



## Shenzhen: A Travelogue from China

By Guy Delisle

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### Shenzhen: A Travelogue from China By Guy Delisle

*Shenzhen* is entertainingly compact with Guy Delisle's observations of life in urban southern China, sealed off from the rest of the country by electric fences and armed guards. With a dry wit and a clean line, Delisle makes the most of his time spent in Asia overseeing outsourced production for a French animation company. He brings to life the quick pace of Shenzhen's crowded streets. By translating his fish-out-of-water experiences into accessible graphic novels, Delisle skillfully notes the differences between Western and Eastern cultures, while also conveying his compassion for the simple freedoms that escape his colleagues in the Communist state.

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### Editorial Review

#### From Publishers Weekly

Last year's *Pyongyang* introduced Delisle's acute voice, as he reported from North Korea with unusual insight and wit, not to mention wonderfully detailed cartooning. *Shenzhen* is not a follow-up so much as another installment in what one hopes is an ongoing series of travelogues by this talented artist. Here he again finds himself working on an animated movie in a Communist country, this time in Shenzhen, an isolated city in southern China. Delisle not only takes readers through his daily routine, but also explores Chinese custom and geography, eloquently explaining the cultural differences city to city, company to company and person to person. He also goes into detail about the food and entertainment of the region as well as animation in general and his own career path. All of this is the result of his intense isolation for three months in an anonymous hotel room. He has little to do but ruminate on his surroundings, and readers are the lucky beneficiaries of his loneliness. As in his earlier work, Delisle draws in a gentle cartoon style: his observations are grounded in realism, but his figures are light cartoons, giving the book, as Delisle himself remarks, a feeling of an alternative Tintin. (Oct.)

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#### From [Booklist](#)

Delisle's *Pyongyang* (2005) documented two months spent overseeing cartoon production in North Korea's capital. Now he recounts a 1997 stint in the Chinese boomtown Shenzhen. Even a decade ago, China showed signs of Westernization, at least in Special Economic Zones such as Shenzhen, where Delisle found a Hard Rock Cafe and a Gold's Gym. Still, he experienced near-constant alienation. The absence of other Westerners and bilingual Chinese left him unable to ask about baffling cultural differences ranging from exotic shops to the pervasive lack of sanitation. Because China is an authoritarian, not totalitarian, state, and Delisle escaped the oppressive atmosphere with a getaway to nearby Hong Kong, whose relative familiarity gave him "reverse culture shock," Delisle's wittily empathetic depiction of the Western-Chinese cultural gap is less dramatic than that of his Korean sojourn. That said, his creative skill suggests that the comic strip is the ideal medium for such an account. His wry drawings and clever storytelling convey his experiences far more effectively than one imagines a travel journal or film documentary would. *Gordon Flagg*

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#### Review

"A fascinating, meandering look at one of China's most storied new cities." *?Boing Boing*

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