



Stiftung Mercator

PRESS INFORMATION

Salon series discusses enlightened emancipation and historical memory in art

Stiftung Mercator presents the Beijing salons of the "Enlightenment in Dialogue" series

Beijing/Essen, 26 August 2011. What significance did the Enlightenment have for the emancipation of women in China and Europe? What role does art play as a historical memory of its time? The next two salons which Stiftung Mercator will be staging within its "Enlightenment in Dialogue" series are devoted to the topics of emancipation and historical memory.

In April 2011, Stiftung Mercator's "Enlightenment in Dialogue" series of events was officially opened as the academic accompaniment to the exhibition "The Art of the Enlightenment" in Beijing. Stiftung Mercator is staging the official forums of the event series together with its partner, the National Museum of China. The series is an initiative of the German Ambassador to China and is supported by the Chinese Ministry of Culture. In addition, Stiftung Mercator has separately initiated a series of salons on the subject in which German and Chinese intellectuals will have the chance to exchange views and ideas on philosophical, social and artistic aspects of the Enlightenment. The salons are designed to imitate the classic salon of the Enlightenment and to offer a forum for open discussions of art, culture and philosophy.

We cordially invite you to attend our salons

**Enlightenment and Emancipation
Three Shadows Photography Art Centre, Beijing
Saturday, 3 September 2011, 3.00-5.30 pm**

After the Enlightenment reached its peak in Europe and, later, in China, it suddenly became possible for women, who had been oppressed for thousands of years, to occupy positions which had previously been denied to them. What led to this reversal? Looking back from today's perspective, what has been achieved in



Stiftung Mercator

some two centuries of emancipation? Bearing these questions in mind, **Professor Li Xiaojiang**, former director of the Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Dalian, and **Professor Christina von Braun**, Institute for Cultural Studies at Humboldt University Berlin, will be joining the audience in a discussion of the concept of emancipation, focusing particularly on the position of women in China and Europe.

Art and Historical Memory
Three Shadows Photography Art Centre, Beijing
Sunday, 4 September 2011, 3.00-5.30 pm

Art has an important bearing on the understanding and further development of civilizations and politics by presenting, preserving, possibly distorting and sometimes even concealing history. Even decades later, however, art, regardless of the form it takes, becomes part of history. Both China and Europe have a rich and multifaceted history, yet they differ in their artistic handling of historical events. **Professor Klaas Ruitenbeek**, director of the Museum for East Asian Art of the National Museums in Berlin, will join **Chen Danqing**, an artist and art critic, in a discussion of the complex relationship between Chinese artists and history.

Statements about the salons

Dr Bernhard Lorentz, President of Stiftung Mercator

"The "Enlightenment in Dialogue" salons give German, European and Chinese participants the chance to exchange views and ideas on various historical aspects of the Enlightenment and its relevance to the present day. Exchange and communication are important prerequisites for mutual understanding – and this is precisely what we hope to achieve as a foundation in China: to strengthen mutual trust and build a bridge between the cultures."



Stiftung Mercator

Professor Christina von Braun, Humboldt University Berlin

"I am looking forward to discussing the issue of the order of the sexes with my Chinese colleague Professor Li. Both our countries have utterly different cultures and traditions. What they have in common, however, is the fact that the role of women (and thus the role of men) has changed completely during the last century. These changes have had major influences on the political, social and economic development of both countries. How is it that these two quite different regions underwent a similar and so far-reaching social transformation in the same era?"

Professor Li Xiaojiang, former director of the Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Dalian

"There are two reasons why I am pleased to have the opportunity to take part in an in-depth exchange of views with my German colleague on topics of interest to us all. First, the "Enlightenment" era in China is far from over. Second, "Enlightenment" is an intercultural issue that has been accorded a relatively large academic platform in China and Germany. From the origins of female emancipation in German Marxism to the socialist emancipation movement in China, from the nationalization of the female sex in 1930s Germany to the "iron maidens" of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in the 1960s... we have a great deal of experiences behind us, many of which we can share."

Chen Danqing, artist and art critic

"After the May Fourth Movement, China introduced European-style historical painting in the course of westernization. However, to this day I cannot think of any piece of work that offers me an honest depiction of history. 2011 marks the 100th anniversary of the Xinhai Revolution, and it's reasonable to say that young people have learnt nothing, at least from the portrayal of history in art, from the past 100 years of history in China."

About "Enlightenment in Dialogue"

The "Enlightenment in Dialogue" series is being staged by Stiftung Mercator as the academic accompaniment to the exhibition "The Art of the Enlightenment" in Beijing. The official forums of the series are being organized by Stiftung Mercator in partnership with the National Museum of China. In addition, Stiftung Mercator



Stiftung Mercator

has separately initiated a series of salons on the subject in which German and Chinese intellectuals have the opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions on philosophical, social and artistic aspects of the Enlightenment. Stiftung Mercator is making available a total of some 1.5 million Euros for the purpose. The programme comprises five dialogue blocks which continue for the entire duration – from spring 2011 to spring 2012 – of “The Art of the Enlightenment”, an exhibition presented by the National Museums in Berlin, the Dresden State Art Collections and the Bavarian State Painting Collections in Munich, in cooperation with the National Museum of China. The exhibition has been made possible by Germany’s Federal Foreign Office and is supported by the BMW Group.

www.aufklaerung-im-dialog.de

About “The Art of the Enlightenment”

On 1 April 2011, “The Art of the Enlightenment”, an exhibition presented by the National Museums in Berlin, the Dresden State Art Collections and the Bavarian State Painting Collections in Munich, in cooperation with the National Museum of China, was officially opened in Beijing. This comprehensive exhibition on the art of the Enlightenment is the first international guest exhibition to be hosted by the National Museum of China, which has now reopened as the world’s largest museum building following extensive modernization and expansion. Under the joint patronage of Chinese President Hu Jintao and Germany’s Federal President Christian Wulff, the exhibition will be on show in Beijing for a period of twelve months. For more information, visit www.kunstderaufklaerung.de.

Press accreditation: For reasons of security and space, accreditation for the salons is necessary. The Chatham House Rule will apply during the events. Members of the press who are interested in taking part in the discussions are kindly requested to obtain accreditation for the salons by 1 September 2011 at www.aufklaerung-im-dialog.de/participation.

Language: Simultaneous interpretation between English and Chinese will be provided during both salons.



Stiftung Mercator

If you should have any questions, please contact:

Nora Neuwinger

Stiftung Mercator

Communication Manager

Phone: +49 201 245 22-840

nora.neuwinger@stiftung-mercator.de