How do contemporary artists explore new possibilities in the internet era?

Lili Wang
Artists on the internet:

- Ou Zhihang (naked push-ups)
- Ai Weiwei
Modern China  Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)
The Moment May 12, 2008, Wenchuan Earthquake, work No 1
Since September 28, 2014, "Occupy Central" Movement in Hong Kong
The Moment  
August 12, 2015, Massive Chemical Explosions in the Port of Tianjin, Work No. 1
Ou Zhihang

- Nude push-ups in spots of critical social issues
- More than 700 images, 10 years
- Constantly interact with audience via the internet
- Background: media worker (journalist, TV producer and anchor)

*The Moment* series won Honorary Mention in 2010 World Press Photo Contest.

- Journalism photography + contemporary art + performance art + documentary…
“In the actual world press, we saw lots of pictures, for instance, maybe Chinese miners or people involved in industrialized production, in factories, very much of a nation as a machine. His pictures show a kind of playful individuality, which was unusual… and I think the barometer of whether a photograph is successful is if you remember it and it stays with you, and you can contemplate it. I think that’s what the person involved in producing that photograph trying to do is to get you stop and think and contemplate.”

— Harry Borden,
A member of the international jury of the 53rd annual World Press Photo Contest
Artists on the internet:

- Ou Zhihang
- Ai Weiwei

- Art creation
- Art exhibition
The internet for art creation

- Ou Zhihang
  - Uses the internet as primary source of news to determine which historical and social issues to intervene
  - “Push-up” being an internet meme for challenge, reflection, skepticism…
  - Interaction with the public as part of the artwork
Modern China
Korean War
(1950-1953)
The internet for art creation

- Ai Weiwei
  - *Citizen Investigation*,
    - recruited 100 volunteers via Weibo
    - documentary film of volunteers finding out student’s name list
    - film and name list released online

— social media enable offline gatherings
The internet for art creation

- Ai Weiwei
  - *Leg Gun* (2014)
    - Reflect on freedom of speech
    - Internet meme for online censorship

— User-generated, participative art creation
The internet for art creation

• Ou Zhihang

• Ai Weiwei

—

Internet memes; 
online-offline interaction; 
collaborative art creation; 
ongoing projects
Artists on the internet:

- Ou Zhihang
- Ai Weiwei

- Art creation
- Art exhibition
The internet for art exhibition

• Ou Zhihang

• Constantly interact with audience, raise online discussions and debates

— Public sphere

• Online presence is part of the art project
millions of followers
(in Chinese)
Tianjin Chemical Explosion
The internet for art exhibition

- Ai Weiwei

Twitter: #512Birthday

April 4

四月四日。今天是8个遇难学生的生日，他们是：赖绪波，廖桂蓉，任潇，吴兴茂，周凯，朱代伟，朱冠国，向京京。

#512Birthday

April 6

四月六日。今天是5个遇难学生的生日，他们是：黄清涛，张涛，赵玉贝，王磊，廖家丽。

#512Birthday
The internet for art exhibition

- Ai Weiwei
  - performance art, documentary…

— Art could emerge from anywhere. It’s an ongoing project, a combination of various categories
The internet for art exhibition

- Ou Zhihang
- Ai Weiwei

No more curators or galleries.

In-time, up-to-date online feeds managed by the artists
New possibilities with the internet

- Contemporary art differentiates with traditional arts in its connection with society

- Creation— Internet memes, online and offline interaction, collaborative, user-generated, internet/social media-based

- Exhibition— Public sphere, social influence, ongoing project in various forms, online up-to-date
• “Everyone is an artist.” — Joseph Buoys

• By names of art, thanks to the internet, contemporary artists reach and achieve beyond art.

Thank you.