

# BREAK THROUGH

WORK BY CONTEMPORARY  
CHINESE WOMEN ARTISTS

This brochure accompanies an exhibition of the same name at the  
Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine from September  
27 through December 22, 2013. The exhibition is presented in  
conjunction with the symposium "Female Embodiment of the Visual  
World: Women's Art in Contemporary China," held at Bowdoin  
College on September 28, 2013.

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Image opposite: Peng Wei, *Autumn of Tang Dynasty*, 2008  
Back cover: Cao Fei, *Deep Breathing* (from *COSPlayers* series), 2004

Bowdoin College Museum of Art  
9400 College Station  
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Cai Jin (Tsai Chin) 蔡锦

Cao Fei (Tsao Fei) 曹斐

Chen Qiulin (Chen Ch'iu-lin) 陈秋林

Hung Liu 劉虹

Lin Tianmiao (Lin T'ien-miao) 林天苗

Peng Wei (Peng Wei) 彭薇

Xing Danwen (Hsing Tan-wen) 邢丹文

Yin Xiuzhen (Yin Hsiu-chen) 尹秀珍

The artists' names appear above in Chinese characters and in two forms of romanization of the Chinese language: pinyin, the current international standard, and Wade-Giles (in parentheses) introduced in the late nineteenth century and used through much of the twentieth century. The names are rendered in pinyin elsewhere in the publication.



## Introduction

The eight artists featured in *Breakthrough: Work by Contemporary Chinese Women Artists*—Cai Jin, Cao Fei, Chen Qiulin, Hung Liu, Lin Tianmiao, Peng Wei, Xing Danwen, and Yin Xiuzhen—span multiple generations, ranging from those who came of age during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s to those who grew up amid China's massive infrastructural reforms and emergence on the global market during the 1990s. They work across a wide range of media—painting, photography, video, sculpture, installation, and even interventions in the online realm of Second Life. Diverse as their perspectives are as a group, each artist is concerned with representations of the body—their own and that of others. The corporeal form inhabits the liminal spaces of rapidly changing built environments (Xing Danwen, Chen Qiulin) or may be implied through clothing or sewing (Yin Xiuzhen, Lin Tianmiao). Bodies are constructed anew as futuristic, virtual avatars (Cao Fei). Figures from historical photographs appear like ghostly specters (Hung Liu). The torsos of female mannequins are canvases for ink wash painting (Peng Wei) and the body's interior is suggested through visceral, abstract painting (Cai Jin). By summoning the figural presence in their art, these artists may also be registering, perhaps inadvertently, a growing awareness of their impact on the contemporary arts scene, both within China and internationally. To visualize the human form becomes an assertion of the self, a way to establish one's position amid the tectonic shifts in Chinese society in recent decades.

In her text Shu-chin Tsui, associate professor of Asian studies and film studies, discusses the works on view in terms of their formal qualities and in relation to artistic, cultural, and societal transformations within China and internationally. In spite of their artistic accomplishments, Chinese women have historically been absent from art

historical scholarship. Peggy Wang, assistant professor of art history and Asian studies, considers the field of Chinese women's art since its emergence in the mid-1990s and cautions us about the potential pitfalls of defining a group of artists by geography or gender. Their joint perspectives activate our appreciation for this sophisticated and vibrant work and foster a nuanced understanding of the conditions behind these artists' arrival on the world stage.

## Acknowledgements

The initiator and co-curator of this exhibition, Shu-chin Tsui, has been conducting original research over the past several years in China on the subject of contemporary women's art. Her deep knowledge, enthusiasm, and personal connections with many of the artists were critical to the exhibition's success. *Breakthrough* was also strengthened immensely thanks to co-curator Peggy Wang's expertise in the field of contemporary Chinese art. Student assistant to the curator Hongbei Li '14 was instrumental to all facets of the exhibition process. Special thanks are also extended to Museum Co-Directors Anne and Frank Goodyear, as well as Museum staff, especially Suzanne Bergeron, Martina Duncan '97, Jo Hluska, Laura Latman, Michelle Henning, Joachim Homann, José Ribas '76, and Andrea Rosen.

