

# CHINESE WHISPERS

## Media Dossier

17 February 2016

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## THE EXHIBITION

### *A new look at contemporary Chinese art through the Sigg and M+ Sigg Collections*

'Chinese Whispers' is a reflection of and on modern China. From 19 February until 19 June 2016, the joint exhibition by Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern showcases significant portions of Uli Sigg's collection. Before the Swiss collector's donation is transferred to Hong Kong, around 150 recent works from the Sigg and M+ Sigg Collections will be on public display in the Swiss capital city. This major exhibition will be accompanied by events such as a series of panel talks with guests including artist Ai Weiwei and architect Jacques Herzog. Both institutions will also present fascinating educational and further supporting programmes.

### Introduction to the Exhibition, Context – Switzerland's Role in Contemporary Chinese Art

Contemporary Chinese art constitutes an unparalleled phenomenon. Art in China, unlike its western counterpart, which has evolved across a succession of artistic movements, experienced an upsurge in the 1980s, when the Chinese government began to relax some of its previously strict rules and regulations. Creating authentically Chinese art in terms of content, China's artists rushed to embrace many modern and contemporary western art movements that had seemingly passed them by. Many of their works responded to then current political and social challenges. Since the turn of the millennium, a younger generation of artists has emerged, however, that not only has come to the very forefront of the global art scene, but is also deeply committed to China's own rich cultural heritage.

In the context of contemporary art, an extremely close relationship has developed between China and Switzerland. The Swiss national Uli Sigg was the first collector to systematically build a collection of contemporary Chinese Art as from the late 1970s. Since then, it has grown into the world's most significant compilation, a 'document' of more than 2,300 pieces to use Sigg's own apt description.

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Switzerland as a country, and Swiss curators and collectors have also played a major part in the western reception of contemporary Chinese art. In 1995, Sigg introduced Lucerne gallery owner Urs Meile to China. Meile went on to become a pioneering western dealer in contemporary Chinese art in China itself, organizing first exhibitions in Beijing and opening one of the very first international art galleries, designed by Ai Weiwei, in Beijing in 2005. And in 1996, another Swiss national Lorenz Helbling opened an art gallery in Shanghai.

Back in Europe, legendary Swiss exhibition designer, Harald Szeemann, curated the Venice Biennale of 1999. It featured the first-ever presentation in the western world of a larger body of works by contemporary Chinese artists, and left the international art scene speechless with amazement.

2005 saw another milestone when 'Mahjong', a major exhibition of works from the Sigg Collection, was presented by Kunstmuseum Bern. Curated by Bernhard Fibicher in co-operation with Ai Weiwei, the show caused a sensation among the international art community. Ever since, and particularly in China, the exhibition catalogue has been considered the 'Bible' of contemporary Chinese art. Moreover, in co-operation with the Sigg Collection, Kunstmuseum Bern has gone on to showcase and promote contemporary Chinese art in a series of exhibitions called 'Window on China' (*China-Fenster*).

A further waypoint in the reception of contemporary Chinese art, both in Switzerland and in the western world, was an exhibition at Kunstmuseum Luzern in 2011. 'Shanshui – Poetry Without Sound? Landscape in Chinese Contemporary Art' was curated by Peter Fischer, the current director of Zentrum Paul Klee, in co-operation with Ai Weiwei and Uli Sigg. Based on selected works from the Sigg Collection, 'Shanshui' was ground-breaking in its presentation of contemporary Chinese artists, and in its exploration of their relationships with their own cultural heritage.

Uli Sigg recently donated a large portion of his collection to the M+ Museum for visual culture in the West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong, which is due to open in 2019. Prior to the departure of these significant works, the city of Bern is once again proud to provide a prominent platform for contemporary Chinese art. The participation of Zentrum Paul Klee alongside Kunstmuseum Bern has increased to more than 4,000m<sup>2</sup>, over 44,000sq ft, the gallery space available to showcase 'Chinese Whispers' with recent Chinese art.

Once more, three men have joined forces: Uli Sigg, the collector; Matthias Frehner, who was the director of Kunstmuseum Bern both in 2005 and currently; and Peter Fischer, formerly in Lucerne and the director of Zentrum Paul Klee since 2011. Their exhibition will probably be the last presentation in the western world of such a large portion of the Sigg Collection, which is due to be transferred to M+ in Hong Kong in 2019. Designed by Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron, M+ is slated to become one of the world's largest museums, with the M+ Sigg Collection as its 'foundation stone'.

