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Chinese art through 28 artists

The Rubell Family Collection offers a walk through the world of the country's contemporary art

By Juliana Accioly. From Art Basel Miami Beach daily edition  
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He Xiangyu, My Fantasy, 2012. Photo: Rubell Family Collection, Miami

With this year's exhibition "28 Chinese", the Rubell Family Collection, the museum of one of Miami's leading art collecting families, offers visitors a walk through the world of contemporary Chinese Art—a tapestry of symbols, history, customs, taboos and social contradictions through the eyes of 28 emerging artists, whose work the couple acquired during their visits to more than 100 studios in China.

"There is something essential in the experience that we get visiting the studio. For us, because the artist is so new and oftentimes they haven't even had a solo exhibition, the studio represents entering the inner, inner sanctum of the artist's practice and life," Mera Rubell says. "We always feel like someone is letting us into a very intimate experience about who they are, why they make the work, and it gives us a real opportunity to engage."

The show contextualises China's social-cultural reality, revolution, continuous search for history and a reality that is shifting from local to a global context. One piece from the show depicts the artistic form of silent Chinese movies. Another work offers a look into a poor area of Beijing where public toilets are still used every day. A tonne of tea compressed into a cube alludes to transportation on horseback along ancient routes. And a collaboration between an artist and immigrant workers brings a contemporary issue to the forefront.

The exhibition will occupy the Rubell Family Collection's 45,000 sq. ft museum. The collection will offer a fully illustrated 256-page catalogue in Chinese and English with texts from the artists and a complementary audio tour.

"China as a place or even as a concept is a topic with which the West is totally obsessed. We're bombarded with a glut of products produced in China and hear constantly about its global economic ambitions and its pivotal role in the 21st century, so it's fascinating to delve into a young art scene and see how that art reflects a country's ambitions," Jason Rubell says.

"The nuances of China wouldn't have become apparent through visits to contemporary Chinese exhibitions in Chelsea galleries. In fact, for many years prior to engaging in this project we simply dismissed Chinese art—we didn't put forth the effort and energy into a thorough exploration of the contemporary scene. It was vital to this project that we were able to touch, smell, hear, feel and taste something about China itself."

28 Chinese, Rubell Family Collection, 95 NW 29th Street, Miami, 4 December-1 August 2014. Opening hours during Art Basel Miami Beach, 9am-6pm. [www.rfc.museum](http://www.rfc.museum)

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