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### Sarah Montross

Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellow



## BREAKTHROUGH: ARTISTS AND WORKS

SHU-CHIN TSUI Associate Professor of Asian Studies and Film Studies, Bowdoin College

*Breakthrough: Work by Contemporary Chinese Women Artists* explores the conceptual claims and creative practices of “women’s art” in contemporary China. “Women’s art” as a gendered category is open to question, however. How, for example, are we to view works by women artists in terms of gender politics as well as aesthetic articulations? Why have Chinese women artists refused to have their work identified in terms of feminism, even if they seemingly engage in feminist art practices? Addressing these questions and locating them against China’s social-cultural conditions, the exhibition explores four key aspects of the work on view. First is a visual dialogue between classical painting and contemporary innovation, which connects

traditional to modern and history to re-presentations of the past. Next is a contrast between ruined sites and urban construction, addressing how China’s socioeconomic transition is dramatically changing its landscape. The exhibition then leads us on a journey through cyberspace, where personal desires find expression through avatars, and the social environment becomes virtual reality. Finally, an engagement between the search for female identity and experiments with cotton threading, shoemaking, and flower painting demonstrate the visual languages of materiality. Through these interwoven themes, *Breakthrough* brings fresh critical attention to eight artists who are making significant contributions to contemporary art.

Xing Danwen, *Urban Fiction* (image 10), 2006



## Between the Classical and the Contemporary

Peng Wei and Hung Liu

Peng Wei brings a contemporary interpretation to classical Chinese landscape painting. The hanging scroll *A Young Girl's Thoughts* (2012) features a restrained farewell scene of a young woman in a boat departing from her lover. The artist has inverted the gender roles present in classical art, where usually a passive female figure watches her male lover sail away. Additionally the artist turns to Western literature rather than Chinese narrative for an inscription, rendering in calligraphy a poem by Friedrich Schiller, thus creating a contrasting dialogue between the conventions of subdued Chinese painting and expressive German poetry. In the sculptures *Night* (2010) and *Autumn of Tang Dynasty* (2008), Peng Wei's formal explorations extend the conversation between the classical and the contemporary. She wraps the torsos of commercial female mannequins with hemp paper and then inscribes classical ink paintings across the body's surface. This innovation transforms two-dimensional painting into three-dimensional sculpture, where the female form assumes material as well as gendered significance.

Whereas Peng Wei's sculptures reframe the classical and the contemporary in terms of form and material,

Hung Liu's paintings juxtapose past and present in terms of history and memory. In *Relic 8* (2004), an image of two nineteenth-century courtesans, quoted from a historical photograph, occupies the canvas. The central panel, red and resin-glazed, features Chinese characters composed with a female radical and phonetic ideogram to signify the gender identity and social status of the subjects. The oil washes and drips of color are Hung Liu's signature painting style. Circles, symbols of the universe, decorate the canvas in several hues. The inserted birds, flowers, and grasshopper—iconography from historical Chinese painting—relate the figures back to traditional art forms.

In *The Path* (2010–2011), Hung Liu uses her characteristic layering of brushstrokes, drips, and patterns to create images that blend historical documents with memory and fantasy. The central image, lifted from a mid-twentieth-century black-and-white photograph,<sup>1</sup> shows two women riding donkeys along a rural path—the first rider smiling as she breastfeeds her baby. Hung Liu embeds the riders within a complex field of imagery—birds, deer, a fish—more references from classical art and symbols of good fortune offered to the travelers on their journey.



Hung Liu, *The Path*, 2010–2011



## Between Ruins and Urban Fiction

Chen Qiulin and Xing Danwen

Sites of industrial ruins and brick balconies are primary motifs in Chen Qiulin's diverse multimedia work that visualizes the transformations of time and place caused by China's rapid urbanization. In the video *Peach Blossom* (2009) and related photography, the artist—wearing elaborate make-up and a wedding dress—appears (dis)located when seen against the industrial ruins or the rubble of demolition in her hometown in Wan County, Sichuan Province. A woman's beauty contrasts with the decaying landscape as the artist bears witness to the tumultuous evolution of urban development. In her installation series *Balcony* (2007), the detached and detailed apartment balconies, with their characteristic red brick, wooden door, and hanging laundry, offer a window into the customs of the old city about to be engulfed by the voracious spread of urbanization.

