

ARTMARKET

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REPORT

*A must read magazine for
collectors of art with a focus
on Pan Asia and the new
emerging global markets*

Critic's Choice

A Year in Review

Art Market News

Market Analysis

Aboriginal Art

Street Art

Asian Art

Elizabeth Taylor's jewels

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Adrian Newstead has been appointed President of the peak art consultant body, the Art Consulting Association of Australia. Newstead is a prominent

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Jane Raffan has worked in the fine arts sector for over twenty years, including six years at the AGNSW and a long stint in the auction industry. Jane is

an accredited valuer for the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program and since launching ArtiFacts, her arts services and valuation consultancy, also writes regular art market commentary and critical articles on her chief interests, Australian and Aboriginal art.



Catherine Croll is the Founding Director of Cultural Partnerships Australia established in 2010 and has held the position of Director of Special Projects at Red Gate

Gallery in Beijing since 2009. Since 2008, Catherine has focused her attention on the initiation and facilitation of cultural exchange programs between China and Australia including: *From Mao to Now* – Sydney Olympic Park, *Coming Home* – Linda Gallery 798 Beijing, *Hard Sleeper* – Red Gate Gallery Beijing and *On the Edge New Media & Hybrid Arts from Australia* – Beijing, Chongqing and Chengdu.



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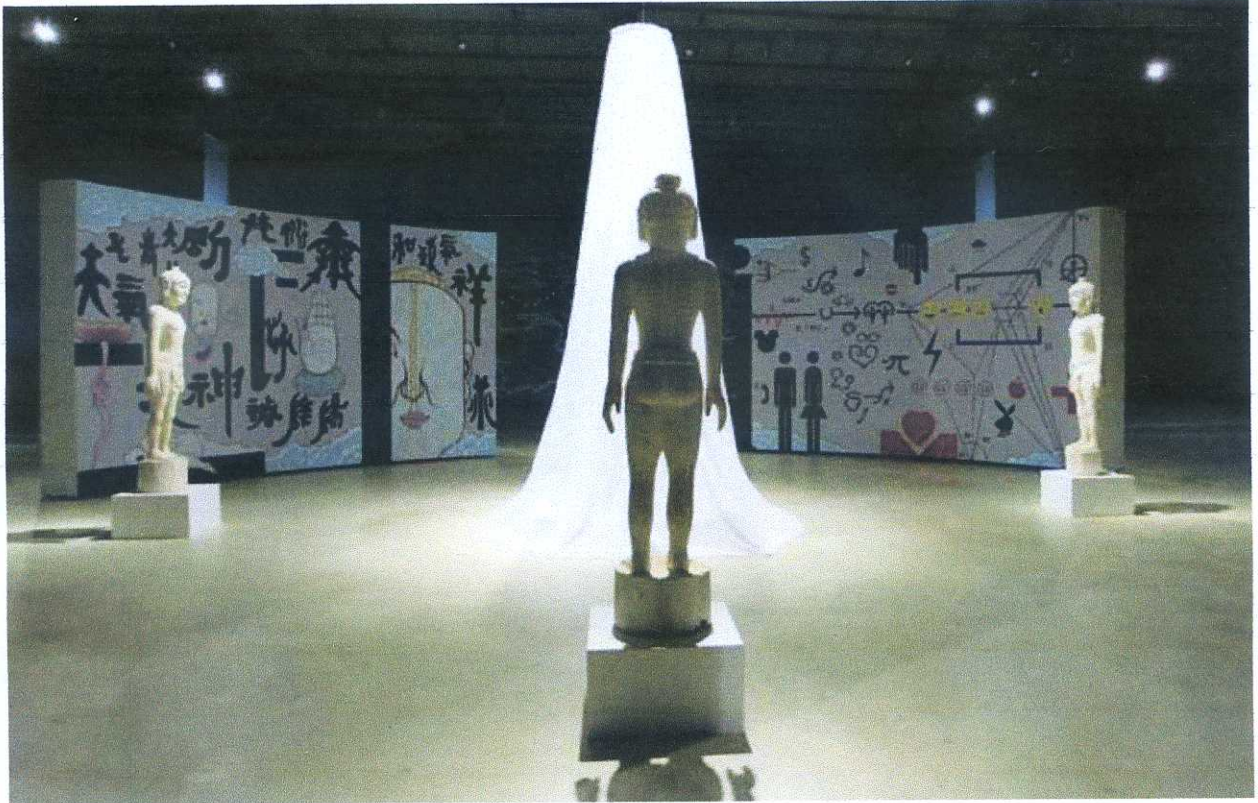