In Bern, 'Chinese Whispers' will showcase a selection of works from the future M+ Sigg Collection, and pieces from Sigg's still increasing personal collection.

The current exhibition has been curated by Kathleen Bühler, the curator of Contemporary Art at Kunstmuseum Bern. The exhibition catalogue was created in close co-operation with experts from M+ in Hong Kong. In 2017, a condensed version of 'Chinese Whispers' will travel to the prestigious MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art, in Vienna. 'Chinese Whispers' is the first major joint project of the two Bernese art institutions since they were brought together in 2015 in the umbrella foundation, *Dachstiftung Kunstmuseum Bern – Zentrum Paul Klee*.

## Content and Structure

The name of the exhibition, 'Chinese Whispers', refers to the popular party game in which an orally transmitted message changes as it is passed from one person to the next. The game not only teaches lessons about the origins of rumours and misunderstandings, it also illustrates the fleeting nature of oral traditions. When dealing with contemporary art from China, the name is a particularly apt metaphor. While the Chinese way of expressing cultural, historic and political characteristics and differences may strike us as alien, we have grown increasingly familiar with this art. After all, it has been some time now since an art market greedy for new forms of expression first introduced contemporary Chinese art to the so-called West through global distribution networks. Moreover, the principle of a game that produces a 'distorted echo' may well serve to illustrate both – the cultural relations between China and the western world, and the diversity of and complexities inherent in contemporary Chinese art itself.

'Chinese Whispers' presents some 150 pieces created by contemporary Chinese artists over the past fifteen years. The adumbration of new artistic trends and concerns is presented in two thematic sections, which are themselves split into two parts each. They illustrate artistic positions between East and West, and between tradition and progress ('Global Art from China'; 'On Dealing with Tradition'); they reflect the impact of recent sweeping changes, both on China's urban fabric, on the country's use of resources, and on how China has documented its recent history; and they explore ways in which artists caricature the political system, or engage in emotional introspection ('Traces of Change'; 'Between Consumer Mania and Spirituality').



Li Tianbing, Ensemble # 1 + 2, 2008, oil on canvas, 2 panels, 200 x 400 cm, © the artist. M+ Sigg Collection, Hong Kong. By donation

### Zentrum Paul Klee: Traces of Change

Since Deng Xiaoping began to introduce economic reforms in 1978, China has undergone rapid and sweeping changes of an extent that is probably unique in recent history. In the 1990s, the push for modernisation was aggressive, and millions of migrant workers were attracted to cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, which were completely transformed. While people grew wealthier, and labour conditions as well as access to education and health services improved, the Chinese authorities obliterated not only the traces of the Mao era, but also of any remains of traditional China, uprooting and displacing families in the process. In their works, many artists have addressed the dramatic changes, and have explored artistic ways of reflecting China's most recent history between the country's only political party's hold on power, and its greater international presence. The artists showcased in this section have scrutinised both their own history and their daily reality made impenetrable by swift and sweeping changes.

Mr. Ai Weiwei, b.1957

Ms. Cao Fei, b.1978

Mr. Cao Kai, b.1969

Mr. Chen Chieh-Jen, b.1960

Mr. Chen Wei, b.1980

Mr. Chi Lei, b.1981

Mr. Chow Chun Fai, b.1980

Mr. Chu Yun, b.1977

Mr. Ding Xinhua, b.1964

Mr. He Xiangyu, b.1986

Mr. Hu Xiangqian, b.1983

Mr. Jing Kewen, b.1965

Mr. Li Songhua, b.1969

Mr. Li Songsong, b.1973

Mr. Mao Tongqiang, b.1960

Mr. Qu Yan, b.1955

Mr. Shen Xuezhe, b.1973

Mr. Shi Guorui, b.1964

Mr. Song Dong, b.1966

Mr. Song Ta, b.1988

Mr. Sun Yuan, b.1972, & Ms. Peng Yu, b.1974

Mr. Wang Qingsong, b.1966.

