

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LEADING CULTURAL FIGURES ATTEND ASIA SOCIETY ART GALA,
LAUNCHING ART BASEL IN HONG KONG**

**GUESTS INCLUDED ROBERT AND CHANTAL MILLER, JULIA AND VICTOR
FUNG & BASSAM SALEM**

**THIS YEAR'S HONOUREES FEATURED BHARTI KHER, LIU GUOSONG,
TAKASHI MURAKAMI & ZHANG XIAOGANG**



(Hong Kong, 15 May 2014) More than four hundred of the world's most distinguished collectors, curators, gallerists and dignitaries gathered this evening to honor four exceptional contemporary artists at the Asia Society's second annual Art Gala, hosted by Ms. S. Alice Mong and Dr. Melissa Chiu at their spectacular Hong Kong Center. Kicking off Art Basel in Hong Kong, the evening celebrated world-renowned artists **Bharti Kher**, **Liu Guosong**, **Takashi Murakami** and **Zhang Xiaogang** for their extraordinary contributions to contemporary art in Asia. Guests were also treated to a private viewing of the first major solo exhibition of **Xu Bing**'s work in Hong Kong, currently on display through 31 August 2014.

Notable guests included **artists** Li Songsong, Mariko Mori, Michael Joo and Song Dong. **International collectors** attended, including Deddy Kusama, Basma Al Sulaiman, Maggie Tsai, Alexandra Prasetio, and Bharat and Swati Bhise. **Gallerists** present included Nick Simunovic of Gasgolian Gallery, one of the evening's hosts, Rachel Lehmann, Emmanuel Perrotin, Arne Glimcher, Marcia Levine, and Jane Lombard and Lisa Carlson. **Supporters of Asia Society** included Robert and Chantal Miller, Hal and Ruth Newman, Mitch and Joleen Julis. **Other guests** included actress Lynn Hsieh, Nam June Paik's Nephew, Ken Hakuta, Director of Art Basel, Marc Spiegler, Managing Director of Christie's Asia, Rebecca Wei, and Curator of UBS Art Collection, Stephen McCoubrey. The night's honourees were recognized with a special presentation by their long-time advocates: Dr. Melissa Chiu for Bharti Kher, Dr. Yeewan Koon for Liu Guosong, Dr. Benjamin Genocchio for Takashi Murakami and Michelle Yun for Zhang Xiaogang.

Melissa Chiu, Director of Asia Society Museum in New York and Senior Vice President for Global Arts and Cultural Programs for Asia Society, commented: "We were delighted to have the unique opportunity to honor such exceptional artists as Bharti Kher, Liu Guosong,

Takashi Murakami and Zhang Xiaogang at the Asia Society Art Gala this year. This annual event, now in its second edition, was established to recognize and celebrate artists who have had an unprecedented influence on the contemporary art scene, particularly in Asia. It is a pleasure to give prominence to their remarkable achievements and to continue to create awareness for contemporary Asian art, building on the foundations of the past two decades.”

S. Alice Mong, Executive Director of Asia Society Hong Kong Center, commented: “Hong Kong has become a global focal point for art and culture so it’s only fitting that it is here, that we not only recognize and acknowledge the outstanding contribution these artists have made in their respective fields, but create understanding and awareness of these artists’ work in the wider community.”

In New York, Chiu has implemented a number of major initiatives at the Asia Society Museum, including the establishment of a contemporary art collection to complement the museum’s renowned holdings of traditional Asian art, gifted to the Society by Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller 3rd. The Art Gala is among the many ways Asia Society Museum is putting a spotlight on artists in Asia for nearly twenty years, and is one of the pioneering institutions in this field.

Mong was instrumental in launch of the Asia Society Hong Kong Center in its current permanent home - in the restored Former Explosives Magazine – and its 7 exhibitions in the Center’s Gallery including the recent *Caravaggio* exhibition which attracted in excess of 26,000 visitors in just one month. The Hong Kong Center also recently received what is probably the largest donation to the arts by an individual in Hong Kong, a HK\$100 million transformative gift from Robert W. Miller, founder of Duty Free Shoppers (DFS.) The donation will be used to promote and celebrate Hong Kong’s emerging talent in the arts.

The 2014 Asia Society Art Gala was supported by: Co-Chairs: Larry Gagosian; Hyun Sook Lee; Lippo Group; Robert and Chantal Miller; Ali Naqvi, Credit Suisse; Richard and Maggie Tsai, Fubon Bank (Hong Kong) Limited; Wheelock and Company Limited

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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. Asia Society is an international organization with 11 centers in the United States and Asia: Hong Kong, Houston, Los Angeles, Manila, Mumbai, New York, San Francisco, Seoul, Shanghai, Sydney, and Washington, DC.

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 Museum

Asia Society Museum organizes groundbreaking exhibitions of both traditional and contemporary Asian and Asian American art. The Museum, located on Park Avenue and 70th Street in New York City, is known for its Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller Collection of masterpiece-quality traditional Asian works. The collection, universally described as “gemlike”, includes objects from cultures across Asia that date from the 11th century BCE to the 19th century CE. Asia Society was one of the first American museums to establish a program of contemporary Asian art in the early 1990s. A recognized leader in identifying and fostering contemporary Asian and Asian American artists, the Museum announced the establishment of a Contemporary Art Collection in 2007.

About the Artists

Bharti Kher is widely regarded as an artist at the forefront of contemporary art. Her radically heterogeneous works have been shown in galleries and museums around the world, including the Tel Aviv Museum of Art; Centre Georges Pompidou; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (MOT); and the Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai.

Liu Guosong, a founder of The Fifth Moon Art Group and pioneer of the modern art movement in Taiwan, is one of the most important and influential practitioners of modernist Chinese art. His paintings are part of more than sixty museum collections, including Taipei Fine Arts Museum, the Palace Museum in Beijing, the British Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne.

Takashi Murakami is an artist of international importance. In addition to numerous solo exhibitions, a large-scale retrospective of Murakami’s work, “©Murakami” toured major museums around the world, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. He has also held major retrospectives at the Palace of Versailles and ALRIWAQ DOHA.



Hong Kong Center

Zhang Xiaogang has established himself as one of the most important Chinese contemporary artists. He has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, and his works are held in the collections of museums worldwide, including the Essl Museum-Kunst der Gegenwart, Klosterneuburg, Austria; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; and Shanghai Art Museum, China.