

BETWEEN SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL SPACES

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC WORLD OF THE

GAO

B R O T H E R S



H U A
G A L L E R Y
contemporary chinese art

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2013 Hua gallery

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THE WORD HUA MEANS TO PAINT, OR A PAINTING, IN CHINESE.

Hua Gallery specialises in the exciting and sometimes controversial space that is Chinese contemporary art.

As Chinese contemporary art continues to fascinate and intrigue collectors around the world, demand and appetite for fresh and innovative art from this fast-changing region continues to escalate.

Hua Gallery represents and exhibits cutting edge, stimulating works by established contemporary Chinese artists, as well as emerging contemporary Chinese artists who are not as yet internationally recognised.

Hua Gallery adopts a distinctive business strategy by acquiring works from artists before selling them, as well as by exhibiting and selling works by artists on a commissions basis - an approach which demonstrates a passion, dedication and commitment to the artists and also, importantly, provides confidence to art collectors who trust the gallery to help expand their collections.

Hua Gallery's founder and director, Shanyan Koder, has developed strong relationships with her artists, and hopes to build a Chinese contemporary art collection in her gallery that is different and inspirational. Every artist represented by Hua Gallery is chosen for their artistic individuality, the creative symbolism in their work, and the emotional energy their work creates.

Hua Gallery is situated on the Albion Riverside, a prestigious residential block on the Battersea riverside, designed by world-renowned architects Foster and Partners. With close to 2,000 square feet of gallery space, Hua Gallery is London's only Chinese contemporary art gallery with a permanent exhibition space of this size and scale.

BETWEEN SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL SPACES:

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Beijing-based artists the Gao Brothers have since the middle of the 1980s acquired their reputation thanks to innumerable artworks and projects of a political nature and humanitarian stance. Dissident and controversial, the Gao Brothers are some of those artists who personally experienced the events of the Cultural Revolution, by which they have been deeply affected¹. Their art develops in the post-Mao era and questions the role of the individual within society, bringing to light social issues and delving into the complex nature of human beings. Leading the viewer to reflect about the notion of “social responsibility” their artistic creations also become an “allegory of human emotions”². Their art is not only a social commentary but it also presents itself as a manifestation of romantic spiritualism and intense human values. Their wide body of work covers a large spectrum of media, which includes photography, oil painting, installation, sculpture and performance.

Between Spiritual and Material Spaces: the Photographic World of the Gao Brothers brings together a series of artistic creations whose focal point is the relationship between the individual and his/her own spiritual and material spaces.

Through the medium of photography the Gao Brothers delve into a realm ruled by the imaginary and the real, creating a dimension which is both magical and ordinary at the same time. This is what characterises the series *The Forever Unfinished Building* where people from different social classes, sex and beliefs are sharing the same spaces, occupying the most hidden corners of this endless labyrinth. Reminiscent of Escher's compositions here the Gao Brothers' images seem to re-create fragments of lives where the characters are experiencing everyday and ordinary feelings. Solitude, melancholy, curiosity, happiness, indifference are just some of the states which permeate this bleak yet enchanted scenario. As a clear criticism of rampant Chinese progress, here attention is brought to the consequent isolation of people who suffer from urban solitude. By leading the viewer between these spaces the Gao Brothers allow us to glimpse some slices of Chinese contemporary life.

A similar sense of loneliness is conveyed in *Silent Space* where the presence of two human beings merges with the absence of a solid spiritual belief. As a frantic construction of new buildings and an increase of consumerism develops, the individual is either drawn into the exhilarating vortex of modernity or he finds himself naked and vulnerable in front of this unbridled urban chaos, thus questioning the current spiritual vacuum.

In *Outer Project - Map of China*, innumerable little cells populated by many different people create a honeycomb whose perimeter forms the shape of China itself. The individuals are here trapped in a hierarchical system with limited and tiny areas defining their living spaces.

The space expands in *The New World of Nuclear Cloud Shape*, a green and blue utopian vision inhabited by religious figures, ordinary people and eminent characters. Here the Gao Brothers create a work imbued with faith and idealism as the destructive artificial power of man turns into a fresh and natural cloud, becoming a symbol of hope and spiritual regeneration for the entirety of mankind.

Among the innumerable figures present in these photographic creations the nude plays a major role. Despite Chinese cultural taboos of nudity, the Gao Brothers' work often makes use of bodies completely or partially revealed. In works such as *Sense of Space*, *Echo*, *Lonely Summer* and *Black Space* the bodies are far from being a flaunting of the nude; rather they are a "laying bare of humanity itself."³ Squeezed into tiny sections, embraced by urban environments and emerging from dark backgrounds these bodies evoke pure states of mind, leading the viewer to penetrate the vulnerability of human beings and to explore between spiritual and material spaces.

Dagmar Carnevale Lavezzoli

1 Carnevale Lavezzoli, Dagmar, *The Gao Brothers' Embrace Project – Art in the name of Life*, MA History of Art, Chinese contemporary art, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2012

2 Angremy, Bérénice, "Photography as an Allegory of Human Emotion", *Le Passage du Temps*, Galerie Guislain Etat d'Art, Paris, 2006

3 Oliva, Achille Bonito. "The Dream of Art in the Work of the Gao Brothers", *The Gao Brothers*, Duncan Miller Gallery, Los Angeles, 2010

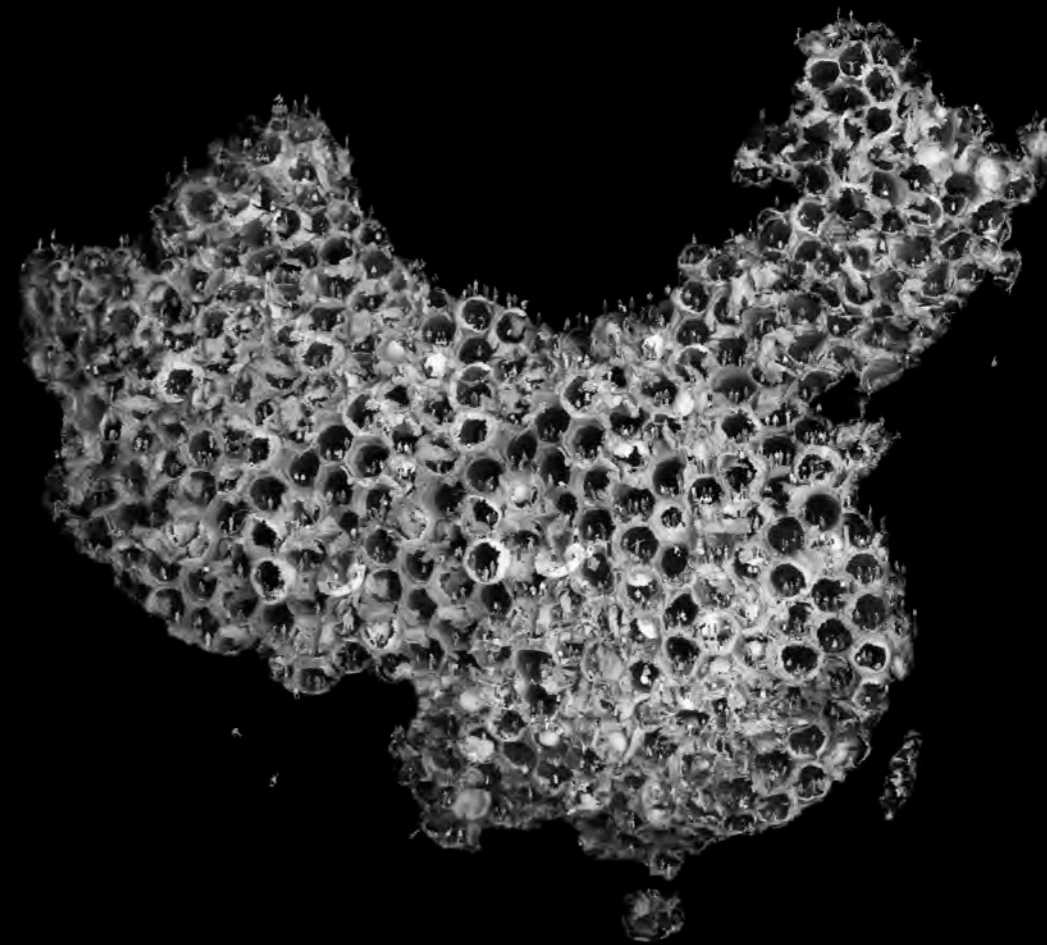
A NEW WORLD OF NUCLEAR CLOUD SHAPE
2008
247 X 180 CM | 165 X 120 CM | 100 X 73 CM
C-PRINT





