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H&R Block Artspace will present a new Project Wall by Chinese artist Yang Yongliang in January

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (Dec. 19, 2008) – “Phantom Landscape II, No. 3,” a new Project Wall by Chinese artist Yang Yongliang, will be on view beginning in January at the H&R Block Artspace at the Kansas City Art Institute, 16 E. 43rd St.

The Artspace Project Wall is a large-scale billboard that serves as a site for temporary public art projects commissioned by the Artspace featuring regional and national artists. Since 1999, the Project Wall has displayed works by Vik Muniz, Mike Sinclair, Jenny Holzer, Deanna Dikeman, Alexis Rockman and Archie Scott Gobber.

“From a distance, the image of mountain peaks, fjords, a winding river and mist evokes a style of Chinese ink painting called shanshui, or mountain and water painting,” said Raechell Smith, director of the Artspace. “A closer look, however, reveals that mountains are built from facades of skyscrapers, trees are construction cranes and electrical poles, and the mist-enshrouded river is a pollution-filled street and a stream of congested traffic. The image pays homage to the tradition of ink landscape painting in China and references, in particular, the imagery of Chinese rural landscapes from the Northern Song dynasty. Yang Yongliang has created a new visual language by combining the mood of traditional Chinese painting with the effects and techniques of digital photography. Making further reference to contemporary life, the artist includes Chinese script in the upper left of the image that describes the Shanghai’s urban geography, naming specific locations and streets such as Nanjing Road and Jing’an Temple. The red seals, or stamps, are images of rubbings made from manhole covers located throughout the city.”

Yang Yongliang was born in Shanghai in 1980. Early on, he studied ink painting and calligraphy and went on to study visual communications at the Shanghai Institute of Design at the China Academy of Fine Arts and at the Shanghai Arts and Crafts Vocational College. He lives and works in Shanghai, and his works have been exhibited in China, Korea, Greece, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States. His works are in the collections of The British Museum and Bates College Museum of Art in Lewiston, Maine.

Other works from the “Phantom Landscape” series are included in the exhibition “Stairway to Heaven: From Chinese Streets to Monuments and Skyscrapers,” which will be on view at the H&R Block Artspace from Jan. 17 to April 4.

About the H&R Block Artspace

Since 1999, the H&R Block Artspace at the Kansas City Art Institute has been dedicated to presenting quality exhibitions of contemporary art and a range of public programs for a growing audience of students, educators, artists, arts enthusiasts and the general public. For generous support of the 2008-2009 exhibition series, the Artspace gratefully acknowledges the Richard J. Stern Foundation, the H&R Block Foundation, the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency, and private contributions. The Artspace is located at 16 E. 43rd St., one block east of Main Street. Public hours are noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. Admission is free. For more information about upcoming exhibitions and public programs, visit www.kcai.edu/artspace or call 816-561-5563.

About the Kansas City Art Institute

Founded in 1885, the Kansas City Art Institute is a private, independent four-year college of art and design awarding the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with majors in animation, art history, ceramics, digital filmmaking, fiber, graphic design, interdisciplinary arts, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture and studio art with an emphasis in creative writing. KCAI also hosts a free public lecture series — “Current Perspectives” — and a range of public programs including exhibitions, events and partnerships in the community to benefit the general public as well as evening, weekend and summer classes in art, design, multimedia studies and desktop publishing for children, youth and adults. For more information, visit KCAI on the Web at www.kcai.edu.

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