Mr. Wang Wei, b.1972

Mr. Zeng Han, b.1974

Mr. Zhao Bandi, b.1966

### Kunstmuseum Bern: Between Consumer Mania and Spirituality

The changes that have swept across China since 1978 have catapulted the communist society into state capitalism. In 2012, the Chinese party leadership began to promote the new political ideology that we now know as the 'Chinese Dream'. China's current president, Xi Jinping, who assumed office in 2013, proclaimed the 'great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation', and a China that would become a 'moderately well-off society' through further market reforms. Moreover, Xi wanted to pursue China's official goals of creating both a 'Civilised China', a country of equity and fairness, and a 'Strong China', not least in military terms. In particular, Xi encouraged young people to 'dare to dream, to work assiduously to fulfil their dreams and contribute to the revitalisation of the nation.' As the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, Xi has attempted to resolve China's serious economic and social problems, not only by legitimising the authority of the party, but also by initiating a far-reaching campaign against corruption, among numerous other measures.

China's Cultural Revolution, followed by the introduction of state capitalism, severely damaged traditional social values infused by Confucian ethics, with their strong emphasis on living together in harmony. Owing to increasing

uncertainties and a new climate of social indifference, many Chinese have returned to religion. Newly acquired wealth and mobility, self-determination and consumerism alongside spiritual emptiness, and the loneliness of millions of single children have left a deep mark on recent Chinese art.

Ms. Cao Fei, b.1978  
 Ms. Chen Ke, b.1978  
 Ms. Cong Lingqi, b.1982  
 Mr. Fang Lijun, b.1963  
 Mr. Jiang Zhi, b.1971  
 Mr. Jun Yang, b.1975  
 Ms. Kan Xuan, b.1972  
 Mr. Li Tianbing, b.1974  
 Ms. Lu Yang, b.1984  
 Mr. Ming Wong, b.1971  
 Ms. O Zhang, b.1976

Ms. Pei Li, b.1985  
 Mr. Tsang Kin-Wah, b.1976  
 Ms. Xie Qi, b.1974  
 Mr. Xin Yunpeng, b.1982  
 Mr. Xu Di, b.1982  
 Mr. Yan Lei, b.1965  
 Ms. Yang Meiyang, b.1983  
 Mr. Zhang Xiaodong, b.1968  
 Mr. Zheng Guogu, b.1970  
 Mr. Zhuang Hui, b.1963

#### **Kunstmuseum Bern: Global Art from China**

The death of (western) art history has been proclaimed on numerous occasions, and has given rise internationally to discussions concerning 'global art'. Against a backdrop of a range of historical events, global art is to free itself from the western world's dictatorship; to be open to all and any international traditions of art; and to contribute to a history of mutual exchange rather than one of western influence on non-western attitudes and positions. For centuries, painting has been practiced all over the world, and has evolved into any number of local traditions. It therefore lends itself particularly well to the exploration of relationships between specifically local and global aspects. This section presents new pictorial content, new concepts of artistic production, as well as various traditions in terms of script, abstraction and ornamentation.

Ms. Duan Jianyu, b.1970  
 Ms. Liang Yuanwei, b.1977  
 Mr. Liu Ding, b.1976  
 Mr. Liu Wei, b.1972  
 Mr. Ma Ke, b.1970  
 MadIn Company / Mr. Xu Zhen, b.1977

Mr. Shao Fan, b.1964  
 Mr. Tian Wei, b.1955  
 Mr. Wang Xingwei, b.1969  
 Mr. Adrian Wong, b.1980  
 Mr. Xue Feng, b.1973

#### **Kunstmuseum Bern: On Dealing with Tradition**

Against the backdrop of a globalised art community; against a fear that artistic creativity may become homogenised, and that artists may sell out on their own cultural heritage owing to the pressures of western commercial standards, it has become an increasingly urgent concern for artists to address their own regional or national artistic traditions. In the western world, tradition is often associated with backwardness and many

western artists explore traditions through the postmodern prism of pastiche. In Asian contexts, by contrast, the authenticity of national art has increasingly been turned into an act of self-assertion against the western world. More specifically, and in a Chinese context, artists who engage with their traditions predominantly do so through calligraphy and the genres of ink and landscape painting. A new aspect of Chinese art – a quest for cultural roots – reveals itself in many Chinese artists' creative attempts to 'update' and use their traditions by embracing Asian aesthetics and traditional Chinese ideas.

