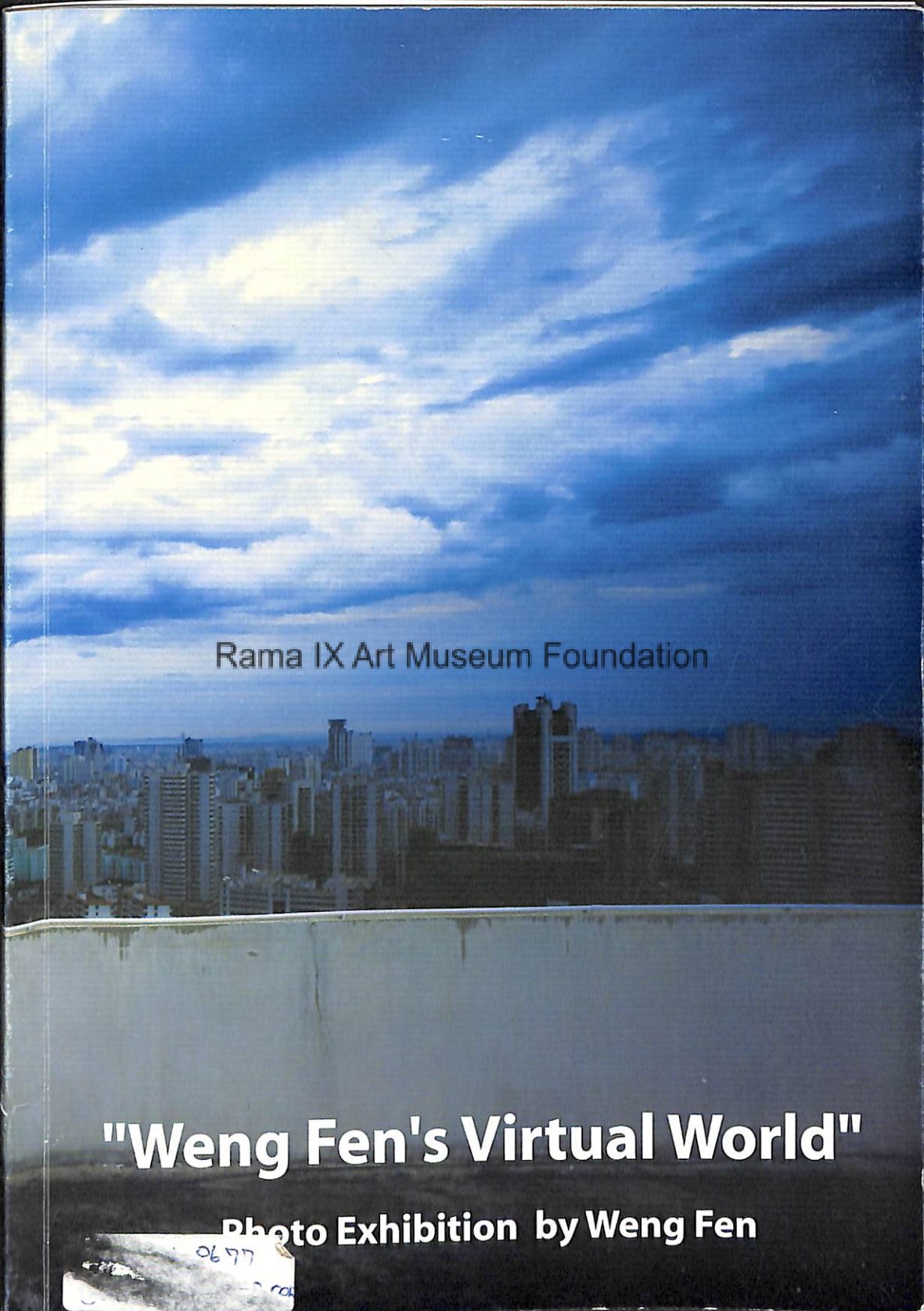
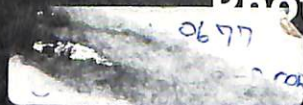




Rama IX Art Museum Foundation

"Weng Fen's Virtual World"

Photo Exhibition by Weng Fen





"Sitting on the wall - Shenzhen 1" 100x80 cm. 1/12

Rama IX Art Museum Foundation

"Weng Fen's Virtual World"

Photo Exhibition by Weng Fen At Tang Gallery

This is the first solo photo exhibition of Weng Fen which included all series together: The Great Family Aspiration series (2000), Sitting on the Wall series (2001-2002), Bird's Eye View series (2002) and String at the Sea series (2004). Let's get inside and view the world together.

