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'Shadow Play: Tales of Urbanization of China'. A virtual Reality Installation

June 8th, 2014 | [Add a Comment](#)

We report in this article on this exciting project created by Lily & Honglei, an artist collective based in New York and Beijing. Integrating the emerging technology of virtual reality (VR) with an intriguing Chinese folk art form known as *shadow play*, the VR installation *Shadow Play: Tales of Urbanization of China* creates an opportunity for the audience to experience the changing landscapes of contemporary China. In four chapters, virtual installation sheds light upon real-life incidents such as clashes during land evictions resulting from urban expansion, children abductions, suicides of migrant workers, and predicaments involving the cultural and environmental degradation.

Chapter I. *The Land: Death of the Village Head*

Chapter II. *The Ruins: Lost Children*

Chapter III. *The City: Into the Void*

Chapter IV. *The Maze: No Exit*



The VR installation Shadow Play is accessible through Second Life, a popular online Multi-user Virtual Environment (MUVE). First download Second Life application, then visit the installation [here](#). If you have questions locating the artwork in Second Life, please email us at: chinacyberat@yahoo.com



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- October 2013 (4)
- August 2013 (4)
- July 2013 (1)
- June 2013 (5)
- May 2013 (7)
- April 2013 (4)
- March 2013 (3)
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Based in New York and Beijing, Lily & Honglei work as an artist collective. Utilizing traditional painting and animation, as well as new media such as virtual reality and augmented reality, Lily & Honglei create 'visual fables' intertwining current social issues with cultural heritages.



Over the past few decades China has been urbanizing at an astounding pace. In 2013, the People's Republic unveiled its plan to relocate 260 million people from China's countryside to one of 21 "mega regions" by 2020*. Such a significant shift will undoubtedly transform China's national character, which has been predominantly agrarian for millennia. "Shadow Play" weaves three interfaces, Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Physical Reality (PR), and combines the past and present — through time-honored imagery, paint, "shadow play," and new media technologies — to immerse participants in the realities of contemporary China.

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- December 2012 (5)
- November 2012 (2)
- October 2012 (5)
- September 2012 (6)
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- July 2012 (9)
- June 2012 (14)
- May 2012 (13)
- April 2012 (9)
- March 2012 (25)

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“Shadow Play: Tales of Urbanization of China” is a 2014 commission of New Radio and Performing Arts, Inc. for its Turbulence.org website. It was made possible with funding from the Jerome Foundation.

Lily & Honglei’s artworks have been presented at numerous prestigious international and national venues, including Museum of Art and Design in New York, Queens Museum of Art in New York, Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, Arad Art Museum in Romania, Musée Guimet in Paris, He Xiangning Art Museum in China, Museum of Ara Pacis in Rome, Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, The Painting Center of New York, Eyebeam Art Technology Center New York, Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning in New York, Australian Center of Virtual Art in Sydney, TEKS–Trondheim Electronic Arts Centre in Norway, Electronic Visualization & Arts at British Computer Society in London, ISEA–Intel Society of Electronic Arts in Istanbul, New York Artist Residency Studios Foundation Gallery, Shanghai University Gallery in China, Center for Advanced Visual Studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Contemporary Art Foundation Kiev in Ukraine, University Gallery of University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Axiom Gallery Boston, NurtureArt Gallery in New York, Devotion Art Space in New York, SIGGRAPH Art Gallery 2008 in CA, SIGGRAPH Asia 2013 in Hong Kong, Budapest Short Film Festival in Hungary, Color Out of Place Festival in UK, Dumbo Art Festival in New York, International Festival of Electronic Art 404 in Argentina, MICROWAVE International New Media Arts Festival 2009 in Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Center, FILE–Electronic Language International Festival in Brazil, Zero1 Biennial of New Media Art in San Jose CA, among many others.

[More info here.](#)



Written by **Puppetring**

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