

UCCA Launches its Fourth Museum in China's Jiangsu Province: UCCA Clay to open in Yixing in October 2024

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Yixing, Jiangsu, China—UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, China's leading independent contemporary art institution, proudly announces the launch of its latest museum UCCA Clay, set to open in October 2024. Situated in Yixing City, approximately two hours west of Shanghai and renowned as the "City of Ceramics," the 2,400-square meter museum is designed by Kengo Kuma.

Media Contact:

Laura Xue
Senior Communications Manager
+86 21 6628 6861
+86 15010858162
bingyan.xue@ucca.org.cn

Jiannan Hu
Media Relations Manager
+86 10 5780 0258
+86 185 1062 2663
jiannan.hu@ucca.org.cn

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ucca.org.cn/en/press

Following on the successful programming and operations of UCCA Beijing (opened 2007), UCCA Dune (opened 2018, Beidaihe), and UCCA Edge (opened 2021, Shanghai), UCCA Clay will become the fourth member of the UCCA constellation in China. This new location underscores UCCA's ongoing commitment to presenting great contemporary art to audiences in China, and addresses the growing demand for top-quality programming throughout the country.

Operated in collaboration with Yixing Taodu Capital Management Co., Ltd., UCCA Clay is situated at the core of the Creative & Cultural Ceramic Avenue, on the site of the converted Number Two Yixing Ceramic Factory that encompasses over 62,000 square meters. Drawing on UCCA's rich experiences and valuable resources gained over the past seventeen years of exploring contemporary art in China, combined with Yixing's unique cultural heritage and urban characteristics, UCCA and Yixing Taodu are committed to building an art museum to showcase contemporary ceramic art and culture, fostering the artistic ecology around the Yangtze River Delta, and promoting exchange between local practices and global contemporary art. UCCA Clay will present three exhibitions each year, curated by the UCCA team and focused on Chinese and international artists working with the ceramic medium in the broadest sense. UCCA Clay's program will aim to demonstrate the diverse potential of ceramics in contemporary art, facilitating exchange and understanding between China and the world.

UCCA Director and CEO Philip Tinari remarked that "UCCA is thrilled to launch UCCA Clay as a new member of its constellation of museums. We are confident that its location at the heart of a beautiful city with a rich artistic history, its innovative architecture, and its special focus on the ceramic medium will empower it to become a museum unlike any other. With this new presence in Yixing, UCCA looks forward to cultivating new local,

regional, national, and global audiences. Through a rich mix of exhibitions and programs, we aim to foster new dialogues between the traditional and the contemporary, and between China and the wider world.”

Qian Jing, Deputy Director of the Standing Committee of the Yixing Municipal People's Congress, Party Secretary of Dingshu Town, and Secretary of the Party Working Committee of Jiangsu Yixing Ceramics Industrial Park, also commented: “Yixing, the ‘City of Ceramics,’ carries a magnificent 7,000-year history of ceramic making. Our collaboration with the internationally renowned art institution UCCA to establish UCCA Clay marks a significant attempt at innovative development for Yixing’s ceramic culture. Designed by master architect Kengo Kuma and operated by UCCA, this museum stands not only as a milestone for the innovation and heritage of Yixing’s ceramic culture, but also as a liaison between tradition and modernity, and Eastern and Western culture. With full confidence and anticipation, we believe that through UCCA’s outstanding curatorial capabilities, abundant artistic resources, and broad international perspective, UCCA Clay will become a dynamic engine for making ceramic art a part of everyday life and promoting cultural exchange. It will help write a new, diverse, and international chapter in the development of Yixing’s ceramic art industry.”

UCCA Clay is located at the heart of the Creative & Cultural Ceramic Avenue in Dingshu Town, Yixing City, Jiangsu Province. Spanning an area of over 62,000 square meters, the Ceramic Avenue has been repurposed from the former Number Two Yixing Ceramic Factory—a pivotal component of Yixing's ceramic industry that had witnessed the evolution of the “City of Ceramics” and bore a rich historical and cultural heritage itself. Having transitioned from factory chambers to a hub of culture and creativity, the Creative & Cultural Ceramic Avenue has now become a comprehensive creative area focusing on contemporary ceramic culture, integrated with cultural innovations and high-quality lifestyle experiences. UCCA Clay is thus immersed in Yixing’s 7,000-year history of ceramic production, along with the city’s unique heritage and wealth of culture.

Drawing upon UCCA’s extensive operational expertise and artistic resources, UCCA Clay will present exhibitions and events featuring leading contemporary ceramic artworks from Chinese and international artists. Through these, UCCA Clay aims to foster dialogues between tradition and modernity, local and global art, and Yixing and the world, strengthening Yixing’s presence on the global cultural map. Moreover, UCCA Clay will also host public education programs related to its exhibitions, including conversations, lectures,

workshops, and performances. These activities will promote the innovative development of culture and tourism in Yixing by providing visitors with immersive and interactive experiences. They will also offer local residents a chance to engage with the transformative power of art. UCCA Clay endeavors to bring fresh perspectives and add new vitality to Yixing's millennia-old cultural heritage, promoting innovation, and international development.

UCCA Clay has been designed by the world-renowned Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, celebrated for his philosophy of "architecture for the five senses." This is the first of his projects to use clay as a primary building material. Combining traditional technique and modern aesthetics, Kengo Kuma's design adopts "clay elements" as its core concept. The building is therefore both an artistic interpretation and homage to the Dingshu region's long-standing ceramic heritage.

The façade of the building is tiled with specially crafted ceramic panels. Fired at high temperatures during production, these panels are glazed with subtle textures and color gradations that change when viewed at different angles and under different light conditions, producing an unpredictable "kiln-transmutation" effect. This gives the museum a unique visual identity and artistic vitality. In addition, to blend the museum into its surroundings landscapes and historical landmarks, Kengo Kuma designed passageways that connect the building with its surrounding plaza, river, and nearby historical sites, making the complex an organic whole. These passageways function as bridges between time and space, guiding visitors from the dimly lit interior spaces to expansive viewing platforms, allowing them to simultaneously appreciate art and engage with the profound interactions between architecture, nature, history and culture. This wholistic experience where visitors become more sentient in their seeing, feeling, hearing, and smelling is precisely what Kengo Kuma would like to create with his "architecture of the five senses."

UCCA Clay spans two floors with a total building area of 2,400 square meters. Its flexible layout includes a range of exhibition spaces, accommodating presentations of various scales and types while considering the unique display conditions of ceramic artworks. The museum also houses a multi-purpose hall, an auditorium, conference rooms, a shop, a café, and leisure areas. In particular, the multi-purpose hall can not only host academic lectures and seminars, but also transform into a special event space for public programs and workshops. The shop, café, and leisure areas offer visitors a place to unwind and relax, ensuring a comprehensive and interactive art experience.

With the official completion of UCCA Clay, Yixing City is set to welcome a new cultural and artistic landmark, infusing new vitality into the cultural ecosystem, and contributing to the urban development of the Yangtze River Delta region. UCCA Clay will become a key link between Yixing and the international art world, placing China's unique ceramic inheritance into global dialogue.

About UCCA

UCCA Center for Contemporary Art works to bring the best in art to ever wider audiences, global dialogue and cultural exchange. Opened in 2007, its Beijing flagship is registered as a non-profit museum, occupying over 10,000 square meters of regenerated factory space at the heart of the 798 Art District. UCCA also operates UCCA Dune in Beidaihe and UCCA Edge in Shanghai. In addition to its exhibitions, public programs, and research initiatives, UCCA includes a charitable foundation (UCCA Foundation), a comprehensive children's art education program (UCCA Kids), and a platform for commercial collaborations (UCCA Lab). Consistently ranked as China's leading art institution, UCCA has pioneered an integrated operating model distinct in the world.

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About Yixing Taodu

Yixing Taodu Capital Management Co., Ltd. is a wholly state-owned enterprise under the Dingshu Town Government. It primarily engages in real estate development, asset management and disposal, urban renewal, and equity investment. Currently, the company's main business activities are concentrated in Dingshu Town in Yixing, including but not limited to residential and commercial real estate development, commercial real estate investment and operation, industrial and estate development and operation, and old city renovation.

About Kengo Kuma & Associates (KCAA)

Kengo Kuma & Associates (KCAA) was established by Kengo Kuma, a renowned contemporary Japanese architect, in 1990. Currently, it has over 400 employees based in Tokyo, Beijing, Shanghai, Seoul, and Paris.

Kengo Kuma advocates for designs that harmonize nature and culture, promoting a gentle, human-centered architectural philosophy. He excels in using natural materials such as wood, ceramic pieces, bamboo, slate, paper, and glass, integrating them with elements like water, light, and air to create “defeated architecture”—structures that appear delicate yet are more earthquake-resistant, exuding the warmth and beauty of traditional architecture. He adopts an approach that contrasts sharply with twentieth-century modernism, eschewing industrial materials and stepping away from abstraction and minimalism, infusing spaces with a sense of history while defining the future.