The themes of my photographic works often involve a kind of utopic imagining. I like expressing such dreams by depicting the people and city around me. In 2000

I shot the series News Report, which expresses the utopian political tendencies of the collective unconscious. The same year I photographed the Great Family Aspiration series, which also debates unconscious utopian tendencies. However, these dreams can be realistic, and I express this by depicting my own family in this work. I find that many families in China are realizing these dreams, be it quickly or slowly. These two series of works discuss the same problem on different levels, and on the surface tend toward anti-politicism. The series Wall Straddle (2001-02) and Bird's Eye View (2002), discuss the individual and the city. If there is a common thread in my works, it is fantasy of utopia.

It was Weng's series "On the Wall" that gained him a place in the "Alors, la Chine?" exhibition held at the George Pompidou Museum in the summer of 2003 and won him virtually international notoriety. In this series, a young girl is perched on a wall and watched from a distance the birth of a new city, a common spectacle in all Chinese cities in recent years. But beyond the simple message about the modernization of the urban landscape, these photos carry with them a strong, codified sensuality, one that is created by the positioning of the young girl straddling the wall and the phallic nature of the modern skyscrapers that seem to fascinate her....

Weng is interested in activation and uncovering fragments of social obsessions in everyday sites and situations, through his iconic figures in the photos as metaphorical tools. He just participated recently in the 1st Prague Biennale, his works include Sitting on the Wall and Bird's Eye View. In the nature of his own society, Weng spins his photo-tales around a globalized environment that has rapidly been taking shape in China. Suspended somewhere in between authority, freedom, destiny and stereotype, the artist focuses on the new situation of Chinese society as China quickly became a capitalist country, or as termed by the Chinese government, "a capitalism with a socialist character". The thriving intensity and fervor of city life enforces my desire for temporary peace and quiet. Hiking in the mountains and beholding the view from the top is perhaps a way to rediscover a moment of placidity-not only do we find the balance of mind and spirit as our soul merges with that of Nature, but also the energy and longing to return to the passionate embrace of the city".

Ascending high and overlooking into the distance are probably the way that we gain a transitory peace. Traveling has now become a fashion for urban consumerism, in which we feel a psychological balance of unification of the Tian (heaven or sky) and human being from this outing consumption, and from which we might wish more eagerly to indulge ourselves in the urban enthusiasm, Staring at the Sea are composed of two series of families and students. This is a utopian expectation of waiting for Goto kind, sensing the inner yearnings in temporary serenity. We are waiting for the numerous unknowns in the city. And we are sensing the same numerous unknowns in nature. We enjoy the serenity of the nature exactly as we expect the chaos of the nature.



Weng Fen's artwork at Pompidou Centre, France

Opening reception:

Thu 20 Oct 05
20 Oct - 12 Nov 2005
Mon - Sat 11 am - 7 pm

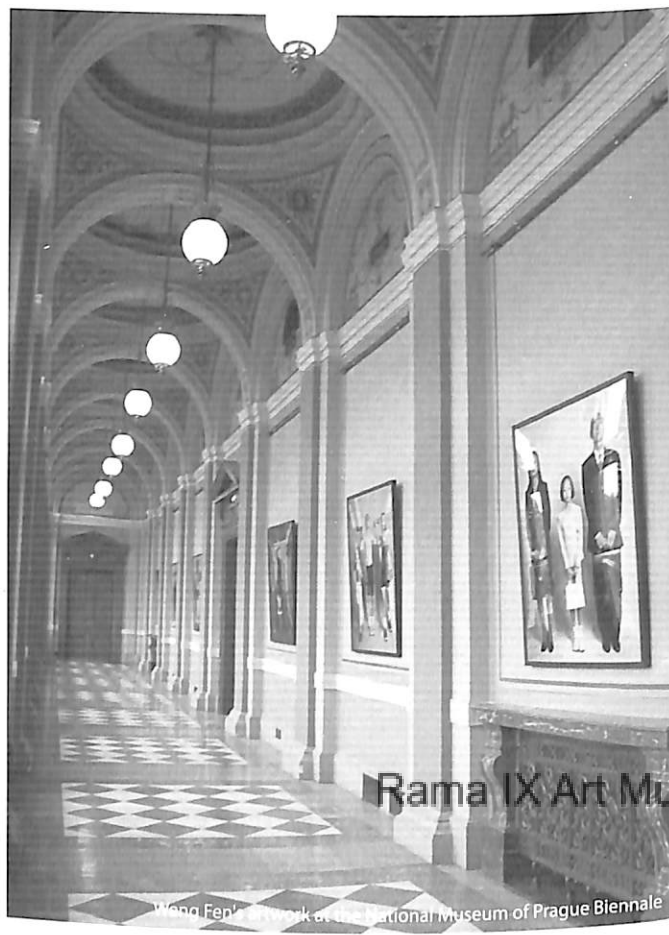
Tang Gallery

Exhibition venue, unit B-28 (Basement) The Silom Galleria
919/1 Silom Road (soi 19) Bangrak, Bangkok 10500 Thailand
Tel: 02 630 1114 ext 0, 02 630 3264 Fax: 02 630 3264
Email: info@tanggallery.com, www.tanggallery.com

Weng Fen (now known as Weng Peijun) was born in 1961 on Hainan Island in the extreme southwest of China, not far from Macau. Hainan Island is almost a Chinese version of Sicily. The port brings in money, but the locals whisper that the reason the island has the greatest number of Ferraris per square of any place in China is actually thanks to the thriving black market. Some people compare Hainan to a Chinese Hawaii. The locals do enjoy the dolce vita; they lead happily indolent lives on the slopes of the magnificent mountains that dominate the superb landscape. His series of photographs show a little girl seen from behind, sitting astride a wall, against the backdrop of a cityscape that is both glorious and yet faintly menacing. They brought him overnight success, making him one of China's best-known artist, alongside Wang Guanyi. One of the photographs was even chosen to be projected onto the side of the Centre Pompidou in Paris to celebrate the official inauguration of the exhibition held to mark the years of China and France in China.

In 2000, inspiration struck with his Great Family Aspirations series, based on propaganda posters from the Cultural Revolution and even earlier, depicting thought provoking scenes of families after 1976 and the single-child policy: a father, a mother, and one child. All three are standing at attention, facing the lens, dressed in the mortarboard and gown of Oxford or Cambridge. They thus represent the Chinese intellectuals reviled by the Red Guard but rehabilitated by Deng Xiaoping. In another photograph, they are dressed patriotically, the