

Capture culture

Understanding Beijing culture from Westerners' perspectives — that's the aim of 10 short films, shot by a group of undergraduates and graduates from the United States, together with their Chinese counterparts. **Xu Lin** reports in Beijing.

Markbradley Kitay, 20, a sophomore from Emory University's Goizueta business school, never expected that he would one day be in Beijing to shoot a short film about the city.

"It's my first time in China," Kitay says. "Beijing is so magnificent. It's old, but so much is new and on the rise."

Kitay is one of the 10 Americans who joined the 2012 Looking Beijing — Chinese and American Youth Summer Camping DV Project. They are students and graduates from Boston University and Emory University, who were in Beijing between July 19 and 21 to produce 10 digital videos about Beijing, together with 10 Chinese students from Beijing Normal University's school of art and communication.

The short films premiered on July 22 in the capital, featuring themes such as Chinese tea ceremonies, tai chi, coffee and bottled water.

Kitay's 10-minute production *Bottled Beijing*, is about the recycling of water bottles and how they affect the lives of bottle collectors and other people.

"I want to track the life cycle of the bottle and shoot it from various perspectives, including vendors and those who collect bottles on the streets," says Kitay, who arrived in Beijing on June 1, to join the Emory University's one-month program to learn Chinese language and culture. He then participated in the Looking Beijing program.

"I drink tap water in the United States. But I notice instantly it's different in China. These little bottles used to hold tea, coffee or water are everywhere," he says.

"It's also my first time holding a camera. I'm very excited. I want to thank my Chinese partner Lu Wenyong, as I've learned many things about Chinese culture and shooting skills from her," says Kitay, who says he often acts in videos for his campus movie festivals but has never shot one.

Together with Lu, they filmed Beijing's iconic places, such as Tian'anmen Square, the National Stadium and Temple of Heaven.

"I think the bottle collectors are helping to keep the streets clean, but some may think they are just people going through trash," he says.

"It's a bit rough for me because I'm not a film major. But Lu makes it better as she tells me various things about Chinese culture and filming, shooting and editing," he adds.

Lu, 21, a junior student from Beijing Normal University, says Kitay's topic is unique and profound. Initially, Kitay wanted to shoot on the topic of *mianzi* (face), but they gave it up because it's difficult to shoot.

Both Lu and Kitay visited a garbage recycling factory to shoot their film — the first time for both of them. "It was an eye-opener for me," she says.

Wang Jingxin, 19, a freshman at Beijing Normal University, also experienced something she has never had seen before in China.

"I had never spent so much time in a traditional Chinese restaurant to observe customs," says Wang, whose film is titled *The Beauty of Food*.

It is set at Uncle Jia's Luzhu Restaurant in Qianmen, downtown Beijing, and the film centers on *luzhu huoshao*, a bean-paste stew dish with pieces of *huoshao* (dough dumplings), beancurd puffs and stewed lungs in it.

Co-directing the film is Scott Rosenkrantz, 20, a film and television graduate from the College of Communication, Boston University. "The film is about my attempt as a foreigner to look into the local eating customs, how the food is prepared, and to make some comparisons between the local residents and foreigners," says Rosenkrantz.

He says as food brings different people together, the restaurant becomes a meeting point for Western and Eastern cultures.

But he says there is room for improvement in his film.

"It's difficult for me to grasp the details due to my limited knowledge of Beijing eating culture. If I had more time, I would have done better!" he says, adding that he has learned a lot about China's history, which he will share with his friends back home.

Wang says she has also gained much from the cooperation. "We respect each other very much. It's a rare experience to co-produce a video with a foreigner. My oral English has improved greatly too," Wang says.

The Academy for International Communication of Chinese Culture at the Beijing Normal University (AICCC) started the annual project in 2011 with the aim of presenting Chinese culture from an American perspective.

