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June 10rd, 2008

**Re: Invitation to Participate in the Third Guangzhou Triennial**

Dear John Kelly,

On behalf of the Guangdong Museum of Art, I should like to invite you formally to develop a new project for exhibition at the Third Guangzhou Triennial 2008.

The Triennial will be curated by Gao Shiming, Sarat Maharaj, and Chang Tsong-zung and their team of Research Curators—(Dorothee Albrecht, Sopawan Boonnimitra, Stina Edblom, Tamar Guimaraes, Guo Xiaoyan, Steven Lam, Khaled D. Ramadan)

It takes off from debates and discussions around the subject '*Farewell to Post-Colonialism*'. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Guangzhou Triennial is scheduled to open on 6th Sep 2008. Kindly refer to the attached materials for further details.

Please confirm if you are willing to accept this invitation. Your participation will make an important contribution to the event and a great honor for all of us.

Please email at your earliest convenience (before 31st of May):

- a. Your exhibition proposal with specifications of material, size, relevant images, artist statement and related text.
- b. An up-to-date curriculum vitae (not more than 10 entrances) together with 6-8 images of your past projects that may be included in the exhibition catalogue.

In the meantime, if we can help with any further questions, kindly contact Tang Xiaolin, the curatorial assistant for the Third Guangzhou Triennial at (86) 20 87351261; fax: (86) 20 87351326; email: [gztriennial@gmail.com](mailto:gztriennial@gmail.com). During the period of preparation in the lead up to the show it would be useful to maintain close contact with the Research Curator who has been liaising between you and the Museum to assist with the development of your work, schedules and resources.

Yours Sincerely,



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A blue handwritten signature in cursive script, reading '王黄生'.

Wang Huangsheng  
Director  
Guangdong Museum of Art



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## Farewell to Post-Colonialism

### The Third Guangzhou Triennial

The Third Guangzhou Triennial will run from September 6<sup>th</sup> to November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Opening preview will be on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

#### 1. Concept:

For the curatorial discourse of this Triennial, we propose to say 'Farewell to Post-Colonialism'. This represents the theoretical basis from which we hope to explore our critical vision. 'Farewell to Post-colonialism' is not a denial of the importance and rewards of this intellectual tradition; in the real world, the political conditions criticised by post-colonialism have not receded, but in many ways are even further entrenched under the machinery of globalisation. However, as a leading discourse for art curatorial practice and criticism, post-colonialism is showing its limitations in being increasingly institutionalised as an ideological concept. Not only is it losing its edge as a critical tool, it has generated its own restrictions that hinder the emergence of artistic creativity and fresh theoretical interface. To say 'Farewell to Post-Colonialism' is not simply a departure, but a re-visit and a re-start.

2008 will be forty years since the heady days of 1968. In these forty years, waves of new social movement and multi-cultural theories have woven a tapestry of rich and clashing colours out of the world's changing social realities. International contemporary art has also benefited from the attention to socio-political issues surrounding identity, race, gender and class. But in fifty years, revolutionary concepts have also transformed into leading discourses safely guarded by 'political correctness'. Post-colonial discourse's analysis of the power structure within cultural expressions has triggered a series of cultural resistance, as well as the construction of the self as the Subject in relation to the Other. However, these forms of analysis and construction have also adversely developed an institutionalised pluralistic landscape (a multi-cultural 'managerialism') that has today turned into a new form of stereotyping. In this Triennial we wish to draw attention to the 'political correctness at large' that is



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the result of the power play of multi-culturalism, identity politics and post-colonial discourse. Urgent issues facing curatorial practice today are: How do we establish an 'ethics of difference' within the framework of difference in cultural production? How do we prevent a 'tyranny of the Other' without sacrificing the grounds already gained against the power status quo?

For some years major international contemporary exhibitions around the world have worked towards building up 'discursive sites for a cacophony of voices' and 'negotiated spaces of diverse values', emphasising 'correctness' in cultural politics; these have inadvertently succeeded to the neglect of independent pursuit of artistic creativity and alternative imaginative worlds. Concepts of identity, multiplicity and difference are now slowly losing their edge to become new restrictions for artistic practice. In response to this, the curatorial project of the Third Guangzhou Triennial centres on mulling over multi-culturalism and its limits within the larger perspective of 'Farewell to Post-Colonialism'.