DETAIL:
A NEW WORLD OF
NUCLEAR CLOUD SHAPE
2008
C-PRINT

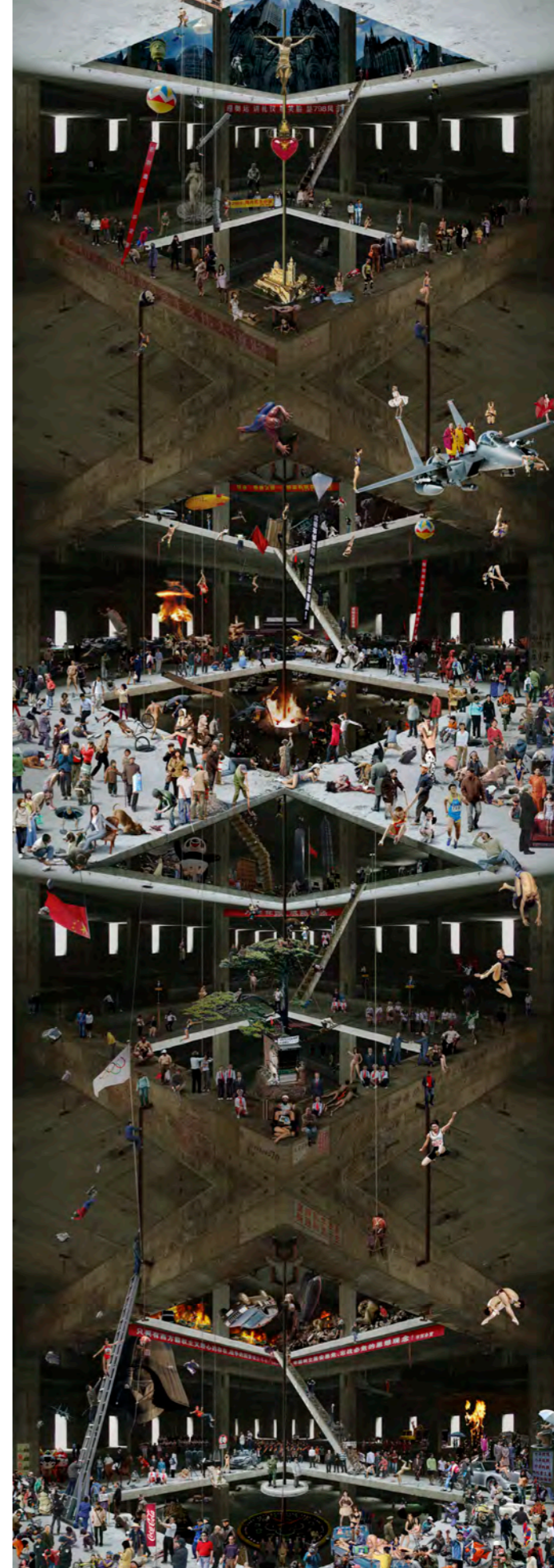
OUTER SPACE PROJECT - MAP OF CHINA
2008
298 X 240 CM | 220 X 180 CM | 146 X 120 CM
C-PRINT