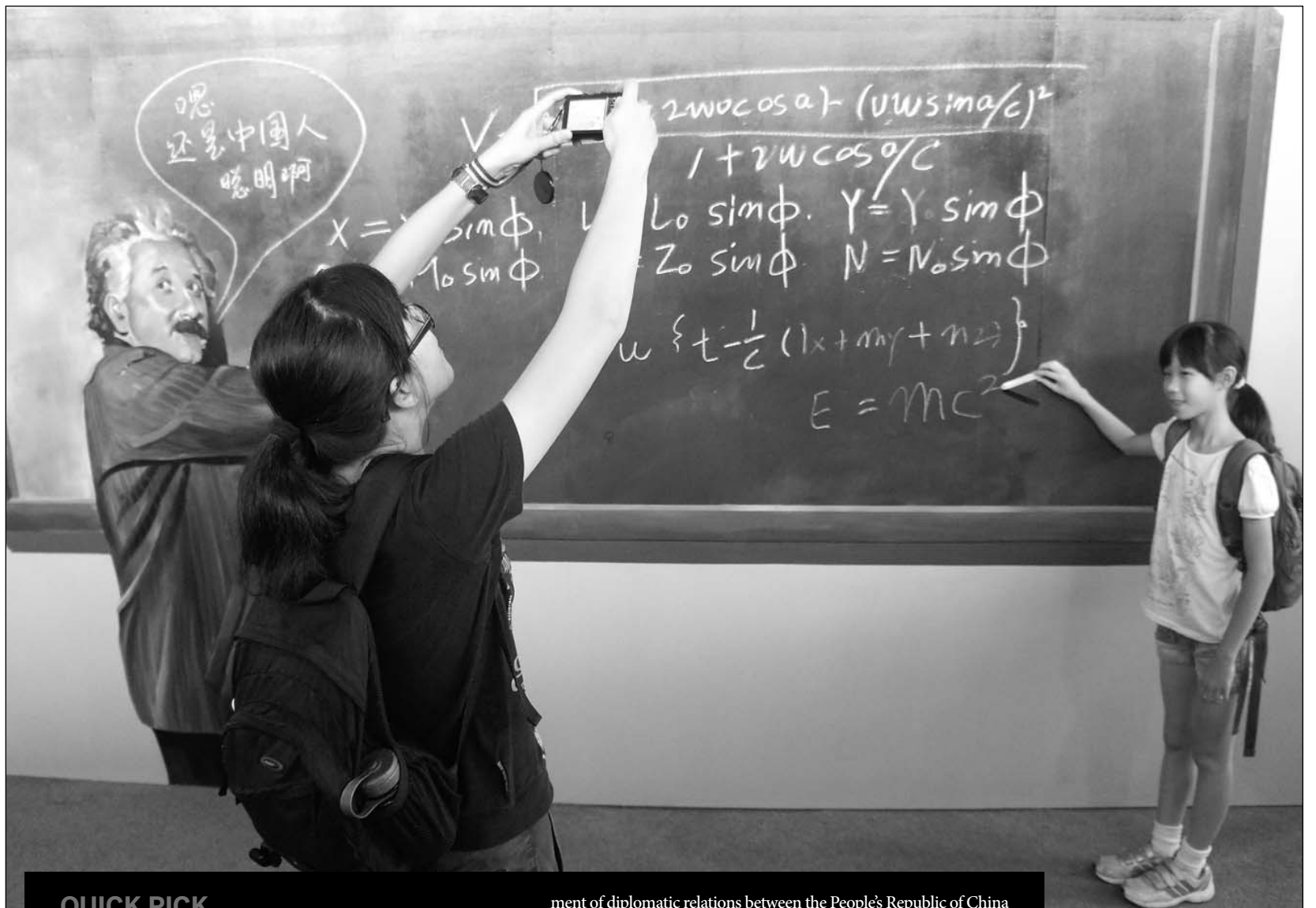
"They've done a great job," says Huang Huilin, dean of the AICCC at the Beijing Normal University. "We are using 'Looking Beijing' as our brand name to promote culture in a modern way. Videos are both direct and simple."

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XU LIN / CHINA DAILY

Markbradley Kitay and Lu Wenyong collect materials near the Water Cube for their 10-minute production, *Bottled Beijing*.



PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

QUICK PICK

The art of optical illusion

An optical illusion art show from South Korea is being held at 751 D-park in Beijing. Part of the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the establish-

ment of diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and Republic of Korea, the exhibition features more than 80 oil painting and installations "that have been rendered to create amazing optical illusions" for viewers, says curator Jin Chenkun.

10 am-5 pm, until Sept 9, 751 D-park, 798 Art Zone, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang district, Beijing. 010-5900-4680.

artbeat ... finger on the pulse

ART

Jade carvings on show

About 40 veteran artists of jade carving are holding a group show at Rongyi Art Space in Beijing.

Sponsored by the China Arts and Crafts Society, the exhibition showcases about 70 jade carving works featuring auspicious motifs, mythic figures, and ornaments. After its Beijing debut, the exhibition will move to Tianjin, Taiyuan, Hangzhou and Nanjing in the coming months.

10 am-5 pm, until Aug 17, B1, 18 Jinrong Dajie, Xicheng district, Beijing. 139-1027-6449.

Bookplates reinvented

A 15th century, European invention, bookplates are now recognized as not only indications of the owner of a book, but also specimens of a bygone era for decorative fashion.

Six talented Guangzhou-based printmaking artists have created bookplates for Guangdong Museum of Art's collection of historical books on Chinese art's development and the museum has put on an exhibition of their works since June 7. These young artists have included their understandings of the books in the bookplates so that visitors can take a glance at China's art history, while appreciating the beauty of the printmaking art.

9 am-5 pm, until Aug 7 (closed on Mondays), Library for Liberal Arts Collections, Guangdong Museum of Art, 38 Yanyu Lu, Ersha Island, Yuexiu district, Guangzhou. 020-8735-1468.

Looking back at ink

Museum of Beijing Fine Art Academy is staging a retrospective show for ink master Qian Songyan (1899-1985).

On display are some 40 ink figure paintings, birds-and-flowers paintings, and mountains-and-waters works, which Qian created from 1940-80.

Qian is widely considered as one of the most important ink artists in the early decades of New China, whose innovations pushed forward the boundaries of Chinese ink painting.

9 am-5 pm, until Aug 7, Museum of the Beijing Fine Art Academy, 1 Liulitun Beili, Chaoyang district, Beijing. 010-6507-1285.

THEATER

Avant-garde live

The 50-minute *PARADIS/Paradise* live show features a solo dancer and a musician in a traditional theater.

The performance explores their relationship and adds live music, videos and public surroundings.

The original performance was created in 2008 and has been performed indoors, outdoors and in other unconventional spaces in Canada, Italy and France.

Reservation required, Admission Free. 7 pm, Aug 5, 1F, Associate Mission Building, Yuan Ming Yuan Rd, Huangpu district, Shanghai. 021-3310-9985.

China's Cats

Cats, one of the most successful musicals in the world, has for the first time given birth to a Chinese version.

The original show opened in the West End in 1981 and then on Broadway in 1982.

It is the second longest-running show in Broadway history and has been performed around the world many times and has been translated into more than 20 languages.

7:15 pm, Aug 17-30, Lyric, Shanghai Grand Theatre, No.300 Renmin Avenue, Huangpu district, Shanghai. 021-6386-8686.



Left: Jade works featuring auspicious motifs and mythic figures. Right: Conductor Li Xincuo leads the Busan Philharmonic Orchestra.



Von Trapp Children comprises four descendants of the Trapp Family Singers, the prototype of the choir in movie *The Sound of Music*.

CONCERT

ASIWYFA in Shanghai

One of the brightest and most dedicated bands to pop out of the Belfast scene in the past decade. Rory Friers, Johnny Adger and Chris Wee make up And So I Watch You From Afar (ASIWYFA). Playing a combination of hard-driving post-rock with hardcore and math-rock influences, ASIWYFA reaffirms their belief in dedication, hard work, and rock 'n' roll.

9 pm, Aug 10, Yuyintang, 851 Kaixuan road, Changning district, Shanghai. 021-5237-8662.

