

STORM KING ART CENTER

STORM KING ART CENTER PRESENTS A MAJOR EXHIBITION OF WORK BY
CONTEMPORARY ARTIST ZHANG HUAN

Zhang Huan: Evoking Tradition Comprises Six Large-Scale Sculptures Installed Outdoors
and Drawings and Sculptures On View Indoors



Zhang Huan, *Milly's Temple*, 2013. Wood, stone and aluminum. 17' 8 5/8" x 18' 4 1/2" x 13' 9 3/8". (540.1 x 560.1 x 420.1 cm). Private Collection. Photograph by Jerry L. Thompson. ©Zhang Huan Studio

Zhang Huan: Evoking Tradition

May 3 – November 9, 2014

Press Preview this Thursday, May 1, 2014, bus leaves NYC at 10am, returns by 3pm

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Mountainville, NY, April 28, 2014—Storm King Art Center presents as its 2014 special exhibition *Zhang Huan: Evoking Tradition*, including more than 15 sculptures and works on paper by internationally celebrated contemporary artist Zhang Huan (b. 1965, Henan Province). Opening to the public May 3, the exhibition will remain on view through November 9, 2014.

Zhang's *Three Legged Buddha* (2007), a copper and steel colossal sculpture standing nearly 28 feet high and weighing more than twelve tons, is the catalyst for the exhibition. It represents the bottom half of a sprawling, three-legged figure, one of whose feet rests on an 8-foot-high human head that appears to be either emerging from or sinking into the earth. The piece entered Storm King's collection in 2010 and has been on view ever since, outdoors in Storm King's pristine, 500-acre landscape of rolling hills, fields, and woodlands. Organized by David R. Collens, Director and Curator of Storm King Art Center, Melissa Chiu, Director of Asia Society Museum, New York, and Nora Lawrence, Associate Curator at Storm King, *Zhang Huan: Evoking Tradition* includes works on loan from collections in the U.S. and China. A new work on view for the first time, *Milly's Temple* (2013), incorporates a traditional Chinese temple, and will be among the outdoor sculptures.

The exhibition focuses on Zhang's interest in Chinese traditional culture, in particular Buddhist imagery and related themes. Zhang's return to China in 2005, after eight years of living in New York, marked a shift in his practice from time-based performances featuring his body as the central object to the more traditional artistic practice of creating painting and sculpture. Significantly, this shift was precipitated by Zhang's revitalized interest

in the traditions of his native China, an interest that would not have been piqued but for his newfound ability to see the country differently.

Storm King's Director and Curator David R. Collens explains, "The inspiration for this exhibition is a large hammered copper sculpture, *Three Legged Buddha*. As a practicing Buddhist, Zhang Huan uses ash from monasteries for his painting and sculpture, and has a particular interest in traditional Chinese artistry. *Milly's Temple* is a recent example of the artist incorporating wooden elements from a traditional architectural structure to create a sculpture. Our visitors will see fascinating and inspiring works by Zhang Huan in the galleries and outdoors near the majestic *Three Legged Buddha*."

Five large-scale sculptures will be installed outside near *Three Legged Buddha*, juxtaposing that sculpture with related works in hammered copper, including sculptures such as *Long Island Buddha* (2010-2011) and *Gone Beyond* (2008). This series of large-scale works was inspired by the artist's travels in Tibet, where he encountered fragments of Buddhist statuary destroyed during China's Cultural Revolution in the mid-1960s and early 1970s. From markets in Tibet and other locations across Southeast Asia, Zhang assembled a collection of fragments—feet, legs, arms, fingers—of small-scale bronze Buddha figures, which he turned into monumental sculptures.

For *Milly's Temple*, created at Zhang's Shanghai studio in 2013-2014 and on view for the first time in this exhibition, the artist has appropriated and stabilized a street gateway for farmers in Shanxi Province in China created during the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911 AD). The temple is intended to demonstrate Zhang's solidarity with villagers in rural China. Zhang has replaced the gateway's original tile roof with a wood structure framework. He has also hung a replica of a beehive from the center of the roof, a metaphor for human communities.

