

Contact: Sarah Bacon
sarahb@creativetime.org
212-206-6674 ext. 205

CHINESE ARTIST ZHANG HUAN ENGAGES HERITAGE AND ASSIMILATION WITH *PEACE* IN CREATIVE TIME'S ART ON THE PLAZA AT THE RITZ-CARLTON NEW YORK, BATTERY PARK



Photo: detail of Zhang Huan's Peace, courtesy of Luhring Augustine, New York.

July 1, 2003: Creative Time presents *Peace*, an elegant sculpture by celebrated Chinese artist Zhang Huan exploring ancestral history and ethnic assimilation. *Peace*, the third installation in Creative Time's multidisciplinary public sculpture series, *Art on the Plaza* at The Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park, opens in mid August, 2003 and will remain on view through April, 2004. **Creative Time will also host a free, public performance by the artist on the Plaza the evening of Tuesday, October 7, 2003 at 6:30 p.m. sharp in which Zhang Huan will be joined by members of the Shaolin Temple, known for its unique Kung-Fu practice and Buddhist culture.**

Peace is presented by Creative Time and The Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park, in cooperation with The Battery Park City Authority. The installation is the latest iteration of Creative Time's continued exploration of contemporary sculpture's myriad manifestations in *Art on the Plaza*.



Peace

Peace embodies the relation of experience to environment, identity to culture, and body to spirit—the cardinal themes of Zhang Huan’s work, which includes performance, photography, and sculpture. In *Peace*, a large bell modeled after those found in Chinese temples hangs next to a gilded life cast of the artist’s naked body. The bronze bell is inscribed with the names of the artist’s ancestors from his native village in China while the rigid perpendicular body bears naturalistic details such as creases in the skin and strands of hair. Viewers are invited to drive the body into the bell, thereby forcing a confrontation between the artist and his ancestral past.

The participatory nature of *Peace* cannot be fully understood outside the context of Zhang Huan’s performances, which began in China in 1993 and have since evolved to occasionally engage his sculptural installations. Zhang Huan’s conviction that he can achieve the rawest form of artistic expression by employing his body as an artistic medium has led him to enact often-gruesome physical feats, which, in his words, “enable one to understand, and enrich one’s knowledge of life.” *Peace* is a performance by proxy: the cast is a surrogate for the artist himself while the sounding of the bell by viewers is experiential. The bell vocalizes the clash of cultures in which Zhang Huan is suspended and, within view of Ellis Island, even asks viewers to consider their own relationship to ancestry and identity.

Zhang Huan

Zhang Huan has distinguished himself internationally with his personal and often provocative photography, performances, and sculpture. Born in An Yang City, China in 1965, Zhang Huan obtained his MA in 1993 from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, and now resides and works in New York City. Zhang Huan’s work has been included in group exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; Queens Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Montreal, and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston. In addition, he participated in the 1999 Venice Biennale and recently presented solo exhibitions at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery and at the Luhring Augustine Gallery. Also, Zhang Huan has performed at the 2002 Whitney Biennial; Edinburgh International Festival; International Triennale of Contemporary Art, Japan; Seattle Art Museum and at the PS1 Museum of Contemporary Art.

Creative Time

As the City’s preeminent non-profit public arts presenter, over the last 30 years Creative Time has taken the arts virtually anywhere that an artist can imagine—from the landmark Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage and Times Square to the Internet and the skies over Manhattan. Lower Manhattan is the site of some of the organization’s earliest and most celebrated projects at 88 Pine Street, the U.S. Custom House, the Battery Maritime Museum and the Battery Park Landfill, where for ten years Creative Time presented *Art on the Beach*. The neighborhood was also the site of *Tribute in Light*, the lauded temporary light memorial to September 11. While the



privatization of public space increases, *Art on the Plaza* exemplifies how public/private partnerships can enhance the urban landscape. We thus relish the opportunity to present our installation series, *Art on the Plaza* at The Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park and further Creative Time's commitment to invigorating New York City with fresh artistic visions. www.creativetime.org.

The Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park

In addition to *Art on the Plaza*, The Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park houses a cutting-edge art collection, The Millennium Partners Collection of Contemporary Art, which features commissions by forty contemporary artists. The Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park is a world-class, five-star hotel with condominium residences, sweeping park and waterfront views, and legendary amenities such as full-time staff, restaurants, and fitness center. Located at Two West Street and Battery Place, The Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park hosts The Skyscraper Museum at Battery Park City. Millennium Partners, a \$3 billion national real estate development company, built the Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park Hotel and Residences. With similar mixed-use properties in Washington D.C., Boston, San Francisco and New York City, Central Park South, Millennium Partners is currently developing such properties in Miami. For more information about The Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park please visit www.ritzcarlton.com. For more information about Millennium Partners visit www.millenniumptrs.com.

Battery Park City Authority

The Hugh L. Carey Battery Park City Authority (BPCA) is a public benefit corporation created in 1968 by Governor Nelson Rockefeller and the New York State Legislature to develop a 92-acre landfill at the southwestern tip of Manhattan. At Battery Park City, parcels of land are leased to private developers who build in accordance with BPCA guidelines. A fine arts program brings significant works of art to public spaces throughout Battery Park City. Battery Park City is currently home to 13 works of public art by renowned artists such as Tom Otterness, Louise Bourgeois, Jim Dine, Martin Puryear, Brian Tolle, and many others. Battery Park City has 35 acres of public parks and gardens and cultural amenities such as The Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, the New York City Police Memorial, and the lauded Irish Hunger Memorial. More than 40,000 people work in the World Financial Center, which was built on land leased from Battery Park City. When development is completed, about 10,000 people are expected to live in Battery Park City. The BPCA's public art program contributes to making Battery Park City one of the most successful and exciting examples of planned urban development in the world. www.batteryparkcity.org.



CREATIVE TIME'S SUMMER & FALL 2003 PROGRAMS

The 59th Minute

Now through September 30, 2003

- *Cowboy Waltz* by **Jeremy Blake** in *The 59th Minute: Video Art on the Panasonic Astrovision*.
- Concurrent installation, June 20 – September 30, *Jeremy Blake: Moving Images*, at The American Museum of the Moving Image, www.movingimage.us
- **Free artist talk with Curator, Carl Goodman at AMMI, September 25, 2003**

Art on the Plaza

Performance by **Zhang Huan** on the Plaza of the Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park,
Date TBD

Light Cycle

September 15, 2003

- Creative Time presents *Light Cycle* by **Cai Guo-Qiang** over **Central Park**. *Light Cycle* is a pyrotechnic display curated by Creative Time, presented in cooperation with Central Park Conservancy and the City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation, and generously sponsored by Häagen-Dazs as part of their *Art of Pure Pleasure* initiative. *Light Cycle* will be the centerpiece of a summer-long celebration of the Central Park's 150th Anniversary.
- **Asia Society and Museum** will feature a complementary exhibition, *An Explosion Event: Light Cycle Over Central Park*, September 9 – December 14, 2003, of Cai Guo-Qiang's gunpowder drawings for *Light Cycle*.



307 Seventh Avenue #1904 New York, NY 10001 Tel.212.206.6674 Fax.212.255.8467 www.creativetime.org

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