father wearing a gray Mao suit, the mother in a long red dress, and the little girl reading aloud a propaganda text with the utter seriousness that only the brainwashed can show. These two photographs are among the best known in the whole series. In both, the little girl is shown standing on a stool, so that the top of her head or her mortarboard is exactly aligned with those of her parents. "There is enormous pressure on children to grow up quickly," says Weng Fen. "Chinese parents tend to unload their worries onto the shoulders of their children."

Should this series be interpreted solely in terms of its political, critical dimension, as is often the case when Western critics study contemporary Chinese art? It was the following series that brought Weng Fen fame. He got a little girl dressed in short socks and a neat skirt to sit astride a wall. She is facing away from the viewer and seems to be gazing out into the far distance, over Haiku, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, or one of the other cities in southern China that have mushroomed in the last few decades, prickly with skyscrapers and high-rises-wounded cities where many building projects have been abandoned halfway through, cities prey to a consumer frenzy.

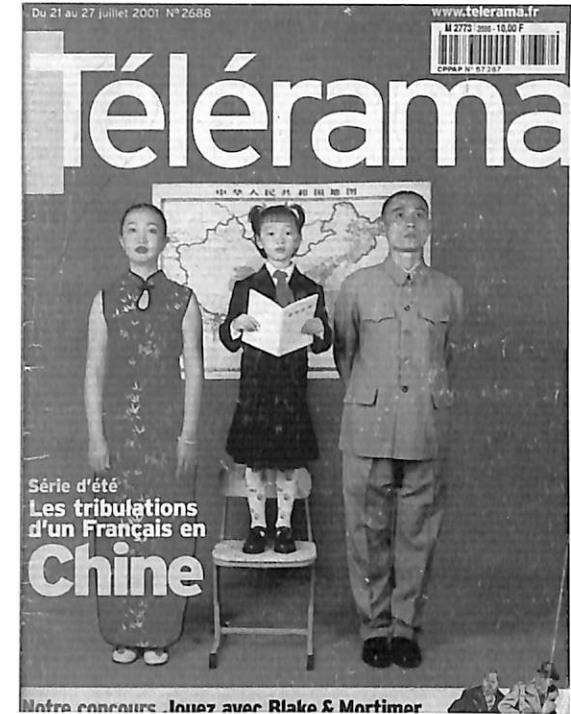


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Weng Fen's artwork at the National Museum of Prague Biennale



Weng Fen's artwork on Liberation Newspaper's cover and Telerama Magazine's cover



There is a Chinese proverb about grass on a wall, blowing in the wind—a metaphor for people who are wavering and easily led. Walls are there to separate. They stop us from seeing. The other side of the wall is another place, a future about to happen that we can observe and judge from a distance. Weng Fen adds, "When I was young, I loved going for long walks in the mountains and looking down on things from above. Like in my photos."

