



press clip

# Smash hit captures China's changing face

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White Rabbit gallery only opened its doors four years ago but it is now old enough to have a memory. The Chippendale venue opened in 2009 to showcase the extraordinary private collection of post-2000 Chinese contemporary art belonging to art patron Judith Neilson.

It seems like yesterday. But White Rabbit has won over the Sydney public with its vibrant, energetic exhibitions, and for

its latest exhibition is bringing back by popular demand a fascinating work from one of its earliest shows.

Central to the evocatively titled *Smash Palace* exhibition, which opens today, is *CBD* — a 16sq m white porcelain reconstruction of part of central Beijing by young artist Zhou Jie.

Among the buildings that can be identified in the sculpture are the uncompleted Television Cultural Centre, which famously burned down in 2009.

Zhou has added blobs and polyps to all the buildings, as though they were sprouting some kind of disease. This could be read as a reference to

the destruction of older residential quarters as Beijing and other megalopolises in China grow at a furious pace.

*CBD* ties in with the *Smash Palace* theme, which is about the rapid rate of urban change in China, Neilson says.

“People are being displaced to put up these buildings,” she says.

Neilson’s daughter Paris Neilson, who curated *Smash Palace*, says they first saw *CBD* at Zhou’s graduation show.

“We just wanted to show what China is about today, and that there are all these different forces at play and all the change that’s happening there,” Paris says.

“(There’s the) oppressive

power of the government and the subversive nature of people and artists and their response to that.”

Judith Neilson is thrilled to be showing *CBD* again.

“We have a few iconic pieces that people write notes (about) in the book at the front or talk to the staff, and everybody wanted that one back,” Judith says. “We can’t often go by what they want because the pieces have to fit in the show. So I am delighted it could come back.”

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White Rabbit Gallery, 30 Balfour St, Chippendale; free, March 1-August 4, [whiterabbitcollection.org](http://whiterabbitcollection.org)



CBD by Zhou Jie (above) and (left) Judith Neilson with a depiction of a worker's dwelling. Pictures: John Appleyard