



# DOUBLE INFINITY

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### ***Double Infinity***

Joint exhibition project by the Van Abbemuseum and Arthub Asia, in the context of the World Expo 2010

Shanghai 29/04 – 23/05/2010

*Double Infinity* is an artistic project jointly organised by the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven and Arthub Asia, in collaboration with the Dutch China Arts Foundation. The project will be opened on 29 April 2010 by Eric Verwaal, Consul General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Shanghai, in the Dutch Culture Centre in Shanghai, China, during the World Expo 2010 Shanghai.

*Double Infinity* comprises of an exhibition, a book and a series of performances and lectures. Its purpose is to build a bridge between a European museum for contemporary art and a Chinese art initiative. Work from the Van Abbemuseum collection will be exposed alongside existing art and new work by Chinese artists, selected by Arthub Asia. The items from the Van Abbemuseum collection include architectural models and an installation by John Körmeling, videos by Johanna Billing and David Maljkovic, and installations by Job Koelewijn and Stanley Brouwn.

The origin of *Double Infinity* lies in the approach of John Körmeling, the architect of *Happy Street*, the Dutch pavilion at the World Expo 2010. His wide-ranging, cross-disciplinary, unconventional stance towards architecture, urban planning and design provides a significant source of inspiration behind the selection of works from the Van Abbemuseum collection and from the participating Chinese artists.

*Double Infinity* marks the first time that the Van Abbemuseum travels to China, but more significantly, it is the first time that a museum opens itself up to the responses of Chinese artists, designers and architects. The dynamic contributions of these artists will be in direct dialogue with a selection of the museum's permanent collection. No Western or Eastern museum has ever allowed this to happen in China.

The multidisciplinary joint art project of the Van Abbemuseum and Arthub Asia raises questions on the formation of contemporary art collections, on the functioning of global artistic networks and on the goals and consequences of far-reaching cultural exchange, creating a response to educational and creative needs also for the desires of the local scene.



John Körmeling, *Hot Spring*, 2002. Photo: Peter Cox

Two cities, Eindhoven and Shanghai, make up the local backgrounds against which an intercultural dialogue on these issues will be stimulated and initiated. Both cities contribute to *Double Infinity* from the starting point of their different identities and cultural hinterlands. Their distinct contributions are highlighted by juxtaposing the Western-style art collection with the work of Chinese artists, although all the selected works respond to the metaphor of the city and its inhabitants. Creating a bridge between the two metropolitan areas makes it possible for us to picture a city that endlessly regenerates itself and which combines distinct identities without regard to socio-historical geography.

In parallel with the World Expo, which focuses first and foremost on the national characters of the participating countries, *Double Infinity* portrays with imaginative flair how Eindhoven and the Netherlands could conceivably be coupled with Shanghai and China. It forces us to see the two cities as entities developing towards a situation where national identity plays only a contingent role. They are both locations which bear the hallmarks of globalisation, and where the Western hegemony in cultural modes of expression no longer plays a dominant part. What matters is the network and the dialogue engendered by the exhibited works of art, by the stimulation of commentary on what is shown, and by new works of art, performances, lectures etc. In this respect the exhibited works function as carriers of standpoints, visions and opinions, and, above all, as mental models for everyone.



Zhou Xiaohu, *Golden Needle*

This continual questioning of our own movements, possibilities and differences is something we recognise not only in the work of John Körmeling but also in that of the other artists selected from the Van Abbemuseum collection and from China itself. *Double Infinity* links the distinct worlds with an active, purposeful dialogue in which the interchanging of knowledge, encounters and

reflections on reality are actualized in the context of visual art, performance and written text.

The title *Double Infinity* refers also to the element of good fortune, and to the universality of the mathematical symbol for infinity ( $\infty$ ), both deeply embedded in Chinese culture. The "double" in the title not only hints at the doubling of happiness but refers to the bond between two continents, the dialogue between two kinds of artistic practice and the fruitful collaboration between the partners.



Henry Milner, *Construction after Lissitzky's Globetrotter (in time)*. Van Abbemuseum, 2009. Photo Peter Cox

### Publication

Part of the *Double Infinity* project is a trilingual publication which will be presented during the opening of the exhibition. The book describes the relatedness of the two metropolitan regions and their contexts. Essays by the curators and other authors reflect on subjects that include modern industrialisation, the expansion of global cultural interchange and the exponential growth of urbanisation. The book also contains two photo reportages and statistical visualisations relating to Eindhoven and Shanghai, with contributions by the editor of independent urban research journal *Urban China*. It also documents the exhibition project with a photo spread dedicated to each participating artist. The publication was conceived and designed in collaboration with Joost Grootens, well known for his contemporary urban atlases. Grootens specialises in books on art,

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photography and architecture, and is a lecturer at Design Academy Eindhoven.

### Performances

During the period of the exhibition, from 15 to 19 May, performances by the following artists are programmed:

◆ Surasi Kusolwong (*Golden Ghost*).

In *Golden Ghost*, Surasi Kusolwong presents a playful critique of capitalism. The spectator has the task of searching for concealed golden chains, which the honest finder may keep.

◆ Zhou Xiaohu (new work)

Zhou Xiaohu develops a performance that involves the honorable guest at the opening.

◆ Dick El Demasiado (new performance)

Dick El Demasiado conducts the spectator on a journey through the South American musical tradition of Cumbia, although with an experimental tinge. It turns into a legendary music experience, in which two totally disparate worlds truly merge.



Performance by Dick El Demasiado during Festicumex, Van Abbemuseum, 2006.  
Photo Peter Cox

### Participating artists

Collection Van Abbemuseum

Johanna Billing  
Stanley Brouwn  
Job Koelewijn  
John Körmeling  
El Lissitzky  
David Maljkovic

### Other participating artists from the Netherlands

Lara Almacergui  
Julika Rudelius  
Alicia Framis

### Participating artists from China

Cao Fei

Xijing Men Collective (Chen Shaoxiong from China, Gimhongsok from South Korea, and Tsuyoshi Okazawa from Japan)

Comfortable Collective

Liu Gang

Speedism

Wang Zhenfei & Wang Luming (HHD\_FUN)

Xu Tan

### Educational activities

Asia Art Archives

Jiang Jun, Urban China

Qiu Zhijie, Arthub Asia

And many others

### Performances

Dick Verdult alias Dick El Demasiado

Surasi Kusolwong

Zhou Xiaohu

### Publication

Joost Grootens (design)

Ingmar Swalve (photography)

Pieter van Wesemael (text)

Jiang Jun (text and photography)

### Curators

Charles Esche, Defne Ayas, Davide Quadrio, Remco de Blaaij

### Partners

Arthub Asia

Netherlands China Arts Foundation

Eindhoven Municipality

Dutch Culture Centre

DutchDFA (Dutch Design Fashion and Architecture)

Shama Xujiahui



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**Press release**  
**January 2010**

**Arthub Asia** is a multi-disciplinary organization devoted to contemporary art creation in China and rest of Asia. In collaboration with museums and other public / private spaces and institutions, it initiates and delivers ambitious art projects through a sustained dialogue with visual, performance, and new media artists. Inspired by the opportunities generated by the collective intelligence of the thinkers across media in the region, Arthub Asia serves as a creative think tank, a collaborative production lab as well as a curatorial research platform. Arthub Asia is committed to furthering experimentation, knowledge-production and diversity among dedicated artists, art professionals, scholars, and arts organizations.

Arthub Asia, a not-for-profit organization supporting the contemporary art creation in China and rest of Asia, is Network Partner of Prince Claus Fund 2008-2010.

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**The Van Abbemuseum** in Eindhoven is one of the first public museums for contemporary art to be established in Europe. The museum's collection of around 2700 works of art includes key works and archives by Lissitzky, Picasso, Kokoschka, Chagall, Beuys, McCarthy, Daniëls and Körmeling. The museum has an experimental approach towards art's role in society. Openness, hospitality and knowledge exchange are important. We challenge ourselves and our visitors to think about art and its place in the world, covering a range of subjects, including the role of the collection as a cultural 'memory' and the museum as a public site. International collaboration and exchange have made the Van Abbemuseum a place for creative cross-fertilisation and a source of surprise, inspiration and imagination for its visitors and participants.

**Van Abbemuseum**  
Bilderdijkaan 10  
Eindhoven, The Netherlands

**Opening hours**  
Tuesday to Sunday 11:00 – 17:00  
Thursday 11:00 - 21:00  
On Thursdays, entrance to the museum is free from 17:00

**Entrance**  
Adults € 9,00  
Groups of 15 persons or more, senior citizens: € 6,50  
Students; holders of the Dutch young people's cultural pass (CJP): € 4  
Thursdays from 17:00 - 21:00: free entrance (until 31/12/2010)

**For more information, please visit [www.vanabbemuseum.nl](http://www.vanabbemuseum.nl)**

**For the editors:**  
For more information and photographs, please visit:  
[www.vanabbemuseum.nl/press](http://www.vanabbemuseum.nl/press)

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