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Australian artists are moving to China to take advantage of low production costs and finding themselves amidst a vibrant international art scene. Catherine Croll looks at how 30 years of cultural engagement between China and Australia has paid off for both Chinese and Australian artists.



Above:
Guan Wei
Spellbound 2011
Installation View at OCAT
Shenzhen China Image
Courtesy of the Artist

Opposite:
He Zubin
Food 2010
oil on canvas
Two Generations -
20 Years of Chinese
Contemporary Art
February-August 2012

On a bright spring day in November 2011 a small influential group of artists, curators, gallery directors, arts administrators, academics, authors and former diplomats were brought together by the newly established Centre for China in the World at the Australian National University, Canberra to reflect upon Chinese Art Post-1949.

The forum examined key instances of artistic contact and dialogue between Australia and China from the 1980s and interactions that laid a foundation for later and more widespread appreciation of contemporary Chinese art.

This timely review allowed key players to be updated on the outcomes of 'riding the dragon' of the Chinese art market – in many ways the fruit of their collective labours over three decades.

Discussions focused upon the 'soft diplomacy' of person-to-person and cultural engagement that followed Deng Xiaoping's declaration of his Open Door policy in 1978 and the consequent opening up and reform that ushered in a new era of cultural and economic liberalization and saw an influx of western art concepts.

1979 - 1990

In the People's Republic of China the first exhibition of Western Art since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution was held in 1979. New grassroots art movements sprang up across the

country and flourished. The cultural environment was new and raw. No formal state-sanctioned structures were in place to allow contemporary artists to show their work. Newly established artists' groups, including the April Photographic Society (1979), Stars group (1979) and Scar Art (1977) joined the first self taught, anti-authoritarian No Name Group (1970s) in the new avant-garde movement exhibiting their work in public parks and historic locations including the Old Summer Palace, the Confucian Temple and the Ancient Observatory, Beijing.

Having established formal diplomatic relations with China in 1972 Australia was well placed to provide many young Chinese artists with assistance by organising small exhibitions in international hotel foyers and 'sofa shows' in the diplomatic compound.

The appointment of Nicholas Jose as Cultural Councillor at the Australian Embassy in Beijing (1987 - 1990) changed the destiny of a number of Chinese artists including Guan Wei, Lin Chunyan and Ah Xian. Following an exhibition of their work in Jose's apartment in 1988 attended by Professor Geoff Parr, then head of the Tasmanian School of Art, they were invited to undertake artist residencies in Tasmania.

During the 1980s the percolating contemporary art scene culminated in the seminal China Avant-Garde *No U-Turn* exhibition which opened at the National Art Museum of China (NAMOC) in February 1989. Featuring work by 186 artists, performance

Opportunity knocks in the Year of the Dragon

art and massive installations, this provocative blockbuster was shut down only hours after opening following the now infamous 'shooting' of her artwork *Dialogue* by Xiao Lu.

A mere 3 months later in June 1989 the entire contemporary art scene crashed to a halt as a result of the Tiananmen Square incidents which prompted a nationwide crackdown on Chinese media, education and cultural institutions.

Many artists went abroad and others chose to live in seclusion. It was a time of great change and adjustment.

