

从六里屯到三影堂

文/巫鸿

几年前，我开始编写《荣荣的东村》¹一书，想讨论三个方面的问题。每个方面都有自己独立的范围和主题，但是对于理解中国当代实验艺术以及从事实践的艺术家而言，都是密不可分的。首要的任务是阐述具体作品，特别是挖掘其中最有趣的现象，进行深入探索，以此作为理解任何艺术或艺术家的基础。第二是要记录和还原艺术家当时的生活和创作环境，大致将他们的生活经历、情感以及欲念的零散信息凝聚成一幅条理清晰的画面。第三是将这些作品和这些艺术家放在中国当代都市、社会、文化空间这一大框架之内。荣荣的东村究竟是什么？他为何与来自全国各地的其他艺术家聚集在北京城乡结合部满是垃圾和工业废弃物的小村里？他们和这个地方有什么联系？东村的最终命运如何？它为何消失得没有留下一丝痕迹，甚至没有留下碎砖断瓦标记它曾经存在过？当我看到《荣荣的东村》中的图片，并且提出这些问题时，我希望理解——而且的确逐渐开始理解——每幅照片的艺术性以及拍摄这些照片的摄影家的生活经历，而且也理解了这座城市的命运，居住在这个环境中的人们与城市之间的亲和与斗争，以及人类无法左右的历史悲剧。

荣荣和映里拍摄的六里屯的照片，可以视为《荣荣的东村》的延续。最早的作品是在东村艺术群体解散、荣荣在 1995 年搬到附近六里屯之后不久拍摄的。我一直在想上面提到的三个视角：作品、艺术家、城市。随着时间的推移，六里屯一步步带领我们回到了二十世纪的最后几年，进而进入二十一世纪。我们看到荣荣的镜头和生活如何逐渐演变，北京的无情扩张——拆毁与重建的巨轮——仍旧追踪而来。世纪之交，一位用眼神来说话的日本女孩子踏入这个陌生的乡村小院；她就是映里。从此以后，她、荣荣以及六里屯在无声的对话中找到了意义。两年后，拆迁的车轮不断蚕食着，最后终于碾过了六里屯。当他们的后院化为一堆瓦砾时，荣荣和映里手持盛开的白色百合，在废墟之上举行了一次只有他们两人参加的葬礼。

我第一次遇见荣荣就是在六里屯。那是 1997 年夏天，当时我正在准备《瞬间：20 世纪末的中国实验艺术》²。这次展览的一个主要目的，就是要把介绍和研究中国当代艺术的焦点从群体转向个体。在我看来，这种转变对于当时刚刚登上国际舞台的这类艺术的大型展览

来说至关重要,因为对当时大多数外国批评家和观众而言,中国当代艺术不论是称作“前卫”、“实验”、“非官方”,还是“地下”,都首先必然被视为政治性的集体行动,只有在文革后的中国国内政治环境或冷战后国际舞台上才能显示其意义。《瞬间》寻求将中国当代艺术描绘成个体艺术家声音的集合。当然,这种个体性并不是孤立的、绝对的,因为艺术家们面对的往往是相似的政治、社会和艺术问题。但他们之所以是“实验艺术家”,是因为每个人都对一系列共有的问题作出了不同的反应,其结果是形式、风格和视觉语言的创造与创新。这种个体的概念成为展览的核心,也成为图录的主题。就这本图录而言,我写了二十二篇短文,探索了个别艺术家的作品;文章素材来自我对这些艺术家的访谈以及他们自己的笔记、著作、计划和草图。我在华侨饭店(那时回国我总喜欢住在这里)作了一些访谈,但是我觉得去艺术家居住和工作的空间看望艺术家更为重要。

