

Sawasdee, *Art Beat: Spring Awakening*, Mar 2012ART
BEAT/ words
Eike Stratmann

SPRING AWAKENING

Shanghai's vibrant art scene is constantly changing and evolving. Even though winter here is cold and damp, galleries are far from falling into winter sleep – there are some hibernating art discoveries to make

stage-back.org
Open Tue-Sun
10am-6pm

ovgallery.com
Open Tue-Sun
10am-6pm

beaugeste-gallery.com
Open Sat-Sun 10am-6pm, weekdays by appointment only

18galleryshanghai.com
Open Tue-Sun
11am-6pm

leoxuprojects.com
Open Tue-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 12-6pm

When Weihai 696 in the middle of the French Concession closed for modernisation in 2011, Shanghai lost an inspiring creative space. However, the German artist and founder of stageBACK gallery, Susanne Junker, did not give up. With the energy of change and challenge, she moved in with the well known Eastlink Gallery at Moganshan Road in the north of Shanghai. This gallery area called M50 offers a new interesting situation for her experimental shows and artists, such as the “headless” French performance artist Laurent Friquet (below) and Gordon Chandler, who cuts and folds oil barrels into beautiful and poetic kimonos, making rusty metal look as delicate as silk.

Around the corner from stageBACK is the OV Gallery, which recently moved from downtown

Shanghai into a more light, airy and flexible space. Established in 2006 by Hong Kong lawyer David Lo, OV offers a diverse programme of thematic exhibitions, which target issues in contemporary China often using history as a point of reference and analysis. The April show is called *Abstract Expressions* and will attempt to delve into the much-neglected tradition of abstract art in China.

Hidden in Taikang Road's labyrinth of old houses, cafés, bars and boutiques, the photography gallery Beaugeste is worth a visit. Curator Jean Loh has invited a major photographer of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) to exhibit his work for the first time in a Chinese gallery. Born 72 years ago in Dalian, Li Zhensheng worked as a photojournalist for the *Heilongjiang Daily* during the Cultural Revolution. He has become an expert in self-portraits using the unused leftovers from rolls of film, hiding tens of thousands of negatives in the parquet of his apartment. View the precious and unique documentation of those ten years in *WINDS & CLOUDS* – the Chinese expression means “big changes” (exhibition on until 21 April).

In addition, Magda Danysz's gallery is presenting the works of the

young Portuguese artist Vhils, also known as Alexandre Farto. From another generation and a different genre, Vhils was made famous quite early on in his career due to the exhibition *Cans Art* in London (2008), where he was one of 39 artists selected and invited by British street artist Banksy. He uses various processes and tools, including engraving with acid or bleach on hood or any other materials that he finds in the street, such as old papers, worn out posters, wood panels and brick walls. His solo show will be his first one in China and will inaugurate the completely renewed 18 Gallery Magda Danysz. The gallery recently moved from the Bund to an impressive new space of 1,000 square metres in the Yangpu district.

Last but not least, don't miss a new art space that only opened a few months ago in the heart of the old French Concession. LEO XU PROJECTS is the brainchild of Shanghai-based curator and writer Leo Xu. Dedicated to new art and ideas, an ongoing large-scale group exhibition is *Boy: A Contemporary Portrait*. The show includes a selection of internationally renowned artists including Wolfgang Tillmans and Apichatpong Weerasethakul (the Cannes award-winning Thai filmmaker), as well as a handful of young Chinese artists such as Liu Chuang, Chen Wei and Guo Hongwei.

For more information, pick up the free bilingual gallery guide and city map, Shanghai Detour (shanghaidetour.org). It will keep you in the loop on Shanghai's burgeoning art scene.



Courtesy stageBACK