

Multimedia Space Chronus Art Center Opens at M50



Work by Raqs Media Collective at Chronus Art Center

Courtesy Sam Gaskin

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Published: August 23, 2013



Chronus Art Center

SHANGHAI — After years of planning, multimedia art space **Chronus Art Center** (CAC) opened at Shanghai's M50 art district on August 23.

Funded by Shanghai-based electronics company **WTi**, and housed in a 836 square meter warehouse between ShanghART and ShanghART H-Space, CAC is shaping up as a serious and ambitious new institution.

Shi Hantao is the deputy director of CAC, having previously worked as the head of public programs at Rockbund Art Museum until 2010. He says the CAC space was the only building available for rent in M50, having previously served as storage for ShanghART and as a site for temporary galleries.

"The space was a total mess" when CAC acquired it, Shi says. Refurbishment required removing ceilings and leveling out floors to create a simple, versatile space. "We're specializing in multimedia art, which usually requires quite specific installation design," he says.

Appropriately enough the backers, WTi, manufacture high-end audio video solutions. "If you look at the sponsor lists for exhibitions by MoCA Shanghai, the Minsheng Art Museum, Ram, sometimes you will find their logo. They've been supporting art exhibition in Shanghai for some years," Shi says.

CAC plans to have three to four exhibitions per year, supported by public education programs. On September 15, CAC will host a talk by sound recording artist **Terence Loren**, who has recorded numerous Shanghainese talking about the neighborhoods they grew up in, and capturing the ambient sounds at each location. CAC also plans to host an exhibition by multimedia artist Jeffrey Shaw late this year or early next year.

Delhi's **Raqs Media Collective** were selected for the opening show at CAC, which is called "Extra Time." This exhibition, which is curated by **Johnson Chang** and **Li Zhenhua**, was chosen by fate, Shi says.

"Chronus is about time. We chose this name because we think media art is time-based. And Raqs are very concerned about time too. ... They were just finishing their projects at the same time we were about to open."

Raqs have been traveling to China for the past three or four years, returning in 2012 for a residency provided by the West Heavens project, which aims to bolster cultural exchanges between India and China.

Shuddhabrata Sengupta is one of the collective's three members (the others being **Jeebesh Bagchi** and **Monica Narula**). He says, "We think about time as something that we experience on a basic affective physiological level and something you can think about and reflect on at an analytic level. Time is both the subject and the medium of our expression."

The works include "Re-run", a video re-enactment — slowed down to a Bill Viola-esque creep — of photojournalist Henri Cartier Bresson's "Photograph of a bank run" in Shanghai in 1948, just as the KMT were exiting and the PLA were arriving. It's the slowest "run" you can imagine, emphasizing the enduring collective imagining of monetary value. Financial crises are not past us yet.

In "Vigil" Raqs asked a local sports network to aim cameras at two soccer goalies for the duration of a match between Shanghai Shenhua and Hangzhou Green Town — a total of 97 minutes including extra time. "The goal keeper at one end is ecstatic when the goal keeper at the other end is devastated. They're the best indices of the emotional feel of the match. If you want to measure time in terms of emotion, they're the best ones to watch," Sengupta says.

"Extra Time" continues at Chronus Art Center through November 17. Bldg 18, 50 Moganshan Lu, Shanghai.

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