

# For an Art Fair, Success Is All in the Timing

From First Arts Page

names like ShanghART Gallery and Vitamin Creative Space.

But there will also be 29 first-time exhibitors, including Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art, from New York; Thomas Dane Gallery, from London; Skarstedt, from New York and London; and, from the Asia-Pacific region, Darren Knight Gallery, from Sydney, and Liang Gallery, from Taipei.

"We've been wanting to do the fair for some time," Mr. Nahem said. "But as somebody who prides himself on sourcing great material, and it certainly doesn't grow on trees, it wouldn't have been easy to do the two fairs close to each other," he said, referring to Art Basel in Switzerland.

Another first-time exhibitor is the Andrea Rosen Gallery, of New York, which will be taking a billboard by the Cuban-born American artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres, among other works. Called "Untitled" (1995), the billboard will be exhibited in tram shelters and transportation hubs across the city in partnership with the Hong Kong nonprofit organization K11 Art Foundation.

"I think a lot of people have a curiosity about Hong Kong right now," Ms. Rosen said.

Hong Kong has only recently emerged as a top destination for international art world figures. When the local art fair, ART HK, began in 2008, the city was known mostly as a global financial capital. That changed as the market for contemporary art began to flourish, a shift accelerated in 2011 with the purchase of ART HK by MCH Swiss Exhibition (Basel) Ltd., Art Basel's parent company. (The founders of ART HK will initiate a more Asia-focused, satellite fair called Art Central on Saturday.)

"I think now that we've established Hong Kong as the major site for the fair in Asia, the bigger task is to focus on the markets that feed the fair," Mr. Spiegler said.

To that end, the team of organizers led by Mr. Spiegler and Ade-



Above, a painting by Xu Longsen and a sculpture by Wang Keping, both of China, at Art Basel Hong Kong. At right, "Same Old, Brand New," by the Chinese multimedia artist Cao Fei.

line Ooi, the new Asia director for Art Basel, has been focusing on recruiting collectors and museum directors, with an emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region. Expected to attend this year are the heads of major arts institutions, like the Tate Britain in London; the Museum of Modern Art in

New York; the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo; the Art Gallery of New South Wales, in Sydney, Australia; the Museum of Contemporary Art in Taipei; and M+, Hong Kong's visual culture museum, which is scheduled to open in 2018. Last year, the event, which is being held again at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center, logged about 65,000 visitors.

"There is a curiosity about all these galleries and artists they've never heard of," Mr. Spiegler said. "For the Asian collectors, that's especially true, because the different art scenes in Asia are historically so disconnected from one another."

David Heng, a collector in Singapore, has attended the event every year since it began as ART HK in 2008. "The fair is getting quite interesting," he said. The

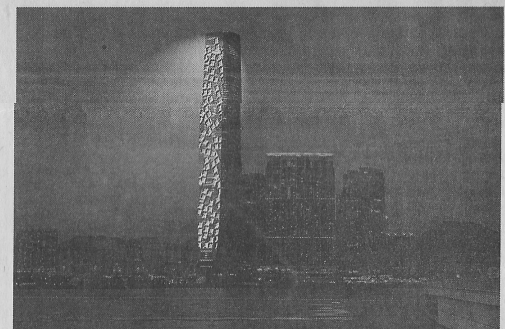
scale is growing, he added, and "we're starting to see a lot of big names in terms of the works the galleries are bringing."

The juxtaposition of Western and Asian artists at the fair makes for a fresh cultural dialogue for collectors who are accustomed to viewing one or two artists at a time here in galleries or at auctions, said Pearl Lam, a Hong Kong dealer.

"It's a very different way of looking at art," said Ms. Lam, who opened a second Hong Kong gallery in the Sheung Wan neighborhood in time for the festivities. "But now, with contemporary art being so fashionable, the gallery culture in Hong Kong is coming together, and everybody is getting into the habit of going to art fairs."

Among the many participants being highlighted at the show is Cao Fei, a rising Chinese artist known for her exploration of Chinese identity through multimedia and video projects.

For this year's fair, she will present "Same Old, Brand New," a large-scale video installation commissioned by Art Basel that



COURTESY OF CAO FEI

will be shown across the facade of the 118-story International Commerce Center, the tallest building in Hong Kong.

The work, which draws on symbols and logos from video games to refer to popular and youth culture in ultra-wired Hong Kong, in particular, will be shown each night from Friday to Tuesday, with a smartphone app that allows viewers to hear music while watching.

While not explicitly political, Ms. Cao's piece inevitably calls to mind the recent democracy pro-

tests that convulsed the city for months as protesters, many of them young residents of Hong Kong, took to the streets to demand open elections for the territory's chief executive.

"Everybody is curious how the recent political unrest is going to have an impact on the arts community," said Doryun Chong, chief curator of M+.

He added: "My view is actually that this shifting ground that we're standing on in fact actually makes things much more interesting."

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