

ABHK TOP 10

An editor's top picks of artworks at the titan of an art fair. by **MARC WONG**

The recent 2014 edition of Art Basel Hong Kong (ABHK) was impressive to say the least. It drew in a much bigger crowd than the previous year, and the works exhibited by all the galleries involved were well-curated and very potent. But because it was all so amazing,

it makes it even harder for any one in particular to stand out. So if you've missed ABHK this year, don't fret. Here, though a daunting task, amongst the myriad of gripping artworks that were showcased, are Art Republik's top 10 picks (in no particular order).

**REPUBLIC OF
JING BANG:
CITIZENS WANTED!**

**ARTIST: SUN XUN
REPRESENTED BY:
SINGAPORE TYLER
PRINT INSTITUTE,
SINGAPORE**

The republic of Jing Bang is a country based on whale. With an amazing booth set-up to boot, this exhibit by STPI was as interactive as it was creative. Jing Bang would only be around for the duration

of Art Basel Hong Kong, as a whale would only surface for a short period before diving back into the ocean. Visitors were welcome to apply for visas or be one of the 100 citizenships available. "Immigration officers from STPI will be there to process new enlistments at this checkpoint." Successful citizenship applicants were rewarded with a hand printed and bound book of "Jing Bang", a passport, identification card, national flag and animation in DVD and digital betacam.



**78
ARTIST: JAKKAI
SIRIBUTR
REPRESENTED BY:
YAVUZ FINE ART,
SINGAPORE**

Specially commissioned by Yavuz Fine Art for Art Basel Hong Kong 2014, 78 is a large-scale, immersive installation that addresses a controversial event in recent Thai political history, while elaborating on Siributr's continuing artistic concerns. The title of the installation refers to the 2004 Tak Bai Incident in Thailand, a violent and controversial incident where

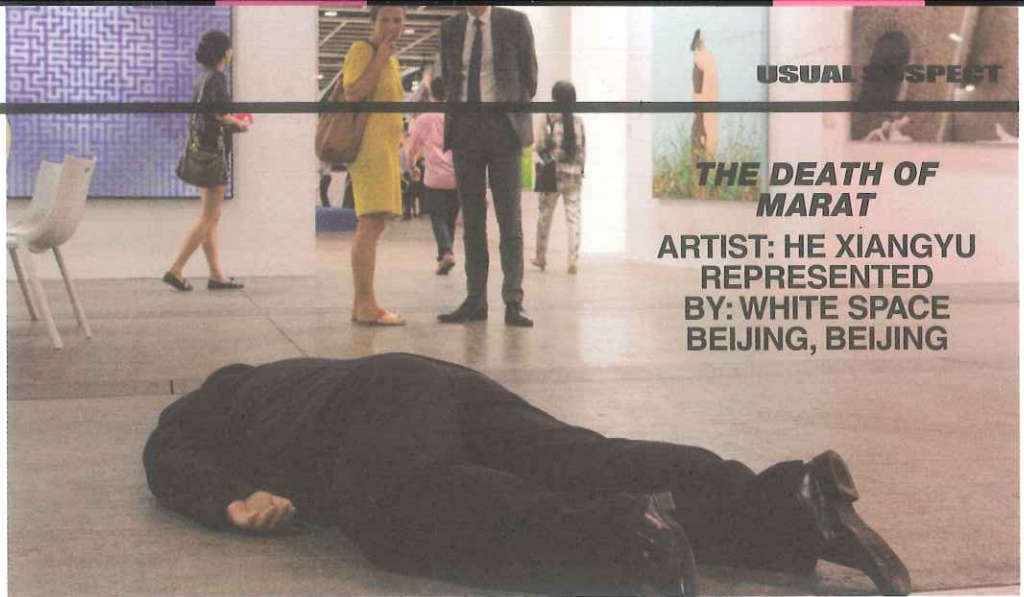
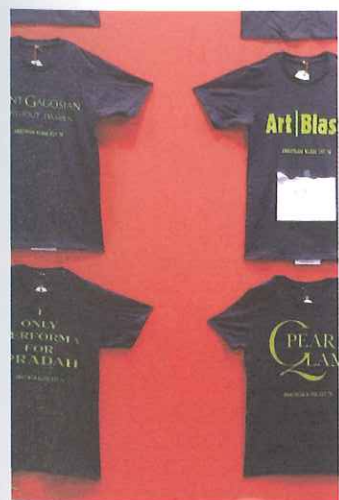
political protests led to the deaths of 78 Thai Muslims as they were being transported to a military camp. The installation is modeled on the Ka'aba, the cuboid structure in Saudi Arabia that functions as a unifying focal point for the Islamic world. As viewers enter the cube structure, they experience a claustrophobic corridor that leads them to a smaller room containing rows of trays. On each tray lies a white kurta, a traditional Muslim garment, hand-embroidered with numbers written in Arabic script. There are 78 kurtas in all, one for each of the victims of the Tak Bai Incident.



ONE STOP KNOCK-OFF SHOP

ARTIST: ANASTASIA KLOSE
REPRESENTED BY: TOLARNO GALLERIES, MELBOURNE

"Jay-Z vs Abromavic". "Ain't Gagasian Without Damien". These were some of the slogans printed on t-shirts at this conceptual performance art stop at Art Basel Hong Kong. And all the t-shirts were for sale (while stocks last). Controversial and interesting at the same time, this exhibit was a big hit amongst many fair-goers. And while her t-shirts mocked many prominent individuals in the art world, perhaps the most amazing aspect of this pick is that it was undertaken with the approval of Art Basel itself.



THE DEATH OF MARAT

ARTIST: HE XIANGYU
REPRESENTED BY: WHITE SPACE BEIJING, BEIJING

Chinese artist He Xiangyu created a life-size fiberglass sculpture of Ai Weiwei's corpse lying contorted face down on the ground – literally everyone who walked by at Art Basel Hong Kong stopped to take a closer look. The title of the work 'The Death of Marat' refers to the 18th century portrait by Jaques-Louis David of the

French revolutionary leader murdered in his bath. In a similar vein, He's work reflects the political persecution of progressive thinkers and artists who have been silenced and imprisoned; hence, the choice to use Ai, most well-known for his openly critical stance against the Chinese government.



PING PONG GO-ROUND

ARTIST: LEE WEN
REPRESENTED BY: IPRECIATION, SINGAPORE

A game commonly played in China and Singapore, ping pong requires a minimum of two players, constituting a form of dialogue

between the players on opposite sides. In this work, the structure and rules of ping pong are reinvented by changing the shape of a traditional ping pong table, as the artist seeks alternative models of interaction. Lee Wen offers a different perception of its limitations and opens multiple possibilities for broader dialogue through a now multi-player game.



UNITED NATIONS: MAN & SPACE

ARTIST: GU WENDA
REPRESENTED BY: HANART TZ GALLERY, HONG KONG

A colossal exhibit that is impossible to miss as guests enter the 3C entrance at Art Basel Hong Kong, United Nations: Man & Space is part of an on-going world-wide art project that has spanned more than a decade. The installation features a wall of the complete national flags of the world made of human hair collected from all over the world. The artist was inspired by the diversity of both collective and personal human history and culture. The unconventional choice to use hair as the main medium stems from the belief that hair is a signifier for the human experience, rich in history, civilization, ethnicity and more. The project stands for a great 'utopia' of the unification of mankind and an internationalism that, while probably impossible in the real world, can be fully realized in the art world.