'Guanzhu, A New Era'
Interview with Boris Svartzman [*]

Ghanzhou, A New Era © Boris Svartzman

In 2004, the village of Guanzhu, located on a river island on the outskirts of Canton, was requisitioned to make way for an 'Ecological Park', a project that was finally replaced by a luxury urban development one. For more than seven years, the Franco-Argentinian photographer Boris Svartzman has followed its residents facing the expulsion and destruction of their own traditional practices and legacies. This is the subject of his first documentary film, Guanzhu, A New Era, an ode to local resistance in the face of China's hyper-urbanization.

Your photographic and film work explores one of the great dynamics of contemporary China, massive urbanisation, and its consequences for both the people and the landscapes. How has your view of this phenomenon been shaped?

The social impact of urbanisation in China has been a theme for me for few decades now. I lived in Beijing for four years as a child, in the late 1980s. Then I went back to live there for a year when I was a teenager, in the mid-90s. The capital was undergoing major urban reform at the time. The *hutongs*, which were the traditional districts of Beijing, were all being destroyed. I was deeply moved, seeing these architectural traces of an ancestral China disappear – along with my childhood memories – to make way for concrete expansion. These traditional neighbourhoods were the setting for a whole traditional way of life that teemed through the labyrinth of lanes. Such a contrast to the new sterile neighbourhoods full of tower blocks, where this intense social activity seems to have disappeared.

At that time, I was taking my first photographs of the *hutongs* as they were being destroyed. One day I came across a man sleeping in the middle of the ruins. He was lying on top of his bags and didn't seem to know where to go. I photographed him, then took the film to be developed at the Friendship Store. At the time, this State-owned shop was still reserved for foreigners in Beijing. It was the only place where you could buy imported goods during the Maoist era, including photographic film. A few days later, the sales assistant gave me back a blank spool. He claimed there'd been no photos on the spool. I felt angry and powerless. That was the first time I caught a glimpse, at my level, of the political dimension of this urbanisation. In retrospect, I think that censored spool deeply marked me. It is possible those lost images pushed me to explore what was going on behind the scenes of Chinese urbanisation.

At university, I did Chinese studies. So I got to go back to China, Chengdu this time, in the early 2000s. It was also undergoing a major urban reform, a few years behind the capital though. Every day, I'd pass by the traditional neighbourhoods being destroyed. I enrolled at the Chengdu Sports Institute, where I was the only foreign student, and immersed myself in Chinese culture by taking classes in Taiji and Wushu (Chinese martial arts). But the traditional living environment was disappearing before my very eyes. What a paradox.

In the afternoons, I'd take my camera and go to the neighbourhoods that were being demolished. Most of the time, they were hidden behind billboards advertising the construction of a modern city. But sometimes I could go in among the ruins, and I'd always find inhabitants there who were refusing to leave their homes. They had all been physically and psychologically abused. An implacable administration would call on the services of petty thugs to intimidate them and even beat them up to discourage them from staying. I photographed the people I met here. I felt a visceral need to keep a trace of these last inhabitants, in the middle

of the ruins. This was the starting point for a few projects to come, photographic, ethnographic and then cinematographic projects, documenting various aspects of the social consequences of this forced urbanisation.

Tabula Rasa © Boris Svartzman

Your first photographic series, entitled _Tabula Rasa_, which emerged from this instinct to record traces, has a documentary value. What did you discover during your first immersion in the heart of Shanghai, in contact with these people experiencing the vestigial disappearance of their traditional habitats?

I went to live in Shanghai in the mid-2000s. I'd been accepted at Fudan University as a scholarship student, in the sociology department. The city was just like one big open-air construction site at the time. It was in the middle of a massive urban boom in preparation for the 2010 World Expo. But none of my courses at the university tackled the subject of this urbanisation that surrounded us. It was too politically sensitive to be discussed in class. So I left the university to roam the neighbourhoods that were being destroyed.

I came across a few diehards refusing to leave their homes, the same as in Chengdu. Only the homeowners were authorised to negotiate the amount of compensation they received. They had to communicate directly with the demolition companies, which had been paid a fixed fee by the authorities to manage the residents' removal and clear the site ready for work to start. You can imagine these companies were probably creaming off some of the compensation payouts.