多年后,我仍然记得那次探访,恍如昨日。荣荣在电话里向我描述了六里屯的大体位置,说是在三环外,靠近当时正在建设的四环路。他会在路边等我。记好地址,我租了一辆车,沿农展馆南路径直向东。道路是新建的,平坦、宽阔,空空荡荡。出租车驶过二环路,然后是三环路,高楼大厦逐渐稀少。工人们正在设立街旁的路灯和电杆;无精打采的路人慢吞吞地横穿马路。出租车突然停在路中间,司机转过头来说:“没法走了,没路了”。我走下车,向周围看看,果然像他说的。路在我脚下嘎然而止,柏油马路也到了尽头,我面前只有一片翠绿的农田。霎那间我忘记了自己身在何处:以前我从未有过类似的经验——不论是什么样的路,它都会延伸到某个地方,还没遇到过不通向任何地方的一条路。我觉得有些恍惚,仿佛在梦境中徘徊在世界的边缘,再向前走一步就意味着跌下峭壁。我赶紧定下神来,让司机掉转头,缓缓向回行驶。不出一百米就看见荣荣站在路边,长发在风中飘起。我喃喃地对自己说:“六里屯,北京的尽头,世界的尽头”。

整个下午,这种身处世界尽头的感觉不断加深。荣荣引着我离开空荡荡的马路,经过一条崎岖泥泞的土路,走进一座小村,最后来到他的小院。有五分钟的时间,我被带回到二、三十年前的时光,回到我熟悉的那种无休无止、永远重复的过去。没有人知道这个过去究竟有多古老:残破的瓦房,褪色的窗棂,屋檐下的浓荫,夏日正午时分此起彼伏的蝉鸣。所有这些似乎从来就是如此,将来也会永远如此。但是在1997年,这种安全和持久感只不过是一种幻觉。当我看到荣荣的作品时,我立刻意识到,对他来说,六里屯平静、慵懒与疲惫实际上充满危机。但是就像台风中心的风眼一样,处在这一危机核心的宁静已经使艺术家的神

经变得异常敏感，在这种紧张期待中审视点点滴滴的现在，在无声中聆听由远而近的喧闹声。于是，这种不受时间影响的感觉，这种毫无意义的状态——残破的瓦房、褪色的窗棂，房檐下的浓荫，夏日正午的蝉鸣——都具备了一种紧迫的时间感，也都具有了特殊的意义。

那天，荣荣给我看了他的《无题》系列，以前我曾称之为“废墟照片”。这个名字对我来说有几重含义。在一个层面上，“废墟照片”表达了北京无处不在的大规模拆迁。在这些照片中，瓦房和四合院已化为瓦砾中的残垣断壁。以前的主人已搬走了，而照片仍保持着墓地般的宁静。但在另一个层面上，这些照片也表现了“影像的废墟”：每幅照片的中心形象，实际上是留在垃圾中的海报招贴，往往是残破的明星照。另一组相关的作品，将废墟影像的主题完全同建筑物的现实脱离开来：这些影像是在公共场所陈列的，因为阳光暴晒而褪色残损。我在文章和书籍中写到过这些作品，但是在这里我想要补充另外一点：这些作品标志着荣荣“六里屯时代”的开始。这些照片都是关于那些与他当时所住的尚未拆迁的小院相类似的建筑的最终命运，也是关于影像本身脆弱性的图像。和“东村时代”的集体性不同，“六里屯时代”属于一位独立艺术家。对荣荣来说，这种独立性体现在他对死亡、悲剧和局限的反思中。

后来我多次造访六里屯，去看荣荣和住在这座小院里的其他艺术家们的新作。虽然可能会感受到早先东村的回声——朋友们聚在一起吃饭喝酒，谈天论地，行为艺术家的偶尔表演——但这个小院的氛围变得越来越平静和封闭了。它逐渐变成了一位艺术家生活和工作的空间，充满了私人生活的隐秘和暧昧。门口的爬山虎长得越发浓密，外面的车声人声似乎越来越遥远。“废墟”仍是荣荣摄影作品的主题，但每一幅新作在精致程度和尺寸上都有所增加，内容也变得越发浪漫和富有戏剧成分。他一直喜欢拍摄自己，现在则身兼导演和演员的双重身份。这些新作中有些运用了手工着色，留下作者参与后期制作过程的痕迹。这些变化的结果，是《婚纱》和《鬼村》两个系列的出现。

这是两个非常优美的系列，通过废墟上一对青年男女徘徊的影像，刻画了荒废与忧伤，仿如一首无字歌。在每幅照片中，我都可以一眼将荣荣认出来，不论他赤裸身体还是身穿女式华丽长裙。但是我从未见过那个和他一起出现的女孩子，所以在我看来她永远是一个抽象的符号，一个仅存在于照片中的幽灵一般的影子。这个影子只是在映里出现的时候才变得真实了。然后我便理解了，之前的那种哀伤，废墟中的踟蹰，一切都只不过是表达了荣荣自己的期待。

可能是在 2000 年，我们——我的妻子朱迪、我的女儿笠答和我自己——成了荣荣和映里的朋友。一切都是那么自然。她出现在六里屯的小院里，面带微笑，捧着小托盘里的清茶。用她刚刚学会的一点点汉语说：“茶”。然后，把目光转向在院子里悠闲漫步的猫，微笑着说：“猫”。但是她之前在东京时拍摄的照片，让我认识了六里屯之前的映里。那是在黑白照片中闪现出的无色瞳仁和痉挛躯体，挣扎到虚脱的女性辉煌面容，东京街灯下浮现出的都市朦胧幻象。那里没有重量和质量，只有对霎那间高潮的期待与焦灼，以及高潮之后的失重感和崩溃。

这些作品同她住在六里屯时拍摄的照片完全不同。后者是日常生活和零星感觉的无数碎片，2006 年在纽约前波画廊的一次展览 3 中以小样的形式首次公开呈现。一排排横横竖竖的图像没有剪裁也没有编辑。其中没有统一的空间和连贯的叙事；唯一恒定的因素，是相机后面映里的眼睛，好奇地观察着她周围的一切，但大多是聚焦在荣荣身上，他的眼睛，他的相机。我能理解，为什么映里没有把这些“小样”制作成个人的作品，将它们放在精美的画框中：这些碎片就是她的生活，是她从来未曾体验过的，也不可能再次体验的生活。

这些照片也让我更深刻地理解了那次展览中最后一组作品：2002 年，当他们的小院连同六里屯的一切被夷为平地的时候，荣荣和映里为这个地方举行了一次葬礼，告别了他们生命中的“六里屯时代”。这个时代从荣荣发现“废墟”开始，结束于他和映里的相遇和结合。随着六里屯的消失，他们离开了永远不复存在的地方，走向一个没有边际的世界。一批焕发出青春，充满对美的渴望的作品诞生了，标志着一次新的超越。在我的想象中，这一超越就像是春蝉的幼虫从泥土中艰难地爬出，一步步爬上高大的树干，挣脱自己的躯壳，最后飞上蓝天。正是因为这个原因，2003 年 9 月当我在北京 798 工厂的大窑炉车间为他们两人策划展览的时候，我选择了“蜕”作为展览的名字，以此作为对这次超越过程的诗意表达，也是对远逝的过去——东村、东京和六里屯——的缅怀和回忆。

我给《蜕》的最后一部分取名为“重生”，在展览图录上这样写道：“对美和青春的歌颂成为展览第三部分的主题，包括荣荣和映里在相遇和相恋之后共同创作的两组作品。仿佛从废墟中重生，依然故我的自然重新获得了生命。两位摄影家拥抱着这个奇异的世界。和谐重新奏响了号角，平息了痛苦的挣扎。感官的快乐重新归来，再次成为艺术创作的目的。甚至冰天雪地、令人畏惧的富士山冬景也只能激发快乐。”⁴

