**扎根时代沃土，支持当代艺术**

——写给新生的泰康美术馆

从拍卖艺术品到支持当代艺术家、收藏艺术品，到今天泰康美术馆落成，我觉得是一个自然的过程。

大学的时候，我读《徐悲鸿传》《梵高传》《罗丹传》等，开始接触艺术相关的内容，了解什么叫印象派。1992年下海创业，因缘际会选择了艺术品拍卖。

艺术是时代精神的结晶。我们这一代人在新中国出生成长，在改革开放的大潮中参与国家建设，见证了中国的发展与崛起。嘉德拍卖带给我商业的第一桶金，也让我得以近距离地认知艺术。所以回馈艺术、支持中国艺术发展也是我的责任。

在嘉德成立前后，中国的当代艺术家聚集在圆明园画家村，后来迁移到宋庄，成为一股新兴的力量。他们的经历，让我想起俄罗斯艺术家康定斯基，作为抽象派艺术的先驱，他的作品从最初不被理解和接纳，到后来成为主流。这也让我相信，中国当代艺术必然崛起。

2001年，当时还是独立策展人的唐昕找到我，请我赞助她策划的中国当代油画展览，我欣然同意。现在回想起来，她找到我是偶然的，但也有一种必然性。2003年泰康的公益事业室设立了泰康空间，20年来唐昕带领泰康空间团队以学术为核心，立足当代艺术现场，支持当代艺术家的实验性创作，研究20世纪以来的中国美术发展，建立泰康艺术收藏，形成了“从1942年以来看当代”的方法论，从文化发展的角度打通常规的国家发展时期断代方式，使泰康收藏形成体系化、历史性、学术性的特色，并在这种大构思中不断精细化发展。

泰康艺术品收藏，我也参照很多国际经验。国际知名的大型金融机构，像JP·摩根集团、瑞银集团、德意志银行、安盛保险都有集艺术收藏、公益性、文化推广于一体的品牌形象。我也经常去美国大都会艺术博物馆、纽约现代艺术博物馆(MoMA)，对这些美术馆认知越多，越让我有一种责任和冲动，要创建一座代表中国当代艺术的美术馆。

随着泰康的发展，我们的艺术收藏越来越丰富，筹建泰康美术馆一直是我工作日程上的重点。因为2004年春天我在北京市政协会议上提交议案建议保留798艺术区，为保留798园区起到了一定的作用，我对798也有特殊的情结，最初的设想就是在798建一座大型当代美术馆，已经做了相当深入的准备工作。很遗憾因为各种原因没有实现。到2021年泰康成立25周年的时候，泰康集团大厦落成，我决定回归初心，把美术馆建在集团大厦，从一个精品型的美术馆起步。我们有自己的学术体系，培养了专业的团队，泰康收藏在中国美术馆、武汉大学万林艺术博物馆、798艺术区、嘉德艺术中心、湖北省美术馆的几次大规模展览都有很好的影响，这都是泰康美术馆坚实的基础。

泰康美术馆的战略定位就是当代美术馆，着重于中国本土的当代艺术和油画艺术，从美术的角度反映1840年以来中国波澜壮阔的历史，我们的强项是革命时代的红色艺术，加上早期油画、当代艺术和年轻人的实验，构成一个体系，是国家现代化历史的一个写照。

我讲过泰康要做中国的MoMA，建设一个在中国当代艺术领域具有代表性的美术馆。美术馆背后的竞争就两点，第一赞助人是不是实力最强的？第二赞助人对美术馆的认知，对作品的认知，体现在好的展览、好的经营上。美国的大都会艺术博物馆和MoMA的形成是一个城市和一批人努力的结果。我认为未来中国在北京和上海，也能够靠社会的力量，靠城市的崛起和这个城市的企业家、 还有一批真正致力于艺术发展的人，打造出顶尖的当代美术馆。

北京是当代艺术的生产中心、艺术家中心，北京的成功企业家也多，具备打造一流美术馆的历史机遇。现在泰康美术馆的唯一赞助来源还是泰康保险集团，随着社会对美术馆的认知的提升，随着泰康美术馆的治理结构、学术、运营形成品牌，有了自己的号召力，将来会实现社会化，成为我们的社会在文化软实力上的象征之一。这是一个时间积累和团队奋斗的过程。

美术馆就像一个生命，她会自然地成长。

陈东升

泰康保险集团创始人、董事长兼首席执行官

泰康美术馆理事长

**Rooted in the Era's Fertile Soil, Supporting Contemporary Art**

To the Newly Born Taikang Art Museum

The path I have taken, from dealing in art and supporting contemporary artists to forming an art collection and founding the Taikang Art Museum, seems to me now to have unfolded completely naturally.

When I was in university, I read the biographies of artists like Xu Beihong, Van Gogh and Rodin. This was my first foray into the world of art, when I came to understand what terms like “impressionism” meant. In 1992, I embarked on my entrepreneurial career and, whether as a result of fate or chance, chose to participate in art auctions.

