

PRESS RELEASE

FOTOFEST2008 – CHINA

Photography from China 1934 – 2008

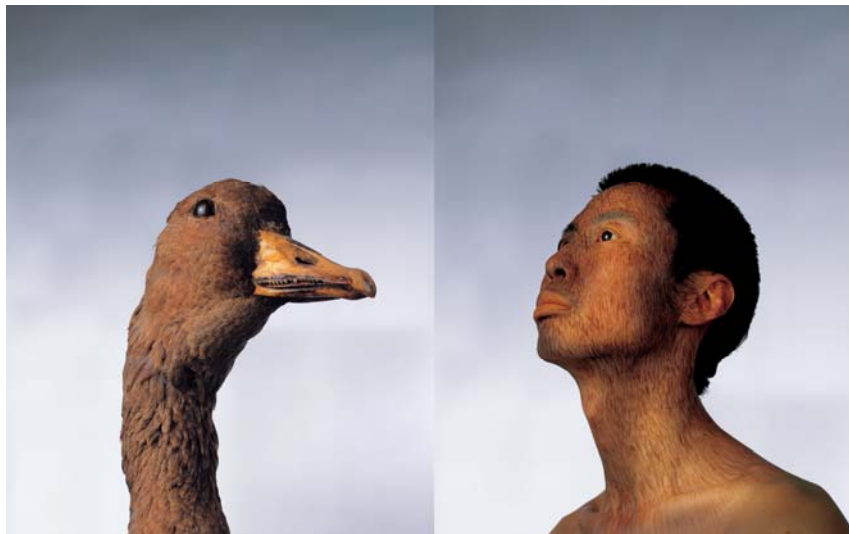
March 7 – April 20, 2008 Houston, Texas



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WU Gaozhong, *Duck, reply is positive*, 2003
Courtesy of the artist

www.fotofest.org

(JANUARY 28, 2008) FotoFest's 12th edition of the **International Biennial of Photography and Photo-related Art**, presents work by 34 Chinese artists, March 7- April 20, 2008 in Houston, Texas. *Photography from China 1934-2008* features ten newly commissioned and curated exhibitions, including two recently recovered archives from the 1930s and 1940s. The China programs are a cornerstone of **FOTOFEST2008**, the six-week city-wide celebration of photo-based art.

In addition to these China exhibitions, FOTOFEST2008 presents a symposium, *The Evolution of Photography in 20th Century China* and a film program, *New Cinema in China*. The film program is organized with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH) and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Forty Chinese artists and curators will attend FOTOFEST2008.

Among 118 participating spaces in FOTOFEST2008, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston is presenting three special exhibitions for FOTOFEST2008: the work of contemporary Japanese photographer Miwa Yanagi from The Deutsche Bank Collection; a retrospective of the influential British photographer Bill Brandt; a presentation inter-relating photography and the scholarship of pioneering U.S. photohistorian Beaumont Newhall. The Menil Collection presents the exhibition *Vivid Vernacular: William Christenberry, William Eggleston, and Walker Evans*, highlighting unexpected connections between these three remarkable photographers. The Holocaust Museum Houston shows works on the conflict and genocide in Darfur by seven photojournalists.

PHOTOGRAPHY FROM CHINA 1934-2008

Photography from China 1934-2008, FotoFest's exhibition program for FOTOFEST2008, reveals the diversity of roles and styles that have shaped photographic art over the past 74 years in China.

ETHNOGRAPHY, PHOTOJOURNALISM AND PROPAGANDA, 1934-1975 – CHINA

Reflecting a growing interest by the Chinese in the peoples and politics of China's western border regions near Tibet, **ZHUANG Xueben** (1909-1984) began traveling to China's far-western border regions in 1934. His work from 1934-1939 is one of the earliest and most serious photographic examinations of ethnic minorities in these regions. FOTOFEST2008 is the first time this work is being shown outside of China.

In 1937, at the age of 25, **Sha Fei** (1912-1950) had himself assigned to the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) 8th Route Army during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). Sha Fei photographed combat and training with the Chinese forces allied with CHIANG Kai-shek, against the Japanese. He set up pictorial magazines to publicize the 8th Route Army and its work in rural villages, and he organized a mass media system that became a principal part of the

CCP's propaganda system for the next 20 years, through the 1970s. After Sha Fei's controversial execution in 1950, his work was blacklisted until the late 1980s when his family and colleagues succeeded in rehabilitating his name. FOTOFEST2008 exhibits the newly recovered work of Sha Fei for the first time outside of China.