在这两位艺术家 2001 年和 2002 年共同创作的平静祥和的照片中最初看到的这一重生，最终在他们于北京东郊草场地村创办三影堂（正式的名字是三影堂摄影艺术中心）时体现出来。他们完全靠自己注资，4600 平方米的建筑是一项宏大的事业，设施包括两座巨大的展厅、会议室、图书馆、暗房、咖啡厅以及物外活动空间。艾未未的设计为核心建筑和周边院宇进一步赋予了额外的建筑学上的意义。作家梅文诗 (Sheila Melvin) 在 2007 年三影堂开幕式上采访我时，我对她说，这两位艺术家“做了一些非常重要的事。有这么多公司或者政府赞助的美术馆和画廊，但是我觉得这是第一个由艺术家赞助的——完全是出于理想主义的理由”⁵。三影堂举办的第一次展览，题目是《新摄影十年》，由张黎和我共同策划，我又告诉梅文诗：“我提出做这次展览的建议，因为我觉得他们首先应该建立一种历史的视角。我也觉得，中国变化如此之快，艺术家们往往想不到——他们充满直觉和抱负，但他们需要思考究竟何为中国当代摄影”⁶。现在又过去了一年，三影堂已经发展成一个成熟的机构，举办了各种展览和教育项目，开始在国际上引起广泛关注。这不只是荣荣和映里重生的结果，而且与创办三影堂一道，他们还创作了大量的摄影作品，记录了三影堂从北京寒冬的冻土中拔地而起的过程，以及他们家庭的壮大：自六里屯时代以来，他们已经生了三个孩子。

1. 巫鸿，《东村》（纽约前波画廊，2003 年）。

2. 该展览于 1999 年 2 月在芝加哥大学斯马特美术馆开幕。

3. 该展览题为《六里屯：荣荣和映里》，2006 年 10 月至 12 月在纽约前波画廊举办，同时出版同名限量本图录。

4. 巫鸿，《荣荣和映里：蛻》（北京和香港，东八时区出版公司，2004 年版）

5. 梅文诗，《摄影作为艺术在中国的涌现》，《国际先驱论坛报》，2007 年 8 月 6 日

6. 同上引文。

From Six Mile Village to Three Shadows Studio

Wu Hung

A few years ago when I began writing *Rong Rong's East Village*,ⁱ I wanted to discuss three things. While each of the three had its own distinct scope and theme, all were inseparable from understanding contemporary experimental art in China and the artists who practiced it. The first task was to interpret specific works of art, particularly to unearth the most interesting ones and explore their depths, as this is the basis of understanding any art or artist. The second task was to document and restore the artists' living and working environment at that time, mainly by consolidating fragmentary information of their lived experience, emotion, and desire into a coherent picture. The third was to place these works and artists into the larger framework of contemporary Chinese urban, social, and cultural space. What was Rong Rong's East Village? Why did he gather with other artists from far-flung reaches of the country in this small village on the periphery of Beijing, filled with garbage and industrial waste? What connection did they have to this place? What would be the fate of the East Village? Why did it disappear without a trace, leaving not even a broken brick or shattered tile to mark its presence? When I looked at the pictures of Rong Rong's East Village and asked these questions, I hoped to understand—and indeed did gradually come to understand—not only the artistic nature of each photograph and the life experience of the photographer who made them, but also the fate of a city, the intimacy and struggle with which people inhabit their environments, and the uncontrollable tragedy of history.

Photographs of Liulitun (literally, Six Mile Village) by Rong Rong and inri might be considered a continuation of *Rong Rong's East Village*. The earliest works here were created shortly after the East Village artist community was disbanded, and Rong Rong moved to the nearby village of Liulitun in 1995. Writing this brief essay, I am still thinking of the three perspectives mentioned above: artworks, the artist, the city. As time

passes by, Liulitun leads us step-by-step through the last years of the twentieth century, and on into the twenty-first. We see how Rong Rong's lens and life gradually evolve, and how Beijing's merciless expansion—that massive wheel of destruction and reconstruction—keeps on turning. At the dawn of the century, a Japanese girl who speaks with her eyes enters into this strange, small courtyard; she is Inri. From this point on, she and Rong Rong and Liulitun find meaning in a soundless dialogue. Two years later, the wheel of destruction encroaches, finally crushing Liulitun. When their courtyard was turned into a pile of bricks, Rong Rong and Inri held a private funeral atop the ruins, holding fresh white flowers in their hands.

