



ArtSway

Contemporary Visual Art in the New Forest

PRESS RELEASE

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Dinu Li: Ancestral Nation

ArtSway

20 September - 16 November 2008

Preview and Reception for the Artist: Saturday 20 September 2008 at 2pm

Dinu Li: Family Village

The Gallery, The Arts Institute at Bournemouth

16 March - 17 April 2009

Dinu Li has been co-commissioned by ArtSway and The Arts Institute at Bournemouth to research and develop a new film entitled 'Family Village', the second in a trilogy of films which take their titles from the three most common ways to say the word 'country' in Chinese.

Li's practice centres on the relationship between the personal and the political, the public and the private, and draws inspiration from the forces that shape and determine our social structures. Li, a filmmaker, photographer and video artist, was artist in residence at ArtSway in Spring 2008.

For his exhibition at ArtSway Li will be showing 'Ancestral Nation', the first instalment in the trilogy, accompanied by two large black and white photographs that resonate themes in the film of social gatherings and ritual-like movement, alongside works in progress and research material relating to the second film in this trilogy - 'Family Village'.

Informed by cinematic traditions, Li's productions are situated between documented facts, oral histories, chance observations and imagined scenarios. 'Ancestral Nation' was filmed during a research trip Li made to China in 2005 and focuses on the dichotomy between collective will and individual aspirations. In a country whose government exerts absolute control over such a massive population, and one that constantly refers to its cultural past whilst looking to an industrialised future, Li decided to film two Chinese 'rituals' involving thousands of people: a state-run festival to mark the birthday of Confucius, and the daily commute at a provincial train station. The third film in the trilogy - 'Nation Family' - will be made in the near future.

'Family Village' once again sees Li visiting China, to explore at first-hand themes connected to urbanism, heritage, architecture and cultural values. This new film, to be exhibited for the first time at The Gallery at The Arts Institute at Bournemouth, examines recent trends in Chinese urban planning where villages and towns have been transformed by desires to reflect British vernacular architectural sensibilities. In Chengdu, Sichuan Province, there is a new development called 'British Town', built by the British construction company Halcrow. It is modelled after a quaint Dickensian Christmas card depicting an image of Dorchester High Street. Li's film explores the cultural differences between the Chinese and the British such as the fact that the Chinese buildings, (while echoing the British vernacular style) are built as multi-stories reflecting local needs based on size of plots and quantity of population.

A full-colour publication focusing on the newly commissioned 'Family Village' project, with two critical texts, will be published in April 2009 in association with text+work programme at The Arts Institute at Bournemouth.

Dinu Li's ArtSway and The Arts Institute at Bournemouth exhibitions are kindly sponsored by

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Editor's Notes

Born in Hong Kong, Dinu Li is a UK based artist living in Manchester. Li has exhibited his work internationally. Recent exhibitions include: 3rd Bucharest Biennale; Museumsnacht in St Gallen, Switzerland; Rivington Place in London; Cornerhouse in Manchester; University of North Texas Art Gallery; Kulturbunker Cologne; Victoria & Albert Museum London; Contact Photo Fest 05 Toronto; White Space 798 Beijing and the Liverpool Biennale 04.

ArtSway is a unique place in the UK's New Forest to see, discuss, make and engage with contemporary visual art. A purpose-built and architecturally important gallery space hosts a changing programme of exhibitions and wide ranging creative opportunities for all.

ArtSway, Station Road, Sway, nr Lymington, Hampshire, SO41 6BA
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ArtSway is open: Tuesday - Sunday 11am - 5pm. Admission is FREE.

The Arts Institute at Bournemouth is a leading specialist higher education institution, offering undergraduate and postgraduate degrees across a range of contemporary arts, design and media subjects. Its programme of text+work promotes dialogue between innovative contemporary art and design practice and its theoretical context.

The Arts Institute at Bournemouth, Wallisdown, Poole, Dorset, BH12 5HH
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Halcrow specialises in the provision of planning, design and management services for infrastructure development worldwide. With interests in transportation, water, maritime and property, the company is undertaking commissions in over 70 countries from a network of more than 70 offices.

Associated Events:

Gallery Talk: Saturday 20 September 2008 at 3pm

Dinu Li in Conversation with Peter Bonnell

To celebrate the opening of his exhibition at ArtSway, artist Dinu Li will discuss with ArtSway's Curator Peter Bonnell the ideas behind his work, and his recent residency at ArtSway. Dinu will also discuss the progress of his work 'Family Village', due to be shown at The Arts Institute at Bournemouth in 2009.

FREE: Booking Essential.

Art in Context (Urban Planning): A Tale of Two Towns

Wednesday 12 November 2008 at 7pm

A Lecture By Steve Pharoah, Regional Director (Masterplanning & Urban Design) for Halcrow Group Ltd

Dinu Li's recent residency at ArtSway, and works-in-progress, relate to his investigation of the recent trend by Chinese city planners to develop housing complexes based on traditional English countryside villages. Li was initially inspired by the story of Chinese developers basing a new development in Qingyang, near Chengdu in Sichuan Province on a Christmas card of an idealised Dorchester town.

This evening lecture by Steve Pharoah will contextualise the background to Li's project, beginning with a brief overview of Halcrow, the international planning and design company responsible for the design of Qingyang and for many prize winning concept master plans, urban designs and architectural work throughout China. Pharoah will give an overview of Halcrow's planning and work in China to date, illustrating the diversity of their design projects – such as the Shanghai Bund Architectural Expo regeneration plan; Giant Panda Park ecological master planning; new city planning (population range 15,000 to 1.5 million people); and post earthquake reconstruction master planning.

Pharoah will focus on the comparisons and contrasts between Chinese and British design, and the relevance of a southern central historic English market town to a western central Chinese city. He will discuss the process of designing Qingyang, including how and why Halcrow's planners and designers were involved; as well as the adoption of key urban design elements and the importance of Qingyang in an emerging China.

FREE: Booking Essential.

For press images, interviews, and further information, please contact Jack Lewis on (01590) 682260 x16 or email jack.lewis@artsway.org.uk

