POMONA COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART FEATURES DOCUMENTRY PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA in “China: Insights”

“China: Insights,” a cross-section of documentary photography from mainland China, will be on view January 22 through April 10, 2011, at the Pomona College Museum of Art in Claremont. A public reception will be held at the Museum on Saturday, January 22, from 5-7 p.m.

*China: Insights* explores the transition from the rural/agrarian environment to the urban/industrial setting in the People’s Republic of China. Seven documentary photographers—Chen Yuan Zhong, Hua Er, Jia Yu Chuan, Li Nan, Yang Yan Kang, Yu Haibo and Zhang Xinmin—record the tensions engendered by rapid change and persistent tradition in a dynamic China. Each artist’s work reflects something they believe is vital to Chinese life -- something emerging or something vanishing.
The photographers’ themes include rural Catholicism, Faith of a Village: Yang Yan Kang; matrilineal culture in an agrarian setting, Mother to Daughter: Hua Er; population shifts, Country to City: Zhang Xinmin; prostitution, Young Pros, Oldest Profession: Chen Yuan Zhong; gender and identity, Bending Gender: Jia Yu Chuan; typologies of urban citizenry, Urban Identities: Li Nan; and the emergence of a thriving pop music/club scene, Night Moves: Yu Haib. They approach their subjects employing methods ranging from classic modernist documentary to more formally experimental styles.

Collectively, these photographers have numerous publications, exhibitions and awards to their credit, but little of their work has appeared outside The People’s Republic of China. Six of the seven are based in Shenzhen, which serves as a microcosm revealing many of the dramatic shifts in contemporary China. Just across the border from Hong Kong in southern China, Shenzhen was the first of China’s Special Economic Opportunity Zones. Already a world-renowned center for printing and information technology, among other industries, in 1980, Shenzhen was a fishing and farming community with a population of roughly 20,000. Today it is a booming metropolis, with a population of more than 13 million and an average age of 30 years.

“China: Insights,” which is curated by Gu Zheng and A. D. Coleman, is circulated by The Foundation for the Exhibition of Photography in collaboration with Flying Dragon Cultural Enterprises.

Accompanying the exhibit, will be visits to the Pomona College campus by the exhibition artists and curators, documentary films about China, panel discussions, and a grant program for Claremont Colleges students to produce videos exploring the role of China in contemporary America. The associated programming is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Project partners at Pomona College are the Oldenborg Center for Modern Languages and International Relations, the Pacific Basin Institute, the Asian American Resource Center, the Queer Resource Center, the Media Studies Department and the Asian Studies Program.

As part of the China: Insights programming, Pomona College Museum of Art is collaborating with the Roy and Edna Disney/CALARTS Theater at REDCAT to present this year’s Jack H. Skirball Series, titled Between Disorder and Unexpected Pleasures: Tales From the New Chinese Cinema. Beginning on Wednesday, April 6 and running through Saturday April 9 REDCAT will present six films that demonstrate the new hybrid approaches of Independent Chinese Cinema, which mixes documentary with fiction and combines found and live footage. The Skirball Film series at REDCAT is
curated by Cheng-Sim Lim and Berenice Reynaud. In conjunction with REDCAT’s series, the Pomona College Museum of Art and Media Studies will present a series of independent Chinese documentary films throughout the semester. A schedule and description of these films is forthcoming. Please consult the museum website for associated programming at www.pomona.edu/museum.

The Pomona College Museum of Art is located at 330 N. College Avenue, Claremont, and is open to the public free of charge Tuesday through Friday, from 12-5 p.m., Thursday evenings from 5-11 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 1-5 p.m.
For more information, call: (909) 621-8283; email: jessica.wimbley@pomona.edu; or visit the museum’s Website at www.pomona.edu/museum.

The Pomona College Museum of Art houses a substantial permanent collection as well as serves as a gallery for the display of temporary exhibitions. Important holdings include the Kress Collection of 15th- and 16th-century Italian panel paintings; more than 5,000 examples of Pre-Columbian to 20th-century American Indian art and artifacts; and a large collection of American and European prints, drawings, and photographs.

# # #