

STEPHEN BULGER GALLERY

SCOTT CONARROE

China

Exhibition Dates: April 5 – May 3, 2014

Closing Reception: Saturday, May 3, 2-5pm

Artist Talk: Saturday, May 3, 1pm; *RSVP as seating is limited.*

The gallery is pleased to present “China,” our third solo exhibition of work by Canadian photographer Scott Conarroe.

Conarroe (b. Edmonton, AB, 1974) first visited Beijing in the wake of the 2008 Summer Olympics. He returned to China briefly the following year and in 2012 he began photographing that nation against the backdrop of a railway expansion that rivals America's Interstates in both scope and intent. With imagery from this ongoing study, some earlier impressions, and a surprising new strain of street work, “China” describes a vast historical moment shot through with human-scale dramas.

Conarroe has ranged some twenty provinces by rail. He is 6' tall, blue-eyed and in no danger of blending in. Over thousands of shoulder-to-shoulder and knee-to-knee kilometres he has learned to make primitive small talk and to recede from focus. His view is certainly an outsider's, but even the landscapes in this exhibition contain instances of unguardedness; village men idling at billiards, people bent in picturesque labour and someone's small garden arranged around a drip-filled bucket. Closer in, his tableaux of proletariat ennui, a prosperous couple fighting and women laughing like girls read as stills from a well-produced cinematic feature. The West has been exposed to many iterations of China in recent years: grandiose, tragic, inspiring, infuriating, backwards and futuristic. Each reflects degrees of truth and each leaves something to be desired. Conarroe's China considers the casual yening of people who live between those extremes.

Conarroe has a BFA from the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design and an MFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. He has been an artist-in-residence at Light Work (US), Villa Sträuli (CH), the FLACC (BE) and a Canadian Armed Forces Civilian Artist in the arctic. He has been awarded numerous prizes, including grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, the 2011 Duke and Duchess of York Prize for Photography, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Conarroe's work was included in Canada's pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo and in “Landmark: The Fields of Photography” at Somerset House, London. Last year he was featured at the inaugural Reflexiva Muestra Fotografía de Vila-Real and “Scott Conarroe: By Rail” concluded its five year tour at the University of Western Ontario's McIntosh Gallery. Conarroe's upcoming monograph, *By Rail and By Sea*, will be published by Black Dog Publishing. He currently teaches at Emily Carr University of Art and Design and he lives between Vancouver and Zurich.

Scott Conarroe is grateful to the Canada Council for the Arts, The Ontario Arts Council, Sony Canada, and TIME for supporting his work in China.