

# SAN JUAN ISLANDS MUSEUM OF ART

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## A RIVER OF MIGRATION: An Installation by Vancouver BC Artist GU XIONG

**Friday Harbor, WA:** Comparing his own journey from China to Canada, with that of the of the migration of the salmon, Canadian multi-media artist **Gu Xiong** will install "A River of Migration" in the San Juan Islands Museum of Art's (SJIMA) Atrium Gallery.

Installation: August 1 to August 5. The community is invited to observe. Exhibition opens Saturday, August 6 and closes Monday, November 28, 2016.

Continuing SJIMA's **Art as a Voice** series, Gu Xiong will give a lecture / multimedia presentation: "A River of Migration", August 3, 7:30 PM at the San Juan Community Theatre in Friday Harbor

In celebration of SJIMA's ongoing relationship with the artistic community of British Columbia and shared concerns about the marine environment, as well as the human cost of migration, SJIMA has invited Gu Xiong to present his installation "A River of Migration". A Chinese immigrant to Canada, Gu Xiong is now a professor in the Department of Art History, Visual Art, and Theory at the University of British Columbia.

In his artist statement, Gu Xiong writes about his own and the Salmon's migration:

"My mixed-media installation 'A River of Migration' focuses on the rich symbolism embodied in socks and salmon, expressing my spiritual rebirth.

When I saw the salmon spawning in the river and streams in the Fraser Valley, I was really moved by their life. I feel a deep connection between their experience and my own. I dreamt I was in a red space, swimming through the Yangzi River, into the Pacific Ocean, and finally arriving at the Fraser River. I felt like I was being carried by the current, not knowing where it would take me.

I swam in the red river, my white socks laid out, forming a winding path on the bottom of the river. I felt like I was sinking, and then resurfacing.....

During this long swim, I saw the silver fish turn red, then white. The river changed from yellow to blue, then red. The fish and the river are intermeshed of two different cultural geologies, carving out an interstitial space. It is full of energy and gives birth to a hybrid culture.

When the water comes, there will be a river. When the salmon returns, the river flows red. A spiritual river. A river of migration."

Gu Xiong's practice centers on the creation of a hybrid identity arising from the integration of different cultural origins. Through the critical angle of visual art, his work encompasses sociology, geography, economics, politics, and literature, as well as the dynamics of globalization, local culture and identity politics, through which he constitutes an amalgamation of multiple cultural histories and seeks to create an entirely new identity. The construction of a new level of being is Gu Xiong's primary interest. **Observe the emergence of two rivers and two cultures – a spiritual river and a river of migration.** 

Gu Xiong has exhibited nationally and internationally, including in more than forty solo exhibitions on four continents. He has received numerous public art commissions, including "The Crowd," a mural at Safeco Field, as well as "A Place Called Home," an installation at the Seattle Public Library, Columbia City Branch, both in Seattle, Washington.



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He has participated in over one hundred prominent national and international group exhibitions including the 55 Venice Biennale Parallel Exhibition "Voice of the Unseen, Chinese Independent Art 1979-today" (Venice, 2013); Border Zones: New Art Across Cultures, (Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, 2010); Post Avant-grade Chinese Contemporary Art - Four Directions of the New Era (Hong Kong, 2007); the Shanghai Biennale (2004), Multiple City (Panama, 2003); the Montréal Biennale (2000), the Kwangju Biennale (Korea, 1995); and the ground-breaking exhibition "China Avant-Garde" at the China National Museum of Fine Arts (Beijing, 1989). He has repeatedly been awarded Canada's Arts Award.

Gu Xiong has published two books and over ten solo exhibitions catalogues. His artwork has received significant critical recognition, including reviews in the international art magazines, *Art in America, The New York Times,* and *Flash Art*.

The installation opens August 6, 2016, along with the ongoing exhibition *FRAGILE WATERS: Ansel Adams, Ernest H. Brooks II and Dorothy Kerper Monnelly*.

Thank you to the **exhibition sponsors**: HARBOR RENTAL, Western Prince Whale & Wildlife Tours

For more information go to http://www.sjima.org

### **Hours:**

Thursday – Monday, 11am – 6 pm, August 6 to September 5, 2016 Friday – Monday 11 am to 5 pm, September 6 to November 28, 2016

#### Social Media:

SJIMA can be found on: www.twitter.com @\_SJIMA http://www.facebook.com/SanJuanIslandsMuseumofArt

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**Press Images**: Available on request