



JENNY LIN

PICTURING GLOBAL CHINA

Contemporary photography and video art from the People's Republic of China.

ESSAY:

PICTURING GLOBAL CHINA
Jenny LIN p. 03

画说全球中国

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on front cover:
Image by Ning Zhouhao

on back cover:
Image by Ning Zhouhao

curated and produced by
Jenny Lin, University of Oregon
digital printing:
Typecraft, Pasadena
design:
Willem Henri Lucas, Los Angeles

100 copies digitally printed,
June 2016

FEATURED ARTISTS:

John ALEXANDER	p. 11
CHANG He	p. 13
Patty CHANG	p. 15
CHEN Fei	p. 17
CHEN Xiaofeng	p. 19
CHEN Yina	p. 21
CHEN Yuan	p. 23
CONG Hailiang	p. 25
GU Zheng	p. 27
HE Pei	p. 29
HU Chengwei	p. 31
HUANG Szichun	p. 33
HUANG Xiaoliang	p. 35
JI Tao	p. 37
JIN Xu	p. 39
JING Yi	p. 41
David KELLEY	p. 45
LIU Jiajia	p. 47
LIU Jianhua	p. 49
LIU Jie	p. 53
LIU Kai	p. 57
LIU Tao	p. 59
LIU Wanyi	p. 61
LIU Yuanyuan	p. 63
LU Yanpeng	p. 65
LUO Dan	p. 67
NING Zhouhao	p. 69
TONG Dazhuang	p. 73
WANG Peibei	p. 75
(Alex) WANG Wenlong	p. 77
WU Pengfei	p. 79
XIE Ying	p. 81
XU Yang	p. 83
Jay YAN	p. 85
YAN Yibo	p. 87
YANG Ming	p. 89
YE Baoliang	p. 93
ZHANG Wenfeng	p. 95
ZHANG Xiao	p. 97
ZHANG Yujiao	p. 99
ZI Bai	p. 101

PICTURING GLOBAL CHINA JENNY LIN

Global China has recently become a buzz term – the subject of academic conferences, a patriotic rallying cry for Chinese Communist Party cadres, and a concept proliferated in foreign news media generating both excitement and suspicion. The notion of a Global China heralds the People's Republic of China's (PRC's) rise as a world power and its growing relations – economic, sociopolitical and cultural – with foreign nations. Global China is sensed in the PRC's push to secure resources, expand its workforce, and make extensive investments in African, Latin American and South East Asian nations of the so-called Global South. Signs of Global China also appear in the immigration patterns, real estate and business holdings, and study abroad of affluent Chinese people within countries of the so-called Global North, such as the United States and Canada.¹ To refer to China as Global is to recognize the PRC's ability to transcend the current North/South and old East/West binaries used to characterize the world's disparate cultural and economic geographies. The term, Global China, also speaks to the PRC's domestic development over the past three decades, and especially its unprecedented, exponential economic growth fueled by exports, foreign consumption, and, increasingly, local consumer demand.²

Despite the PRC's growing prominence on the world stage, China still mystifies most foreigners. Depictions of Chinese culture outside of the PRC remain

1. For a compelling study of the population, activities, and impacts of affluent overseas Chinese (*huaqiao*) persons, see Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).

2. The PRC's recent economic growth can be traced to China's opening up of its markets, instigated with leader Deng Xiaoping's post-Mao Era, post-socialist reforms of the late 1970s, and the state's embrace of capitalist models that adhere to, and indeed shape, the ever-evolving tenets of globalization.

sion of Twitter and Facebook), with the intention that selected submissions would be included in the exhibition. The call asked people living and working in Mainland China to send in their photographs of contemporary life in the PRC, and to consider, but not limit themselves to the following thematic suggestions: globalization within urban and rural landscapes, cities' expansions into the natural landscape, *Chineseness* and the impact of foreign cultures on Chinese identity, social media as a tool to integrate China into a global context, income disparity in rural versus urban environments, contemporary values, self-identity and relationships, gender issues and the role of women, environmental issues, street photography and street art, and artists' use of photography.