To discourage the homeowners from negotiating, they were subjected to all sorts of miseries. There were night-time disturbances, their water and electricity were cut off, there was psychological pressure, they were beaten up, etc. The repression became more and more violent as time went on. Only the most reckless or those with nothing left to lose managed to resist. The residents were forbidden to communicate with one another on how their negotiations were progressing. Deprived of the right to complain publicly, they were forced to just sit tight in their homes, isolated from each other.

Some time after I'd returned to France, I got these images back out of my drawers again. Of Chengdu, Shanghai and other cities where I'd photographed the urban expropriations. This destruction was not a phenomenon that was confined to just one district, or even one city. The whole country had been undergoing an intense urban reform, a euphemism for the destruction of traditional neighbourhoods, since the early 90s. This photographic series, *Tabula Rasa* attests to this moment. It was the first phase of Chinese urbanisation, accompanying the opening up of China to a market economy.

Tabula Rasa © Boris Svartzman

You then decided to extend your gaze to peri-urban and rural areas, as we can see from your photographic series *China in Change*. Was it in this context that you first met the inhabitants of the village of Guanzhou who became the protagonists in your film?

At that point, I had a hunch the urban expropriations were just the tip of the iceberg. In a country that was still 85% rural in the early 1980s, the impact of urbanisation was even greater in the countryside. China's cities just continued to

grow and expand into the peri-urban and rural areas. The inhabitants of rural communities lost the use of their land and were systematically urbanised in situ, without migration. There's even a Chinese saying about this phenomenon: 农民上楼 (*Nongmin shanglou* 'peasants enter the buildings'). This saying sums up the second phase of Chinese urbanisation very well. Since the 1990s, around four million peasants have been forcibly urbanised every year.

I see urbanisation in China as being like a change of scenery in a play where the inhabitants are just extras who have no say. This idea served as a central theme when I was photographing people in their changing environment. I felt the need to change my technique, though. Then I discovered medium format, which I fell in love with. It's not too square or too long. The proportion seemed perfect for photographing the characters in their setting, without the frame overflowing too much. I also switched to colour to get a better feel for the surrounding context.

I spent two years travelling thousands of miles across China. I photographed rural areas that were being demolished and others that hadn't yet been taken over by urbanisation. I photographed migrants working on building sites and migrants with no work, just roaming the city. And I photographed the expansion of the megalopolises. All these contexts make up my second series, *China in Change*, which I completed in 2009. They represent moments in this transition from the rural to the urban world.

It was while I was travelling around the country that I came across the village of Guanzhu, in December 2006. It was soon to be razed to the ground to make way for the construction of a so-called ecological park. The villagers' farmlands had already been wiped out. They were told they'd have to wait for an apartment complex to be built, which would rehouse them at the end of 2008. I photographed the inhabitants of the village at this time, before it was demolished. I shot my first film there later, in the ruins of *Guanzhu, A New Era* – but I didn't know that yet.

At that point, I was thinking about starting a new project on internal migration in China. In the first few years, I went out to the rural areas, hoping to find peasants leaving the area or returning from the city. However, all the villagers I met, in every single region I went to, talked about land expropriations, past, present and future. Even the most remote areas seem to have been affected by this scourge.

I also went back to Guanzhu to see what had become of the place. Most of the two thousand villagers had been relocated to the opposite side of the river, into the apartment complex. But, against all the odds, a handful of residents were refusing to leave their ruined village. So I started filming them.

What were your reasons for choosing documentary film over photography? And to what extent did this film fill a gap in the existing corpus of cinematic representations on the issues and consequences of urbanisation in China?

By this time, I'd been focusing on expropriations in the city and countryside for over a decade. Every time the villagers talked to me, I was blown away by the power of what they said, from both a human and a political perspective. But photography can't convey the way people demand their rights or how they view things. I wanted to keep a trace of these encounters that would be more alive than photographs, which can only capture a moment, and note-taking, which I could always do afterwards. So I swapped my photographic camera for a video camera and my pen for a microphone. Film allowed me to connect words to the images. This seemed particularly important in a country where speaking out like this was extremely rare.

Millions of peasants in thousands of villages are being expropriated every year amid an appalling silence. A myriad of localities, controlled mostly by the local authorities cutting off all means of communication with the outside world. Anyone coming in from outside would be quickly spotted, and images of the repression rarely come out of the locality in question. The many village protests are systematically suppressed, often by force and with complete impunity.

