

*Shanghai Kaleidoscope's Dynamic View*  
**Christopher Phillips**  
**International Centre of Photography, New York**  
**Curator of Shanghai Kaleidoscope**

*[Animated ROM logo appears with sound sting]*

*[Christopher Phillips, Curator of Shanghai Kaleidoscope, standing at the entrance of the Roloph Beny Gallery]* Christopher Phillips: I'm Christopher Phillips. I'm the curator of the exhibition, Shanghai Kaleidoscope, which is on view at the Royal Ontario Museum until November 2.

Shanghai is a city with a population of 20 million. It's one of Asia's largest and most dynamic cities. In this show we're presenting works by a range of artists who are all responding, in one way or another, to the dramatic changes that have taken place in Shanghai in recent years.

*[Christopher turns and walks into the gallery]*

*[Camera pans across lightbox-mounted photographic transparencies of the tops of skyscrapers created by Shi Yong. The camera stops moving with Christopher entering the frame, standing next to the work.]* This is a work by Shi Yong. He is a Shanghai artist who was born and raised in the city. He says that he has seen Shanghai change so much in the past decade that he sometimes doesn't recognize streets where he may have played as a child.

*[Camera pans the photographs]* With this work, what he's done is to create a large lightbox display. It's a group of photographs that he made of the skyscraper tops of some of the most dramatic buildings in Shanghai. *[Still shot of the full work]* He shot on nights when there was fog in the sky which makes it look extremely dream-like. *[Close-up view of some of the photography]* Shi Yong says that this work is meant to convey his feeling of what a dream-like space the whole city is for him these days.

*[Shot of mounted screen displaying a slideshow of photographs by Greg Girard. Camera zooms out to show Christopher standing next to the work.]* Greg Girard is a Canadian photographer, originally from Vancouver, who has been living and working in Shanghai for the past 10 years. During that time he has made it a personal project to photograph the older neighbourhoods in Shanghai that are so rapidly disappearing as the bulldozers come in, flatten houses to make way for

new highrises. Over the last decade, Greg Girard has created an incomparable archive of great historic value showing what Shanghai looked like before the boom changed everything.

*[Christopher standing in the gallery with a video projected on the wall behind.]* I'm standing in front of a video work called *Light and Easy*, by the artist Yang Zhenzhong. He started his career as a painter, but now he is making mostly video art.

*[Hand-held close-up image of the projection showing a man balancing an inverted skyscraper and skyline on his fingertip.]* In this piece he's trying to give us a sense of what it feels to live in a city where the pace of change is absolutely relentless. We see him moving back and forth along the banks of the Huangpu River, and he appears to be balancing on his fingertip a giant building, the Oriental Pearl TV Tower, one of the most famous landmarks in the Shanghai skyline. *[Shot of Christopher standing in front of the wall projection.]* He's trying to show us that the changes that are happening in the city are nothing to get concerned about. It's light and easy, something to play with, like it's a toy.

*[Christopher standing in front of a negative photograph framed and mounted on a yellow wall.]* This is a very unusual photographic work by Shi Guorui, an artist who lives in Beijing, but travels and works all throughout China. In this particular work, what he's done is to make an enormous image with a pinhole camera. *[Camera zooms out to show the full mounted photograph.]* He rented a hotel room on the banks of the Huangpu River, blocked off the window, made a tiny opening in it and then used that opening like a kind of primitive lens. *[Close-up panning shot of the architecture depicted in the photograph]* He hung this giant sheet of paper on the wall opposite the pinhole and made a 24-hour exposure. He processed the big sheet of paper in the bathtub in the hotel room creating a unique work. It shows the architecture along both sides of the main river bank in Shanghai. *[Shot of Christopher standing beside the full photograph]* The old 19<sup>th</sup> Century side to the left, and on the right the new soaring, sci-fi towers of Shanghai's new financial district.

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