

Biennale returns to artistic Chengdu

By LI YU

The city of Chengdu is one of China's oldest cities – with a more than 2,300-year history, stretching all the way back to the early Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC).

Modern Chengdu is the capital of Sichuan province and now finds itself at the core of the province's economic and cultural development.

It is rich in resources and has a mild climate and a reputation of being a "City of Heaven" and has garnered a number of awards such as Best Chinese Tourist City and National Model City for Environmental Protection.

It also ranks as China's third largest arts center, after Beijing, the nation's capital, and Shanghai, the biggest city. Local artists have contributed a lot to the development of the city's arts.

One prominent example of this is Zhou Chunyu, vice chairman of the Chengdu Biennale's academic board. Zhou and three fellow artists established Chengdu's first art center – the Chengdu Landing Art Center – in 2004.

First of all, they searched around for a vacant factory where they could set up their studios. The factory buildings had roofs of blue-colored iron, so they called the studios "Landing" (Chinese for "blue roof").

Landing soon began attracting attention and dozens of artists from around Sichuan and elsewhere began to settle there, and it had to be expanded. These days, it is a large art center with four separate areas and 50-some artists.

Because of the Landing effect, the city built the Nongyuan International Art Village and five other art centers. Each and every one of them plays an important role in Sichuan's arts culture, a place for artists to gather, create, and talk, meaning a bright future for contemporary arts.

Zhou has been to exhibitions in many countries and has held his own exhibitions dozens of times across China. He sees these as a place to display his ideas and a way to present the images of his city and the country.

He has said that he wanted to help build a professional art gallery, but it seems difficult.

The local artists managed to turn

Chengdu into the perfect place to hold the Biennale, the first of which took place in 2001 – a first for Chengdu and for China. Now, the Biennale – in its fifth reincarnation – is returning to the charismatic, charming city.

The Chengdu Biennale 2011 will take place in the Eastern Creative New Town and will last for a full month, from Sept 30 to Oct 30.

The city government came up with an industrial growth blueprint for 13 industrial areas under its supervision, in 2010. The Eastern Creative New Town was a part of this, and a nucleus for the development of creativity.

The new town, which covers a 41-square-kilometer area, is a mere eight kilometers from the downtown area. It contains Qingling Lake, on 107 hectares, and the Dongfeng Canal are the city's only wetlands, and are meant to improve the ecology.

The new town is an integrating place for the culture and creativity business, with its modernity, intelligent facilities, and environmentally friendly buildings. It combines Chengdu style and culture as a city-within-the-city and is gaining some fame outside Chengdu.

Its scenery and pioneering ideas have attracted investment as well. Some people here believe that, by attracting top enterprises and carrying out major programs in this way, Chengdu's creativity industry will be worth more than 4 billion yuan by 2015, and the new town will be an industry leader.

And, by 2020, with the growth of industrial chains and other industries in the eastern part of the new town, Chengdu's creativity business will be worth 1.15 trillion yuan. By then, it just might have the reputation of one of the world's top cities for creativity and culture.

The Eastern Creative New Town mainly focuses on the mass media, film, the entertainment industry, and the arts, with arts being given priority. Its goal is to combine the arts with tourism and hold activities like the Biennale.

The city also hopes that more galleries, studios, and design exhibits will be set up here to improve the quality of the Biennale.

One goal of Biennale 2011 is to create harmony between Chinese and Western

cultures and art form. It is separated into three areas, each with a different theme: Contemporary Art, International Design, and International Architecture, with additional displays covering Realistic Art Easel Painting and Folk Art.

The curators have said that they plan to invite several dozen famous artists and architects from around the globe.

They include Japan's Takashi Murakami and Nara Yoshitomo, and China's Fang Lijun, Zhou Chunyu, and Chen Danqing. They will also invite art agencies and studios from Europe, the United States and Asian countries and regions.

In addition to the exhibitions, the Biennale will hold a week of academic events that combine art theory with practice. The curators have invited a lot of prominent people to attend the seminars.

Chengdu's artistic atmosphere, picturesque environment, and its prominent artists and invitees will make the Biennale 2011 a great success, without question.



Curators announcing the 2011 Chengdu Biennale at a news conference.



Teachers and students who took part in a Helping the Disabled project, pose with the painter Zhou Chunyu (third left, back row), academic vice-chairman of the Chengdu Biennale.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Sep. 30, 2011 - Oct. 30, 2011

CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION
Curator: Lv Peng

INTERNATIONAL DESIGN EXHIBITION
Curator: Ou Ning

INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION
Curator: Zhi Wenjun

REPRESENTATION OF REALISTIC ART
EASEL PAINTING EXHIBITION

SPECIAL INVITATION EXHIBITIONS

CLASSIC THEATRE PERFORMANCES

FOLK ART EXHIBITIONS AND DISPLAYS

Sponsor: 2011 Chengdu Biennale Organization Committee
Undertaker: Institutions of Chinart

Chief Curator: Lv Peng
www.chengdubiennale.org
Email: chengdubiennale@hotmail.com
Tel: 0086 - 28 - 86635889

CHENGDU
BIENNALE
成都双年展

2011