

## rogue wave projects presents chen man in los angeles

Immerse yourself in Chen Man's digital world of water nymphs, Chinese ice-princesses and sylph-like snake-charmers in her new exhibition at L.A. Louver.



Today, LA-based initiative *Rogue Wave Projects*, opens it's second international exhibition at the LA Louver Gallery in Venice, California, featuring the breathtaking works of Chinese photographer and artist Chen Man, fittingly titled *East - West*. At only 34 years old, Chen Man is considered one of

China's leading photographers, creating images so flawless they could have been dreamt up by a computer, if computers could read beauty. She transforms her subjects into hyper-real goddesses, post-produced to perfection, and re-imagined as the twelve signs of the zodiac, the five elements or the four seasons. For i-D's The Whatever the Weather Issue, Pre-Spring 2012, Chen Man created 12 stunning covers, unapologetically, digitally manipulated and in all the richest colours imaginable, as well as photographing *X-Men* star Fan Bing Bing for The Role Model Issue, Fall 2012 and capturing some of China's less celebrated but no less integral farmers, athletes and musicians. See her i-D archive here ([http://i-d.vice.com/en\\_gb/article/chen-mans-i-d-archive](http://i-d.vice.com/en_gb/article/chen-mans-i-d-archive)), or scroll down for a sneak peek into her fantastical world...



Red Crest

## **How has the fashion industry in China changed since you started working?**

In China, we tend to emphasize on the collective, rather than the individual. But that's all starting to change. People are pursuing a greater sense of security and in turn an individualised sense of self. In peaceful times, many don't have to worry about food or keeping warm. More Chinese people now have the luxury to think about fashion, when they never did before.

## **Who are your favourite photographers?**

Liu Heung Shing. Ho Fan.

## **You transform your models into fantastical creatures, where do you get your inspiration from?**

Life is my inspiration. My inspiration is sourced from life, but does not seek to imitate it. My generation is the first to flourish after China's era of socialistic reform, and we are the first generation to witness the realisation of our material dreams. The more modernised we become, the more I feel the need for Chinese traditional philosophical thought in our every lives. In my work I aspire to make visual illustrations of traditional Chinese culture using modern aesthetics.





Young Pioneers with Three Gorges

### What is your favourite image from the exhibition?

I like all the works in the exhibition. They all reflect the different stages of my artistic development, and my evolving views on the world. My earliest photographs on display are from my Vision series, which I created in 2003 while still attending university. Being young and brimming with ideas, I used heavy postproduction on my photographs to express multiple themes in a singular image or vision.



When challenged with questions about the "excessive employment of postproduction" in my works, I switched to a simplistic approach and began shooting minimal portraits that resembled enlarged 1-inch instant photos. This proved to the critics that I was capable of creating meaningful images without the use of postproduction. It was through these photographs that I began to be sought out by celebrities and established my prominence as a mainstream photographer in the fashion circles.

While most Chinese photographers are still imitating their Western counterparts in exploring their individual styles, I look to China for inspiration. This is most clearly expressed in my Motherland series (2008). This series is very special to me, being the first photographer to use iconic Chinese locations as backdrops in fashion photography. Rather than repeating typical representations of China, I wanted to illustrate what Chinese beauty looks like in a contemporary context.



Funky Great Wall

What's your Chinese zodiac sign?

Monkey.

What does that say about you?

In traditional Chinese philosophy, natural phenomena can be classified into five elements: metal, wood, water, fire and earth. The monkey is often attributed with the characteristics of metal, which I feel suits me. Metal is firm but resilient, active and tough, perseverant but flexible.





Chinese Colours: Eosin

### **What does beauty mean to most Chinese girls today?**

The definition of beauty is always changing and cycling like the seasons. Now, I would say Chinese girls are embracing a more diverse sense of style that fuses modern trends with traditional ideals. Today in Beijing's luxury malls, you can see women with Hermes bags, wearing Chanel suits and UGG boots, and at the same time holding a string of beads in the left hand, and a calculator in the right hand.

### **What does beauty mean to you?**

Beauty to me is two opposites that need each other in order to exist in our world at the same time - the philosophy of Yin and Yang. Most people find beauty in material wealth and luxury goods. But what are luxury goods? Luxury goods cannot be reproduced, such as the treasures in the Palace Museum, a cup of tea enjoyed in the countryside, or a lovely person I happen to meet on the street. It's special and cannot be duplicated. To me, the tranquility of blue skies and singing birds in the morning is more of a luxury, than any Birkin bag.





Mr Zhong





Hurry and Listen to me

### What are you working on next?

After my *East/West* exhibition finishes at L.A. Louver, it will travel to the Imperial Ancestral Temple, located in the Forbidden City in Beijing. This is the perfect venue to exhibit my first traditional Chinese paintings together with my photographs.

## What do you get up to when you're not working?

Painting, reciting and copying Buddhist and Taoist Scriptures. Spending time with close friends and relatives, or simply just being by myself - which is a luxury.

*Chen Man: East - West is open 10th December - 24th January at L.A. Louver.*

### Credits


---

Text Felicity Kinsella

Photography and artwork Chen Man

Connect to i-D's world! Like us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/iDmagazineofficial>), follow us on Twitter ([https://twitter.com/i\\_D](https://twitter.com/i_D)) and Instagram ([http://instagram.com/id\\_magazine](http://instagram.com/id_magazine)).

**f** **t** **g<sup>+</sup>**

 ([mailto:?body=rogue wave projects presents chen man in los angeles](mailto:?body=rogue+wave+projects+presents+chen+man+in+los+angeles) [https://i-d.vice.com/en\\_gb/article/rogue-wave-projects-presents-chen-man-in-los-angeles](https://i-d.vice.com/en_gb/article/rogue-wave-projects-presents-chen-man-in-los-angeles))

Topics: [news \(/en\\_gb/topic/news\)](/en_gb/topic/news), [chen man \(/en\\_gb/topic/chen-man\)](/en_gb/topic/chen-man), [rogue wave projects \(/en\\_gb/topic/rogue-wave-projects\)](/en_gb/topic/rogue-wave-projects), [la louver \(/en\\_gb/topic/la-louder\)](/en_gb/topic/la-louder), [fashion interviews \(/en\\_gb/topic/fashion-interviews\)](/en_gb/topic/fashion-interviews)

*recommended*