

Scottish Artists Score in China

Scottish artists are carving an exciting new reputation in China, while contemporary Chinese art and artists will be brought to Scotland as never before, all thanks to a ground-breaking new cultural exchange.

In September this year a collection of Scottish artworks caused a sensation at the second Qi Baishi International Arts Festival in Xiangtan (Hunan Province, China and, as the birthplace of China's most important artist of the 20th Century, a key site in the history of modern Chinese art).

The festival, which hosted 25,000 guests at its opening ceremony, was attended by 9 Scottish artists and art managers who over ten days in China met with art organisers, artists and educators, including in Beijing a meeting with Mr Ma Shulin, Deputy Director of the National Art Museum of China.

With the help of Perth and Kinross Council, 22 large artworks were exhibited along with around 100 smaller ones. The Scottish collection, which included works from Scottish National Gallery, pieces by Claire Harkess, Lys Hansen, Shona Karol Leith, Frances Law, Ryan Hannigan, Kyra Clegge and Gavin Lockhar, drew rave reviews from exhibition organisers and the attending public.

Meanwhile under the terms of the reciprocal exchange, in 2008 Scotland will host a Chinese delegation, exhibiting their work and further strengthening the newly established relationship. This will include artist residencies in the Burrell Collection, Glasgow Print Studio and exhibitions at the Perth Museum and Galleries.

Consul General in Edinburgh Tan Xiutian has been keen to support the venture, even helping to organise a reception by the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles in Beijing as part of the recent visit.

"This is the first time that Scottish artists have organized a formal visit to China," Consul Tan said. "I think it's very helpful to our bilateral cultural communication and will raise the profile of Scottish Art in China. It will be a milestone to our cultural links.

"Next year, across the UK, Chinese culture will be celebrated in 'China Now 2008' and I believe more Scottish people will become interested in Chinese classical and contemporary art and in our diverse culture. I am sure the Chinese will show the same interest in Scottish culture and art."

Ricefield Arts Centre - Scotland's Hub for East Asian Arts and Culture

The trip to China was co-ordinated by Lin Chau, chair of Ricefield Arts and Cultural Centre, and supported by the Scottish Government. Lin's involvement included planning and preparation of the trip for the Scottish delegates, and providing interpreting and general Chinese cultural advice for the group while abroad.

Ricefield is the hub for Chinese arts and culture in Scotland. It is the Glasgow meeting point for artists, musicians and designers who are of East Asian descent, or other artists exploring the artistic dialogue between East Asia and Britain's diverse cultures.

The organization has helped to open doors and facilitate the working partnership of the University of Dundee and Xiangtan University. Under the China Now programme, meanwhile, it will deliver educational exhibition/workshops to Scottish schools, funded by HSBC.

Ricefield has also collaborated with several Glasgow museums and galleries in a series of programmes that have been planned for next year: Chinese New Year celebrations (Kelvingrove); 8.8.8 celebration of the opening of Beijing Olympics (Kelvingrove); Xiang Silou artist residency at the Burrell Collection; and Chen Qi's woodcut exhibition and artist residency at the Glasgow Print Studio.

Further information on Chinese activities in Scotland via <http://www.chinanow-inscotland.org.uk/> or <http://www.ricefield.org.uk/>.



National Art Museum of China visit



Whunan University arts exchange



Xiangtan University seminar



Xiangtan City Museum Opening



Baishi Festival Opening



Scottish Arts Exhibition Hall

This press release has been written by Fraser Newham, a widely published writer on Chinese topics and the proprietor of Inbox Education. www.frasernewhamfreelancing.com ; www.inboxeducation.com