

[ART JOURNAL]

Asia's biggest international art show opens in China

ShContemporary is the most important of three major art fairs running this week in Shanghai

AGENCIES
SHANGHAI



Celebrity Interview

Roots

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"All I remember of that night was seeing Michael Jackson sat in the front row, and thinking, 'Don't fuck up,'" says Ulrich. On a stage set strewn with battleground props, the group played their new single, *One*. It opened like a ballad, but Hetfield wasn't singing about love. The song, *One*, was written from the perspective of a soldier so imprisoned by his war-damaged body that he could not even commit suicide. The song crackled with the angst that was Metallica's forte, its tender acoustic strums segueing into a brutal, ballistic thrash, drumrolls blasting like artillery as lead guitarist Kirk Hammett fired off haywire solos, doubtless terrorizing some members of the awards audience.

Two years later, the "Black album" translated that impact into commercial success. It sold 15 million copies worldwide (though if you asked most rock critics to name the most significant hard rock album of 1991, they'd probably offer *Nevermind* by Nirvana). They had become one of the world's biggest bands without any significant compromise, by appealing — as Rolling Stone writer Michael Azerrad put it — "to the dark underside of the white-suburban-male psyche."

"We were stubborn," grins Hetfield, laconically explaining Metallica's mindset of the time. "We're not going to come to you, we're not going to meet you halfway — you have to come to us."

Despite what some detractors have suggested, the deer-hunting Hetfield is no redneck, though he is unabashedly blue collar. "I didn't grow up around people who had therapy," he says. "But my dad was extremely religious, up reading the Bible at five every morning for an hour. Maybe that was his therapy, his pill for the day." Hetfield was raised as a Christian Scientist, and his family adhered to the religion's avoidance of modern medicine, even as his mother died slowly of cancer. The anguish of his adolescence would later find voice in Hetfield's lyrics, fuelling songs that railed against religion and authoritarianism.

His anger proved to be a gift — as Ulrich says in *Some Kind of Monster*, "Twenty years of hatred sold 100 million records," and Hetfield was anxious that entering therapy and rehab at the time of the *St. Anger* sessions might quiet his muse. "That is probably the biggest cliché of walking out of recovery" — he pauses, corrects himself — "sorry, walking out of the recovery building, and into recovery itself: the fear of 'I can't do this without alcohol, without the anxieties.' My dichotomy is, I don't like people, but I have a never-ending quest to feel like I belong. So, there's still stuff to work out, for ever."

Hetfield hit a lyrical peak with *Puppets and Justice* — Azerrad wrote that Metallica were "as political as any band out there." Hetfield's songs eschewed sloganeering for something more potent, reflecting the rage of an undereducated, underemployed, alienated fanbase — best reflected in the song *Disposable Heroes*, which he wrote in 1985 about those sent off to war to become cannon fodder. The "disposable heroes" of American suburbia could sense that Hetfield was one of them. More than 20 years later, that sense of identification remains: the soldier-cum-author Colby Buzzell has posted on his blog — since turned into a book, *My War* — of Metallica's heavy rotation on his iPod while he was fighting out in Iraq.

Hetfield shifts uncomfortably at the subject, and says he hadn't heard about Buzzell's blog. "Metallica has really tried to be non-political, as much as possible," he continues, carefully. "I write about the human side of it all. I really dislike it when celebrities get up on a soapbox and start giving their opinion. It shouldn't be more valid, because you're popular. It gets in the way of the music. I like to just live, and think, and feel. Politics bore me. Politics separate people, especially where we're from. Politics rarely bring people together." Hetfield's answer is earnest, honest and polite — much like the man himself — but it does highlight one of the frustrations of *Death Magnetic*. His lyrics are introspective and intensely personal — *Unforgiven III*, he explains, concerns how you "can't forgive anyone until you've forgiven yourself" — but they lack the fiery conviction of the likes of *Disposable Heroes*, written when he was just some ratty San Francisco headbanger. And there's a generation at war in the Middle East sorely wanting a group like Metallica to write their song.

But Metallica are not the same people as they were when they recorded *Disposable Heroes*. "I'm 44 years old, I've got three kids, I flew in a helicopter on Friday," laughs Ulrich. "It's a little difficult to revisit the vibe of 20 years ago when you're living in a two-bedroom suite at in one of the most expensive hotels in the world. I live a very different life to how I lived then."

The one thing that hasn't changed is the level of expectation Metallica still command. "I was thinking the other day," Ulrich says, "about how everyone expects us to continue to release albums that define the genre, to 'save' metal. And that's a lot of fucking pressure, really. Why hasn't anyone dethroned us yet? We support all the great new metal bands, take them under our wing, but people still want us to carry the whole genre on our backs."

But Metallica are the pioneers and figureheads of modern metal, the genre's Beatles; they did it first and on the biggest scale, they won this music its mainstream acceptance. Theirs is the standard by which newcomers will always be measured, and while they might be faster and louder than Metallica, no one else will ever be Metallica.

Although *Death Magnetic* is plagued by a couple of sub-grunge grunners and something suspiciously like a power ballad, when it's good — which is at least half the time — it's great, the group playing painstakingly composed riffs with all the violent precision of their golden era.

As they play *One* on stage at Reading tonight, preceded by a barrage of pyrotechnics and special effects that would rival a Hollywood blockbuster, it's clear that age hasn't impaired their ability to play up their sturm und drang, for all the effort it must demand. But it feels odd to hear the song's visceral horror played out as puppy stadium-rock bombast tonight, while Metallica fans in Iraq and Afghanistan are coming home in wheelchairs and coffins from a controversial war they had no say in. I wonder if the James Hetfield of 1986 might have found it odd too.

The largest show for contemporary art in Asia opened its doors for an expert audience yesterday in Shanghai.

ShContemporary, with 150 participating galleries from 20 countries, is the most important of three art shows running this week in the eastern Chinese city.

The other two in the framework of the so-called Art Compass are the Shanghai Biennale, running until Tuesday and the Shanghai Art Fair, which is open until Saturday.

This year's biennale, titled Translocalmotion, deals with the effects of urbanization and is held at the Shanghai art museum.

Half the artists at the second ShContemporary, open to the public from Thursday to Saturday at the Shanghai Exhibition Center are from Asia, the remainder are from Europe and the US.

The exhibition, organized by fair director Lorenzo Rudolf shows works from classic modernism to contemporary works.

Highlights include the Best of Discovery featuring 32 up-and-coming Asia-Pacific artists and Outdoor Project with installations, performances and large-scale sculptures outside the exhibition building.

Both projects are to serve as a "catalyst between Eastern and Western art scenes," a press release said.



Meanwhile, the organizers of SHContemporary down an enclosure yesterday that would have featured eight of Belgian artist Wim Delvoye's tattooed pigs, after banning the exhibit at the fair.

Workers, escorted by security guards, dismantled the sty at the Shanghai Exhibition Center at 11:30am, said Xin Beijing Gallery's manager Yu Tiantian, the dealer of Delvoye's work. The pigs, tattooed with Walt Disney characters and LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton SA's motif, were banned from the art fair. Yu wouldn't say if the government had ordered the ban. Gu Zihua, spokesman for SHContemporary, declined to comment.

"It's unbelievable how aggressive they are becoming in stopping this show," Delvoye said today by phone from Shanghai. "We have collectors who've traveled to China all the way from Europe to see the pigs. They're very disappointed."



Shanghai, China's financial hub, is vying with Beijing to be the country's center for contemporary culture as it prepares to host the 2010 World Expo.

ArtBeijing opened in the Chinese capital on Friday with a preview of works to be shown by 100 galleries, half of them China-based and the remainder from Asia, the US and Europe. The fair's highlight, an inaugural show specializing in photographic art, featured 15 galleries in 20 booths.

