

EXPANDED GEOGRAPHIES
BY CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS2015
LIANZHOU FOTO
FESTIVAL
连州国际摄影年展

We live at a moment when our entire planet is being reshaped by human forces, with great new cities arising in previously remote and underpopulated areas. This rapid urban development is attracting millions of people from the countryside to the city in the hope of finding economic prosperity. It is also dramatically increasing the movement and migration of people within and across national borders. One result of this global dynamic is to bring people from many different cultures into direct contact for the first time. Another result is the creation of shared, worldwide awareness of the increased fragility of the natural environment in the face of industrial development and hyper-urbanization.

The creative vision of photographers around the world is helping to focus a new awareness of the parallel experiences that today link widely separated countries, regions, and local communities. This sense of expanded geographies is the central theme of the Lianzhou Foto Festival 2015, as it explores the emerging connections between different parts of the globe.

Three of the participants in Lianzhou Foto 2015 uses their cameras to portray overseas Chinese communities around the world. In her series "Convergence," Wei Leng Tay, an ethnic Chinese Singaporean, photographs mostly middle-class Chinese families in Singapore and Malaysia. Often set in quiet domestic spaces, her portraits subtly suggest the strains of the social world and the inner lives of her subjects. Zhuang Wubin, a third-generation Chinese born in Singapore, is a writer, photographer, and educator. Since 2006 he has been carrying out long-term projects in the Chinese communities of Southeast Asia. His 2010 book *Ten Chinatowns of Southeast Asia* brings together his photographs of Chinese communities in Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Huang Dongli, who was born in China and studied at the China Academy of Art in Hongzhou and at Parsons School of Design in New York, is a close observer of Chinatowns in the U.S. Her photographs demonstrate how immigrant Chinese communities have survived, in part, by holding tight to their own language, traditions, and culture. She also shows, however, how quaint and outdated some of these traditions can appear to a young visitor from China like herself, someone who has grown up in a modernizing country that has consciously abandoned many of its oldest traditions.



Huang Dongli, "Chinatown Project"



Zhang Wenxin, "Trilogy of Escape"



Yan Wang Preston, "Mother River"

Zhang Hai provides a fascinating example of a Chinese photographer who has immersed himself in a culture very different from the one in which he was raised. Born in Kunming and educated in Chongqing, he has lived since 2000 in the U.S. His independent photography projects have led him to explore the social landscape in both China and the U.S., especially in the African-American communities of the American South. The photographs shown at Lianzhou Foto 2015 are the result of a recent “road trip” across the American continent. As he refines his own photographic language, Zhang Hai engages in a confident visual dialogue with the work of earlier photographers of America, such as Robert Frank and Garry Winogrand.

Another group of photographers in Lianzhou Foto 2015 offers hypnotic and sometime unsettling images of the ongoing urbanization of the world. Pablo Lopez Luz specializes in aerial views of what he calls the “constructed landscape” surrounding his home town, Mexico City, and other large metropolitan areas in Mexico. His photographs show the relentless urban sprawl that is pushing its way into the countryside and completely covering once-bare land formations. While in this series Lopez Luz photographs mainly from a distance, Alejandro Cartegna, who lives in the city of Monterrey in northern Mexico, works at ground level to reveal the explosive growth of new residential housing developments on the periphery of Mexico’s large cities. In his five-part series “Suburbia Mexicana,” Cartegna examines the new residential zones that are springing up throughout the country, often unregulated by government authorities. He presents a systematic look at the characteristic architectural styles of the new suburban zones, and offers sympathetic portraits of the varied families and individuals who live there.

Ivan Kashinsky, an active freelance photographer in Ecuador, uses his free moments to make pictures that tell the story of the impact of modernization on his home town, Quito. As he describes it, “I’m witnessing the collision of hundreds of years of ancestral customs with full-blown modernity, and the mix is fascinating.” Kashinsky regularly posts his casual but richly images of daily life in Quito—all made with his smartphone camera—on Instagram, where they have attracted much attention. A more ironic response to the standardized urban architecture found around the world today can be seen in the “Waterfront” series by the French photographer André Mérian.

Taking as his subject the banal new buildings that increasingly line the historic waterfronts of the port cities of the Mediterranean, he documents the rapid disappearance of an irreplaceable part of the architectural heritage of France, Spain, Italy, Turkey, and Morocco.

In the remarkable series “Avenue Patrice Lumumba,” Guy Tillim, one of South Africa’s most distinguished photographers, presents a somber meditation on architecture and urban imagination in postcolonial Africa. Tillim directs our attention to the remains of the architectural monuments of mid-20th-century Africa. This was a period when elaborate modernist-style buildings were constructed in expectation that the continent would soon enter a new age of independence and economic prosperity.