As hundreds of photographs streamed into my Inbox, I felt a special connection with each and every sender. For the most part, those who sent images were previously unknown to me. These strangers' submissions allowed me to see, through their eyes, a fuller representation of the PRC, a place whose art I have been engaged in studying over the past decade. Upon first conceiving of the exhibition, I was myself quick to adopt the vague buzz term, Global China, but the images I received pictured so much more. The problem with the Global China label is that it purports to neatly package an infinitely varied place of richly diverse cultures undergoing unfathomable phenomena: urbanization, globalization, the CCP's adaptations of capitalism. The images of *Picturing Global China* effectively resist

simplistic reductions, together complicating any unified notion of a Global China.

The submissions, sent by artists, photographers, photojournalists, students, and people from all walks of life, came from all over Mainland China – from the cosmopolitan capitals of Beijing and Shanghai to countryside towns in Henan Province, from ethnic minority villages in Yunnan and autonomous regions, such as Xinjiang, to fast-developing interior municipalities, like Chongqing, and beyond. Like the exhibition, this book includes images by all of those people who submitted photographs. Specific photographs were selected based in part on the images' abilities to collectively map the PRC's multitudinous worlds and shifting terrains.

Images by well-known Chinese artists, such as sculptor Liu Jianhua and photographer Gu Zheng, create striking juxtapositions – between handmade ceramics resembling mass-produced goods and natural landscapes, poker chips and imposing architecture, a sparkling skyline and shiny urinal – that question and engage in Duchampian critique the values of urbanization and globalization. Images by the exhibition's only non-Chinese participants, U.S. artists working in China – Patty Chang, David Kelley, and John Alexander – unsettle the notion that rapid development necessarily means progress, contrasting the large-scale Three Gorges Dam project against the personal experiences of locals in the region's altering landscape.⁴ Conjuring a collapse of nature and civilization, an image by photojournalist Chang He and photographs by artist Chen

4. In addition to photographic stills by each artist, the exhibition included Patty Chang & David Kelley's collectively produced *Flotsam Jet-sam* (2007), a 1 channel HD video installation that was produced in the Three Gorges Dam area of the Yangtze River.

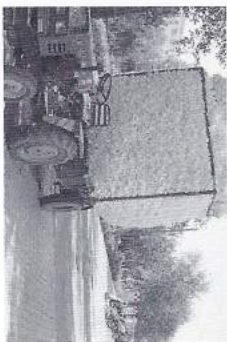
Xiaofeng show an invasive plant species and potted artificial greenery invading China's environment and daily life. Photographs by Liu Jiajia show reflections, both romantic and haunting, on the destruction of old neighborhoods around Shanghai, which she captured as abandoned spaces at night and paired with textual laments.

A series of photographs by artist Liu Tao depicts his nude performance in the derelict surrounds of Pudong International Airport – one of Shanghai's chief symbols of the city's global status. In Yunnan, China's most ethnically diverse province, Zhang Wenfeng photographs a flamboyant minority village chief, Luo Dan uses the collodion process to picture a Christian community, and Chen Yina reveals a tourist site where traditional-style architecture houses global chains, like KFC. One series by independent photographer Yang Ming depicts punk kids at a festival on the outskirts of Beijing, while another shows the detrimental, at times heart-breaking impact of industrialization on a town in Shandong Province. Jing Yi's black and white photographs give us insight into common practices in a cattle market in western Henan Province, where bills bearing Mao Zedong's visage are stealthily exchanged. Hai Liang pictures a magical burst of white doves from a desolate factory in icy winter. Ning Zhouhao's photographs reveal surprisingly poetic moments strewn from the daily life of a CCP bureaucrat working inside the politburo. Zhang Xiao's photographs of rural coastal areas and Yan Yibo's series of diptychs comprise a variety of humor-

