

DAI HANZHI 5000 ARTISTS

Exhibition Guide

Director's Welcome

While living and working in China, it struck me how many of my peers and colleagues – artists, curators, and gallerists alike – all spoke so fondly of Hans van Dijk, or Dai Hanzhi in Chinese, acknowledging him as a mentor and an important influence on their own respective practices. Long forgotten in the Netherlands, Hans van Dijk (1946–2002), the Dutch curator, scholar, teacher and art dealer, is the guiding light for this exhibition titled *Dai Hanzhi: 5000 Artists*. The exhibition not only tells the story of Van Dijk and the important role he played in supporting early contemporary art in China, but discloses the underexposed history of artistic development in China in the late eighties and early nineties.

For the exhibition, renowned artists Ding Yi, Zhang Peili, Wang Xingwei, Zheng Guogu and Liu Ding have been invited to either create new works for the exhibition, or to present a personal choice from their oeuvre. Vitamin Creative Space and now-defunct BizArt – two leading Chinese art spaces known to combine both a curatorial voice and strong business savviness – present their own contributions as to show their affection and respect for Van Dijk. Van Dijk's meticulously organized, staggeringly comprehensive catalogue of over 5000 Chinese artists born between 1880 and 1980 is also present, albeit digitally, alongside loans, archival materials and Van Dijk's work on Ming furniture.

With *Dai Hanzhi: 5000 Artists*, Witte de With is able to continue its investigative program across China and the rest of Asia, which it set out to do since 2012. There is a substantial history of exhibitions that attempted to grant a more global space of representation for China. The most intelligent ones investigated the spread of Western modernity as a universal condition, while others worked mostly with Western models as their blueprint.

As such, Witte de With for instance had worked with very few artists from China in its twenty-four year history.

When noted Dutch curator Marianne Brouwer approached us with her exhibition plans around Van Dijk, we immediately accepted her proposal. Looking at all the artists and movements that preceded the by now well-known flood of commodified Chinese art, we considered this exhibition significant, as it adds a crucial yet largely unnarrated layer to the globalized story of art of the past decades.

We are grateful to Mrs. Brouwer for embarking on this undertaking as well as numerous individuals, who have been invested in getting this exhibition off the ground of years. We also thank all the artists participating in the exhibition for their impassioned contributions. The partnership between Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art and Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, which co-commissioned the exhibition, is also worth noting here. I would like to thank Philip Tinari (Director, UCCA) as well as Claire Hsu and Anthony Yung from the Asia Art Archive team, Samuel Saelemakers (Associate Curator, Witte de With), and Ian Yang (Curatorial Fellow, Witte de With) as well as Martijn Kielstra, Andreas Schmid, Davide Quadrio, Zhang Li, Zhang Wei, and Hu Fang who have been with us throughout the duration of this exhibition's development if not before. I would also like to extend my gratitude to everyone mentioned in the guide's colophon and exhibition imprint: artists, lenders, and funders – including AMMODO, the Mondriaan Fund – as well as the entire Witte de With team.

Defne Ayas
Rotterdam, May 2014

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The first entry of Hans van Dijk's digital *Lexicon and Library of 5000 artists active in China, born between 1880 and 1980*.

Curator's Introduction

Though a legendary figure in the Chinese art scene of the nineties, Hans van Dijk's place in recent Chinese art history has never before been the subject of art-historical research or presented to the public at large. The exhibitions at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art and at Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, attempt to bridge that gap for the first time.

The research for this project has been conducted through interviews with dozens of Chinese artists and others who knew Hans van Dijk well. The NAAC/CAAW archive in Beijing has been an abundant source of material and information. Invaluable knowledge about Van Dijk's life amidst the art scene in China came from his witty letters and reports to his friends in the Netherlands and Germany, a correspondence he kept up throughout the years and which they faithfully preserved. For the rediscovery of the lexicon I am particularly indebted to Hans van Dijk's former assistants and to his family.

No exhibition and no amount of scholarly work, however, can describe the love and respect one encounters with those who knew Van Dijk. Even today, people would sometimes be moved to tears, more than a decade after his death. Many a person would claim a piece of him from the time they had known him with jealous exclusivity. They would talk about how he gave up everything to come to China, about the sacrifices he had made for art, about his fierce independence in the midst of the Chinese political and artistic landscape, his unassuming attitude and ironic sense of humor. How he had helped them by making them known abroad, especially in the early years of great hardship after 1989 when it was forbidden to show or sell contemporary art in China as there was no infrastructure; no galleries, no museums, no collectors, no curating. How he had taught them without seeming

to do so just by listening, observing and acting. His life was legendarily frugal, his home reduced to such bare necessities that it looked like a monk's cell; but what little he owned was shaped with unerring taste.

Van Dijk, as everyone has told me, was no businessman. His true force was his scholarly informed vision. First demonstrated when he set up the New Amsterdam Art Consultancy in Beijing in 1994, which organized more than forty exhibitions and activities involving Chinese art in just a few years, and later when, in 1999, he joined with collector Frank Uytterhaegen and artist Ai Weiwei to found the gallery China Art Archives and Warehouse and the Chinese Modern Art Foundation, both of which tirelessly championed (and archived) Chinese art domestically and abroad. The artists he exhibited or wrote about, almost without exception, managed to withstand the test of time and today represent some of the most influential and significant artists in China.

