

**SFMOMA PRESENTS DOCUMENTARY FILM SERIES *TURN IT ON: CHINA ON FILM, 2000–2017* CURATED BY AI WEIWEI AND WANG FEN**

**Screenings accompany the exhibition *Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World* and are available for free streaming via Kanopy**



Still from the documentary *Readymade* by Zhang Bingjian chronicling the ambitions of two Mao impersonators in China.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (September 28, 2018)—*Turn It On: China on Film, 2000–2017*, a free documentary series presenting 20 independent films by more than a dozen of China’s most daring artists and filmmakers will accompany the exhibition *Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) this winter. These films, many rarely shown in the United States, will investigate the political, social, economic and cultural conditions of contemporary China. Co-curated by artist Ai Weiwei and filmmaker Wang Fen, 13 films will be screened in the Phyllis Wattis Theater, January 10–27, 2019, and special guest speakers will offer talks with three of the films. These films plus an additional seven will be available on January 10 via Kanopy, a free on-demand streaming platform.

“Many of the filmmakers represented in this series are writers or artists with very little or no cinematography training, who learned by doing,” said co-curators Ai Weiwei and Wang Fen. “Some of these films’ never-before-seen stories are painful. But in the darkness, without an audience, the voices

telling these stories are weakened. This is why we chose these films. Without hearing these voices, China cannot call itself a civilized society.”

“*Turn It On: China on Film, 2000–2017* is a unique opportunity to see China through the eyes of risk-taking filmmakers who do not tread lightly on the conditions of their homeland,” adds Gina Basso, manager of film programs at SFMOMA. “Told in both short and long form works, these stories show the effects of ongoing changes in contemporary China, and the lives of the individuals who must navigate a world of systems — governmental, economic, consumerist, legal, cultural. This powerful series is a deep dive into contemporary Chinese life and, in many works, reflections on the past reveal challenges to preserving memory and revealing truth. Our new partnership with Kanopy also offers audiences a chance to view these works at home.”

Documentaries and curator talks in the Phyllis Wattis Theater at SFMOMA:

**Thursday, January 10**

6 p.m. SFMOMA 101 Talk introduced by Rudolf Frieling, curator of media arts  
7 p.m. *Plastic China* (Wang Jiuliang, 2016, 82 min)

**Saturday, January 12**

Noon *Nightingale, Not the Only Voice* (Tang Danhong, 2000, 180 min)  
3:30 p.m. *Disturbing the Peace* (Ai Weiwei, 2009, 80 min)

**Sunday, January 13**

Noon *We the Workers*, (Huang Wenhai, 2017, 173 min)  
3:30 p.m. *The Road* (Zhang Zanbo, 2015, 94 min)

**Thursday, January 17**

6 p.m. SFMOMA 101 Talk introduced by Gary Garrels, Elise S. Haas Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture  
7 p.m. *Dream Walking* (Huang Wenhai, 2005, 86 min)

**Saturday, January 19**

Noon *Storm under the Sun* (Peng Xiaolian and S. Louisa Wei, 2009, 137 min)  
3 p.m. *In Search of Lin Zhao's Soul* (Hu Jie, 2004, 116 min)

**Sunday, January 20**

10 a.m. *Jiabianguo Elegy: Life and Death of the Rightists* (Ai Xiaoming, 2017, 409 min)

**Thursday, January 24**

6 p.m. SFMOMA 101 Talk introduced by Eungie Joo, curator of contemporary art  
7 p.m. *Readymade* (Zhang Bingjian, 2009, 79 min)

**Saturday, January 26**

11 a.m. *Falling from the Sky* (Zhang Zanbo, 2009, 145 min)  
3 p.m. *Plastic China* (Wang Jiuliang, 2016, 82 min)

**Sunday, January 27**

Noon *Prisoners in Freedom City* (Hu Jia and Zeng Jinyan, 2007, 36 min)

1 p.m.                      *Garden in Heaven* (Ai Xiaoming and Hu Jie, 2005, 200 min)

All 20 documentaries selected by Ai Weiwei and Wang Fen will be available for free to members of the San Francisco Public Library and the 1,800 university and public library partners across the U.S. via Kanopy. In the greater Bay Area, the collection can be accessed through 40 partner colleges and universities, as well as local public library partners including Berkeley, San Mateo County, Mill Valley, Sausalito, Marin County, San Rafael, Napa, Santa Cruz, Palo Alto, Sunnyvale and Santa Clara. The seven additional films available only through Kanopy are:

- *Apuda* (He Yuan, 2010, 145 min)
- *Karamay* (Xu Xin, 2010, 356 min)
- *Petition* (Zhao Liang, 2009, 315 min)
- *Fairytale* (Ai Weiwei, 2007, 153 min)
- *When the Bough Breaks* (Ji Dan, 2013, 110 min)
- *Silver City* (Li Peifeng, 2009, 98 min)
- *Sanlidong* (Lin Xin, 2006, 172 min)

## **ABOUT KANOPY**

Kanopy is a free on-demand streaming platform available to members of public libraries and universities. With a focus on thoughtful entertainment, Kanopy's curated catalog of thousands of titles collects the best in award-winning films and documentaries from around the world. Kanopy is accessible on preferred apps and devices including iOS, Android, Roku, Apple TV and Chromecast to ensure remarkable and thought-provoking films are available anytime, anywhere.

## **ABOUT THE EXHIBITION *ART AND CHINA AFTER 1989: THEATER OF THE WORLD***

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.

"*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.

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.

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).

### EXHIBITION 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 Shannon and Dennis Wong, and Akiko Yamazaki and Jerry Yang.

*Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World* is made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

### 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, Hangzhou, 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.

Holiday hours: Open December 24 and December 31, 2018 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; open Wednesday, December 26, 2018 and Wednesday January 2, 2019 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; closed December 25, 2018.

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. Since its inaugural year, the expanded museum has welcomed more than 1 million visitors each year.

Visit [sfmoma.org](http://sfmoma.org) or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

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Image credit:

Still from the film *Readymade*; image: Zhang Bingjian