

For Immediate Release

## O ZHANG The Elopse

*These blank billboards are stark and beautiful, and although they are devoid of any overt message, they are not silent. Their empty content speaks of decline, decay and bankruptcy. Conversely, in their formal similarities to abstract art, these advertising surfaces recall a certain heroic American spirit. Their stark simplicity reminds me of the idealism embodied in high-Modernist design -- the era of America's post-war boom and rise of consumer and automobile culture.*

- O Zhang

W.Ming is pleased to present *The Elopse*, O Zhang's works from *I am Your Mirror* (2012) and *The Elopse* (2014). *I am Your Mirror* and *The Elopse* are two complimentary series whose content reflects on America's empty billboards.

In 2012, Zhang created *I am Your Mirror* as an installation for the Vilcek Foundation. The installation included photography, works on paper, works on board and a site-specific piece. In this exhibit, a complete set of 40 photographs from this project will be on view.

Zhang was inspired for the installation during a road trip when she first arrived in the United States in 2004. Unlike the capitalist-inspired commercial messages and Communist messages of her native China, the American billboards conveyed a different tone. She had never seen an empty billboard before coming to the United States. Rather than seeing them as meaningless, she believes they are a reflection of the complexities of the country's condition. They convey messages about American lives, from during the post-war period to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They embody the existence of strength as well as the potential for both extreme success and failure of the "American dream."

*The Elopse* is Zhang's latest sequence of work, based on the *I am Your Mirror* series. This exhibit shows 20 of her works on paper from *The Elopse*. She reuses the images from *I am Your Mirror* and subjects them to new materials and interpretation, writing a mystic narrative about reality. These works address similar content and sentiments, but in a different manner. The production of this series particularly compelled Zhang to question the function of time in the creation process. During the making of the works on paper, time is embodied in the

movement of nature, including the effect of the rainwater on the photographs. Zhang titled the series *The Elopse* due to her heightened awareness of the passage of time, which has increased over the years and has made her feel increasingly marginal in American culture.

## O Zhang

O Zhang was born in 1976 in Guangzhou, China. She was trained in painting, but now works in photography and mixed media. A graduate of Royal College of Art in London and Central Academy of Art in Beijing, she moved to New York in 2004. Zhang was the recipient of the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Artist Fellowship (NY), Wilson Centre for Photography Fellowship. She was the winner of the Fuji Film Awards (London) and the RCA Photography Graduate Award (London), and nominated for numerous awards including the Chinese Contemporary Art Awards (Beijing), Beck's Future Award (London), Creative Capital Awards and The Louis Comfort Tiffany Biennial Awards (New York).

O Zhang has had solo exhibitions in Beijing, Istanbul, London, Manchester, Vancouver, Philadelphia and New York. She has been invited to lecture at institutions including New York University, Beijing Central Academy of Fine Art, Beijing Fashion Institute, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Art, and the Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art. Her work has been included in group shows throughout Europe, America and China, at establishments including Kunsthalle Museum (Hamburg), Miro Museum (Barcelona), Kunstmuseum (Bern), Folkwang Museum (Essen), Peabody Essex Museum (MA), Museum of Contemporary Art (Shanghai), Millennium Monument Art Museum (Beijing) and is in the collections of the Guggenheim Museum (NY), Santa Barbara Museum (CA), Clifford Chance Collection (London), Vancouver Art Gallery (Vancouver), Millennium Monument Art Museum collection (Beijing), and other private collections, including the Uli Sigg collection in Switzerland. O Zhang lives and works between New York and Beijing.

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