

## Press Release



*BILL VIOLA Old Oak (Study)*, 2005, Color high-definition video on LCD panel mounted on wall, 14 X 24 3/4 inches

### **Inaugural Exhibition: *Mining Nature*** **James Cohan Gallery Shanghai** **July 10-August 30, 2008 Opening reception July 10, 6-8:00PM**

James Cohan Gallery Shanghai is pleased to present, *Mining Nature*, the inaugural exhibition of the new gallery in Shanghai, opening July 10<sup>th</sup> and running through August 30<sup>th</sup>. This exhibition is a group thematic show of works by international artists that make inquiries into the meaning of nature in contemporary life. As the American transcendentalist writer Ralph Waldo Emerson asked, "*Let us inquire, to what end is nature?*"

Man's relationship to the natural world has shifted over the last two centuries. In contrast to the reverential landscape painters of the nineteenth century, today's contemporary artists are not passive observers. Nature itself has evolved through global changes in the environment, the more pronounced role of human-engineered science, and the reflection of social and political unrest on the landscape. Out of the chaos of man's confrontation with his surroundings has emerged a possibility for artists to have a renewed dialogue with nature. Many have developed an expressive language with which to consider such issues as the force of entropy, the politicization of the landscape, and the sublime in nature.

This expansive exhibition will include works by ten artists from six countries and will explore the issues raised in a variety of mediums including painting, drawing, print, photography, video, and sculpture. The meditative portrait of an a tree bathed in light from dawn to midday *Old Oak (Study)*, 2005, by American video master Bill Viola, will be shown alongside the lyrical musings of Japanese artist Hiraki Sawa in his photo series *Going Places Sitting Down* 2007. Chinese expatriate Yun-Fei Ji uses traditional methods of ink painting to expose a landscape dramatically altered by development in his *On High Branches*, 2008, while American painter Ingrid Calame traces the detritus left on city streets in her map-like drawing series *Tracings from the LA River*, 2007. American conceptualist Roxy Paine takes as subject nature verses industry and explores it from many angles as in his *PMU* painting and *Scumak* sculpture, both made by machines of the artist's design and his *Pokeweed 1*, 2006, a meticulous recreation of the toxic weed. In the mediation garden adjacent to the gallery, English artist Richard Long's *Vermont Georgia South Carolina Wyoming Circle*, 1987, will be installed. It is a circular shaped sculpture divided into four segments; each quadrant is made up of rocks found in the four states named in the title. Other artists included in the exhibition are Japanese photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto, American sculptor Jeff Koons; Nigerian-born Yinka Shonibare MBE; and German film director and photographer Wim Wenders.

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