Mr. Feng Mengbo, b.1966  
 Mr. Jin Jiangbo, b.1972  
 Mr. Li Dafang, b.1971  
 Mr. Li Shan, b.1942  
 Ms. Li Xi, b.1979  
 Mr. Ni Youyu, b.1984  
 Ms. Peng Wei, b.1974  
 Mr. Qiu Qijing, b.1979

Mr. Shao Wenhuan, b.1971  
 Mr. Shen Shaomin, b.1956  
 Mr. Shi Jinsong, b.1969  
 Ms. Charwei Tsai, b.1980  
 Mr. Xiao Yu, b.1965  
 Ms. Ye Xianyan, b.1985  
 Mr. Zhang Jianjun, b.1955

**Duration:** 19 February–19 June 2016  
**Venues:** Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Switzerland  
**Number of works:** 150 works and groups of works by 72 artists  
**Gallery area:** 4'100m<sup>2</sup>/44,100sq ft  
**Curator:** Kathleen Bühler, Curator of Contemporary Art, Kunstmuseum Bern  
**Committee:** Peter Fischer (Director, Zentrum Paul Klee)  
 Matthias Frehner (Director, Kunstmuseum Bern)  
 Pi Li (Curator, M+ Museum for visual culture, West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong)  
 Uli Sigg (Collector, Mauensee, Switzerland)  
**Second venue:** MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art, Vienna, Austria  
 18 January–16 April 2017

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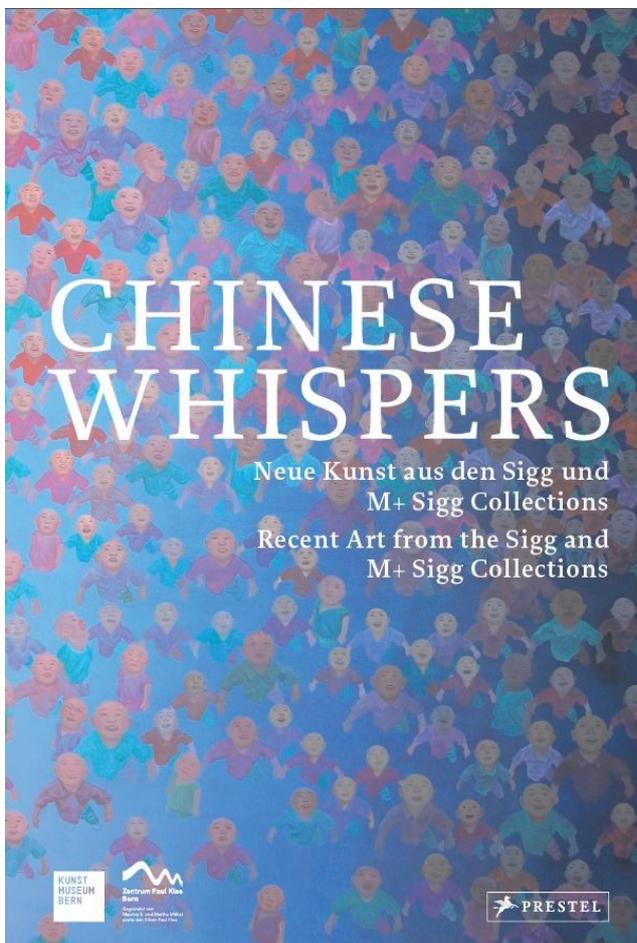
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## The Catalogue

The richly illustrated catalogue provides an opportunity to become more deeply immersed in contemporary Chinese art. Its core part is dedicated to interviews with each of the artists participating in the exhibition. Their comments on their art are contrasted with our western interpretations. The context for these conversations is outlined in essays by Pi Li, the curator of the M+ Collection, and by art critic Carol Yinghua Lu, and in an interview with Uli Sigg, the Swiss art collector.



### CHINESE WHISPERS

***Neue Kunst aus den Sigg und M+ Sigg Collections***  
**Recent Art from the Sigg and M+ Sigg Collections**

Kathleen Bühler, Editor, Kunstmuseum Bern / Zentrum Paul Klee

Prestel Publishing

Bi-lingual edition in English and German

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Available from February 2016

## Uli Sigg

### The Collector and the Artists

It was in the late 1970s that the Swiss native Dr. Uli Sigg, deputy chairman of the board of Ringier, Switzerland's largest media company since 2003, began to explore China and Chinese culture to ever greater depths. In 1980, he established the first ever joint venture between a western company and China. From 1995 until 1998, he was the Swiss ambassador to China (and North Korea) and based in Beijing. Sigg continues to play an active part in terms of Chinese art, not just as a collector, but also as a mediator, patron and sponsor of both the arts and of artists alike.

