



## SUBVERSIVE IN CHINA - MAINSTREAM IN ADELAIDE Press Release 22 August 2008

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2008 - news begins to circulate about James Powderly's detention in Beijing. Since text messages reading "detained since 3am" and "there's 8 of us here, we're all OK", nothing has been heard from them.**

James, co-founder of Graffiti Research Lab (GRL) was detained by Chinese Authorities while preparing an intervention in support of the Students for a Free Tibet protest. His current whereabouts remain unknown.

GRL visited Adelaide during the Adelaide Bank Festival of Arts earlier this year, thanks to Carclew Youth Arts & ANAT's emerging technologies (et) lab, to present the GRL Masterclass. <http://grl.anat.org.au/>.

Using an updated version of the L.A.S.E.R. Tag system enjoyed by participants of the GRL lab, general public and even Police officers in Adelaide, James had planned to "project the message 'Free Tibet' and additional messages that would have been three-stories high" said colleague Nathan Dorjeee.

Reports state James and his associates were detained before they were able to use the stencil, although a 'Free Tibet' banner was later displayed briefly by five other American artists before they too were detained.

"James has always been dedicated to providing tools for free speech," Ms. Michelle Kempner (James' wife) said in an interview with the New York Times, and later commenting on what can be done to help she stated, "the best thing is to get attention...just spread the word. We need to make sure they release them".

Unsurprisingly the blogging community and independent media sources have been rife discussing the issue. Public declarations of "what the hell was he thinking" through to "I'm sure he knew full well what the risks were...all signs suggest the goal was to draw maximum attention to the nature of Chinese repression" suggest that whatever his original intentions he has certainly encouraged debate. Clearly, anyone who can run a class entitled 'Internetfamo.us' at Parsons New School for Design knows a thing or two about utilising today's online social networks.

Meanwhile in Adelaide, the GRL legacy lives on. An innocent intervention made by lab participants changing the white light of the North Terrace National War Memorial to a red glow is now to be adopted across the city. Celebrating the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Armistice to end World War I, a number of prominent Adelaide landmarks will be illuminated in poppy red between November 4<sup>th</sup> and Remembrance Day. Sites will include selected trees and prominent points of the CBD and of course the original GRL-branded War Memorial. ANAT are very proud and excited to see artist interventions being adopted by the wider community.

ANAT supports and encourages the safe and quick release of James and co-detainees.

Attachment: Photo by Simeon Moran, caught in the action installing red lights on the North Terrace National War Memorial during the festival in February.

Sources:

<http://grl.anat.org.au/>

<http://www.graffitiresearch.com>

<http://fffff.at>

<http://freetibet2008.org/globalactions/jamespowderly>

<http://www.boingboing.net/2008/08/19/grls-james-powderly.html>

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/20/sports/olympics/20china.html?\\_r=1&ref=asia&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/20/sports/olympics/20china.html?_r=1&ref=asia&oref=slogin)



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