



SOUNDINGS: east asia monthly

a newsletter for undergraduates

VOLUME I, NUMBER 2: OCTOBER 2006

WEATHERHEAD EAST ASIAN INSTITUTE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

WEAI HOSTS VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY SERVICE OPEN HOUSE FOR UNDERGRADS

by Wei Wei Hsing, CC'08



As part of its new undergraduate initiative, the WEAI hosted its first-ever Volunteer and Community Service Open House on Tuesday, September 26th. Geared primarily towards undergraduates interested in devoting time to fostering the well-being of New York's Asian community, the event attracted many students eager to get involved. "I wanted to find a way to apply my interest in China and Chinese culture," said Sasho Donovan, GS'09.

The six community organizations in attendance were looking to get students involved in a wide range of volunteer activities, from spreading cultural awareness to English tutoring. Representatives from Asian Professional Extension, the Chinatown Manpower Project, the Chinatown Progressive Association, the Chinese-American Planning Council, the Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans, and the New York Asian Women's Center were present with brochures and applications, and were also available to introduce students to their organizations on a one-to-one basis.

Many of the organizations were founded and developed through the sole efforts of volunteers, and chose to attend the open house because they believe in the

(continued on next page, left column)

STAY INFORMED!

JOIN THE WEAI UNDERGRAD E-MAIL LIST AT: www.columbia.edu/weai (click on "get on the mailing list"), or email us at weaiundergrads@columbia.edu

EXHIBITION SHOWCASES CONTEMPORARY ASIAN AMERICAN ART, NOW

by Jon Kief, CC'07

Now in its second month on display, the Asia Society's new exhibition, "One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now," is a diverse collection that highlights both the broad creative spectrum of contemporary Asian American art as well as the ways in which today's Asian American artists are questioning and contesting this spectrum's borders, conventions, and preconceptions. Comprising the work of 17 artists of Asian American heritage, and incorporating a wide range of expressive mediums from painting, photography, and sculpture to video, interactive built environments, and performance art, the exhibition is also significant for its focus on young artists involved in developing movements.

(continued on next page, right column)



[Indigo Som, *China Garden, Yazoo City, Mississippi*, from the series *Mostly Mississippi: Chinese Restaurants of the South*; 2004-05; digital pigment print; 34 x 34 in; photograph by artist; courtesy of the artist and the Asia Society]

VOLUNTEER OPEN HOUSE (CON'T)

importance of volunteers in the promotion of the interests of underserved Asian communities in the New York area. Marian Tan, Executive Director of Asian Professional Extension, a youth mentorship program, said, “The kids really need the support of the volunteers.” Representatives from several of the other organizations expressed similar sentiments, citing stories of volunteers who have had tremendous impact on the lives of individuals. Helen Wu, Outreach Coordinator for the New York Asian Women’s Center, spoke of a victim of domestic abuse who, after receiving English tutoring from NYAWC, was able to report details of her abuse to the police.

Asked why she came, Mae Lee, Director of the Chinese Progressive Association, said, “Volunteers are very important to us. We like to bring students and the community together. We think students are the future.”

For more information on the organizations mentioned in this article, visit: www.columbia.edu/cu/weai/undergraduate-resources_n.html.

EAST ASIAN STUDIES ALUMNI PROFILE: KIRSTEN ELLER, BC’02 (AMEC MAJOR)



Four years out of college, I’m back at a university, working as a Study Abroad Advisor for the University of Florida. I specialize in Asia, Australia, and the United Kingdom: a perfect fit for me. I’m helping to guide the development of our UF in Beijing Center and also regularly correspond in English and Japanese with UF’s Japanese exchange partners. Advising is an amazing experience, and I look forward to continuing on this path.

After graduating from Barnard in 2002, I got a Master’s from Stanford in International and Comparative Education. I taught English for a year and a half at two Japanese universities before returning to California to work at a start-up company for overseas educational programs.

Here in Gainesville, I spend time playing with my two cats, one of whom I brought home from Japan. For the first time in my life, I’m in an area where I can actually afford real estate, so I’m in the process of purchasing my first home. While it would be nice to be physically closer to Asia, I’m very much enjoying the latest path my life is taking.

ASIAN AMERICAN ART NOW (CON’T)

The exhibition further leverages upon its title’s “now” through the works of art themselves, which find their most fascinating ground when they challenge the viewer to engage with his or her own positionality within the present of the collection on display. In such moments—produced, for example, by Xavier Cha and Mika Tajima’s accompaniment of their sculptural pieces with video footage of their opening night performance-presentations, or by Ala Ebtekar’s insertion of the viewer into a fabricated space that links interactivity to simulation and fantasy—the exhibition calls attention to the empowered dynamism of contemporary Asian American art and the extent to which this operates as a function of the unstable and shifting borders of its own constitution.

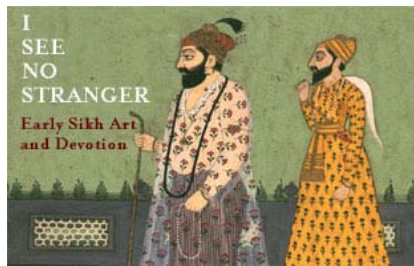


Jiha Moon
Haven
2006
Ink and acrylic
on hanji
80 x 60 in.
Collection of the
artist
Courtesy of
the Asia Society

The exhibition is the product of a collaborative curatorial effort by Melissa Chiu, Director and Curator of Contemporary Asian Art at the Asia Society, Karin Higa of the Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, and Susette S. Min, Assistant Professor of Asian American Studies and Art History at the University of California, Davis. It will be on display until December 10th at the Asia Society, which is located at 725 Park Avenue. Admission is free for Columbia students with current IDs. For more information on “One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now,” visit: www.asiasociety.org/arts/onewayoranother/index.html.

HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS

I See No Stranger: Early Sikh Art and Devotion
Rubin Museum of Art (www.rmanyc.org)
September 18, 2006 through January 29, 2007



“This exhibition will present approximately 100 works from the sixteenth through the nineteenth century, including paintings, drawings, textiles, metalwork, and photographs that identify core Sikh beliefs and explore the plurality of Sikh cultural traditions.” (text and photo: rmanyc.org)

Master Tangka Painter Samten Dakpa
Tibet House (www.tibethouse.org)
August 17, 2006 through November 10, 2006



“An exhibit of 30 spectacular tangka paintings by Tibetan artist, sculptor, architect and teacher Samten Dakpa. With touches of humor, he depicts his visions of the magical world of the Tibetan gods and seeks to convey the peacefulness and balance that are the core of the tangka tradition.” (text and photo: tibethouse.org)

EVENTS CALENDAR

Weatherhead East Asian Institute Events

Tue, Oct. 10, 12:00-1:30pm

Brown Bag Lecture:

“Why South East Asia Matters: US-Malaysia Relations as a Case Study”

Christopher LaFleur, US Ambassador to Malaysia
918 IAB

Tue, Oct. 17, 12:00-1:30pm

Brown Bag Lecture:

“Tibetan History in Amdo (Qinghai)”

Kunchok Tsedan (Guan Que Cai Dan), Editor and Journalist
918 IAB

Wed, Oct. 25, 12:00-1:30pm

Brown Bag Lecture:

Akihiko Tanaka, Professor of International Politics,
University of Tokyo

918 IAB

See www.columbia.edu/cu/weai/events.html for an up-to-date calendar of Institute events.

East Asia Events at Columbia

Thu, Oct. 19, 6:00-7:30pm

Lecture: “Nenbutsu: From Mantra to Manzai”

Mark Blum, SUNY Albany
403 Kent Hall

Fri, Oct. 27 – Sat, Oct. 28, 9:00am-5:00pm

Symposium: “The Past and Future of the Book: Transition and Translation in Japanese Publishing”
301 Philosophy Hall

Tue, Oct. 31, 6:00-7:30pm

“Writing in the Web of Words: An Evening with Author Yoko Tawada”

301 Philosophy Hall

For more info on any of the three events listed above, see www.donaldkeenecenter.org.

