

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Blindspot Gallery participates in PHOTOFAIR SHANGHAI 2017  
featuring a solo exhibition by Zhang Hai'er and works by Jiang Pengyi in "Insights"**

8-10 September 2017, Friday to Sunday

Venue: Booth A10, Shanghai Exhibition Center, 1000 Yan'an Road, Jing'an District, Shanghai, China

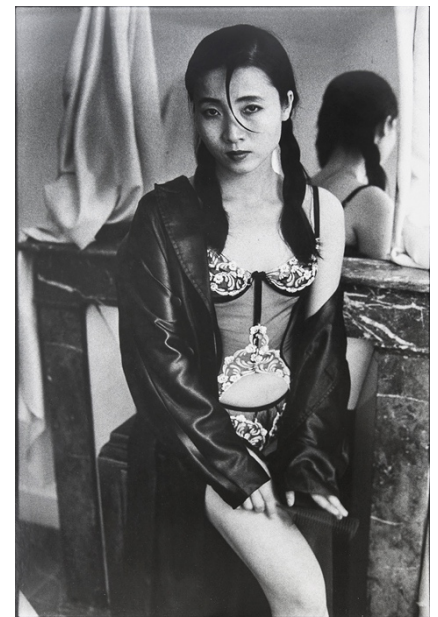


Blindspot Gallery will participate in "PHOTOFAIRS SHANGHAI 2017" that takes place in the Shanghai Exhibition Center, Shanghai, China on 8-10 September 2017, with a solo exhibition of the Chinese photographer Zhang Hai'er. The featured vintage gelatin silver prints, all hand-printed by the artist himself at the time of its shooting during the 1980s to 1990s, and most of them unique prints, will be showcased in the solo exhibition. These photographs have varying subject matters from two different series: *Bad Girls* series and *Steam, Steel and the Rail* series.

Zhang Hai'er was among the earliest photographers to develop a distinct, independent and experimental approach to documentary photography in the late 1980s and early 1990s in China. In searching for new documentary subjects, he turned his lens towards the city, photographing the changing urban landscape and lifestyles of Guangzhou and other metropolises. In 1988, Zhang was one of the first-ever Chinese photographers to be exhibited internationally at les Rencontres d'Arles, a much-historicised moment that marked the beginning of global exposure and recognition of Chinese photography. In the early 1990s, Zhang Hai'er has exhibited in numerous solo exhibitions across Europe, including Heidelberger Kunstverein (Heidelberg, Germany, 1990), Musée de l'Elysée (Lausanne, Switzerland, 1993). and Image Fotografisk Galleri (Aarhus, Denmark, 1995).

In *Bad Girls* series, Zhang enumerates the many iterations of the self-fashioning and self-exposition of femininity and womanhood. Amongst the many portraits of women in the series, including prostitutes, socialites, and ordinary women, the artist's then girlfriend and later wife Hu Yuanli has always been the protagonist, the archetype of feminine beauty, and the muse. These portraits go beyond the objective, neutral stance of conventional documentary photography. Half-undressed women, mostly in an indoor studio or domestic setting, stare provocatively at the camera, engaging the viewer, and at times exposing the performative presence of the photographer.

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In *Steam, Steel and the Rail* series, Zhang turns his lens to the male labourers in railway stations and steel factories, replacing the metropolitan grace of *Bad Girls* with the tough masculinity of rural China. Zhang documented the era of economic liberalization and the open door policy of China in the late 1980s, a time of progressive industrial reform dominated by state-controlled plants



which were driven by the grand schemes of the Communist Party's Four Modernisations and Ten Year Plan. In the steel factories of Wuhan and the train stations of Shahe County, Hubei, Zhang portrayed the hardship of the labourers at work, as well as the optimism of the nonetheless human individuals. The steam of train engines and steel mills, as well as the smoke of tobacco cigarettes, find their expressive analogy in Zhang's at times blurry images, while the soot and dirt of coal and factories transpose themselves into the grains of analogue photographs.

