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• "Singapore Biennale 2011:  
Open House"

# Shanghai

## "0° Space"

AIKE-DELL'ARCO GALLERY

50 Moghanshan Road, Floor 2, Building 1

April 16–May 15

Ideas of both physical and existential space—with spaces conceived as ambiguous vessels to be filled or emptied—are central to this group show. For this reason, almost all of the works on view deal with the rapidly changing city, the prime site of displacement and disorientation in China today. The real estate brochures that constantly clog mailboxes in China were one source of inspiration for Guo Hongwei's watercolor on paper series "The Temporary Existence," 2011. Here, Guo uses a dusty monochromatic palette to render bare rooms with dank walls and overexposed windows. These lodgings aspire neither to domesticity nor to the romance of transience, instead resting in some fly-by-night interstice. That Guo worked solely from the advertising images, rather than the actual rooms, contributes to the feeling of getting stuck while passing through. This perpetual estrangement allows him to create a relationship with the room beyond that of hope and expectation.

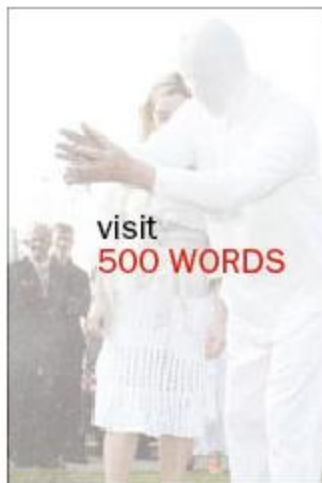


Jiang Pengyi, *No. 8*, 2010, color photograph, 37 1/2 x 49". From the series "Unregistered Cities," 2010.

Jiang Pengyi's 2010 series "Unregistered Cities" critiques the transformation of the cityscape. The artist photographs small-scale dioramas of urban turmoil and then digitally adds images of thriving cities. In *No. 8*, for instance, mirror shards rising from a pile of disintegrated tile and cement reflect pristine views of buildings and skies. However, the mirrors show different cities at various times of day, leading to several levels of fragmentation. We do not see any one scene's true reflection, which might support the "ends justify the means" defense of land developers. Instead, one finds only slivers of idealization within the rubble. This appropriation moves beyond questions of land rights to identify the shift toward the image-based city, a novel and startling transition for contemporary China.

When the individual does appear—as in the collage *Mystery and Melancholy of a Street*, 2011, Chow Chun Fai's photo reconstruction of a Giorgio de Chirico image of urban alienation—it is only a marginal spectator. Chow comments on de Chirico's menacing shadows, which are spatially illogical to begin with, by painting his own outside the frame of the original piece. This acknowledged liminality is sobering, especially considering the exhibition's scope.

— Hunter Braithwaite



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