Lu Hao (The Holden Gallery)

*Replicated Memory, 2008*

City walls, city gates and Hutong (the name of Beijing's small streets) are all aspects of Beijing's cultural heritage which have disappeared or are disappearing in the era of the construction of a modern Beijing city. In *Replicated Memory*, Lu Hao has re-installed models of the city gates back onto today's map of central Beijing, to recover the history in which the gates, having survived numerous conflicts and battles, were destroyed in a process of progress and necessary road widening. While the nine gates of the inner city of Beijing had no specific function, they had different names with different meanings. For instance, the Desheng Gate (also known as Xiu - to cultivate) signified moral superiority while the Anding Gate (also known as Sheng - to live) implies being in plenty.

Hao views himself as an aboriginal or folk artist deeply concerned with his native city of Beijing, its residents and their personal and collective histories. *Replicated Memory* is infused with a melancholy that mourns the loss of a part of Beijing's cultural history, the reconstructed gates assuming a ghost-like quality as they hang over the sites on which they once stood - an indication of their absent presence and a subtle revealing of the fragility of cultural legacy. The artist also mourns the displacement of local residents forced out of Beijing to make room for the newly modernised urban landscapes that demolish and deny their personal memories.

State Legacy Exhibition Identity

The exhibition identity and publicity materials have been designed by Chinese graphic designer Wang Xu. Awarded more than one hundred international design awards, Wang was a member of the Visual Committee and Logo Competition jury member for Beijing's 2008 Olympic Bid. He has edited and designed more than eighty design books and magazines and has featured in various publications, including International Professional Scene 90 (Phaidon Press, 2002), Area (Phaidon, 2003) and World Graphic Design (Merrill Publishers, 2003).

There is also a full programme of related events for anyone who is ready to discover more about the exhibition.

For details visit: www.cornerhouse.org/statelegacy
www.miriad.mmu.ac.uk
www.ocat.com.cn

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Zeng Li (Cornerhouse, Galleries 1 & 2)
*The Shuicheng Iron and Steel Works*, 2005 - 2008

In early 1966, the same year that saw the beginning of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, building work began on an iron and steel works in a desolate mountainous area of Guizhou Province named Shuicheng. In response to the start of the Cold War, Chairman Mao initiated the ‘Third-line Construction’ project, a form of national defense that would guarantee logistics support in the event of war. Large numbers of workers were transferred from major cities to the southwestern regions of Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan to begin construction work on a host of new factories. When the Cold War ended, industry began to move back into the city, prompting the decline of the factories and the gradual deterioration of areas like Guizhou Province.

Artist Zeng Li presents seventeen high-definition photographs that record the demolition and deterioration of these hidden factories. He succeeds in preserving the memory of these once vibrant industrial landscapes by documenting their history, using photography as a means to explore an alternative form of viewing, a process that enables the artist to rethink the history of his nation. In this way, the photographs represent a museum of images that expose the true reality of China, the reality of living in an era of rapid industrial, cultural, social and political change.

Wang Jianwei (Cornerhouse, Gallery 2)
*The Grandstand, Tiananmen*, 2009
*Squares*, 2002

In 1949 eight temporary grandstands were erected in Tiananmen Square for elite guests to view the founding ceremony of the People’s Republic of China. The temporary structures were replaced by eight permanent grandstands in 1952 designed by Kaiji Zhang. Their viewpoint looked out across the newly levelled Tiananmen square, with the Forbidden City - the ancient heart of Beijing - out of site behind. These were later demolished to make way for four new stands constructed to the north of the Jinhui river. *The Grandstand - Tiananmen* gives audiences the opportunity to virtually relocate a computer generated section of the Tiananmen Grandstand to sites across Manchester city centre, adopting first-person viewpoints from these new settings. It is specifically the section of the Grandstand reserved for foreign dignitaries that has been recreated. Jianwei explores the cultural and ideological significance of the Grandstand’s construction and its location, form and function. He sees the structure as an explicit meeting of ideology and architectural form and addresses the shifting relationships between architecture, time and space. In recreating and relocating the Grandstand in an alternative context, the artist encourages us to consider the impact that this has on the interaction between buildings and the physical spaces they inhabit. Over the course of history, as buildings and urban spaces repeatedly transform and mutate, original contexts are lost and new meanings and relationships emerge.

In realising this project, the curators have worked with Arup, Manchester, significantly Simon Mabey who they thank for his input in the creation of a virtual Manchester and models.

Also on show is *Squares*, a recent video piece by Jianwei that examines the contrasts between Tiananmen’s historical usage and significance with its present day status and commercial investment.

Sui Jianguo (Cornerhouse, Gallery 3)
*Raising Speed on the Railway*, 2007

After the 1950s, the main problem faced by the Chinese Ministry of Railways was how to increase speeds to maximize capacity and quality of transportation. In 1956, a circular track testing ground was built in an eastern suburb of Beijing. The track was built on the edge of an urban and rural area, inhabited by some two thousand local people, eight thousand immigrants and large pockets of artists who relocated in search of more affordable housing. Since October 2006, the train has circled the track for nearly ten hours a day, providing data for the Chinese National Railway that will allow them to raise the speed on the railway for a sixth time.

Sui Jianguo’s multi channel video installation presents twelve recordings on twelve screens across which the test train completes a loop of the nine kilometers long track ... exploring the relationship between the still and moving image and provoking dialogue on the social realities of modern life.

Wang Guangyi (The Holden Gallery)
*East Wind - Golden Dragon Car*, 2008

The notion of a car or motor vehicle only appeared in China at the beginning of twentieth century. On 14 July 1956, the Changchun No.1 Automobile Factory produced China’s first vehicle and in October of the same year, vehicle production formally started, laying the foundation for the independent development of China’s vehicle industry. In May 1958, the first car to be made in China was completed and named the *East Wind - Golden Dragon* (dongfeng jinlong), taken from Chairman Mao’s saying: ‘the east wind overrides the west wind’. After the start of the Cultural Revolution, the emergence of three new larger vehicle factories marked a significant development of China’s vehicle industry in terms of quantity and quality.

Artist Wang Guangyi presents *East-Wind Golden Dragon Car*, a mixed-media installation that showcases a replica of the first Chinese car presented to Chairman Mao as a gift. The car stands as a symbol of the modernising desires of the Industrial Revolution, an object that expresses the conflict between belief and material desire. Guangyi believes that the car bears the weight of China’s recent history, creating the piece by hand, he reflects on the primitive methods of manual labour manufacture employed by the early vehicle factories. He conceives the visual reconstruction of this piece as a means to recover the unique spirit of the age in which it was first created, a moment of hope and aspiration offered by the Industrial Revolution, lending the car a kind of mythical historical status as a lasting tribute to imperial power.