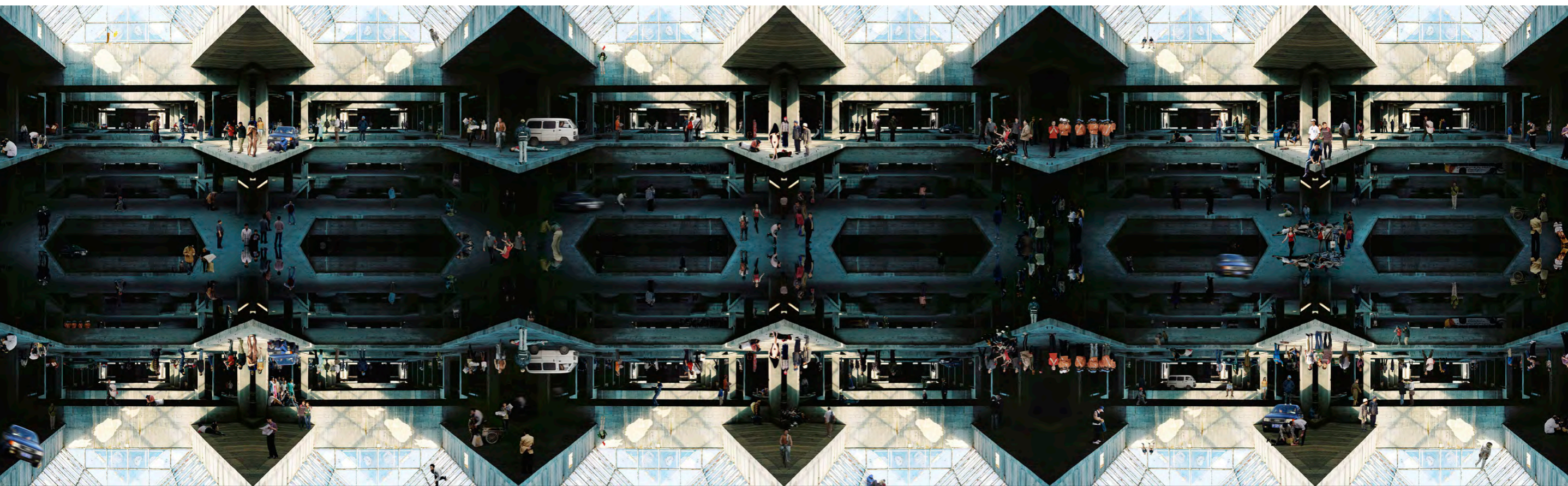
DETAIL:
OUTER SPACE PROJECT - MAP OF CHINA
2008
C-PRINT

THE FOREVER UNFINISHED
BUILDING NO.4
2008
150 X 444 CM | 100 X 295 CM | 54 X 160 CM
C-PRINT





DETAIL:
THE FOREVER UNFINISHED
BUILDING NO.4
2008
C-PRINT



THE FOREVER UNFINISHED BUILDING NO.2

2005

398 X 120 CM | 299 X 90 CM | 150 X 45 CM

C-PRINT



DETAIL:
THE FOREVER UNFINISHED BUILDING NO.2
2005
C-PRINT



THE FOREVER UNFINISHED BUILDING NO.1

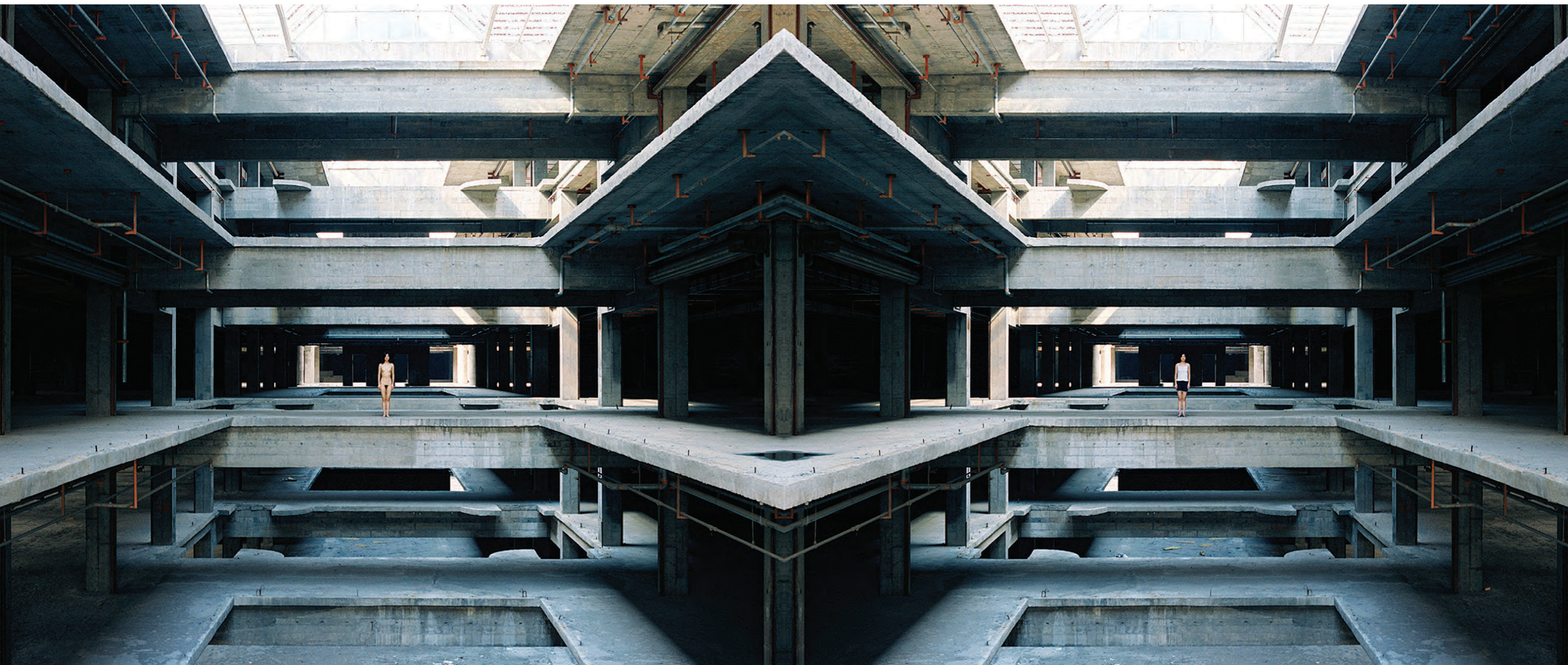
2000

283 X 80 CM | 200 X 57 CM | 120 X 34 CM

C-PRINT



DETAIL:
THE FOREVER UNFINISHED BUILDING NO.1
2000
C-PRINT



SILENT SPACE

2000

120 X 289 CM | 83 X 200 CM | 42 X 100 CM

C-PRINT

