

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Renowned Chinese Contemporary Artist Xu Bing Opens First Solo Exhibition in Hong Kong at Asia Society Hong Kong Center with New Commissioned Works

(Hong Kong, May 7, 2014) Internationally acclaimed Chinese contemporary artist, Xu Bing, is staging his first major solo exhibition - ***It Begins with Metamorphosis: Xu Bing*** – in Hong Kong at Asia Society Hong Kong Center from May 8 to August 31, 2014. The exhibition is generously supported by MetLife Foundation, the lead sponsor, and other partners.

Recognized for his originality, creativity, self-direction and contribution to the community, Xu Bing is known for his extraordinary printmaking, calligraphy and installations, as well as his works using unexpected materials such as tobacco leaves, debris and silkworms.

Curated by Dr. Yeewan Koon, Associate Professor in the Department of Fine Arts at the University of Hong Kong, ***It Begins with Metamorphosis: Xu Bing***, features some of the artist's latest works alongside several newly commissioned pieces for this Hong Kong exhibition. The exhibition shows how metamorphosis marks the beginning of the process of ideas and methods, which brings insights to Xu Bing and his art. A catalogue will be published in conjunction with the exhibition.

Dr. Yeewan Koon explains further, “We noticed something extraordinary about Xu Bing’s work. He is able to talk about very complex ideas to large numbers of people by turning familiar things into unfamiliar things and vice versa - hence the concept of transformation and metamorphosis. In this exhibition, we see how this artist uses different materials and through different mediums, explores the idea of transformation.”

The exhibition also features artworks that provide a glimpse into Xu Bing’s life - who he is, how he started as an artist, his family relationships and where he is going today.

Notable works in the exhibition include newly commissioned exhibits *Background Story* (2014) which looks like a traditional Chinese landscape painting but is in fact, a composition made of leaves and debris; and *Square Word Calligraphy* (2014), an excerpt from Zhuangzi, a famous Taoist classic, written in what appears to be authentic Chinese characters but on closer examination we see they are invented characters formed by alphabet letters, a product of the artist’s imagination.

Also in this Hong Kong exhibition is Xu Bing’s famous *Tobacco Book* (2011), a super-sized book made entirely of tobacco leaves and his ‘live’ installation *The Opening* (1998), where some 300 silkworms have been found to populate several mulberry trees for this artwork during the course of the exhibition.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Ms. S. Alice Mong, Executive Director of Asia Society Hong Kong Center said, “We are honored to be playing host to Xu Bing’s first solo exhibition in Hong Kong. Xu Bing’s work never fails to fascinate and astonish - whether it’s at the Museum of Modern Art in New York or the British Museum and Victoria & Albert Museum in London or

any one of several Venice Biennales. I am sure Hong Kong audiences will be thrilled and excited in equal measure at Xu Bing's art."

Mr. Chris Townsend, President, Asia, for MetLife Inc. and a Board Member of MetLife Foundation, the lead sponsor of the exhibition, said, "MetLife is pleased to be partnering with the Asia Society in bringing this extraordinary exhibition of Xu Bing's work to Hong Kong. At MetLife, we are committed to supporting cultural programs that have a strong educational theme. We are delighted to be showcasing the work of an artist who has such strong cultural ties in both the US and China."

The exhibition is complemented by education programs as well as a public lecture series including an evening discussion with Xu Bing and exhibition curator Dr. Yeewan Koon - as well as an Art Salon event with Xu Bing and archaeologist Agnes Hsu-Tang. Agnes Hsu-Tang interviewed Xu Bing as part of Discovery Channel Asia's series on "Chineseness", a 4-part documentary that examines the idea of a renaissance in Chinese identity through the lives and work of four contemporary Chinese artists.

About *It Begins with Metamorphosis: Xu Bing*

Venue: Asia Society Gallery (Former Magazine A) -- Asia Society Hong Kong Center

Address: 9 Justice Drive, Admiralty, Hong Kong

Date: May 8 - August 31, 2014

Hours:

Tuesday - Sunday: 11:00 - 17:00

Last Thursday of the month: 11:00 - 20:00

Closed on Mondays

***Special Opening Hours: May 13 - 18, 11:00 - 20:00**

Last admission: 30 minutes before closing

Admission Fee:

Adult: HK\$30 | Senior (aged 60 or above) and individuals with disabilities: HK\$15 | Asia Society members, full-time students, aged 18 or below, last Thursday of the month, International

Museum Day (May 17 and 18, 2014): Free

Free Gallery Docent Tour Schedule:

	English	Cantonese
Fridays	14:30	15:30
Saturdays	14:30	15:30
Sundays	14:30	15:30
Last Thursday of the month	19:00	

Enquiry: (852) 2103 9511 | www.asiasociety.org.hk

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About Asia Society

Founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller 3rd in New York, The Asia Society is a leading educational organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among peoples, leaders and institutions of Asia and the United States in a global context. Across the fields of arts, business, culture, education, and policy, The Asia Society provides insight, generates ideas, and promotes collaboration to address present challenges and create a shared future.

About Asia Society Hong Kong Center

As an affiliate of the Asia Society global network with 11 centers, Asia Society Hong Kong Center was established in 1990 by a group of Hong Kong community leaders, led by the late Sir Q.W. Lee, the honorary chairman of Hang Seng Bank. In February 2012, the Hong Kong Center established its new permanent home in Admiralty, Hong Kong at the Old Victoria Barracks, Former Explosives Magazine site steeped in history, cultural significance and natural beauty and offers a broader variety of programs in the form of lectures, performances, film screenings and exhibitions to the community.

About Asia Society Gallery (Former Magazine A)

Built between 1863 and 1868, Asia Society Gallery is the oldest building in the Former Explosives Magazine, the historic fabric and features of this imposing structure have been thoughtfully restored and adapted for re-use as a modern exhibition space of international museum standard. Asia Society Gallery brings together established artists and aspiring talent who share a commitment to promoting Asian arts and culture, and to bringing the best and culturally inspiring in visual arts to the Hong Kong public.

Address

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About MetLife Foundation

MetLife Foundation was created in 1976 to continue MetLife’s long tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Today, the Foundation is dedicated to advancing financial inclusion, committing \$200 million over the next five years to help build a secure future for individuals and communities around the world. The Foundation also continues its support for civic and cultural organizations that help build stronger communities. To learn more about MetLife Foundation, visit www.metlife.org.

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