

ArtReview



INTERNATIONAL ART & STYLE

NOVEMBER 2004 VOLUME LIV £4.25

POWER 100

Who really
matters in
the art world?

Larry Gagosian
photographed by Todd Eberle

China: the new power

Cai Guo-Qiang as artist and curator
Mega-cities and Western architects
Uli Sigg's Chinese art collection

PLUS

Exclusive new work by Keith Tyson
The dark side of Swedish design

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Powers old and new

Now in its third year, our Power 100 list is fast becoming a key event in the international art world. It is the only list of its kind, presenting a comprehensive insight into who really controls the production and sale of art on a global scale. Any such list is bound to be controversial and spark debate. Edward Lucie-Smith, one of our own advisors on this year's list, fought hard for a greater representation of non-Western powers. Whilst we ended up not including as many Brazilians, Russians and Chinese as he would have liked, the increasing significance of China in the art world is indisputable. For this reason we decided to accompany this year's Power 100 with a special focus on China, without question one of the world's most exciting new powers.

One of the best-known Chinese artists in the West is firework supremo Cai Guo-Qiang, who we profile in this issue. For his latest project as curator rather than artist, he has created a new museum on Kinmen Island in Taiwan. With the help of 18 artists, Cai – making both a political and artistic gesture – has transformed a number of abandoned military bunkers into what he describes as 'an arsenal for peace'. Marc Spiegler gains access to the private collection of the former Swiss ambassador to China, Uli Sigg, before it goes on display at the Kunstmuseum Bern next June. Brian Dillon examines the explosion of photographic creativity in China, while Jay Merrick assesses the country's architectural boom: in Beijing 2,000 new buildings are in progress and in Shanghai 4,000 tall buildings have been built since 1990, many of them designed by Western architects such as Rem Koolhaas and Zaha Hadid (turn to page 61 to see where they, and Uli Sigg, rank in this year's Power 100).

As Barbara Pollack discovered on her visit to Shanghai to write about Western gallerists in China, sitting with Lorenz Helbling in his gallery Shanghai was much like sitting in any gallery in any major European art capital. Kenny Schachter, who has made the transition from New York to London (where he opens not one but two temporary galleries this month, pending the construction of a brand new building by Zaha Hadid), seems to have come up against many more cultural differences, as he explains in the hilarious second instalment of his diary. On a more sombre note, Louise Gray argues the need for a new photojournalism in her discussion of philosopher Judith Butler's latest book written in response to the Iraq War and the appalling photographs that emerged from the Abu Ghraib prison. We also bring you an exclusive artist's project by Keith Tyson, who met poet Paul Farley in his 'studio-as-laboratory' to talk about the work he's been making since he won the Turner Prize in 2002, and a brilliant essay by April Elizabeth Lamm on the way Elaine Sturtevant's 'works of repetition' challenge the way we see and remember art.

As ever, we try to be as international as we can: Charles Darwent previews the biggest photography fair in the world, Paris Photo, Victoria Lynn reports from Melbourne on the latest project by San Francisco-based artist Barry McGee, Helen Kirwan-Taylor uncovers the dark side of Swedish design, and Godfrey Barker predicts a frenzy of spending at this month's contemporary sales in New York, where, no doubt, you will be able to spot some of the art world's most powerful people.

Rebecca Wilson

Cai Guo-Qiang, *Sakurajima*
Volcano Time/Space
Reversion Project,
1991, gunpowder on
paper, 300 x 400cm



Future powers

By Edward Lucie-Smith

Magazines habitually amuse themselves and their readers by making lists of this, that and the other. *ArtReview's* new Power 100 list can perhaps be taken more seriously than most, since it is the product of hard-fought discussions with no fewer than eight different consultants, myself among them.

What does it have to tell us about the present state of the art world? The list is white, largely male and focused on what is happening in the United States. It is very conscious of the importance of large sums of disposable cash. Women feature largely as nurturers and facilitators: patrons, dealers and curators. There is only one woman artist and she appears very low down on the list.

If one were to make such a list in five or 10 years' time, would it be very different? I think it would. The writing is already on the wall.