ECHO
2002
125 X 150 CM | 50 X 60 CM
C-PRINT



LONELY SUMMER

2002

80 X 120 CM | 67 X 100 CM | 40 X 60 CM

C-PRINT



SENSE OF SPACE - WAKE

2000

180 X 230 CM | 117 X 150 CM | 78 X 100 CM

C-PRINT

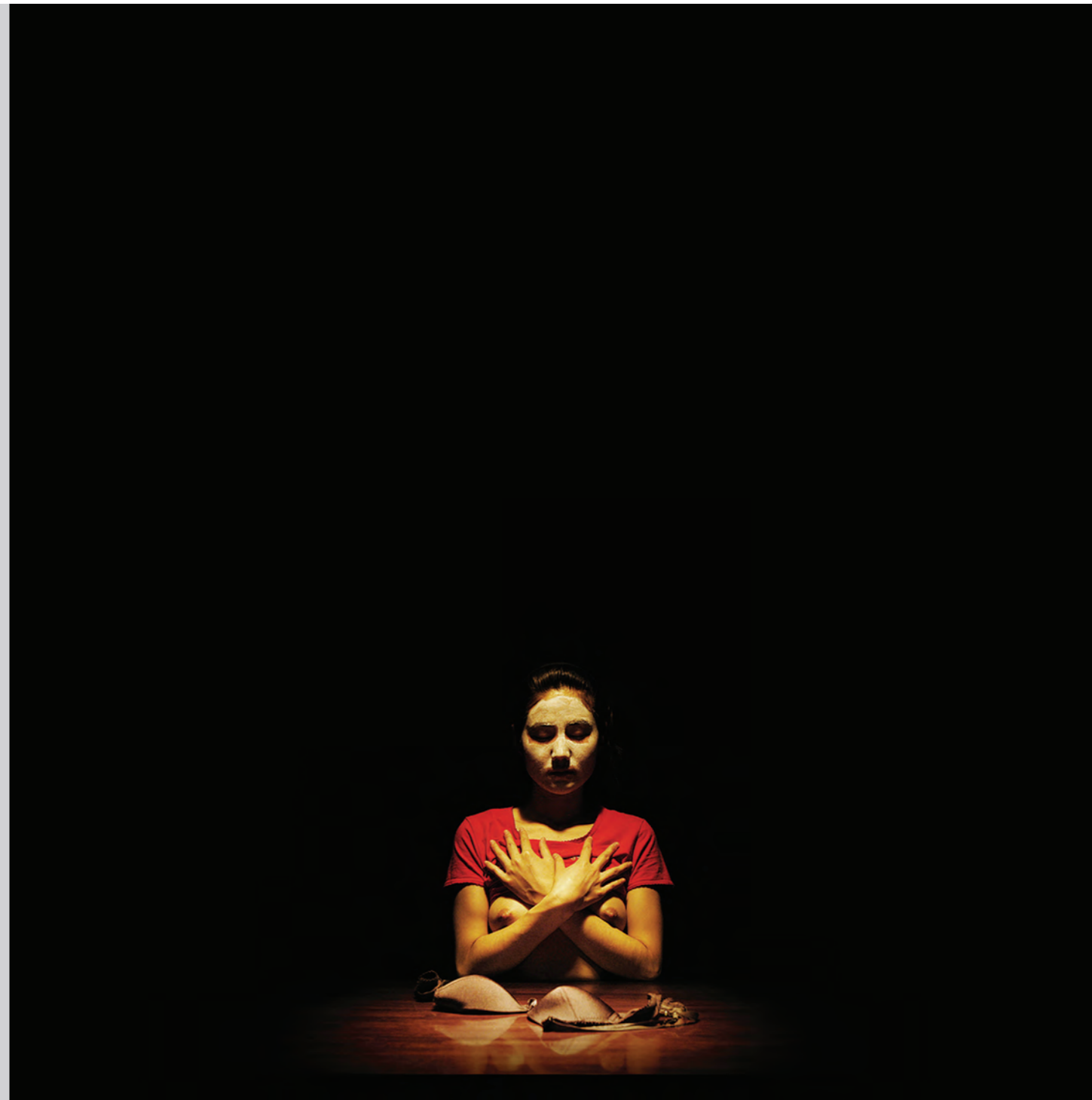


BLACK SPACE NO.1

2004

120 X 120 CM | 80 X 80 CM | 50 X 50 CM

C-PRINT



BIOGRAPHY



Gao Zhen 1956 Born in Jinan, China
Gao Qiang 1962 Born in Jinan, China

The Gao Brothers are a pair of artist brothers based in Beijing. They have been collaborating on installation, performance, sculpture, photography works and writing since the mid 1980s. Some of their works were published in “A History Of China Modern Art”, “China Avant-garde Photography” and “The Best Photography Of China”, amongst others. Their artworks have been gathered by both private collectors and museums in China and across the world, such as:

Steven Cohen
Uli Sigg
Charles Saatchi
China National Museum
Centre Georges Pompidou
The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
Princeton University Art Museum
Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2013**
Between Spiritual and Material Spaces: the Photographic World of the Gao Brothers.
Hua Gallery, London, UK
- 2012**
The Gao Brothers, Vue Privée Gallery – Art Stage Singapore, Singapore
- 2011**
The Gao Brothers: Grandeur and Catharsis, Walsh Gallery, Chicago, USA