ous, bizarre, and surreal scenes. Photo-manipulations by Lu Yanpeng, Huang Xiaoliang, and Zi Bai turn typical scenes of nature and even grotesque imagery into painterly, traditional Chinese landscape-like compositions. Chen Fei mocks the grandiosity of China's Great Wall in a recreation using bricks, toys, and processed meat. Chen Yuan, Liu Wanyi, and Wang Wenlong photograph tourist sites – from beautiful national parks and beaches to the overcrowded modes of transport used to get there. Liu Yuanyuan, Ji Tao, Wang Peibei, and Jay Yan powerfully impose bodies and performative actions on a variety of modern and old-fashioned cityscapes. He Pei, Wu Pengfei, and Xie Ying show outdoor barbershops and other small businesses tucked down alleyways – markers of earlier styles of commerce and community. Hu Chengwei, Ye Baoliang, Zhang Yujiao, Jin Xu, and Liu Kai capture street life in cities, towns, and religious sites across the PRC, highlighting the humor, struggle, and tenderness embedded in quotidian moments. Tong Dazhuang reduces the faces of corrupt officials to a repeatable pattern in a tapestry-like image, and Huang Shizun fashions a map of Mainland China from an assortment of found advertisements. Liu Jie's series and Xu Yang's photographs of Jingdezhen (China's traditional porcelain capital) reveal that artisanal labor, passed down through generations, continues to exist despite the PRC's reputation as the world's capital of industrialized factories and mass production.

Taken from very personal, individual points of view and representing a wide variety of scenes, locales,

people and customs, these images unravel the official nationalist rhetoric and foreign media hype surrounding Global China, showing the resounding ability of everyday images to debunk mythologies attached to the PRC's international rise. These surreal, mundane, experimental, and quixotic pictures tackle the ambitious goal of Picturing China, but ultimately and critically reveal that this lofty goal hovers constantly out of reach. The images presented here shatter any unified notion of a Global China, and create in its place a kaleidoscopic collage that begins to map the dreams, realities, promises, and fissures of China's radically altering landscapes amidst globalization. Go picture!



Patty Chang (1972, San Leandro, CA) lives and works in Boston, MA. Chang works primarily with performance and video. She has had solo exhibitions at institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art, NY; the New Museum, NY; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Museet Moderna, Stockholm, Sweden; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Fri-Art Centre d'Art Contemporain

Kunsthalle, Fribourg, Switzerland. She is a 2014 recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship.

UNTITLED, XINJIANG



These photographs are research images shot during the making of *Minor* (2010), a video of an attempted journey to Lake Lop Nur in Xinjiang, China. *Minor* takes as its inspiration the path of the turn-of-the-century Swedish explorer Sven Hedin as he tried to map the desert lake as

it shifted positions and was 'lost' to explorers for over a century. Unable to make my way to the site of the now evaporated lakebed (and former nuclear testing site), the video comprises multiple performative actions that tie together themes of communication, the body (collective/

03. PATTY CHANG



individual), landscape and movement. *Minor* was shot months after the riots in Urumqi, where local Uighur minorities and Han Chinese populations clashed over growing tensions of economic and political disparity. Actions include writing words with headscarves on cotton trucks, flying

a military parachute in the desert, and sleeping mummies in museums. The video moves between hand held first-person perspective framing and wide landscape shots to alternate between an embodied and distanced response to the landscape.