It is a remarkable body of work. For Weng Fen, success came when he stripped down his themes and used them as exemplary, allegorical figures. In the space of two years, he has become so famous that he has chosen to change names. Now he prefers to be known as Weng Peijun. Does he think it sounds more chic? No, he explains. His other name was just a surname and a name that reminded him of a stump. Now Weng has everything he could ever need—including a real first name.

Weng Fen's Beautiful New World --On his Installation "Building with Eggs"

Gu Zhengqing
Translated by Steven Huang

With the rising of China, the issue of modernity has become the top priority across the country. It is, I believe, also one of the key issues the Chinese contemporary art community has to address. Nevertheless, despite a huge number of artists who like to advocate their Chinese identity, few have made any attempt to express their thoughts on this special phenomenon. Weng Fen is one of the few artists who have created many series of work to depict the changes of urban residents' mentality as well as the discrepancy between their expectation and the reality of the society, both caused by the nation's rapid economic development in a global setting. His works include "On The Wall" photo series (2001), "Bird's Eye" photo series (2002), installation "Viewing Stand" (2003) and "Staring At The Sea" photo series. The photos taken by Weng Fen always leave the viewers with a complicated sensation that recedes slowly. In his works, issues of traditional and modern life, economic globalization and China's own path, as well as the unbalanced development in the urban consumer society are intertwined in the common background of modernity. Therefore, his work brings out subtle emotions that used to hide deep in our minds, leading to strong and irresistible emotional fluctuations. We also get the feeling of becoming an integral part of the pictures: standing right behind the girls in his "On The Wall" and "Bird's Eye" series, we are looking in the same direction at the gigantic modern cities. Instead of being in an ecstasy of delight, we, as a part of the development process toward modernization, inevitably experience a timeless solitude and great mental burden. Compared with the thin girls in the pictures, it is us that appear to be lost more deeply in a state of helplessness.

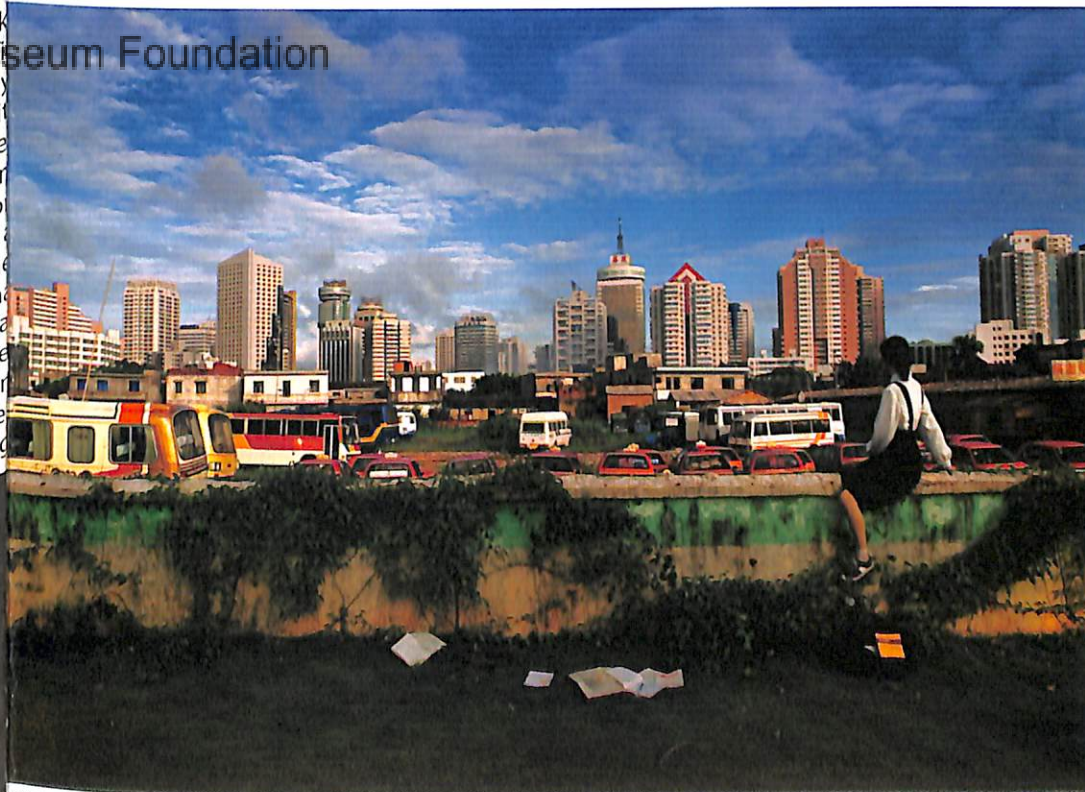
Weng Fen continues his exploration of the modernity issue by turning out new pieces of work hoping to find a solution. His work in 2005, "Accumulating The Eggs Project- Weng Fen's Beautiful New World", is one such attempt. This project was started at the end of 2004 and has been widely known to the Chinese art community since then. Due to the huge amount of work it requires, it was finished only recently in August, 2005. Around ten thousand chicken eggs and slightly fewer duck and quail eggs with their contents removed were used in the project to constitute an 8X4X1m miniature model city. Viewing from above, people see a complete picture taken from the image of a 50-yuan banknote. The green banknote, still in circulation now in China, shows the profiles of a worker, a peasant and an intellect in the middle of it. Like a concrete forest growing out of the banknote, the model vividly represents a typical Chinese city developing in a competitive international environment. Problems occurred frequently during the process of creation, which almost led to a complete failure several times. I believe this experience reflects the similarly unstable state of the nation's economic and political environment. Shortly after the project started, the Chinese government was urged by the US and Europe to reevaluate its RMB, triggering heated debates around the globe. In July 21, 2005, after months of pressure from the US and Europe, China scrapped the yuan's peg