§

I first met Rong Rong in Liulitun. It was the summer of 1997, when I was preparing the exhibition *Transience: Experimental Chinese Art at the End of the 20th Century*.ⁱⁱ One major goal of this exhibition was to shift the focus of the introductory research then being done on Chinese contemporary art from collectivity to individuality. As I saw it, this transition was of utmost importance for the exhibitions of this art then being mounted abroad, because for most foreign critics and viewers at that time, Chinese contemporary art, regardless of whether it was called “avant-garde,” “experimental,” “unofficial,” or “underground,” was unfailingly seen as a collective political behavior, meaningless outside the context of the post-Cultural Revolution political environment inside China or the post-Cold War international situation. *Transience* sought rather to portray Chinese contemporary art as a collection of individual artistic voices. This individuality, of course, was not isolated or absolute, because these artists did indeed face similar political, social, and artistic questions. But they were “experimental artists” precisely because each one reacted differently to a set of common questions and problems, resulting in creation and innovation in terms of form, style, and visual language. This idea of individuality became the center of the exhibition and the theme of its catalogue. For the catalogue, I wrote twenty-two short essays exploring the work of individual artists; the material for these

articles came from my interviews with the artists as well as their notes, writings, plans, and drawings. I did some of these interviews at the Overseas Chinese Hotel (the place where I most liked to stay when I came back to China in those years), but I also felt it important to see the artists in the spaces where they lived and worked. And that is why I went to visit Rong Rong in Liulitun.

Even after many years, I remember that visit like it was yesterday. Rong Rong described to me the rough location of Liulitun over the phone, outside the Third Ring Road, close to the Fourth Ring then under construction. He would wait for me by the roadside. With this in mind I hired a cab and had it drive straight east along Agricultural Exhibition Center South Road. The road was newly constructed: flat, broad, empty. The cab passed the Second Ring, then the Third, as the tall buildings grew scarcer. Workers were erecting traffic lights and electric poles along the street; sluggish pedestrians waddled across. The cab suddenly stopped in the middle of the road, when the driver turned around and said, "No way to go on, no more road." I got out and looked around, and indeed things were as he said. The road ended under my feet, the pavement stopped, in front of me only bright green cropland. For just an instant I forgot where I was: I have never had another experience like this—no matter what the road, it always leads somewhere. There are no roads to nowhere. I felt absentminded, as if in a dream I had wandered to the edge of the world, where going one step forward would mean falling off a cliff. Snapping out of it, I asked the driver to turn the car around and drive slowly back. Less than a hundred meters back, Rong Rong was standing by the side of the road, his long hair blowing in the wind. I mumbled to myself, "Liulitun, the end of Beijing, the end of the world."

This feeling of being at the end of the world grew deeper as the afternoon went on. Rong Rong led me off the empty road, down a bumpy dirt road into a little village, and finally to his small courtyard. In those five minutes I was taken back to days twenty or thirty years before, back into the recesses of my familiar, endless, eternally recurring past. No one knows how old this past is: humble brick and tile homes, faded latticework, deep shadows under overhanging eaves, the rising and falling chirp of cicadas at high noon. It

is as if these have always been and always will be. But in 1997, this feeling of safety and permanence was but an illusion. As soon as I saw Rong Rong's work, I immediately realized that for him, the quiet laziness and exhaustion of Liulitun were full of crisis. Yet like the eye of a storm, the tranquility at the heart of this crisis had made the artist's nerves all the more sensitive, observing every drop of the present amidst this anxious state of waiting, listening in silence to the clamor moving in from afar. Thus this feeling of timelessness, this state of meaninglessness—the humble homes and faded latticework, the eaves and their shadows, the chirping noontime cicadas—was endowed with a biting sense of time, a special significance.