From the late 1970s, which saw the emergence of contemporary Chinese art, Uli Sigg kept a close eye on the scene. It was in the early 1990s that he and his wife Rita Sigg began to collect Chinese art systematically. Over the years around 2,300 works by some 350 different Chinese artists have come together, including avant-garde pieces that have become classics, as well as very recent contemporary art in any kind of medium, from painting and sculpture to photography, video, installation and performance. In terms both of its breadth and quality, this collection has no equal.



Uli and Rita Sigg, Schloss Mauensee, December 2015

(Zheng Guogu / Yangjiang Group, Waterfall, 2003. Wax, calligraphy, metal)

Photograph by Monika Flückiger

## **The Uli Sigg / M+ Sigg Collections**

The Uli Sigg / M+ Sigg Collections of contemporary Chinese art consist of some 2,300 works and series in any conceivable medium, including painting, sculpture, object-art, installation, photography, video and multimedia, and by around 350 artists. Earliest works included date from the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), followed by the No Name (mid-1970s) and the Star Groups (late 1970s). They were precursors of contemporary Chinese art proper, whose official ‘beginnings’ have been dated to 1979. Uli Sigg has been engaged in the creation of a systematic museum collection since 1990; the collection constitutes an historic document of one of the most dynamic periods in China’s recent cultural history. The collections have continued to grow; a recent acquisition dates from 2014. Mainland Chinese artists Zhang Peili, Geng Jianyi, Gu Dexin, Ai Weiwei, Fang Lijun, and Hong Kong artists, Lee Kit and Pak Sheung-chuen, are among the major artists.

In 2012, Uli Sigg donated 1,510 works to the future M+ Museum for visual culture in Hong Kong. With its focus on 20th and 21st-century art, motion pictures, design and architecture, the new museum of contemporary visual art will be part of Hong Kong’s West Kowloon Cultural District. The Swedish curator Lars Nittve has been the executive director of the museum since 2011, while Chinese-born Pi Li is the curator of the M+ Sigg Collection. In 2013, Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron emerged victorious from an international design competition for the museum whose effective area, all buildings and functions included, extends to around 60,000 m<sup>2</sup> (just shy of 646,000sq ft). The museum is expected to open in 2019, with the M+ Sigg Collection on permanent display from that day forward.

## Interview with Uli Sigg

**In *KunstEinsicht Bern*, a magazine published by Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee (March 2016).**

by Maria-Teresa Cano (Head of Department Communications and Art mediation, Zentrum Paul Klee)

*Dr. Sigg, you have assembled the world's largest collection of contemporary Chinese art. How is it that a Swiss manager and diplomat has concerned himself so deeply and for such a long time with art from a culture that still seems strange and inaccessible to many people in the western world?*

For two reasons. I have always been interested in contemporary art. So, when I went to China, it was only natural for me to find out about artists working there at the time. The other reason was that I was completely unfamiliar with Chinese culture. I had been thrown into this project with Schindler quite suddenly and wanted to find a different approach to China than the official avenues open to me. Remember, I was under constant observation, I could never go anywhere without a minder.

*In terms of understanding Chinese art, were there any barriers and obstacles you had to overcome?*

Of course there were! Especially so during my early years, when contemporary Chinese art was completely different from anything the western world knew as contemporary art. Chinese artists had only just begun to produce that kind of art. Any previous art had been commissioned; it was art for propaganda. In a complete break with the past, Chinese artists were suddenly in a position to put their own ideas on canvas. Initially, that was a context that I had to learn to deal with.

*How did you manage to meet local artists?*

Initially through mutual friends and then one artist took me along to meet another. Eventually, artists wanted to get to know me – this exotic person who wanted to spend money on contemporary Chinese art, and who wanted to talk to them. They were absolutely not used to talking about art with someone who perhaps might also know what to do with this kind of art outside China. When I set up an art award, that also increased artists' awareness of my existence.

*What has been your greatest motivation for collecting? Is it the attention and curiosity that a painting or a sculpture elicits? Or is it more about meeting an artist or artists?*

Ultimately, China was the object of my studies and I wanted to learn more about the country through art and by meeting artists. I could never have achieved this by going into a gallery and buying a piece. It was only later that I realised that no-one was systematically collecting this kind of art. That's when I began to collect it, but never with the intention of owning the works. I always intended to pass them on at some point.

*In your opinion, what are some of the most relevant differences between the Chinese and the Swiss art markets?*

The art system as we know it in the western world consists of artists, collectors, auction houses, museums and other institutions, art critics, the art market and galleries. In the early days of contemporary Chinese art, in the late 1970s that is, there was none of that in China, except for the artists themselves. In this respect, there has been a lot of change. The art market is flourishing; there are auction houses and hundreds of art galleries. Chinese artists know about the rest of the world: they travel; they are present on the internet. By comparison to our system, however, the range of art institutions and art criticism is still extremely limited; certain boundaries remain.

*I would now like to jump to the present. You have decided to send a large part of your collection to Hong Kong. Why now?*

Well, that also has something to do with my biological age (laughs). There comes a time when you have to find a solution for a collection that is of some relevance to China, and for which responsible to some degree. Also, back in 2010, when I began to secure the future of the collection in earnest, some substantial museum projects had been launched in Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong. That, too, made me think it was the right time. In the meantime, some of these large projects have been realised.

*Did you ever consider donating your collection to a Swiss museum, or perhaps establish a museum of your own for it?*

Well, you see, my means are finite, and that is just the beginning. I am very much aware of what it means to build and operate a museum. But more importantly, I feel that their contemporary art must belong to the Chinese, so that they can actually get to see it. It is part of their culture. Swiss museums have other purposes; they could never dedicate themselves exclusively to contemporary Chinese art; that would not make much sense. Now the best possible opportunity has arisen in China where a fantastic new museum, one without a collection, is under construction in Hong Kong.

*One day, when the major part of your collection is on display in Hong Kong, will you perhaps focus your passion for collecting somewhere else? Might you turn your attention to a different culture?*

My heart still beats for contemporary Chinese art, but I no longer feel the same compulsion. Meanwhile, a great many collectors have come onto the scene, and some institutions, as well. That means my self-imposed mission has ceased to exist in this sense. I am now following artists who interest me particularly; I collect contemporary art from other Asian countries and occasionally something from Europe. Collecting has become less focused, I have widened the field.

*You have been very close friends with Ai Weiwei. How do you explain your mutual sympathy?*

That is certainly a question of mutual affinity. We share some important interests, including a deep knowledge of contemporary Chinese art, of Chinese tradition, and of western contemporary art. That is a very rare combination. We have a lot to talk about. I have also been greatly interested in his political analyses and we have always discussed his projects in great depth. Some ideas have emerged from our conversations that he has realised.

*We are familiar with the 'American Dream'. Attentive people know that the Chinese government has proclaimed the 'Chinese Dream'. What does the 'Chinese Dream' mean to Chinese artists?*

The 'Chinese Dream' is a slogan created by president Xi Jinping, who actually had the 'Dream of a Nation' in mind. It is hard to know what this means to an individual Chinese person. As Chinese artists and intellectuals have noted, except for increased wealth, there is nothing specific about the 'Chinese Dream' that would benefit an individual. A desire for a 'Chinese Dream' does exist, however. There is a need to fill the 'vacuum of values' caused by the shattering of all ideologies. If the 'Chinese Dream' were filled with more content, it could definitely achieve this.

*On 18 February [2016], the four-month exhibition 'Chinese Whispers' will open at two museums in Bern, Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee. We are all very excited about the prospect of seeing this wide cross-section of contemporary Chinese art. Is there one aspect of the exhibition that you would like to emphasise? Does the exhibition focus on one specific aspect?*

Well, one of the more significant aspects is that the exhibition only showcases works that were added over the past ten years, since the 'Mahjong' exhibition (at Kunstmuseum Bern in 2005), that is. One important question is how Chinese artists deal with the global mainstream in contemporary art. This is an overarching topic, not just in terms of Chinese culture, but also when considering the huge drive for innovation in the Chinese economy. One aspect of the exhibition, therefore, is to highlight a conflict that all Chinese artists have to deal with: should they allow themselves to be sucked into the mainstream in order to compete on the global stage? Or should they instead emphasise their roots by focusing on their culture?