1991 - 2000

Australia was quick to respond to these circumstances. The Hawke government granted more than 42,000 Chinese students permanent visas in the aftermath of Tiananmen.

Chinese artists who migrated to Australia during this period included: Guan Wei, Ah Xian, Guo Jian, Song Ling, Lin Chunyan, Tan Yifeng, Wang Zhiyuan, Shen Shaomin, Xu Wang, Xiao Lu, Zhong Chen, Fu Hong, Huang He, Hui Hai Xie, Jian Hua Qian, Jun Chen, Li Gang, Zhou Xiaoping, Fan Dongwang and Shen Jiawei.

Throughout the 1990s Australian educational institutions and public galleries hosted significant exhibitions of Chinese contemporary art including:

- *Twelve Contemporary Chinese Artists*, The University of Sydney, Sydney 1991
- *Post Mao Product – New Art from China*, AGNSW 1992
- *Mao Goes Pop: China Post-1989*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney 1993
- *New Art from China*, Noosa Regional Gallery, Queensland 1994
- *In and Out: Contemporary Chinese Art from China and Australia*, National Touring Exhibition 1997-2000 (Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Rockhampton & Cairns)
- *Beyond China*, Campbelltown City Bicentennial Art Gallery, Sydney 1998

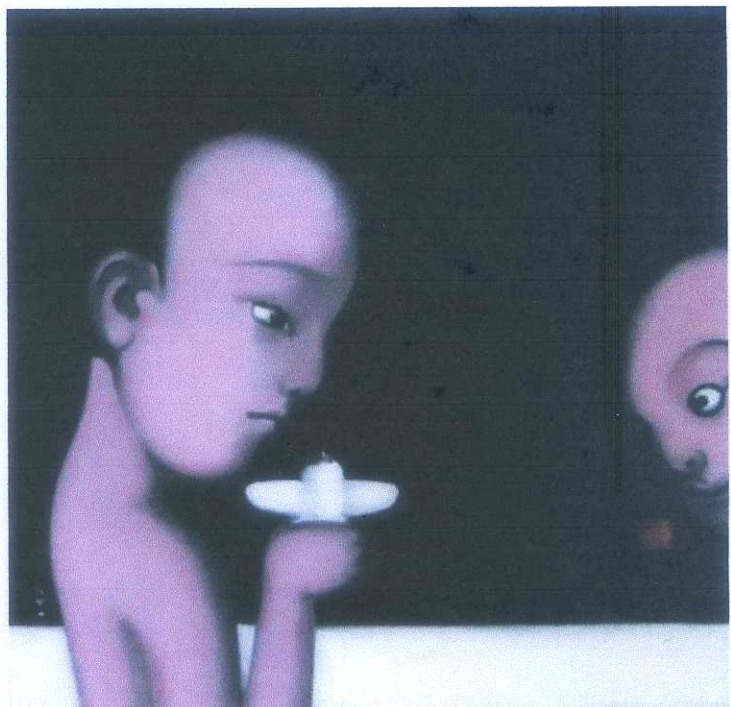
Newly arrived Chinese artists, some of whom were surviving by selling their artwork to tourists at Darling Harbour, were picked up by commercial

galleries, with Guo Jian represented by Ray Hughes, Guan Wei by Irving Galleries (renamed Sherman Galleries in 1992), Zhong Chen by Eva Breuer and Fu Hong by Jan Murphy.

Wang Zhiyuan, Zhong Chen and Guan Wei amongst others received fellowships and grants from the Australia Council to undertake artist residencies and many more commenced further study at Australian art colleges and universities.

By the early 2000s Chinese artists, Song Ling, Zhong Chen, Shen Jiewai, Fu Hong, Xu Wang, Hui Hai Xie, Jian Hua Qian, Wang Zhi Yuan, Tan Yifeng, Zhou Xiaoping and Huang He were making their presence felt through regular inclusion as finalists in all of Australia's major art prizes.