Also on view outdoors will be *Peace No. 2* (2001)—the earliest work in the exhibition—a 20-foot-tall bronze sculpture comprising a bell with a life-size, gold-leaf replica of Zhang's body dangling from its center. In this piece, Zhang connects his body to Buddhist tradition in a direct, physical, and provocative manner. The bell is covered in writing delineating Zhang's family tree, and the hopes and dreams of his assistants. The piece is one in a series of works that address the significance of the bells found in traditional Chinese temples, which evoke visitors' yearning for peace of mind, physical well-being, and social harmony. As traditional Chinese temples are typically set in the mountains, surrounded by beautiful natural scenery, Storm King is an especially fitting location for this piece.

Additional sculptures and works on paper will be displayed inside Storm King's Museum Building to showcase Zhang's artistic process. These include various drawings of *Three Legged Buddha*, and a plaster model of it created in 2006, as well as *Small Three Legged Buddha* (2007), a 3-foot high sculpture in copper.

Also inside the Museum building will be Zhang's sculptures made of ash, including *Ash Thinker No. 10* (2008), and *Ash Army No. 5* (2008). The figurative sculptures in this exhibition are made of ash, steel, and wood. The surfaces of the sculptures change slightly over time, reflecting the way that humans change and reinvent themselves. Buddhist ceremonies incorporate incense burning as a means through which to sanctify the space of worship and summon deities and ancestors. Zhang's assistants collect the ash that is left behind from some twenty Buddhist temples in Shanghai, and bring it back to Zhang's studio. The ash is then sorted by consistency and tone to be used in making the sculptures; several jars of sorted ash will also be on view at Storm King, lending a

studio-like feel to the installation and helping to elucidate the artist's process.

To complement the exhibition, Storm King will publish a fully illustrated catalogue that will include an interview with Zhang Huan conducted by Melissa Chiu and an essay by Nora Lawrence.

Zhang Huan: Evoking Tradition is made possible by generous lead support from Agnes Gund, the Hazen Polsky Foundation, Ohnell Charitable Lead Trust, Pace Gallery, and The Trevor Family. Additional support is provided by Abel and Sophia Sheng. Support for the accompanying publication is generously provided by Pace Gallery.

Support for education-related programming is provided by the Charina Endowment Fund and Sidney E. Frank Foundation, and artist talks are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

Special Event:

Join Co-Curators of *Zhang Huan: Evoking Tradition* Melissa Chiu, Director of the Asia Society Museum, and David Collens, Director and Curator at Storm King Art Center, for a conversation and tour on June 7th at 2pm.

About Zhang Huan

Born in Henan Province in 1965, Zhang Huan is one of China's most influential and provocative contemporary artists. After attending Henan University, Kaifeng (1984-88) and receiving an M.A. from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, in 1993, he gained international recognition for performance pieces. In 1998, Zhang was included in *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* organized by the Asia Society and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, in New York, and moved to New York City, living in New York for eight years. Zhang returned to China in 2005, and since then he has shifted away from performance-based activity conceived as existential explorations and social commentaries, and developed a complex, studio-based practice. His work, as well as his spiritual life, has become increasingly influenced by the imagery, rituals, and teachings of Buddhism.

Zhang Huan's work is part of numerous public collections worldwide. For more information visit zhanghuan.com.

About Storm King Art Center

Located in New York's Hudson Valley about an hour north of the George Washington Bridge, Storm King is one of the world's leading sculpture parks, encompassing over 500 acres of rolling hills, verdant fields, and woodlands. These provide space for a collection of more than 100 large-scale sculptures by some of the most acclaimed artists of our time, including Alexander Calder, Mark di Suvero, Andy Goldsworthy, Maya Lin, Claus Oldenburg, Louise Nevelson, Isamu Noguchi, Richard Serra, David Smith, and Zhang Huan, among others.

Storm King is located on Old Pleasant Hill Road, in Mountainville, New York, one hour from New York City. For information about hours and admission, public transportation, directions, Zipcar discounts, special events, family activities, bike rentals, and the cafe, visit www.stormking.org, or call 845-534-3115.

Storm King reopens for the new season on April 2, 2014.

Join the '**Zhang Huan: Evoking Tradition**' conversation on social media by mentioning **Storm King Art Center** and using **#ZhangHuan #StormKing** hashtags when posting.

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