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Huge new art district near Beijing announced for 2019



The Art Newspaper reports on plans unveiled last week at the Venice Architecture Biennale that a 400 hectare new "eco-city" art district is planned for Xinglong Valley in the Hebei province surrounding Beijing, with art museum, performance venue, artist studios, art education district, commercial and residential developments.

Hebei, the province surrounding Beijing, will get a massive arts district of its own next year. At the Venice Architecture Biennale on May 24,

Guangdong Yuegang Investment Development unveiled plans for Valley XL, an Rmb 18bn (around \$2.8bn) development designed by Arquitectonica across 400 hectares of Hebei's Xinglong Valley. Valley XL is a special partner of China's pavilion on rural development, Building a Future Countryside, and is hosting a symposium in Venice from 24 to 26 May.

The project is billed as an "eco-city" that will include a Modern and contemporary art museum, an art education district and artists' studios along with commercial and residential areas. Construction is due to begin in the second half of 2018, jointly funded by Guangdong Yuegang and Shenzhen XL Culture Development. The prolific curator Li Zhenhua has already come on board as its advisor and the filmmaker and artist Ju Anqi is its project video director.

The soft opening will be in 2019 with the Valley XL Art Centre, an 8,500 sq. m venue for exhibitions as well as music and theatre performances, designed by Wang Zhenfei. The project's first completed building will be "one of the key architecture highlights", says Xiao Zeguang, the chairman of Guangdong Yueguang. Before the Valley XL Museum is established, the centre "will play a significant role in the project's Art Zone, acting as a platform for artist exchange, hosting part of the overall exhibition programme, a symposium space and also restaurants", Xiao says. An "art park" is proposed to the north.

Xinglong Valley is located in Chengde City, also home to the Mountain Resort, a summer retreat originally used by the Qing emperors. The Valley XL site is 97km from downtown Beijing and will be connected to the city by a 20-minute express train running from next year as part of the Beijing-Shenyang high-speed railway.

"While it's rare to find a place with great natural resource in Beijing now, in Xinglong we discover beautiful blue sky and clear waters," Xiao says.

"Xinglong's landscape is amazing; it resembles traditional Chinese landscape painting." While China's inland provinces also offer natural beauty, they are "way too far away from major cities, not to mention the cities with a developed art industry such as Beijing and Shanghai", he says. "Xinglong is precious for its brilliant natural resources and its proximity to Beijing."

Full article on *The Art Newspaper*

Image: A rendering of the Valley XL development in Xinglong © courtesy of Valley XL

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