Every year, the central authorities receive hundreds of thousands of complaints from the peasants hoping to find a sympathetic ear in the capital that would have the power to counteract local corruption. The 2009 film *Petition*, by Zhao Liang, documents this phenomenon. Since that time, the number of complaints from peasants facing expropriation has increased so much that the government has simply stopped publishing its annual figures on the number of complaints received! This is a real disavowal by the rural population of this policy of systematic destruction throughout the country.

One of the few films on the subject, *Taishi Cun*, made by the anthropologist and committed filmmaker Ai Xiaoming, illustrates this well, because the film crew were pursued in a car by thugs under the authorities' pay. This attack put an end to shooting. To my knowledge, there are therefore only a very small handful of films dealing with this destruction of rural areas, such as Wang Qingren's *Game Theory* and Cao Dan's *Dragon Boat*.

Most films about the expropriations in China are set in urban or industrial contexts. I'm thinking, for example, of Wang Bing's *West of the Tracks*, Gan Chao and Liang Zi's *Last House Standing*, Zhang Jinli and Ou Ning's *Meishi Street*, Liu Zhenchen's *Shanghai, Shanghai*, J.P. Sniadecki's *Chaiqian*, Dussolier's *Last Days in Shibati* and Zhao Dayong's *One Says No*. These films have expertly documented the first phase of urbanisation, which is

now almost complete. It therefore seemed urgent to me to shift the focus to the countryside, the new setting for urbanisation.

There are some very fine films such as [Yung Chang's](#) _[Up the Yangtze](#)_ and [Antoine Boutet's](#) _[South to North](#)_ that show expropriations outside the cities. But these document the upheavals associated with the widely reported national-scale projects, which represent only a small portion of the expropriations happening every day in China. The Three Gorges Dam, for example, displaced around one million people. This very high figure represents only a fraction of the millions of people living in rural areas who are expropriated each year.

Every time I went back to the village of Guanzhu, I became a little more aware of the extreme rarity of the situation that I had access to. I therefore felt I had to make this film, using this specific case, to show the profound metamorphosis that the Chinese rural world had undergone. As one of the Guanzhu elders said to me: '_Guanzhu is not the whole of China, but the same things that are happening in Guanzhu are happening throughout the whole of China_' [1].

Why did you choose to anchor the film on the side of those who were resisting and living in the ruins of the village rather than those who had moved into the new apartments?

At the beginning of filming, I'd meet villagers living in the middle of the ruins but also former inhabitants who'd been relocated to the apartment complex and diaspora emigrants based in Hong Kong. But I quickly realised I'd always be able to film the people that had left the ruins. They were living in a future that I'd have plenty of time to film in. But there was an urgency to filming the people still in the ruins. The engine was running and their days there were numbered.

At the start though, I never thought they'd stay for as long as they did. Every time I went back, I was never sure I'd still find them there. So I'd film as much as I could in the ruins thinking the images would serve as an archive, because I knew one day I'd go back and these people would all be in the apartment complex.

But the situation in the new complex was also extremely tense. Many of the two thousand villagers who'd been relocated were dissatisfied with their living conditions. As time went on, they realised with the benefit of hindsight that their compensation payouts had been ridiculously low compared with the cost of living in the city and that they should have received pension and social insurance contributions (which were reserved for the urban population), etc. The apartment complex was therefore a real ticking time bomb for the authorities, and the residents were closely monitored. Whenever I visited someone, they'd be systematically questioned by the police. understood that the authorities hoped to

keep me away by putting pressure on the people I talked to and making them believe I'd be arrested.

Those responsible for the expropriations did not want any spotlights being shone on this matter that they were trying to cover up at all costs. So they had to keep the "foreigner" away and avoid any diplomatic tensions. On the other side of the river, my visits to the inhabitants of the ruins seemed to go unnoticed and even to be tolerated.

The battle to save their land had in effect already been lost because the village had been razed to the ground and construction work had begun. These villagers living isolated and cut off from the community no longer presented any danger to the authorities. So I made the most of this opening and continued filming these few diehards amid the ruins. Then, as the years went on, I realised that these images were no longer just archives, they were at the heart of my film.

The boundary between the two river banks was porous though. Residents from the apartment complex sometimes went back to the island. Some of them gave me images of the destruction, their letters of complaint, etc. When I filmed the inhabitants of the ruins, I was also filming the hidden faces of all those who had left.