This tells us something about Van Dijk's principles in art and about his character, too, when he wrote to an old friend about a year before his death: "Like many people I'm a bit fed up with the modern art world: too much what's new, what's hot. Writing this in front of me are those rectangular aluminum eat-boxes from Nanjing Art Academy which I used to put cards in with dates about artists [...]. Now I'm adding the dates on those cards in a data-base on artists I started in Berlin in 1991, when I bought my first computer. I know I'm good in archiving. It's not new and hot but will be useful, there is a Chinese expression denying short-term success 'xiao congming—small smart'. I believe in that."

Marianne Brouwer
Otterlo, July 2014



Thomas Fuessler, *Hans van Dijk (Beijing 1993)*, 1993. Courtesy of the artist & ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai.

Dai Hanzhi: 5000 Artists

Dai Hanzhi: 5000 Artists introduces the extraordinary life in China of Dutchman Hans van Dijk (1946 – 2002) and outlines his seminal role in Chinese contemporary art. Van Dijk, whose Chinese name was Dai Hanzhi, was active as a curator, art historian and gallerist in China throughout the nineties. Though hardly known in the Netherlands, Van Dijk is still revered by many Chinese artists today.

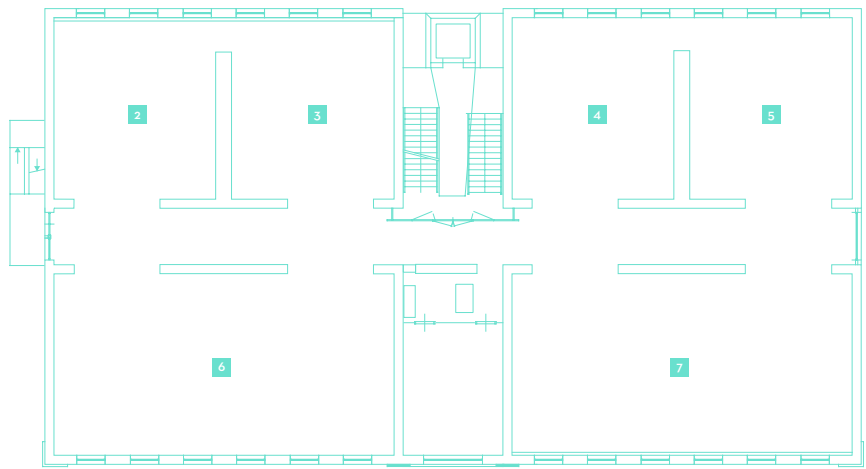
Dai Hanzhi: 5000 Artists includes historical installations, paintings, video, and photography by artists who were close to Van Dijk. A number of artists created new works or proposed a personal selection from their oeuvre. The works on view are supplemented by rare archival material from Europe and China and a digital presentation of Van Dijk's hitherto undiscovered life's work, a lexicon of 5000 Chinese modern and contemporary artists born between 1880 and 1980.

Exhibition Floor Plans

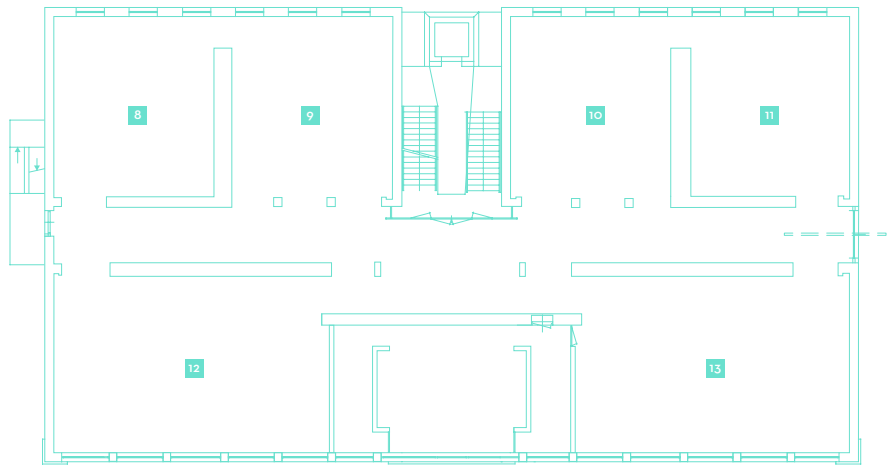
GROUND FLOOR

1

2ND FLOOR



3RD FLOOR



This room gathers works by old friends: Xin Kedu (Gu Dexin, Wang Luyan, Chen Shaoping), Li Yongbin, and Ni Haifeng, who worked with Hans van Dijk from his early days in Beijing until the mid-nineties.

GROUND FLOOR, ROOM 1

Ni Haifeng, *The Angle*, 1995.

Xin Kedu (The New Measurement Group, 1989–1996), *Arbeitsbuch III*; *Arbeitsbuch IV*, 1995, and photographs.

Li Yongbin, *Face* (No. 1), 1995–1996.

Documents:

Li Yongbin, *Untitled*, 1993, and photographs with text by Hans van Dijk, 1993.

Ni Haifeng, *Heartless Passage*, 1994, photograph of his installation with text by Ni Haifeng. Catalogues, photos, invitations.

THROUGHOUT THE EXHIBITION

Liu Ding, 1999, 2014.

1999 is a semi-autobiographical work by Liu Ding about the time when he first met Hans van Dijk, consisting of popular songs from the late nineties, and short, personal texts written by Liu Ding. Hans van Dijk showed Liu Ding's first works at NAAC in 2000. This work is commissioned by Witte de With.

BEGINNINGS | THE NETHERLANDS 1946 – 1986

Born in 1946, Hans van Dijk grew up in a Calvinist middle class family in Deventer, where his father was an Elder of the community church. At the age of sixteen he entered the Arnhem Art Academy. The teachers most important to him were Henk Peeters, a member of the international Zero-movement, and Peter Struycken, the first artist in the Netherlands to make computer-based art. In 1965, on Struycken's advice, he entered the Design Academy in Eindhoven, where he started reading avidly and became interested in literature, science and the philosophy of gay authors (also as a gay man himself) such as Gerard Reve, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Alan Turing. After graduation, he began making random, computer-generated artworks, participating in exhibitions at Galerie Swart in Amsterdam and Sally East Gallery in London. With a group of close friends from the academy he established the artists' magazine *Daglicht* (*Daylight*, 1980–1982).

Always interested in woodworking and the puzzle of its construction techniques, he discovered a reprint of early twentieth century missionary Gustav Ecke's standard work on *Ming* furniture. Fascinated by the furniture's masterful construction, he approached the Sinology department of Leiden University to ask for assistance with translation of the book's classical Chinese instructions, but he was met with reluctance. In 1983, Van Dijk forsook art practice and began learning Chinese from exchange students at Eindhoven University of Technology. During these years, he created a series of tables, stools, and screens which he dubbed "Ming-inspired Rietveld-style furniture" for himself and his friends, but, as with all of his design works, he refused to produce them on a commercial scale. During this period, many of Van Dijk's close friends married and settled down. This, perhaps more than anything else, inspired him to radically change 'his life and career. So, in September 1986, at nearly 40 years old, he moved to Nanjing to study Chinese language and calligraphy.

SECOND FLOOR, ROOM 2

Hans van Dijk, early art works; table and stools of his Ming-style furniture.

Documents:

Van Dijk's polaroid photos, sketches, studies for art works.

Copies of *Daglicht* magazine.

Picture wall of photographs of Van Dijk in his studio in Nuenen and Eindhoven.

IMMERSION | NANJING 1986 – 1989

Hans van Dijk took to China with a growing sense of having reached his destiny in life. Though he initially had no concept of the emerging contemporary art scene of the eighties, he quickly recognized that something extraordinary was happening. Nanjing was at the center of many debates about the changes in art at the time. He switched his concentration to Chinese art history and began researching and collecting documents on modern and contemporary Chinese artists.

He traveled across the mainland between 1987 and 1989 meeting some of the country's most interesting avant-garde artists, such as Ding Yi, Huang Yongping, Wu Shanzhuan, Zhang Peili, Geng Jianyi, Tang Song, Ni Haifeng, and others, with whom he quickly exchanged correspondence and ideas. Many of them became life-long friends. He began translating artists' texts and projects such as the *Pond Society manifesto* by Geng Jianyi and Zhang Peili. In 1988, Van Dijk published his translation of Li Xiaoshan's ground-breaking essay on the future of ink painting in the catalogue of an exhibition on recent Chinese art in Eindhoven. When his courses ended in 1989, he applied for further study in Beijing in hope of securing a job in the arts. However, the uprising and ensuing massacre at Tiananmen Square that same year prevented him from pursuing this plan. In Nanjing he witnessed mass demonstrations by students and workers as early as December 1988. 4 June 1989 was followed by police raids across the country, causing students and foreigners to flee. Van Dijk went to Qingdao for a few weeks with his Chinese friends. Determined to become a witness of the times he kept a day-to-day diary of events. When it became clear that he could not stay, and that contemporary art in China had few, if any, immediate prospects, he returned to the Netherlands with his books and his nascent archive on Chinese modern art.

ROOMS 3 AND 4

China, early conceptual art, radical ink painting. Huang Yongping, *Xiamen dada*; documentary video, 1986.

Geng Jianyi, *Water Factory*, 1987.

Zhang Peili, *Art Project No. 2*, 1987.

Geng Jianyi, *Investigative Form*, 1988.

Ni Haifeng, *Warehouse No. 10*, 1988; *Untitled*, 1988; *Warehouse No. 1*, 1988.

Wu Shanzhuan, *No Water Today*, 1989.

Documents:

The *Xiamen Dada Manifesto*.

The *Pond Society Bulletin*.

Hans van Dijk, translations and articles.

Correspondence between Van Dijk and Huang Yongping, and Hans van Dijk and Tang Song,

all with translations.

Van Dijk's Nanjing diary, 1989.

Letters, postcards, photos.

CORRIDOR

Thomas Fuessler, *Hans van Dijk (Beijing, 1993)*, 1993.