While Chen Qiulin captures the disappearance of a familiar landscape, in Xing Danwen's *Urban Fiction* series an alien landscape emerges. The artist digitally inserts dramatic scenes from everyday life into photographs of miniature architectural maquettes from real estate showrooms. Often the artist herself appears as the primary actor, staging episodes with her male counterparts in supporting roles. The architectural models pinpoint critical social problems and gender issues. From a bird's-eye view, we gaze at the city dwellers isolated inside high-rise buildings or behind walls. The revelation of private life within a projected architectural framework demonstrates how massive construction projects are radically reshaping China's landscape and people's lifestyles.



Chen Qiulin, *Solidified Scenery* (from *Peach Blossom*), 2009



Xing Danwen, *Urban Fiction* (image 24), 2006

## Between the Real and the Virtual World

Cao Fei



Critical concerns about urban landscape and social reality extend to cyberspace and virtual reality in an acknowledgment of the hybridity of contemporary life between analog and digital realms. A traveler who frequently transgresses these lines is Cao Fei, a maverick multimedia artist. The video, photography, and installations related to her *COSPlayers* (2004) series show urban adolescents role-playing in elaborate, fantastical costumes. Using construction sites, commercial streets, or abandoned buildings in Guangzhou as their stage, the “cosplayers” of manga or anime are like alien invaders who enact their dreams and exercise their ability to co-opt reality.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, after their momentary escape, the heroes must return home to face a mundane existence.

The artist extended her exploration of fantasy and reality into cyberspace when she entered the online virtual world of *Second Life*. Her avatar, named China Tracy, reflects the desire to locate a position in the

virtual world without losing one’s personal identity. The video *i.Mirror* (2007) is a *machinima* that documents as well as tele-presents the artist’s blossoming romantic entanglement with another avatar in *Second Life*. By creating a documentary about her own avatar in virtual space, the artist altogether dissolves the demarcation between real and virtual.

Cao Fei continued to work in *Second Life*, building an entire virtual island called *People’s City* (人民城寨) in Chinese or *RMB City* in English. Designed by Cao Fei in collaboration with the design firm *Avatrian LLC*, *RMB City* again links virtual space with the physical world. Visitors to *RMB City* recognize familiar sites of China’s built environment past and present, such as the *Forbidden City*, the *Bird’s Nest*, or the *CCTV Tower*. In remapping architectural landmarks in cyberspace and transforming them digitally, the artist appropriates symbols of China’s ascension as a global power.



## Between Female Identity and Material Embroidery

Yin Xiuzhen, Lin Tianmiao, and Cai Jin

Flower painting and crafts both have long histories as feminine practices in China—flowers traditionally stand for scholarly ideals and embroidery for virtue. In her 1998 mixed media installation *Yin Xiuzhen* (presented here as a sequence of photographs), the artist searches for female identity through a personal subject deeply etched in her memory. She inserts old photos of herself at different ages in the soles of ten pairs of handmade cotton shoes. The shoes are identical in material and style, recalling a time during the Cultural Revolution when a standard dress code unified a collective identity. In this self-titled piece that makes art out of material culture, Yin Xiuzhen claims her identity as a subject. Moreover, by personally sewing the shoes with her mother, the artist not only evokes social and familial pasts but also effects material innovation in her creative practice.

Lin Tianmiao uses cotton threads to both construct and question identity. In a piece from her *Focus* series (begun in 2001), the artist projected an enlarged photographic portrait onto paper, which she wrapped with embroidered cotton balls. She creates a visual interplay between individuality and material obscurity, between the artist as subject and artifact as object, and between photographic image and the three-dimensional surface. By transforming the image into a mixed media print overlaid with threads and other materials, this portrait becomes a multifaceted meditation on form and meaning. Lin Tianmiao's *Hand Signal* series is her response to customs of the Peking Opera: how do hand gestures deliver theatrical expressions and why do men play female roles? *Hand Signal No. 20* evokes the expression of praise in operatic performance. The expressive image of the hand invites and challenges the viewer through its visual indications and theatrical narratives. Separated from the body and disassociated from the costume, the gesture becomes a mixed media image, a frozen moment inscribed in memory.