Editors and photographers trained by Sha Fei during the war became leaders of major CCP pictorial news media and propaganda agencies, using photography as one of the primary media promoting Chairman MAO Zedong's agenda during The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The exhibition curated by **CHEN Guangjun** and **XU Vicky**, founders of **798 Gallery**, one of Beijing's most respected photography galleries, shows how photography was choreographed to promote the message of collective solidarity. The exhibit, commissioned by FotoFest, features three photographers working for news publications during The Cultural Revolution: **WENG Naiqiang**, **XIAO Zhuang**, and **WANG Shilong**.



WENG Naiqiang, Chairman MAO on Tiananmen, 1966

INDEPENDENT DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY, 1985-2000 – CHINA

In the mid-1980s, a new generation of Chinese photographers began to produce strong personal bodies of photo-documentary work outside official media and news agencies. The first to gain international prominence was **WU Jialin** with his work on Yunnan province. A chance discovery of this work by FotoFest co-founder Frederick Baldwin at Marc Riboud's Paris apartment led to his first exhibition in Western art world at FOTOFEST1996.

Two subsequent generations of photographers continue to develop independent approaches to documentary work. **LU Nan's** interest in the ethics of social interaction, led him to photograph the institutionalization of the mentally ill and underground Catholic communities in China. **LI Lang's** early poetic work with the Yi People in central-western China has led to his current work exploring the human imprint on China's landscape.

CONCEPTUAL AND STAGED WORK - NEW PHOTO, 1994-1998 – CHINA

In 1996, two Beijing artists, RongRong and LIU Zheng founded the influential **New Photo** magazine, an independent, underground publication that circulated in Beijing's art circles. The magazine signaled a burgeoning Chinese interest in photography as a medium of contemporary art, and marked an important turning point in the development of contemporary photography in China. FOTOFEST2008 presents this new exhibition for the first time outside of China, with 15 artists published in **New Photo** magazine. The exhibit, curated by ZHANG Li and WU Hung, is organized by **Three Shadows Photography Art Centre** in Beijing. The *New Photo* exhibit features ZHUANG Hui, LIU Zheng, GAO Bo, GUAN Ce, JIN Yongquan, QUI Zhijie, AN Hong, RongRong, WANG Xu, ZHAO Liang, JIANG Zhi, ZHENG Guogu, SAN Mao, and HONG Lei.

CONCEPTUAL AND STAGED WORK - CURRENT PERSPECTIVES, 1998-2008 – CHINA

Individual shows of 10 current, multi-disciplinary Chinese artists address issues of identity, memory, spirituality, gender, urbanism, and the complex relationships between the present and the past in contemporary China. Designed as a series of one-person exhibitions, these shows feature BAI Yiluo, CANG Xin, CHENG Lingyang, XING Danwen, LIU Lijie, SUN Guojuan, WANG Chuan, WU Gaozhong, YAO Lu, and ZENG Han.

SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS - CHINA

FotoFest, Houston Center for Photography and the Asia Society will debut *Mined in China*, a new project by China scholar Dr. Orville Schell, director of Asia Society's Institute for U.S.-China Relations, and acclaimed U.S. documentary photographer Susan Meiselas.

In collaboration with Rice University Media Center, FotoFest is presenting the work of the young Chinese artist, LIU Ren.

In satellite spaces FotoFest is showing the work of ZHUANG Xueben and WU Jialin in The Woodlands, north of Houston. ZHUANG Xueben's images are also being shown in the windows of Macy's Department Store on Main Street in Downtown Houston.

SYMPOSIUM - CHINA

The FOTOFEST2008 - CHINA Symposium, *The Evolution of Photography in 20th Century China*, occurs March 12, 2008, 7-8:30pm, at the Brown Auditorium at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston with Chinese scholars GU Zheng, (Fudan University, Shanghai) and CAO Tai, (Guangdong Museum, Guangzhou).

FILM PROGRAM - CHINA

In collaboration with FotoFest, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH) Film Program and the UCLA's *New Chinese Cinema* program will present three weekends of films and videos by Chinese film-makers and video artists. March 8 - April 6, 2008. The Southwest Alternate Media Project (SWAMP) is sponsoring a call for short film submissions by Texas film-makers on *Imagining China*. Selected films juried with the Museum of Fine Arts (MFAH) Film Director will be presented at the MFAH April 5, 2008 and on SWAMP's television series, *The Territory*.



