



Zhang Dali, *Dialogue and Demolition 198125C*, 1981, photo on photo paper, 53 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 78 $\frac{3}{4}$ ".

## ZHANG DALI

UNITED ART MUSEUM  
WUHAN, CHINA  
SEPTEMBER 18 - MARCH 18

Ever since his graffiti around Beijing propelled him to fame in the late 1990s, Zhang Dali has been a central figure in Chinese contemporary art. Nevertheless, his sculptures and photographs still carry a sting, as evidenced by the fact that his first retrospective is being held in a provincial museum, far from the view of the censors (or a wider audience).

"From Reality to Extreme Reality: The Road of Zhang Dali" begins with Zhang's early Socialist Realist pieces and ink paintings. Both fueled his photographic projects, which are truly his strongest work.

In his 1998 "Demolition" series Zhang drew mammoth outlines of his head on walls near imperiled historic sites throughout Beijing and then photographed them. In *Second History* (2003–6) he paired 130 propaganda photos from the Cultural Revolution with prints from their original negatives, showing how they were doctored for political purposes. Most recently, he's been producing cyanotypes on canvas of ordinary citizens marching, dancing, or cycling, memorializing them as glowing, animated figures.

In 2012 the Museum of Modern Art featured Zhang Dali in its "New Photography" series. Still, this is an artist who deserves wider exposure, both within and outside of China.

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