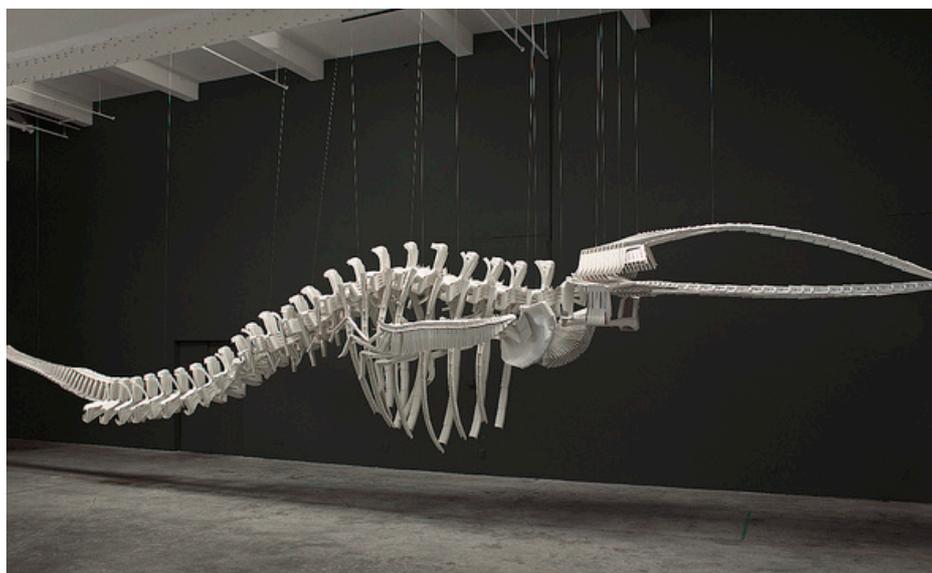


INTER-CITY PAVILIONS: FIRST SNAILS, NOW WORMS...?

IN...ART FEATURES

The slideshow is best viewed in popout, second button from the right.



1 / 12 Vancouver, Brian Jungen, Cetology, 2002

One of the unique aspects of the Shanghai Biennale is that curators have taken a step towards connecting city to city rather than country to country, and it has resulted in some fantastic art which can be seen in [pavilions](#) dedicated to various cities near the Bund.

On the Bund itself, you will find six major locations for the Inter-City Pavilions with the remainder of the pavilions stationed at the new [Power Station of Art](#). You can start with the Central Building on East Nanjing Road, representing three floors of cities including Berlin, Tehran, Pittsburgh, Ulan Bator, San Francisco, Daejeon, Antwerp, Detroit, Lima, Mexico City, Vancouver, Dusseldorf, Dakar, Sao Paulo, and Bogota.

In the Pittsburgh Pavilion you can find an 'estate sale' giving a view of the basement and attic of an average American family. The money raised will purchase the estate of a family in China and they will have a similar sale in the US. I would love to see what the estate from Shanghai will look like. Although there have been galleries that have done something like this before, I have to say I was quite touched by a look at American items such as a glass blender that looked just like the one that Mom used to make the family eggnog every Christmas. Indeed, I have seen several of the items on view in my own mother's cupboard.

Vancouver has an amazing dinosaur-like sculpture made from plastic chairs, and the way it is put together with plastic ties and rivets is impressive. Dusseldorf presents us with a city infested with worms. *Beyond the Heaven*, a work by Yang Qi, is a series of worms made from rice paper that seem as if they are lanterns crawling up the walls. Detroit has a tribute to vaudeville with live performers and film acts to show a rich history of street performers. Berlin has windows from the architecture of Richard Paulick, that, recycled, form a tea house.

Heading down the street you find the Macmillan building with the Sydney and Brooklyn pavilions. Turning back towards the Union Church you see the RAM Studio with Diankou, Yuanmingyuan Apartment with Sendai and Los Angeles, the Lyceum Building with Lille Metropole, and finally, arriving at the Union Church, the Auckland Pavilion.

The Union Church is a favorite with Vincent Ward's film work

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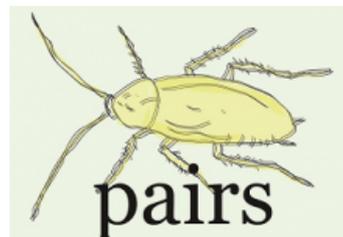
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The film starts with a woman, her image projected on the walls of this historic cathedral. The film is eerie, showing a woman floating in what seems to be a plastic bag, and has a wonderful jellyfish quality from the lighting he has used. It is beautiful, something that you want to just gaze at, sitting on the floor, as the water slowly moves and images of a siren-like woman appear and disappear with an ephemeral poetry, vaguely reminiscent of Pre-Raphaelite paintings. It makes for an interesting and eclectic collection of images and experiences, with movement and sound an added bonus.

Steeped as it is in art and culture, the Inter-City Pavilion draws an eclectic mix of personalities on a quest for artistic exchange, some traveling from far and wide to make connections to Shanghai's art world. One such group I met calls themselves the Transnational Research Caravan, a group of researchers, curators, artists, and thinkers from Europe traveling in a caravan around China to cultivate international exchange.

Coordinated by Luigi Galimberti Faussonne, Lorenzo Marsili, and You Mi along with other hardworking members of the contemporary intelligentsia of Europe, this group is part of a wider project run by the not-for-profit organization [European Alternatives](#) and supported by the European Commission "Youth in Action" Programme.

Luigi explained that for the Transnational Research Caravan, the role of art in contemporary society and in education is a query as well as the observation and cultivation of exchanges to support cultural innovation. By engaging in a discourse between artists, thinkers and critics, they hope to foster a spread of democracy and support of broader ideas beyond their European borders. They travel with their own videographers as well as a philosopher and several journalists, their members voyaging from London, Paris, Milan, and Rome.

One couldn't help but feel envious of their unique travel agenda as they talked of meeting up with various organizers and artists who run both alternative and established art spaces in China. They will publish a journal and an online Chinese think tank, having already started an exchange with five artists from China who traveled to Italy last spring.

The journal will be free and available in London, Paris, Rome, Beijing, Chengdu, Chongqing, and Shanghai. The [web page](#) explains in detail their goals of expanding the support of democracy, as well as exchanges and partnerships beyond their initial European borders.

The Transnational Research Caravan's aim is collaboration amongst art researchers and practitioners across Europe and China in order to increase the size and depth of the intercultural dialogue between Europe and China. This group embodies the sort of artistic and intellectual curiosity that you'll find at this year's Inter-City Pavilions and Biennale.

With its emphasis on connections and "energy exchanges" between people and cultures, the Pavilions' Project brings an inter-cultural spirit to Shanghai that represents the city's own international bent. It will certainly be an experience worth seeing - catch the [Biennale](#) until December 31st of this year. Click [here](#) to see more reviews from Shanghai247 on the Power Station of Art, and [here](#) to see more on the Biennale.

"The Inter-City Pavilion draws an eclectic mix of personalities on a quest for artistic exchange"

"The role of art in contemporary society and in education is a query"

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THE 48 HOUR FILM PROJECT

WORDS: Anne Murray
PICTURES: Anne Murray



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