

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

First Museum Exhibition of Photography by Lisa Ross Captures Artist's Unprecedented Access to the Muslim Shrines Of Uyghur Region of China

Photographs and Videos Showcase Breathtaking Tranquility of the
Holy Sites in their Natural Landscapes



Lisa Ross. *BlackGarden (An Offering)*. Archival print on cotton paper. 2009.



Lisa Ross. *Unrevealed, Site 4 (Colored "Cribs")*. Archival print on cotton paper. 2009.

January 17, 2013, New York, NY— The Rubin Museum's exhibition *Living Shrines of Uyghur China: Photographs by Lisa Ross* traces the artist's ten-year exploration of the remote Xinjiang region of China through a selection of large-scale photographs and videos capturing the area's breathtaking *mazars*—Muslim shrines. The exhibition, the first solo museum exhibition ever devoted to Ross's work, emphasizes the powerful meditative quality of the holy sites, created from twigs, branches, flags, and recycled fabrics in the region's vibrant natural landscapes. On view from February 8 – July 8, 2013, *Living Shrines* portrays Xinjiang as it approaches a major cultural crossroads in which its *mazars* and Uyghur culture are being compromised by rapid modernization. Ross's images offer a singular opportunity for foreign audiences, who are rarely granted access to the sites, to experience the *mazars* as intended—as sacred places of pilgrimage and undisturbed, quiet contemplation. The exhibition continues the Rubin Museum's commitments to broadening the understanding of the cultures of Himalayan Asia by expanding public access to them and being a leading voice in presenting contemporary art related to the region.

“Many of the *mazars* in Lisa's photographs contain elements similar to Tibet's prayer flags, Mongolia's wishing trees, and even the mass-produced acrylic silks that are ubiquitous in Chinese towns. All of these areas are located just beyond the Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang), and in that way, the *mazars* have a unique ability to portray the depth and diversity that defines the region as a cultural crossroads,”

said Beth Citron, assistant curator at the Rubin Museum. “By inviting us to see these landscapes, Lisa inspires our desire to look carefully at details and recognize the visual beauty and sacred gravity of these sites, something very few Westerners have had the opportunity to see.”

Living Shrines will feature twenty-three photographs taken in the last decade as well as two 11-minute videos which capture the slow movement of the *mazars* in the desert wind. Several of the photographs in the exhibition show dolls that were placed on the ground at the *mazars* by pilgrims who wanted to mark a specific wish or prayer, and these will be displayed horizontally in order to give viewers the experience of looking down on them, as Ross’s lens did when the images were captured. Together, the photographs and videos create a meditative space reminiscent of the quiet found in the natural landscapes of Xinjiang and highlight Ross’s slow and deliberate approach to her work in the region in a time-based format.

Living Shrines of Uyghur China: Photographs by Lisa Ross will be accompanied by a book under the same title which will be released by Monacelli Press.

ABOUT THE RUBIN MUSEUM:

The Rubin Museum creates an immersive environment for experiencing the art and culture of Himalayan Asia and develops programming that enables visitors to make personal connections to their contemporary lives. The only museum in the U.S. dedicated to the Himalayan region, the Rubin holds outstanding collections of Tibetan, Indian, Nepalese, Mongolian, and Bhutanese art, and provides a bridge to the cultures of the region. Dedicated to providing a multidimensional experience, the Rubin engages its visitors in a spectrum of exhibitions, dialogues, films, performances, and educational programs that explore Himalayan Asia through a range of artistic, cultural, religious, and traditional contexts and perspectives. Its intimate scale facilitates both quiet contemplation and direct and active engagement. The Serai Café and shop are also inspired by the region’s varied cultures and serve as an extension of the museum’s gallery experience. For more information, including hours, visit www.rmanyc.org.

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For further information and images, please contact:

Alina Sumajin/Ariel Hudes
Resnicow Schroeder Associates
212-671-5155/212-671-5169
[asumajin@resnicowschroeder.com/](mailto:asumajin@resnicowschroeder.com)
ahudes@resnicowschroeder.com

Anne-Marie Nolin, Head of Communications
RubinMuseum of Art
212-620-5000 x276
amnolin@rmanyc.org