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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

***The Last Nomads: Photographs from Inner Mongolia by A Yin***

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Rubin Museum of Art (RMA) is pleased to present *The Last Nomads: Photographs from Inner Mongolia by A Yin*. Born in 1971 into a poor herdsman's family in the steppes (semi-arid grasslands) of Inner Mongolia, A Yin is a self-taught photographer who captures the daily life of one of the oldest Mongolian tribes, the Wu Zhu Mu Xin, in the Inner Mongolian highlands. He works in black and white, using both medium- and large-format film to document and give voice to the disappearing culture of one of the last remaining nomadic tribe in his country. The exhibition comprises 29 black-and-white digital prints, created in 2007; *The Last Nomads* is A Yin's first American museum exhibition.

A Yin has had enough commercial success through his photography to finance his personal work. As he lives the traditional herdsman lifestyle, he documents the destruction of the grasslands that he sees in his travels. In 1998, A Yin initiated his photographic documentary study of Mongolians with a series of work titled *Mongolian*. Inspired by the landscape and the stories of the people of Inner Mongolia, A Yin has continued this compelling photographic journey.

In A Yin's own words:

Inner Mongolia is considered to be one of the few highly remote places remaining in the world, yet the forces of globalization in today's world are quickly changing the traditional way of life for the descendents of Genghis Khan. The need for economic development is rapidly changing the face of Mongolia; horses are being replaced with motorcycles, and herders are struggling to deal with grassland degradation. Severe sandstorms are destroying the environment and, as a result, my own culture. As a Mongolian photographer, it is very important for me to document these crucial times and share the stories with the world.

A Yin's work first came to the attention of RMA's Curator of Photography, Miles Barth, through the *All Roads* Film and Photography Program, sponsored by the National Geographic Society. This program recognizes and supports talented international storytellers whose photographs document their changing culture and communities. Recipients of this prestigious award must be from an indigenous or minority culture within their countries of origin. An advisory board of leaders in the photography industry and representatives of the National Geographic Society chose A Yin as a 2007 award recipient. This award led to the publication of several books of A Yin's photography in his native language and gave A Yin the opportunity to exhibit his work in an international setting.

The new work presented in *The Last Nomads: Photographs from Inner Mongolia by A Yin* is a continuation of his personal investigation of his land and people, some of which was aided by the fieldwork that the *All Roads* program made possible for him. Miles Barth said, "A Yin is the first indigenous photographer RMA has ever presented. His work is direct and documents many of the vanishing traditions in Inner Mongolia as well as how Western influence, and the declining grasslands, is helping to make this happen." A video interview of A Yin, produced and provided by the National Geographic Society, will be incorporated into the exhibition installation.

### **About RMA**

RMA holds one of the world's most important collections of Himalayan art. Paintings, pictorial textiles, and sculpture are drawn from cultures that touch upon the arc of mountains that extends from Afghanistan in the northwest to Myanmar (Burma) in the southeast and includes Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia, and Bhutan. The larger Himalayan cultural sphere, determined by significant cultural exchange over millennia, includes Iran, India, China, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia. This rich cultural legacy, largely unfamiliar to Western viewers, offers an uncommon opportunity for visual adventure and aesthetic discovery.

Admission to RMA is \$10.00 for adults; \$7.00 for seniors, middle- and high-school students, and artists (with ID); \$2.00 for college students (with ID); \$7.00 for neighbors (zip codes 10011 & 10001 with ID); free for seniors the first Monday of every month; and free for children under 12 and for museum members. Gallery admission is free to all on Fridays between 7 pm and 10 pm

Open Monday 11 am to 5 pm, Wednesday 11 am to 7 pm, Thursday 11 am to 5 pm, Friday 11 am to 10 pm, Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm; closed on Tuesday. To reach the museum by subway, visitors may take the A, C or E to 14th Street; the 1 to 18th Street; 1, 2, 3 to 14th Street; F and V to 14th Street; N, R, Q, W, 4, 5 and 6 to 14th or the L to 6th Avenue. By bus, visitors may take the B20 to the corner of 7th Avenue and 17th Street.