Any power list of people in the art world has to field the names of lots of museum directors and curators. *ArtReview's* list is certainly not short of these. It contains, for example, not only the director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York but MoMA's drawings curator and the head of its design department. Yet MoMA strikes me as a good example of an institution in crisis – a victim of its own success. The museum contains so many of the masterpieces of the 20th-century Modern movement that it finds its ability to manoeuvre in response to new tendencies much restricted. The definition of art that it seems to stand for is being challenged on every side.

There are two sorts of collectors: those who follow fashion and those who attempt to make it. The list contains a lot of the former but rather few of the latter. **Dakis Joannou (6)**, often cited as an innovator, celebrated the Olympics in Greece with a big show drawn from his collection and entitled 'Monument to Now'. This was exactly what the title suggests – a display of everything that is most fashionable at the present moment, with no attempt to make guesses about the future. Show the same material in five years' time and the title would have to be 'Monument to Then'.

Charles Saatchi (17) is an example of a collector who is genuinely trying to move forward, but so far without much success. He has not managed to dream up a new art movement to match the success of the first generation of YBAs, whose fortunes he largely made. Now he has begun to rely on the intuitions of those who are officially his enemies. One of his most recent 'discoveries', **Stella Vine**, author of a controversial image of Princess Diana, was taken over from the Stuckist movement, a guerrilla group theoretically hostile to everything Saatchi stands for. In fact, Vine was once briefly married to Stuckism's head honcho, **Charles Thompson**. Stuckism is currently the subject of an exhibition at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, and its website is one of the largest, most international and most active art sites on the internet. Can we look forward to some surprising new alliances?

One of the most striking omissions from the list is the name of the veteran Italian collector **Count Panza di Biumo**, who is back with a bang. Panza has a history of buying shrewdly and selling shrewdly. His American Pop art purchases, made very early, went to MOGA in Los Angeles. His minimal art went to the Guggenheim. By the mid-1980s he seemed to be more or less out of the market. He still has work installed in the vast family

villa in Varese and he has now taken over space in four other locations: the Palazzo Ducale in Gubbio, the Palazzo Ducale in Sassuolo near Modena, the Palazzo della Gran Duca in Verona and the new museum in Rovereto, designed by **Mario Botta**. The artists (nearly all of them are American) are as yet little-known practitioners of minimal sculpture or monochrome painting. Panza is the only collector in Europe who supports art of this type on this scale. With his track record there's a chance he may be right. Or maybe he's just swimming against the tide.

In fact, I think the real issue raised by this list is that of America itself. If American institutions and collectors still dominate, this is no longer the case with contemporary American art. There is

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only one 'new' American artist in the Power 100: **John Currin (37)**, many places below **Maurizio Cattelan (4)** and **Gerhard Richter (12)**. One symptom of the situation is that the Americans apparently can't find anyone to take charge of – and finance – the American pavilion for the next Venice Biennale.

Any future list will have to take into account all the personalities and situations that are omitted here: the Italians, the Spanish, the Russians, the Brazilians – and the Chinese. Despite the rising tide of interest in Chinese art, this year's Power 100 contains only two Chinese names – **Cai Guo-Qiang (87)** and **Xu Jiang (95)** – although this issue of *ArtReview* does also offer a number of features on the Chinese art scene.

Fascination with the new Chinese art is sure to be fuelled by this year's Shanghai Biennale, the fifth in the series, which opened on 28 September. A slick, highly professional presentation subtitled 'Techniques of the Visible', this was focused on photography – (an area in which the Chinese are formidably good) and on video. It demonstrated how expert the Chinese have become in taking their message to the world. There are already avid collectors of Chinese art in Europe, such as **Uli Sigg (79)**, who is on the current power list, but also **Myriam and Guy Ullens**, who aren't. Their encyclopaedic collection of contemporary Chinese art was shown at the Espace Cardin in Paris in October 2002, and they are likely to be major players in years to come as pioneers of a new and important category of contemporary collecting.

In fact, this is the last time that a list that is not fully global will seem in the least convincing.

The peace process

Cai Guo-Qiang has detonated explosives in museums, let off fireworks on canvas, created a mushroom cloud over Hiroshima and curated an exhibition in Taiwan's military bunkers. But the political context of his artworks gives them the power to explode much more than gunpowder. By Bridget Goodbody

Chinese-born Cai Guo-Qiang is an artist of reversals and inversions. For his most recent project, the new Bunker Museum of Contemporary Art (BMoCA), which opened in Taiwan on 11 September, he relinquished his usual role of exhibiting artist to step behind the scenes as curator and organiser. Still, the result reveals as much about his artistic practice as it does about the man.

