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- April Elizabeth Lamm on Douglas Gordon and Tobias Rehberger in Ibiza
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International News Digest

AUGUST 13

The gift shop at Greece's Minoan Palace ruins museum at Knossos, Crete is under investigation for tax fraud by the country's authorities, according to Henri Neuendorf in *Artnet*. According to AFP, investigators, in one day alone, found 534 tax regulation breaches. "Even the shop's cash register was found to have been left unplugged," wrote Neuendorf, who noted that "Greece is struggling to change a widespread culture of tax evasion amid a mounting debt crisis." Culture Minister Nikos Xydakis has cited a "zero tolerance" policy towards cultural organizations trying to evade taxes.



As the momentum of China's economy seems to slow, with construction projects down 16 percent in the first half this year, architecture firms are feeling the heat, reports the *Wall Street Journal's* Esther Fung. In June, Aedas, the fifth-largest architecture firm in the world, informed its Hong Kong staff of pay cuts ranging from 5 percent to 20 percent. This followed an earlier layoff of twenty-four staffers out of a total 281 workers in the firm's Beijing, Chengdu, and Shanghai offices. Shanghai-based architect Teddy Hu halved his staff a few months ago, saying "I was an idealist, but I have a more realistic mindset now."

But if the Chinese economy is faltering, it hasn't taken a toll on the high-end Chinese art market. Bonhams' Hong Kong-based specialist John Chong said that "booming market for Chinese art shows no sign of slowing down," according to AFR's Jane O'Sullivan. Citing "exponential" growth, Chong said "You're seeing more world records being broken in the past five to ten years than in the past fifty years."

According to Chong, the government has fueled the strength of the market for Chinese antiquities, by taking "a considerably firm stance in protecting and preserving their cultural heritage and national treasures in the recent decade." He added: "The economy has been suffering its ups and downs for the past fifteen years but the Chinese art market has always been growing and has resisted these crises."

The Bihar Museum, a new museum in Patna, east India, has partially opened this month, doing its part to address "India's under-funded state culture infrastructure," according to Gareth Harris in the *Art Newspaper*. Designed by the Tokyo-based architects Maki and Associates, the museum focuses on history and culture in the Indian subcontinent. Its children's and orientation galleries are now open to visitors, though its history galleries won't be accessible until next year. With an estimated budget of eighty million dollars being underwritten by the state, the museum has been "planned and implemented by a women-led, Indian team which has been virtually unprecedented until now," according to Eric Leyland, the creative director of UK company Lord Cultural Resources, which developed the venue.

Harris also reports in the *Art Newspaper* that a former salt warehouse in Ibiza is being turned into an eight thousand square foot gallery by New York-based collector Lio Malca. The art space, which opens this week and which has sponsorship from companies such as AirEuropa, is kicking off with a show that features Brooklyn-based artist Kaws. The pieces on display are all owned by Malca, whose collection also features work by artists including George Condo, Nobuyoshi Araki, Vik Muniz, and Keith Haring.

"In the main space, we'll show works from my collection, as well as works from other private collections—all museum-quality—and occasionally there will be commercial exhibitions," said Malca. Harris notes that Ibiza's becoming something of a hot-spot for contemporary art: Guy Laliberté, founder of Cirque du Soleil, also operates an exhibition venue called Lune Rouge, and contemporary art gallery Parra & Romero aims to open a small-scale sculpture park on the island as well.

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