



THE GAO BROTHERS

MARCH 16 - APRIL 28, 2007

opening reception March 16, 5 - 8 pm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE


Contact: Julie Walsh, Director 312.829.3312

Chicago, IL: "From China with Love"

On March 16th Walsh Gallery presents photography and sculpture by Beijing-based artist duo the Gao Brothers. "From China with Love" is an investigation into the effects of Chinese urbanization on the spirit. The show will run from March 16 to April 28 with an opening reception on Friday March 16, from 5 to 8 pm. **The artists will be present at the opening reception.**

Gao Zhen and Gao Qiang have expressed an alternative voice during the 20 years that they have been making art in China.

They experimented in performance art, installation and photography during the mid 1980s when these practices were only in their infancies.

"From China with Love" covers the Gao Brothers' photography which was based on documentation of real and imaginary performances. In the earliest photography series on display, "T.V.," (2000) the Gao Brothers created a series of mini-dramas while sitting on top of a Chinese television. The t.v. is an icon for China's rapid urbanization and rampant consumerism. "A t.v. in every home" was a popular mantra of the communist party. In one photograph is a nude child that waist up looks like a boy, reading Mao's "little red book" and is sitting on a t.v. It turns out that the child is a girl. (Continued) 



“From China with Love”

THE GAO BROTHERS

(Continued) In the photo series entitled “Embrace,” the Gao Brothers invited men and women to hug each other in settings ranging from within the urban to the sublime. In these hug sessions the huggers are often nude and these couplings range from man-woman to man-man or woman-woman. These works are not so much about the sexuality that they seem to exude, but more about the quest within China’s new urban culture to find again something that seems to be lost... a touch of humanity, faith and trust in each other. These “hugging sessions” were staged in both China and in Europe. In some cases the performers were hired but mostly they were volunteers.

In another ongoing series called “High Places” the Gao Brothers place individuals both clothed and nude on pedestals. Sometimes the pedestal glows blue like a reflection from a t.v. monitor. These individuals have been taken from the streets of urbanization and become monuments to the search for spirituality and meaning.

In the project room is a large sculpture entitled “Miss Mao,” the Gao Brothers’ latest work. Also a monument to the voice of plastic consumerism, this androgynous Mao is painted gold and smiles warmly at the viewer. Although this sculpture is monumental in scale, the question becomes what is it a monument to?

China’s rapid globalization and the sexual ambiguity that often appears in the Gao Brothers’ work refers not to sexual confusion; it’s about a confusion of spirit. This sexual androgyny also questions conventional party line logic on what is normal and what is pornographic.

The Gao Brothers simultaneously invite the viewer to share in these feelings of confusion while hoping all along for a little more love for us all.



The Gao Brothers have exhibited at such renowned institutions as Beijing’s National Fine Arts Museum, the He Xiangning Fine Arts museum in Shenzhen, Nanjing Normal University, Fukuoka Art Museum in Japan, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Nice), Espace d’Art Contemporain (Paris), Institute for New Media (Frankfurt), Foam Photography Museum in Amsterdam, the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), the Seattle Art Museum, the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art in Chicago and at the Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago).