

Asia

REG NEWITT, JAYNE DYER,
CAROL ARCHER
& NEILTON CLARKE

regnew88@gmail.com
cararcher@gmail.com
neil@unswalumni.com

Gonkar in Beijing

Gonkar Gyatso, originally from Tibet and now a British citizen, has been selected for the Arsenal exhibition in the 2009 Venice Biennale, starting this month. China Art Projects features Gonkar in *Trading Meaning*, at DAC Art Space in the 798 Art District, Beijing from 6 to 30 June. Gonkar will take time out from Venice to visit Beijing for the exhibition and to present an artist's talk at the Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art, facilitated by the Australian Ambassador to China, Dr Geoff Raby. Curated by Reg Newitt, *Trading Meaning* includes well-known Australian artist Tony Scott and an emerging young British artist, Adam Bridgland. Australia will host Gonkar in a number of events later in the year, including the Asia Pacific Triennial. www.chinaartprojects.com. **JD**

UCCA in June

The Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art (UCCA) features a number of new shows in June including Shen Yuan and Ye Nan & Ding Ding. Shen Yuan participated in the *China Avant Garde* exhibition at the National Art Museum of China in 1989 before moving to Paris. She is recognised as a major contemporary Chinese artist who seeks to reveal the latent language in objects, to transform the non-living into life, the corruptible into the magical, and the useful into the useless. *Shen Yuan: Hurried Words* is a poetic installation displaying 2 important recent works; a 'landscape' made of combs and more than 80 small cloth tongues blown by hair driers. These 2 works, both connected with hair and related daily objects, open new forms of dialogue between cultures.

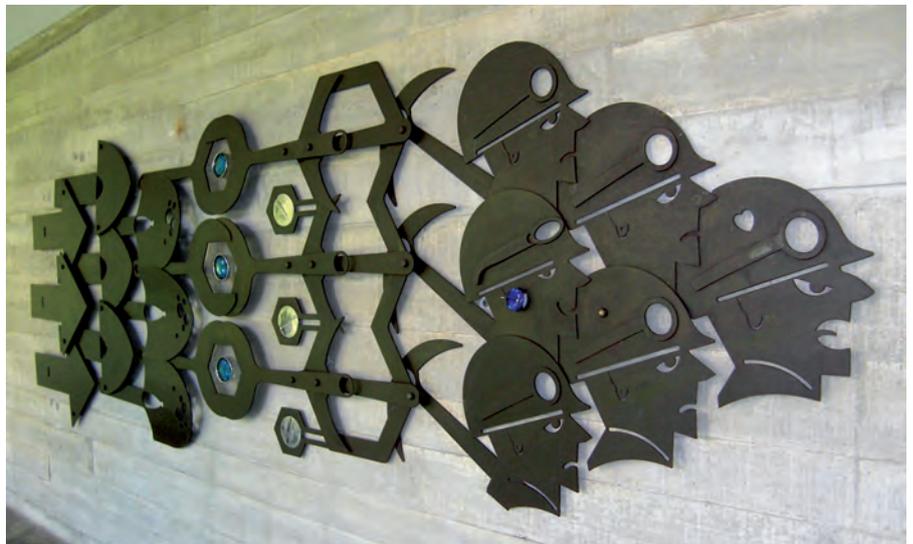
For the latest in the *Curated by* series, UCCA invited Qiu Zhijie to curate *Ye Nan & Ding Ding: Immunity*. The show, including paintings and multi-media installations, presents two young artists' philosophical views on their immediate art environment. Qiu Zhijie, well known for his multi-dimensional practice and curator of this exhibition, explains: 'in China contemporary art has already gone past its experimental phase, what has now become characteristic among new generations of artists is this anxiety to gain influence through their art. Ye Nan and Ding Ding both face this issue in a singular and courageous way.' **RN**

31 books touring China

An exhibition of outstanding artwork from Australian picture books, *An Australian Menagerie*, opened in Shanghai (Shanghai Children's Museum, 12 to 16 May), Suzhou (Bookworm, 20 to 26 May) and Chengdu (Bookworm, 1 to 7 June). It features 31 books across a variety of styles, the work of 28 artists, 30 authors (including a number of Indigenous authors/illustrators) and 15 Australian publishers. Using the theme of animals, *An Australian Menagerie* features Australian native animals, pets, friends and



Alfred Ko, *All Red*, 2009, colour photograph. *Burdening Representations* is on from 5 June at Lumenvision, in the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre, at Shek Kip Mei, Hong Kong, until 7 July. www.jccac.org.hk