That day Rong Rong showed me his series *Untitled*, which I have since referred to as “ruin pictures.” This name has several meanings for me. On one level, “ruin pictures” expresses the ascendance and scale of demolition in Beijing. In these pictures, tiled buildings and courtyard dwellings have been transformed into desolate, dilapidated piles. The former occupants have moved on, and the images retain the tranquility of a cemetery. But on another level, these photographs also represent “ruined image”: the central image in each picture is a leftover poster amidst the rubble, often faded portraits of glamorous movie stars. Another related group of works frees the theme of ruin images from the realities of architecture altogether: these are images displayed in public settings, faded and damaged by the bright sun. I have already written of these works in articles and books, but here I would like to add one more point: these works marked the beginning of Rong Rong's “Liulitun Moment.” They are photos about the fate of buildings like the then still-undemolished one in which he lived, and about the fundamental fragility of the image itself. Unlike the collective nature of the “East Village Moment,” this “Liulitun Moment” belonged to an independent artist. For Rong Rong, this independence is reflected in meditations about death, tragedy, and limitation.

§

I would visit Liulitun many more times, going to see Rong Rong's new work and

that of the other artists living in that courtyard. Although at times one could still feel the echoes of the earlier East Village—gatherings of friends eating and drinking together, debating the world, the occasional performance by one artist or another—still the atmosphere of that courtyard grew ever quieter and more closed. Little by little it became the living and working space of a single artist, filled with the secrets and ambiguities of a private life. The ivy on the gate grew thicker, the sounds of cars and people outside seemed to grow more and more remote. “Ruins” remained a theme in Rong Rong’s photography, but each new work grew in refinement and size, as their content likewise grew more romantic and theatrical. He had always liked to photograph himself, and was now filling the twin roles of director and actor. Some of these new photographs were hand colored, bearing traces of their author’s participation in the post-production process. These changes resulted in the series *Wedding Veil* and *Ghost Village*.

These are two exceptionally beautiful series, which portray decay and melancholy through images of a young man and woman wandering atop ruins, like songs without words. I can pick Rong Rong out of every image, whether he is naked or dressed in the bright cloak of a woman. But I had never met the girl who appeared with him, and so she has remained for me an abstract symbol, a ghost-like image existing only in the photographs. This image became real only at the moment when inri appeared. Then I understood. The melancholy that came before, the hesitation amidst the ruins—all were but expressions of Rong Rong’s expectation.

Perhaps that was in 2000, when we—my wife Judith, my daughter Lida, and I—became Rong Rong and inri’s friends. It was all so natural. She appeared in that courtyard in Liulitun, bearing the lightest tea on a small tray, smiling. “Tea,” she said (in her newly acquired Chinese). Then, turning to face the lazy cat roaming the courtyard, she smiled and said, “Cat.” But the pictures she made while in Tokyo allowed me to know the pre-Liulitun inri. That was a time of colorless pupils and convulsing bodies staring out of black-and-white photographs, a brilliant feminine face struggling toward collapse, shadowy urban spectacles of Tokyo emerging under streetlamps. There was no substance or weight, just the anticipation and anxiety before the climax and the

weightlessness and collapse that followed.

These works are utterly different from the photographs she produced while living in Liulitun. The latter consist of innumerable fragments of daily life and piecemeal emotion, presented openly for the first time as galley proofs in an exhibition in New York's Chamber Fine Arts in 2006.ⁱⁱⁱ The vertical and horizontal rows of images have not been cut or edited. There is no spatial coherence or sequential narrative; the only constant is the eye behind the camera, that of inri, curiously observing the extent of her surroundings, and focusing mostly on Rong Rong, his eyes, his camera. I can understand why inri has not made these proofs into individual artworks, placing them into exquisite frames: these fragments are just her life, a life she had never before experienced and will never again experience.

