



Artist Danielle Roney

# Scene: Arts

East meets West at The Contemporary as an innovator in mixed media undertakes an ambitious and stirring exploration of societal revolution

**T**he topic of conversation is China: Danielle Roney is telling me about the country and its culture over mid-morning coffee in a West End café. The artist spent several months in the capital city of Beijing last year exhibiting with a group of 40 international talents, and the experience inspired much of her *Genesis Trial* installation, opening this month at the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center.

Roney says the work is a meditation on the potential repercussions of modernization in the Orient, within both the microcosm of art history and the broader sphere of general global impact. "I'm really paying attention to an undiscovered, undeveloped dialogue between Chinese tradition and contemporary media," she says. "Beyond that, I think that all eyes are on China. It's a critical time in the world, so I think that it is a test for everyone involved. The 'genesis' of the title signifies that we're at the beginning; it's the birth of a new identity, regardless of the outcome. How are we evolving? Is the result going to be positive; is it going to be negative? So I'm examining [these questions] in a poetic way."

The piece integrates such diverse materials as film recordings, photographic projections and refractions, sculptures and musical compositions, and features the recurring image of the phoenix, the mythical bird that is the symbol of both our Georgia metropolis and of the last Empress of China. After the show's conclusion, the University of Georgia alumna anticipates more treks between the American South and the Orient, though it is the latter region that represents the future. Roney currently is developing a network of public kiosks, or "global portals," that will afford the populations of international hubs virtual transport to far-flung locales through live streaming video. Sites are confirmed for both Shanghai and Atlanta, as well as for Durbin, South Africa. "How do we empower voices?" Roney asks. "This type of simulcast event, by promoting personal exchanges, creates a whole new definition of what public art is, what collaboration means." —COLE DeLAUNE

## GENESIS TRIAL

Sept. 9-16  
Atlanta Contemporary Art Center  
thecontemporary.org  
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