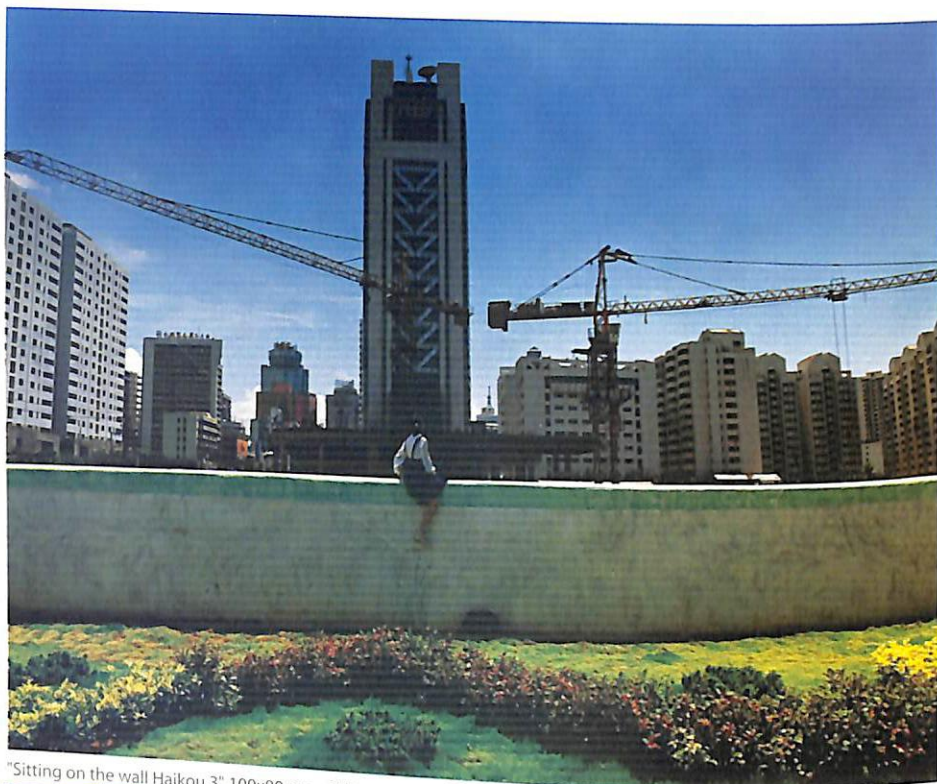
Weng Fen's New work in Seoul, Korea



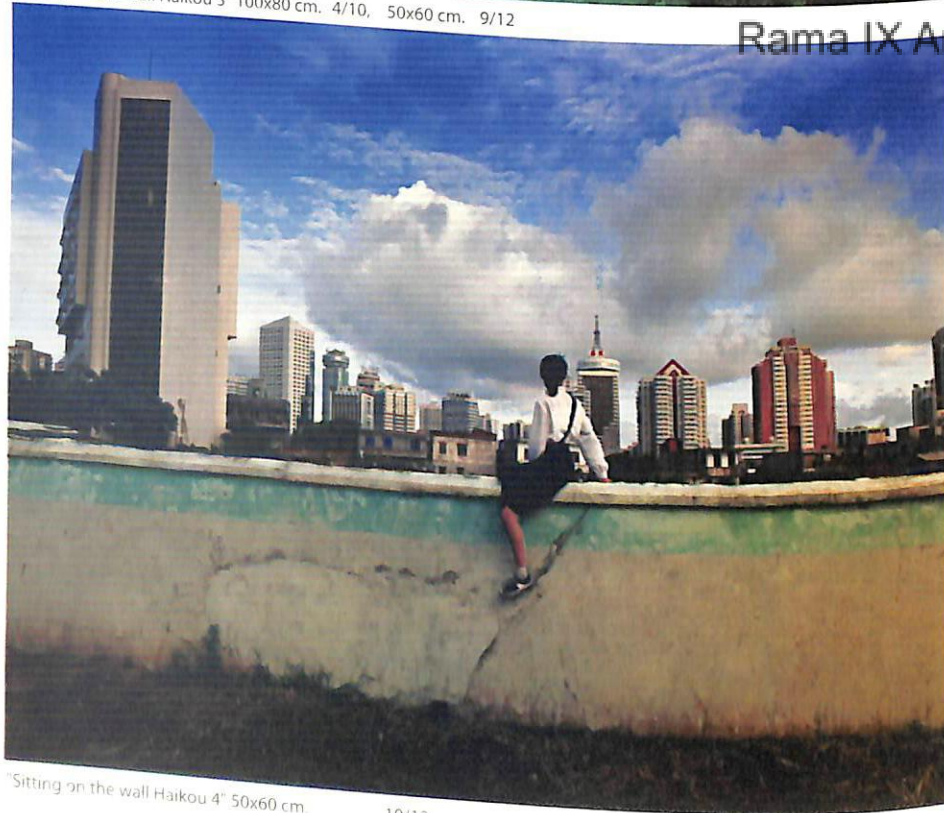
"Sitting on the wall Haikou 1" 100x80 cm. 9/10



