

TRAVEL WITH FRIENDS IN 2012

Revised  
Dates



# Cutting Edge China

## Contemporary Art in Shanghai and Beijing

with John McDonald

21 May – 02 June 2012 (13 days)

  
Renaissance  
Tours





Tour Leader  
**John McDonald**

John McDonald is best known as the art critic of the Sydney Morning Herald. He is a former Head of Australian Art at the National Gallery of Australia, a busy lecturer,

and author of several books, most notably, *Art of Australia: From Exploration to Federation*, the first in a projected three volume history of Australian art.

John has a longstanding interest in China, which he has been visiting since 1989. Last year he wrote the bulk of the catalogue for the White Rabbit Gallery, a new private museum of contemporary Chinese art.

## Cutting Edge China Contemporary Art in Shanghai and Beijing

Following the sell-out success of the October 2011 tour, join John McDonald on a second tour to China in May 2012.

Over the past two decades China has emerged as the most innovative force in international contemporary art. In the mid 1980s the Chinese said goodbye to Maoism and entered an age of reforms, but the past died hard. There have been three distinct waves of activity, as artists came to terms with the legacy of Modernism, exorcised their memories of Mao and the Cultural Revolution, and embraced a new individualism.

This tour will focus on the galleries and studios that are driving this new revolution, including major arts complexes such as 798 in Beijing, and Shanghai's Moganshan Lu. In addition, we will visit the private studios of well-known Chinese artists, and witness the extraordinary scale on which they are working.

The tour will include visits to historic landmarks such as the Great Wall, Summer Palace and the Forbidden City and major institutions such as the Today Art Museum and the Shanghai Museum. There will be opportunities to shop, to explore, to sample a range of Chinese cuisines, and savour the atmosphere of two of the world's largest, most vibrant cities.



*Temple of Heaven, Beijing*

## ITINERARY

**Mon 21 May 2012** **Australia - Shanghai**

Morning departure from Sydney on Qantas to Shanghai. Arrive in the evening and transfer to your hotel located in the heart of Shanghai on Maoming Road near Huai Hai Road's great selection of designer boutiques and retail outlets. Since its opening in 1929, the hotel has received about 300 state leaders and heads of government.

**Tue 22 May** **Shanghai**

After a welcome breakfast and briefing by John McDonald start your exploration of Shanghai with a city tour. Started in the 11th century as a fishing village, Shanghai is now China's largest city and the new "Gateway to the Orient". Visit the historic waterfront Bund, lined with grand European-style architecture from the 1920's and 1930's boom period.

After lunch visit Zhongshan Dong Road, the raised promenade provides an excellent view across the Huangpu River to the skyscrapers of Pudong – the "new" Shanghai. Cross to Pudong and visit the Pearl Orient Tower which houses an Observation Tower with spectacular views of the city and the Museum of the History of Shanghai. (BL)

**Wed 23 May** **Shanghai**

Morning visit to private galleries such as Three on the Bund, Shangart and Eastlink among others in the Suzhou Creek gallery community. Much like Beijing's art scene, Moganshan Road at Suzhou Creek is a little hidden and a little out of the way, but it provides a portal to a world of Chinese contemporary art that is fighting for the attention of the world. Behind the storied Suzhou Creek, which winds its way through Shanghai before joining the Huangpu River, the complex of art galleries and studios have not only managed to stay in existence, but are driving forward the city's art scene. Lunch will be followed by a visit to MoCA, the Museum of Contemporary Art. (BL)

**Thu 24 May** **Shanghai**

After breakfast, visit the 400-year old YuYuan Garden. Built in 1559 in the Suzhou style by a high official in honour of his father, the garden has maintained its classic beauty over the centuries and is a graceful blend of traditional Chinese architecture, miniature lakes, bridges and rock formations.

Afternoon visit to the Shanghai Museum. Located on People's Square, the political and cultural centre of Shanghai, this extraordinary building is shaped like a giant bronze tripod and houses one of the world's top collections of ancient and modern Chinese art and artefacts.

Dinner at M on the Bund restaurant. (BD)



*The Bund*



*Oriental Pearl Tower*



*Yu Yuan Garden Credit Wolfgang Staudt*



*MoCA, Shanghai*

**Fri 25 May** **Shanghai - Beijing**

Transfer to the airport via the Shanghai Expo site. If possible, visit the China Pavilion which is the only remaining pavilion.

Afternoon flight from Shanghai to Beijing. "On the banks of a great river in the province of Cathay, there stood an ancient city of great size and splendour which was named Khanbaliq, or the Khan's city". So wrote Marco Polo the first European to visit the city we now call Beijing. (BD)

**Sat 26 May** **Beijing**

Morning exploration of two landmarks of the Chinese capital: the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square. Covering over 100 acres, Tiananmen Square is surrounded by the Forbidden City, the Gate of Heavenly Peace, the China Museum National Museum and the Great Hall of the People. In the middle of the square is the Monument to the People's Heroes and the Chairman Mao Zedong Memorial Hall.