张怡 (1972年, 圣莱安德罗, 加利福尼亚州) 在麻省塞州波士顿工作和生活在。张的艺术主要是表演和视频。她在很多机构有个人展览, 如纽约现代艺术博物馆; 纽约新美术馆; 洛杉矶哈默博物馆; 瑞典斯德哥尔摩美术馆; 芝加哥当代艺术馆; 瑞士弗里堡弗里堡当代艺术中心。她2014年领取古根海姆奖学金。

这些照片是在拍摄《未成年入》视频 (2010年) 的研究图像, 这是企图到中国新疆罗布泊湖旅程的视频。《未成年入》的灵感来自本世纪初瑞典探险家斯文·赫定的旅程, 他试图画这沙漠湖的地图。因为它移动位置, 一个多世纪的探险家都“失”去了它。我无法到现在已蒸发的湖底 (和以前核子试验基地), 这视频包括了多种表演动作结合在一起沟通, 身体 (集体/个人), 风景和运动的主题。《未成年入》是在乌鲁木齐, 当地维吾尔少数民族和中国汉族经济和政治差距发生冲突后几个月拍的。行动包括在运棉花卡车上用头巾形成字, 在沙漠中飞行军用降落伞, 和在博物馆里睡的木乃伊。这视频从手持第一人视角到广角风景镜头来交换体现在风景中和远看风景。



research images from MINOR, XINJIANG, 2009, Patty Chang

<未成年人>的研究的照片, 新疆, 二〇〇九年, 张怡



David Kelley is Assistant Professor of Art at Wellesley College, where he teaches art practice, critical theory and poetry as intra-dependent disciplines. He is involved in ongoing research regarding the space of performance in the production of documentary and structural photography and film. He is also interested in collectives, progressive social movements, experimental

anthropology and historic avant-gardes.

CAPTAIN FLOTSAM JETSAM (VIDEO STILL), THREE GORGES DAM AREA), 2007



This photograph is from *Flotsam Jetsam*, a photography and video project by Patty Chang and David Kelley. "*Flotsam Jetsam* is a journey video that was produced in the Three Gorges Dam area of the Yangtze River in China. The project regards landscape's relationship to identity,

particularly in the midst of extensive infrastructural changes at the Three Gorges site. The video details the process of fabricating a large *faux* submarine, its launch below the Three Gorges Dam with a crew of local actors, the submarine's progress along the river and through the dam's

17. DAVID KELLEY



boat locks, and into the reservoir. Along the journey various performances are enacted: actors' dreams are recounted during a psychodrama session in a swimming pool, a theatrical play is filmed in a ship factory, and actors' concerns about making this video are voiced. Interlacing

a broad collection of sources including: Mao Zedong's historic swims in the Yangtze, Jules Verne's "20,000 Leagues Under The Sea," and current news accounts of China's rapid economic development, and related imaginaries of Asia's modernization and environmental impact."

David Kelley is 美国韦尔斯利学院的艺术系助理教授。他教授的课程包括艺术实践、理论评论、和诗歌作为内部依存的学科。他正是在进行的关于表演和空间在于纪录片和结构性摄影的研究的主要研究者。

这些剧照来自Patty Chang和David Kelley拍摄的摄影和影片《支离破碎》。《支离破碎》是一部关于三峡大坝的艺术影片。这部影片的主题是展现景观和场所认知的关系，特别是大规模的三峡工程基础设施对于地貌的改变。这部影片详细的展现了一群当地的演员在一艘仿真潜艇里从入水，到进入水闸再到进入水库的全过程。这部影片还包括多种的表演的方式再现三峡工程对于当地人人文地理环境的巨大改变：一个游泳池的心理剧，一段造船厂的戏剧表演，还有演员对于拍摄这部影片的疑虑也都收录进了这部影片。这部影片还运用了多种资料来源来展现历史和现代的的交错，这些影音资料包括毛泽东在长江游泳的历史场景，凡尔纳的科幻小说海底两万里和当今中国快速的经济发展以及相关的亚洲现代化和环境影响的影像。



from FLOTSAM JETSAM (Stills), THREE GORGES DAM AREA, 2007,

David Kelley

破损船只 (剧照), 三峡坝区, 二〇〇七年, David Kelley



东西来划分世界不同的文化和经济地域的二元模式。¹全球中国这个概念本身也代表了中国在过去三十年中的发展，特别是在其出口，国外消费，以及越来越多的本地需求的推动下，中国经济以前所未有的速度呈几何级数增长。²

