

For Immediate Release

China Institute Gallery  
Presents  
***Art of the Mountain:***  
***Through the Chinese Photographer's Lens***  
Through August 18, 2019



Yang Yongliang, *Peach Blossom Colony*, from the series: *Peach Blossom Colony No. 1*, 2011  
Inkjet print, 33 3/8 x 92 1/8 inches

NEW YORK – An exhibition of contemporary photography is on view at China Institute Gallery through August 18, 2019. ***Art of the Mountain: Through the Chinese Photographer's Lens*** surveys work from more than 20 photographers. With over 60 photographs – many on view for the first time in the U.S – *Art of the Mountain* pays homage to the major mountain ranges of China.

In Chinese legend, mountains are the pillars that hold up the sky. Mountains were seen as places that nurture life. Their veneration took the form of rituals, retreat from social society, and aesthetic appreciation with a defining role in Chinese art and culture.

*Art of the Mountain* consists of three sections: *The Revered Mountains of China* introduces the geography, history, legends, and culture that are associated with Chinese mountains and includes photographs by Hou Heliang, Kang Songbai and Kang Liang, Li Daguang, Lin Maozhao, Li Xueliang, Lu Hao, Zhang Anlu, Xiao Chao, Yan Shi, Wang Jing, Zhang Jiakuan, Zhang Huajie, and Zheng Congli.

The renowned Chinese landscape painting aesthetic and its influence on contemporary photography is explored in the second section. *Landscape Aesthetics in Photography* presents work by Wang Wusheng (1945-2018) who spent much of his career photographing Mount Huangshan, also known as the Yellow Mountain. Located in Anhui province in northern China, Mount Huangshan with its 72 peaks has enchanted landscape painters for centuries with its

extraordinary beauty. Inspired by the spectacular nature of the Mount Huangshan, Wang Wusheng documented the mountain in all seasons, expressing its “inner worlds” and referencing the philosophical and aesthetic concepts of Chinese landscape painting and the ancient quest to purify the spirit and find renewal.

The last section, *New Landscape Photography*, showcases artists using photography and new techniques to express their thoughts on the role of mountains in society, including the work of Hong Lei, Lin Ran, Lu Yanpeng, Shao Wenhuan, Taca Sui, Xiao Xuan’an, Yan Changjiang, Yang Yongliang, Yao Lu, Zeng Han, Gao Hui and Feng Yan.

The exhibition is curated by Willow Weilan Hai, Director, China Institute Gallery; Jerome Silbergeld, P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Professor of Chinese Art History at Princeton University, Emeritus; and photography critic and photographer Jiang Rong.

“*Art of the Mountain* articulates a vision of Chinese culture and documents its contributions to civilization,” said Willow Weilan Hai, chief curator of the exhibition. “The search for eternal happiness, a happiness of spirit that reflects harmony, where nature heals all, is an essential part of Chinese culture. Chinese artists are employing photography to depict nature – and man’s complicated relationship with it – often derived from Chinese philosophy about the natural world.”

Among the highlights in the exhibition, which focuses on photographs from 1990 to 2017, are aerial photographs by Hou Heliang (born 1953), telling stories of man’s impact on the environment in Shandong province during the last 30 years. Taca Sui (born 1984) whose work is collected by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, dedicates himself to the study of China’s ancient poetry collection, *The Book of Odes*, considered a window into early Chinese civilization. His photography is infused with poetic stillness and the absence of human activity.

Yao Lu (born 1967) employs photomontage that reflects classical Chinese painting styles. Upon closer examination, his mountains and landscapes are in fact construction sites scaled in different proportions and comment on China’s rapid industrialization. A celebrated mountaineer, Wang Jing (born 1975) is known for climbing the highest mountain peaks on earth to create her photographs. She holds the women’s world record for the Explorers Grand Slam, consisting of scaling the “Seven Summits,” the highest mountains on every continent including Everest, and hiking the North and South poles, which she accomplished in 143 days.

Yan Changjiang and Xiao Xuan’an have collaborated on a series entitled *Return to the Mountain*, 2010-2011, which is reminiscent of traditional Chinese ink paintings and investigates man’s relationship with nature. Notes Yan, “We wanted to express longing. Our society has become so complex, people wish to return to a sense of peace. I think this series expresses this quality of modern life.”

*Art of the Mountain: Through the Chinese Photographer’s Lens* marks the first contemporary exhibition to be held at China Institute Gallery’s new downtown location. China Institute moved

to their current location in the fall of 2015. China Institute Gallery has become known for presenting contemporary Chinese art within the context of Chinese art history.

### **About China Institute**

China Institute advances a deeper understanding of China through programs in education, culture, business, and art in the belief that cross-cultural understanding strengthens our global community.

In 2016, China Institute celebrated both its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of China Institute Gallery. Founded in 1926 by a group of American and Chinese educators, China Institute in America is the oldest bicultural non-profit organization in the U.S. to focus exclusively on China. The organization promotes the appreciation of Chinese heritage and provides the historical context for understanding contemporary China. Programs, activities, courses, and seminars are offered on the visual and performing arts, culture, history, music, philosophy, language, and literature for the general public, children, and teachers, as well as for business.

### **About China Institute Gallery**

China Institute Gallery, established in 1966, is distinct among the museums of New York City. It was the first in the United States to showcase Chinese art exclusively on a regular basis. Today, China Institute Gallery is New York's only non-commercial exhibition space solely dedicated to Chinese art and is known for its innovative thematic and scholarly exhibitions, publications, and related art education programs.

China Institute is located at 100 Washington Street, New York, NY 10006, with a temporary entrance at 40 Rector Street. During exhibitions, China Institute Gallery is open Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$5 for seniors and students, free for members and children under 16, and free on Thursdays from 5 to 8 p.m. For more information, call 212-744-8181 or visit [chinainstitute.org](http://chinainstitute.org), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

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