

Allan Chawner

*Remnants*

Opening night Thursday October 4, 6 - 8pm

Exhibition dates October 5 – 27, 2012



*Remnants: Sculptures*, detail from scrolls, 2011



*Remnants: Place*, detail from scrolls, 2011



*Remnants: Remains*, detail from scrolls, 2011

In 2010 Allan Chawner was artist in residence at the Red Gate Gallery Residency Program at Bei Gao on the outskirts of Beijing. During this time he completed several series of works; some in collaboration with other resident artists, and others which developed as a result of his solitary cycling expeditions into the surrounding areas. In the exhibition *Remnants* he presents scrolls which are divided into three sections and record three different aspects of his response to this surreal and devastated landscape. These series are titled *Sculptures*, *Place* and *Remains*. The landscape and buildings around Bei Gao have been demolished; nothing much remains of the small houses previously occupied by migrants from the Chinese countryside, or of the various industries in which these people were employed. This area hosted several sculpture studios, mainly fabricating figurative work for public places, restaurants and hotels. Traces of this industry can be found amongst the ruins; broken sculptures lie half submerged in a forest of debris. Piles of bricks have been collected by scavenging locals; these will be taken away and used to build yet more small temporary homes a little further out of the city, away from the encroaching development. These in turn will be demolished as Beijing continues to grow.

The works in *Remnants* have been printed on rice paper and traditional archival rice glue has been used to mount the images. It seems appropriate to show this view of the beauty and terror of a changing China, in a way which acknowledges the importance of the underlying tradition and history of this culture. The three books which accompany the scrolls are also made according to traditional methodology; these hand-held objects allow an intimate viewing of images from each of the series. In *Remnants*, Allan Chawner has successfully portrayed both the beauty and the underbelly of modern China. He engages our curiosity, sympathy and optimism for this emerging world power. - Professor Anne Graham, The University of Newcastle, 2011

Allan Chawner has been a practicing artist for more than 30 years. During this time he has consistently held exhibitions and collaborated with writers or composers. Allan's artwork is based around notions of sense of place in portraiture and landscape. His work is a response to identity: both of the self and of the communities. He presents exhibitions internationally and has also developed links with small communities, exhibiting in venues outside mainstream art galleries. Allan's work is part of many public and private collections both in Australia and overseas. Allan has been lecturing in visual arts since 1978 and remains a Conjoint Associate Professor of Fine Art at The University of Newcastle, New South Wales.