

“Documentary Photographers in the New Century”

The opening ceremony of the exhibition, “Documentary Photographers in the New Century” was held on June 23, 2010, in the Shanghai Exhibition Center. The exhibition calls attention to the forces of rapid technological change from film-based photography to digital photography, and how these forces affect the ways in which photographers picture the globalized world. The curator of the New York-based International Center of Photography (ICP), the world-renowned photography curator Christopher Phillips thinks highly of the new perspective of documentary photography in this exhibition, which is one of the leading shows in size and scope all over the world. It brings together 420 pieces of outstanding works contributed by 14 prominent photographers from 12 countries, which constructs an open survey of the trends of the documentary photography in the digital era.

All the participating photographers are active in documentary practice and have individually experienced the transition from film-based photography to digital photography. Some of them work with both technologies, while some prefer to sustain either film or digital technology. Their working experience covers the period from 1960s to 2000s, based on a scope of age from 20s to 70s. The half-century span of time in their works and cultural differences of each photographer provide several clues to the development of documentary photography from both vertical and horizontal perspectives.

Each statement made by the photographers according to the question "if digital photography has any influence to my way of shooting or seeing" enriches this exhibition.

These statements reflect remarkable points of view about whether and how the impact of digital technology affects the photographer's way of seeing and shooting. For instance, South Korean photographer Chung Chu Ha maintains the use of medium and large format cameras and analog methods rather than digital ones; while German photographer Andy Spyra's career started entirely from digital. Austrian photographer Paul Kranzler only uses digital technology for editing, but Australian photographer Stephen Dupont works with the digital camera for shooting video. Each photographer provides his/her own understanding of the relationship between technology and practice. However, the show has no prejudice of what is best, or has any opinion on paradigms or direction on the trend. Rather, it leaves space for the viewers to find their own answers through the examples of how the documentary photographers all over the world are working now.

This exhibition is co-curated by Christopher Phillips and Shi Zhimin who is an independent curator from Beijing. ICP is one of the largest photography museum in the world, which has held more than 500 exhibitions over the past thirty years.

The photos of the exhibition were printed on Fantac fiber paper which enhanced the quality of the images. The exhibition is a part of “2010 Shanghai International Photography Week & The Tenth International Art Photography Exhibition,” which has been held since 1986 and is organized by Shanghai Literature and Arts Association and Shanghai Photographers Association.

The photographers in the exhibition:

Thomas Hoepker	(German 1930s)
Tsuchida Hiromi	(Japanese 1930s)
Peter Menzel	(American 1940s)
Chung Chu Ha	(Korean 1950s)
Jean-Christian Bourcart	(French 1960s)
Didier Ruef	(Switzerland 1960s)
Christoph Lingg	(Austrian 1960s)
Stphen Dupont	(Australian 1960s)
Mauro D'agati	(Italian 1960s)
Bela Doka	(Hungarian 1960s)
Zilola Saidova	(Uzbekistan 1970s)
G.M.B Akash	(Bangladeshi 1970s)
Paul Kranzler	(Austrian 1970s)
Andy Spyra	(Germany 1980s)