Bill Bensley & John Underwood, *Tin Miners*, metal, glass, 2006. Installed at Indigo Pearl, Phuket, Thailand, the work recalls the tin-mining history of the area. Photograph by Neilton Clarke. www.underwood-phuket.com, www.bensley.com, & www.indigo-pearl.com

fantastical creatures. Artist Ann James and curator Ann Haddon are travelling with the exhibition, offering creative workshops and presentations for families, school groups, authors and artists. **RN**

Plotting art

Sydney writer Bob Percival has just completed a 1-month residency with Red Gate Gallery. He is now living in China, working on a novel set in the 1980s Beijing avant-garde art scene, as part of his Ph.D in Creative Writing from Southern Cross University. **RN**

Li Gang returns to Australia

Well known Australian artist Tony Trembath is in Beijing working with Li Gang, an established Chinese sculptor, painter and photographer, who studied in Perth and Melbourne in the '90s. They are preparing a touring exhibition in Australia of Li Gang's photography. *Li Gang – In*

The Grey Scale opens at Monash Gallery of Art in September 2010. It covers the evolution of Li Gang's photography from random shooting and loose darkroom techniques to his current use of extraordinary large-format handmade cameras. Images, mainly of exterior spaces, expose process and experimentation as the primary concerns of Li Gang's practice. **RN**

BSC studio residencies

40 minutes from downtown Beijing by expressway, and close to the Beijing International airport, Songzhuang Art Village is a thriving arts community with over 3000 Chinese visual artists, critics, film makers, musicians and writers, plus 130 international artists living in the area. In 2006 artist Zheng Xuewu established the Beijing Studio Center (BSC), and the centre's new purpose-built facilities located in an historic 'candy making' factory yard include 27 studios available for Chinese and international artists, writers, curators and

SHOT BY BOTH SIDES



Dennis Trew, *Shot by both sides*, 2008, collage.
Nam Bang! 25 Australian and International artists investigate the post Vietnam/American War experience. On at Casula Powerhouse, Sydney, until 21 June. Image courtesy of the artist and Casula Powerhouse. www.casulapowerhouse.com

academics. The short term (1-3 month) international residency program offers 7 private studios with private bedroom and shared bathroom. Residents can also exhibit their work at the BSC Gallery. BSC is a member of Res Artis. Contact www.beijingstudiocentre.org for more information. **JD**

Memento glory

Vanitas art of 17th century Holland, associated with the transience of human existence, obsession with beauty, material possession and mortality are subjects found with increasing regularity in the work of artists, and particularly female artists in China. Beijing-born artist Yang Jing's paintings simultaneously draw from the cyberpunk trend of anime and film and a more contemplative return to essential questions of the individual's existence. Perhaps this work echoes the concerns of the young, predominantly only children and nuclear families; a burgeoning middle-class that is the future and audience for contemporary art in China. Yang Jing's exhibition opened in Shanghai on 29 May at Andrew James Art, curated by Australian Emily de Wolfe Pettit, director of an independent, China-based arts consultancy. emily@artsinfluentialchina.com. **RN**

Disappearing Macao

The Neighbourhood of Macao is an exhibition of over 80 documentary photographs by Macao photographer Chan Hin Io. The photographs record old shops, alleys and traditional industries – sites of collective memory best known to locals. At Macao Museum of Art until October 4. www.artmuseum.gov.mo. **CA**

4 June 1989

The 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre is marked in Hong Kong with an exhibition titled *Burdening Representations - visualizing historical memory of China from Hong Kong*. Participating photographers include Alfred Ko, Frankie Chan Mok Nam, Leon Suen, Raymond Chan Wai Man, Tse Ming Chong, Bobby Yip, Wong Kan Tai, Vincent Yu, Leo Cheng, Karl Chiu and Sin Wai Keung. Curator Yeung Yang notes that the exhibition aims to contribute to 'the critical visual

reception of photographs of and about China'. Scheduled for 6 June is a roundtable discussion between the exhibiting artists and the young artists' collective P-at-riot. Runs 5 June to 7 July at Lumenvisum in the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre at Shek Kip Mei. www.jccac.org.hk. **CA**

Chrysalid ...

