



**MARSEILLE-PROVENCE 2013**  
EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

THIS EXHIBITION IS PART OF '**RESTER PARTIR, LE VOYAGE IMPOSSIBLE**'  
A PROJECT CO-PRODUCED BY MARSEILLE-PROVENCE 2013

## Hai Zhang :: *Don't follow me, I'm lost*

Exhibition from January 13 to March 3, 2013 :: Voies Off Gallery, Arles (France)



© Hai Zhang



**Rester Partir**  
Le voyage impossible

January 13, 2013, on the opening ceremony of Marseille-Provence 2013, Voies Off will lay the foundation stone of the project 'Rester Partir, le voyage impossible'\* and invites you to the opening of the exhibition '*Don't Follow Me, I'm Lost*', by Hai Zhang.

'*Rester Partir, le voyage impossible*' is a multi-media art event developed by Voies Off in coproduction with Marseille-Provence 2013. This is a collaborative project with artists and curator from Serbia, Turkey and Egypt. It will span the whole year of 2013 and will feature photography exhibitions and screenings, an artist's video and artist's residencies.

The theme of the project 'Rester Partir' is humanity. The project is focused on the aesthetic, plastic and philosophical interactions of the mind, body and society. It will attempt to address the concept of 'border', sometimes external, often internal, summarized in the duality: 'staying / leaving'.

**The exhibition '*Don't Follow Me, I'm Lost*', by Hai Zhang at the Voies Off Gallery is the first event of the project '*Rester Partir, le voyage impossible*'.**

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→ **OPENING ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 13, 2013 AT 12:30 P.M.**  
→ EXHIBITION FROM JANUARY 13 TO MARCH 3, 2013  
→ VOIES OFF GALLERY :: 26 TER RUE RASPAIL, ARLES (FRANCE)  
→ MON-FR, 10 A.M.-12 P.M., 3-6 P.M.  
→ ON SATURDAY WITH AN APPOINTMENT

\* *Staying Leaving, the impossible travel*

**Hai ZHANG** studied and practiced architecture in China and the US. While photography had always been an essence in his personal and professional life, in 2008, he decided to devote himself completely to photography. His concerns of the human conditions have been explored through photograph whether his intimate personal subjects and of broader projects related to society at large.

Since 2008, his photographs focuses on the ever-changing and sprawling Chinese urban landscape. Meanwhile, he works on a long-term project in the US titled *To Kill A Mockingbird* which was featured in *America Through A Chinese Lens*, an exhibition at the Museum of Chinese in America in New York City.

Hai Zhang was a fellow of Rafael Vinoly Architecture Research Fellowship from 2009 to 2010. His works have been exhibited in museums, galleries, and cultural venues in New York, Kansas, Washington, China, Turkey and Costa Rica. He has lectured at numerous artistic and cultural institutions in New-York, Turkey and Beijing. Currently, he commutes between New York and China.

### ***Don't Follow Me, I'm Lost***

Wandering in Chinese cities nowadays is magical. The accelerated metabolic rate of urban development has collaged the Chinese cities with fragments across decades. To me, as a photographer, it has become impossible to take a shot of today's China without capturing contrast. But what does it really mean?

The apparent contrast in the photograph with a lone house in the midst of rubbles and shadows of skyscraper failed to tell the story that the building owner had collected multimillion dollars as compensation for the demolition and moved to Hong Kong. The ones who became homeless were the migrant workers who could only afford a room in such a building.

The running-away crowd was chased by the policemen as they were selling black market train tickets for higher profit. But no one knows that most of them were migrant workers who just lost their jobs in the nearby factories. The shabby room with a bunk bed appeared almost uninhabitable, but in fact it was the last refuge for the migrant worker's children. A month after the picture was taken, the five-member family moved into a twenty square-meters room that could only fit one bunk bed that was shared by them all.

Facing the complexity of today's stories, the photography appears inadequate. Can I grasp the sense of today's "Chinese-ness" through a composite portraiture of my own society? Maybe beyond documentary or visual evidence, photography should not give answers but raise more questions. Perhaps this is an impossible ambition. Looking at the pictures I have taken so far, I hate to realize that I am still dealing with illusions and fantasies. Therefore I have to and must pursue my journey, and go deeper and further until I am totally lost.

The lonesome security guard who sat under a dilapidated wall and turned away from my lens appeared as vulnerable as a kid; the running kid who looked toughly right into my eyes. Who is more fragile? Why did the splendid urbanscapes from the five-star hotel room made me feel no less poignant than the lonely building in the rubbles?

The mass praying in the morning of Chinese New Year at the Buddhist monastery is probably the only allowed spontaneous social mass

gathering in China. In the context of increasing consumerism, have we become more spiritual or are we too frightened by the unpredictable future?

In a hot summer afternoon, I walked into a luxury house. A stunningly beautiful girl was standing in front of a window facing the ocean. She turned her head and stared at me.

It was a complete silence. But I heard her clearly: *Don't Follow Me, I'm Lost*. In her eyes I saw the exact same staring that I have encountered countless times in my four years of wandering.'

**Hai Zhang**  
December 2013

*Don't Follow Me, I'm Lost* is also an upcoming artist photography book composed of the photographs taken in China from 2008 through 2012.

More details: [www.voies-off.com](http://www.voies-off.com), [www.oceanmate.com](http://www.oceanmate.com)

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## → Voies Off Gallery :: contemporary Photography :: Arles (France)

Opened in July 2007, the Voies Off gallery is a natural complement to the Voies Off festival whose raison-d'être is the support and promotion of young creative photography. Under Christophe Laloi's direction, the Voies Off gallery schedules emerging or full-fledged artists. The Voies Off gallery is opened year round and located at the heart of the ancient city of Arles. It occupies a 150 m2 dedicated to contemporary photography. Its entrance is free.

**Useful Informations** :: The gallery is open Mon-Fr, 10 a.m.–12 p.m., 3-6 p.m. On Saturdays with an appointment. **Infoline** :: +334 90 96 93 82 - [photographie@voies-off.com](mailto:photographie@voies-off.com)

Voies Off Gallery is supported by the Regional Council of Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur

