

Press release of 10 January 2014

## Wenfeng Liao and Bignia Wehrli: «Sternenberg»

**In their first joint exhibition, Wenfeng Liao and Bignia Wehrli present photographs, drawings and videos that are as much interwoven with the Chinese way of thinking as they are with Bignia Wehrli's home town of Sternenberg. While Liao explores man's interaction with his surroundings and the essence of things, Wehrli translates transient movements and everyday traces into images. The artists make hidden realities visible and allow the everyday to be viewed in a new light.**

The starting point for the work of Chinese artist **Wenfeng Liao** (\*1984) is the precise investigation of his social environment, to which he responds with subtle artistic gestures. For example, he lays a marbled stone from Sternenberg upon his heart and films how both move in tandem («My stone is my heart»). Almost as large as the artist's own heart, the stone appears to come to life through the latter's beating, bonding artist and place of origin. The arched bridge Liao has built over a stream appears almost idyllic until, at second glance, one realises that it is made of worn shoes («Bridge No. 1»). Only the artist's tracks mark his presence in this romantic-looking landscape but he connects what was previously apart and proves that sometimes – despite the circumstances – new ways can be found using the simplest of means. By adding his own imagination to a chosen context, Liao not only changes reality but opens up existing places, things and systems to new meanings and perceptions.

The Swiss artist **Bignia Wehrli** (\*1979) already got to know China and its language as a child and studied art and calligraphy in Hangzhou. Encounters with the foreign and distant influence her work as much as the symbolism of Chinese characters and their closeness to painting. Similar to the many meanings of Chinese characters deciphered through reading, Wehrli's works often appear to be only coded marks or signs of hidden realities. For instance, a series of mysterious circular pictures resemble images of the moon. In actual fact, Wehrli has turned a pencil sharpener into a pinhole camera and let light pass through the tip onto photographic paper to form a quasi-miniature cosmos («The length of two pencils' light»). The invisible is also present in Wehrli's works. Whereas the imagination of the viewer supplements the invisible in Chinese landscapes, with Wehrli the invisible appears as an implied space behind the visible and can be reached only through the imagination. A shaky picture of the stars, for example, actually shows Wehrli's heartbeat, transferred via the camera on her chest to the stars in the viewfinder, their distant light producing a mystical photograph («The heart moves the stars»).

In their work, inspired by traditional Chinese thinking, Liao and Wehrli unite microcosm and macrocosm, man and nature, calmness and movement, emptiness and fullness in a harmony of opposites. With an inquisitive, critical and sometimes playful vision, they transform everyday places and subjects into poetic, surprising and inspirational images.

**You and your friends are warmly invited to the exhibition preview on Thursday 23 January 2014, from 17.00 to 20.00.** Wenfeng Liao und Bignia Wehrli will be present.

The exhibition runs from 24 January 2014 to 8 March 2014.

Opening hours: Wednesday to Friday 12.30 to 18.00, Saturday 11.00 to 14.00, or by appointment.

Closing event with two performances on Saturday 8 March 2014 at 14.00. Wenfeng Liao presents «Drilling Stars» and Bignia Wehrli «How much does the way from Hangzhou to Zurich weigh?».

### Further information available from:

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