Shen Jiewei had won the Mary MacKillop Art Award in 1995, Jun Chen the Sulman in 1997, 1998 and 2001 before winning the Archibald in 2006,





Above:
Guy Maestri
Untitled China Painting No 2
2010
Courtesy of the artist

Opposite:
Guo Jian
Excitement Sideshow - Qigong
oil on canvas 1997
Courtesy of the artist

Guan Wei won the Sulman in 2002. Ah Xian, who only began working in porcelain in 1998 using the Sydney College of the Arts facilities, won the 2001 inaugural National Sculpture Prize and had a solo exhibition at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum, while Guo Jian's provocative work had been selected as the backdrop for the main stage at the Big Day Out, propelling him into contemporary Australian culture.

Meanwhile back on the Chinese mainland Beijing was beginning to relax and China was 'opening up' again. There was a new energy, the period of 'jumping into the sea', a commercially led dawn arrived and Australian born Brian Wallace opened China's first contemporary art gallery – Red Gate Gallery in the China World Hotel to service the small emerging, expat driven art market.

Australian artists began to undertake residencies with Asialink, a non-teaching faculty of Melbourne University, sending Rodney Pople to the Beijing Art Academy (BAA) as its first artist in residence in 1994. The BAA working spaces were adequate but the foreign residents were housed in special blocks 'off limit to the student body' resulting in little exchange taking place.

As the decade progressed the situation for foreigners in Beijing living outside designated housing compounds was slowly relaxed and in 2001 Red Gate formally partnered with the Australia China Council (ACC) to establish a dedicated artist residency in the Feijiacun Shangri-la artist community of Beijing.

The Chinese art scene had already surpassed the liveliness of the late 1980s with many new curators, writers and critics emerging and returning from

overseas. New publications, art fairs, auction houses and alternative art spaces also appeared.

In 1995, Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Art (CAFA) set up workshop spaces in the Dashanzi factory complex. By 2000 the Dean of Sculpture at CAFA had established his own studio in the area and in 2001 Timezone 8 Art Books opened in a former workers' canteen. Beijing Tokyo Art Projects followed and in 2002 the 798 Space gallery was established with the Bauhaus-inspired buildings and factories providing the post industrial chic now known as the 798 Art District – the most famous art district in China.

2001 - 2010

The Chinese art market was booming and the eyes of the world were on China when the SARS epidemic hit in 2003 closing borders and markets across the country. However, by mid 2004 the danger had passed and the Chinese market bounced back with even greater vigour: Sotheby's conducted the first-ever dedicated sale of Contemporary Asian Art in Hong Kong in October that year.

Private contemporary art museums opened including: The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Shanghai (2005), Today Art Museum, Beijing (2006) and Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art (UCCA) Beijing (2007).

Art Fairs also flourished with the first Art Beijing: Contemporary Art Fair held in 2006, the annual Shanghai Art Fair and SHContemporary (Shanghai) commencing in 2007 and Art Hong Kong launching in the heady lead up to the Olympics in 2008.

However, the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008 caused an abrupt halt to the unprecedented growth in the market for Chinese contemporary art, which had risen from 3 million dollars in 2004 to 194 million dollars in three short years to 2007.

As a result many Chinese galleries simply downsized and tightened their belts to ride out the storm and collectors and gallery directors alike welcomed what many saw as a timely correction to hugely exaggerated prices. The flood of poorer quality mid-range work and copies that had entered the market was reduced.

While in Australia opportunities grew for Australian audiences to experience Chinese contemporary art first hand with the establishment of two significant art foundations:

The Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation (SCAF) opened in 2008. This dedicated not-for-profit organisation works closely with public institutions and artists to commission work and develop exhibitions of significant and innovative contemporary art from Australia, the Asia-Pacific and the Middle East.

