

jia: the road series

Photography

Young and unique artist from China, represented in many well known public and private Collections (amongst others Frederick R. Weisman Foundation Art Collection, Sammlung Gregor von Bismarck, Sigg Collection).

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Official introduction by Drew Hammond
Senior International Correspondent, *The Art Economist*
31th May 2012, 7pm
Exhibition: 27th April - 9th June 2012
In collaboration with
WHITECONCEPTS by Nicole F. Loeser
www.whiteconcepts.de
Open: Thursday-Saturday 2-6 pm and by appointment

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Born in Beijing in 1979, Jia made her first trip to the West in 2007, and began her ongoing photo project, ***The Road Series***, in 2009, always shooting from moving automobiles in mist or rain, and in nine Western countries. The artist prints photos from ***The Road Series*** as she first shot them without any *ex post facto* modification of the original shot.

Despite an overt formal aspect that is predominantly abstract, ***The Road Series*** is consistent with a general tendency of contemporary Chinese art to be socially engaged by means of themes of critical negation.

For the artist, a dark consequence of the rapid economic growth of China has been a generalized obsession the acquisition of material goods and the fetishization of Western designer brands. Nowhere are these consumerist aspirations more evident than in the mania for automobiles, and the false sense of social standing afforded their owners. For the artist, the automobile, like the Chinese vision of West itself, is a metonym for false consumerist values that have eclipsed traditional ideas of virtue.

In ***The Road Series***, the widespread aspiration of sightseeing in the West occurs in such a way that the automobile becomes a prism through which we perceive the world. This vision seems attractive, but it is so distorted that we cannot even tell which country we are in, or even whether it is day or night.

This form of artificial vision has a theoretical precedence in the technique of traditional Chinese landscape painting that would use rain and mist in order to generate distortions that posed a radical departure from reality, but which nevertheless seemed pleasing to the eye.

By means of photography, the very medium that most "relies on what is already there", ***The Road Series*** creates overtly pretty visions of things that are not already there, but which belie our distraction from any authentic awareness—not merely awareness of hazardous weather conditions, but of the more profoundly dangerous epistemic blindness of consumerist fantasy.

In this sense, ***The Road Series*** is a cautionary tale for China that warns against learning too well the lessons of the West.

Drew Hammond
Senior International Correspondent, *The Art Economist*

Exhibition: Jia, „*The Road Series 4*“, Nr. 7, 2009; 5/10, 150 x 225,8 cm

Printed on Fine Art Inkjet on Hahnemühle Fine Art Baryta, mounted on solid aluminum, sealed behind plexiglass.

The works in the catalog are available:

H x B (cm)	Edition „The Road Series 4“, Nr. 7	Edition
150 x 225	10	3
120 x 180	15	5
60 x 90	20	10

Catalog

Jia (ZHANG Jia)

Born in Beijing: 02/4/1979.

Nationality: Chinese; Currently works in Hangzhou and Berlin

EDUCATION

- B.S. in Architectural Design, North China University of Technology (Beijing), 2003
- M.A. Graduate Faculty of the Chinese National Academy of Art (Beijing), 2008

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2002 Shanghai Biennale, curated by ZHANG Qing (currently curator at the National Museum of China NAMOC): title of installation: *City Boxes*.
- 2006 11-ART (Beijing) Solo Exhibition and Lecture *Recent Work*
- 2007 Galerie Gordon Pym et Fils (Paris) Solo Exhibition: *Chinoiseries*
- 2009 MIAUHAUS (Los Angeles) Solo Exhibition: *The Road Series I*

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Public Institutions

Frederick R. Weisman Foundation Art Collection (Los Angeles)

Private

Sammlung Gregor von Bismarck (Friedrichsruh)
 Sammlung Ingeborg Prinzessin zu Schleswig-Holstein (Hamburg)
 Li Lin Collection (Vancouver)
 Katrin Bellinger Collection (London)
 Sigg Collection (from May 2012)

Corporate

JNBY Collection (Hangzhou)

CURRENT PROJECTS

- Since 2009, Jia continues her ongoing long-term conceptual photo project shot to date in nine countries: *The Road Series*.
- *The Chinese Version*: an installation of ninety paintings that generate formal relations from the juxtaposition of simplified Chinese characters, including at least one large work for the Sigg Collection.

SELECTED ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- March – August, 2006: Curator, Courtyard Gallery (Beijing)
- August 2004 – February, 2005: Editor-in-chief, FAKE Publishing, the Beijing publishing enterprise of Ai Weiwei
- September 2001 – September 2002: Vice President and Co-founder The Practice Society [of Independent Film]. Until it was closed by the state authorities, this was China's first independent film movement. It featured works by over one hundred directors with screenings in over twenty cities.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Books

- Brendan McGetrick, **ZHANG Jia**, Chen Shuyu, *MAD Dinner* (ACTAR, Barcelona, 2007)
- ZHANG Bo, HE Yan, **ZHANG Jia**, *The Classical Garden in Beijing* (Guangming Press, Beijing, 2004)