

DOUGLAS F. COOLEY MEMORIAL ART GALLERY, REED COLLEGE

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COOLEY



CHINA URBAN

April 7 – June 7, 2009

An exhibition of contemporary Chinese art that explores the historical and contemporary Chinese city—as representation, model, catalyst, and socio-political construct

Opening Reception:

Thursday, April 9, 6:00 p.m. at the Cooley Gallery
Beginning with a Public Performance
of the calligraphy of the King of Kowloon by Dr. Yang Jiyu

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Images, clockwise: Xie Xiaoze and Chen Zhong, Untitled (detail), from the series *Last Days*, 2008, Color photograph documenting an environmental installation; Li Yan, Untitled, from *Snippets 5*, 2008; Dr. Yang Jiyu writing on the walls of the Cooley Gallery; Chen Qiulin, Color photograph from *The Garden*, 2008.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

The Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery is proud to present *China Urban*, a multimedia exhibition of contemporary Chinese art exploring the historical and contemporary Chinese city—as representation, model, catalyst, and socio-political construct.

The artists in **China Urban** are each uniquely notable for the manner in which their work explores the conflicts, tensions and symbolic shifts underlying the creation of a "new" China, one dependent upon the initial and irrevocable reconfiguration—and often destruction—of China's architectural and cultural traditions. Using a wide range of media, the artists in *China Urban* address the constant flux and transient nature of the new Chinese city, examining the city as a complex of both real and imaginary spaces. China's socioeconomic upheaval has sacrificed and displaced histories, traditions, and localities in favor of the creation of an economic superpower. As the artists featured in *China Urban* demonstrate, the reality of urbanization is every bit as psychological and internal as it is physical and environmental. Each artist presents us with engaging meditations on China's new urban condition.

China Urban features work by: multimedia artist **SONG DONG**, Beijing; filmmaker and multimedia artist **YANG FUDONG**, Shanghai; painter and filmmaker **CHEN SHAOXIONG**, Guangzhou; painter **LI YAN**, Beijing; multimedia artist **CAO FEI**, Beijing; urban calligrapher **TSANG TSOU CHOI** (the **KING OF KOWLOON**); multimedia artist **YIN XIUZHEN**, Beijing; painter and installation artist **CHEN QIULIN**, Chengdu; painter **YUN-FEI JI**, Brooklyn; and multimedia artists **XIE XIAOZE**, Pennsylvania and **CHEN ZHONG**, Beijing.

Painter **Yun-Fei Ji** and multimedia artists **Xie Xiaoze** and **Chen Zhong** explore the cultural and environmental consequences of the Three Gorges Dam project, a massive construction project that has forced millions of Chinese citizens to abandon their ancestral homes—and their traditional modes of life—in the name of modernization. The urban calligraphy of the "**King of Kowloon**" also addresses the pervasive problem of displacement, on levels both public and personal. **Cao Fei** (under the alias "**China Tracy**") interrogates China's urbanization by constructing her own bustling digital metropolis, RMB City, within the popular online program Second Life. RMB City creates a space of otherness from which to critique China's crisis of dislocation—and as an accelerant to the possibilities of the "virtual" extension of the self in the wake of rapid environmental change. **Li Yan's** large assemblages of exquisitely rendered oil paintings re-present media images of political



ABOUT THE CHINA URBAN COLLECTIVE

China Urban is curated and produced by the China Urban Collective, a collaborative organ initiated by Reed College Assistant Professor of Art Lisa Claypool and Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery Director Stephanie Snyder, and including the students of Claypool's Art in Contemporary China course (currently underway at Reed College) and curatorial research assistant Molly Dilworth (NYC). **China Urban** originated several years ago, in a series of conversations between Claypool and Snyder, initiated by Claypool and shaped by her extensive travels in China. The curatorial project was brought into the context of the Reed College classroom, and the China Urban Collective was born. The students of the Art in Contemporary China course are working on all aspects of the exhibition.

EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

An ongoing series of lectures, artist talks, and film screenings will occur from April 1 through early May 2009. The China Urban Collective is producing a color catalog for the exhibition that will arrive by the close of the show on June 7. Please check the Cooley Gallery website for updates and information related to events and special projects. Press releases will be issued for individual events.

protest and cultural struggle, focusing on the urban environment during the time of the recent Beijing Olympics. The character of the urban nomad—both real and imaginary—becomes a representative of change in many of the artists' work, as in **Yang Fudong's** depiction of a band of "bohemian aesthetes" wandering the city, exploring the possibilities of subjectivity in a radically changed China, and in **Yin Xiuzhen's** biographical sculptures that collapse personal and geographical history within the space of a suitcase. Other visions of the urban landscape possess a dreamlike, hallucinatory quality, evoking philosophical questions related to the artists' experiences of global, "non-native" landscapes and cultures. These questions seep through **Song Dong's** film *Scottsdale*, a shimmering meditation on self and place, and in the films and photographs of **Chen Quilin**, whose visually lush narratives explore the symbols and rituals of China's vanishing urban villages.



LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

SONG DONG and YIN XIUZHEN courtesy of the artists and Chambers Fine Art, New York; YANG FUDONG, courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York and Paris; CHEN SHAOXIONG, courtesy of the artist and Wedel Fine Art, London, England; LI YAN, XIE XIAOZE and CHEN ZHONG courtesy of the artists and Morono Kiang Gallery, Los Angeles and Platform China, Beijing; CHEN QIULIN courtesy of the artist and Max Protetch Gallery, New York; and YUN-FEI JI, courtesy of the artist, James Cohan Gallery, New York, and a private collection.

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suddenly re-opens January 24, 2009

Pomona College Museum of Art Claremont, California
Exhibition walk-through and reception: **JANUARY 24, 2009, 6 p.m.**

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3203 SE WOODSTOCK BLVD.
PORTLAND, OREGON 97202-8199**

**HOURS: NOON TO 6 P.M., WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY, FREE
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**The mission of the Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery is to
enhance the academic offerings of Reed College with a diverse
range of scholarly exhibitions, lectures, and colloquia in its role
as a teaching gallery.**

**The gallery was established by a generous 1988 gift from Sue and
Edward Cooley and John and Betty Gray "in support of the
teaching of art history at Reed College, as part of an
interdisciplinary educational experience that strengthens the art
history component of Reed's distinctive humanities program."
Exhibitions are coordinated in collaboration with Reed faculty
members and courses, with attention to the needs and interests
of the larger Portland and Northwest arts communities. A
schedule of three to four exhibitions during the academic year
brings to Reed and the Portland community work that would not
otherwise be seen in the region.**

Stephanie Snyder

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**EMAIL THE ABOVE ADDRESS TO BE ADDED
TO THE GALLERY EMAIL OR MAILING LIST**

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