Yin Xiuzhen, *Yin Xiuzhen*, 1998

Opposite: Cao Fei, *i.Mirror by China Tracy* (AKA. Cao Fei),  
*A Second Life Documentary Film*, 2007

As a craft specific to women's artistic practice, flower painting can provide metaphorical expression of a woman's inner life. For over twenty years, Cai Jin has continually transcribed banana leaves onto canvas, rendering them in the color red. Her *Beauty Banana* series started accidentally, when the artist found banana plants in the wild, their green colors fading. "The withered form and the color seized my attention," she recalled. "The root, the stem, and the leaves were still breathing for life."<sup>3</sup> The artist saturates the shriveled leaves with blood-red hues and imbues them with a bodily texture. The redness of the leaves expresses life energy and organic force, while the darkness suggests deterioration and even death. The conjunction of beauty and decay is an



Cai Jin, *Banana Plant 310*, 2008



Lin Tianmiao, *Hand Signal No. 20*, 2005

irresistible draw to the viewer, a mixture of fascination and horror. Thus, the transformation of color and texture in Cai Jin's *Beauty Banana* series reflects an ambivalence towards life and speaks about female corporeal experience.

Through the work of these eight extraordinary artists who introduce challenging subject matter and formal innovation, *Breakthrough* highlights the critical contributions to contemporary Chinese art made by women without reducing it to a gendered category. We aim to engage this diverse body of women's art first on its own terms, and then through its social-cultural implications. If we look with open minds and through fresh eyes, art created by Chinese women reveals many avenues for discussion.

#### Notes

1. Email correspondence between Hung Liu and the author, June 26, 2013.
2. Cosplayers, short for "costume players," wear costumes and accessories of specific characters from movies, video games, and comic books. They often meet at conventions or gather in public spaces for role-playing activities.
3. Cai Jin in interview with Jiang Mei, *Deep Breath: 19 Samples of Chinese Contemporary Female Artists*, edited by Jiang Mei (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2008), 20.



## Interrogating “Chinese Women’s Art”

**PEGGY WANG** Assistant Professor of Art History and Asian Studies, Bowdoin College

Mao Zedong’s famous 1968 proclamation that “women hold up half the sky” has often been repeated as testament to China’s acknowledgement of women’s contributions to the state. While most observers of recent Chinese history are understandably skeptical of this claim for gender equality, the very familiarity of Mao’s assertion speaks to the need to take into consideration the specific ideological conditions that have governed the historical status of women in China. As a rebuttal against so-called feudalist, Confucian hierarchies, women under Communism were regarded as comrades in revolution. With the privileging of the masses over the individual, gender was obscured as a marker of individuality. Mao-era posters and model operas visually celebrated this phenomenon through the masculinization of women. It wasn’t until the 1980s that the demonstration of female experiences as difference began to re-emerge.

In the brief, thirty-year history of contemporary Chinese art, the category of “women’s art” gained currency during the 1990s. The 1995 International Women’s Congress in Beijing served as a further catalyst for launching large-scale, state-sanctioned exhibitions featuring art by Chinese women. While this attention to a distinctly female voice marked a new interest in questions of difference, the surrounding discourse was not necessarily tied to explorations of inequality, gender constructs, or calls for liberation.

Within these early exhibition and historical narratives, the phrase “women’s art” often constricted artwork into generalized approaches and stylistic tendencies. As a “style,” women’s art was identified with particular materials, motifs, and traditions, distinct from work produced by men. The prominent Chinese art critic and curator Jia Fangzhou noted that the 1990s saw the rise of women’s awareness towards themselves and their gender identity and identified particular characteristics of the resulting art. As the curator for the large-scale 1998 exhibition *Century Woman* in Beijing, Jia identified specific characteristics in the work of female artists

such as intuition, emphasis on personal experience, and used materials drawn from daily life. Women artists, in his view, were also generally “apathetic towards politics, history and philosophy, and on the contrary, concentrate[ed] on the themes of nature, life, and humankind and survival.”<sup>1</sup> Burdened by these descriptions, “women’s art” served less as a rallying call for female artists, and more as the start of a set of thorny parameters against which to navigate and negotiate.

Throughout the 1990s, the independent curator Liao Wen rose to fame in the Chinese art scene for her writings and exhibitions championing work by female artists. She granted more leeway in her formulations of the category and described it as a space through which women could discover themselves. While

Chen Qiulin, *Old Archway* (from *Peach Blossom*), 2009





admitting that a “women’s approach” still remained in an embryonic state, Liao noted the importance of this room for development given its historical absence in China’s patriarchal society. She was furthermore clear about distinguishing Chinese art by women from a larger international feminist movement. Even still, her identification of particular characteristics—the materials used, “silent subversion,” and a greater “emphasis on women’s particular feelings and experiences”—continued the trend of narrowing this term into definable attitudes and properties.<sup>2</sup>

Through the imposition of this category, gender was soon trumpeted as the sole defining feature through which to access and understand these artists’ works. While bringing much-needed attention to certain under-represented artists, the reproduction of similar systems of narrative classification posed troubling problems for artists over interpretation and intent. As a result, many female artists began to bristle at this category and deny its applicability altogether.