Continue with a tour of the incredible Forbidden City. Originally built (by more than 200,000 men) in 1420 for the Emperor Yongle, this former Imperial Palace is an architectural masterpiece with a breathtaking symmetry of palatial pavilions, courtyards, gates, treasure halls and gardens.

After lunch visit the Temple of Heaven. Built between 1406 and 1420 as the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, the Temple of Heaven covers 273 hectares and represents a Golden Age of Chinese Architecture. Laid out according to the needs of sacred ceremony, it is believed to be the one place on earth with direct access to heaven, although only for Emperors who were regarded as celestial go-betweens. (BL)

**Sun 27 May** **Beijing**

After breakfast visit the Red Gate Gallery, opened in 1991 by Australian Brian Wallace. Continue to the 798 Art Space, located in the Dashanzi area, to the northeast of central Beijing. It is a site of state-owned factories including Factory 798, which originally produced electronics.

Beginning in 2002, artists and cultural organizations began to divide, rent out, and re-make the factory spaces, gradually developing them into galleries, art centres, artists' studios, design companies, restaurants, and bars.

It became a 'Soho-esque' area of international character, replete with 'loft living', attracting attention from all around. Bringing together contemporary art, architecture, and culture with a historically interesting location and an urban lifestyle, 798 has become one the major centres of Beijing's thriving contemporary art scene. Dinner at the Three Guizhou Men restaurant. (BD)

**Mon 28 May** **Beijing**

Excursion to the Great Wall of China at Badaling, 80 km from Beijing. Built section-by-section between the 5th century BC and the 16th century AD, the first Emperor of the Qin Dynasty and a unified China decided to link up



*Gate of Heavenly Peace at the Forbidden City*



*Chen Wen Ling Studio, Beijing*



*798 Art Space*

the separate walls, formerly built by different Kingdoms to protect their northern territories. This mammoth project covering more than 6,700 km, took over 10 years and 1,000,000 people to complete and is a poignant reminder of the power of China's ancient civilisation.

Enjoy lunch at the extraordinary Commune by the Wall – a boutique hotel and 12 private contemporary residences designed by 12 leading Asian architects. (BL)

**Tue 29 May** **Beijing**

After breakfast discover some of the stunning new architecture in Beijing including the newly built stadiums for the 2008 Olympic Games - the 'Water Cube' and the 'Bird's Nest'- plus the Olympic Village, the CCTV Building, China National Museum and the National Centre of the Performing Arts, known as 'the Egg' (exterior views only).

Continue to the Today Museum, Beijing's first non-governmental and non-profit art museum. The museum focuses on the promotion of Chinese contemporary art. (B)

**Wed 30 May** **Beijing**

Full day exploration of the new art gallery districts that showcase the city's burgeoning contemporary art scene. (BL)

**Thu 31 May** **Beijing**

Morning visit to the Summer Palace (Yiheyuan). Located 10 km north-west of Beijing, Yiheyuan was the summer retreat of the imperial family during the Qing Dynasty. Its beautiful gardens are renowned for their architectural grandeur and stunning natural beauty. The large classic Kunming Lake makes up three-quarters of the total area of 290 hectares, while the balance (Longevity Hill) contains a complex of imperial residences rebuilt by the Dowager Empress Cixi in the late 19th century.

After lunch explore a slice of 'old Beijing' with a visit to one of the ancient Hutong areas of the city. Hutongs are ancient alleyways lined with siheyuan, traditional courtyard residences, which are linked to form delightful historic neighbourhoods dotted with communal squares.

Tonight attend a traditional Beijing Opera performance. (BL)

**Fri 01 June** **Beijing**

Day at leisure to enjoy the wonderful shopping opportunities that abound or simply take in the pulse of this exciting city. Tonight join John McDonald and fellow art lovers for a farewell dinner. (BD)

**Sat 02 June** **Depart Beijing**

Transfer to the airport for the flight to Hong Kong connecting with an overnight flight to Sydney on Qantas. (B)

**Sun 03 June** **Arrive Australia**

Morning arrival in Sydney.



Gao's Bro Studio.Beijing



CCTV Building



The Water Cube



Opera performance

## TOUR PRICES ...

Per person, twin-share **AUD6,950**

Single supplement\* **AUD1,450**

Reduction without international  
airfare **AUD1,250**

Business class surcharge on request

Deposit (per person) **AUD500**

Final Payment Due **22 March 2012**

*\*Single travellers may request to share.  
Please advise at time of booking.*

**TOUR CODE:** AGS CHINA

## TOUR PRICES INCLUDE

- Accommodation in centrally located 5-star hotels with private facilities and daily breakfast (B)
- Meals as per itinerary (L=Lunch, D=Dinner) including special Welcome and Farewell meals
- Return economy class airfares Sydney – Shanghai / Beijing – Hong Kong– Sydney on Qantas (23KG luggage allowance)
- Economy class flight Shanghai – Beijing (20KG luggage allowance)
- Taxes and fuel surcharges (as at 20 November 2011)
- Transfers on arrival and departure if travelling on group flights
- Comprehensive sightseeing,

visits to galleries and attractions with John McDonald including entrance fees as per itinerary