*Does the exhibition 'Chinese Whispers' have a message for the visitors here in Bern? In other words, what lessons can contemporary Chinese art teach us?*

The exhibition tells us about present-day China, about Chinese politics and culture. The country is characteristic for its ideologies, philosophies and realities that are very different from ours. That, too, makes it hard for us to interpret China. Anything and everything can be found in China – and the opposite to anything and everything as well. Contemporary art can render these tensions, contradictions and asynchronicities visible; it can transform them into physical objects. No text will ever be capable of achieving the same, however many thousands of pages you might be able to write. You have to see it!

## Supporting Programme

### 'Chinese Challenges' – Three Panel Talks

A series of three evening conversations, co-convened by the Asia Society Switzerland and the Swiss Institute of International Studies (SIAF), takes place in Zentrum Paul Klee with illustrious guests discussing the challenges currently facing China, and facilitated by Martin Meyer (NZZ, SIAF).

For once, the focus is less on art and more on China's daily which frequently makes headlines in our part of the world, and of which we occasionally become vaguely aware. Selected experts join Uli Sigg to talk about Chinese society, China's economy and urban transformation.



Ai Weiwei and Jacques Herzog / © Ai Weiwei Studio & Herzog & de Meuron

10 March 2016 | 7pm

#### ***Wer träumt ihn? Der chinesische Traum und die Gesellschaft***

#### **Whose dream? The 'Chinese Dream' and Chinese Society**

Guests: Prof. Andrea Riemenschneider, sinologist, University of Zürich; Urs Schoettli, Asia specialist and journalist (NZZ).

27 April 2016 | 7pm

#### ***Bauen an der Zukunft: Die Rolle der Architektur im grossen Wandel***

#### **Building the Future: The Role of Architecture in China's Great Transformation**

Guests: artist Ai Weiwei; Jacques Herzog, architect, Herzog & de Meuron.

24 May 2016 | 7pm

#### ***Kurswechsel: Die chinesische Wirtschaft und ihre Herausforderungen***

#### **Changing Tack: The Chinese Economy and its Challenges**

Guest: Jixin Dai, founder, chief investment officer, Xin Tian Fund Management Company Limited, and another special guest (tba).

The three events will be held at the Auditorium of Zentrum Paul Klee, in English or German, with simultaneous interpretation into the other language.

Tickets to these events include admission to the exhibition 'Chinese Whispers' (combined ticket for both museums), valid on the day until 7pm:

Adults: CHF 40.00; Concession (OAPs / Disabled / Military): CHF 36.00; Apprentices / Students: CHF 28.00

Advance bookings at <http://www.kulturticket.ch> and at Zentrum Paul Klee.

Due to the limited number of seats at the Auditorium, talks may be live-streamed to another venue at Zentrum Paul Klee. Tickets (as well as combined for both museums) will be available at the door.

(Programme subject to change)

### Screenings of Topical Chinese Films at Cinema Rex

From February until April 2016, on Saturday afternoons and Wednesday evenings, Cinema Rex in Bern will screen recent Chinese documentaries and feature films that take a radical critical look at present-day China. Screenings will include topical films that address current social issues and challenges in China from various angles. The radical aesthetics of several documentaries explore the boundaries between art and film, while fascinating feature films combine genre cinema and social criticism.

Exclusive preview: 16 February 2016, 8pm: 'The Chinese Lives of Uli Sigg'. An exclusive preview of this documentary film, followed by a panel talk with Uli Sigg and film director Michael Schindhelm. Regular screenings of the film from 18 February 2016 (see below for details).

#### SCREENINGS

'People's Park' (2012), J.P. Sniadecki (no dialogue) – 06 and 17 February 2016.

'Behemoth' (2015), Zhao Liang (OV/E) – 06, 10 and 13 February 2016.

'Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry', Alison Klayman (OV/German) – 13 February 2016.

'The Chinese Lives of Uli Sigg' (2016), Michael Schindhelm (OV/German) – from 18 February 2016.

'24 City' (2008), Jia Zhangke (OV/E) – 20 February, 02 March 2016.

'A Touch of Sin' (2013), Jia Zhangke (OV/German) – 24 February, 13 April 2016.

'Father and Sons' (2014), Wang Bing (OV/E) – 27 February, 16 April 2016.

'Winter Vacation' (2010), Li Hongqi (OV/E) – 27 February, 06 April 2016.

'Three Sisters' (2013), Wang Bing (OV/E) – 05 March, 09 April 2016.