INTRODUCING CHINA'S AVANT-GARDE / BERLIN

1990 – 1993

Upon returning to Eindhoven, Van Dijk published a two-part scholarly article entitled "Painting in China After the Cultural Revolution" in a Leiden University publication. He wrote a number of short articles on Chinese art, which were published over the next two years. He also immediately started working on plans for a major survey exhibition of Chinese contemporary art in the Netherlands. However, interest was slow to materialize. In 1990, he met German artist Andreas Schmid, who had studied in China, and, with former Maoist Jochen Noth, had recently convinced the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (House of World Cultures) in Berlin to hold an exhibition on recent developments in Chinese culture. The two quickly realized that Van Dijk's expertise would be invaluable to the project and adapted their proposal according to his ideas. With his first advance as a curator, he bought a computer, which would house his growing database on Chinese artists. He returned to China in late 1991 with Andreas Schmid to scout for the exhibition in Germany. At the *Garage Show* in Shanghai – one of the first exhibitions to open after two years of silence – art critic Chen Xiaoxin, editor of the magazine *Jiangsu Art Monthly*, announced, "I have good news. Hans is coming back!"

BACK TO CHINA / BEIJING 1994

Meanwhile, Van Dijk and Schmid had to compete for artists and works with the Hong Kong exhibition *China's New Art: Post-89*. Ultimately, many artists ended up in both exhibitions. *China Avant-Garde* opened in Berlin on 29 January

1993, the first major exhibition of Chinese contemporary art in Europe. Van Dijk moved back to Beijing while the exhibition went on to travel across the continent, including the Netherlands where it was shown at the Kunsthal in Rotterdam. With loans from friends, Van Dijk established Artfame Development Ltd. in Hong Kong, a company that would enable him to open a gallery in China. While looking for a suitable exhibition space, he also tried hard to set up a serigraphic printing workshop for artists in Beijing, but in vain. Meanwhile, Van Dijk still needed a space to stay. Although it was illegal for foreigners to live outside certain designated areas, he refused to be confined to the Friendship Hotel – he wanted to lead the same Beijing life as his artist friends. Meanwhile he made a living by guiding foreign artists and journalists such as New York Times writer Andrew Solomon to artists' studios across China.

CORRIDOR

Picture wall of Van Dijk's travel photographs of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, 1991.
Video of the Guangzhou group Big Tail Elephant (Chen Shaoxiong, Liang Juhui, Lin Yiling and Xu Tan) with works from 1991–1994.

ROOM 5

Hans van Dijk, *The URARC Report*, 1994;
Ink on Top, 1994.
Liu Anping, Wang Jinsong, *Good Morning Beijing*, 1994.
Zhao Shaoru, *Correct Action!* (Ink throwing party), Beijing, 1994, photographs by Wu Jin and Zhao Liang.
Zhao Shaoru, *In the name of the Red Sun*, 1988/1991;
In the name of the Red Guard Youth, 1989/2005;
In the name of the Cultural Revolution, 1989/1993.
Wu Shanzhuan, *Art Worker of Berlin*, 1993; *Main Events of the China Avant-Garde Exhibition After the Opening 18.00hrs, 29th January 1993 (Berlin time)* *Internal Newsreport*, 1993.

Documents:

Letters by Hans van Dijk, 1991–1992 and design for the Berlin exhibition, 1993.
Picture wall of the *China Avant-Garde* exhibition, Berlin, 1993.
Fang Lijun, exhibition proposal.
Ding Yi, statement, 1992.
Posters, invitations, photographs.

ROOM 6

A selection from Ding Yi's oeuvre, from the time he met Hans van Dijk to the present:
Ding Yi, *Appearance of Crosses 89-6*, 1989;
Appearance of Crosses 91-B6, 1991; *Appearance of Crosses 92-B20*, 1992; *Appearance of Crosses 93-2*, 1993; *Appearance of Crosses 93-B3*, 1993; *Appearance of Crosses 94-B19*, 1994; *Appearance of Crosses 95-16*, 1995; *Appearance of Crosses 97-18*, 1997; *Appearance of Crosses 2009-10*, 2009; *Appearance of Crosses 90-7*, 1990; *Appearance of Crosses 2007-11 (fluorescent)*, 2000.
Hans van Dijk, *Ming-inspired Table in Rietveld-Style*, 1984.

ROOM 7

Some of Wang Xingwei's most iconic works since 1995: Wang Xingwei, *Recruit*, 1998; *The Testimony of the Hare*, 1995; *Again No A Mark*, 1998; *Mein Kampf*, Wang Xingwei in 1936, 1996; *The Dust of the Romantic History of Male Heroism*, 1995.
Hans van Dijk, *Ming-inspired Table in Rietveld-Style*, 1984.

LEAVING A LEGACY – PART I THE LEXICON: 5000 NAMES OF CHINESE ARTISTS BORN BETWEEN 1880 AND 1980

Hans van Dijk began compiling his archive in Nanjing in 1986. With the advance for his work on the Berlin exhibition *China Avant-Garde*, he purchased a computer in 1991 onto which he entered his files. As his archive grew, Van Dijk realized that a comprehensive compendium of artists would be an invaluable asset to Chinese contemporary art.