- Lectures and talks with your tour leader throughout
- Gratuities for local guides and drivers
- Hotel portorage (1 piece per person)
- Visa for China

## DO NOT INCLUDE

- Transfers on arrival / departure if not travelling on group flights
- Drinks with meals, except Welcome and Farewell meals
- Items of a personal nature, including telephone, laundry, taxis etc.
- Airport portorage
- Travel insurance

## YOUR HOTELS ...



Jin Jiang Hotel / Cathay Building  
Shanghai

★★★★★



Regent Beijing

★★★★★

*NB. Hotels of a similar  
standard may be substituted.*



Summer Palace, Beijing



Great Wall

## TERMS & CONDITIONS

### How to Book

Complete, sign and return the Booking Form available from Renaissance Tours with your deposit.

### Deposit / Final Payments

Your deposit is due at the time of booking and is used to pay hotel, airline, performance tickets and/or other deposits. It is non-refundable in the event of your cancellation.

Final payment is due 60 days before departure. Failure to make the final payment by the due date may result in cancellation of your booking and loss of deposit.

Payments are accepted in cash and by cheque, bank transfer, American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa. A 3% service charge applies for payment by American Express and Diners Club.

### Cancellation & Refunds

a) Cancellation by You - Cancellation charges will be applied as shown below, calculated from the day written notification is received by Renaissance Tours. In addition to cancellation fees for tours operated by Renaissance Tours as shown below, airlines, hotels and other third parties may impose up to 100% cancellation charges.

60 days or more	Forfeit of deposit
59 – 45 days	25% of tour cost
44 – 31 days	50% of tour cost
30 – 15 days	75% of tour cost
Less than 15 days	100% of tour cost

The above cancellation charges include applicable GST.

In addition to the above, cancellation charges may apply for additional arrangements booked by Renaissance Tours, such as air tickets, hotels and travel insurance premium. If the reason for cancellation is covered by the insurance policy, you may be able to reclaim these charges.

b) Cancellation by Us - We reserve the right to cancel a tour for any reason (such as failure to reach minimum tour participant numbers). Except for force majeure, we will not cancel a tour less than 60 days before departure. No further compensation will be paid in the event of cancellation by Renaissance Tours. A full refund of monies paid for tour costs will be the full extent of our liability.

Cancellation and/or amendment fees may apply for additional travel arrangements booked by Renaissance Tours.

### Passports, Visas and Vaccinations

All travellers must be in a possession of a valid passport – most countries require a 6-month validity from your date of entry or exit. For some countries (e.g. China, Vietnam, India, Russia), visas are included in the tour cost and will be arranged by Renaissance Tours prior to travel. For other countries, it is your responsibility to ensure you have the appropriate visa(s).

You are also responsible for obtaining all necessary inoculations and preventative medicines as may be required for the duration of the tour.

### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of travel that you are covered by comprehensive travel insurance

for international tours. Your travel insurance can be arranged by Renaissance Tours.

### Fitness and Participation

For the overall benefit of the group, all tour members must possess a moderate level of mobility, including the ability to:

- negotiate airports and railway stations without wheelchair assistance
- use combined shower/bath facilities (it is impossible to guarantee walk-in shower facilities)
- undertake walking tour of 2-3 hours duration, including using stairs, walking over cobblestones and other uneven surfaces
- stand for long periods in museums and other sites
- embark / disembark coaches, trains and other methods of transportation without assistance
- handle your own luggage

If you (or we) have any doubts about your ability to participate in your chosen tour, you may be required to have a doctor's appraisal. This would require a doctor to read the itinerary of your chosen tour and provide you with a written confirmation of your ability to participate.

### Terms & Conditions

You can find the full terms & conditions on the Renaissance Tours booking form. They can also be found at [www.renaissancetours.com.au](http://www.renaissancetours.com.au) or we would be happy to post you a copy on request.



Hutong, Beijing



Front Cover: Lv Peng, *Flower Stepping* 2011, Acrylic on canvas, 85 x 185 cm, Credit: Courtesy of the artist and Red Gate Gallery, Beijing  
Back Cover: Sculptures by Chen Wen Ling

TO BOOK CUTTING EDGE CHINA  
CALL RENAISSANCE TOURS ON 1300 727 095  
EMAIL [INFO@RENAISSANCETOURS.COM.AU](mailto:INFO@RENAISSANCETOURS.COM.AU)



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NEW SOUTH WALES  
ART GALLERY ROAD, THE DOMAIN  
SYDNEY NSW 2000  
w [www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/member](http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/member)



TOUR ARRANGEMENTS BY –  
**Renaissance Tours**  
Level 4, 47 York Street, Sydney NSW 2000  
GPO Box 5068, Sydney NSW 2001  
ABN 14 069 591 448 Lic. 2TA4526

Toll Free (Aust) 1300 727 095  
Toll Free (NZ) 0800 403 621

t (02) 9299 5801  
f (02) 9299 5805  
e [info@renaissancetours.com.au](mailto:info@renaissancetours.com.au)  
w [www.renaissancetours.com.au](http://www.renaissancetours.com.au)

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