

Xiang Liqing

向利庆



Rock Never 4 (b&w), Photo, 2002, 200x100 cm

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Saw Polished to Knife
Oil/acrylic on canvas
2003

IN a series of photographs entitled *Rock Never* Xiang Liqing presents a reaction to the changes brought on by the transformation of space and its potential uses in the metropolis. Today rigid high-rises have pushed horizontally structured communities into vertical organization of order and control. Xiang Liqing's photographic images with their grid-like facades of contemporary residential buildings, scrutinize these symbols of architectural master planning. Yet the strength of this work rests on its ambivalence: as one reads the pictures closely, one reaches to the understanding that all individual, but similar, apartments serve as habitat for real people - the image shows the dichotomy between the public masses and the private space. Architecture is presented as a carrier of social desires, in this case the fantasy that collective residential architecture will make for happiness regardless the neglect and the needs of individuals. Despite the attempted leveling out of differences and the claustrophobic staging of the failures of the system, the work becomes paradoxically exhilarating. Focusing on the theme of sameness and difference, his recent series of photographs *The Second Generation* (2005) show a remarkable distinction between two persons from the same family, only one generation apart, but each respectively representing and connoting an entirely different universe.

Xiang Liqing's oeuvre is not only limited to photography, he also works with painting and sculpture. His all-over abstract paintings express the same loss of center as his photos of the nightmare architecture. Accordingly, within his paintings no immediate or recognizable point of fixture is to be found. His colorful composites might well have their dark and uncomfortable passages, but ultimately they propose not a drama of anxiety and endgame but a quiet celebration of life.

Xiang Liqing was born in Zhejiang in 1973. He graduated from China Academy of Fine Art, Oil Painting Department. Today he lives and works in Shanghai. Xiang Liqing has exhibited widely in China and internationally. His most recent exhibitions include *China Contemporary, Art, Architecture and Visual Culture* at Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam (2006), and *Restless, Photography and New Media* at Museum of Contemporary Art in Shanghai (2006).



Flag, Photo, 2001
63x91 cm