The 'Farewell' calls for the renovation of the theoretical interface of contemporary art, in order to depart from its all pervasive socio-political discourse in an endeavour to work together with artists and critics to discover new modes of thinking, fresh analytical tools for today's world. The curators hope this GT2008 will be a process of discovery for ourselves; not just the fleshing out and illustrating of readymade theories and preconceived ideas. In trying to explore what this Triennial 'is', we wish to carry out a parallel inquiry into what it should not be. In this sense, GT2008 may be understood as a locus of questions for all of us involved in the international art world, starting with an Exercise in Negation. We hope to uncover, with the help of artists and thinkers, elements of the paradoxical reality veiled by contemporary cultural discourse, to make contact with realms that slip through the cracks of well-worn concepts such as class, gender, tribe and hybridity. We hope in thinking with artists and critics, their practices and projects what new modes and imaginative worlds are possible for art beyond those already heavily mapped out by socio-political discourses.

**The Self Imagining of the Third Guangzhou Triennial:  
An Exercise in Negation ...**



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Neither Western nor non-western; neither global nor local; neither international nor national; neither left nor right; neither the third world nor the third space; neither tourist spectacle nor ethno-scape.

Not cosmopolitanism; Not multi-culturalism, Not tribalism; Not post-colonialism; Not identity politics; Not sociological report; Not relational aesthetics; Not regime of the Other; Not alternative modernity; Not hybridity; Not showcase of new stars; Not metropolis of art; ...

Through the Exercise in Negation the Triennial invites all colleagues in the art field to help imagine ways to realise the 2008 Triennial. For the curators, the important thing is to liberate discourse through discourse, and to liberate artistic production by scrutinising our intellectual tools. It is our wish to bring curators and artists together in order to **think through the visual**.

## 2. Programme in Motion:

**1<sup>st</sup> Station:** GT2008 is launched from the discussion platform *Farewell to Post-Colonialism* at the Open Day, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2007, Tate Modern (London)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Station:** Symposium *Farewell to Post-Colonialism* with focus on *Mulling over the Multi-Cultural*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 2007, Guangdong Museum of Art (Guangzhou)

**3<sup>rd</sup> Station:** *Thinking Through the Visual*, Traveling Forum, 23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> November 2007, China Academy of Art (Hangzhou) and Peking University (Beijing)

**4<sup>th</sup> Station:** *Artists' Questionnaire Session*, Discussion Group, 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007, BizArt (Shanghai) and Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing)

**5<sup>th</sup> Station:** *Unpacking Projects-in-Progress*, Workshop, 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> April 2008, (Huangshan Mountain)

**6<sup>th</sup> Station:** *Flowers in the Mirror: Anxiety of Creativity and Possible Worlds*, Workshop, 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> July 2008, Hong Kong Arts Centre (Hong Kong)

**7<sup>th</sup> Station:** *3<sup>rd</sup> Guangzhou Triennial*, Exhibition, 6<sup>th</sup> September to 16<sup>th</sup> November 2008, Guangdong Museum of Art (Guangzhou)

**8<sup>th</sup> Station:** Farewell to Post-colonialism— Towards a Post-Western World: Critical Reflections on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Guangzhou Triennial, Conference, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2008, Guangdong Museum of Art (Guangzhou)

## 3. Curators/ Organizer:



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Curators: Gao Shiming; Sarat Maharaj; Chang Tsong-zung  
Research Curators: Dorothee Albrecht, Sopawan Boonnimitra, Stina Edblom, Tamar Guimaraes, Guo Xiaoyan, Steven Lam, Khaled D. Ramadan  
Organizer: The Guangdong Museum of Art

**General information:**

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**Introducing the Curators of the Third Guangzhou Triennial**

**GAO Shiming**, Deputy Director of the Advanced School of Art and Humanities, China Academy of Art. His subject is visual culture research, contemporary art studies and curatorial practice. He has participated in many exhibitions of academic standing, including the research project 'The Migration of Asian Contemporary Art and Geo-politics' 2002-2003; 'Techniques of the Visible' the 5<sup>th</sup> Shanghai Biennial 2004; 'In the Depth of Reality: Contemporary Chinese Art' and 'Asian Time: New Media Art Exhibition', 2005; 'Micrology: Micro-politics in Chinese Contemporary Art' and 'The Yellow Box: Contemporary Art and Architecture in a Chinese Space', 2006; 'Alchemy of Shadow: the 3<sup>rd</sup> Lianzhou International Photography Festival, 2007. He has published several books include *Visual Thinking: Intangible Dialogue between Art and Phenomenology*, 2002; *Edges of the Earth: Migration of Contemporary Art and Geo-politics in Asia*, 2003; *Mask and Mirror: Visual Studies on the Real and Reality*. Curatorial practice for Gao is a kind of critical-creative action. He believes in the

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contemporary significance of bringing together action and subjective knowledge. He also firmly believes in curatorial work as a form of 'writing in practice' within the dark room of history. Since 2002 his work has been guided by a special form of cultural thinking, which is: how to start afresh from intellectual discourse, depart from the habits of identity politics and contextual studies, and seek inspiration from the depth of reality, in order to stimulate creativity, and find a form of interventional representation for contemporary art and visual culture.

**Sarat MAHARAJ**, Professor of Art History & Theory at Goldsmiths College where he is *now* Visiting Research Professor. *Currently*, he is Professor of Visual Art and Knowledge Systems, Lund University, Sweden. He was the first Rudolf Arnheim Professor, Humboldt University, Berlin (2001-2002) and Research Fellow at the Jan Van Eyck Akademie, Maastricht (1999-2001). His specialist research covers Marcel Duchamp, James Joyce and Richard Hamilton. His current research spans Visual Art as Knowledge Production & Non-Knowledge —and the concept of 'thinking through the visual'. His expanded research, experimental writing and publications cover: Visual Art as Knowledge Production, Textiles, Cultural Translation and Difference —and the contemporary 'convergence' of image, sound and movement and consciousness studies (Knowledge Lab 2005 & 2006 Berlin) and New Media Art Lab, Banff, Canada 2007. Sarat Maharaj's curatorial contributions include: co-curating *Documenta 11*, 2002 and with Ecke Bonk and Richard Hamilton *retinal.optical.visual.conceptual.....on Marcel Duchamp* (Boymanns, Rotterdam. 2002) *The Knowledge Lab* (Haus der Kulturen der Welt 2005-2006 took in sound/image/movement experiments with Liu Sola (Beijing/NY) and Kofi Koko (Benin/Paris). With Stuart Hall, his publications include *Modernity & Difference* (INIVA. London). His published and new essays will be brought together in *Work in Progress: Collected Writings* (MIT.2009). Maharaj's theoretical competence, combined with his willingness to bring the concepts of cultural, diversity and difference to a more public forum, make him a key intellectual voice on the Continent today.

**CHANG Tsong-zung**, curator, co-founder of the Asia Art Archive in Hong Kong, co-founder of the Hong Kong chapter of AICA, guest professor of Visual Culture Institute, China Art Academy. He has been active in curating Chinese exhibitions since the 1980s; he pioneered participation of Chinese art in international exhibitions, and was instrumental in establishing the international image of Chinese contemporary art



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of the 1990s. As a curator with strong attachments to the literati tradition, he firmly believes that contemporary art should have unique responsibilities under different contexts and take diverse paths. One of his main interests is the angle of contribution Chinese art may open up to the world. In recent years, his activities have centred around the theme: 'revival of Chinese visual and material culture' through the intervention of curatorial practice. These projects involve artefacts, space and ritual, forming a special and unique chapter in Chinese contemporary art. His exhibitions include 'China's New Art Post-1989' in 1993; Special Exhibitions at the Sao Paulo International Biennial in 1994 and 1996; the 'Power of the Word' series of exhibitions, 1999; Hong Kong Project at Sao Paulo Biennial 1996 and Venice Biennial 2001; 'Strange Heaven: Chinese Contemporary Photography', 2002; 'Open Asia: International Sculpture Exhibition' in Venice 2005; 'Yellow Box' series of research projects about contemporary art practice and Chinese space, 2004-2006; 'A Lu Ban Experience: Revival of the Countryside', special project of Sao Paulo Architectural Biennial 2007.