Ka-Man Tse, “Narrow Distances”
Anita



Xiaoxiao, “Rational Reality”



Xiao Quan, “Our Generation”
Can Xue[Writer], August 1991, Chang Sha

It was the era when Patrice Lumumba, the charismatic prime minister of the newly liberated Democratic Republic of the Congo, came briefly to symbolize the continent's rising hopes, and streets were named after him throughout Africa. The high hopes of that moment did not last long, and Tillim's photographs amount to a mournful collection of images of crumbling modernist ruins. Tillim feels that such architectural relics have nevertheless won a place in the African cultural imagination, as an "avenue of dreams" that may be realized in a different form in the 21st century.

One force that is dramatically reshaping our sense of the world's geography is the growing importance of environmental issues that cut across national borders. Evidence of this development is provided in the work of another group of photographers in Lianzhou Foto 2015. "Drowning World," a project begun in 2007 by the London-based South African photographer Gideon Mendel, reveals the impact of climate change on individual lives around the globe. Mendel photographs and makes videos in areas that now experience severe flooding on a regular basis since the onset of global warming. The inhabitants of these areas contend with rising floodwaters on a recurring basis, and the different ways in which they are able to cope with them reveals global inequities. Mendel says that such flooding "represents an overwhelming, destructive force that renders humanity helpless in its wake." His incisive portraits show families and individuals desperately attempting to cope with floodwaters in such countries as Australia, Brazil, Thailand, Pakistan, Great Britain, India, and Germany.

The tension between economic development and the safeguarding of the natural environment can be discovered in almost every region of the world today. Maria Teresa Ponce's "Pipeline" series concentrates on the recently built oil pipeline that runs across her home country, Ecuador. Ponce's panoramic photographs offer idyllic images of the natural splendor that surrounds the route cleared for the construction of the pipeline. She leaves it to the viewer to imagine the long-term environmental consequences of her country's growing dependence on oil as a source of energy to power its economic development.

Since 2010, French photographer Antoine Bruy has sought out people who have chosen to abandon modern society and adopt a much simpler, nature-oriented way of living. Bruy's photographs, made in remote settlements in five European countries, depict a group of unique personalities and the pre-modern dwellings they have constructed. Bruy finds inspiration in his subjects, who have left behind the ceaseless demands of a fast-paced consumer society: "No more clock ticking but the ballet of days and nights, seasons, and lunar cycles."

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Zhang Xiao, "About My Hometown"



Through writing, public speaking and interviewing, Liu Yan practices her art, as the medium for artistic expression and definition of artist kept expanding since 2001. She initiated the journalist's interview on urban streets in 2001, by asking the passer-by's true thinking, and recorded them in video. With such practices, Liu Yan questioned the authenticity of press in the transitional social identity. In 2003, she stood on a platform on the City Square, teaching the public how to struggle for the freedom of expression through public speaking. The artwork "a. b. c." records an on-site behavioral performance given by her in an art museum in 2005, where she used her body as the subject of writing, and asked the audience to determine whether or not to paint her face black by writing a. Yan, b. He or c. TED. In her works, she reflects on art, critically probes the spiritual anxiety and human weakness, and understands and discusses each individual's living arrangement with behavior art, on the basis of her own life experience.

Gao Yan, "Samples of Practices from Young Contemporary Artists"
a. b. c., Performance Art, 2005



Yang Mu, "Human Brain Project"



Li Zhaohui, "Specimen: Transgenic Organism"
Rice/A3364ko/defective panicle

Joseph Desler Costa adapts for his own purposes the language of contemporary advertising and design, and photographs mass-produced objects that he renders strange, troubling, and enigmatic. Although he consciously mimics the sleek look of Photoshopped commercial imagery, he creates all of his remarkable visual effects in the studio without the aid of digital manipulation. Barry Stone, a photographer living in Austin, Texas, uses traditional landscapes and still life themes only as a starting point. His real interest lies in manipulating the digital code that underlies his color images – a process sometimes called “data-bending” – to create eerily beautiful visual effects.

While the works of Costa and Stone seem at first glance to be blithely impersonal, the black-and-white photographs in Dru Donovan’s series “Carving the Lung” show us human figures that have an immediate and disturbing presence. It hardly matters whether the scenes are staged or not, because the awkward and strangely vulnerable human bodies in them prove so unforgettable. The human body also plays a central role in the works of New York-based Turkish artist Pinar Yolacan. Trained as a fashion designer, she creates astonishing costumes and studio sets for her models. In the series shown at Lianzhou Foto 2015, she employs female models whose bodies recall the Pre-Neolithic sculptures of fertility goddesses found in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Posing her models in front of brightly colored backdrops, and cropping the images to emphasize the powerful shape of the subject’s torso, Yolacan contrasts ancient concepts of the ideal female form with those of today.

