

Greg Girard Richmond/Kowloon

April 18 – June 28, 2015

Richmond Art Gallery is pleased to present *Greg Girard: Richmond/Kowloon* by Vancouver-based artist Greg Girard. Organized by Richmond Art Gallery Curator, Nan Capogna, the exhibition comprises of previously created work documenting Hong Kong's renowned Kowloon Walled City and premieres a new body of photographic images of Richmond, BC and its residents. *Greg Girard: Richmond/Kowloon* is a participating exhibition in the Capture Photography Festival.

A singular Hong Kong phenomenon, the Walled City housed up to 35,000 people living in over 300 interconnected high-rise buildings covering one square city block in a densely populated neighbourhood forming a "city within a city". Though demolished 20 years ago in 1993, interest in the Kowloon Walled City continues, fuelled in part by urban legends that persist about this extraordinary community. The Kowloon images, published in book form, have never before been exhibited.



In the past 25 years the City of Richmond has undergone profound physical and demographic changes, a process of urbanization and immigration, much of it from Hong Kong and China, as well as other cities. Recording the city, homes, shops and businesses where Richmond residents live and work, Girard's new body of work reflects a city in transition, impacted by migrations of people seeking better opportunities in a new country.

This exhibition links the two communities, Richmond and Kowloon, both of them lesser-known (and formerly rural, working class) entities within the better-known cities of Vancouver and Hong Kong. The resulting images will serve to document the social fabric and physical development of Richmond in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

Greg Girard is a Canadian photographer who has spent nearly 30 years living and working in Asia - mostly in Shanghai and Hong Kong. His work examines the social and physical transformations in Asia, especially in its largest cities. He is the author of several photographic books. *City of Darkness Revisited*, published in 2014, revives an early collaboration with co-author Ian Lambot, and updates their influential book, *City of Darkness: Life in Kowloon Walled City* (Watermark, 1993).

Based in Shanghai between 1998 and 2011, his photographic monograph, *Phantom Shanghai* (Magenta, Toronto, 2007), with a foreword by novelist William Gibson, looks at the rapid and at

times violent changes in China's largest city as Shanghai raced to remake itself at the beginning of the 21st Century.

Other recent titles include *Hanoi Calling* (Magenta, Toronto, 2010); and *In the Near Distance* (Kominek, Berlin, 2010), a book of early photographs made in Asia and North America between 1973 and 1986.

The International Center of Photography in New York featured his series *Half the Surface of the World*, a survey of US military bases and their host communities in Asia, in 2012. His work is in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, The Art Gallery of Ontario, the Vancouver Art Gallery and other public and private collections.

He is a contributing photographer to *National Geographic Magazine*. Recent stories include *The Kingdom of David and Solomon*, *Bitter Waters: China's Water Crisis*, and *Can China Go Green?* He is represented by Monte Clark Gallery, Vancouver, Canada.

The opening reception will be on Friday, April 17 from 7:00-9:00pm with the artist in attendance. A publication including essays by Glenn Deer and Rufina Wu and an interview with the artist by Nan Capogna will be available at the Gallery for \$15.

Public programming will include an Artist Talk with Greg Girard on Saturday, May 23 from 2:00-3:00pm and a Panel Discussion, *CURSE OF THE LIVABLE CITY* on Saturday, April 25, 2:00-3:30pm. *Facilitator: Leslie Van Duzer, Professor and Director, School of Architecture & Landscape Architecture, UBC. Panelists: Greg Girard, Photographer; Bing Thom, Principal, Bing Thom Architects; Glenn Deer, Assistant Professor of English & Associate Editor of Canadian Literature, Dept. of English, UBC and Rufina Wu, Architect AIBC.*

As one of Capture Photography Festival's public installations, the Vancouver Airport Authority will exhibit Greg Girard's work at the Canada Line Station Walkway to the YVR International Terminal from early April through June.

The Richmond Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the on-going support of the City of Richmond, the British Columbia Arts Council, and the Province of British Columbia. This exhibition has been generously funded by the Vancouver Foundation and Metro Vancouver. The Gallery thanks London Drugs PhotoLab and the Capture Photography Festival for their partnership, and Peller Estates and PriceSmart Foods Richmond for their sponsorship of refreshments for opening receptions.

Image: Greg Girard, *Commercial/Residential #1*, 2014 24 x 32 inches Archival Pigment Print

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