

## Putting Changzhou on the Art Map—Art at Wemhöner Surface Technologies Factory in Changzhou Changzhou/Herford

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[Announcement]

The collector Mr. Heiner Wemhöner, CEO of Wemhöner Surface Technologies, operating manufacturing facilities in Herford, Germany—and since 2005 in Changzhou, China—reveals a commissioned artwork by the Beijing-based artist Li Hui on the Wemhöner Changzhou manufacturing site.

“I started collecting contemporary art in the late 1990s and owing to my business engagements with China I became very intrigued by Chinese artists” states Mr Wemhöner. Heiner Wemhöner’s idea has always been to share his passion for art. This is why his company’s headquarters in Hertford, Germany as well as his company’s offices in Changzhou, China have a number of artworks on display by artists such as Yang Fudong, Chi Peng and Ji Wenyu. The artworks exhibited at these establishments reflect Wemhöner’s philosophy to generate a special work environment, complementing the building’s distinctive design based in Changzhou.

“In Changzhou, our architect created a ‘transparent’ factory, which is completely walled by glass windows allowing the public to look inside. To my knowledge, this is the only factory designed this way in China.”

It is the first time in Changzhou that both an entrepreneur and art collector commissions a work specifically for a manufacturing site. Once meeting the artist Li Hui in an exhibition in 2011, Wemhöner was fascinated by the way he employed lights in his artworks. After two site visits in Changzhou, Li Hui devised the idea to produce a piece that would strongly connect with the city.

“As I was researching about Changzhou,” said Li, “it became very apparent that root sculptures play an important role in the city’s history. When visiting the Tuyidao Root Carving Art Museum, I realised I wanted to create a work that reflects this history.”

This resulted in a four-meter high stainless steel sculpture referencing these typical roots.

“I was surprise when Li Hui didn’t plan to use light in the artwork” comments Wemhöner after the artist presented him the sketches of his first proposal. “But considering he is an internationally respected artist with an amazing body of works, I fully trusted his idea.”

Li Hui’s art project titled “Eternity” was set up in September 2014 and made its way to its final destination in the middle of a scenic pond on the factory premises in April 2015, which was the artist’s dream location. The installation process was quite a spectacle for the workers of the factory, who are generally used to operating heavy machinery and materials. Viewing a large truck lift up a 1-ton stainless steel sculpture over the factory building and placing it onto the green surroundings of the establishment was a very impressive scene. The General Manager of Wemhöner Changzhou He Xufeng mentions they involved a select number of their employees to help lay the concrete foundation of the sculpture: “We wanted our employees to actively engage in this artistic process as we are aware that contemporary art is, for most of us, a new and challenging topic.” Pleased



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with the outcome, Heiner Wemhöner added: “with the high polished steel, Li Hui managed to successfully capture the light as the work seems to glow. Despite not using technical light, he still produced a ‘light’ based artwork. I am very amazed by the result.” The entrepreneur and art collector confessed this piece may not be the only outdoor sculpture he will commission: “I do have a long history of engagement with public museums along with public art projects in Hertford.” Wemhöner has donated a number of artworks to the city municipal and has also set up works in public spaces for public enjoyment. “I have had initial talks with the Changzhou Municipal and I am very open to contribute to the city’s art scene”, adds Wemhöner, “and by that, I would be happy to accentuate Changzhou’s place on the contemporary art map.”

The sculpture was officially revealed during a public ceremony on June 8, 2015, coinciding with the 10th Anniversary of Wemhöener (Changzhou) Machinery Co.,Ltd. Throughout the event, guests were invited to see the further artworks on the company’s premises.

For further information please refer to: Mrs. Melody Yu, [melody.yu@wemhoener.cn](mailto:melody.yu@wemhoener.cn)

For further information on the Wemhöner Collection: [www.sammlung-wemhoener.com](http://www.sammlung-wemhoener.com)

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