EXHIBITIONS

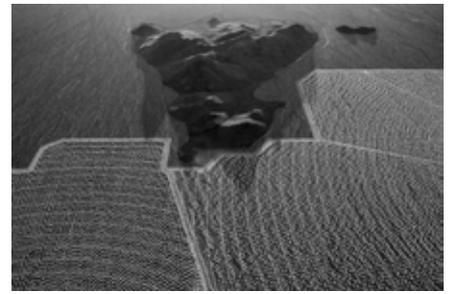
MASTER EXHIBITION :

Martin Parr (UK) Tittle missing

Walter Bosshard (Switzerland) , “1930s China in the Eyes of a Swiss Photographer”

“EXPANDED GEOGRAPHIES” THEME EXHIBITION :

Guy Tillim (South Africa), “Avenue Patrice Lumumba”
 Antoine Bruy (France), “Scrublands”
 Gideon Mendel (South Africa), “Drowning World”
 Simon Norfolk (Nigeria), “When I am Laid to Earth”
 Rachel Sussman (USA), “The Oldest Living Things in the World”
 Joseph Desler Costa (USA), “Supplemental Materials”
 Dru Donovan (USA), “Carving the Lung”
 Barry Stone (USA), “The World is Round from Here”
 Ka-Man Tse (Hong Kong/USA), “Narrow Distances”
 Zhang Hai (China/USA), “Between Destinations”



Jamey Stillings, “The Evolution of Ivanpah Solar”



Simon Norfolk, “When I am Laid to Earth”



Pablo Lopez Luz, “Terrazo”



Martin Parr, “Luxury”
 Moscow, Russia, 2004

Alejandro Cartagena (Mexico), "Suburbia Mexicana"
 Ivan Kashinsky (Ecuador), "Mi Barrio"
 Pablo Lopez Luz (Mexico), "Terrazo"
 Maria Teresa Ponce (Ecuador), "Pipeline"
 Wei Leng Tay (Singapore/Hong Kong), "Convergence"
 Zhuang Wubin (Singapore/Hong Kong), "Chinatowns"
 Pinar Yolacan(Turkey), "Like a Stone"
 André Mérian(France), "Waterfront"
 Birdhead(China), "Welcome to Birdhead World Again"
 Zhang Wenxin(China), "Trilogy of Escape"
 Yan Wang Preston(China), "Mother River"
 Huang Dongli(China), "Chinatown Project"

SPECIAL EXHIBITION :

The Chinese Photobook

Curated by Martin Parr and WassinkLundgren

Colorama : Collection from Musée Nicéphore Niépce

SOLO EXHIBITION :

Zhang Xiao(China), "About My Hometown"
 Li Bigang(China), "At the Festival"
 Li Zhaohui(China), "Specimen: Transgenic Organism"
 Yang Mu(China), "Human Brain Project"
 Xiao Xiao(China), "Rational Reality"
 Charles Fréger(France), "Mardi Gras Indians"
 Jamey Stillings(USA), "The Evolution of Ivanpah Solar"
 Chris Jordan(USA), "Midway"
 Catherine Leutenegger (Switzerland), "Kodak City"
 Lisa Barnard(UK), "Post-traumatic"
 Pan Wei(China), "Tiangong Kaiwu or The Exploitation of the Works of Nature"
 Michael Akerman(USA/Germany), "Mix"
 Crow(China), " Never Returned Homeland "
 Jiang Zhenxing(China), "Tibet"
 Jacob Aue Sobol(Denmark), "Sabine"
 Stéphane Lavoué(France), "The Kingdom"
 Chen Xiaofeng(China), "Placing Plants II "
 Olivia Martin McGuire(Australia), "The Veiled Unseen"
 Kai M Caemmerer(USA), "Scrim"
 Zhang Yuming(China), " Existence and Presentation"
 Li Weikun(China), "Waste"



Walter Bosshard "1930s China in the Eyes of a Swiss Photographer"
 Soldier camouflaged in a battledress, China, 1938
 © Archives for Contemporary History ETH Zurich / Swiss Foundation for Photography



Ivan Kashinsky, "Mi Barrio"



Guy Tillim, "Avenue Patrice Lumumba"



"Colorama", Collection from Musée Nicéphore Niépce

DOCUMENTARY SOLO SECTION :

Xiao Quan, "Our Generation"
Ren Xihai, "Compound No.10"
Wang Fuchun, "The Green Train"

GROUP EXHIBITION :

Young Photographer Exhibition :

