

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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THE BIG WORLD: RECENT ART FROM CHINA

Exhibition highlights the next generations of contemporary Chinese artists
at the Chicago Cultural Center, April 25 – August 30, 2009



The timely exhibition, organized by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), focuses on art in various media by approximately 20 artists living and working in China today. “The Big World” alludes to the vast, almost unimaginable scale of contemporary Chinese art in the international art scene, but the title also references a large and storied Shanghai amusement park. The attraction became a general reference for Shanghai and China’s urban centers to the East by those in Western rural China. Various aspects of the changing Chinese landscape and daily life are analyzed in this selection of some fifty works by artists who range from emerging talent to fairly celebrated international artists.

The Big World: Recent Art from China will be on view in the Chicago Cultural Center’s Fourth Floor Exhibit Hall and Sidney R. Yates Gallery from April 25 through August 30, 2009. On Friday, April 24, at 5 p.m., the exhibition curators Gregory G. Knight, DCA Deputy Commissioner for Visual Arts, and Tereza de Arruda of TA Art Projects, Berlin, will lead a gallery talk at 5 p.m. followed by an opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m. A panel discussion with the curators and visiting artists will take place on Saturday, April 25, at 2 p.m. Additional gallery talks will be held on Thursdays, April 30, May 21, June 25, July 23, and August 30, at 12:15 p.m. Admission to the exhibition and these associated programs is free.

The scale of urban China and the products of its several important art academies have given rise to a perception that China is among the top countries today for art education and experimentation. The resources there have also allowed this perception to become reality; many artists are able to work in large studios with dozens of assistants to help them realize their ideas to exhibit at home and abroad.

Offering insight into the active studio scene in China, **The Big World: Recent Art from China** examines contemporary Chinese art’s dissemination to the world and museums’ interest in new art from China. Unlike several recent exhibitions based on private collections from the United States or Europe, this project engages directly with the artists in China. Beyond the “super stars” of the Chinese

art market, this exhibition highlights the emerging artists of significant artistic accomplishment, including: Bu Hua, Chen Bo, Jin Shi, Liu Bolin, Liu Ding, Liu Wei, Ma Jiawei, Qiu Xiaofei, Rong Rong & Inri, Shi Yong, Wang Chengyun, Wang Qingsong, Wang Wei, Xiong Yu, Yin Xiuzhen, Zhou Liang, Zhou Tao, Zhou Wenzhong, and Zhou Yi.

The Department of Cultural Affairs has followed the rise of Chinese contemporary art in several exhibitions and programming presented over the past 30 years. In 1979, right after China first opened up to foreign travelers, the Office of Fine Arts, as the department was then known, presented "21 Views of China," an exhibition of cultural items brought back by Chicago art professionals on a visit to China. Later, in 1997, the traveling exhibition "New Art in China Post-1989" came to the Cultural Center. This selection of works from the early 1990s included many of the works that are now setting auction records for some key artists, such as Fang Lijun, Liu Wei, and Zhang Xiaogang. The rich diversity of this show highlighted the post-Pop, Mao-heavy imagery of artists just then emerging from a period of heavy censorship. **The Big World: Recent Art from China** now looks at the generations of artists living in a China more open to trade and information.

Also on exhibit in the Chicago Cultural Center's first floor Michigan Avenue Galleries is "Articles of Faith: Photographs by Dave Jordano" from April 4 to June 28, 2009, and "The Sorrows of Swans: Paintings by Eleanor Spiess-Ferris" and "Look at me: Photographs of Mexico City by Jed Fielding" from April 11 to July 5, 2009. "Catherine Whitehead: The Butterfly and the Skull" is on view in the Project Onward Gallery from April 21 through June 1, 2009, and "Inquire Within: Soul Searching and Truth Seeking by Artists with Disabilities" continues through May 17, 2009, in the Chicago Rooms.

Viewing hours for **The Big World: Recent Art from China** and other exhibitions at the Chicago Cultural Center are Mondays through Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Fridays, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturdays 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Chicago Cultural Center is closed on holidays. Admission to Chicago Cultural Center exhibitions is free.

Organized by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, this exhibition is co-curated by Gregory G. Knight, DCA Deputy Commissioner for Visual Arts, and Tereza de Arruda, of TA Art Projects, Berlin.

This exhibition is made possible by the Lead Sponsorship of The Boeing Company, in addition to generous support from the Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office, New York; the Governor's International Arts Exchange Program of the Illinois Arts Council; the Philancon Fund at the Boston Foundation; and Royal Roots Global Inc. Additional assistance has been provided by Chinablue Gallery, Beijing, and the Chengyun Wang Studio, Chengdu.

Transportation support is provided by United Airlines, the Official Airline of the Chicago Cultural Center. Lawry's the Prime Rib is the restaurant sponsor of Chicago Cultural Center exhibitions.

For more information about **The Big World: Recent Art from China** and Chicago Cultural Center exhibitions, the public can visit www.chicagoculturalcenter.org or call 312.744.6630. (TTY: 312.744.2947).

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Note to Press: Electronic Images Available Upon Request
Image at the top: **Wang Qingsong**, *The Glory of Hope*, 2007. Courtesy of Chinablue Gallery.