He created a system, in which he could make print-outs offering information and answers to every conceivable question by every conceivable visitor. The database was sortable according to many categories: artists' names, dates, bibliographical references, location, medium, and many others. Several digital versions of the database exist, and each extant version has more than 5000 artists. The notion of 5000 artists cropped up as a goal very early on. As he was growing his database, Van Dijk would keep friends updated on the number of artists he had recorded, reaching 5000 or more around the year 2000. Towards the end of his life, he was dedicating a great amount of time to his database, still editing and deciding on who to include. Every day after work he

would return home and enter information from his note cards into his PC, to copy the data into the office computer the next day. But even his closest friends were never told the ultimate goal of his work: a print version of his database to be published as a lexicon. At the time of his death, Van Dijk had finished the layout, designed the title page and key, and started an introduction to the book. The last entry in his computer lexicon is dated 1 April, 2002, just 18 days before his death.

It is hard to overstate the uniqueness of this project. Periods and persons are regularly edited out of Chinese history for political reasons; modern and contemporary art history are particularly sensitive topics in this respect. Van Dijk's choice of the format of a lexicon circumvented both this type of censorship and competitive claims within the Chinese art-critical field, while his research and choice of artists' names implicitly allowed him to state his own, inclusive vision of Chinese modern art history. Typically, it will take experts from every field across the last century to interpret that vision because, contrary to usual Chinese art-historical lexica, Van Dijk's lexicon includes artists from all artistic disciplines such as photography, printing, or wood cut on an equal basis with the traditional high arts.

THIRD FLOOR, ENTRANCE

Hans van Dijk, *Lexicon and Library of 5000 artists active in China, born between 1880 and 1980, 2002.*

ESTABLISHING THE NAAC | BEIJING 1994 - 1995

In 1994, Hans van Dijk established the New Amsterdam Art Consultancy (NAAC) as an umbrella for his dealership and curatorial projects. Unlike any other commercial gallery, Van Dijk would only take 35% of any work he sold; 65% went to the artist. Alongside Zhang Li, curator, and Jule Noth, sinologist and daughter of Jochen Noth, they organized their first exhibition, *Moon Flight* by Zhao Bandi

in cooperation with the newly established Hanmo Art Gallery. This cooperation was short-lived when the director of Hanmo was arrested for alleged fraud in 1995. From then on Van Dijk was always on the look-out for suitable gallery spaces. On 8 July 1994, his friends Zhao Shaoruo and Liu Anping staged a happening in the Dahua Cinema, in which Zhao Shaoruo threw ink on dozens of Chinese artists and critics who had assembled to see a performance video by Wang Jinsong and Liu Anping. Later in July, Van Dijk published the NAAC's URARC Report, a manifesto inspired by Alfred Jarry's absurdist play *Ubu Roi*. In the report, he "classifies" dozens of Chinese artists into various fictitious categories of his own invention. Though written in Van Dijk's characteristic tongue-in-cheek style, the manifesto nonetheless shows some of his theoretical assessments of Chinese contemporary art. 1994 also saw the publication of his essay "Art Theory Is Not Art" in *Jiangsu Art Monthly*.

Throughout 1994, Van Dijk curated exhibitions in whichever spaces were available, including exhibitions of photographer Zhang Hai'er in Ritan Park and Ding Yi's first solo exhibition at the Shanghai Art Museum. He collaborated with Goethe-Institut Director Michael Kahn-Ackermann on an exhibition by the New Measurement Group (Xin Kedu) with German artist Günther Uecker of the Zero group. This exhibition, like so many others at the time, was not allowed to take place. The New Measurement Group were instead shown at the Haus der Kunst in Berlin in cooperation with Director Alexander Tolnay in 1995.

Meanwhile, demands were pouring in from abroad for Van Dijk to act as a consultant on the many exhibitions of Chinese contemporary art that were now being organized throughout Europe. For *Forändren (Change)* at the Göteborg Konsthall in Sweden, he suggested the artists and provided the organization on the Chinese side. He did the same for an exhibition at the Kvindemuseet (Women's Museum), Denmark; for *Configura 2, Dialogue*

between Cultures in Erfurt, Germany; and for the *Triennial of Small-Scale Sculpture* in Stuttgart and Vienna. By now, he had four to five employees working full-time at his newly found office, which also housed his archive and (illegally) served as his apartment. Van Dijk's NAAC apartment quickly became a center of artistic life in Beijing. At a time when the infrastructure for supporting and promoting contemporary Chinese art was virtually non-existent, Van Dijk was integral in forging structural connections with Europe in an attempt to create a continuous showing of the best of contemporary art in China. Throughout the years, he introduced many Chinese artists to the Western art system of museums, galleries, and curators. He also provided the artists with portfolio material and academic support as a facilitator and consultant for exhibitions.

In 1995, Hans van Dijk met ex-Maoist Frank Uytterhaegen, a Belgian businessman and art collector, with whom he developed a life-long friendship. Together they organized an exhibition of Flemish artists entitled 3 × 3 at the private Yanhuang Art Museum in Beijing in 1996. In Beijing, Van Dijk curated a seminal exhibition of photographer Han Lei a.o. and set up a year-long exhibition program for the Goethe-Institut.

ROOM 8

Artists and photographers exhibited and represented by NAAC.

Zhao Bandi, *The Big Rumour Spreading Until Today*, 1994; *Moonflight*, 1994.
Zhang Hai'er, Canton, 1987; *Wuhan Steel Plant*, Wuhan, Hubei Province, 1991; *Wuhan Steel Plant*, Wuhan, Hubei Province, No. 2, 1991; *Wuhan Steel Plant*, Wuhan, Hubei Province, No. 5, 1991; *Lin in Shanghai*, 1989; *It begins to rain...* *Miaoqian Street*, Guangzhou, China, 1987; *Pepsi in The train from Canton to Shenzhen*, 1993; *Garden Hotel*, Canton, 1990.
Han Lei, *Beijing*, 1988; *Kaifeng*, 1986; *Kaifeng*, 1986; *Luochuan*, 1989.

Documents:

NAAC mission statement, catalogues, invitations, photographs of exhibitions.

ROOM 9

Artists and photographers exhibited and represented by NAAC.

Hong Hao, *Selected Scriptures*, page 1, *Preface*, 1995; *Selected Scriptures*, page 1862, *The Division of Nuclear Arms*, 1994; *Selected Scriptures*, page 3065, *The New World Order*, 1995; *Selected Scriptures*, page 3535, *New World Geomorphologic Map*, 1996; *Selected Scriptures*, page 2931, *Worldly Tales*, 1995.
Ielnay Oahgnoh (Yan Lei and Hong Hao), *Documenta X project*, 1997: a hoax consisting of fake letters and floorplan of Hans van Dijk's apartment/NAAC office.
Luo Yongjin, 18 photographs of the series *Celebrities and Celebrations*, 1996.
Zhang Hui, *The Entire Faculty and student body of Wulong Gou primary school*, Luoyang City, March 19, 1997; *The She Huo Team of Beiyue town in Xin'an county, Henan province*, November 5, 1996; *The Faculty and entire student body of Luoyang City Police Academy*, May 13, 1997; *One and Thirty Workers*, 1996 – 1997; *Army*, 1996 – 1997.

Documents:

CIFA Gallery and Berlin catalogues, invites, photographs.

UNREALIZED PROJECTS | BEIJING 1996 – 1997

Aside from the Netherlands and China, Van Dijk prepared for the 1996 Chinese Cultural Weeks in Munich, a massive project that included theater, music, and the exhibition *China – Aktuelles aus 15 Ateliers*, for which he undertook the organization and curatorial work. In 1996, he managed to temporarily rent the CIFA Gallery space at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. In the scope of six months, together with his assistant Zhang Li, Van Dijk curated seven of the best exhibitions of his career at a breakneck pace, including the first solo presentations in China of painter Wang Xingwei and photographer Luo Yongjin. He also published a second article in *Jiangsu Art Monthly*, "The Myth of Art History."

After this string of successes, Van Dijk's luck ran out. The Munich festival was canceled by the Chinese government, though Van Dijk's exhibition still managed to go through. Sales commissions were slow to come in. Around two-thirds of his projects would fail to materialize,

and he would spend all the money he earned buying art and helping artists. Knowing that he needed help on the business side, Van Dijk asked Frank Uytterhaegen to be the business director of NAAC. 1997 took off promisingly with *Face to Face*, a three-part exhibition for Siemens pairing Chinese and German artists. The first exhibition of Luo Yongjin and German photographer Thomas Struth at the China Cultural Art Palace was a success, but it received loudly voiced criticism possibly instigated by the official China Photographers Association (Luo Yongjin was not a member). Afraid of reenacting the Munich debacle, Siemens stalled on the two next exhibitions: Ding Yi with German painter Katharina Grosse, and Zhang Peili with a yet undetermined German artist. They eventually abandoned the project without officially saying so, leaving Van Dijk with a large gap in his agenda.

During this period, new galleries began sprouting up across Beijing and Shanghai while Hans van Dijk still had no residence permit and consequently no gallery space of his own. Several of his close artist friends left him for other galleries. As there was little concept of gallery loyalty, artists frequently sold to the highest bidder. Foreign curators were flocking to China, kicking off a wave of exhibitions and diminishing Hans's importance as a mediator to the local scene. Young Chinese art critics had come of age and demanded to be heard as well. Nonetheless, Van Dijk realized a two-part exhibition of Ding Yi's *Crosses* in cooperation with ShanghART Gallery, and a seminal exhibition of Chinese photography at the Haus der Kunst in Berlin with Alexander Tolnay and Andreas Schmid, which established Chinese photography abroad. Van Dijk's role in the promotion of Chinese photography cannot be overestimated. Typically, he did not theorize on photography; from the outset, he showed his engagement with the medium by exhibiting it alongside other art forms as equal.