Gao Yan, "Case Study on Young Contemporary Artist"
Gao Lei, "Exile of Consciousness"
Ji Mu, "In Nowhere"
Zhang Lanpo, "Crown of Blood Vessel"
Su Jiehao, "Borderland"
Tokka Kinfu, «Photo Studio on the Prairie"
Ou Jiacheng(Taiwan), "Made in Taiwan"
Li Ming, "Travel in the Mountains and Water"
Wang Juyan, "Xian Guan"
Li Xiaozhou, "No Border"
Li Lin, "The Waste Land"

Gucang Dummy Book Award Exhibition : Martin Parr Edition

On Mt.Nobody – (Gucang) Residency Program :

Du Siran, Li Jun, Lin Shu, Mu Ge, Sun Yanchu, Zhu Mo

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

Today vast areas of our planet are being actively reshaped by human forces, with great new cities arising in previously remote locations. This rapid development is bringing millions of people from the countryside to the city, and dramatically increasing the movement and migration of people across international borders. One result of this global dynamic is to bring many different cultures into direct contact with each other for the first time. Another result is the creation of a shared awareness of the worldwide fragility of the natural environment in the age of hyper-modernization.

The creative vision of photographers around the world is helping to produce a new awareness of the parallel experiences that link different countries, regions, and localities and regions in important and surprising ways. The Lianzhou Foto Festival 2015 will explore the expanded geographies that reflect these emerging linkages between different parts of our planet.



Pinar Yolacan, "Like a Stone"



Joseph Desler Costa, "Supplemental Materials"
Layered Guitar



Gideon Mendel, "Drowning World"

Beginning this year, the proportion of international exhibition in Lianzhou Foto will increase from 40% to 60%. In addition to presenting a selection of recent photography from North America, the theme exhibition of Lianzhou Foto Festival 2015 will direct special attention to photography from South America & Africa, continents that are engaged in an enormous process of modernization and urbanization comparable to that of China. Examples of current photographic practices in Southeast Asia, an area in which Chinese culture has long had a powerful presence, will also be highlighted.

Other highlights include: Martin Parr exhibition curated by Thomas Sauvin; 'The Chinese Photobook exhibition curated by Martin Parr and WassinkLundgren; "1930s China in the Eyes of a Swiss Photographer", a Walter Bosshard exhibition co-curated by Peter Pfrunder and Duan Yuting; solo exhibitions from Zhang Xiao, Jacob Aue Sobol, Lisa Barnard and more.

The eleventh edition of Lianzhou Foto will take place from Nov. 21st, 2015 to Dec. 10th, 2015 at the city of Lianzhou, to present nearly ten thousand pieces of photographs, created by established and emerging photographers from around the world. More than two thousand artists, critics, collectors and cultural elites are expected to attend the festival.

Director: Duan Yuting

Chief Curator: Christopher Philips(USA)

Curators: Duan Yuting, Martin Parr(UK), François Cheval (France), Peter Pfrunder(Switzerland), Mao Weidong, Shu Kewen, Joanna Lehan(USA), Wassink Lundgren(Netherlands), Thomas Sauvin(France), Michel Philippot (France)



Ka-Man Tse, "Narrow Distances"



Li Bigang, "At the Festival"
Gui Zhou Province, An Shun City, 26th February 2015, 8th day of the first lunar month



Zhang Hai



Wei Leng Tay



Huang Dongli
Fortune goods with a dizzy view, Flushing, New York, 2014



Zhang Xiao
About my Hometown



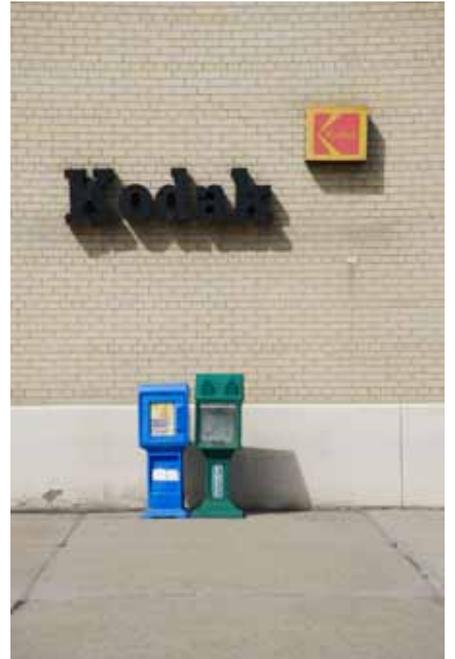
Jacob Aue Sobol
Sabine



Charles Fréger
Mardis Gras Indians



Jiang Zhenxing
Tibet



Catherine Leutenegger
Kodak City



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