- 2010**
The Gao Brothers: Grandeur and Catharsis, Kemper Museum Of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, USA
The Gao Brothers, Gallery Adrian David, Knokke-zoute (Kustlaan 335), Belgium
The Gao Brothers, Duncan Miller Gallery, Los Angeles. USA
Portrait: Gao Brothers’ Painting Exhibition, China Art Archives & Warehouse, Beijing
- 2008**
Sense of Space. Galerie Art Mûr, Montreal, Canada
Some Space for Humanity: Gao Brothers Photography Exhibition, Iaf Gallery, Shanghai
The Gao Brothers, Vallois Gallery, Paris, France
The Utopia of Construction, Gao Brothers Center For Contemporary Art, Beijing, China
- 2007**
The Gao Brothers, Albert Benamou Gallery, Paris. France
The Gao Brothers, Limn Gallery, San Francisco. USA
The Utopia of 20 Minutes Embrace, Brandenburg Gate, Berlin. Germany
Another World: Gao Brothers Photography Exhibition, Arles Photo Festival, France
The Gao Brothers, Boxart Gallery, Verona, Italy
The High Place: Gao Brothers Photography and Sculpture Exhibition, Beijing New Art Projects, Beijing. China
The Miserable Prostitutes: Gao Brothers’ Painting and Sculpture Exhibition, Gao Brothers Center For Contemporary Art, Beijing, China
From China with Love: Gao Brothers Photography and Sculpture Exhibition, Walsh Gallery, Chicago, USA
- 2006**
Miss Mao: Gao Brothers Sculpture and Photography Exhibition, Krampf/Pei Gallery, New York. USA
One and Together: Gao Brothers Photography Exhibition, Moscow House of Photography - Gallery on Solyanka, Moscow, Russia
The passage of Time: Gao Brothers Photography Exhibition, La Galerie Guislain Etats d’ Art, Paris, France
The Utopia of Hugging, London, Nottingham, Marseilles
Trope of Body: Gao Brothers Photography Exhibition, Beijing New Art Projects, Beijing, China
- 2005**
One Abandoned Building’s Visual Story—Gao Brothers Photography Exhibition, Beijing New Art Projects, Beijing, China
- 2002**
A Dinner With The Homeless People, performance, Jinan, China
- 2001**
Embrace: Gao Brothers’ New Works, Courtyard Gallery, Beijing, China

2000

Fuse: Gao Brothers' Photography, Eastlink Gallery, Shanghai, China

1995

The End of Mankind: Gao Brothers' Installations, Jinan Painting Institute, China

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

2012

Un-Forbidden: the Post-Revolution of New Chinese Art. Macro Museum, Rome, Italy

2011

Drapeau rouge / Red Flag, Contemporary Chinese Art in Montreal Collections, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada
Verboten, Thomas Ammann Fine Art AG, Zurich, Switzerland
Pino Pascali. Return to Venice / Apulia Contemporary Art, Palazzo Michiel dal Brusà, Venice, Italy
Middle East, Middle Kingdom, Etemad Gallery, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
In God We Trust Contemporary Chinese Art, Bard College, New York, USA

2010

Daegu Photo Biennale, Daegu Culture and Art Center, Daegu, Korea
Intramoenia Extra Art_Mirages, Alfonso's Castle of Brindisi, Italy
Reshaping History: China Art from 2000 to 2009, National Conference Center, Beijing, China
State of the Dao: Chinese Contemporary Art, Lehman College Art Gallery, New York, USA
Hotbed: Shandong Contemporary Art, Sunshine International Museum, Beijing, China

2009

Vancouver Biennale, Vancouver, Canada
Action-Camera, Beijing Performance Photography, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver, B.C. Canada
Madre Coraggio la mostra di Achille Bonito Oliva al Ravello Festival, Italy
Made In China, the Museum of New Art (MONA), Detroit, USA
The Very Condition, Wall Art Museum, Beijing, China
Contact Photo Festival, Drake Hotel, Toronto, Canada
Between the Sexes, Paris Beijing Photo Gallery, Beijing, China
Xun Dao: Searching for Spirituality in Contemporary Chinese Art, Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, USA

2008

Mahjong, Contemporary Chinese Art from the Sigg Collection, The Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, USA
The 2008 Fotofest 12th International Photography Biennial, Houston, USA

China... Forward: China Contemporary Art, TSUM, Moscow, Russia
Ah! We: Chinese Contemporary Art 1978-2008, China National Theater, Beijing, China

2009

Chinese Aroma-Huantie Times Chinese Art Invitation Exhibition, Huan Tie Times Art, Beijing
Made in Beijing: China Contemporary Art, Modern Art Museum of Hongik University, Seoul, Korea
China Under Construction: Contemporary Art from the People's Republic, Beborah Colton Gallery, Houston, USA
Exhibition Of Chinese Contemporary Social Art, The State Tretyakov Museum, Moscow, Russia
The Photographs of the Performance in China, Ying Art Center, Beijing, China
Dragon's Evolution, China Square Art Center, New York, USA
Breathe: Shandong Contemporary Art Exhibition, Shandong Museum, Jinan, China

