Shanghai Bienniale looks to expand artistic consciousness

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Cuauhtémoc Medina, chief curator of the Shanghai Biennale, believes the exhibition will become one of the most important venues for rethinking the geography and concepts of contemporary art "as we get into a new world history era".  
The 12th edition of the Shanghai Biennale will take place at Shanghai's Power Station of Art (PSA) from Nov 10, 2018 to March 10, 2019. It was introduced on Thursday at Cai Studio in New York to dozens of media members.  
This year's theme will be Proregress — Art in an Age of Historical Ambivalence. For the Chinese representation of the Biennale, the concept of Yubu, a basic mystic dance step of Daoist ritual in ancient China, has been chosen.  
The dancing technique makes the dancer look like he or she is moving forward while going backwards. The figure also suggests the importance of a way of thinking and culture that ought to help people thrive in an ambivalent era, Medina explained.  
Medina was appointed chief curator of the Biennale after consideration by members of the PSA Academic Committee and confirmation by the Shanghai Municipal Administration of Culture, Radio, Film &TV.  
Born in Mexico, Cuauhtémoc Medina is an internationally renowned art curator, critic and historian. Having worked extensively in Europe, he currently serves as chief curator of the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City.  
Biennales are large-scale exhibitions that, beyond offering a certain perspective on the potential of art and culture today, inscribe a city and an event as a provisory and symbolic artistic world center.  
That Shanghai hosts such an exhibition is considered appropriate, because it provides a clear image of the current decentering of cultural narratives and the significance that China and Asia have in the cultural and economic circuits of today.  
In collaboration with colleagues from China and around the world, Medina said he hopes to curate an exhibition that"will enhance the importance of a growing cultural production that infuses subjective complexity into the complex texture of our times,"he said in a prior interview.  
As the first international contemporary art biennial on the Chinese mainland, the Shanghai Biennale was launched in 1996 under the authority of the Ministry of Culture and the Municipal Administration of Shanghai.  
In 21 years, it has grown to become a major platform for global contemporary art and discourse.  
The Bienniale aims to expand Shanghai's importance as the "gateway to the west" through the arts sector, according to its website. As artists, curators, writers, theorists and art supporters from around the world gather, the Bienniale not only provides a platform for the showcase of contemporary art, but also a place where artists can meet, challenge their work and expand their experience.

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