AN Hong, *Water Buddha*, 1997
Courtesy of the artist and Three Shadows
Photography Centre, Beijing

FOTOFEST2008 OPENING NIGHT

March 7, 2008

The Opening Night for FOTOFEST2008 - CHINA will inaugurate the exhibition of *New Photo, 1993-1998 - China*, at FotoFest Headquarters, 1113 Vine Street, Houston, Texas. The evening begins at 8pm and will be celebrated with music and entertainment.

SELECT ADDITIONAL EVENTS

PARTICIPATING SPACES

March - April, 2008

In addition to China programs, curated or commissioned by FotoFest, the 2008 Biennial will feature 136 photo-related exhibitions and events at 118 spaces independently created by participating museums, galleries, artist and commercial spaces. These Participating Spaces present important and high-quality exhibitions around the theme of *China* and the ancillary subject of *Transformations* as well as their own independent themes.

FOTOFEST2008 MEETING PLACE PORTFOLIO REVIEWS

March 7-20 and April 3-6, 2008, DoubleTree Hotel, Houston Downtown

Principal Sponsor: Hewlett-Packard

Over 175 professional curators, gallerists, publishers and collectors from twenty-five countries are reviewing portfolios of 375 artists from twenty-eight countries in the course of fourteen days. The Artist Reviews at the Doubletree Hotel Downtown, Houston are sold out, but FotoFest is sponsoring two open evening programs where, for the first time, the public is being invited to meet Meeting Place artists and look at their work. The famed photo book distributor, Photo-eye, opens a bookstore at the Meeting Place for the run of the portfolio reviews.

HEWLETT-PACKARD PRINT CENTER AT THE MEETING PLACE

March 8, 13, and 18, 2008, DoubleTree Hotel, Houston Downtown

HP is sponsoring free demonstrations of their latest art printing technology as well as free printing for artists, curators and the interested public. HP provides first-hand experience with the latest generation of professional fine art pigment printers.

FOTOFEST2008 INTERNATIONAL FINE PRINT AUCTION

March 11, 2008, DoubleTree Hotel, Houston Downtown

The FOTOFEST2008 International Fine Print Auction at the DoubleTree Hotel Downtown, Houston features over eighty contemporary fine art prints from Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States. Sotheby's Senior Vice President of Photography, Denise Bethel, serves as auctioneer. Among donating artists are Doug and Mike Starn, David Maisel, Lalla Essaydi, Pavel Banka, Luis Gonzales Palma, Atta Kim, Graciela Sacco, Thomas Kellner, and Marc Riboud.

FOTOFEST2008 WORKSHOPS

March 11 and 16, 2008, DoubleTree Hotel, Houston Downtown

FotoFest and well-known photography marketing specialist Mary Virginia Swanson present two career workshops for artists, curators and the public: *CAREER BUILDERS and ART MAKERS*, March 11, is sponsored by HP. *PUBLISHING PHOTOBOOKS TODAY, From Traditional Publishing to Print-on-Demand* occurs March 16. Registration for the FOTOFEST2008 Workshops is still available and a registration form may be found on the FotoFest website at www.fotofest.org/ff2008.

SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

Discoveries of the Meeting Place

March 7 – April 20, 2008, Erie City Iron Works

FotoFest presents *Discoveries of the Meeting Place*, an exhibit which showcases the work of ten artists from the FOTOFEST2006 Meeting Place Portfolio Review. The 2008 Discoveries artists are Kyund Duk Kim (South Korea), Vincent Delbrouk (Belgium), Seung Woo Back (South Korea), Suk Kuhn Oh (South Korea), Jacob Aue Sobol (Denmark), Katharina Mouratidi (German), Dan Nelken (US), Brian Berman (US), Vojtěch V. Sláma (Czech Republic), and Michelle Sank (UK).

National Geographic All Roads Photography Program

March 7 – April 20, 2008, Heritage Gallery, JPMorgan Chase Bank, Downtown Houston

The *All Roads Photography Program* recognizes and supports talented indigenous and minority-culture photographic storytellers who are documenting their changing cultures and communities around the world through photography. The program provides a forum for photographers to showcase their perspectives to a global audience. The JPMorgan Chase bank in Downtown Houston hosts this special exhibition during FOTOFEST2008. The exhibition features, A Yin (China, Inner Mongolia), Akintunde Akinleye (Nigeria), Altaf Qadri (Kashmir), Oded Balilty (Israel), André Cypriano (Brazil), Marcela Taboada (Mexico).

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For more information on FOTOFEST2008 or for visuals, please contact:

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