The White Rabbit Collection, one of the world's largest and most significant collections of contemporary Chinese art opened to the public in August 2009. The collection, collated by Judith Neilson with the assistance of Chinese Australian artist Wang Zhiyuan from Chinese art fairs and auctions, focuses on contemporary work produced in the period post-2000.

By the end of 2009 the Chinese Art Market was well on the road to recovery with total revenue from Contemporary art sales in China representing more than 17 percent of the global market compared with 7.8 percent in 2008.

In May 2010 the Asialink - Asia Society National Forum, *Mapping Our Future in the Asian Century* was held at Parliament House in Canberra, bringing together 130 specialists and stakeholders from business, the arts, government, academia, public health and development. This forum created an opportunity for cross-referencing between sectors, and building relationships seen as vital in furthering Australia's effective engagement in the region.

The key outcomes and recommendations for the arts sectors included the need to address the following priorities:

- 1 Develop equitable and collaborative relationships
- 2 Act collegially and utilise existing networks
- 3 Improve cultural literacy in the arts sector

Less than 1 month later, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, Governor General of Australia was in Beijing launching *Imagine Australia – the Year of Australian Culture in China* at the Performing Arts Centre.

2011 saw an unprecedented volume and variety of visual arts events presented under the *Imagine Australia* banner with many reaching far into regional China.

"The *Imagine Australia* program really lifted the profile and reach of Australian visual arts, not only into some of China's top-level institutions such as the National Art Museum of China, but also into new and interesting venues across the country including Organhaus in Chongqing, Xi'an Art Museum, OCAT in Shenzhen", said Jill Collins, Counsellor Public Affairs and Culture at the Australian Embassy in Beijing.

"There is such enormous potential in so-called 'second and third tier' cities in China and Australian artists really have an opportunity to make their mark in those areas. I think a strong trend in coming years will be the development and professionalisation of the many new galleries in these large cities beyond China's crowded eastern seaboard", Collins stated.

A number of key Australian organizations also benefited from the increased funds directed to the *Imagine Australia* program by the Australian International Cultural Council, Australia China Council and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, with many forging new partnerships with Chinese galleries.

Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces Melbourne in collaboration with Warnum Arts Centre in Western Australia and the Iberia Center for Contemporary Art in the 798 Art District Beijing brought together 6 curators and 10 artists and writers from China and Australia for the cross-cultural exchange project *No-Name Station*.

Cultural Partnerships Australia undertook an ambitious project that brought Fiona Foley, Frances Belle Parker, Guy Maestri, China de la Vega, Peter Gardiner and Phil James to China for a month long tour of the provinces where they met with artists and toured arts communities before returning to take up a further month-long residency at Red Gate in Beijing.

The resulting exhibition *Hard Sleeper* was opened by the Australian Foreign Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd at Red Gate Gallery before touring to the Damien Minton Gallery in February 2011.

"Visiting China was incredible", said participant Guy Maestri. "Witnessing the scale and momentum of the art world there was an education in itself, and the art institutions were enormously impressive, as

"Making art in China is intoxicating; an endless ceiling of opportunities taunted by China's monumental scale and production"

