

Cai Guo-Qiang: Head On
Deutsche Bank Collection
August 26 to October 15, 2006

From August 26 to October 15, 2006 the Deutsche Guggenheim is presenting, with *Cai Guo-Qiang: Head On, Deutsche Bank Collection*, the first German museum soloexhibition of the internationally renowned artist. A three-part work complex has been specially developed for this show and mirrors the major aspects of Cai's oeuvre in its diversity, while at the same time establishing a thematic relationship to the past history and present reality of Berlin.

In October 2005, during his first stay in the German capital, Cai Guo-Qiang visited Checkpoint Charlie, the Soviet Memorial and the "Topography of Terror" memorial, among other places. Further points on the program were an inspection of the remains of the Berlin Wall and tours of various museums. Inspired by the omnipresence of recent German history in the city, he created the first sketches for the exhibition. Out of these ideas was developed a concept that not only presents the diverse media with which Cai works, but also addresses the city of Berlin in terms of content and the exhibition space in terms of form. The show is divided into the installation *Head On*, which provides the title and consists of a pack of ninety-nine wolves rushing through the exhibition hall, the large-format gunpowder drawing *Vortex* and the video work *Illusion II*.

The production of the wolves already began in January 2006 in Quanzhou. The local Chinese workshop in that city specializes in preparing extremely realistic-looking, life-sized animals. First, small clay models were created as movement studies, out of which Cai subsequently developed the artist editions which are appearing along with the exhibition. However, the installation's realistic and lifelike wolves which are based upon these models and drawings in fact possess no literal

remnants of wolves: they are fabricated from painted sheepskins and are stuffed with hay and metal wires, with plastic lending contour to their faces.

The video *Illusion II* was produced, not in China, but right in the middle of Berlin - upon the vacant lot at the corner of Stresemannstraße and Möckernstraße. The site, surrounded by office buildings and typical Berlin residential buildings, is actually a fairly run-of-the-mill, empty urban space except for the fact that, rising up in the background as a historical symbol, is the ruined remnant of the façade of the former Anhalter Bahnhof train station. Cai Guo-Qiang was fascinated by this detail, which he considered to correspond perfectly to the content of *Illusion II*, which he says is a reflection "on the contradictory forces of violence and beauty," on "destruction, glory, and heroism" in the history of Berlin. In accordance with the artist's specifications, a team from the film studio in Babelsberg built a small, typically German-looking house on these 30,000 square meters of land. Then on July 11, the production of the video took place. The house was filled with fireworks and rockets of various types and with different effects. At precisely 9:30 p.m., Cai Guo-Qiang gave the starting signal, and, against the backdrop of the sun setting on the horizon of Berlin's evening sky, a magnificent spectacle lasting twenty minutes was captured by more than fifteen cameras for the catalogue and video.

As the third work of the exhibition, the gunpowderdrawing *Vortex* was created during the middle of August in the atrium of the Deutsche Bank. Hemp paper spread out upon the floor constitutes the image-carrier. The motifs arise out of the traces left by smoke and fire at the moment of explosion after individual stencils are laid down beneath cardboard and rocks, and various types of gunpowder are applied. Upon lighting a fuse, the artist ignited all the powder in only a few seconds, and the picture first disappeared beneath a

thick cloud of smoke. When the rocks and stencils were subsequently removed, the new work became visible for the first time, emerging out of the interplay between deliberate planning and chance happening: *Vortex* depicts hundreds of wolves whose bodies form a giant vortex into which they are inexorably drawn.

Cai Guo-Qiang was born in 1957 in the city of Quanzhou, in the province of Fujian. The works of the artist, who lives in New York, have been displayed in recent years at numerous international museums, including the MASS MoCA, the Tate Modern, the Centre Pompidou and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. In 1999 Cai Guo-Qiang won the Golden Lion of the 48th Venice Biennale with his work *Venice's Rent Collection Courtyard*. Last year in Venice he curated the Chinese pavilion, which was presented for the first time. An extensive retrospective of the artist's work is planned for 2008 at the Guggenheim Museum in New York and the National Museum in Beijing.

Upon the occasion of the current exhibition, there will appear on October 1 a two-part catalogue in German or English, with a design by Sagmeister Inc. and texts by Dan Cameron, Ariane Grigoteit, Friedhelm Hütte, Nicholas Mirzoeff as well as Zhu Qingsheng, at a price of 59 Euros.

Study for a Wolf's Bodily Movement: For Head On, 2006, has been created as Edition No. 36 of the Deutsche Guggenheim. As a preparatory state to the ninety-nine realistic-looking wolves of the installation, were small-scale produced clay models. From these which Cai Guo-Qiang has selected, for this Edition, nine variants cast in resin which are exclusively available in the MuseumsShop at a price of 630 Euros each. The limited edition amounts to 9 x 11 and is made out of resin.

The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive supporting program consisting of podium discussions, films and children's programs. Guided tours are offered free of charge each day at 6 p.m. The familiar Lunch Lectures on Wednesdays at

1 p.m., as well as the Keynote Tours each Sunday at 11:30 a.m., round out the offerings of the supporting program. We would like to direct your attention to the detailed information in the attached documents.

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