尽管中国在世界舞台上日益突出，还是很多西方人觉得中国很神秘。在国外对中国文化的描绘依旧是充满异国情调。

九十年代出现的大众媒体标语，“沉睡的巨龙醒来”，是指中国崛起成为世界强国。

这条标语出自拿破仑著名的说法：“中国是一个沉睡的巨

人。让她沉睡，当她醒来的时候她将震撼世界”。这种关于中国发展的陈词鼓励西方人把中国看成龙——中国古老神话中的野兽同时也是中国十二生肖中最强大的动物。这不但暗示了西方人对于这种完全不同的古老文化的敬畏，还暗示着西方人对于龙的火热气息变得越来越强的惧怕。尽管西方人都不可能避免接触中国产品

（实际上更可能的是西方人的日常用品都是中国制造，而

画说全球中国

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“全球中国”最近已经成为一个时髦的名词——学术会议的主题，共产党干部的爱国口号和一个在国外新闻媒体中曝光率激增的概念。“全球中国”让世界为之兴奋又心存疑问。全球中国这个概念预示着中国作为世界大国的崛起，并且显示出中国与世界多个国家在经济，社会政治和文化方面同步成长的关系。在中国政府确保资源，扩大劳动力队伍，并大量投资非洲、拉美国家和东南亚等南半球国家的举措进程中，我们能感觉到全球中国这个现象；从富裕的中国人到如美国和加拿大等北半球国家的移民模式中，从持续增长的投资房地产及商业实体控股的比例中，以及大量涌入的中国留学生这种种现象中，我们也能看到全球中国的迹象。全球中国的概念也是承认中国有能力超越目前以南北或是从前以

¹ 富裕华侨人口，活动和影响力的一个引人注目的研究，参见Aihwa Ong (王爱华)，*Flexible Citizenship (弹性公民): The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999)。

² 中国近年来经济增长可以追溯到中国市场开放，这是从毛泽东时代后70年代末邓小平的社会主义改革开始，国家采纳资本主义塑造造成不断发展的全球化原则。

包容适应。《画说全球中国》旨在丰富全球中国的单一印象，从而有效地抵制中国形象的简单化。

参选照片的作者群包括了形形色色的中国各阶层，来自中国大陆的艺术家、摄影师、摄影记者、学生和各行各业的人——从北京和上海这种国际化大都市到河南的小镇，从云南少数民族村寨到新疆自治区，还有快速发展的内陆城市如重庆等等。被选中的照片共同描绘出了当下中国的多重性和不断变化的知识领域。

来自中国著名艺术家如雕塑家刘建华和摄影师顾铮的作品，描绘了不同景象并存的震撼，比如以手工制作的陶器代表的大规模产品制造和自然景观，扑克筹码和雄伟的建筑，金光闪耀的大楼及闪闪发光的小便池，这些作品引人思考并联想起杜尚对于城市化和全球化的价值的评论。本书中包括的非中国人的作品都是来自于在中国工作的美国艺术家：张怡，David Kelley和John Alexander，他们的作品动摇了一些既成观念，如快速发

的影响，中国人的特质和外国文化对中华文化认知的影响，使中国融入全球的社交媒体工具的广泛应用，农村与城市收入的差距，现代的价值观，自我认知和人与人的关系，男女问题和妇女地位，环境问题，街头摄影和街头艺术，及艺术家对摄影的应用。与此同时我们也欢迎不限于这些主题的摄影作品。

