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For Immediate Release

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*Fowler Museum presents photographs by artist Stephen Verona
depicting dramatic cultural change in contemporary China*

MAO to NOW: Photographs by Stephen Verona

May 15–September 11, 2016



(Left) Rickshaw, 1980. (Right) Bullet train, 2014. Stephen Verona. Courtesy of the artist.

MAO to NOW: Photographs by Stephen Verona features 32 images documenting striking changes when comparing Chinese society in 1980 with 2014. The exhibition will be on view in the Fowler's Goldenberg Galleria from May 15–September 11, 2016.

In 1980, Stephen Verona made his initial trip to China to direct a co-produced American-Chinese film, the first in more than 40 years. Verona and his film crew entered China shortly after the country opened its borders to the outside world as a result of the Chinese Economic Reform that began in 1978. The film crew traveled with Chinese escorts, including an army general, from Shanghai to Suzhou and on to Beijing. While scouting for film locations, Verona

photographed many aspects of everyday life including people bicycling, practicing Tai Chi, and fetching water from the Bund.

In late October of 2014, Verona returned to China to retrace his steps and document the many changes that took place during the previous 34 years. "I had to go and see the country again." Verona said. "Today it's almost unrecognizable."



(Left) Public posting of news, 1980. (Right) Cell phone billboard, 2014. Stephen Verona, Courtesy of the artist.

In Mao to Now, Verona contrasts his vastly different photographs of China in diptych groupings. The paired images highlight dramatic societal changes such as expanded modes of transportation (rickshaws and bullet trains) and communication methods (community bulletin boards and mobile devices). These images bring to light both the positive and negative effects of China's economic development, from the stagnation of the Maoist era to one of the fastest-growing in the world.

Stephen Verona is an artist, photographer, and filmmaker who lives in Los Angeles. His paintings and photographs are in public and private collections worldwide.

The Fowler Museum at UCLA is one of the country's most respected institutions devoted to exploring the arts and cultures of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas. The Fowler is open Wednesdays through Sundays, from noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, from noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA Arts, is

located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Parking is available for a maximum of \$12 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call 310 825-4361 or visit fowler.ucla.edu

RELATED EVENT:

Culture Fix: Stephen Verona on *MAO to NOW*

Sunday, May 15, 2 pm

Fowler Museum at UCLA

In this opening-day gallery talk, Stephen Verona discusses his photo exhibition *MAO to NOW* as an exploration of the many changes that have occurred since his initial visit to China over 35 years ago.