globalization, and the problems it is giving rise to. Chinese contemporary art is entering a period of reorientation. This reorientation no longer abides by any movement or general trend; rather, it produces a multi-directional complexity which is tending to become incorporated in the world, generating new and apparently chaotic worlds which are active and dense, but marked by a relentless individualism, and invariably in direct contact with a precise context. Here, artists are evolving fast and spontaneously, like so many rebel forces.

And what about the title of the show being held in Nice and Sète? **À l'est du sud de l'Ouest / À l'ouest du sud de l'Est** (West of the South of the East/East of the South of the West) reflects the kaleidoscope represented by present-day Chinese art. Some

of the artists chosen live in China, others hail from the Chinese diaspora in France and Europe. Over and above issues involving borders and nationalities, these choices show how Chinese culture is tackling the problems of today's world, while trying to sidestep the determining factors of its own limits (historical, geographical, etc.) and stereotypes.

In the form of a statement of absurd geographical orientation, **À l'est du sud de l'Ouest / À l'ouest du sud de l'Est** is an exhibition which avoids all themes and tries, rather, to focus on free and individual explorations in a planisphere going through far-reaching changes.

Artists:

Huang Yong Ping (Paris)
Shen Yuan (Paris)
Yan Pei Ming (Dijon)
Wang Du (Paris)
Yang Jiechang (Paris)
Ni Haifeng (Amsterdam)
H. H. Lim (Rome)
Yan Lei (Beijing/Hong Kong)
Wang Jianwei (Beijing)
Zhuang Hui (Beijing)
Chen Wenbo (Beijing)
Chen Shaoxiong (Canton)
Yangjiang group : Zheng Guogu, Sha Yeya, Chen Zaiyan, Sun Qing Lin (Yangjiang, Guangdong)
Xu Tan (Canton)
Xu Zhen (Shanghai)
Yang Fudong (Shanghai)
Fu Jie (Hangzhou)
+ a video program with works by **Cao Fei, Kan Xuan, Yang Zhenzhong, Lu Chunsheng, Zhu Jia, Liang Yue...**

From March to June, the Villa Arson will play host to four Chinese artists-in-residence, thanks to the support of the General Council of Alpes-Maritimes: Xu Tan, Fu Jie, Yan Lei and Wang Jianwei. The last three studied at the China Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou in Zhejiang province, twinned with the département of Alpes-Maritimes. Huang Yong Ping, Shen Yuan, Ni Haifeng, Yang Fudong, Yang Zhenzhong, Kan Xuan, Chen Zaiyan and Lu Chunsheng are also former students of this academy.

The Villa Arson receives support from the Délégation aux arts plastiques, the Drac Paca (ministère de la Culture et de la Communication), the Conseil général des Alpes-Maritimes, the Conseil régional Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, the city of Nice and les Années France-Chine.

Jean-Claude Chedal, general director

Laurence Gateau, director of the National Contemporary Art Center and exhibition curator

Maxime Matray, publications attaché

Patrick Aubouin, manager

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