"Sitting on the wall Haikou 2" All already sold out



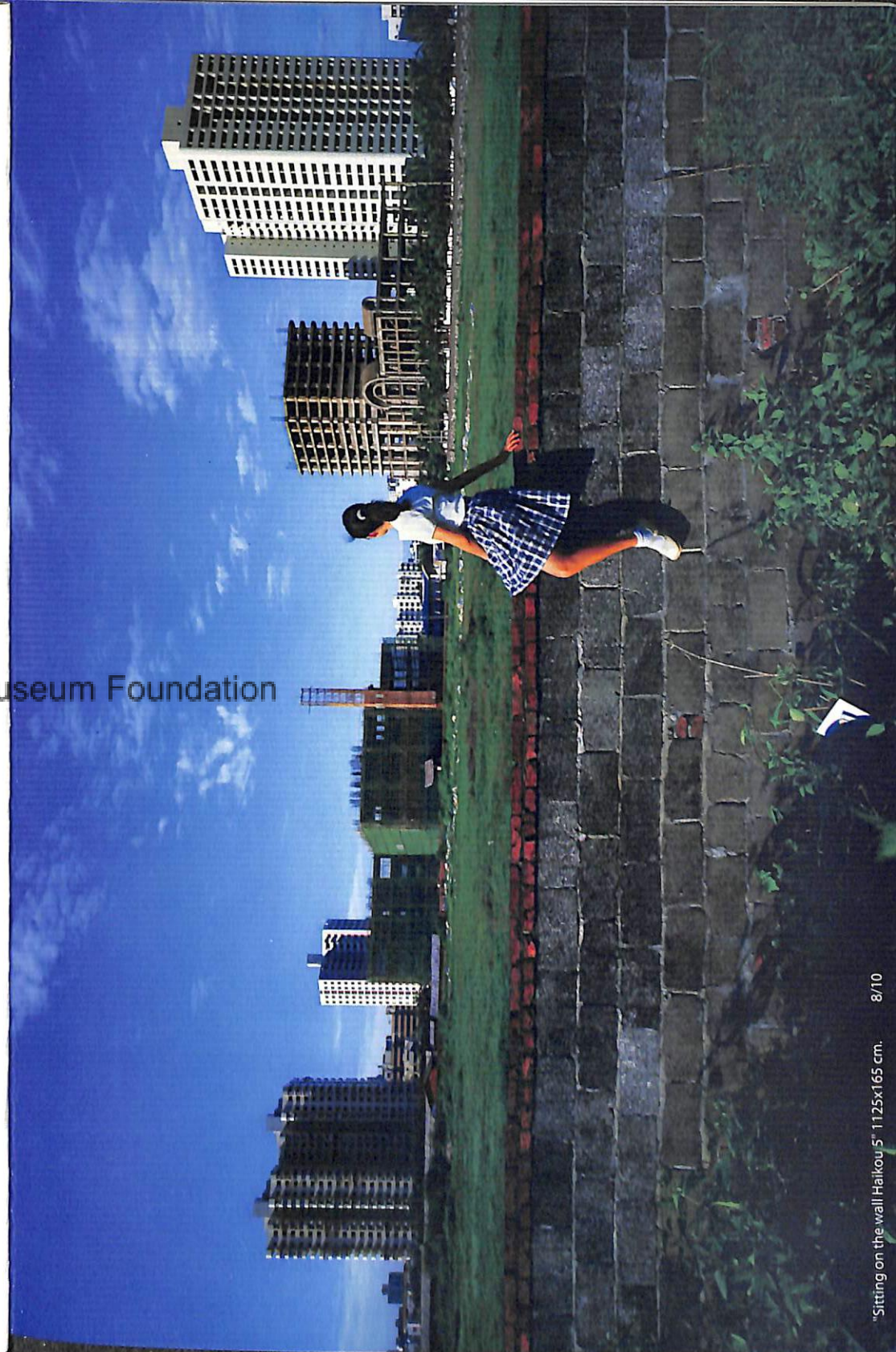
"Sitting on the wall Haikou 3" 100x80 cm. 4/10, 50x60 cm. 9/12



"Sitting on the wall Haikou 4" 50x60 cm.

10/12

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"Sitting on the wall Haikou 5" 1125x165 cm. 8/10



"Sitting on the wall Haikou 6" 50x60 cm.

3/10, 10/10



"Sitting on the wall GuangZhou 2" All already sold out



"Sitting on the wall GuangZhou 1" 50x60 cm.

10/12



"Sitting on the wall GuangZhou 3" 50x60 cm.

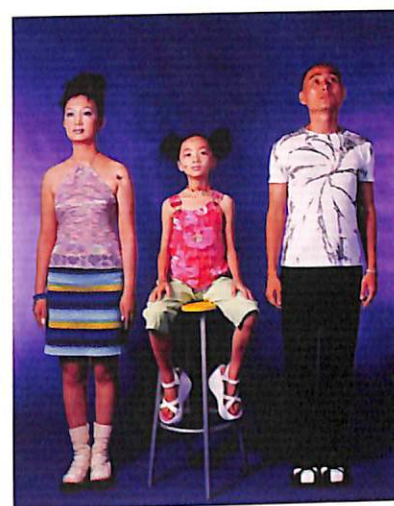
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"The series great family aspiration No.1-6" 100x80 cm.

