



26th October, 2012

Exhibition of Works by Contemporary Chinese

Photographer:

Chen Jiagang – The Great Three Gorges

- Artist : Chen Jiagang
Opening Cocktail : 6 – 8 pm, Thursday 8th November, 2012
Opening Ceremony at 7 pm – The artist will be present.
- Venue : Contemporary by Angela Li
G/F, 90-92 Hollywood Road, Central, Hong Kong
- Exhibition Date : 9th November – 2nd December 2012
- Website : www.cbal.com.hk

Contemporary by Angela Li is proud to present “The Great Three Gorges”, a solo exhibition of latest works by internationally acclaimed Chinese photographer Chen Jiagang.

Chen, an artist as complex as his works, is a former architect and businessman. In this much anticipated show, following on from his retrospective at the Hong Kong International Art Fair earlier this year, he brings us an exciting new collection of works. Debuting some dramatic new techniques and portraying powerful panoramic effects, combined with his discerning eye for detail, Chen offers us his new “The Great Three Gorges” series.

The Three Gorges Dam is not only a monumental engineering achievement; it has brought us some undeniable world records. It is in fact the biggest dam, power plant and largest consumer of dirt, stone, concrete and steel. On top of that, this project is responsible for the displacement of in excess of 1.1 million people, suggested as one of the largest human resettlements of modern times.

Along with its spawning environmental problems like water pollution and landslides, this rising controversy makes it easy to over look that it is, in fact, the world’s biggest manmade producer of electricity from renewable energy. Hydropower is the centerpiece of one of China’s most praised green initiatives along with a plan to rapidly expand renewable energy by 2020. In his latest series of works, Chen tries to capture some of these landscapes, unearthed by the relocation, some of which are desolate and others that are now highly urban as a result.

On his newly created “Great Three Gorges” series, Chen Jiagang said, “Destiny - the relationship between one’s childhood experiences and adult conduct is destiny. I was born in Chongqing and grew up in the Three Gorges Reservoir area, living in such places as Fengdu, Wanzhou and Yichang. I’ve photographed the Three Gorges countless times, but I didn’t really begin to focus on the Three Gorges until an experience in 2009. That was when I noticed that the fog over the Three Gorges Reservoir was growing denser and more prevalent. Why is this? One reason is the changes in the overall climate of the area since the construction of the Three Gorges Dam. Another reason is the dust that is left over after the human plundering of resources. This symbol, and the waters beneath the fog, are a microcosm of China today. Following the undulating red songs of the reservoir region, passing through the empty buildings sealed off in the anti-corruption campaigns, one can see the gaping holes left by the trees transplanted into the city and the despondent shadows of the people trying to resettle in the area.



Chen Jiagang, *The Great Three Gorges - Voice of Fuling*, Photograph, 2012

Covered by the mist and compounded by the sudden rise of the massive chemical factories, my heart is at a loss. Is this really where I lived as a child? No, it looks like Africa, like the Middle East, like those images of pillaged third world countries. It created a beautiful life for a different civilization and a different place. I can only step back, using close-up methods to view things, giving ample observation room to the details, further stepping through history to express my anxiety about the destruction of my childhood dreams.”

The monumental scale of these photographs draws the viewer into the struggle between man and nature, capturing the destruction and isolation of China's big cities but also a yearning for its past. Chen’s choice of contrasting and fading colours hints at nostalgia and memory, enhanced by

the juxtaposition of his fleeting 'phantom' figures onto the grey, fixed landscape. The appearance of a young woman dressed in traditional qipao adds a sense of illusion to the images recalling a glorious past when the 'revolutionary age' was so intrinsically bound up with the industrialisation of China. The qipao, once banned, was considered the attire of the intellectual elite. Thus the woman becomes a binary symbol, one of modernity but also of the entrenched bureaucratic power of the country's capitals, absorbing the wealth and resources of the land.



Chen Jiayang, *The Great Three Gorges – The Smog of Fuling*, Photograph, 2012



Chen Jiayang, *The Great Three Gorges – Ship in Changshou*, Photograph, 2012



Chen Jiagang, *The Great Three Gorges – A Night in Fengjie*, Photograph, 2012

All images: Courtesy of the artist & Contemporary by Angela Li.

About Contemporary by Angela Li

Contemporary by Angela Li is one of Hong Kong's most exciting art galleries showcasing and promoting contemporary art. Regular curated exhibitions are held for emerging and established artists and the gallery is committed to bring quality works to the local and international art scene.