East Asia Events in NYC

Sat, Oct. 7, 10:00am-7:00pm

Film Festival: “Reel China: Documentary Biennial”
NYU Cinema Studies, 721 Broadway, Room 656
(www.reelchina.net/news/04.htm)

Wed, Oct. 11 – Sat, Oct. 14, 7:30pm

Performing Arts: “Nine Hills One Valley”

Ratan Thiyam’s Chorus Repertory Theatre of Manipur
Brooklyn Academy of Music (www.bam.org)

Wed, Oct. 11 – Tue, Oct. 17, 6:30 and 9:15pm

(additional 3:15pm showing on 10/14 and 10/15)

Film: “Out of Place: Memories of Edward Said”

Anthology Film Archives

(www.anthologyfilmarchives.org)

Tue, Oct. 24 and Thur, Oct. 26 – Sat, Oct. 28, 7:30pm

Sun, Oct. 29, 3:00pm

Performing Arts: “Kagemi: Beyond the Metaphors of Mirrors” (Sankai Juku Butoh troupe)

Brooklyn Academy of Music (www.bam.org)

Sat, Nov. 4, 4:00pm

Film Premiere: “Gobi Women’s Song” (Mongolia)

Rubin Museum of Art (www.rmanyc.org)

OPPORTUNITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Academic

Call for Papers: October 15th is the deadline to submit a proposal to the 3rd Undergraduate Asian Studies Symposium, Marietta College (Ohio), Nov. 10-11: <http://www.marietta.edu/~asia/symposium3.html>.

Internship/Volunteer/Career

Internship: Assistant to the Foundation Manager, China Institute; minimum commitment 10 hrs/week for 3 months. Direct questions and applications to: Matthew Marotta, mmarotta@chinainstitute.org.

Volunteer: The New York Asian Women's Center seeks volunteers to assist with a variety of projects. To find out more about these opportunities, contact Xue Yi Zhen at: xzhen@nyawc.org.

Study Abroad

Undergraduate Study Abroad Fair
Fri, Oct. 6, 12:30-4:30pm
Roone Arledge Auditorium, Lerner Hall

Information Session: NSEP/David L. Boren
Scholarship Program
Tue, Oct. 17, 3:00pm
602 Lewisohn Hall

CONTACT INFORMATION

To add your name to the undergraduate mailing list, visit <http://www.columbia.edu/weai> and click on "get on the mailing list," or e-mail us at: weaiundergrads@columbia.edu.

WEAI undergraduate liaisons:

David Aaron Engle, GS
(dae2106@columbia.edu)

Wei Wei Hsing, CC
(fwh2101@columbia.edu)

Nicholas Kavoussi, SEAS
(nlk2104@columbia.edu)

Meghan Wu, BC
(mw2173@barnard.edu)

For information on how to contact East Asia-related student groups on campus at Columbia, visit:

http://www.columbia.edu/cu/weai/undergrad_student_groups_n.html

ABOUT US

About SOUNDINGS: east asia monthly

Published monthly, **SOUNDINGS** aims to help better incorporate undergraduates into the broader East Asian Studies community at Columbia by providing increased access to information about East Asia-related groups, activities, and events. Incorporating academic as well as non-academic news and listings, it seeks to help interested undergraduates further pursue their interest in East Asia, whatever form it may take. **SOUNDINGS** is edited by Jon Kief (CC'07, jk2336@columbia.edu).

About the Weatherhead East Asian Institute

Since its establishment in 1949, Columbia University's Weatherhead East Asian Institute has been a major center for research, teaching, and publishing on modern and contemporary Asia. The Institute's mission is to train new generations of Asian experts in the humanities, social sciences, and the professions and to enhance understanding of East Asia in the wider community.
