



Press Release - Announcement CAFAM Techne Triennial 2020

Beijing, China, November 2019 - CAFA Art Museum (CAFAM) is delighted to announce the opening of the inaugural edition of the CAFAM Techne Triennial, which takes place in Beijing from January 18 through March 29, 2020, and is curated by ZHANG Ga (张尜), CAFAM Consulting Curator and CAFA Distinguished Professor. With over 120 works by more than 130 artists and collectives from 28 countries, the Triennial is comprised of two parts: a major exhibition titled *Topologies of the Real*, and *Art in Motion: Masterpieces with and through Media*, a presentation organized by ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe.

CAFA Art Museum to launch inaugural edition of CAFAM Techne Triennial in January 2020

ZHANG Zikang (张子康), the director of the CAFA Art Museum, announced the opening date of the exhibition at a press conference emphasizing the Central Academy of Fine Arts as a world-class art academy committed to cutting-edge teaching and creative research. He highlighted that the CAFAM Techne Triennial is the largest that museum has independently organized, noting, "We are in a period where technology, art and culture have intersected, resulting in subversive changes in artistic creation, expressions and theoretical interpretations. Developing a new path from the intersection of art and technology has become an important proposition in CAFA's future direction."

Utilizing CAFAM's entire gallery space, a total of 5,000 square meters (53,000 square feet), CAFAM Techne Triennial 2020 features a selection of work from the late-nineteenth century to the present day, by early experimentalists and pioneering visionaries of modern art to defining voices in contemporary art, including *Reunion* (1968) by **Marcel Duchamp** and **John Cage**; *Crossroads* (1976) by **Bruce Conner**; *Present Continuous Past(s)* (1974) by **Dan Graham**; *Focal Distance* (1996) by **ZHANG Peili** (张培力); *Kandors* (1999–2011) by **Mike Kelley**; *Pancreas* (2013) by **Thomas Feuerstein**; *Mindfall* (2004) by **Micol Assaël**, *Weight of Insomnia* (2016–2020) by **LIU Xiaodong** (刘小东); *With a Rhythmic Instinction to be Able to Travel Beyond Existing Forces of Life* (2018) by **Philippe Parreno**; *Easternsports* (2014) by **Alex da Corte** and **Jayson Musson**; and *Leonardo's Submarine* (2019) by **Hito Steyerl**; to name just a few.

Curator ZHANG Ga: "The Triennial's exhibition is the first major undertaking in mainland China that showcases the most current media art production, while situating the state-of-the-art within a comprehensive historical context. It also marks the first presentation of many of the works in a Chinese museum."

Conceived as a three-part presentation – *Reality Interrupted*; *Datumsoria: The Return of the Real*; and *Multiverse: Ecology without Nature* – the exhibition *Topologies of the Real* explores how artistic imagination has challenged and redefined the notion of reality under the technological construct of space-time, as well as how such artistic endeavors have

brought to light the political, economic and cultural conundrums and creative potentialities of the digital world.

ZKM's *Art in Motion: Masterpieces with and through Media* China edition co-curated by **ZHANG Ga** with **Peter Weibel** and **Siegfried Zielinski** in collaboration with **Judith Bihr** and **Daria Mille**, forms the media-historical fundamentals for *Reality Interrupted*. It encapsulates the ramifications of a hundred-year-long history of art with and through media, underscoring the notion that media art is based on technical devices and inseparable from apparatus and machines.

Peter Weibel, CEO of ZKM: "ZKM is very proud and grateful for the privilege to take part in this enormously significant, relevant and informative exhibition. As CAFA, Central Academy of Fine Arts, is one of the most important art academies in the world - and following the classic tradition, an art academy always has its own museum. Now we can exhibit together an exhibition about media art in the 20th century, for the benefit of both the public and the students. It is a singular, exceptional opportunity. Because with this exhibition, we are redefining what media art is."

Using motion as an essential characterization of machines, this group of work sketches out an art history that evolved from the introduction of photographic apparatus. It is further augmented by the moving images in cinematographic aggregation and the cybernetic feedback systems which foreshadowed today's ubiquitous interactivities of all kinds.

The emergence of the information society in the mid-twentieth century was signalled by satellite communication technologies and the early implementation of distributed network nodes (albeit a Cold War by-product). These further accelerated the speed of movement, compressing space and time into a pure technical construction in which distance disappears and time becomes timeless, culminating in the millennial chaos of digital capitalism exacerbated by the catastrophic image of the fall of the Twin Towers as vividly captured in *Untitled* (2001) by **Wolfgang Staehle**, interrupting and suspending our received concept of reality.