2006

Ten Chinese Avant-garde Photographers, Asia Art Center, Beijing, China
Photography of Gao Brothers, Matteo Basile and Raimondo Galeano, Il Ponte Contemporanea, Rome, Italy
Miss Mao, Black Projects, London, UK
Between Art and Architecture, 798 Avant Gallery, New York, USA
Beijing-Soldiers at the Gates, Factory 798 Dashanzi Art District, Beijing, China
The First Annual Exhibition Of Chinese Contemporary Art, China Century Altar, Beijing, China
My Space, Your Space, Walsh Gallery, Chicago, USA
Brothers, Xin Dong Chen Space For Contemporary Art, Beijing, China
Ruins, Inova Art Center, Peckschool of Art, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, USA
Field of Vision: Beijing, Beijing New Art Projects, Beijing, China
5x7 Frame Decide the Attitude Exhibition in Pingyao International photography Festival, Pingyao, China
"Photographing China", The circumvallation site of Ming Dynasty, Beijing, China
"Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China", Santa Barbara Museum of Art, USA

2005

The Second Reality: Photographs From China, Piazza of Berlaymont building, European Commission. Brussels, Belgium
Field of Vision: Extremes, The Institute For New Media, Frankfurt, Germany
The Gesture. Visual Library in progress, Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece
Tian An Men - Tian An Men – Gate to Heaven, Foam Photography Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands
A Utopia of the Visible: 13 Outstanding Art Photographers In China, Beijing New Art Projects, 798 Art District, Beijing, China
Placed in China, Walsh Gallery, Chicago, USA

The Flower in the Ruin: Contemporary Image Exhibition, Niu Fang Depot, Macau
The City in 360 Degrees: French and Chinese Photographers in China, Beijing New Art Projects, 798 Art District, Beijing, China
China Avant-Garde: Contemporary Chinese Art, Arena, Santa Monica, USA
Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China, Victoria and Albert Museum London, UK
Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, USA
Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, Chicago, USA
Start To Fly: He Xiangning Art Museum OCAT Contemporary art Collection, He Xiangning Art Museum, Shenzhen, China
Vehicle and Mirror Image, Beijing New Art Projects, Beijing, China
Pingyao International Photography Exhibition, Pingyao, China
2004 Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China, International Center of Photography and Asia Society, New York, USA
Tiananmen, Chinese Eyes Gallery, Paris, France
Design the Marble – 40 international artists in Carrara, Carrara, Italy

2003

The 2nd International Photo Festival of Rome”. L’ Officina, Rome, Italy
Chinese Art Today, China Century Altar, Beijing, China
SOHO Contemporary Art Exhibition, SOHO Street, Beijing, China
Bare Androgyny - A group show of Contemporary Art, 798 Art Community, Beijing, China

2002

The First Triennial Of Chinese Arts. Guangzhou Art Museum. China
Limits of Bodies, Shangrila, Beijing, China
“2002 Pingyao International Photography Exhibition”, Pingyao, China

2001

“The 5th Los Angeles International Biennale”, Bergamot Station Arts Center, LA, USA
The First Tirana Biennale, National Gallery & Chinese Pavilion, Albania
Nice International Photography Festival: Chinese Album, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Nice, France
Mao Y’a Pas Photo, the Espace d’ Art Contemporain of La Rochelle, Paris
Rotate 360 - Chinese Plan Art Exhibition, Paragold Int’l Art Centre, Shanghai
2000 China Avant-garde Artists Documents, Fukuoka Art Museum, Japan
Portraits, Figures, Couples and Groups from the MCAF collection, BIZART, Shanghai, China
Family? Contemporary Art Project, Yuexing International Furniture Center, Shanghai, China
Man and Animal, performance show, Beijing, China

1999

The 2nd Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Sculpture, Shenzhen, China
The Documentary Exhibition of World Chinese Installation Art, Hong Kong Art Commune, Hong Kong
The Picture and Writing Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Artists, Gallery of Nanjing Teachers University, China
Out Of Control, Design Art Museum, Beijing, China

1996

The Documentary Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Art, Chengdu, China

1992

Guangzhou Biennale, Guangzhou, China

1989

China Avant-Garde, China National Art Museum, Beijing, China

1985

Shandong Modern Art Exhibition, Jinan, China

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CURATION: DAGMAR
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DESIGN: NICHON GLERUM



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