9/12





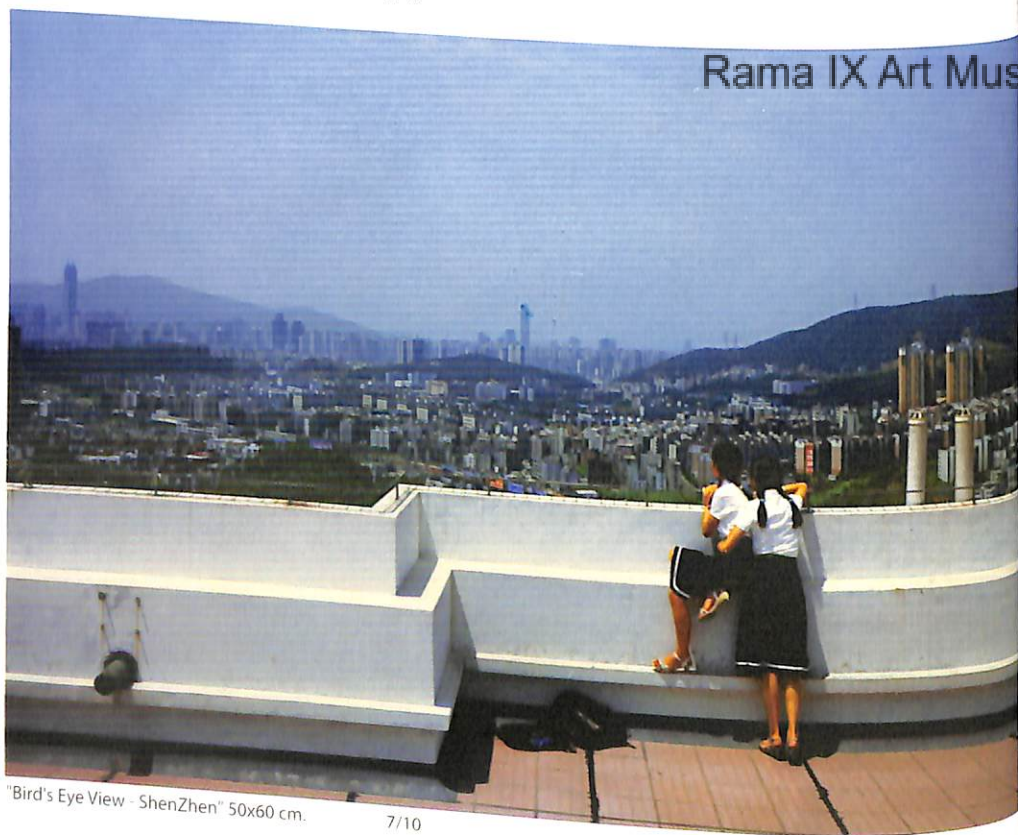
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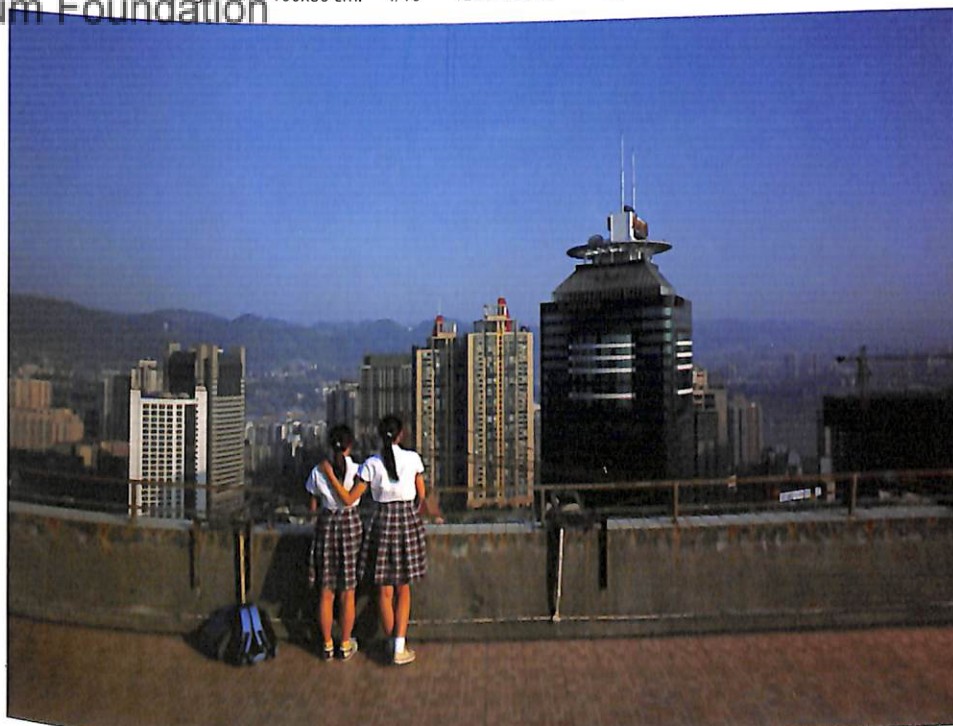
"Sitting on the wall - ShenZhen 2" 100x80 cm. 9/10



"Bird's Eye View - GuangZhou 1" 100x80 cm. 4/10 125x165 cm. 1/8



"Bird's Eye View - ShenZhen" 50x60 cm. 7/10



"Bird's Eye View - Chongqin" 100x80 cm. 1/10, 2/10 125x165 cm. 1/8

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"Girls in hoods 1-6" 100x80 cm. 6/10