These photographs also make me understand more deeply the last series of works in that exhibition: when their courtyard was razed to the ground along with all of Liulitun in 2002, Rong Rong and inri held a funeral for this place and a farewell to the "Liulitun Moment" in their own lives. This moment began when Rong Rong discovered "ruins" and ended with his encounter and union with inri. Once Liulitun had disappeared, they left this place that would never again exist, moving into a world without end. A batch of works reflecting youth and full of desire for beauty had been produced, marking a new transcendence. In my imagination, this transcendence is like that of the spring cicadas climbing arduously out of the ground, bit by bit up the trunks of tall trees, shedding their shells, and finally flying off into the blue sky. For this reason, when I curated their two-person show in the Great Furnace Room of Beijing's Factory 798 in September 2003, I chose the name *Tui-transfiguration* as a poetic expression of this process of transcendence, and as a remembrance and recollection of their bygone days in the East Village, Tokyo, and Liulitun.

§

I titled the last part of the *Tui-transfiguration* "Rebirth," and commented on it in

the exhibition catalogue: "A fascination with beauty and youth is the dominant theme of the third section of the exhibition, which feature two groups of collaborative works that Rong Rong and inri created after they had found each other and fallen in love. As if reborn from ruins, nature, still unspoiled, comes back to life. The two photographers embrace this amazing world. Harmony has triumphed, struggle has subsided. Sensual pleasure has returned to become the main purpose for artistic creation; even the frozen, frightening winter landscape of Mt. Fuji inspires joy."^{iv}

First seen in the tranquil photographic images that these two artists created together in 2001 and 2002, this rebirth finally materialized in their founding of Sanyingtang---the Three Shadows Studio (the formal name is the Three Shadows Photography Art Center) at Caochangdi on the east edge of Beijing. Solely funded by themselves, this 4,600 sq meters complex is an ambitious undertaking with facilities including two large exhibition halls, a conference room, a library, darkrooms, a café, and spaces for outdoor activities. Ai Weiwei's design further bestows the central building and surrounding yards with additional architectural significance. When the writer Sheila Melvin interviewed me in 2007 upon the Center's opening, I told her that these two artists "have done something quite important. There are so many museums and galleries sponsored by companies or governments, but I think this is the first sponsored by artists---and for idealistic reasons."^v About the first exhibition the Center organized, called *New Photo---Ten Years* and co-curated by Zhang Li and me, I told Melvin again: "I suggested this show because I felt they first should establish a historical perspective. I also feel that China moves so fast that the artists don't always think---they have instinct and ambition, but they need to think about what is Chinese contemporary photography."^{vi} Now in its second year, Sanyingtang has developed into a mature institution with a varied exhibition and education program, and has begun to attract wide attention internationally. This is not the only result of Rong Rong's and inri's rebirth, however: with the founding of the Sanyingtang they have also created a large body of photographs recording its emergence from Beijing's frozen earth, as well as the expansion of their family: since the Liulitun Moment they have given birth to two

children and are awaiting the third.

(This essay is partially translated by Philip Tinari.)

- i Wu Hung, *East Village* (New York: Chambers Fine Art, 2003).
- ii This exhibition opened in Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, in February 1999.
- iii Entitled *Liulitun: RongRong and inri*, this exhibition was held in Chambers Fine Arts from October to December 2006 and was accomplished by a lavish catalogue of the same title,
- iv Wu Hung, *RongRong & inri: Tui-Transfiguration* (Beijing and Hong Kong: Timezone8, 2004), p. 188.
- v Sheila Melvin, "Photography as art comes into its own in China," *International Herald Tribune*, August 6, 2007.
- vi Ibid.