

EVENTS/CAUSES

Fondation Louis Vuitton examines economy, society in Chinese art exhibition

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New by Xu Zhen, on view at Fondation Louis Vuitton

By STAFF REPORTS

LVMH's Fondation Louis Vuitton is celebrating the contemporary art scene of China in its latest exhibition.

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Opened as of Jan. 27, the "Bentu, Chinese artists at a time of turbulence and transformation" exhibition is the first showing entirely devoted to contemporary Chinese art in France in the past decade. With Lunar New Year just days away and many luxury houses concerned about the Chinese bubble popping, Fondation Louis Vuitton's art exhibition is timely across many layers.

Global vs. local

The word Bentu translates to English to mean "native soul." According to LVMH, this concept "informs the work by the guest artists, representing an attempt to reconcile the global' with a local,' personal identity."

For art, Bentu relates to the uniqueness of each artist and their desire for individuality "amidst a mass of uniformity."

Fondation Louis Vuitton's exhibition features a dozen Chinese artists spanning different generations including Liu Wei, Xu Qu and Hao Liang. Through sculptures, paintings, videos and other mediums, the artists involved shared their personal take on the current state of the economy and society.

To capture these sentiments the artists used a vast number of techniques and media such as local craftsmanship and cutting-edge technologies.



Currency Wars Xu Qu

Bentu, organized with the Ullens Center for Contemporary art of Beijing, will be on view until May 2.

Additionally, Bentu is also joined by a number of new works on view from the Fondation Louis Vuitton Collection. These pieces also highlight Chinese art and contemporary artists such as Ai Weiwei, Xu Zhen and Cao Fei.

Pieces on view show how each artist has been inspired by Chinese mythology and how their reinterpretation reflects contemporary social realities of their country. The Fondation Louis Vuitton Collection of art will be on view through Sept. 5.

Since its opening, Fondation Louis Vuitton has staged a number of art exhibitions, many of which were rooted in charitable initiatives.

In November 2015, Fondation Louis Vuitton maintained a level of mystery with an anonymous art auction benefitting French charity Secours Populaire.

Intending to level the playing field and let the work speak for itself, the foundation did not reveal the names of the 200 contemporary artists who created works for the fundraiser until after the auction took place. This tactic likely generated interest in those dedicated to the cause rather than attracting strategic collectors ([see story](#)).

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