

Paradise Row



Press Release

Birdhead

Welcome to Birdhead World Again, London

09/03/12 - 07/04/2012

Private View:
Thursday 8 March,
7.00-9.00pm

Paradise Row presents the first London solo show of Shanghai based photographic duo Birdhead.

Founded in 2004 and comprising Ji Weiyu (1980) and Song Tao (1979), Birdhead use photography to capture, mediate and occupy their contemporary experience of daily life in Shanghai, China's greatest metropolis whose ever increasing scale and vitality is more than itself - being read the world over as a gauge of the flow of power from West to East.

Their tactical use of the snapshot aesthetic and the high volume of images they deploy make manifest a visual stream of consciousness. We see the artists going about their lives; being with friends, laughing, talking, eating, working, partying, sleeping etc. all this against the backdrop of the urban landscape of Shanghai. Tall towers, skyscrapers, telecoms masts and vast flyovers punctuate the images of human activity, of youth and consumer culture, illustrating the strange symbiosis between inanimate infrastructure and the life that it shelters and facilitates.

Alongside their images, Birdhead present, *Youth Does Not Know How Sorrow Tastes* by Xin Qiji, a classic poem from the Song dynasty era. A melancholy masterpiece, the poem reflects upon the arc of experience that forms each life, the Romantic naiveté of youth and the price paid for wisdom. In common with Birdhead's sensibility, the poem is imbued with the pathos of the individual set against the sweep of historical time.

Birdhead's work is a vision of the contemporary sublime, being at once a mediation on and a product of the vastness of contemporary experience.

It was the struggle to comprehend and live with this overwhelming scale that was perhaps the fundamental drive of Modernism, a vastness that emerged with the birth of the modern city in all its complexities. As history replays itself in altered but familiar forms, culture follows suit.

Set within this historical moment Birdhead's work, in all its simplicity, is a key cultural and social document.

Birdhead's recent solo exhibitions include *Birdhead: New Village* at EX3 Centre for Contemporary Art in Florence, *Artist File 2011 The NACT Annual Show of Contemporary Art* at the National Art Centre Tokyo.

A major presentation by Birdhead featured in *ILLUMinations* in the Arsenale at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011. Birdhead also participated in museum exhibitions including *China Powerstation IV* at Pinacoteca Agnelli in Torino, Italy, *Warm Up* at the Minshing Museum in Shanghai, *Reversed Images, Representations of Shanghai and it's Contemporary Material Culture* at the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago and *China Power Station: Part II* in the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo in Norway.

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Gallery hours:
Mon—Fri / 11am – 7pm
Saturdays / 11am – 6pm