FOUNDING CAAW AND MCAF / BEIJING 1998 – 2002

In 1998, Van Dijk successfully curated *Mondrian in China*, an exhibition which traveled from Beijing to Shanghai and Guangzhou. Though he had previously acted as an agent and consultant, he formally entered the art market that year with the founding of the China Art Archives and Warehouse (CAAW) with Frank Uytterhaegen and artist Ai Weiwei. The gallery, which Uytterhaegen funded, opened in 1999 in an abandoned factory in a village in South-Beijing. Even within the set-up of a commercial gallery, Van Dijk maintained his standard of meticulously curated exhibitions. He launched several artists' careers through solo exhibitions, including Zheng Guogu, Meng Huang and Duan Jianyu. He was one of the few curators supporting abstract and conceptual art in China. The gallery moved to a new building designed and built for the purpose by Ai Weiwei in 2000. On 9 June that same year Van Dijk founded the Modern Chinese Art Foundation (MCAF) with Uytterhaegen and his wife Pascale Geulleaume. The Foundation, of which Van Dijk was the curator, brought together a number of private collections of Chinese contemporary art, including Van Dijk's own small collection. Both projects were running successfully; by 2001 CAAW was turning a profit for the first time, and with MCAF, they undertook a number of important promotional exhibitions in Ghent and Shanghai. However, years of poverty and sacrifice had taken their toll on Van Dijk. He fell gravely ill in 2001, spending a few months in France to recover. While preparing a new exhibition and working on his lexicon of 5000 Chinese artists, Hans van Dijk died unexpectedly of complications following a stomach bleed in Beijing in spring 2002.

ROOM 10

Avant-garde photography concerning the changes in urban life in China in the mid-nineties.

Chen Shaoxiong, *Street 1, Street 2, Street 3, Street 4*, 1996.

Zheng Guogu, *The Vagarious Life of Yangjiang Youth*, 1996.

Documents:

Mondrian in China, CAAW and MCaF: catalogues, photos.

ROOM 11

Works by artists close to Van Dijk whose first solo shows he organized at CAAW at an early stage in their career.

Zheng Guogu, *The chat God of Millennium No. 19a*, 2002; *The chat God of Millennium No. 19b*, 2002; *Computer Controlled by Pig's Brain No. 89*, 2006. Meng Huang, *Paradise Lost 14*, 2002, *The Sea*, 2014. Duan Jianyu, *Hey Hello hi - 10*, 1999.

Documents:

Rob Schröder, *Helse Vrede*, VPRO TV program, 2001, staging Ai Weiwei, his *Fuck Off* exhibition in Shanghai, and CAAW.

ROOM 12

Zhang Peili, 30 × 30, 1998; *A Gust of Wind*, 2008. Two iconic works by China's first and foremost video artist. 30 × 30 was the first video artwork ever made in China. *A Gust of Wind*, made in 2008 just before the crisis, seems prophetic of the times.

LEAVING A LEGACY – PART II A NEW MODEL FOR ART SPACES IN CHINA

In addition to some of the most interesting vanguard exhibitions in Beijing, at CAAW gallery visitors found a library of a thousand books and catalogues, plus sixteen years of Chinese art magazines; Van Dijk's 'own artists' archive spanning 480 files, and his database to be accessed for any questions they might have.

With the CAAW gallery Van Dijk created a unique model for an art space in China. Pairing an alternative art space producing and exhibiting art, with a commercial business – always deemed a contradiction in terms – and an exhaustive archive, this model was the direct successor to his former NAAC consultancy.

Two very influential art spaces in China are directly based on Van Dijk's model: Davide Quadrio's BizArt in Shanghai, and Vitamin Creative Space in Guangzhou.

Quadrio, an Italian Sinologist and Tibetologist, arrived in China in 1992. Taken by China's

contemporary art, he began working as an artist and in 1998 he had the idea to create an art center in Shanghai. He then met with Hans van Dijk and they embarked on long discussions on what art in China was needing and how to open and sustain art spaces. Quadrio's BizArt Art Space or Biyi in Chinese, initially was located on Huaihai West Road. The venue was destroyed in 2001. BizArt moved to several locations and nested in Moganshan Road 50 where it became Shanghai's most interesting independent art center at the turn of the century. It followed Van Dijk's model except for one significant detail: BizArt would not sell art, but, as a collective, make a profit from other activities such as designing books, art services and other activities related to art production and design. Van Dijk and Quadrio organized a number of projects together: Zheng Guogu's first solo exhibition entitled *Multi-Dimensional*; the MCaF exhibition *Figures, Portraits, Couples & Groups*, and performance artist Hsieh Te Ching's presentation of his oeuvre.

Vitamin Creative Space was launched in 2002 by Zhang Wei, who had been Van Dijk's assistant from 1996 to 1998 – the years of hardship at NAAC – and her husband Hu Fang, Van Dijk's friend at Guangzhou for many years. The gallery, which proved to be highly successful in China and internationally, opened up a second space in Beijing in 2008. From the very beginning, a photo of Hans van Dijk sitting at his desk has occupied a prominent place at the offices in Guangzhou and Beijing.

CORRIDOR

Luo Yongjin, *Photographs of Hans van Dijk*, 1995.

Hai Bo, *Portrait of Hans van Dijk*, 2001.

Hong Lei, *Hans and I*, 2014.