Art is a crystallization of the Zeitgeist. My generation was born and grew up after the founding of the People’s Republic of China. With the arrival of the burgeoning period of free market reforms, we contributed to the economic development of the nation and witnessed first-hand its rapid evolution in that time. My participation in the China Guardian Auctions, aside from providing me with the capital I needed to start my business career, also allowed me to become better acquainted with the world of art. I therefore have always felt I owe a debt of gratitude to art and have a duty to support Chinese art’s development.

Around the time China Guardian was established, many artists were living in the “painters’ village” near the Old Summer Palace in Beijing. Later they moved to Songzhuang in the capital’s suburbs where they became an exciting new creative force. Their experience reminds me of Kandinsky, the Russian pioneer of abstract art who produced works which, despite not being understood and accepted at first, were later to become mainstream. I am convinced that a similar path awaits Chinese

contemporary artists.

It was the independent curator Tang Xin who first reached out to me in 2001, asking if I would sponsor a contemporary Chinese oil painting exhibition she was curating, an offer I was only too happy to accept. Looking back on it now, our apparently chance encounter was perhaps meant to be. In 2003, Taikang’s Public Services Office set up its own non-profit art institution, Taikang Space. In the twenty years since, Tang Xin has led the team at Taikang Space in developing a centre for the exploration and exhibition of contemporary art with an emphasis on academic research, an institution that supports contemporary artists’ experimental work, researches the development of Chinese twentieth-century art, and has established its own Taikang Collection. The team at Taikang Space has also formulated a methodology for understanding Chinese art that situates the contemporary in a historical context that “Researching contemporary art since 1942”, adopting a cultural development perspective that challenges the standard division of Chinese cultural history into discrete eras. As such, the Taikang Collection has a uniquely systematic, historical and academic character, which continues to be developed and refined to this day.

With regards to the Taikang Collection, I have consulted various examples from abroad. Many large international financial institutions such as J.P.Morgan, UBS Group, Deutsche Bank and AXA have made art collection, public service and promotion of culture part of their brand image. I am also a frequent visitor to America’s Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and as my understanding of these museums grows, so too do my commitment to and excitement about creating an art museum that could represent Chinese contemporary

art museum.

As Taikang has grown, our collection has become more extensive. Establishing the Taikang Art Museum has therefore been an important part of my day-to-day work for some time. In the spring of 2004, I recommended to the Beijing Municipal Political Consultative Conference that they work to preserve the 798 Art District, a proposal which in its way helped influence their final decision to do so. As such, I have always had an emotional connection to the 798 Art District, and I initially chose it as the site for the construction of a new large-scale museum of contemporary art. I carried out a lot of preparatory work for this project, but unfortunately a variety of factors meant I was unable to bring it to fruition. On Taikang’s 25th anniversary in 2021, the Taikang Group Tower was completed, and I decided to return to my original plan of constructing a space for high-quality artworks in the Taikang Group Tower to act as the first stage in the life of the Taikang Art Museum. At Taikang, we have developed our own academic approach and trained our own professional

team, and works in the Taikang Collection have made a profound impact as part of large-scale exhibitions at Wuhan University’s Wanlin Art Museum, the 798 Art District, the Guardian Art Center and the Hubei Museum of Art. These are the solid foundations on which the Taikang Art Museum has been built.

The strategic positioning for the Taikang Art Museum as a contemporary art museum is its focus on native Chinese contemporary art and oil painting, as well as its commitment to offering an artistic perspective on China’s turbulent history since 1840. Our collection has a rich selection

of “Red Art” from the Maoist period which, alongside earlier oil paintings, contemporary artworks and experimental pieces by young artists, forms an aesthetic structure that reflects the history of China’s arrival into the modern age.

I have said before that I want Taikang to build China’s MoMA, the go-to museum for Chinese contemporary art. There are two main challenges behind the realization of such a project. The first lies with the capabilities of its sponsor, the second with the ability to turn the sponsor’s understanding of the museum and its artworks into a successful operation with influential exhibitions. The city of New York joined forces with a group of committed individuals to make America’s Metropolitan Art Museum and Museum of Modern Art a reality. I believe that in cities like Beijing and Shanghai, China too will be able to harness society’s strengths, drawing on the talents of its cities, entrepreneurs, and many others devoted to the development of art, to establish a top-tier contemporary art museum.

Aside from being the heart of China’s artistic production, a center for artists across the country, Beijing is also home to many successful entrepreneurs, all of which provides a historic opportunity for creating a first-class art museum. At present, Taikang Art Museum’s only source of funds is the Taikang Insurance Group. As society becomes more acquainted with the museum, and as Taikang Art Museum’s administrative structure, academic approach and operational logic contribute to an increasingly recognized brand, it will become more and more part of the social fabric, a symbol of cultural soft power in Chinese society. This is a gradual process, a result of the accumulation of time and collective effort.

The art museum is a living thing. She will grow naturally.

Chen Dongsheng

Chairman, Founder, and CEO of the Taikang Insurance Group

Chairman of the Taikang Art Museum