A retrospective solo exhibition of Zhang Hai'er, titled "MUSE" and curated by Karen Smith, will also open on 6 September 2017 at the Shanghai Center of Photography (SCoP). A book signing of the exhibition catalogue will take place on 9 September 2017 at the Blindspot Gallery booth at the fair. The artist will be present.

Presented in the special exhibition "PHOTOFAIRS SHANGHAI 2017", "Insights", are Jiang Pengyi's selected works on instant film from two series: *The Sun Matched with the Sea* and *Dissolution*. In *The Sun Matched with the Sea*, Jiang captured found erotic images on expired instant films and violently treated them with excessive force, folding, pressing and prodding in an act of utter destruction and violation. The resultant image shows creases of radiating patterns, dramatising the explosive power and domination that characterise the underlining sexually explicit images. In *Dissolution*, Jiang directly intervened in the found images through an emulsion lift from the instant film material. By separating the image-bearing emulsion from its original setting, Jiang gives a sculptural body to the once flat images, creating photographic objects that are unique, blurring the line between photography and sculptures.

#### **About Zhang Hai'er**

Born in Guangzhou in 1957, Zhang Hai'er graduated from Shanghai Theatre Academy in 1982. One of the pioneers of experimental photography in China, Zhang Hai'er and four other young Chinese photographers were invited to participate in the prestigious Les Rencontres d'Arles in 1988 in France, the beginning of international exposure of Chinese photography to the western world. He has held solo exhibitions at Image Fotografisk Galleri (Aarhus, Denmark, 1995) and Musée d'Élysée (Lausanne, Switzerland, 1993). His work is collected by Fondation Danielle Mitterrand (France), Musée de l'Élysée (Lausanne, Switzerland), The Walther Collection (USA), White Rabbit Collection (Sydney, Australia), M+ Museum (Hong Kong), Shanghai Center of Photography (Shanghai, China), Sifang Art Museum (Nanjing, China) and Taikang Space (Beijing, China). Zhang currently lives and works in Guangzhou, China and Paris, France.

#### **About Jiang Pengyi**

Born in Yuanjiang, Hunan Province in 1977, Jiang Pengyi graduated from the Beijing Institute of Art and Design in 1999 and the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou in 2014. He has been awarded the Aletti ArtVerona Prize for Photography in 2011, the Jury Grand Prize from the Société Générale Chinese Art Awards in 2010, and the Tierney Fellowship Award from the First Annual Three Shadows Photography Award in 2009. Jiang was invited to participate in the Helsinki Photography Biennial 2012 and was nominated for the Prix Pictet 2012. His work is collected by CAFA Art Museum (China), DSL Collection (France), Frac des Pays de la Loire (France), Fondazione Banca Aletti (Italy), The Guy & Myriam Ullens Foundation Collection (Switzerland), Kadist Art Foundation (France and USA), Tierney Family Foundation (USA), UniCredit Art Collection (Italy and Germany), and White Rabbit Contemporary Chinese Art Collection (Australia). He currently lives and works in Beijing, China.

#### **About Blindspot Gallery**

Set up in 2010, Blindspot Gallery is a Hong Kong-based contemporary art gallery. The gallery began with a primary focus on contemporary photography and image-based art, and has evolved to include diverse media in contemporary art. The gallery represents both emerging and established artists, mainly from Hong Kong and the region, but also beyond.

For enquiries and media interviews, please contact Ms. Lesley Kwok at 2517 6238 or by email [info@blindspotgallery.com](mailto:info@blindspotgallery.com)

Image captions:

**Zhang Hai'er**, *Hu Yuanli, Guangzhou, 1987*, 1987, Vintage gelatin silver print, 50.5 x 38.5 cm

**Zhang Hai'er**, *Hu Yuanli à la cheminée, Paris, 1992*, 1992, Vintage gelatin silver print, 60.8 x 50.4 cm

**Zhang Hai'er**, *Wuhan Steel Plant, Hubei Province, 1991*, 1991, Vintage gelatin silver print, 49.3 x 60.6 cm

(Image courtesy of artist and Blindspot Gallery)