

CHINA

SEAGULL



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parallel zero



Beijing, the 798 Art District. Government control of dissent is strict and severe. Chinese artists often have to leave the country if their views diverge substantially from those of the Government.



Left: Shanghai, a subway station. Facial recognition technology means that the authorities have the power to locate a person in just a few minutes. The Chinese government is estimated to have installed more than 300,000 CCTV cameras in 2020. | Right: Shanghai, People Square.

## **An ode to a slower pace in the world's fastest country**

One of the principles of Taoist philosophy is that in order to obtain something, one should pursue its opposite because everything contains just a little bit of its opposite. When applied to photography, this principle would suggest that the best means with which to photograph the world's most rapidly developing country is with the slowest camera.

The country is China, none other than the homeland of Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism: a nation that like no other has developed and transformed its appearance in the space of just a few decades, almost making it unrecognizable to the eyes of the very same Chinese people. A nation projected into the future in a spasmodic way, but at the same time strongly determined to preserve its traditions, convictions and past belief systems, which become its new bedrock.

The camera is a Seagull 4, an analogue twin-lens reflex produced in Shanghai in the 1960s and the most commonly used in China, the lenses of which documented a large part of the country's history until the 1980s. A slow, inaccurate, cumbersome camera, an object from the past that forces the photographer to observe the subject matter carefully before pressing the button: perhaps for this very reason, it is the best tool with which to analyse and understand what China has become and, above all, what remains of it.



Shanghai. Nanjing East Road. Actors take a break during filming.



Left: Shanghai, the railway yard. | Right: Beijing. Thousands of people visit Tiananmen Square from the early hours of the morning to see the celebration of the flag raising. Every day a squad of 96 soldiers from the Guard of Honour of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) march from the Forbidden City to the centre of Tiananmen Square for the flag raising in the morning and the flag lowering in the evening.



Left: Yunnan Province, Pugaolao, terraced rice fields. A man preparing the field before sowing the crop. | Right: Shanghai, a game of Mahjong in People Square.



Shanghai, the Jade Temple.



Left: Shanghai, West Bund. Two women take a photo in front of a cherry tree in bloom. In China the spring blossoms are very popular and attract many visitors. | Right: Shanghai, a view of the city.



Beijing. China's One Child Policy has now been rescinded but previously it was forbidden for families to have more than one child.



Right: Yunnan Province, Yuanyang district. Shengcun Local Market, a street dentist at work. | Left: Yunnan Province, Yuanyang district. Water Buffalo. Buffaloes are used for arduous work in the rice fields.



Zhujiajiao. A tourist photographs a woman wearing traditional dress.



Right: Shanghai. | Left: Shanghai, Nanpu Bridge.



Shanghai, People Square. Public gardens are preferred places in which to practice group activities.



Left: Shanghai, People Square. Public gardens are the locations preferred by older generations for practicing group activities like dancing, singing or martial arts. | Right: Shanghai. A rubbish bin is right next to a bucket of wooden skewers at a street food stand selling cooked meat. Food in China is a huge business, but it is also the source of a lot of controversy concerning freshness controls and storage methods.



Beijing. A mobile Police robot. China is experimenting with different ways to enforce law and order. Facial recognition technology means that the authorities have the power to locate a person in just a few minutes. In April 2018 a CCTV surveillance network took only seven minutes to find a BBC reporter.



Zhujiajiao. One of the largest “water towns” close to Shanghai, Zhujiajiao was established 1700 years ago. The water towns once prospered through the trade in clothing and rice but are now well known tourists attractions.



Right: Shanghai. The birthplace of the Chinese Communist Party. One century ago the Chinese Communist Party was founded in this building. Located in one of the city's more upmarket districts, it is now a museum and a famous tourist attraction. | Left: Shanghai, West Bund. A man performs a trick on an electric unicycle.



Shanghai, People Square. Public gardens are the locations preferred for practicing group activities like dancing, singing or martial arts.



Left: Beijing. | Right: Yunnan Province, Yuanyang district. A man sits with a large tobacco pipe.



Shanghai, Pudong. This part of the city, to the east of the Bund River, has grown and developed over the last 10 years.



Left: Beijing. Main entrance to the Forbidden City. | Right: Shanghai. A roadside seamstress. The less qualified sometimes work in more makeshift professions, from waste collection to repairing clothes.



Beijing.



Left: Shanghai, a residential suburb. | Right: Shanghai, tea house in Yuyuan Garden.



Yunnan Province, Yuanyang district. A woman from the Hani ethnic group. The population of this district includes two main minority ethnic groups: the Hani and Yi. It is possible to recognize them based on their traditional clothes: the Hani wear dark colours and Yi wear colourful outfits.



Left: Yunnan Province, Yuanyang district, Shengcun Local Market. | Right: Shanghai, a nighttime view of the Bund area. Ten years ago, not one of these buildings existed. Shanghai's Skyline is a symbol of the country's growth in recent years.



Zhujiajiao. One of the largest "water towns" close to Shanghai, Zhujiajiao was established 1700 years ago. The water towns once prospered through the trade in clothing and rice but are now well known tourists attractions.

Parallelozero, via Donatello 19/a, Milano Italy  
info@parallelozero.com - www.parallelozero.com  
+39 02 89281630

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