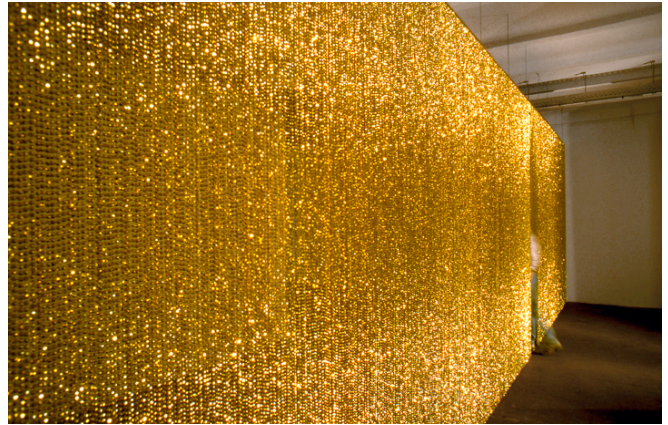


Felix Gonzalez-Torres' First Major Solo Exhibition in China to be presented by Rockbund Art Museum



left: Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *"Untitled" (North)*, 1993. Light bulbs, porcelain sockets and extension cords. Twelve parts: overall dimensions vary with installation. Installation view of: "Part Object Part Sculpture". Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH. 30 Oct. 2005 – 26 Feb. 2006. Cur. Helen Molesworth. Catalogue. © The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation, Courtesy of Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York

right : Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *"Untitled" (Golden)*, 1995. Strands of beads and hanging device. Dimensions vary with installation. Installation view of "Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Zwei Installationen [Two installations]". RealismusStudio der Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst (nGbK), Berlin. 3 Aug. – 1 Sept. 1996. © The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation. Courtesy of Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York.

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Sep 30 - Dec 25, 2016

Curator: Larys Frogier, Li Qi

Artist: Felix Gonzalez-Torres

Organizer: Rockbund Art Museum

Support: Rockbund

The Rockbund Art Museum is honored to present the first solo exhibition of the influential international artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957-1996) in Greater China. From September 30th to December 25th, 2016, RAM will host an exciting exhibition of work by the late American artist, who is renowned for his unconventional methodology and poignant sensitivity. The unique nature of his work takes this exhibition beyond a retrospective; it constitutes a genuine renewal of his art.

Selected from 30 institutions and collections across the world, the exhibition includes over 40 pieces, spanning from 1987 to 1994, allows audiences to contemplate a broad and meaningful selection of the artist's works. The tension between the public and private, the shared and the personal, comprises a recurrent theme for Gonzalez-Torres. Many of the artist's works consist of everyday objects, such as strings of lightbulbs, mirrors, wall clocks or printed sheets of paper. Other works are comprised of spills of candy and jigsaw puzzles. His artwork itself is like a puzzle, but lacking a univocal order. Its demure minimal aesthetic solicits the audience to put the pieces together for themselves, inviting a plurality of pictures to emerge.

There is a vibrancy to his work. One of the more unusual senses to be engaged is that of taste. In the corner of the exhibition space on the 2nd floor, the viewer will find one of the most recognizable works of Gonzalez-Torres', "*Untitled*" (*Portrait of Ross in L.A.*), which is an extremely sensitive and delicate way of portraying someone through an intimate gesture of connecting one's body to another.

Other works tend toward the more visually arresting. For instance, "*Untitled*" (*Go-Go Dancing Platform*) consists of a simple blue platform lined with light bulbs. Once a day, for only a few minutes, a Go-Go dancer in silver shorts dances on the platform to the music that is audible only to himself. Another work "*Untitled*" (*Arena*) consists of a string of lights hung from the ceiling. Headphones are set nearby allowing the viewers to waltz in the sparkling festive enclosure. Other works, suggest a more muted tone, such as the piece "*Untitled*" (*Lover Boy*), which consists of sheer blue curtains hanging over the museum's second floor windows, transforming the space into a romantic and personal atmosphere..

It is well known that Gonzalez-Torres produced his work in the 80's and 90's in an American society and art community profoundly affected by the AIDS epidemic. However, it would be a mistake to engage with his work as simply dealing with homosexual issues or the AIDS crisis. These issues represent that circumstances under which the works were made, and can be understood as platforms for exploring human values, relationships and aspirations at large, both in the artist and in the viewer. In fact, one of the most intriguing aspects of this exhibition is the dramatic shift in the historical and cultural context of the artworks as they are exhibited in Shanghai. Much of Gonzalez-Torres' work allows the environment to shape its aesthetic. By staging the exhibition in contemporary China, it will open up the artist's work to a new context, as a 21st

century Chinese public confronts its message for the first time. Audiences in China may readily recognize a postmodern diagnostic in the artworks on show. It is certainly a presentation relevant to an age of information, where social media and the internet tend to fragment personal identities and abrogate local bonds.

20 years since his passing, RAM is able to present the work of Felix Gonzalez-Torres afresh, moving beyond the labels that once constrained its definition. Its uniquely interactive nature entails that meaning is not only discovered, but also contributed by its audience. This reciprocity is what makes Gonzalez-Torres both an artist of the polity, and in the end altogether intimate. Quirky and opaque, sharp and humorous: the pieces presented in this forthcoming exhibition will incite introspection just as they draw its audiences together.

