

**The Art Newspaper**, *More Than Brand Names and Biennial Favourites*, Melanie Gerlis and Gareth Harris, 2015 Mar, P1 + 2



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# INTERNATIONAL EDITION THE ART NEWSPAPER™

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ART BASEL IN HONG KONG DAILY EDITION 13-14 MARCH 2015



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## More than brand names and biennial favourites

*For many Western collectors, the fair provides a chance to discover young Asian artists*

### FAIRS AND BIENNALES

**Hong Kong.** Art Basel in Hong Kong, which opens to VIPs on 13 March, has become a place for Western collectors – and even curators – to discover work by Asian artists whose names are unfamiliar. Such a status is unusual for a big-brand fair. It is partly due to the swift emergence of a vast and unknown (to Westerners, at least) artistic community in Asia. The fair has also helped to fill the gap created by the perceived shortcomings of some of the region's biennials and non-selling exhibitions.

"We are still largely in a world where the West looks at the West. Chinese artists are not naturally that well exposed. There are very few [institutional] exhibitions focused on them, and when there are, it's always the same names," says Sylvain Levy, the collector and co-founder of the DSL collection of contemporary Chinese art.

Joan Kee, an associate professor of the history of art at the University of Michigan, says: "There are quite a few efforts to hold Whitney Biennial-type surveys [in Asia], but these are often just plain chaotic."

Conversely, many on the art-world circuit praise the Hong Kong fair for creating something meaningful out of



Unfamiliar faces: Li Qing (born 1981), a Chinese artist with a growing market, at Leo Xu Projects (3C16) with his work

the chaos. The fair, although arguably rather uncontrolled when it launched as Art HK in 2008, quickly raised its game, even before Art Basel took it over in 2013. Arianne Levene, a London-based contemporary art adviser who specialises in Asian art, says that

**"Whitney Biennial-type surveys [in Asia] are often just plain chaotic"**

the fair had "standards that eclipsed anything that was there before".

The launch this week of a satellite fair, Art Central (14-16 March, Central Harbourfront), has piqued the interest of those who are keen

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### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### UNITED STATES >>>

#### Met gets twice as modern

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York has chosen the British architect David Chipperfield to revamp its south-west wing, creating more space for Modern and contemporary art while also doubling the size of the Roof Garden (above). Meanwhile, the Met is planning its first show, which will mix historic and Modern art, in the Whitney Museum of American Art's former home, which is due to reopen next year. Thomas Campbell, the director of the Met, announced the two-pronged strategy for Modern and contemporary art on Wednesday, describing the plan as a "giant leap forward". J.P.  
\* For more on the Met, see p9



#### RUSSIA >>>

#### Hermitage plans Moscow satellite

St Petersburg's State Hermitage Museum plans to open a satellite in Moscow with a focus on contemporary art. A building, designed by the Canadian-born architect Hani Rashid on the site of the former Zil car factory, could be completed by 2018. Mikhail Piotrovsky, the director of the Hermitage, signed an agreement with the site's developers on Wednesday. The Hermitage has satellites across Russia and in Amsterdam, but launching one in Moscow would be a historic move. The Hermitage Moscow could organise "exhibition projects in collaboration with other museums", according to a statement. S.K.