



Cuahtémoc Medina, curator of the 12th Shanghai Biennale, speaks at the opening. — Ti Gong

Shanghai at forefront of biennale art festival

Wang Jie

TODAY biennale seemingly becomes a cliché, as there exists too many biennales around the world.

But the 12th Shanghai Biennale still continues its special city projects that have grown into an integral part of the event, and this year's theme is "Proregress."

First launched in 1996, the exhibition is not only China's most established and influential international showpiece of contemporary art, but also one of the most important in Asia.

The biennale has always taken Shanghai as its primary focus, gathering cutting-edge international curators and artists to explore the ultimate connection between urban life, contemporary art and the public.

Apart from the main venue at Power Station of Art, the 12th Shanghai Biennale will team up with a rich selection of partners of different backgrounds, including the Swatch Art Peace Hotel, Tank Shanghai, Extra Time, Columbia Circle, Sinan Mansion and City Hall of media The Paper. Satellite sites will be set up across several city locations and historical investigators will go out-and-about gathering information from people in the hope of capturing Shanghai's cultural charms.

The Columbia Circle is a new hot spot on the city's art map. Renovated from the old site of the Shanghai Institute of Biological Products, the venue will contribute to the 12th Shanghai Biennale by acting as its City Laboratory.

Scholars from different areas, including urban planning and sociology, as well as artists utilizing different media, will descend as "city researchers" to conduct investigation and studies around the popular hangout and its surroundings.

The Columbia Circle will also stage special exhibitions to present all eventual research and creativity-based achievements.

Date: November 10 to March 10, 2019, 10am-5pm
Venue: Power Station of Art, 1-3/F, 678 Miaojiang Rd
Admission: 30 yuan (US\$4.33)

West Bund Art & Design Fair promoting a world-class field

Wang Jie

Get your sneakers on and get ready for a host of dazzling exhibitions and art events. Shanghai's West Bund area is poised to be the city's premier arena for world-class art at the fifth edition of the West Bund Art & Design Fair.

The fair takes place from November 8 to 11, in Hall Ha of the West Bund Art Center and newly constructed adjacent Hall N.

This year the exhibition will see more than 110 leading international galleries from 43 cities across Asia, Europe, North America and South America presenting the highest caliber of contemporary art.

"I have been to many international art fairs around the world," said Christine Liu, a 30-something local art lover. "I can assure you that today West Bund Art & Design is not inferior to any top international art fairs."

The art scenario at the West Bund area was non-existent several years ago.

Situated in the southeast part of Xuhui District, the area along the Huangpu River stretches 9.4 square kilometers and used to be a cradle of many leading national industries, such as Shanghai Cement Plant, and a hub of modern transportation. So when Zhou Tiehai, one of China's best-known contemporary artists, was invited to open an international fair at West Bund five years ago, he hesitated.

He said, "There was no atmosphere here."

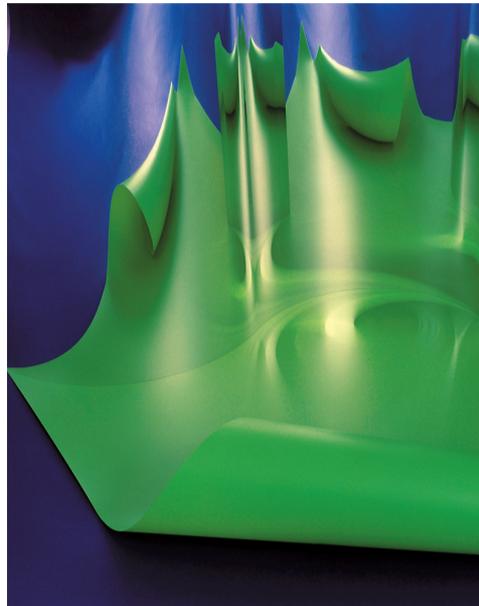
At that time, it was a "cold winter" for the contemporary art scene in the city: In particular, the closure of ShContemporary International Art Fair frustrated lots of industry leaders and art lovers.

Fortunately Zhou, the fair director of West Bund Art & Design and his team, got to work, and the West Bund Art & Design soon developed the whole neighborhood.

Modeled on Paris' Left Bank and London's South Bank, Shanghai's West Bund area has been developed into a world-class waterfront center for culture, arts and design.

The whole region in the West Bund copied *corniche*, a French word that stands for comfortable and open waterfront avenue where people can enjoy a walk down the promenade or drive slowly and appreciate the beauty along the river.

It is believed the West Bund will become the biggest art zone in Asia by



Above: "Backstage," 2017, by Brian Calvin, acrylic on canvas

Left: "Grün-Blau-01," 2017, by Shirana Shahbazi, C-print on aluminium — Ti Gong

the year of 2020.

"Can you find such a similar place elsewhere in Shanghai?" asked Zhou, "Definitely no. It is sited in downtown along the Huangpu River filled with traces of history everywhere."

"Here the view is splendid. Plus it has a spacious exhibition area with incredibly high ceilings of the old warehouses."

The unique location, post-modern industrial traces and the vast space gave the area a lot of promise and potential.

Zhou and his team absorbed the successful experience of several international art fairs and thought of the characteristics of the West Bund Art & Design.

Based on his wide connections in the art community and good reputation and a new management team, he was keen on every small detail curating the West Bund Art & Design.

"We often worked day and night, because there is a lot to do if you want to create a perfect art fair," Zhou said.

"The goal of West Bund Art & Design is clear. We are not a big art fair, ours is smaller, focusing on the 'best of the best.'"

The fair features some top galleries from China and overseas, including Hauser & Wirth and Pace Gallery. The artworks will almost be close to a museum collection.

Because of its advantageous location, some of the exhibition hall outdoor space will be fully used.

In its third edition, the ArtReview

Asia Xian Chang section is comprised of solo presentations by invited international artists, which are installed inside and outside West Bund Art Center.

Works vary from painting, sculpture to moving images and installation. The highlight of ArtReview Asia Xian Chang is Korean artist Choi Jeong-hwa's "Flower Chandelier" and Chinese artist Liu Jianhua's "Monument."

The West Bund Art & Design aims to reach a higher level every year.

For example, this year, a new section titled "DREAM Video 100" will be launched.

It features a program of over 100 film and video works that will be presented on the outdoor LED projection wall of the Dream Center on the West Bund Plaza, providing a glimpse into the diverse development of Chinese and international video art.

Although November is the late autumn season it becomes the "reviving spring" for the local contemporary art scene, as there will be a series of outdoor exhibitions and art events. Let's hope there is plenty of bright and sunny weather during the fair.

Private View (by invitation only):
November 7, 12-7pm

Public Days:
November 8 and 9, 12-7pm;
November 10 and 11, 10am-7pm

Address:
West Bund Art Center, 2555 Longteng Avenue, Xuhui District, Shanghai

The main exhibition hall of the annual West Bund Art & Design Fair — Ti Gong