'The Other Half' (2006), Ying Liang (OV/E) – 09 and 16 March 2016.

'Ghost Town', Zhao Dayong, 2008 (OV/E) – 12 March, 23 April 2016.

'Fengming: A Chinese Memoir' (2007), Wang Bing (OV/E) – 19 March, 02 April 2016.

'Black Coal, Thin Ice', Yinan Diao (OV/German) – 23 and 26 March 2016.

'The Iron Ministry' (2014), J.P. Sniadecki (OV/E) – 26 and 30 March 2016.

'Summer Palace' (2008), Lou Ye (OV/German) – 16 and 20 April 2016.

(Listings subject to change)

[www.rexbern.ch](http://www.rexbern.ch) | Cinema REX Bern, Schwanengasse 9, 3011 Bern, Switzerland.

## Guided Tours

Public and private guided tours of the exhibition are available in several languages at both Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee. Same-day tours of one or both museums are available to visitors wishing to explore 'Chinese Whispers' in greater depth.

### Public Guided Tours

Included in the admission to the exhibition 'Chinese Whispers', public guided tours are available in English, German, French and Italian.

## Kindermuseum Creaviva

### Interactive exhibition: 'huānyíng'

(Chinese: welcome – pronunciation: hooayning)

**Where one finds whispers, one often finds secrets – or the fear of someone overhearing something not meant for their ears. One whispers for various reasons and in many different places. Everybody knows these small and great secrets that balance all that we believe to be certain.**

**From February 19th 2016 the interactive exhibition 'huānyíng' at the Creaviva goes on a journey to find the hidden meanings behind symbols, formations and color compositions, all against the background of the exhibition 'Chinese Whispers' at the ZPK. Everything we create is of an exceptionally fleeting nature and we soon discover that not only art but all of life is transient.**



With the interactive exhibition the children's museum not only welcomes guests of the Creaviva. The welcome is extended to a variety of extraordinary artworks of contemporary Chinese art originating from the extensive collection of Uli Sigg.

Over four months, starting February 19th 2016, people of all generations have the opportunity to experience a series of selected topics through different interactive offers and to dive into a culture hardly known to us but immensely fascinating.

The mystery and the art of calligraphy along with the creative handling of personal characters and stories will form the fund for workshops with school classes but also workshops for adults with the focus on team development. Furthermore the Open Studios as well as the 5 Franc Studio with its monthly changing activities will address additional elements and topics of the versatile Chinese culture.

Interactive exhibition «huānying» from February 19th to June 19th 2016 daily except Mondays, from 10am to 5pm. The interactive exhibition is free. Find out more at [www.creaviva.org](http://www.creaviva.org) or call 031 359 01 61 / 60 - Urs Rietmann, director of the children's museum Creaviva, [urs.rietmann@zpk.org](mailto:urs.rietmann@zpk.org)

### **Open Studios**

February: Dēnglong (chin.: lantern)

On February 8th 2016 China heralds the year of the Fire Monkey. The so called Lantern Festival forms the end of the New Years celebrations, which last several days. The designs found on the outside of these lanterns often show signs, symbols and mysteries. Invent your very own lantern at the Creaviva!

March: Mind Netting

Thoughts are never one-way roads. They much more resemble waves of the sea. Linked with our emotions, sensations and our lively imagination these thoughts form a wonderful netting, which determines and reflects our way of thinking and feeling.

April: «made in»

The world famous chop sticks are capable of far more than just guiding Beijing duck or Cantonese rice to ones mouth. With a little caoutchouc and some colour pigments we will prove that there is way more to these small wooden sticks than just food. Work that almost demands to be eaten!

May: «Lòng» (Chinese dragon)

Underneath its monstrous red peel the dragon fruit holds a surprisingly sweet white flesh with little black dots. And what creature is there to find beneath the gown of the Creaviva dragon child?

June «Fragment»

Fragments are shivers, leftovers, like broken pieces of a mirror. They resemble shreds of memories of distant dreams. With glue brushes, colourful ink and paste we begin to put the pieces back together.

## Patrons, Partners, Sponsors

### The following are Patrons of the Exhibition

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Bernhard Pulver, Executive Councillor of canton Bern

Alexander Tschäppät, Mayor of the city of Bern

Rolf Dähler, President of the Burgergemeinde of the city of Bern

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