

## ChengduSpecial

# Exhibition in Japan features everyday Chengdu life

CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS PROVIDE GLIMPSES OF MODERN LIFESTYLE

By LI YANG and LI YU

A contemporary art exhibit themed *Living in Chengdu 2015* was staged in Tokyo from Dec 17 to Dec 23.

The exhibition, which featured about 20 pieces of artwork about life experiences in Chengdu, was hosted by the Chengdu tourism bureau and Chengdu culture bureau, and organized by the Chengdu Culture and Tourism Development Group and Chengdu Contemporary Art Association with the assistance of Air China at the Nitten Exhibition Hall in Tokyo.

The exhibits were by 12 noted Chinese contemporary artists, including Zhou Chunyu, He Duoling, Feng Zhengjie and Luo Fahui, and designed to allow viewers to feel what modern life is like in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, which is famous for its leisurely lifestyle, long history, modernity and distinctive Shu culture.

A statement from the Chengdu Culture and Tourism Development Group said culture and art exhibitions can effectively promote a city's popularity around the world, as culture and art attract foreign visitors. A city's charm originates from its cultural characteristics and cultural tourism, the statement said, and they are becoming a new forefront of the modern cultural industry.

The exhibition is one of a series that started in 2004 at the Shenzhen Gallery. It has since been held in locations including Singapore and Montpellier of France, and has played an important role in promoting Chengdu's culture, art and tourism around the world.

As part of the 2015 exhibition in Tokyo, a seminar was held on Chengdu's contemporary art and art tourism, during which experts, officials and artists discussed the merging development trends of culture, art and tourism. As part of the seminar, the Chengdu tourism and cultural authorities released maps of Chengdu's contemporary art and of the Landing art zone, launched a website on Chengdu art tourism with Air China and published an album of Chengdu's contemporary art and relevant materials on the city's art tourism on cooperation with Japanese tourist agencies.

Japan is an important foreign tourist source market for Chengdu. From January to October, about 125,900 Japanese tourists visited Chengdu, making Japan the fifth-largest source of foreign visitors to the city.

### Series of shows

An exhibition in the series was staged in the Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts in Taipei at the end of last year, to great success. The Chengdu tourism authority plans to take the series to all main tourist source countries and regions in the future, not only to attract tourists to Chengdu, but also to strengthen the world's understanding about the city and its culture.

Cheng Qianqiang, a professor of tourism stud-



The *Living in Chengdu 2015* contemporary art exhibition featured about 20 artworks portraying everyday life in Chengdu was shown in Tokyo from Dec 17 through 23. The works shown above (clockwise from top) are by Zheng Pu, Zhou Chunyu, Xue Song and Wang Chengyun.

ies with Sichuan Normal University in Chengdu, said in October: "Since Chengdu aims to become a world-class tourist destination and foreign tourists account for less than 20 percent of the total tourist number, Chengdu should pay more attention to promote its tourism resources and culture around the world. Chengdu is not a transit station for tourists to go to neighboring areas, but a destination in itself."

Miao Wei, general manager of the Chengdu Culture and Tourism Development Group, said, also in October: "The exhibits show art-

ists' works as well as Chengdu's cultural atmosphere and achievements in arts, and attract many art lovers. Art exhibits are an innovation of city marketing and cultural industry operation, and give tourists an 'elegant' reason to stay in Chengdu."

Artist Zhou Chunyu said: "Only when a city has its culture and substance can it attract tourists. The Landing art zone in Chengdu now accommodates hundreds of artists operating their studios and workshops, organizes art shows and has evolved into a famous modern



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art cluster."

Zhou is one of the first contemporary artists from Sichuan to take his art to the world since the 1990s. These avant-garde artists are also the early founders of the Landing art zone. Their works have become a new flag of Chengdu's contemporary art scene and built a bridge connecting Chengdu with the world.

"Chengdu has giant pandas, spicy gourmet, breathtaking views, as well as a thick and fertile art soil that has been formed in its thousands of years of history and civilization," Zhou said. "Chengdu is a place that nurtures artists and a place to experience art. Its city character, which features closeness and openness, and unique local culture are also base points for artistic creation and inspiration."

The exhibit in Taipei from Dec 26, 2014, to Jan 4, 2015, showed nearly 100 pieces of art from 22 Chinese artists that focused on people's lives in Chengdu and the city's culture. Viewers from Taiwan said the exhibit provided them with a rare chance to gain a glimpse of Chengdu's modern art and, more importantly, to communicate with the artists face to face. They hope they can see more such art events from the Chinese mainland come to Taiwan, which is currently the third-largest tourist source market for Chengdu outside of the Chinese mainland.

Zhang Ling, who has worked as a tourist guide in Chengdu for more than 18 years, said: "Apart from its places of historic interest and natural landscapes, the leisure culture in Chengdu is an important attraction for tourists. I set aside time to let my customers experience Chengdu's restaurants and tea shops.

"More and more tourists come to Chengdu on their own," she said. "Such tourists are attracted more by Chengdu's culture and life, and they stay longer in the city than tourist groups."

In the first half of this year, Chengdu hosted more than 80 million tourists from home and abroad, and generated 87.26 billion yuan (\$13.46 billion) in tourism revenue, up 24.86 percent year-on-year, and accounting for 9.36 percent of the city's gross domestic product, according to the Chengdu tourism bureau.

It is predicted that the city will harvest tourist revenue of more than 193 billion yuan, and host more than 190 million tourists this year.

Si Luyu contributed to this story.