This rigidly bifurcated response—either a complete adoption or rejection of “women’s art”—has often come at the expense of more honest explorations into the actual power dynamics that have governed contemporary Chinese art. In the 1980s, few women entered into art academies and even fewer worked in experimental art in the following decade. Of those who did, only a handful went on to attain significant renown, while many faded away into a male-dominated art scene. In the late 1990s, these artists faced further challenges when entered into international exhibitions where their voices were subsumed within Western assumptions about international feminism and “dissident” art. This generated two problems. First, identifying female artists within a larger community—categorizing them according to gender—often failed to clarify the specific cultural distinctions in their works. Tendencies to see agitation for women’s rights as a generalized and universal phenomenon, for example, sometimes elided the historical particularities and





Hung Liu, *Relic 8*, 2004

personal motivations surrounding the production of these artists' works. At the same time, while positioned within national or regional boundaries—as Chinese or Asian artists—exhibition narratives often circulated vast generalizations that served to simply reinforce reductive views of a backwards East.<sup>3</sup> In these ways, these artists found themselves trapped within interpretations about both gender and nation according to problematic metrics of sameness and difference. Subsequently, artists issued denials of this reifying tendency and raised the possibility of seeing their work as individual creations within post-gender and post-national frameworks.

Understanding the problematic implications of “women’s art” as a category, this exhibition challenges us—as viewers—to reconsider our preconceptions. Like race and nationality, the invocation of gender can be simultaneously a source of empowerment and confinement. While the phrase “contemporary Chinese women’s art” may seem assured and unambiguous, its historical and contemporary connotations need to be treated prudently. As one approaches the exhibition, important questions arise: What are the assumptions about

women and the work that they produce that would justify the existence of this category at all? Is there something that can be considered a “women’s experience” that inherently translates into art? This kind of critical questioning can apply to any themed exhibition, but given the deeply ingrained preconceptions that we hold about gender and nationality, it is especially important here to reconsider how we formulate and apply these labels.

By bringing together this select group of artists, *Breakthrough* challenges viewers to break through bounded concepts and terms to allow for multiple, nuanced, and possibly contradictory meanings, groupings, and continually shifting themes that reach within, beyond, and across this exhibition.

#### Notes

1. Jia Fangzhou, “Preface” in *CenturyWoman*, transl. Chen Yang and Karen Smith (Hong Kong: Shijie Huaren Yishu Chubanshe, 1998), 11.
2. Liao Wen, *Women’s Approach to Chinese Contemporary Art*, transl. Isolda Morillo (N.p.: n.p., 1995), 1–4.
3. A notable exception to this was the 2000 exhibition and catalogue *Text & Subtext: Contemporary Art and Asian Woman* at the Earl Lu Gallery, LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, Singapore.



## Artists

**Cai Jin** was born in Tunxi, Anhui Province, in 1965. She graduated from the fine arts department of Anhui Normal University, Wuhu, in 1986 and earned a degree in oil painting in 1991 at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing. She currently teaches at the Tianjin Fine Arts Institute. Cai is best known for her striking, nearly abstract paintings of banana leaves that merge themes of fertility and decay. Cai has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including a 2012 retrospective at the National Art Museum, Beijing, and the seminal group show *Die Hälfte des Himmels: chinesische Künstlerinnen der Gegenwart / Half of the Sky: Contemporary Chinese Women Artists* at the Frauen Museum, Bonn, Germany (1998).

**Cao Fei** was born in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, in 1978 and is based in Beijing. She earned her bachelor's degree at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, where she studied decoration and design, and there made her first films. Cao creates elaborate multimedia projects in which she contrasts themes of fantasy and escapism in popular youth culture against the everyday realities of contemporary life. She has exhibited at numerous biennials and prestigious museums, including the China Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2007. Her project *RMB CITY* has been exhibited at the Deutsche Guggenheim (2010); the Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo (2009); the Serpentine Gallery, London (2008); and the Yokohama Triennale (2008). In 2010 she was a finalist for the Hugo Boss Prize.

