

Globe Times, *Interactive Art Creates Optical Illusion*, by Hu Bei, Nov 19, 2013

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Interactive art creates optical illusions

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At present, a huge installation is on display in the open space of the atrium of the Jing An Kerry Centre (1515 Nanjing Road West) alluring passers-by to become a part of the optical illusion Argentine artist Leandro Erlich has created.

A life-size façade of an authentic shikumen terraced house lies flat on the ground with a large-scale mirror hung overhead at a 45 degree angle reflecting the image of the horizontal façade as an upright building. Visitors can crawl on the façade and the mirror shows them scaling a wall like Spider-Man. Those who simply stand on the façade appear to protrude from the wall, defying gravity.



Shikumen House

Born into an architecture family, Erlich is renowned for dealing with the physicality of space. Influenced by film directors like Alfred Hitchcock, David Lynch and Stanley Kubrick, Erlich takes familiar, everyday spaces and subverts them to blur the line between reality and illusion.

The *Shikumen House* installation is the Shanghai incarnation of his Reflective Optical Illusion House series. Previously, Erlich wowed Londoners with Victorian terrace façade Dalston House and installed a classic Parisian house front at Le Centquatre.

Erlich said that whenever he designs an installation for a particular place, he always tries to use something that local people can understand or recognize so that "something ordinary and familiar is transformed into something new, something that would be surprising."

"I know shikumen is a very typical architecture that was built in Shanghai in the early 20th century by the Europeans that came here, and later, it was adapted with local references to Chinese culture," Erlich said. "So for this project I'm doing here, they both can be regarded as a point of encounter between these two cultures. And incredibly, the magic of the installation is that it can make anyone inside, no matter where you are from, which culture you belong to, you can all enjoy the same feelings without thinking how different or how similar you are."

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