... is an exhibition of works by Afsoon Hayley, China de la Vega and Lorene Taurerewa. The *Talisman* series by London-based Iranian artist Afsoon Hayley consists of sewn and collaged love charms while her *Mix and Match* works are matchboxes that feature tiny etchings of well matched and mismatched couples. Australian artist China de la Vega's small-scale sculptures utilise found objects from the Barkly Region of the Northern Territory to create poetic and often humorous objects. The small ink drawings of figures, objects and animals that comprise New Zealand artist Lorene Taurerewa's *Sensible World* are suspended from wires. Opens 11 June and continues until 4 July at Amelia Johnson Contemporary in Central Hong Kong. www.amelijohnsoncontemporary.com. **CA**

Shenzhen Symptom

Wang Jianwei is one of China's most prominent multimedia artists. He was the first Chinese artist to be exhibited at Documenta, and his works have been included in other prestigious international exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale and the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art. *Symptom: A Large Stage Work by Wang Jianwei* opens 28 June. The work employs video, photography, theatre, sculpture and performance to explore the relationships between art making, social background and the 'mentality-body'. Until 28 July at Shenzhen OCT Contemporary Art Terminal (OCAT), the new contemporary art organisation administered by Shenzhen's He Xiangning Art Museum. www.ocat.com.cn. **CA**

Asia-Venice axis

Photographer Miwa Yanagi (achieving notoriety with her early *Elevator Girls* series) is the chosen one for the Japan Pavilion at the Daniel Birmbaum-directed 53rd Venice Biennale (VB), *Making Worlds*, opening 7 June. Commissioner for her *Windswept Women: The Old Girls' Troupe* installation is Hiroshi Minamishima, professor at Joshibi University of Art and Design, Tokyo and Kanagawa. Yoko Ono receives one of two VB Golden Lion Lifetime Achievement Awards, while Japanese group GUTAI round out the Japanese contingent. Coinciding with the VB, Japanese architect Tadao Ando's conversion of the Punta Della Dogana di Mare (Maritime Customs) opens as a space for contemporary art. Asia-wide, Thailand, Korea, China and Singapore each have individual pavilions, and event-wide around 20 artists of Asian origin are participating. Until 22 Nov. www.yanagimiwa.net/e, www.labiennale.org/en/art & www.jp.fgo.jp/venezia-biennale/art/e/53 **NC**

Spiders over Yokohama

Being the 150th anniversary of the opening of Yokohama Port (in 1859, after Commodore Mathew Perry's 'tall ships' arrival in 1853-4), a gamut of manifestations are set for EXPO Y150. The most sculptural are two giant mechanical spiders, each over 12 metres in height, which crawl around the city's bayside area terrorising and delighting residents and visitors alike. The

Artnotes



China de la Vega, *To Pasture*, found objects from the Barkly Region of the Northern Territory of Australia. *Chrysalid* is on at Amelia Johnson Contemporary, Hong Kong, from 11 June to 4 July. www.ajc-art.com



Koji Ryui, *The Tree of Life* (installation view). 2009, foil and wood. *Koji Ryui - Moai* is showing at Gallery 4A, Sydney, alongside *Huseyin Sami - Painter I am why not*, until 6 June. Courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney. www.gallery4a.com.au



Terra Bajraghosa, *John Lennon (Power to the People)*, 2009, paint and acrylic on wall. *Power to the Pixel (and to the Artisan)*, is on at Cemeti Art House, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Image courtesy Cemeti Art House. Photograph by Beiny Harsono. www.cemetiarthouse.com



Yang Jing, *My Carnival*, oil on canvas. Yang Jing's cyberpunk inspired show, curated by Australian Emily de Wolfe Pettit, is showing at Andrew James Art, Shanghai, until 28 June. www.andrewjamesart.com

brainchild of French group La Machine, the spiders, crafted from steel, wood and leather are part of an ongoing series entitled *Les Mécaniques Savantes* (intelligent mechanical beings), going some way towards creating a new gender of sorts according to François Delarozzière, the group's artistic director. Until 27 September. <http://event.yokohama150.org/en> & www.lamachine.co.uk **NC**

Tokyo Tai-up

Melbourne-based artist and curator Tai Snaith takes up her 3-month residency mid-June at the OzCo Tokyo studio, smack-bang in the city's 'buzzville' area of Takadanobaba. Her cross-disciplinary activities are sure to thrive here. www.taisnaith.com **NC**