**Chen Qiulin** was born in 1975 and grew up in Wanzhou, a city in Sichuan Province now partially underwater due to the construction of the Three Gorges Dam. She graduated from the printmaking department at the Sichuan Academy of Art and now works and lives in Chengdu and Beijing. Chen's multimedia work centers on how recent urbanization projects in China have altered human lives and the land. Recent exhibitions include *Chen Qiulin* at the Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles (2009) and *Displacement: The Three Gorges Dam and Contemporary Chinese Art* at the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago (2008).

**Hung Liu** was born in Changchun, Jilin Province, in 1948, a year before the People's Republic of China was established. She earned a bachelor's degree in art and art education from the Beijing Teachers College and a master's degree in mural painting from the Central Academy of Fine Art, Beijing. She immigrated to the United States in 1984 and received a master of fine arts degree from the University of California San Diego in 1986. She is professor emerita of art at Mills College and lives and works in Oakland, California. Recent retrospectives of her work include *Summoning Ghosts: The Art of Hung Liu* at the Oakland Museum of Art (2013) and *Hung Liu: Memorial Grounds 1988-2006* at the Savannah College of Art and Design (2008).

**Lin Tianmiao** was born in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, in 1961 and lives and works in Beijing. She earned a bachelor's degree from the fine art department at Capital Normal University in Beijing in 1984. Lin moved to New York in 1987 and studied at the Art Students League while working as a textile designer, before returning to Beijing in 1994. She is known for multimedia work in which she winds silk or cotton threads around everyday objects and images, transforming their appearance and function. Lin has exhibited in numerous domestic and international exhibitions, including *Bound/Unbound: Lin Tianmiao* at the Asia Society, New York (2012), *The Some* at the Beijing Center for the Arts, Beijing (2007), and *Global Feminisms* at the Brooklyn Museum (2007).

**Peng Wei** was born in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, in 1974 and lives and works in Beijing. She earned a bachelor's degree in fine art (1997) and a master's degree in aesthetics (2000) from Nankai University, Tianjin. She is among a younger generation of Chinese contemporary artists who use traditional ink painting as their favored medium. Recent exhibitions include *Taking off the Shell—Works by Peng Wei 2002-2011* at the He Xiangning Art Museum, Shenzhen, China (2011); *Attitudes: Female Art in China* at the European Centre for Contemporary Art, Brussels, Belgium (2009); and *INK: A Chinese Contemporary Art Exhibition* at the Shenzhen Art Museum, Guangdong, and Today Art Museum, Beijing (2008).

**Xing Danwen** was born in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, in 1967 and lives and works in Beijing. Xing earned a bachelor's degree in 1992 from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, and a master's degree in photography at the School of Visual Arts, New York, in 2000. Xing is best known for her playful yet sensitive portrayal of urban life shown in her *Urban Fictions* series of large-scale photographs of architectural maquettes that straddle the line between reality and fantasy. Recent exhibitions of her work include *Chinese Modernism and U.S. Vernacular—Xing Danwen & Jim Vecchi* at the Architecture Center Houston Foundation (2010) and *Seeing Utopia, Past and Future—Wang Di and Xing Danwen* at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University (2010).

**Yin Xiuzhen** was born in 1963 in Beijing and now lives and works there. She graduated from Capital Normal University's fine arts department in 1989 with a degree in painting. She is known for her creative manipulations of second-hand items, especially clothing, to explore topics of nostalgia, personal memory, rapid globalization, and homogenization. Yin has shown in major exhibitions domestically and internationally since the 1990s, including *Die Hälfte des Himmels: chinesische Künstlerinnen der Gegenwart / Half of the Sky: Contemporary Chinese Women Artists* at the Frauen Museum, Bonn, Germany (1998); *Global Feminisms* at the Brooklyn Museum (2007); *Projects 92: Yin Xiuzhen* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2010); and *Yin Xiuzhen* at the Groninger Museum, Groningen, Netherlands (2012).



## Works in the exhibition

Works marked with an asterisk (\*) are illustrated in this publication.