How did your decision to film over the long term affect how your relationship developed with the residents of Guanzhu? What were their expectations of you and how did they influence your role as a filmmaker?

Ghanzhou, A New Era © Boris Svartzman

Some people were happy to be filmed straight away, others opened up gradually, and some decided after a while that they didn't want to be filmed anymore (so I didn't include them in the film). Some people actually only came and spoke to me after a few years had gone by. The only rule I had was never to force the encounters.

Some of the residents may have hoped I'd be able to help them publicise their case, plead their cause. But as time went by, they saw that I hadn't released anything and that I was therefore 'useless', but they could see I was still interested in talking to them, so this expectation took a back seat and I gradually gained access to moments in their lives and a more intimate voice. Especially because they were tired of this struggle, which they'd talk about less often.

Before the village was razed to the ground, the villagers had tried to get journalists to come – even foreign ones – but with no luck. Documenting a village being destroyed is not easy and they knew I understood the situation they were living in. Whenever I went back to see them, they'd refuse the gifts I brought them: *'You're the only person who comes to talk to us. It's us who should be thanking you!'* These very human moments showed me the trust that had been established between us. There was an unspoken understanding there. Little by little, times and spaces for talking presented themselves, and each encounter was unique.

I also tried to go to the village with different people a few times, to team up. But this always compromised the quality of the encounter. Their eyes would

wander over to the person with me, whereas when I was alone they'd only address the person holding the camera. So I continued my immersion alone.

There were also some people who didn't want to be filmed but who gave me documents, films taken on their mobile phones, complaint letters and the authorities' responses, files from the local administration and the police (which the villagers had obtained by the backdoor). These signs of trust were just as important for me as the spoken encounters. I thus become a kind of village archivist.

I also saved about 100 reports published online by the local administrations on actions taken to move inhabitants out, speed up the process, etc. (these documents have since been completely deleted from the internet). At this point, all sources had documentary value. I saw this village as a textbook case demonstrating how the regime in power was forcing its rural population to urbanise.

From this point of view, the fact that the resistance was spread out over a long time worked in my favour, because I was able to film a plurality of situations experienced by the inhabitants in a process that is usually much quicker and almost impossible to film. The trauma of the destruction gave way to reflection and introspection, and all the emotions that the people may have felt at the time of the demolition would resurface.

For all these reasons, I prefer to speak of a cinematographic gesture or approach rather than a filming device. The people of Guanzhu experience everyday a repressive device. Filming these people mean bypassing the device, exiting this rigid framework. Every time I travel, I arrive in a complicated context that I have to decipher to know whether I can stay there or not. Each film has to find its own form, and this is the one that seemed natural to me here. It allowed me to adapt to the movement, to the changing situation. This, I believe, was my role as director/filmmaker.

Beyond our capacity for resistance, this film also examines our sense of belonging to a place. You managed to show this with a great deal of modesty, a modesty that's imbued with nostalgia for places that had been brutally transformed, where nature had sometimes reclaimed its rights amid the ruins. How did you bring to life a place that no longer existed?

Ghanzhu, A New Era © Boris Svartzman

When I photographed the villagers just before the village was destroyed, I felt like I was accessing the last moments of life in a rural community before it was wiped off the map. The first woman who appears in the film speaks emotionally about this past. She was living in a time suspended between her life in the village, which was in the past, and a future she did not want, in the apartment complex. But the fact that these ruins were still inhabited by people as I wandered through made this place still alive. So for me it was anchored in the present. Especially because this standstill moment was so prolonged.

After the shock of the demolition, everyday life took over again. Everyone just went about their daily business. They started growing again, did odd jobs, opened up shops, etc. Nature reclaimed the abandoned lands. And all around, the construction companies were closing in.

Filming these places as they changed also revealed the invisible hand of power that was operating behind the scenes. This power was an abstract entity, hidden from my view, but it was embodied in the building sites, the slogans and the letters that it exchanged with the inhabitants. This power thus appeared implicitly, through its words and the places it was transforming.

But the building sites themselves couldn't convey what the authorities were capable of putting the inhabitants of these places through. For example, the images I took every year of the sites from a fixed point to show the progress of the works were of no use because they were too cold and distant. The challenge during editing

was to show the sites' proximity to the ruins, how they encroached on the inhabitants' living space. So I decided to show moments from a rural life that contrasted with the surrounding context. It wasn't simply out of a nostalgia for the rural past.