Kirin's call, a lion's share

Asahi Breweries Ltd (Japan) has for a long time



Chen Wei Meng, *Rhu Tapai*, acrylic on canvas. *Two, Three, Six* (236) the approximate length (km) of the coastline of Terengganu (Malaysia), from Kuala Besut to Kemaman, where Meng's paintings are drawn from. Showing at Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 3 to 24 June. www.weiling-gallery.com

been a high-profile supporter of the arts, particularly visual arts. I've lost track of the number of times its logo has punctuated exhibition catalogues and invites here, however the taste of its brew leaves a lasting impression. It's a full member of the Kigyo Mecenat Kyogikai (KMK: Association for Corporate Support of the Arts), as is its archrival, Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd, the latter well-publicised following its recent successful takeover bid for Australian beer-maker Lion Nathan – providing potentially greater leverage in Asia and Oceania markets, crucial given the shrinking Japanese market for beer sales. Next time you congratulate the artist on reception night over a Tooheys (or two), XXXX, or Hahn beer (to name three), you may or may not be wishing (or able) to recognise that what you're now sinking is Japanese grog. www.kirinholdings.co.jp/english, www.mecenat.or.jp/english/e_index.html **NC**

Mekong matters

As part of the *Mekong Japan Exchange Year 2009*, the Japan Foundation hosted a seminar at its Tokyo headquarters, 21 May entitled *Art for Whose Sake? – Art Activities in the Mekong Region: Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos*. The 7 speakers had earlier returned from regional reconnaissance: Yoko Nose (curator, Toyota Municipal Museum of Art), Kenji Kubota (independent curator), Teiko Hinuma (assistant curator, Aomori Contemporary Art Centre), Azusa Hashimoto (National Museum of Art, Osaka), Shinichi Hanada (independent curator), Minoru Kuroda (Coordinator, Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park), and Australian Edan Corkill (staff writer, *The Japan Times*). Stay tuned for further activity and exhibition news. www.jpfa.go.jp/e/culture/new/0904/04_01.html **NC**

Open-air affair

Hashima Island, better known as Gunkanjima (' Battleship Island') and located 18km off the city of Nagasaki, has had its landing ban lifted for the first time in 35 years. Resembling the shape of a warship, day-trips to the 480-metre-long island made famous by photographer Ikko Narahara with his 1956 exhibition *Human Land* are now possible. It also featured in the action-thriller film *Battle Royale II: Requiem* (2003). Japan's Cultural Affairs Agency chose Hashima as a candidate site for UNESCO World Heritage status in January, and Nagasaki has decided to make it an open-air museum. Around 100 million yen has already been spent on pier and

pavement work, its high sea walls and abandoned buildings making for a unique atmosphere. The powers that be would do well to consider integrating an artist-in-residence program and exhibition spaces into Hashima's cultural planning. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gunkanjima> **NC**

Drifter matter

Yoshihiro Tatsumi, born 1935 and a seminal figure in the development of Japanese *manga* and the somewhat bolder, darker comic form *gekiga*, recently had *A Drifting Life* published by Drawn and Quarterly Publications (DQP), who have taken to issuing translated versions of his works. An autobiographical work of sorts, and 11 years in the making, it charts Tatsumi's experiences in Japan's postwar context, referencing matters as diverse as Hirohito's surrender, Japan's first domestically manufactured washing machine, its Miss Universe contestants, maritime mishaps, and love of Coca-Cola. Tatsumi's Japanese prose has been translated by Taro Nettleton. This and other Tatsumi works such as *Good-Bye* and *Abandon the Old in Tokyo* can be glimpsed and ordered via DQP. www.drawnandquarterly.com/shop/CatalogLong.php?st=art&art=a41e32e169aff2 **NC**

Videos, vetoes & Vito

The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (MOMAT) has *Waiting for Video: Works from the 1960s to Today*, featuring film and video works by Vito Acconci, Taro Izumi, Bruce Nauman, Hitoshi Nomura, Richard Serra and others. Get rolling, it closes 7 June. www.momat.go.jp/english **NC**

Juni with a view

Filipino artist Juni Salvador, a recent immigrant to Australia, holds his first exhibition in Australia through Sydney's SLOT artist-run-initiative. Showing at SLOT's 38 Botany Rd space (at Henderson Rd traffic lights, in Redfern/Alexandria), Salvador will create a site-specific installation of Australian landscapes, drawing on related images and paintings sourced from op-shops and the street. See how an Australian 'arcadia' and notions of reality and the environment figure through fresh eyes. Opening night drinks, 30 May, from 2-5pm; exhibition runs 10 May to 6 June: www.slot.net.au [Ed.]