Above: Chinese artist Jing Shijian's *Express Train* is displayed during the official opening at the Shanghai Biennale on Monday. This year's Shanghai Biennale, titled Translocalmotion, deals with the effects of urbanization and is held at the Shanghai Art Museum. Some 150 participants from 20 countries and regions will show works at the fair, one of five major autumn art fairs in China. The exhibition is open to the public until Nov. 16.

Far left: Chinese artist Yue Minjun's *Colorful Running Dinosaurs* is shown during the official opening at the Shanghai Biennale on Monday. Left: Chinese artist Zhang Qing's work *Tower of Babel* on display during the official opening at the Shanghai Biennale on Monday.

SHContemporary is aimed at enticing collectors to buy in a market hit by the world's worst-performing equity index this year. Price gains in works by Liu Xiaodong and other Chinese contemporary artists have slowed and auction sales have shrunk as a drop in China's equities erased US\$2.3 trillion in market value this year.

Delvoye bred his pigs on a farm outside Beijing, letting his tattoos grow with the animals. The animals' skins are sold for up to US\$10,600 a piece. A canvas, marked with Walt Disney characters, was sold to Chanel SA and made into two bags, displayed at the fashion group's Feb. 26 Mobile Art exhibition in Hong Kong, according to Delvoye's spokeswoman Xia Jie.

Found objects win artist US\$250,000 prize

Ann Hamilton's wildly creative installations often use items culled from flea markets and warehouses

BY PATRICK COLE
BLOOMBERG

Ann Hamilton, a visual artist known for her eye-popping installations including paper-sucking machines and a weeping wall, is among the winners of the Heinz Family Foundation's Human Achievement Awards.

Hamilton, 52, a professor of sculpture at Ohio State University in Columbus, won the US\$250,000 cash award for wildly creative installations that often use items culled from flea markets and warehouses, Kim O'Dell, director of the Heinz Awards, said in a phone interview.

"Her art engages you in a way that walking past traditional works of art wouldn't do," O'Dell said. "Everyone we spoke to talked about how inspiring it is to work with her."

She'll receive the award on Oct. 21 at a ceremony in Pittsburgh, where the Heinz Foundation is based, O'Dell said.

Hamilton specializes in works created for the locations where they're exhibited, relying on found objects, videos, photographs, textiles and other materials. In *Corpus*, her 2004 show at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, she installed 40 machines onto a gallery ceiling and had them descend to the floor, suck up sheets of translucent, onionskin paper and later release them.

In another installation, *Welle*, more commonly called "The Weeping Wall," drops of water were pumped through tiny holes in a flat white wall.

The Heinz Award is the latest major prize Hamilton has won. She received a US\$500,000 "genius grant" from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in 1993. She won fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1999 she was chosen



Ann Hamilton is seen at work in this handout photo taken in May. Hamilton, a visual artist known for her eye-popping installations that include paper-sucking machines and a weeping wall, is among the winners of the Heinz Family Foundation's Human Achievement Awards.

to represent the US at the 48th Venice Biennale, one of the world's most important contemporary art shows.

Now in their fourteenth year, the Heinz Awards honors those who have distinguished themselves in the arts and

humanities, the environment, technology, the economy and by improving the human condition.

Other recipients this year are Thomas FitzGerald, 53, founder and director of the Kentucky Resources Council, for improving the environmental landscape in his home state; and Brenda Krause Eheart, 64, founder of Generations of Hope and Hope Meadows in Champaign, Illinois, for her work with foster children and their families.

Robert Greenstein, 62, executive director of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington-based research group that focuses on budget and tax policy, received an award for helping make anti-poverty programs more effective and efficient.

Joseph DeRisi, 38, a molecular biologist at the University of California, San Francisco, was cited for improving methods of detecting malaria and other infectious diseases.