Xu Tan, *Keywords Lab: Social Botany (5)*, 2012–ongoing. Documentation and video of his *Social Botany Project*, an ongoing project since 2008. Starting in the Pearl River Delta Region, one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world, the artist investigates how people use their land, how and what they plant, what they eat and drink. Under auspices of Witte de With, his project will continue in Rotterdam from November 2014. Xu Tan was a member of the famous Big Tail Elephant

Group (Guangzhou, 1991–1998), and a close friend of Hans van Dijk since they first met in 1991. Zheng Hao, *The Mirror*, 1994. An Hong, *China Doesn't need Aids, China needs Love*, 1997.

ROOM 13

Davide Quadrio and Shi Yong, *The Independents of Shanghai*. Collaborative experiences stemming from BizArt and its collective, 1998–2010; videos of BizArt projects, and reconstruction of the exhibition project *Kuaidi*, 2006.

Hu Fang and Zhang Wei, *Facing the light you could not see directly – To Hans van Dijk*, 2014, and photographs of Vitamin Creative Space's Beijing and Guangzhou office spaces.



Zhao Bandi, *Moonflight*, 1994.

Public Program

TALKS

The great departure: Contemporary Art in China in the 1980's and early 1990's and its representation in Europe during the exhibition China Avant-Garde
Wednesday 3 September 2014

Location: Auditorium, Witte de With

Artist and curator Andreas Schmid will talk about the making of the seminal exhibition *China Avant-Garde*, which he curated together with Hans van Dijk and Jochen Noth in 1993, and which travelled from Berlin's Haus der Kulturen der Welt to the Rotterdam Kunsthal and other venues in Europe. Schmid will also discuss the development of Chinese society and experimental art in the eighties and early nineties.

Digitizing Hans van Dijk's Archive

Date: To be announced

Location: Auditorium, Witte de With

By making information on the recent history of contemporary art in Asia easily accessible, Asia Art Archive aims to facilitate understanding, research, and writing in the field. Anthony Yung, Senior Researcher at AAA, will present his work on digitizing Hans van Dijk's archive and making it available online to researchers across the globe.

SYMPOSIUM

Slash: hybrid ecologies and audiences today
Saturday 6 December 2014

Location: Auditorium, Witte de With

Taking curator/dealer Hans van Dijk as a point of departure, this symposium will investigate what happens when cultural sector divisions – such as public/private and the commercial/non-profit – bleed. Although the latest financial crisis has past, a new generation of cultural producers came of age – and were likewise forged – by this downturn. Six years on, now is the time to take stock of how these initiatives,

particularly those led by artist or writer-led startups, have scaled. To this end, Witte de With hosts a convocation of critics, thinkers, and artists currently engaged in these platforms to discuss how novel – and at times heterodox – modes of address, support, and management have reshaped – for better and for worse – the ways ideas spread.

A closed workshop between Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art and the Gallerist programme of de Appel arts centre that spies commercial 'ambivalence' through the lens of historic curator/dealer case-studies will proceed this event.

MASTER CLASS

The Social Botany Project

Thursday 27 November 2014

Location: Auditorium, Witte de With, and other locations

Noted Chinese artist Xu Tan (Wuhan, 1957) will lead a workshop which continues his explorations into socio-botany. The *Social Botany project* was initiated in 2012, as a specific part of Xu Tan's *Key-words project* which he began in 2005. Throughout multiple exhibitions and research projects the artist aims to uncover and expose the multilayered relationships that govern our relationships between the natural and built environments in which we live. During his workshop at Witte de With Xu Tan, whose video work *Social Plants and Thought Spasm* is on view in the exhibition *Dai Hanzhi: 5000 Artists*, will zoom in on the specific qualities of Rotterdam's built environment and its rural surroundings.

For more information about our public program, please visit www.wdw.nl.

Colophon

Dai Hanzhi: 5000 Artists

4 September 2014 – 4 January 2015

Curated by

Marianne Brouwer

Lenders

Boers-Li Gallery, Canvas International Art, Peter Cox, Collectie de Heus-Zomer, DSM Art Collection, Jan van Dijk, Ronald van Dijk, East Asian Library – Leiden University Libraries, Ernst Dinkla, Collectie G+W Nederland, Groeninghe Foundation, J.V.M Holthuis, Meng Huang, Monique Kies, ShanghART Gallery, Andreas Schmid, Sinopia East Asia Fine Arts Collection, Jeroen Vinken, Vitamin Creative Space, Walker Art Center, and other collections.

Exhibition Guide

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Co-commissioned by



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Dai Hanzhi: 5000 Artists

04.09.14 – 04.01.15

Artists

An Hong, Chen Shaoxiong, Ding Yi, Duan Jianyu, Thomas Fuessler, Geng Jianyi, Han Lei, Hong Hao, Hong Lei, Liu Anping, Liu Ding, Luo Yongjin, Ni Haifeng, Ielnay Oahgnoh, Shi Yong, Wang Jinsong, Wang Xingwei, Wu Shanzhuan, Xin Kedu (The New Analyst Group), Xu Tan, Yan Lei, Zhang Hai'er, Zhang Peili, Zhao Bandi, Zhao Shaoruo, Zheng Guogu, Zhuang Hui, among others.

Curated by

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