

Contemporary Chinese Artist Chee Wang Ng Makes His Solo Museum Debut at the Eskenazi Museum of Art at Indiana University

A Step in Time Across the Line Recent Work by Chee Wang Ng Explores the Modern Immigrant Experience and Diaspora Identity,

Exhibition will be presented in conjunction with the University's campus-wide spring 2017 Global Arts and Humanities Festival Celebrating China



Chee Wang Ng (Malaysian Chinese, b. 1961). *Griefless Peace* 安上無憂, Lambda print (4 x 4 feet).

Bloomington, Indiana (December 8, 2016) – Next spring, The Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art at Indiana University will present *A Step in time Across the Line: Recent Work by Chee Wang Ng*, the artist's first solo museum presentation. Featuring large-scale conceptual photography, video, and installation work, including two new series of works that have never before been shown, the exhibition will shed light on traditional Chinese culture and the immigrant experience. Through the use of iconic Chinese symbols, artifacts, and Western memorabilia—such as porcelain figures, rice bowls, Chinese postal stamps, and chopsticks—juxtaposed with distinctly American imagery, such as Andy Warhol's iconic Campbell's soup cans, the exhibition explores what it means to be Chinese in an increasingly multicultural and transnational world, through the lens of diaspora identity.

On view from March 11–May 8, 2017, the exhibition, curated by Judith A. Stubbs, Pamela Buell Curator of Asian Art at the Eskenazi, will communicate notions of Chinese culture through familiar imagery, inviting audiences to reexamine our modern construction of race and identity. The exhibition will take place as part of Indiana University's spring 2017 Global Arts and Humanities Festival, a campus-wide initiative that will celebrate Chinese culture through lectures, workshops, exhibitions, films, and other public programs.

"Ng's work tells an important part of the story of our global social history, addressing issues that resonate internationally, as immigrants around the world seek to build new homes in their adopted countries," said

Judith A. Stubbs. “What makes Ng’s work particularly striking is that it is very contemporary, with richly layered symbolism, but is also quite impressive formally.”

“Our aim is always to expand students’ worldview, and through this exhibition, we will provide a space for thinking more broadly about immigration and assimilation, issues that are very relevant to our student body,” said David Brenneman, the Wilma E. Kelley Director of the Eskenazi Museum of Art. “We are thrilled to provide a platform for Ng’s first museum show, which we also feel is a timely and fitting contribution to the dialogue taking place during the University’s Global Arts and Humanities Festival.”

Among the works on view will be two new bodies of work, *Chinoiserie (2015–16)*, and *A Step in Time Across the Line (2016)*. *Chinoiserie* features six large-scale tableaux that incorporate Chinoiserie—readymade porcelain-wear made in the “Chinese style,” for export to Europe—depicting significant periods and events that shaped China and its peoples’ history, from the Opium Wars during the Qing Dynasty to the Cold War years of McCarthyism, the Red Scare, and Tiananmen Square. The work explores racial oppression, cultural cooption, and racist caricatures of the Chinese evidenced by porcelain figurines.

With *A Step in Time Across the Line*, Ng reflects on the idea of empathy, or its absence, looking at times throughout history—from the Sampson Shoe Factory incident, in which police forced Chinese immigrants to replace striking shoe factory workers, to the Little Rock Nine’s integration into an all-white high school—when oppressed groups were met with hostility, anger, and a blatant lack of understanding. The work is composed of a series of miniature and life-size porcelain shoes that ask audiences to think about walking a mile in another’s shoes to better understand the past, present, and the circumstances that shape people’s actions. Also on view will be *In the Name of Our Forefather – Clear Tea, Light Rice*, an installation of 60 readymade ceramic white cow creamers that hang along a metal chain, symbolizing the major contributions made by Chinese immigrant laborers towards development projects in Western countries, including the U.S., France, Germany, Spain, England, and Portugal.

Coinciding with *China Remixed*, a global arts & humanities festival on the University’s campus designed to celebrate the most diverse and dynamic aspects of contemporary Chinese culture, the exhibition will offer a more contemporary counterpoint to the Museum’s permanent holdings of Asian art, providing audiences a more expansive view of work being created today. Ng will be on campus lecturing around the opening of his show, timed to the festival, alongside other notable Chinese artists and scholars, such as Beili Liu, a contemporary visual artist; Gene Luen Yang, a comic book artist and author of graphic novels; Isaac Leung, an artist and curator; Kelly Tsai, an award-winning writer, performer, director, and filmmaker; and Lü Ping, a Chinese feminist organizer and visiting scholar at Columbia University.

About Chee Wang Ng

Born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to parents of Chinese descent, Chee Wang Ng (b.1961) lives and works in New York City. Ng studied Liberal Arts at Wartburg College, Waverly, IA and earned his BFA in Architecture from Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI. His work has been featured in film festivals and included in group exhibitions at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Museum of



Contemporary Craft, Portland, Oregon; Asian American Arts Centre, NY; Museum of Chinese in America, NY; Art in General, NY; Henry Street Settlement, NY; University of California, Berkeley, CA; SESC Foundation, São Paulo, Brazil; and at "videoART" in 22.dokumentART in Szczecin, Poland. Additionally, Ng has been awarded grants, prizes, and artist residencies, including the Award of Excellence from the Art Museum Association of America.

About the Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art

Since Indiana University first established a small teaching collection in 1941, the Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art has become one of the leading university art collections in the country. Encyclopedic in scope, with masterworks from a range of time periods, the collection's diverse areas of strength include classical antiquities, modern art, and African and South Pacific art, among others. Notable collections include ancient jewelry, East African art, African ceramics, and German Expressionism.

Housed in an iconic building designed by architect I.M. Pei, the Eskenazi Museum serves as a cultural and research resource for students, faculty, and the broader Bloomington and Indianapolis communities. The Eskenazi Museum of Art is free and open to the public Tuesday to Sunday.

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