

UNNI GJERTSEN AT 1 SHANTHIROAD, BANGALORE



Interview in Sui Jian Guo's studio. Photograph: Unni Gjertsen

OCA AND COLAB ART & ARCHITECTURE, BANGALORE, INDIA, IN COOPERATION WITH 1 SHANTHIROAD, BANGALORE PRESENT

BEYOND OXIANA
A project by Unni Gjertsen

Exhibition Dates:
16 January–12 February 2011

Opening Reception:
Friday, 14 January / 18:30

www.1shanthiroad.com

Beyond Oxiana is a site-specific, text-based installation project resulting from Norwegian artist **Unni Gjertsen's** OCA-sponsored residency in Bangalore in November 2009. This is Gjertsen's fourth and final project in an on-going series relating to travel: the three previous projects were constructed from her journeys through Cairo, Istanbul and Armenia. The exhibition at 1 Shanthiroad deals with the artist's interest in the spatial organisation of memories and adapts an alternative form of archaeology for mapping history and identity. 1 Shanthiroad is an artist-led initiative in Bangalore, which supports the production and presentation of experimental contemporary art practices with artists' studios, a gallery and a discursive programme.

The gallery walls will have painted texts, distilled from notes Gjertsen made from seven interviews during her residency at Platform China, Beijing in April/May 2009. All the interviewees were born in different parts of China between 1940 and 1979 and were of varying ages and professions. They include a philosopher teaching theory at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts, a dancer and choreographer working within conceptual dance and others working within architecture, art criticism and visual art.

The interview questions were designed to elicit personal memories of the topography of each individual's birthplace, as well as recollections of major socio-political events in China's history (such as World War II, the Cultural Revolution and the Tiananmen Square protest), which have helped forge the collective consciousness of Chinese identity today. The texts will be organised in correlation with Chinese geography, with each story representing a position on the conceptual 'map' formed by the exhibition space.

Beyond Oxiana will ultimately function as a reconstruction of physical and cognitive space, embodying both the personal perceptions of each individual and the moments of exchange with the artist.

About the Artist

Unni Gjertsen was born in 1966 in Sjøvegan, Norway, and lives and works in Oslo. She studied at the Trondheim Academy of Arts and University of Oslo. Her previous group exhibitions include 'Correct me if I'm critical', Nordische Botschaften, Berlin; 'Headlines and Footnotes', Henie-

Onstad Art Centre, Bærum, Norway; 'The last Marquise', Kasteel van Gaasbeek, Belgium; 'If I can't dance I will not be part of your Revolution', MUHKA, Antwerp; as well as others at UKS, Oslo, Göteborgs Konsthall, Liljevalchs Konsthall and IASPIS in Stockholm (2005-10). Her films have been screened at Malmö Konsthall and Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, amongst other venues. She has had solo exhibitions at Baltic Sea Cultural Centre in Gdansk (2007) and at Konsthall C in Stockholm (2005). Most recently, Gjertsen participated in 'The Eternal Tour' taking place in Jerusalem and Ramallah, where she presented 'The Armenia Project' — a collaborative research project born out of a journey to Armenia in 2009 and consisting of video installations and text.

About the Office for Contemporary Art Norway

The Office for Contemporary Art Norway is a non-profit foundation created by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs (KKD, now KUD) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (UD) in autumn 2001 with the aim of strengthening the position of contemporary visual arts and production from Norway, and stimulating and facilitating exchange between Norwegian and international art institutions and professionals. Since its foundation in 2001, OCA has been responsible for a programme of exhibitions, conferences, lectures and seminars both in Norway and abroad, involving artists, curators, philosophers and art and cultural theorists.

About Colab Art and Architecture

CoLab Art and Architecture based in Bangalore, India aims to establish a platform to promote contemporary culture, both visual and spatial. CoLab organises and commissions a range of activities including exhibitions, seminars, residencies and publications designed to profile contemporary Indian work and shows this within the context of international practice. CoLab partners with a network of artists, institutions and government organisations from India and beyond in order to foster experimentation, dialogue and share viewpoints of interest to the Indian and International Arts Community. A key aspect of CoLab's work is to generate a wider engagement with contemporary practice through audience development.

About 1 Shanthi Road Gallery

1 Shanthiroad is an artist-led initiative that has developed into an art space, which nurtures creativity and cutting edge art practices. It has achieved a reputation of being open and welcoming to artists as a venue for dialog, debate and an incubator for contemporary art experimentation that focuses on process. The studio is an active host for alternative art practices in the city of Bangalore.

Beyond Oxiana has been supported by O3-funds as underwritten by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for enhancing collaboration in the contemporary art field with professional artists in countries designated by the MFA. The purpose of the O3-funds as allocated to OCA is to further develop cooperation and professional networking between OCA and the constituency of artists, independent cultural producers, and organisations that are located in designated countries. This includes but is not limited to 'professional research visits by cultural producers, artists, and curators', 'short-term residencies for cultural producers and artists', seminars, conferences, art projects, workshops, etc. that focus on the further development of professional exchange and networking between and among countries', and 'project development (and pilot projects) on an international scale'.