Celebrating diplomacy

Conductor Li Xincuo, the first Chinese conductor to take the podium at Wiener Symphoniker in Wiener Staatsoper, will collaborate with Busan Philharmonic Orchestra, founded in 1962, to perform Shostakovich's *Symphony No 10 in E minor*, Sieblius' *Violin Concerto in D minor* and Lu Qiming's *Ode to Red Flag*. This collaboration celebrates the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Republic of Korea and China.

7:30 pm, Aug 3, National Center For Performing Arts. 7:30 pm, Aug 5, Shanghai Oriental Art Center. 7:30 pm, Aug 8, Guangzhou Opera House. 400-620-6006, 010-6585-5755.

Big Bang rocks

Popular South Korean pop group, Big Bang, will give its debut performance in Beijing, as part of the 2012 Big Bang Alive Galaxy Tour. Formed in 2006, Big Bang has become one of the most successful Asian acts in the world. Consisting of G-Dragon, T.O.P, Taeyang, Daesung and Seungri, Big Bang composes its own music while produces a unique fashion style. Before their Beijing gig, Big Bang performed sold-out shows in Shanghai and Guangzhou.

7:30 pm, Aug 4, Mastercard Center, Formerly Wukesong Arena, 69 Fixing Road, Haidian district, Beijing. 400-620-6006.

More from Von Trapp

Four descendants of the Trapp Family Singers, the prototype of the choir in movie *The Sound of Music*, have formed a musical group called Von Trapp Children and had

performed around the world.

Justin, Amanda, Melanie and Sofia, step-great-grandchildren of Maria von Trapp, the prototype of the movie's heroine, will give their Guangzhou debut in Guangdong province, on Aug 5.

The Von Trapp Children is the world's only one-family choir. The four talented youngsters will charm the audience with their unaccompanied singing of the classics *Do Re Mi*, *Edelweiss* and *Climb Every Mountain*.

The audience will also be able to watch documentaries of the Trapp Family Singers and learn more about the history of the choir, originally founded in the 1930s.

The Von Trapp Children will stage performances across China in about 10 cities. The next stop after Guangzhou will be in Zhuhai, another city in Guangdong, on Aug 12 at Zhuhai Great Hall.

8 pm, Aug 5, Symphony Hall, Xinghai Concert Hall, 33 Qingbo Lu, Ersha Island, Yuexiu district, Guangzhou. 020-8735-2222.

Two is better than one

It's a feast for the ears when two pianos are heard together. Liang Xiaomin and He Jue (third-prize winners of the Liszt 200 International Two-Piano Competition) are set to amaze the audience in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, with their synchronized artistry.

At their Guangzhou concert on Aug 4, the Liang-He duo will perform eight works, including Mozart's *Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major*.

The duo will also perform *China West Suite*, a series of two-piano songs American-Chinese composer Chen Yi wrote for the duo. These songs were all inspired by the folk songs of ethnic groups in western China.

8 pm, Aug 4, Concert Hall, Xinghai Concert Hall, 33 Qingbo Lu, Ersha Island, Yuexiu District, Guangzhou. 020-8735-2222.

Ice cool sounds

Iceland's Ogmundur Thor Johannesson will give a classical guitar solo performance to coincide with his most recent album *Ocean without Paths — Icelandic Music for Guitar* at the Penghao Theater in Beijing.

His performance will combine works inspired by folksongs, contemporary music and classical guitar, suggesting Icelandic themes such as volcanoes, hot springs, glaciers and nature.

Johannesson has won a number of honors and awards at national and international competitions and has been invited to perform at various music festivals and concerts, including Nordic Music Days in Reykjavik.

His concert tour of China has already completed its sounds in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

8 pm, Aug 3, Penghao Theater, 35 Dongmianhua Hutong (south gate of the Central Academy of Drama, between Nanluogu Xiang and Jiaodaokou Nandajie), Dongcheng district, Beijing. 010-6400-6472.

FESTIVAL

Dalian hosts beer fest

The 14th China International Beer Festival is to take place in Dalian, Liaoning province.

At the festival, visitors can enjoy more than 400 brands of beer from more than 30 countries, including Germany, the United States and Czech Republic.

The annual beer festival attracts up to 2 million visitors from home and abroad every year.

Until Aug 6, Dalian Xinghai Square, Shahekou district, Dalian.