CHEN SHAOXIONG is one of the most outstanding and versatile artists of the last decades in China. Early in the mid-1980’s he was involved with the underground and experimental art scene in Guangzhou. In the 1990’s, he was a member of the most important artists group “Big Tail Elephant” in Southern China. Consisting of Chen Shaoxiong, Lin Yilin, Liang Juhui and Xu Tan, the group intervened in informal urban spaces such as car parks, construction sites and offices, as well as the streets, with site-specific projects of performances and installations. Dynamic, intense but ephemeral, their endeavors became vivid testimonies of and critical comments on the unprecedentedly rapid urbanization and expansion of a new economic, social and cultural model initiated in the development and modernization experiments carried out in the Pearl River Delta region. Chen Shaoxiong, particularly interested in the specific power of electronic images as channels of perceptive innovation, adopted video as his main language. His pungent and humorous video installations were among the pioneers of video art in the Chinese art scene.

Since the late 1990’s, he has developed a complex body of work ranging from video, installation, photo-montage, painting, individual performance to collective participation, while the subjects – deepening his obsessive researches on urban changes and their impacts on our perceptive modes and social consciousness – have also been expanded to embrace some of the most challenging questions of our society in the process of globalization. His horizon of perception has broadened to cover geopolitical events across the world from the “War Against Terrorism” to “Occupy” movements and “Arab Spring”, etc., expressing much more profound demonstrations of the interactions between global events and the transformation of Chinese society. In the meantime, re-examinations of the narrative of history also entered his focus. His multimedia works, lately marked by the singular experimentation of turning his ink-paintings into animation films, have been widely enriched with his inherent sense of humor and wisdom – a kind of playfulness imbued with a hint of “unbearable lightness of being” – these elements together are greatly amplified into a powerful force of critique.

What is equally remarkable is that his system of thought and practice has become hugely open. He invites the public to participate in the making of some of his works in order to evoke and to share the common memories and ideals and desires for urban and social change. More significantly, he initiated a trans-national three-artist collaboration project with the Japanese artist Tsuyoshi Ozawa and the Korean artist Gimhongsok (often involving their families too) in the name “Xijing Men” to explore through three artist performances, the possibility of the construction of a contemporary Utopia in negotiation with the sheer dystopian reality and history…

Chen Shaoxiong’s artistic language is now entering a truly mature period. It stays vividly open to innovation and the consistency of his intellectual reflection is consolidated. His work appears to be more and more relevant as a force to face the rapid changing reality, both in China and the world.

By Hou Hanru, Artistic Director of MAXXI, Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome, Italy.
INK MEDIA

2011-2013
Ink paintings & video with sound.
Photos courtesy Peking Fine Arts.
INK MEDIA

2011-2013
Ink paintings & video with sound
Photos courtesy Pékin Fine Arts
INK MEDIA | 2011-2013 | Ink paintings & video with sound | Photos courtesy Pékin Fine Arts
2010

Ink paintings, video with sound and installation. Photos courtesy Pékin Fine Arts.
VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE KNOWN AND UNKNOWN

2010 | Ink paintings video with sound and installation | Photos courtesy Pékin Fine Arts
Sight Adjuster-3, adopts two visual channels to separate the viewer’s vision into two objects (televisions). The content of these two TV screens are both related and paradoxical, they are “connected” at times, and “separate”, or even be in conflicting positions with each other. The information received to both eyes force the brain to process these images together in order to find establish their logical relationships. In the course of processing these information, the eyes and the brain experienced the trouble of “looking”, by which the artwork achieves to “adjust the sight” of the viewers. The design of this installation is tailored to the physiological requirements of medical equipments, its height and distant are both fitted to contain a person receiving “sight-adjustments”. The artist wishes to improve one’s adjustability to the constantly changing and complex social environment through “sight-adjustments”.

SIGHT ADJUSTER-3
2010
Dual channel video installation.
Photos courtesy Pékin Fine Arts.
SEEING IS BELIEVING

2009

Installation.
Photos courtesy Pékin Fine Arts.
Engagement and dialogue between distinguished individuals who represent a wide set of perspectives, approaches to work, and disciplines has long been the hallmark of The Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center resident experience. For decades, the Center has hosted a unique residency program for artists, scholars, scientists, composers, and writers to live in residence, produce new work, and benefit from rich cross-disciplinary exchange.

From 2009-2015, to increase the capacity for outreach to accomplished artists around the world, The Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center established the Creative Arts Fellows program. The program brought more than twenty acclaimed artists from across the globe to Bellagio, nominated by an advisory panel of leading international curators, for extended residencies to develop projects inspired by or related to social or global issues.

Having ended the Creative Arts Program, The Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center remains committed to bringing in renowned international artists, and now works with regional and international arts outreach partners to attract top artists to the program. For more information about the Bellagio Center, please visit [http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/bellagio-center](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/bellagio-center).