



Chen Nong San Xia

In his San Xia project, Chen Nong creates a sumptuous allegory which explores the interplay between the ancient and the contemporary. His work contemplates the Three Gorges Dam, the largest construction project since the Great Wall and a potent symbol of modern Chinese industrial development; and the social, cultural and environmental impact such projects bring about.

As the Three Gorges Dam project nears completion, the impact of consuming an area with water so rich in natural, historical and archaeological significance, as well as the displacement and relocation of millions of villagers, is yet to be determined. Using former residents, at that time employed as workers to tear down their 2500 year old city, Chen recreates the "Terracotta Warriors" in handmade uniforms created by the artist himself and photographs them amongst the rubble and detritus of their destroyed homes. The Terracotta Army of the Emperor Qin Shi Huang, originally created as a symbol of the endurance of the imperial system, become in Chen's series representative of the futile quest for the immortality of tradition in the face of China's unstoppable progress. As the German photographer and curator Thomas Kellner says, Chen's army reveals itself to be an "army of morality".

Chen Nong's beautiful and painstakingly produced black and white prints are created using an old style bellows camera, which are then hand-coloured by brush reflecting his fascination with traditional photographic techniques and values.

Chen Nong was born in 1966 in Fujian Province, China. He has worked extensively with ceramics and is a self trained photographer and painter. His photographic career was established in 2005 after his participation in the Rome Photography Festival. He currently lives in Beijing.