That he is best known for spectacles that involve detonating explosives in military bases, power plants and museum interiors is perhaps unsurprising: Cai grew up in a war zone, China's Fujian Province. His hometown, Quanzhou, was the epicentre of the Communist army's battle to regain Kinmen Island from the Nationalists in neighbouring Taiwan. And it is on Kinmen Island, using abandoned military bunkers, that Cai has established BMoCA. Cai selected 18 artists for the inaugural exhibition, assigning each a bunker to do with as they saw fit. Since travel between Taiwan and mainland China is illegal, Cai will only consider the museum truly successful if and when he can take an easy ferry across the bay home when he curates round two of BMoCA. 'We are trying to turn defence mechanisms into fortifications for peace, and ruins into something miraculous,' says the 47-year-old, whose shaved head gives him the aura of a Buddhist monk. 'We hope BMoCA will be an arsenal for peace.'

BMoCA is the third project in Cai's 'Everything is Museum' series, in which he establishes permanent museums with himself as the ongoing curator. He made the first, the Dragon Museum of Contemporary Art (DMoCA), for the 2000 Echigo-Tsumari Triennial in Niigata, Japan, out of a reconstructed antique dragon kiln he brought over from China. The kiln, designed 500 years ago to facilitate the ceramic trade with Japan, now houses revolving exhibitions. In 2001, Cai produced the second in the series, the Under Museum of Contemporary Art

(UMoCA), beneath a medieval bridge in Colle Val d'Elsa, Italy, for Arte All'Arte. There, he built a bare-bones, electricity-free museum and installed an exhibition by Ni Tsai Chin. All three MoCAs critique the museum's white cube while glorifying the artist's role.

The paradox of creative destruction characterises Cai's art, and it is often rooted in Chinese culture. For one of his first explosive events, *Project to Extend the Great Wall of China by 10,000 Meters* (1993), Cai laid and then detonated a 10-kilometre wall of explosives in the Gobi desert at dusk. For *Cultural Melting Bath* (1997), he put strangers in a hot tub infused with herbal medicine in a Chinese rock garden installed in the Queens Museum of Art in New York. Bringing more drama into a space often criticised for being boring, he 'bombed' the Taiwan Museum of Art by trailing a fine line of gunpowder through its interiors and then exploding it in *No Construction, No Destruction: Bombing the Taiwan Museum of Art* (1998).

Cai developed his dexterity with the cultural about-face during his childhood, which coincided with the Cultural Revolution and Mao's struggle to modernise China. His father, a calligrapher, introduced Cai to the 5,000-year history of Chinese poetry, paintings and literature at a time when the Party forbade it. 'I understood quickly the value of the underground,' he says, explaining that anything un-Communist had to be hidden from view. Rather than painting, he studied the equally old but more action-packed Chinese tradition of martial arts with a teacher willing to update it to serve the Party. For his single role in a kung fu movie, *Spring and Fall in a Small Town* (1978), Cai was cast as a Nationalist bad guy. ▶

Right: Wang Wen-Chih, *Dragon Dares Tiger Lair*, 2004, installation at the Bunker Museum of Contemporary Art, Kinmen, Taiwan





◀ In 1976, Mao's death ended the Cultural Revolution's reign of terror, and the arts began to flourish again. Cai left the provinces to enrol in the Shanghai Institute of Drama in 1981. There, he learned all aspects of stage production – the use of space, lighting, timing, set design and their relationship with the audience – that would later stand him in good stead for his undeniably theatrical practice. He also started making unsuccessful paintings that look like Socialist Realism minus the propaganda. But the avant-garde was taking root in Shanghai at this time and its members introduced Cai to Western masters of spectacle, from Joseph Beuys to Andy Warhol. Though he claimed their art had no relevance to Chinese culture, he learned from them what he had learned from Socialist Realism – that 'art should be from the people and for the people. So,' says Cai, 'I decided I had to know China.' He left the city to tour the countryside, travelling through Mongolia in the north and Tibet in the south, leaving behind him the portraits he painted as gifts for his hosts.

