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Chinese billionaire collector partners with Institute of Contemporary Arts in London

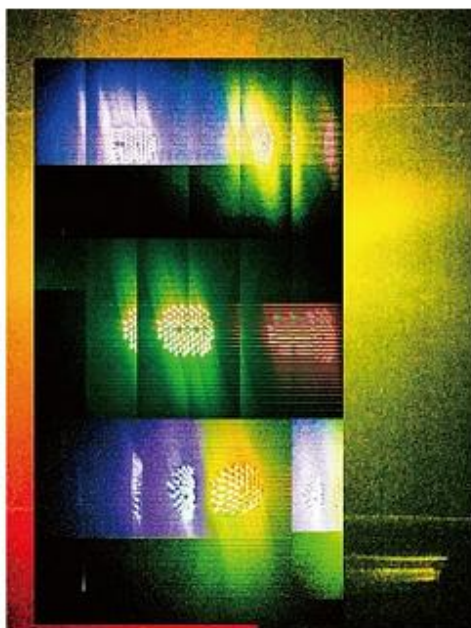
Adrian Cheng will support exhibitions by emerging Chinese artists at the institution

by ANNY SHAW | 25 June 2015

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Preliminary works by Zhang Ding for his exhibition at the ICA © Zhang Ding

The K11 Art Foundation, founded by the Chinese billionaire Adrian Cheng, and the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London are collaborating on a series of exhibitions in a bid to foster cultural exchange between the UK capital and China. The shows will focus on emerging Chinese artists.

The partnership kicks off with an exhibition by Zhang Ding, which opens at the ICA on 12 October (until 25 October). It is the Shanghai-based artist's first solo show in a UK institution. Cheng's private collection includes works by Zhang, according to the Financial Times.

Zhang's exhibition, *Enter the Dragon* (titled after Bruce Lee's film), is due to be installed in the ICA's

theatre, which will be covered in mirrors and transformed into a music venue with two stages. Here invited artists and bands selected from an open submission process via NTS Radio will perform against each other. The show, which is being organised by the ICA's curator Matt Williams, is due to travel to China in autumn or winter 2016.

"It will be a battle of the bands-type experience," says Gregor Muir, the ICA's executive director. "It's a highly social project; we are [also] supporting Zhang by connecting him to the London music scene."

Construction of the work has begun in Zhang's Shanghai studio and will be completed on site at the ICA. When asked how the exhibition costs are split, Muir says: "It wouldn't be possible without the support of K11."

Cheng, who founded the non-profit K11 Art Foundation in Hong Kong in 2010, has in the past collaborated with several institutions including the Palais de Tokyo and the Musée Marmottan Monet, both in Paris. The foundation recently announced it is working with the Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation in Figueras, Spain. The ICA partnership is Cheng's first in the UK.

There are already plans for the ICA to host another exhibition by a Chinese artist next year, which will again travel to China. Muir says further shows will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Chinese curators are also expected to be involved in the process, starting next year. "We don't have enough independent curators in China and their exposure is very weak," Cheng says. "It's important for curators as well as artists to cross-fertilise."