

Search

TINA B. - NEWS

ABOUT FESTIVAL

PROGRAMME

SECTIONS/ARTISTS

LOCATIONS

CURATORS

SB PROJECTS

FABRIKANTEN

ARTE LAGUNA

FOR MEDIA

VIDEO

CONTACTS

PREVIOUS EDITIONS

VIP REGISTRATION

## OLIVER TSCHIRKY

curator



Oliver Orest Tschirky works as an independent curator and art critic and currently lives in Zurich, Switzerland. He studied International Affairs and Law at the University of St. Gallen (MIA) as well as Art History and Spanish Literature at the University of Berne (MA). He has held positions as Assistant Curator of the Museum of Fine Art Berne, Curator of the Kunsthau Langenthal, Director of Artvera's Gallery in Geneva, Director of the Art & Design Academy St. Gallen, and Vice Director of Art Basel.

As an art historian, Oliver Orest Tschirky has extensive experience with museums, collections and experimental exhibition spaces, exhibitions and public art interventions, as well as catalogues and other publications. He specializes in modern and contemporary art, uses interdisciplinary and sustainable approaches and communicates in English, German, French, Spanish and Italian. Until today, he has realized art projects in Europe, Russia, China, the United States of America and Mexico.

### The Chinese Umbrella Hat Project (Part II), Venice 2011



Andrea Bianconi, The Chinese Umbrella Hat Project (Part I), Shanghai, 2010  
 "...giving the great Chinese community a face."

### The Chinese Umbrella Hat Project (Part II), Venice 2011

An intercultural art project by Andrea Bianconi, curated by Oliver Orest

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The Italian artist Andrea Bianconi connects East and West by building an artistic bridge with 88 dressed models between art hot spots Shanghai and Venice with his intercultural, poetic and fascinating art project.

Public art intervention (part II) in conjunction with La Biennale di Venezia:

**Saturday, June 4, 2011** (opening week of the Venice Biennale 2011)  
**16-18 pm, Piazza San Marco / Viale dei Giardini Pubblici, Venice, Italy**

### **Public Art Performance**

88 models dressed with Chinese umbrella hats, opera masks and silk dresses are walking through Shanghai and Venice to make visible the historic, cultural, social and economic relations and interdependences between China and the rest of the world.

As the first part of the public art intervention, last year on September 9, 2010, when the World Expo 2010 "Better City, Better Life" and the contemporary art fair ShContemporary were occurring simultaneously, 88 Chinese models were walking through the city of Shanghai.

This year, on Saturday, June 4, 2011, during the opening week of La Biennale di Venezia, the second part of the public art performance will take place, when 88 models with the same umbrella hats, opera masks and silk dresses are walking through the city of Venice.

Andrea Bianconi created in China the symbolic number of 88 Chinese umbrella hats, opera masks and silk dresses for this public art performance. At the Chinese paper umbrellas are chopsticks with knotted strings attached where small objects of the daily life were hanging such as toys, coins, pins, buttons, pieces of paper, feathers, parts of plants, and artificial flowers.

Even though a great number of Chinese people are living in Italy, especially in the Milan and the textile center of Prato, they are not willing to participate in the public art performance because they do not dare to take part in a public event. Therefore, courageous Italians are replacing the Chinese immigrants in Europe, representing the Chinese culture and presence, and are symbolically giving the great Chinese community a face. In

### **Perception and Interpretation**

The spectators laugh and wonder, take pictures, have positive and lasting impressions, and appreciate the peaceful appearance of these meaningful and poetic characters because in the Chinese culture the number 8 symbolizes good luck and 88 means a lot of good luck.

The umbrella hats stand for the rich cultural tradition and history, the openness and dynamics of the civilization, the exchange and communication between the people, the mutual and international understanding, the fast development and transition from the past to the future, the intimacy and shelter, the daily happiness and personal welfare, the appreciation for simple things and the vernacular, as well as the beauty, esthetics and richness of the human being.

Because of the Silk Road the two places are highly connected through history, culture, trading and economy. Today, both Shanghai and Venice are world leading places for classic and contemporary art. Different worlds as well as past, present and future are united in the public art intervention the Chinese Umbrella Hat Project.

### **Organization and Support**

The artist and his wife Sonia travelled to China in August 2010 and rented an apartment as well as a studio and worked in Shanghai for one month to prepare the public art performance. During this time, they purchased the working materials, produced 88 umbrella hats and the special silk dresses.

The models make experience in an international art project and each receive for the participation a unique and signed artist t-shirt of the event, designed by the artist. The

public art project is generously supported by Chinese, Italian and Swiss institutions and companies.

For 2011 in Venice the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Italy, Rome, Anno Culturale della Cina, Italian Culture Office of the Consulate General of Italy in Shanghai, Regione del

Veneto, Dipartimento di Studi sull'Asia e sull'Africa Mediterranea, Ca'Foscari Venezia, Istituto Confucio presso l'Università Ca'Foscari Venezia are holding the patronage.

#### **The Artist Andrea Bianconi**

Andrea Bianconi was born in Arzignano, Italy, in 1974, and lives and works in Vicenza and New York. Originally, he studied law at the University of Bologna, but evolved in an art autodidact. Since he moved to Milan in 2004 and New York in 2008, he has held many solo exhibitions and participated in numerous group shows around the world, e.g. Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates; Kunsthal Charlottenburg, Copenhagen, Denmark; Embassy of Italy in Washington DC; Palazzo Reale, Milan, Italy; Tina B, The Prague Contemporary Art Festival, Prague, Czech Republic; Furini Arte Contemporanea, Rome, Italy; Vernon Project, Prague, Czech Republic; Barbara Davis Gallery, Houston, USA; Galleria Comunale d'Arte Contemporanea, Monfalcone, Italy; Volta Show, New York; USA; The Chinese Umbrella Hat Project, Shanghai, China). His works are represented in many public and private collections and recently published in a monographic and multilingual publication by Charta Edition.  
[www.andreabianconi.com](http://www.andreabianconi.com)

#### **The Curator Oliver Orest Tschirky**

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