His tour complete, Cai accepted a two-year artist's residency in Tokyo in 1986, which turned into nine years of exile. The harrowing events of Tiananmen Square in 1989 made him realise that he couldn't return to his home country and be an artist, since his work often revisited the devastation wrought by 20th-century political regimes all over the world. Before Tiananmen, he had experimented with gunpowder by setting off firecrackers on the surface of paintings or blank canvases. Because the Chinese word for gunpowder means 'fire-medicine', Cai had begun to explore its potentially therapeutic

aspects. After Tiananmen, Cai decided to use gunpowder on a massive scale in his series 'Projects for Extraterrestrials': pyrotechnic events so grand that they could be seen from outer space.

One of the most breathtakingly beautiful yet subversive of these 'healings' was *The Earth Has Its Black Hole Too: Project for Extraterrestrials No. 16* (1994), for which Cai created a mushroom cloud in reverse. The event took place in Hiroshima, where the US military dropped the A-bomb in 1945. Over the site, 114 helium-filled balloons laden with gunpowder were flown in a cyclone formation 900 metres high. Cai coordinated the 30-second explosion so that the balloons detonated from the top of the cyclone, in the sky; to the bottom, in a deeply dug hole, so that the smoke was sucked back down into the earth. Although the artwork couldn't begin to address the damage caused by the original bomb, Cai hoped that it would signal to intelligent celestial beings that some earthlings were willing to acknowledge the absurdity of nuclear war.

Reworking history continued to concern Cai after he moved to New York in 1996, where he took up a residency at PS1. As he began operating outside Asia, he turned his sights towards toying with outsiders' perceptions of China. At the 1999 Venice Biennale, Cai presented his *Rent Collection Courtyard*, an installation where viewers witnessed the construction as well as disintegration of an artwork. In the original *Rent Collection Courtyard*, built by members of the Sichuan Art Academy in the 1960s, over 100 sculptures depicted the horrors of peasant life before Communism. Jiang Qing,



‘We are trying to turn defence mechanisms into fortifications for peace, and ruins into something miraculous’

Mao’s wife and the deputy director of the Cultural Revolution, ordered copies to tour throughout China and the Eastern Bloc to promote Communism’s advances. Cai hired several members of the Sichuan Art Academy who had worked on the original to remake it before the eyes of Venice viewers, leaving the clay unfired so that the sculptures fell apart as the Biennale progressed. The installation addressed Communism’s erosion of Chinese culture and tapped into the West’s ongoing concern with China’s poor human rights record. But at the same time, and perhaps more importantly, it humanised Communism’s ideals for viewers as they watched the older sculptors lovingly recreate the greatest achievement of their youth.

Like *Rent Collection Courtyard*, BMOCA is intended to promote a more nuanced understanding of China’s war-torn 20th century. Though it claims to present 18 artists from both sides of the Taiwan Strait, none is from Fujian Province. Instead, BMOCA showcases artists whose concerns come from their individual experiences of the Chinese diaspora. Cai chose one artist from Kinmen, four who live and work in Taiwan and four who call the mainland home. The other

nine artists live and work overseas. Very few of the installations tackle the violent history of Kinmen and the increasingly vituperative debate between Taiwan and China regarding Taiwanese sovereignty. Together with the elementary school children of Kinmen, who fill an additional 19 bunkers with art, this diverse group of artists – many of whom are usually practising architects, critics, musicians or filmmakers – have created an exhibition that replaces the absurdity of day-to-day politics with inspirational art.

Meanwhile, in Miramar, San Diego, Cai is already organising his next project. At the time of going to press, the artist was preparing to commandeer Lima-Lima, a six-man civilian team of acrobatic pilots, to fly their Second World War-designed propeller planes in formation, releasing jet streams to create Chinese landscape paintings in the sky. As the vapour released by these war machines melts into art, Cai Guo-Qiang will be reiterating the message that resounds so clearly at BMOCA.

‘18 Solo Exhibitions’, to 10 Jan. Bunker Museum of Contemporary Art, Kinmen, Taiwan (www.bmoca.kinmen.gov.tw). ‘Cai Guo-Qiang Traveler’, to 24 April, Arthur M Sackler Gallery & Hirschhorn Bunker Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C. (+1 202 633 1000, www.asia.si.edu)

Opposite page: Shen Yuan, *Speaker Tea*, 2004 **Above:** Lee Mingwei, *Shufo Legend*, 2004. Both installations at Bunker Museum of Contemporary Art, Kinmen, Taiwan