

SYDNEY BUDDHA
WORLD PREMIERE

Australia



“One of China’s most daring artists.” **The New York Times**

Zhang Huan, *Taiwan Buddha*, 2010. Image courtesy of the artist and Pace, New York.

Carriageworks, in association with Sydney Festival, presents *Zhang Huan: Sydney Buddha* from 8 January until 15 March 2015, the largest installation ever created for Australia by the renowned Chinese artist. *Zhang Huan: Sydney Buddha* is a free exhibition presented in the Carriageworks public space that will be created especially for the contemporary multi-arts institution.

Zhang Huan: Sydney Buddha is comprised of two large-scale sculptures of Buddha, each over five-metres tall, and positioned facing each other in the Carriageworks public space. One Buddha is created from aluminium and acts as a mould to form the second Buddha, which is created from 20 tonnes of ash collected from Buddhist temples in Shanghai, Jiangsu Province and the Zhejiang Province of China. The ephemeral ash Buddha will gradually disintegrate over the course of the exhibition, affected by exposure to the environment.

Zhang Huan: Sydney Buddha continues Carriageworks’ three-year long tradition of presenting large-scale installations by international artists in the summer. **Zhang Huan’s** installation follows previous projects *Song Dong: Waste Not*, 2013, and *Christian Boltanski: CHANCE*, 2014, both attracting large audiences and critical acclaim.

Carriageworks Director Lisa Havilah said: *“Zhang Huan: Sydney Buddha continues our series of large-scale visual arts installations by leading international contemporary artists, presented in the Carriageworks public space each summer. We are excited to be presenting this major work by Zhang Huan in 2015 – specially created for Carriageworks and presented in association with Sydney Festival – which is sure to delight visitors of all ages.”*

Chinese-born Zhang Huan (b. 1965) is one of the most vital, influential and provocative contemporary artists working today. He began his career in Beijing in the 1990s creating performative, politically engaged works, and moved to New York in 1998. Over two decades, his body of work has addressed themes including poverty, personal liberty, cultural difference and nomadism. Since his return to Shanghai in 2006, Zhang Huan has shifted focus to more traditional forms of art such as sculpture and painting and adopted ash as his primary medium.

Sydney Buddha has been renamed by the artist for its presentation in Australia. Originally named *Taiwan Buddha*, the work was first shown in the exhibition *Zhang Huan: Amitufo* at the Museum of Contemporary

Art Taipei in 2010, and in *Zhang Huan: Soul and Matter* at the Palazzo Vecchio and Forte di Belvedere Florence in 2013. The exhibition at Carriageworks is the largest work the artist has ever shown in Australia. A smaller work, *Berlin Buddha*, 2007, was presented at MoNA as part of the *Red Queen* exhibition in 2013.

Zhang Huan: Sydney Buddha continues Zhang Huan's fascination with contemporary life as he engages with the traditions and rituals that are central to Buddhist, Chinese and Tibetan histories. The sculptures explore the relationship between memory and spirituality, as well as how it relates to Buddhist practice.

Zhang Huan has commented on his series of Buddha installations: "The piece conveys the collective memory, soul, thoughts and prayers, and collapse of mankind. It implies a collective ineffectiveness, arising from taking action when none should be taken, upsetting the natural order of things. As time passes, and humidity in the air changes, the ash crumbles to the ground naturally, I believe that in the moment that the Buddha collapses, innumerable groups of souls will be flying back to the east."

"Ash Buddha isn't protected by any eternal force. It is destined to scatter and disappear as time goes by. It is affected by place, time and air. She will become bigger or smaller, fall apart and disappear."

"The medium I choose depends on what I want to convey: I listen to my heart and do whatever I feel I want to, whatever I feel I should. An artist's creations are all playing on one theme or another, so the choice of medium is a matter of his inner feelings, and his views on life."

"To me, incense ash is neither 'just ash' nor 'just a material'. It represents the collective souls, memories and prayers of the faithful. The prayers offered are all devout and beautiful."

Zhang Huan: Sydney Buddha will be presented at Carriageworks from 8 January until 15 March 2015. The exhibition is free to the public and will be open from 10am until 6pm every day. Zhang Huan will travel to Sydney for the opening of *Sydney Buddha* and will give a free public talk at Carriageworks on Wednesday 8 January at 4pm.

Where Carriageworks

When 8 January – 15 March

Price Free

Sydneyfestival.com/zhang

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