

*Dollar Sign*, by Andy Warhol, 1981.



# the eastern connection

PHILADELPHIA'S COLLECTORS AND GALLERISTS EAGERLY ANTICIPATE THE OPENING OF ART BASEL, THE RENOWNED INTERNATIONAL ART FAIR, IN HONG KONG. BY SUE HOSTETLER

Almost two years after the group behind Art Basel bought a majority stake in Asian Art Fairs Ltd., which founded the Art HK contemporary art fair, the newly rechristened Art Basel in Hong Kong opens to much international fanfare on May 23. “The fact that there is an Art Basel show in Hong Kong now is an indication of the art world’s interest in the region and the importance of Chinese and Asian collectors,” says Hiromi Kinoshita, the Hannah L. and J. Welles Henderson associate curator of Chinese art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Boasting work

presented by 245 of the world’s leading galleries, and an improved floor plan and architectural design (sited at the waterfront Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre), the show promises to provide Western audiences with the context to explore the diverse histories, ideas, and aesthetics of Asia’s visual arts, a segment of the art market that has skyrocketed in recent years. Art Basel’s expansion into Asia also gives the storied fair an unparalleled three-continent, year-round engagement with art-world cognoscenti, with its other shows in Switzerland and Miami Beach.

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*True to Myself, Poyo Mix, Append* by Mr., 2012.

Magnus Renfrew, the original fair’s director who is now Art Basel’s Director Asia, has overseen the transformation and is confident that both attendees and participants will be impressed. “With an emphasis on the highest quality work and presentation,” Renfrew says, “the fair will showcase artworks by more than 3,000 artists—ranging from young stars to the modern masters of the early 20th to 21st centuries, hailing from both Asia and the West.” Renfrew has always been a firm believer that Hong Kong is the natural home for a major international art fair.

“We are geographically positioned at the heart of Asia, and we are the region’s financial center,” he offers. “There is no tax on the import or export of art, and Hong Kong has an increasingly expanding cultural sector and a culturally interested population.” And with the rapid proliferation of art fairs creating a climate in which dealers are forced to carefully select where to devote their resources, it’s telling that many of the most prestigious gallerists are putting effort into building their Asian audience at Art Basel in Hong Kong.

This year’s fair is sited at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. The Basel shows are perhaps most renowned for an unflinching curatorial rigor in choosing participating galleries and developing various fair sectors. “Each year will be an opportunity for



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MR. / NAIKAI KIRI CO., LTD. (TRUE TO MYSELF); COURTESY OF ART BASEL (CENTRE)

“We want to be part of the cultural surge in this dynamic city.”

—MAGNUS RENFREW

galleries to participate, with every applicant undergoing the identical review process and [being] given the same consideration,” explains Renfrew. “New committee members are appointed by Art Basel’s director and generally serve for five to 10 years.” More than 170 modern and contemporary exhibitors will show in the main section of the fair this year, including participants like New York-based Dominique Lévy gallery and 303 Gallery. Eyes will be on the Insights sector of the fair, which highlights site-specific projects from 47 galleries from Asia and the Asia-Pacific regions. The Discoveries segment likely will be the most experimental, presenting solo and two-person exhibitions by emerging artists and, in an exciting twist, will feature a \$25,000 prize. But Renfrew reiterates that the fair is also attractive because of its outstanding ancillary activities. “In addition to the quality of art brought by our galleries, Art Basel is known worldwide for the programming surrounding our shows,” he says. “That includes conversations and salon discussion panels, and ambitious collaborations with powerhouse local partners, including museums and institutions.”

Special exhibitions and events at local galleries are poised to draw immense interest. The Hong Kong gallery scene has been invigorated over the past few years by the arrival of major international blue-chip players like Gagosian Gallery and White Cube, which have joined local stalwarts Hanart TZ Gallery and Osage gallery. The multitude of special exhibitions and events at Hong Kong cultural institutions and not-for-profits is dizzying. The government is getting in on the art act, too, by celebrating the opening of its new venue, Artspace @ Oil Street—a space converted from a 1908 heritage building. Asia Art Archive, widely regarded as the most important collection of source material for the recent history of art in Asia, has grown from a single bookshelf in 2000 to more than 35,000 records, including physical and digital pieces. This unique institution, which has diligently recorded and saved material about art across Asia

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to make it accessible to the public, will also be hosting a series of panel discussions, as well as a keynote lecture, during Art Basel.

Not surprisingly, the Hong Kong show has proven attractive to corporate sponsors looking for a foothold in the fast-growing region. Deutsche Bank has signed on as lead partner, joining existing associate sponsors Davidoff, Audemars Piguet, and Absolut Art Bureau, among others, which also support the shows in Switzerland and Miami Beach. Comparisons are being drawn between today's Hong Kong art market and that of 10 years ago in Miami Beach. "The market is in a relatively early stage of development here, much like the atmosphere in [South Florida] when we opened there," says Renfrew. "We want to be part of the cultural surge in this dynamic city, and the show provides the perfect global platform for that." Adds Philly curator Kinoshita, "Hong Kong is a good gateway to China for Westerners, as it combines both East and West." *Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, 1 Expo Dr., Wan Chai, Hong Kong; artbasel.com* **PS**

## A LOCAL LOOK

Philadelphia Museum of Art's Hiromi Kinoshita shares insight to Art Basel in Hong Kong.



"AS A NATIVE OF HONG KONG who returns once a year, I have seen how the contemporary art scene there has developed," says Hiromi Kinoshita, associate curator of Chinese art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Kinoshita organizes exhibitions of PMA's Chinese collection, which originated when the institution first acquired pieces displayed at the 1876 World's Fair in Philly. Kinoshita describes what not to miss at Art Basel in Hong Kong:

"Even though it's the first year in Hong Kong, I would expect that Art Basel will live up to its reputation for putting on well-organized, excellent quality events that both dealers and collectors will find worthwhile," Kinoshita says. She is excited about the 47 galleries from Asia and the Asia-Pacific region that will show in **the new Insights section**. The special **Encounters sector**, organized by famed Japanese curator Yuko Hasegawa, will feature large-scale sculptures and installations throughout the Centre's two exhibition halls.

Around town, Kinoshita recommends visiting **Hollywood Road**, which boasts contemporary and traditional galleries, as well as many adventurous restaurants. Also of interest is the historic **Pedder Building**, home to blue-chip dealers such as White Cube, Pearl Lam, and Lehmann Maupin; **the new Asia Society Hong Kong Center**, set in a former British Army explosives compound; and the ambitious **Para Site**, a tiny but hip nonprofit dedicated to international art. Kinoshita also advises seeing the largest contemporary art exhibition to date at the **West Kowloon Cultural District** site, presented by Hong Kong's future M+ museum and featuring inflatable sculptures by artists from South Korea, the US, and China, including artists such as Choi Jeong-Hwa and Paul McCarthy.

## lines in the sand

ARTLANTIC, A \$13 MILLION PUBLIC ART PROGRAM, MAKES ITS HIGHLY ANTICIPATED DEBUT. BY MARNI PRICHARD MANKO

Atlantic City will become something of a large-scale experiential art gallery when Artlantic: Wonder kicks off with a grand opening celebration on June 20, rolling out the first three installments of a \$10 million multiphase public art project. Funded by the Atlantic City Alliance (ACA) and the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA), Wonder's exhibits make use of formerly empty lots around the city and will feature works by internationally acclaimed artists such as Robert Barry, John Roloff, Kiki Smith, and husband-and-wife artists Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, a collaborative work-in-progress to continue into 2016.

The first location, which launched in November 2012, highlights Smith's sculpture of a woman holding a fawn, surrounded by a constantly changing red landscape, and a playful pirate ship created by the Kabakovs. "Having the ability to curate five exhibitions in as many years is thrilling and daunting," says Lance Fung, the founder and curator of the art organization Fung Collaboratives. Fung, a former gallery owner, is responsible for international works like "The Beijing Project," a public art exhibition created to coincide with the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. "It's curating on steroids."

But according to Fung, the driving impetus for it all is to "get art to the masses." The ultimate goal is to take large, underused parcels of land and not only create fully functional public spaces, but also engage locals, visitors, and art enthusiasts to experience art in a nonexclusionary manner. The installations are free and open to the public year-round. [atlanticcitynj.com](http://atlanticcitynj.com); [artlanticblog.com](http://artlanticblog.com)

ABOVE: This June kicks off Artlantic: Wonder's program of installations and events. BELOW: A performer in the Artlantic event "Etude Atlantis."



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