

## **SCAPE FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS CHRISTCHURCH'S RICH CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

Ideas of tolerance and community are embraced by a new public artwork that will spark questions around what it means to live in Ōtautahi Christchurch when you're from elsewhere.

*Made in China* (2010) is a large-scale sculpture by celebrated Chinese contemporary artist Sui Jianguo to be located near the corner of Oxford Terrace and Worcester Boulevard for SCAPE Public Art Season 2019. Rendered larger-than-life by being etched in a shipping container, *Made in China* is the first of his artworks to be exhibited in New Zealand.

At a time when people are increasingly concerned about where and how things are produced, *Made in China* inserts itself into the heart of the debate, says Emma Bugden, Managing Curator of SCAPE Season 2019.

“Everything comes from somewhere. *Made in China* is both a provocation – tapping into contemporary anxieties about buying local – and statement of fact: it's an artwork made by a Chinese artist.

“It claims the space it sits on as much as the imaginary items it might contain. But *Made in China* is also a playful take on the artist's signature, geo-tagging the artwork to a place and, in doing so, talking about the art world's obsession with provenance.

“Many New Zealanders may be unaware that China has a rich art history and that its artistic community is thriving. As one of their most internationally celebrated artists, it's a real coup to have Sui Jianguo's work on show here for the first time.”

*Made in China* is one of more than a dozen artworks being showcased in [SCAPE's Season 2019](#) – New Zealand's pre-eminent public art festival that runs from 5 October to 16 November. The theme for this year's Season is the iconic game *Rock : Paper : Scissors*, with it featuring artworks that make us think and feel: about what home means, the emotional resonance of materials, and the patterns and rituals that help us make sense of the world.

*Made in China* will be unveiled at a public, family-friendly event at 2pm on Saturday 19 October, featuring culturally-infused activities and entertainment.

The richness of Christchurch's cultural diversity comes under the spotlight in a number of this Season's temporary artworks, including *Made in China*, says SCAPE Executive Director Deborah McCormick.

"*Made in China* will make many of us think about where we are 'made' and reflect on our sense of identity. We hope this will spark conversations and help us embrace the rich cultural diversity we have here in Ōtautahi Christchurch.

"It's also enhancing the strong connection we have with China through Christchurch City Council's Sister Cities Programme. Bringing this artwork to the heart of the city is a great way of strengthening the programme's relationships with Gansu Province and Wuhan."

*Made in China* started its journey from China to New Zealand by ship this week, much to the delight of sponsors Asia New Zealand Foundation Te Whītau Tūhono.

"This is one of Sui Jianguo's signature works and we're thrilled to be able to showcase an artist of such calibre from our country," says the Foundation's Arts Director Craig Cooper.

"Using art and sculpture to grow New Zealanders' understanding of Asia is important to us, and we know *Made in China* will challenge people's ideas and get a conversation started."

SCAPE is running a programme of art-making activities linking to the artwork, including a unique chance to experience the Chinese section of Canterbury Museum's Asian Arts Gallery, exploring links between the collection and *Made in China*.

- *Made in China* is proudly sponsored by China Construction Third Engineering Bureau and China Railway Group, China Southern Airlines and Asia New Zealand Foundation Te Whītau Tūhono. Venue partners: Canterbury Museum and Christchurch City Council.

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[Please refer to high resolution image folder here](#)



Sui Jianguo *Made in China* 2010. Image courtesy of Pace Gallery and SCAPE Public Art.

## About the Artist

Sui Jianguo (b.1956 in Qingdao, Shandong province), is one of China's most celebrated artists and came to prominence internationally in the 1990s with sculptures that questioned China's new role as a global super-power.

Originally trained in Western-based Socialist Realism during the Cultural Revolution, Jianguo's Mao works – for which he first came to international attention – depicted the ubiquitous jacket of Chairman Mao, reconfigured as series of empty shells. As China shifts from communist to capitalist, Jianguo accurately captures the contradiction and change.

He received a BA in the Fine Arts Department from the Shandong University of Arts in 1984 and an MA in the Sculpture Department from the China Central Academy of Fine Arts in 1989, where he is a professor in the Sculpture Department.

Jianguo's art explores his unique understanding and recognition of creation, form, alternative media, alternative methods, and space-time. His sculptures are ingenious fusions of concept and form, with many of his works utilising large-scale force in order to have an impact on viewers.

He says: "In China, if you want to be a modern artist, you have to teach yourself. You learn the figurative technique in school, but you want to find a new way. Then you have to find a different material and the way to fix it by yourself. I use heavy materials because I think my inside wants the heaviness."

Jianguo's early works carry strong symbolic content, most of which carefully relates the peculiarities of society and history. His later creations gradually became disconnected from his own identity and began incorporating a bigger visual angle, thus making his concepts of cultural space-time apparent.

Introspection on the artistic process in modern China is another angle Jianguo's work brings to the forefront. Whether it be the Realism in his early works or the classic shapes in his later *Mao Jacket* and *Dinosaur* pieces, both rely on the wisdom of native Chinese genealogy and channels of culture to serve as ways to solve problems, as outlets.

Jianguo has exhibited extensively, including in the group exhibitions *Memory and Contemporaneity: China Art Today*, 57th Venice Biennale 2017; *Blackness in Abstraction*, Pace, New York and the 9th Shanghai Biennale 2012.

Solo exhibitions include the major survey exhibition *System: Sui Jianguo 2008–2018*, OCAT, Shenzhen; *Stampede*, Denver Art Museum, 2017 and *Birth of*

Legacy Mantle, Art6 Docklands, Melbourne, Australia, 2017. He lives and works in Beijing and is represented internationally by Pace.

**About the SCAPE Public Art Trust**

SCAPE Public Art installs public art in Christchurch all year round, with a focus on the annual Seasons. SCAPE is the largest producer of public art in New Zealand. The SCAPE Public Art Seasons are New Zealand's premier public art events – festivals that ignite the city in spring.

Held in Christchurch's central city public spaces and supported through a range of partnerships, the Seasons showcase leading national and international contemporary artists, and provide a springboard for emerging local talent. Artworks in the Seasons are created as a result of close collaboration between art and business. This is a highly regarded model world-wide.

The Seasons provide an opportunity to shine a light on the introduction of new artworks, while maintaining a focus on the impressive base of legacy pieces.

[www.scapepublicart.org.nz](http://www.scapepublicart.org.nz)

**For media comment please contact:****Deborah McCormick**

Executive Director  
SCAPE Public Art  
Tel: +64 (0)3 365 7990  
Mobile: +64 (0)27 280 9557  
Email: [deborah@scapepublicart.org.nz](mailto:deborah@scapepublicart.org.nz)

**Carolyn Grant**

Philanthropy & Communications Manager  
SCAPE Public Art  
Tel: +64 (0)3 365 7990  
Mobile: +64 (0)21 660 715  
Email: [carolyn@scapepublicart.org.nz](mailto:carolyn@scapepublicart.org.nz)