The second part of the exhibition, *Datumsoria: The Return of the Real*, attests to the formidable presence of a planetary membrane: the network that has forever changed the rules of the game in work and play, in politics and economics. As a neologism conjugated from datum and sensorium, datumsoria denotes a new perceptual space immanent to the information age. It speaks the logic of the new real, a reality predicated on the virtual force of the binary impulse, of the generativity of ones and zeros from whose plane of immanence comes forth a hardening of shapes and forms.

Precipitating sentient residues and invoking emotive potentials, in the flux of electronic impulses there emerges a consciousness of technical autopoiesis that is capable of subjectivity of another order and inquisitive about the new ethics of another dimension. This exhibition component also signals that the politics of the real no longer only lie in the sphere of actual bodies and social sites recognized in the form of the traumatic and abject subject as the predominant subject of contemporary experience and object of artistic inquiry, but also alludes to who has ownership of this new reality that is constructed by the materiality of bits and bytes and the algorithmic power of the digital.

The exhibition's third chapter borrows its subtitle from the eponymous book by Timothy Morton, albeit skewing away from the author's cultural critique of nature, to solicit a speculative yet probable reality of multiple universes of entirely different dimensions and

materialities as string theory advocates. In this multitude of ecologies and umwelt, much like how quantum reality topples the familiar and perceivable, the nature of Nature, as particles gush through the fabled double slit test to land in juxtaposing distances infinitely far and near simultaneously, in which erratically fluctuating time and space once again sabotage human intellect, an oxymoron becomes a new trope. In these parallel time spaces, in between the cosmological horizons, humanity's laughs and cries, machine mumbles and chirps, cultural myths and anomalies, self-styled AI diligence and bio-eccentrics are all making their own worlds of the real, their habitats of survival and triumph.

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EDITORIAL NOTES

About CAFA Art Museum

The history of the CAFA Art Museum can be traced back to the early 1950s. Originally called the Central Academy of Fine Arts Gallery, the Gallery was the first professional art museum built after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. In 1998, the Gallery changed its name to the CAFA Art Museum. Spreading over 14,777 square meters across four floors, the new museum was completed in October 2008 and designed by Pritzker Prize winning Japanese architect Arata Isozaki. At the end of 2010, the CAFA Art Museum was selected to be one of the first to be listed as the Key National Museums. The CAFA Art Museum is a professional and international modern and contemporary art museum that conducts academic research, presents exhibitions, restores artworks and provides art education. The museum upholds the philosophy of open-mindedness and is rooted in the concept of using knowledge to serve society. It aims to bridge the past and the future through presenting great artistic and cultural accomplishments of humanity, and to share the culture of our times with all quarters of society. The Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) is one of the most prestigious and renowned art academies in China and the only one to be administered directly by the Ministry of Education.

www.cafamuseum.org/en/

About curator ZHANG Ga

ZHANG Ga is CAFAM Consulting Curator, Distinguished Professor and Director of the Center for Art and Technology at China Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA). Previously, he was a Professor at the Academy of Arts and Design, Tsinghua University, and Associate Professor of Media Art at Parsons School of Design, and has held visiting positions at UCSB, Stanford, MIT, EPFL, among others. He has curated numerous exhibitions including Beijing International New Media Art Exhibition and Symposium (2004-2006) and three editions of the Media Art Triennial (National Art Museum of China, 2008-2014). These large-scale exhibitions critically investigated and examined global media art trends, and generated intellectual discourses about art, technology and culture, and have received extensive media coverage in *The New York Times*, *China Daily*, *Artforum*, *ArtAsiaPacific*, *The Art Newspaper*, and *Hyperallergic*. His recent curatorial projects include *The 6th Guangzhou Triennial* (co-curator, Guangdong Art Museum, 2018), *Machines Are Not Alone* (Zagreb Contemporary Art Museum, 2018), *unREAL: The Algorithmic Present* (co-curator, HeK Basel, 2017) and *Datumsoria: The Return of the Real* (ZKM, 2017-2018). ZHANG Ga has spoken widely around the world on media art and culture and his writings and edited books have been published by MIT Press, October, Flash Art International, and Liverpool University Press, among others. Since 2015, he directs Chronus Art Center in Shanghai and currently is also co-curator of ZKM | Hong Media Art collection.

ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe

By extending the original duties of a museum, the ZKM | Center for Art and Media has become a cultural institution unique throughout the world. It is a house for all media and genre, a house for both spatial arts, such as painting, photography, and sculpture as well as time-based arts, such as film, video, media art, music, dance, theater, and performance. ZKM was founded as a museum in 1989 with the mission to perpetuate classical arts in the digital age, which is why it is occasionally referred to as "Electronic or Digital Art Bauhaus".

www.zkm.de/en

Catalogue

Publisher

CAFA Art Museum / China Youth Press

Design

CAFA Art Museum

Page count: 340 p

Language: English / Chinese Bilingual

Distribution: International

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