

## Chen Guanghui (CHINA)

talks with Julie Bartholomew

**Julie Bartholomew:** During 2009 you will be curating the second in a series of four major exhibitions, *2010 China China*, at the Shanghai Museum of Art and Design. What is the aim of *2010 China China*?

**Chen Guanghui:** The aim of *2010 China China* is still being developed but we all agree we want it to be a 'layered space' that is both physically and psychologically based. The intention is to reflect the layers of culture and offer a sense of what the present time is like in China. We are working to merge the idea of a layered space with actual space in order to show how context plays a large role in the meaning of the artists' work. We will take into consideration the identity of clay and what the technical processes mean to Chinese culture in the contemporary context.

**JB:** In your view is contemporary Chinese ceramics changing, reflecting or critiquing the momentous economic and social forces currently impacting on present day China?

**CG:** Yes Chinese ceramics is changing but it's not simply a reaction that mirrors the changes of present day China. Contemporary China never stands still in any recognized arts theory. The diversity of backgrounds and concepts in Contemporary Chinese ceramics is very much like the nomad that has been everywhere but never belongs to one place.

**JB:** You have navigated through other cultures, particularly during your period of study at Alfred University in the States. Have cross-cultural experiences influenced your ceramic art practice? If not, what motivates your practice?

**CG:** Navigating through other cultures has definitely influenced me but my way of processing culture is quite different now. In the beginning, when I first went to Alfred, it was the language and culture shock that reminded me of my cultural identity. Now intuitively I am re-evaluating my culture and absorbing it. I am forming new ways to scan and critique my surroundings. I am trying to take in my surroundings to help me better understand who I am. Some of my influences are still Matthew Barney's *Cremaster* and Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*. I enjoy finding new ways to navigate and understand the cross-cultural experiences I encounter. I want to use ceramics as an icon to help explore contemporary Chinese culture.

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Chen Guanghui, *Right Here, Right Now*, stoneware, catalogue image

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