

Miao Xiaochun

The Last Judgment in Cyberspace

The first St. Louis showing of an internationally exhibited Chinese artist who uses virtual reality technology to explore Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel masterpiece from a variety of new perspectives.

Sample Images



left and above: Miao Xiaochun, *The Last Judgment in Cyberspace: The Front View* (full image and detail), 2006. Digital C-print. 94 × 81.25 in.

A fully illustrated exhibition catalogue is available for purchase at MOCRA for \$15.



below and right: Miao Xiaochun, *The Last Judgment in Cyberspace: The Vertical View* (full image and detail), 2006. Digital C-print. 94.5 × 279.5 in.



Images courtesy of Walsh Gallery, Chicago

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Miao Xiaochun

The Last Judgment in Cyberspace

Museum of Contemporary
Religious Art (MOCRA)

Saint Louis University

February 3 – May 11, 2008

opening reception February 3, 3 – 5 P.M.

The first St. Louis showing of an internationally exhibited Chinese artist who uses virtual reality technology to explore Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel masterpiece from a variety of new perspectives.



left and above: Miao Xiaochun, *The Last Judgment in Cyberspace: The Side View (full image and detail)*, 2006. Digital C-print. 94.5 x 35.5 in. Images courtesy of Walsh Gallery, Chicago.



About the Exhibition

What do the figures in Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* ... see at this fatal moment? To Miao Xiaochun, to answer these questions means to enter the painting and to assume the varied gazes of the painted figures.

- Wu Hung, art historian and exhibition curator

Chinese artist Miao Xiaochun asked himself an interesting question: "How would Michelangelo's *The Last Judgment* appear from behind?" To explore this premise, Miao Xiaochun rendered a 3-D digital model of his own body. Then he mapped this model onto all 400-plus of the figures in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel painting, creating a virtual space according to the composition of the painting. From this virtual space he produced several large-scale digital C-print images of the scene from various vantage points, as well as a video in which the viewer "flies through" the painting.

Curator and art historian Wu Hung describes *The Last Judgment in Cyberspace* as a "re-representation" of an existing work of art. Miao Xiaochun's approach enables the viewer to enter Michelangelo's painting as a participant, and allows one to adopt otherwise impossible viewing angles. This allows for imaginative play: what is the experience of judgment from the point of view of the divine, the demonic, the saved, or the damned? The repeated use of the same model "automatically abandons the distinctions between high and low, left and right, good and evil, honorable and humble, east and west, ancient and modern," according to the artist. Miao Xiaochun leaves the figures in his "re-representation" in a relatively rough state, with an almost marble-like texture. The C-prints and the video blend qualities of cutting-edge technology with sublime and apocalyptic imagery.

The Last Judgment in Cyberspace has been exhibited in Beijing, Berlin, and Chicago. MOCRA is only the second American venue for this pioneering work. MOCRA is grateful to the Walsh Gallery, Chicago, for its assistance in bringing this exhibition to St. Louis.

About the artist

Miao Xiaochun was born in Wuxi, Jiangsu, China in 1964. He has been featured in solo and group exhibitions worldwide, including shows in China, Korea, Australia, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Presently he teaches in the Photography and Digital Media Department at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing.

About the curator

Wu Hung is the Harrie A. Vanderstappen Distinguished Service Professor in Chinese Art History at the University of Chicago, and Consulting Curator at the Smart Museum. His research interests include both traditional and contemporary fields and he has published several books in addition to numerous catalogue essays. He has curated several major exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art.

Museum of Contemporary Religious Art (MOCRA) • Saint Louis University

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