



## New Face of Beijing iconic Water Cube

By joycexuxu | Posted July 3, 2013 | Beijing, China

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On June 23, an interactive public art in fusion of ancient Chinese philosophy and modern technology was launched on the façade of the Beijing National Aquatic Center, also known as the Water Cube, which once hosted the aquatic events of the 2008 Beijing Olympics

This permanent art installation, Nature and Men in Rhapsody of Light at the Water Cube, was designed by artist Jennifer Wen Ma and lighting designer Zheng Jianwei, together with a team of color specialist, feng shui expert, creative technology and programming experts, bringing new vitality and visuality to the Olympic Green.

Embodying the harmony between Men and Nature, a philosophical theme embedded in traditional Chinese culture, the alternating lights and colors of the LED-lit bubbles of the Water Cube are inspired by the essence of I Ching, the ancient Chinese divination manual and book of wisdom. I Ching is an energy model that consists of 64 hexagrams in a rotation by combining 8 natural elements: Heaven, Earth, Wind, Thunder, Fire, Marsh, Rain and Mountain.

On top of that, the blend-new art project also reflects emotional data of netizens collected from the social networking sites such as Sina Weibo, a twitter-like micro-blogging site in China. According to the 75 types of emotions including love, excitement, anger and sadness expressed in the blogs, the light installation will change daily through contemporary color theory, light, composition, rhythm and movement on the iconic building.

The artist Jennifer Wen Ma was also part of the core creative team of the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and Paralympics and the designer of the multimedia installation for Digital Beijing Building, which is situated north of the Water Cube.

Being one of the popular tourist destinations and major arts and cultural venues of Beijing since the Beijing Olympics Games, the aquatic center is notable for its energy efficient design of ETFE, a plastic-like material and exterior skin of "bubbles" in soap foam, which are associated with water molecules.

"By adding colors and connecting with the Internet, as well as focusing on Chinese traditions, what we are doing is bridging the gap between East and West, between ancient and modern, and putting it on a level that can universally connect with everybody in Beijing, no matter where they are from," said Steven Bleicher, color specialist of the project.

Starting from June 23, the artwork will be lighting up at around 8:20pm every day throughout summer and 5pm in winter. The light installation ends each day at 10 pm.

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