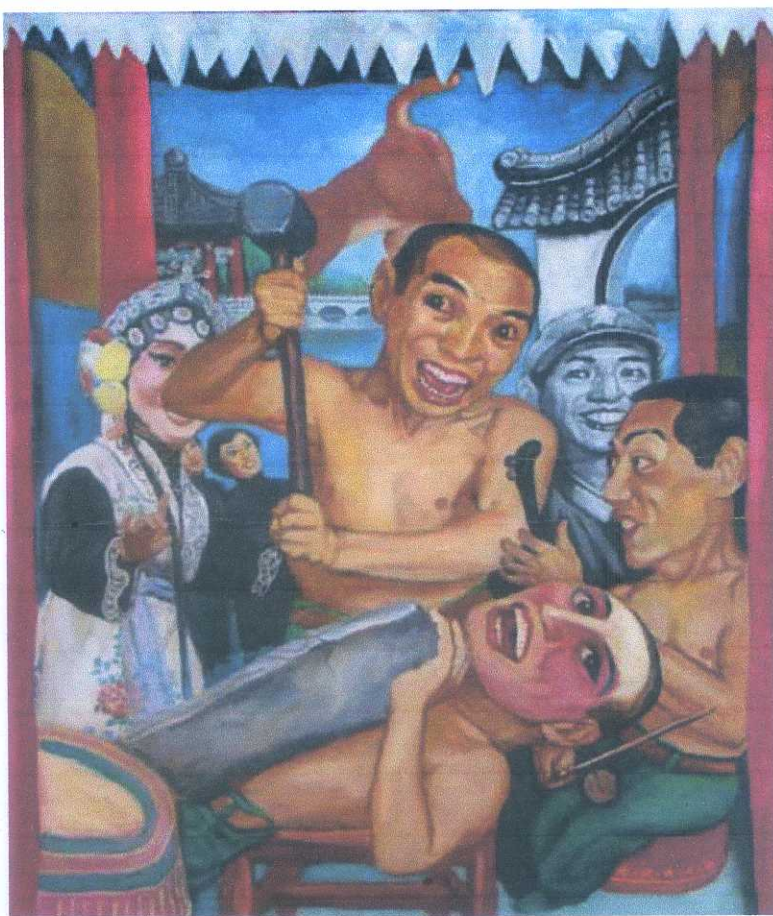
were art districts like 798. There is an enormous amount to respond to in China politically, socially and environmentally, and this has given rise to a great deal of very interesting contemporary art, not to mention heavily influencing my own work whilst traveling and preparing for the *Hard Sleeper* exhibition at Red Gate".

Another partnership between Asialink and 24hr Arts, Darwin saw the establishment of a new residency, dedicated to artists from regional Australia, in Huantei Art City situated in the Chaoyang District, Beijing.

One of the first residency recipients, Anna Reynolds from Batchelor in the NT, was impressed: "Making art in China is intoxicating; an endless ceiling of possibilities taunted by China's monumental scale and production", she stated upon her return. "Beijing has a sense of immediacy attached to its art making population. The low cost of production, materials and equipment are the obvious indicators but the readiness of the audience to engage in the arts and its spectacle is phenomenal".

Indeed undertaking an artist's residency has had an enormous impact upon the hundreds of Australian artists who have done so during the past decade with significant numbers joining the rapid influx of foreign artists moving to Asia to take advantage of the low studio rents, highly skilled assistants and the ability to manufacture large scale works in a range of materials which would be financially out of reach at home.

Laurens Tan is one of a group of Australian artists who have relocated to Beijing after undertaking Red





Above:
Jayne Dyer
Swire East – City Plaza Link
Bridge Hong Kong
Image courtesy of the artist

Gate residencies in 2006 and 2007. For Tan, Beijing is a 'strategic world hub for international artists, curators and other cultural practitioners, which has developed a vibrant contemporary art dialogue resulting from an open-minded attitude'.

The leap of faith has paid off with Tan being curated into a number of key Chinese contemporary exhibitions at Iberia, PKM Gallery and the Today Art Museum in Beijing and his being invited as one of 5 feature artists to a special booth in Art Asia Miami.

Jayne Dyer is a senior Australian artist who relocated to Beijing in 2007. Dyer's sophisticated art practice and commitment to intercultural collaborative exchange has resulted in her being commissioned to produce installations for the Mandarin Oriental, Macau, Prudential Hotel, Kowloon, Swire Link Bridge and City Plaza and Swire East Hotel, Hong Kong.

Indeed the increasing trend towards key international hotels commissioning installations and art events saw the Opposite House Beijing partnering with Asialink to present the 'Abandoned Boudoir', an exhibition of Australian art and design.

The Chinese Art Fairs continued to grow with attendances at Art Hong Kong 11 up 38 percent on 2010.