Rockbund Art Museum would like to thank the Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation and the many institutions that graciously loaned their pieces, both for their generous help and their assistance in bringing this exhibition into realization.

About the Artist

Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957–1996) was the subject of several important museum exhibitions during his lifetime, including “Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Traveling” (1994) at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. and The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, and a retrospective organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1995), which traveled to the Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, Santiago de Compostela, and ARC-Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Gonzalez-Torres’s interest in social and political causes may have informed the overlap of private and public life that can be found in his work. From 1987 to 1991, he was part of Group Material, a New York–based art collective whose members worked collaboratively to initiate community education and cultural activism.

Gonzalez-Torres’ works have been included in hundreds of group shows, including early presentations at Artist’s Space and White Columns in New York City (1987 and 1988 respectively); the Whitney Biennial (1991); the Venice Biennale (Aperto 93, 1993); SITE/Santa Fe (1995); and the Sydney Biennale (1996). Since his death in 1996, there have been numerous solo exhibitions devoted to his work, including ones organized by the Sprengel Museum Hannover, Germany (1997) which traveled to Kunstverein St. Gallen Kunstmuseum, Switzerland (1997) and Museum für Moderne Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Austria (1998); the Serpentine Gallery, London (2000); Hamburger Bahnhof-Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, Germany (2006–2007); PLATEAU and Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea (2012). A survey of his work, “Specific

Objects without Specific Form”, was organized by WIELS, Centre d’Art Contemporain, Brussels, Belgium (2010), and then travelled to Fondation Beyeler, Basel, Switzerland (2010) and Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main, Frankfurt, Germany (2011). In 2007, Gonzalez-Torres was selected to represent the United States at the 52nd La Biennale de Venezia, in the exhibition “Felix Gonzalez-Torres: America”.

About the Curators

Larys Frogier is the Director of the Rockbund Art Museum (RAM) in Shanghai. Curator, critic and art historian, he is involved in artistic and social challenges in post-global contexts where ongoing social, economical, cultural transformations demand new ways of interrelations, citizenship and reinvented creativity.

He curated numerous exhibitions and published extensive essays on the works of international artists: Adel Abdessemed, Nan Goldin, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Paola Pivi, Ugo Rondinone, Wang Du, Yang Jiechang.

Previously the Director of the contemporary art centre La Criée in Rennes (France), he curated long-term projects (symposiums, residencies, exhibitions, publications) which question the links and ruptures between broadening transcontinental areas. Chair of the HUGO BOSS ASIA ART jury since 2013 at the Rockbund Art Museum, he is conceiving this new award, exhibition and research program as an evolving platform to promote emerging artists and to question Asia as a construction to investigate rather than a monolithic area or fixed identities.

Larys Frogier taught art theory, history of art and curatorial studies at the University of Rennes, while he was also researcher at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) and at the Archives for Art Criticism.

Li Qi is Senior Curator at Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai. He was Opinions Editor at *The Art Newspaper China* and Senior Editor at LEAP, where he currently serves as a contributing editor. He was a jury member of the 2015 Hugo Boss Asia Art Award for Emerging Asian Artists. In 2014, Li Qi curated “CONDITIONS: An Exhibition of Queer Art”, at club Destination, Beijing. In 2016, he curated “Heman Chong: Ifs, Ands, or Buts” at Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai. Li Qi graduated from Beijing’s Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), and from London’s Chelsea College of Art and Design. He has worked at institutions such as the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) in Beijing and the British Film Institute (BFI) in London.

About Rockbund Art Museum

For over 5 years RAM has been at the forefront of the growing contemporary art scene in China, presenting world-class programmes in a unique museum setting. A boutique Museum of the upmost quality, RAM holds a unique position within Shanghai's continually expanding cultural scene. The Museum is located within the Bund district and housed in an exquisite heritage Art Deco building which was renovated by architect David Chipperfield before opening in 2010.

The museum's exemplary curatorial, education and research programmes showcase acclaimed and emerging Chinese and international artists, responding to and reflecting on present and urgent challenges of society locally and internationally. RAM presents a bold and pioneering programme of 3 exhibitions and a special project "RAM HIGHLIGHT" per year; exploring and realising artists' most ambitious projects and working with them to tailor exhibitions to the Museum and to the Shanghai context, often with a large proportion of works being new commissions. RAM devises, produces and curates its programme in-house, in conjunction with carefully selected international collaborations of the highest quality.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.rockbundartmuseum.org>

About ROCKBUND

As an integral element of the historic Bund waterfront, Rockbund is situated at the birthplace of modern Shanghai with her dazzling array of architectural styles. In order to protect this valuable aspect of the urban fabric and cultural heritage, the Rockbund preservation and development project has the stated aim of "restoring the original style and remodeling its function." The project stretches from Yuanmingyuan Road and Park 33 in the east, Suzhouhe Road in the north, Huqiu Road in the west and Beijing Road in the east, and sits at the confluence of the Huangpu and Suzhou rivers. Aside from restoring eleven protected historical buildings, Rockbund will also build six new buildings with the goal of creating a high-end luxury district with a captivating environment for luxury retail, fine-dining, serviced apartments and commercial offices, recreating the glamour of Shanghai for a new age. With the opening of the Rockbund Art Museum, the first of the eleven historic buildings, Rockbund is re-establishing the origin of the Bund as a hub for arts and culture.

For more information on ROCKBUND, please visit: www.rockbund.com

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