This proximity could also be conveyed through the use of sound. The villagers all showed a great attachment to the atmosphere of calm and the sounds of nature in their village. Even after it was razed, you could still sense this great tranquillity that the visitors from the city came to the island for. However, I saw the ambiance change gradually over time. First, the presence of nature, lush. Then, the sounds of the construction sites gaining ground. Finally, a silence that fell away, nature annihilated and the main work completed. These three temporalities were reproduced in the sound editing to give body to this space, both visually and aurally.

Behind this apparent tranquillity, there were paradoxically insidious tensions sowing division among the villagers. How did you show these less visible consequences of expropriation?

Whenever I arrived in a tense situation and was advised to leave, I would slip away. Also, my interlocutors were only willing to talk in peaceful moments. Most of the images I filmed have a sense of tranquillity. Like the inhabitants peacefully tending their kitchen gardens. So it wasn't easy to show the tensions, which were omnipresent. Apart from the violence that a few villagers talked openly about and some archive footage filmed by the inhabitants, the film remains very gentle compared to what the people experienced: threats of all kinds; violent arrests; beatings. Some villagers even suffered serious physical consequences (coma, death, etc.).

Some violent moments appear in the archival footage filmed by the inhabitants, but they're often blurred and in the distance. And also in some letters that refer to the death of an inhabitant. However, the purpose of the film was to give a sense of the process from the inhabitants' point of view and not to exhaustively reconstruct the history of their expropriation. Moments that might have seemed anecdotal, such as when customs wanted to check my images and when I was asked to turn off the camera, etc., have found their way into the narrative proper. Because these scenes communicated the fear and psychological pressure felt by the inhabitants.

Also, I rarely had access to communal life moments because I mostly filmed the inhabitants in their own environments, one-on-one. But the tensions also affected the social and administrative organisation of the community. Dissensions between the villagers would emerge, fuelled by the authorities' scheming behind the scenes. For example, the authorities asked the resistance fighters who had not signed the demolition agreement to elect their representatives to facilitate dialogue with the

villagers (whom they simultaneously dissociated from the group of displaced villagers that had been relocated to the apartment complex). But, following these elections, the inhabitants of the ruins felt their new representatives were making too many concessions to the authorities. They suspected them of taking bribes.

One evening, some of the villagers met with me to talk about the importance of the Dragon Boat Festival for village unity. The authorities were trying to take over the organisation of this ceremony, which was causing tension. We went to the riverbank to talk in the tranquillity of the night. One of the men there was a representative for the non-signatories. The discussion had barely begun when an argument broke out between the villagers. A few days later, they arranged another meeting with me to resume their discussion about the festival. But they started arguing again! The whole thing is too complicated to go into in detail, but this scene symbolised the tensions that were spreading in the community. I kept this night scene in the film to reflect the opaque ambiance in which they existed.
At what point did you think you had enough material to make a film? How did you reproduce all these exchanges you'd captured over the years during the editing process?

I was convinced from the start that every situation I filmed and all the material I collected would make a good documentary. But this was the first time I'd tried filming and I found it difficult to tell if my images could be made into a film. I was thinking at first maybe I should turn it into an interactive project or maybe I should do a fiction or cartoon storyline.

But of course my aim had been to make a documentary film and I gathered all this material together as soon as I started writing the first script. I reflected on how to combine the archive images, letters, interviews, construction sites, etc. As soon as I understood that all the material had a documentary value, that they showed several sides of the same phenomenon, I began to think cinematically.

I thought of using the filmed encounters and letters of complaint, because these were two registers of speech, written and oral, that complemented one another. For example, showing two complaint letters and the government's cold, implacable response would really convey, in my eyes, how the inhabitants were begging the authorities for help and how this powerful regime always had the last word.

When I started editing, it wasn't easy trying to manage the two hundred hours of rushes (including about fifty hours of archive footage) and the many letters of complaint and responses from the authorities. I found it difficult to organise the testimonies into a narrative framework that was clear enough to communicate all these elements. And then, due to a lack of funding, the editing stopped for nearly a year, until a crowdfunding campaign boosted the coffers again.

Then I met the film editor [Suzana Pedro](), a meeting that turned out to be pivotal. I showed her a three-hour rough cut containing all the characters that I thought were important but that had been left out of the first cut. Her response was: 'You mustn't cut your characters, you must condense what they're saying'. This may seem an obvious point to make, but suddenly everything fell into place.

We constructed a framework that perfectly encapsulated what I've described so far. The first meetings set the context and then give us a window onto the inhabitants' more personal perceptions. The sincerity and strength of what the people were saying to me are enough to convey the trust they placed in me without overemphasising my presence. The filmmaker character is therefore created brush stroke by brush stroke. And then, finally, the slow but ineluctable advance of the construction work.

In this film, you manage to articulate, through the words of these inhabitants who despite everything continued to live amid the ruins, the complex political dimensions that made their simple existence a cry for freedom. What do these people tell us about the way we live in today's world and about the world that awaits us?

To answer this question, you need to look at the economic and political logics of urbanisation that were impacting these people and their community-based way of life. In communist China, rural land is held collectively by the members of each rural community in the form of individual plots. Land requisition is therefore accompanied by the transformation of rural committees into neighbourhood committees. When a rural community is urbanised, it is dismantled and the inhabitants are deprived of their right of access to land. In this sense, they do not become the 'landless peasants' that we see in other countries that expropriate their peasants but 'new urbanites'.

In the city, the State is the sole owner of land in China. It grants usufruct rights for buildings, but there is no private land ownership. Contrary to popular belief and in contrast to the history of the development of Western capitalism, land in China's countryside is not expropriated through privatisation but through the systematic nationalisation of the peasants' land. Only the official authorities can dispossess peasants of their land and commit it to non-agricultural use. Once the land is returned to the State, or more precisely to the local authorities, they can make huge profits from it by granting temporary leases. This phenomenon is not likely to stop any time soon, because urbanisation provides the core funding for local authorities, which are promoting the nation's modernisation.

The official doxa implies that extreme poverty in the countryside is linked to the delay in urbanisation between coastal and remote areas. To redress the economic differences, 'new socialist villages' are currently being built all over China (the

official name of this campaign is "Building a New Socialist Countryside"). From the depths of Tibet to the plains of the Northeast, peasants are being bundled together in new villages and towns, supposedly to speed up the transition to urbanisation. When this policy was launched in 2006, it aimed to urbanise 250 million peasants by 2025! This is the third phase of urbanisation in China, and it's currently in full swing.

But on top of the economic issues, the political impact has also been profound for these rural communities. Since the 1980s, people have been voting for their own representatives at local level. Even though everyone knows these freedoms are in reality circumvented in various ways, the rural population in China nevertheless felt invested with a desire to become involved in the management of their land. The powers that be, which are concentrated in the cities, have therefore had a strong interest in reclaiming the rural communities, which in my view were pockets of autonomy that had so far escaped political control. We can see here the hallmark of a powerful regime that strengthens its control over its entire territory through urban expansion.

In the village of Guanzhu, it's clear that the inhabitants who've been relocated to an urban setting have been deprived of their greatest asset, that of making public decisions at the community level. They may own their own homes, but their social and political fabric has been dismantled. And they want it back!

In China, economic liberalisation has not been at all synonymous with political liberalisation. On the contrary. The excessive urbanisation of the country has become synonymous with the creation of completely new totalitarian methods. So much so that the city could become the anti-democratic model par excellence. This goes against all established ways of thinking, which from the Athenian model to the present day have always placed the city, the *polis*, at the heart of the democratic project.

These are the impressions that I convey in the film. They'd have to be studied and demonstrated. But that's why I wanted to make it an ensemble film, with a plurality of inhabitants who all expressed extremely well what was happening to them. They delivered their visions of the world, which went above and beyond their private interests. They defended a vision of a shared world.

The film therefore closes with this travelling shot announcing a dystopian but no less real plan for a new urban era that makes a clean break with the past and the rural world. This shot is a metaphor, in my eyes, for China's political aim to contain the population as far as possible in their new streamlined urban spaces.

Francois-Xavier Destors

Boris Svartzman is a Franco-Argentinian photographer and sociologist who is documenting the social consequences of urbanization in China since the beginning of the millenium. His photographs have been exhibited in several international festivals. "*Guanzhou, A New Era*" is his first documentary film.