作品的征集过程受到了广泛的关注与回应，上百张照片传进我的收件箱。虽然我与大多数的发信人并不认识，但是我仍然感到与每位发信人都有一种特殊的关连。在过去的十年我一直致力于研究中国艺术，通过这些陌生人的摄影作品，让我通过他们的眼睛看到了比较完整的中国。在我构思这次展览的时候，我采用了这个模糊的概念——全球中国，但是我收到的摄影作品提供了更细致入微的关于全球化中国的影象。全球中国这个标签的问题是，它标榜可以很完整的包装一个深不可测的变化多端的而多姿多彩的中国：城市化，全球化，对于资本主义的

尝星巴克的拿铁，在纪念中国共产党的博物馆纪念旁的高级国际时尚精品店购物时，当政府官员在豪华KTV边唱红歌和外国流行歌曲边做生意的同时庆祝他们的物质财富时，当北京政客的子女们在美国新英格兰大学城开着欧式跑车时，《画说全球中国》的目标是更好地表现中国的矛盾，不同的阶层，甚至可以说是具有争论性的甚少可见的另外一面。

作为在美国西北部俄勒冈大学艺术系的教授，我于2013年在俄勒冈大学波特兰分校白盒画廊举办了《画说全球中国》的展览。而本书收集的影像作品正是由这次展览而来。我和我在俄勒冈大学的学生将摄影作品征集的宣传册送到中国大陆艺术院校和机构，艺术家，摄影师和摄影记者，并广泛发布在社交媒体，微博（中国版的Twitter和Facebook）上。作品征集的内容是请在中国生活和工作的人们将他们在拍摄的生活照片发送给我们。我们提供了以下的专题建议：全球化影响下的城市与乡村景观，城市化其对自然景观

今中国已经成为世界工厂），但是西方人发现自己不了解中国这个人口最多的国家。《画说全球中国》源自于对于了解中国日益增强的文化，经济和政治地域的渴望，收集了来自中国大陆各地的照片，从而更加复杂且细致入微地描绘今日中国。

但是，这样一个画面可能吗？大多数中国人都会告诉你，中国不能归结为一个特定的定义，观念，或地域。中国不是一个单一的世界，而是多元的文化包括56个少数民族，23个省，4个直辖市，五个自治区，2个特别行政区，数百种不同的方言，和广阔的地域和不同的气候。中国也是充满矛盾的。1989年秋季的柏林墙倒下本应证明资本主义战胜共产主义从而结束了几十年的冷战紧张局势。然而在这重大事件的七个月后，中国共产党加强其统治权力，在6月4日镇压了北京天安门广场民主运动之后全速发展中国式的资本主义经济。在中国四处可见共产主义和资本主义的混合产物，这使得外人相当费解。当上海人品

万花筒一样反映出中国全球化进程中的各色梦想，现实，承诺，裂以及巨变。让我们来欣赏这些影像吧！

摄了曾经代表早期商业和社区的标志，那些隐藏在小巷的室外理发摊及各式小商店。胡承伟，叶宝亮，张雨娇，徐津还有刘凯的镜头记录了跨越中国大城小镇及宗教场所的日常生活，呈现出会心的幽默，挣扎和柔情。佟大壮以壁毯式的图片来展示微缩了的腐败官员的面孔，而黄仕尊则用各式各样的招领广告拼出了中国大陆的地图。刘捷的组图和徐阳的景德镇照片显示了尽管中国已经成为是世界工业化的中心，世代相传的手工作坊依旧存在。

这些摄影作品从非常个人的眼光展现了各种各样的场景，环境，人与风俗习惯，揭示了中国官方言论之外的景象。同时，在外国媒体高调宣传全球中国的背景下，这些作品栩栩如生的描绘出中国崛起的神话。这些超现实的，世俗的，实验性的，堂吉珂德式的摄影作品试图完成记录中国当代影响的雄心勃勃的目标，但最终揭示了这一崇高目标是难以企及的。本书所呈现的影像打破了全球中国的单一形象，这些图片象

山东省一个城镇工业化负面甚至令人心碎的影响。井轶的黑白照片让我们见识到了河南省的黄牛交易市场，在那里印着毛泽东头像的钞票被悄悄做转手。海亮的作品展示了在冰冷的冬天一群神奇的白鸽从一个荒凉的工厂振翅而飞。在宁舟浩的作品中，一位政治局中共官员的日常工作显示出了令人惊讶的诗意。张晓的农村沿海照片和严怿波的系列照片包含着各种幽默，离奇和超现实的影像。卢彦鹏，黄晓亮，以及资佰用照片技术把典型的自然的甚至怪诞的景象变成传统的中国山水画。陈飞运用砖，玩具以及肉制品的组合来另类的展示宏伟的长城。陈源，刘婉怡和王闻龙拍摄了大量旅游景点的照片，从美丽的国家公园和海滨到通向那些景点的无比拥挤和混乱的交通状况。刘媛媛，纪涛，王培蓓和盐加葱在多样化的现代以及古老的城市景观上充满力量地展示出他们的身姿和表演动作。各种及古老的城市景观上上强有力地展现出身段和表演动作。何沛，伍鹏飞和谢莹则拍

展是否必然意味着进步。举例来说，张怡和David Kelley合作的影片“支离破碎” *Flotsam Jetsam* (2007) 记录了大规模的三峡大坝工程对当地地形地貌的改变和当地人对于种种巨大改变的个人感受。³ 与此同时摄影记者常河和艺术家陈晓峰的作品展示了入侵植物物种及人工绿化入侵中国的环境和日常生活，魔术般的呈现出自然和文明的坍塌。刘佳佳在夜间拍摄了上海周边老区被拆毁并被遗弃的空间，显得既浪漫又诡异。

艺术家刘涛的一系列摄影作品展示了他在浦东国际机场的破落的周边的裸体表演，而浦东国际机场正是上海彰显全球地位的主要标志之一。在云南这个中国最多少数民族的省份，张文风拍摄了一位华丽的少数民族村长，骆丹用湿版胶片法拍摄了一个基督徒社区，而陈伊娜的作品则展示了一个旅游景区国际风格建筑中的全球连锁店，比如肯德基。独立摄影师杨明的一系列照片描绘了一群在北京郊区庆祝节日的朋克孩子们，而另一系列则展示了

³ 除了每一个艺术家拍摄的照片，展览包括张怡和David Kelley合作的 *Flotsam Jetsam* (2007)，这是一个长江三峡库区的1频道高清影片。

《画说全球中国》的展览来源于我在俄勒冈大学2013年秋季的所教授的课程“当代艺术全球化，亚洲焦点”。我要感谢所有的学生提供了宝贵的意见和贡献。特别感谢研究生 Christie Hajela, Gina Kim, Caroline Parry 和 Madeleine Phillips.

她们担任本次展览的策展助理并且非常出色的完成了工作。我非常感谢俄勒冈大学的艺术与建筑史系主任 Charles Lachman 和艺术系主任 Laura Vandenburg。两位同仁在多方面支持这次展览的成功展出。我还要衷心感谢俄勒冈大学波特兰分校白盒画廊 (White Box Gallery) 主任 Ashley Gibson 和俄勒冈大学亚洲和太平洋研究中心副主任 Lori O'Hollaren 的支持，没有她们这次展览不可能成功。我还要诚挚的感谢我在中国的合作者，刘媛媛，刘多悦，顾铮，和王军。他们在展览初具规模时特别来到现场并提供了宝贵的意见。

《画说全球中国》的图书和相关的活动还受到了下列机构慷慨支持：俄勒大学白盒画廊 (White Box Gallery)，亚太研究中心，孔子学院全球中国学，Jordan Schnitzer 美术馆，艺术历史与建筑系，俄勒冈州人文中心，艺术系，教务处，东亚研究国家资源中心，建筑与相关艺术学院，东亚语言文学系，亚洲研究议程，以及艺术科学学院的教师创意艺术专项资金。

鸣谢

我深深感谢各位发送并且同意出版其作品的作者。参加者包括 (英语排名) John Alexander, Chang He (常河), Patty Chang (张怡), Chen Fei (陈飞), Chen Xiaofeng (陈晓峰), Chen Yina (陈伊娜), Chen Yuan (陈源), Gu Zheng (顾铮), Hai Liang (海亮), He Pei (何沛), Hu Chengwei (胡承伟), Huang Shizun (黄仕尊), Huang Xiaoliang (黄晓亮), Ji Tao (纪涛), Jin Xu (徐津), Jing Yi (井轶), David Kelley, Liu Jiajia (刘佳佳), Liu Jianhua (刘建华), Liu Jie (刘捷), Liu Kai (刘凯), Liu Tao (刘涛), Liu Wanyi (刘婉怡), Liu Yuan-yuan (刘媛媛), Lu Yanpeng (卢彦鹏), Luo Dan (骆丹), Ning Zhouhao (宁舟浩), Tong Dazhuang (佟大壮), Wang Wentong (王闻龙), Wang Peibei (王培蓓), Wu Pengfei (伍鹏飞), Xie Ying (谢莹), Xu Yang (徐阳), Jay Yan (盐加葱), Yan Yibo (严恽波), Yang Ming (杨明), Ye Baoliang (叶宝亮), Zhang Wenfeng (张文凤), Zhang Xiao (张晓), Zhang Yujiao (张雨娇), and Zi Bai (资佰)。

My deepest thanks go to those who sent in and agreed to share their photographs. Contributors include (in alphabetical order) John Alexander, Chang He, Patty Chang, Chen Fei, Chen Xiaofeng, Chen Yina, Chen Yuan, Gu Zheng, Hai Liang, He Pei, Hu Chengwei, Huang Shizun, Huang Xiaoliang, Ji Tao, Jin Xu, Jing Yi, David Kelley, Liu Jiajia, Liu Jianhua, Liu Jie, Liu Kai, Liu Tao, Liu Wanyi, Liu Yanpeng, Liu Yuanyuan, Luo Dan, Ning Zhouhao, Tong Dazhuang, Wang Wenlong, Wang Peibei, Wu Pengfei, Xie Ying, Xu Yang, Yan Yibo, Yang Ming, Ye Baoliang, Zhang Wenfeng, Zhang Xiao, Zhang Yujiao, and Zi Bai.

The *Picturing Global China* exhibition came about through a series of projects initiated in conjunction with my fall 2013 course, "Contemporary Art amidst Globalization, Asia Focus," at the University of Oregon. I would like to thank all of my students for their invaluable input and contributions along the way. Very special thanks go to graduate students Christie Hajela, Gina Kim, Caroline Parry, and Madeline Phillips, who served as excellent curatorial assistants. I am very grateful for the support of Charles Lachman, Chair of the Department of the History of Art and Architecture, and Laura Vandenburg, Chair of the Department of Art, who

supported and encouraged this undertaking in many ways. I also extend my sincere thanks to White Box director, Ashley Gibson, for her unwavering support and professionalism, and to Lori O'Hollaren, Assistant Director of the University of Oregon's Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, without who this project would not have been possible. I extend my warmest gratitude to my China-based collaborators, Liu Yuanyuan, Liu Duoni, Gu Zheng, and Wang Jun, all of who traveled to Oregon and offered their invaluable insight as this project took shape.

The *Picturing Global China* exhibition, related events, and book project are made possible with generous support from University of Oregon's White Box, Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, Confucius Institute for Global China Studies, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Department of the History of Art and Architecture, Oregon Humanities Center, Department of Art, Office of Academic Affairs, National Resource Center for East Asian Studies, School of Architecture and Allied Arts, Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures, Asian Studies Program, and the College of Arts and Sciences Fellowship program for Faculty in the Creative Arts.

2014 俄勒冈大学/白盒·波特兰

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林珍妮

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