

Artworks, serious and not so, fill pair of exhibits

By **MARY LOUISE SCHUMACHER**
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'Ruins' at Inova

As China's place in the world rapidly transforms, the country's emerging artists provide a moment of pause, a prescient window into what is being lost and forever changed culturally, politically and otherwise.

Photography and video are the most avant-garde forms coming out of China now. These mediums are also featured in the "Ruins" exhibit of contemporary Chinese video and photography on view at Inova at UWM, 3253 N. Downer Ave.

To see images from the show, on view through May 19, go to: www.jsonline.com/links/ruins.

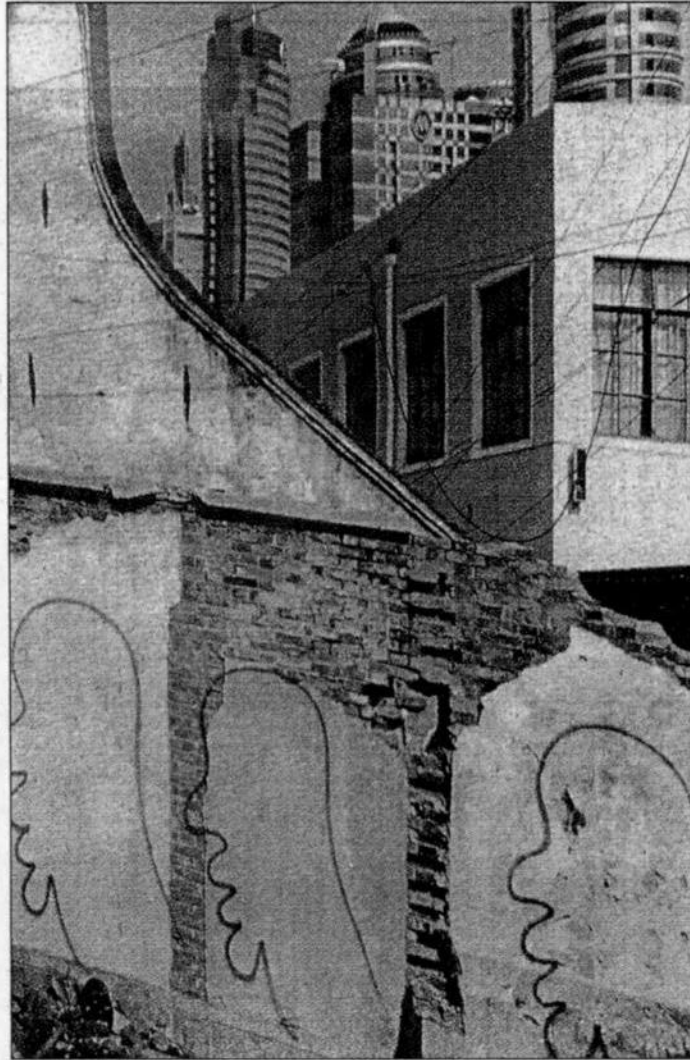
'Pitter Patter' at Hotcakes

It's a weird little world of drips, dribbles, blooms and clouds, traveled by sweet, wide-eyed creatures. With heads like balloons, that seem to float, about 100 times the size of their bodies, these bitty beings seem to exist on a Horton-hears-a-Who scale.

It is not terribly serious art or even paintings that you'd want to keep for a lifetime, but there is something about Chicago artist Jeremiah Ketner's universe that is universally liked.

Ketner, along with California-based artist Evah Fan, have work on view as part of the "Pitter Patter" show at Hotcakes Gallery, 3379 N. Pierce St.

Look at images of the art and the opening at: www.jsonline.com/links/pitterpatter.



Some of the works from "Ruins" speak to the metamorphosis of old China into the new one.



Zhang Zhaohui has curated "Ruins," an exhibition of new photography and video by 14 Chinese artists.



You can experience the "Pitter Patter" of little (or not so little) Jeremiah Ketner paintings online or at the Hotcakes Gallery.

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A QUICK ART-HOPPER'S GUIDE

Gallery Night and Day



Liu Wei's work expresses his concern about China's ongoing urbanization program. Liu is among the artists in "Ruins," an exhibition of new video and photography from China, at Inova Gallery One. Courtesy of Liu Wei

Exhibit "Ruins," new video and photography from China.

Where Inova Gallery One, Vogel Hall, 3253 N. Downer Ave., on the UW-Milwaukee campus.

Gallery Night and Day hours

Noon-9 p.m. Friday, April 21; noon-5 p.m. Saturday, April 22.

When we hear the word "ruins," we think of unoccupied places or sites that are permanently destroyed. But the word takes on a complex meaning in the hands of 14 artists from Macau and mainland China currently exhibiting work at Inova Gallery One.

The artists explore what happens when a culture's history — ever evolving with acute psychological effects — bears down on its current inhabitants. They are using new media to translate the visible and the felt experience of change, destruction and uncertainty in their country.

A human being's need and determination to function in an environment of fast-paced upheaval, shame, confusion or the clash of tradition with technology is a thread linking the work of these artists beyond their use of media. "Ruins" offers criticism, longing and hope for the physical, cultural and emotional landscape of not just China, but society as a whole.

Photos by street artist Zhang Dali document the mark he makes on old homes, destroyed by man and age, with an almost playful silhouette of a human face linking aban-

doned spaces back to a human presence.

By filling the compositions of her photographs with discarded cell phones, battery chargers or memory boards, Xing Danwen creates images that address the degree of waste produced by local industry as well as the over-reliance of the economy upon obsolete industries.

In "One Day," a video/performance by Chen Quilin, a woman in her wedding dress sits before a vanity mirror, applying make-up, on the site of a ruin. A working power station is in the background; a crowd watches as a man in a business suit throws cake at the seated woman. She doesn't acknowledge him and, though eventually covered with frosting, continues to go about the business of self-beautification. The individual's fantasy of a simple moment or a dream life persists despite confrontation, vulnerability and the ugliness of modernization.

In the exhibition catalog, curator Zhang Zhaohui describes the source of ruins in Chinese culture: "The collision between modern material civilization, fueled by globalization and the Internet, and China's weighty past defines a complicated reality in which fragments of different cultures are entwined, creating, from time to time, absurd or incomprehensible phenomena."

— Lindsey A. Wolkowicz

On view through May 14. Regular gallery hours are noon-5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. For more info, call (414) 229-6122 or visit www.arts.uwm.edu/inova.