

Beyond:

recent photographs by **Rong Rong & i n r i**

curated by **Wu Hung**

walsh
GALLERY



JUNE 3 - JULY 16, 2005

opening reception: **JUNE 3, 5 - 9pm**

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Contact: Julie Walsh, Director 312.829.3312

**WU HUNG CURATES BEIJING HUSBAND & WIFE
PHOTOGRAPHIC TEAM'S RECENT WORKS**

Chicago, Illinois;

Beijing photographers **Rong Rong & i n r i**'s recent work debuts at Walsh Gallery. This exhibit entitled "Beyond" is curated by Wu Hung (Director of the Center for the Art of East Asia and Consulting Curator of the Smart Museum of Art (University of Chicago)).

The opening reception is on Friday, June 3rd from 5 to 9pm. The artists and curator will be present at the opening

Curator Wu Hung chose the title "Beyond" for Rong Rong & i n r i's latest collaboration because it reminded him of a line he had heard before: "To go beyond is to vanish from view." This is the departure point for the exhibition at Walsh Gallery, which features 23 works by this husband and wife team. In the series "Mt. Fuji" and "We Are Here", the artists shed their clothes in rather hostile environments (on a frozen lake in front of Mt. Fuji and in an abandoned factory). The beauty of their nakedness transforms their chosen habitats into a mythic realm. This isn't the "Hallmark" version of love, but rather something a bit more raw and pure at the same time. As Julie Walsh, the director of Walsh Gallery, says, "This was clearly the type of love that makes people do foolish things just because they are no longer alone and finally understood."

Rong Rong became famous for his gritty depictions in the 1990s of life in the East Village of Beijing. He was, quite simply, the guy who had a camera. Thus he became privy to some of the most powerful performances by legendary artists like Zhang Huan and Ma Liuming. i n r i gave up her career as a popular portrait photographer for a Japanese newspaper to pursue fine art photography. She met Rong Rong in 1999 and they were married shortly afterwards. Neither artist spoke the same language for a couple of years. Despite their language barrier, just 3 months after their wedding they went to Mt. Fuji and created a series of photos that documented a spontaneous performance they did there. They took off their clothes and walked on a frozen lake in the middle of winter. They were waiting to see Mt. Fuji. Their pure expression of love is not without an edge. In their other body of work, encompassing 6 photos entitled "We Are Here", the couple posed nude in an old factory that later became the trendy Beijing art space 798.

Rong Rong & i n r i's Mt. Fuji series has been seen in museums in Berlin, Singapore, Finland, Italy, and France. Both within China and internationally, Rong Rong's photos have been included in the most prominent exhibitions of Contemporary Chinese art. His photographs have been included in biennales such as the 2004 Shanghai Biennale in China, the d'Issy Biennale in Paris, and the Torino Biennale in Italy. His photos have also been seen at museums such as the Smart Museum of Art (Chicago), the Institute of Contemporary Arts (London), the Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago), and the Asia Society (New York).