This tax and duty free haven still provides the best entry to the Chinese Art Market for Australian Galleries. This is largely due to the complexities of Chinese customs, and prohibitive duty (up to 40 percent) charged on imports, which limit participation by all but the wealthiest international galleries in the annual art fairs held on the mainland.

In 2011 ArtHK introduced a brand new gallery feature, Asia One, designed to encourage emerging Asian galleries (broadly defined to include Australia, New Zealand and the Middle East) to present solo shows of artists of Asian origin. The aim is to provide a fresh, wide ranging and current view of the Asian art scene to collectors, arts professionals and ArtHK visitors.

Australian galleries, Annandale, Conny Dietzschold, Dominik Mersch, Sullivan+Strumpf Fine Art, Sutton and Tim Olsen took advantage of this international platform for smaller galleries to showcase their strengths.

Conny Dietzschold traded strongly, selling six large works by Professor David Thomas, a lecturer at RMIT, to local and ex-pat clients from Hong Kong including the former head of BMW. "I think

the HK art lovers are more than happy to get all these wonderful international artworks served on the platter at the HK Art Fair by top galleries and therefore educating themselves in viewing art and buying art", Dietzschold said.

Ursula Sullivan from Sullivan+Strumpf was delighted that Sam Leach's exhibition *We have Never Been Modern* was met with such positive results. "He is a successful artist in Australia, so the fact that he sold out was nothing new and easily achieved, but the true value of the fair was in the relationships that were initiated, including a major commission in Israel, discussions with overseas galleries, and the placement of works in overseas collections in London, America, Turkey and, of course, China", Sullivan explained.

Auction highlight of the year was the sale by Sotheby's Hong Kong of the *Ullens Collection – The Nascence of Avant-Garde China* which included works exhibited at the seminal *China Avant-Garde, No U Turn* exhibition held at NAMOC in February 1989 and rarely seen since their creation and acquisition in the late 1980s.

This remarkable combination of quality, rarity and extraordinary provenance sparked strong international interest and combined with confidence in the Chinese art market, up 12 percent from September 2010, resulting in record breaking sales. *Forever Lasting Love*, a triptych by Zhang Xiaogang coming under the hammer for \$10 million US, broke both the world record for contemporary Chinese Art and the world record for a Chinese artist at auction.

Australian interest centered upon record results achieved by artist Guan Wei for a series of small acrylic on canvas works dating from 1987 that in the case of *Playing with String* came under the hammer for 1,100,000HKD – over 20 times the reserve.

Indeed 2011 proved to be an interesting year for Guan Wei who returned to Beijing with his family in 2009. In addition to relocating after the demolition of his studio complex in May, Guan staged *1980-2010 Thirty Years Retrospective Review of Guan Wei* at 798 Art Village Beijing and *Spellbound* his epic 1,300 square meter installation at the OCT Contemporary Art Terminal in Shenzhen.

In July 2011 the Chinese Government launched *Experience China – The Year of Chinese Culture in Australia*. Unlike *Imagine Australia* with its focus upon the development of strategic partnerships, this reciprocal year of cultural exchange features an array of outstanding exhibitions and performances.

We will look back with interest upon those individuals and organisations that take up the opportunities and challenges as we move into 2012 – The Year of The Dragon.

Two Generations - 20 Years of Chinese Contemporary Art

The iconic Red Gate Gallery Beijing presents *Two Generations* showcasing some of China's very best contemporary artists as part of: *Experience China - The Year of Chinese Culture in Australia*.

Two Generations features the work of 11 senior Red Gate artists who have each nominated a young artist for inclusion. The works of the two generations of artists are being shown side by side to celebrate the achievement of one generation and to herald the promise of the next. The exhibition which opened at Sydney Town Hall in January will travel to Taree, Sydney, Newcastle, Perth and Melbourne from February to August 2012. For further details contact CulturalPartnerships@gmail.com