### Cai Jin

*Banana Plant 295*, 2008  
oil on canvas, 78 3/4 x 74 13/16 inches  
(200 x 190 cm)  
Private collection

\**Banana Plant 310*, 2008  
oil on silk, 66 15/16 x 43 5/16 inches  
(170 x 110 cm)  
Private collection

### Cao Fei

*Yanmy at Home* (from *COSPlayers* series), 2004  
digital c-print, 29 1/2 x 39 3/8 inches  
(75 x 100 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Lombard  
Freid Gallery

\**Deep Breathing* (from *COSPlayers* series),  
2004  
digital c-print, 29 1/4 x 39 1/4 inches (74.3 x 99.7 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Lombard  
Freid Gallery

\**Mirror by China Tracy (AKA Cao Fei),  
A Second Life Documentary Film*, 2007  
single-channel video with sound,  
28 minutes  
Courtesy of the artist and Lombard  
Freid Gallery

*The Birth of RMB City*, 2009  
single-channel video with sound,  
10.5 minutes  
Courtesy of the artist and Lombard  
Freid Gallery

*Live in RMB City*, 2009  
single-channel video with sound,  
30 minutes  
Courtesy of the artist and Lombard  
Freid Gallery

### Chen Qiulin

*Balcony* (1, 10, 11, 12), 2007  
mixed media, each 18 1/8 x 29 1/8 x 9 7/16  
inches (46 x 73.99 x 24 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Beam  
Contemporary Art, New York, London

*Peach Blossom*, 2009  
DVD, 16 minutes 37 seconds  
Courtesy of the artist and Beam  
Contemporary Art, New York, London

\**Old Archway* (from *Peach Blossom*), 2009  
giclee print on paper, 60 1/8 x 48 3/8 inches  
(152.72 x 122.87 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Beam  
Contemporary Art, New York, London

\**Solidified Scenery* (from *Peach Blossom*),  
2009  
giclee print on paper, 48 3/8 x 60 1/8 inches  
(122.87 x 152.72 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Beam  
Contemporary Art, New York, London

### Hung Liu

\**Relic 8*, 2004  
oil on canvas, 66 x 66 inches (167.64 x  
167.64 cm)  
Courtesy of Nancy Hoffman Gallery,  
New York

\**The Path*, 2010–2011  
mixed media, 41 x 87 1/2 inches (104.14 x  
222.25 cm)  
Courtesy of Nancy Hoffman Gallery,  
New York

### Lin Tianmiao

\**Hand Signal No. 20*, 2005  
c-print, felt, synthetic hairs, 46 7/16 x  
58 1/4 inches (117.95 x 147.96 cm)  
Copyright of the artist, Courtesy of Galerie  
Lelong, New York

*Focus print 06-605A*, 2006–2007  
silk, cotton threads, foam and print paper  
made by Singapore Tyler Print Institute,  
50 x 39 3/8 inches (127 x 100 cm)  
Copyright of the Artist, Courtesy of Galerie  
Lelong, New York

*Seeing Shadow No. F-12*, 2009  
c-print on canvas, silk threads, and cotton  
threads, 72 1/16 x 72 1/16 x 3 1/8 inches  
(183.01 x 183.01 x 8 cm)  
Copyright of the artist, Courtesy of Galerie  
Lelong, New York

### Peng Wei

\**Autumn of Tang Dynasty*, 2008  
ink on hemp paper, 27 9/16 x 15 3/8 x  
8 11/16 inches (70 x 39 x 22 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist

*Night*, 2010  
ink on hemp paper, 19 11/16 x 11 13/16 x  
8 11/16 inches (50 x 30 x 22 cm)  
Private Collection

\**A Young Girl's Thoughts*, 2012  
ink on hemp paper, 111 x 14 3/16 inches  
(282 x 36 cm)  
Collection of Ray and Soo Venkatesan,  
image courtesy of Sotheby's Inc.

### Xing Danwen

\**Urban Fiction (image 10)*, 2006  
c-print on paper, 67 x 85 9/16 inches (170.2 x  
217.4 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Artist Pension  
Trust, Beijing

\**Urban Fiction (image 24)*, 2006  
c-print on paper, 88 x 67 inches (223.6 x  
170 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Artist Pension  
Trust, Beijing

### Yin Xiuzhen

\**Yin Xiuzhen*, 1998  
set of ten color photographs on paper,  
each 16 x 23 3/4 inches (40.64 x 60.33 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Chambers Fine Art

# Bowdoin

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