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Audemars Piguet to Unveil Sun Xun's Commission Artwork at Art Basel Miami



Sun Xun, Republic of Jing Ban: Citizens Wanted!, at Art Basel Hong Kong 2014
(Sonia Kolesnikov-Jessop)

Having recently renewed its global partnership with Art Basel, Audemars Piguet is continuing its support to the arts with a commission to Chinese artist Sun Xun, which will be unveiled at Art Basel Miami in December, Tim Saylor, Audemars Piguet's Chief Marketing Officer, tells Blouin Artinfo.

The Swiss watchmaker launched its Audemars Piguet Art Commission program last year to support artists "in the creation of works of exceptional complexity, precision, and experiential impact on an ongoing, annual basis."

Its first commission, unveiled at Art Basel in Basel last June, was an ambitious installation titled Synchronicity, by Swiss artist and composer Robin Meier. This immersive installation was based on spontaneous emergence of cycles in nature with fireflies and crickets featuring alongside computers, sounds, and electromagnetic pendulums.

Video artist Sun Xun, who is represented by Sean Kelly and ShanghArt, is known for his stop-motion animations that he creates from thousands of ink drawings. Having studied printmaking, he was awarded the title Best Young Artists by the China Academy of Fine Arts in 2010.

Saylor says the Chinese artist was given carte blanche to create any works he wishes around the theme complexity and precision. "The idea is that it's something that will also inspire us," he says, adding "what we like about Sun Xun's work is that he's deeply rooted in craftsmanship."

Last Spring Sun Xun was invited to Le Brassus for a week and, according to Saylor, was inspired by the "specialness" of the place. "He lives in Beijing and a lot of his work has to do with the destruction of the environment. He was amazed by the nature and the calmness of the place. He just walked out into the forest and started drawing." Though it is too early to discuss the actual work, Saylor says it would comprise a film as well as a large scale installation.

The new commission, curated by Ruijun Shen, was initially supposed to be unveiled at Art Basel in Hong Kong, but the artist needs more time which is why it will now be shown in December.

Talking about the partnership with Art Basel, Saylor said the brand was in it for "the very long term."

For us it's really a platform to show the brand in a context that really fits us and to an audience that is really receptive. We're the only legacy brand that is truly contemporary, our uniqueness is our history but also the fact that we're truly innovative, not just in technology but how the brand looks and talks and designs. And for that Art Basel, as a leading contemporary art fair, is a great platform to bring that to life and to push the envelope on how we present the brand."

Each year at Art Basel, the brand creates a different booth in the VIP salon and exhibits pieces around a specific theme. This year for Art Basel Hong Kong in March, the exhibition will be conceptualized by New York-based Sebastian Errzuriz in collaboration with Audemars Piguet's museum director and will center on chiming watches — at SIHH, the brand unveiled the Royal Oak Concept Supersonnerie, a titanium tourbillon chronograph with a new chiming mechanism that the watchmaker says allows for a loud and crisp sound.

To know more about the artist work, watch this video by the Metropolitan Museum of Art:

