



Silver Eye Center for Photography
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Large Color Photographs of Vietnam Today by Howard Henry Chen on View at Silver Eye

(Pittsburgh, PA) Silver Eye Center for Photography proudly presents ***Multiple Entry Visa: To Vietnam and Back*** on view **November 15 – February 10, 2007**. This exhibition features large-scale color photographs of Vietnam today by Fellowship 2006 award recipient, **Howard Henry Chen**. *Multiple Entry Visa: To Vietnam and Back* focuses on globalism and the tourism boom in a country that has been a battlefield for a hundred years. Ten Honorable Mention photographers are each exhibiting one image.

Multiple Entry Visa: To Vietnam and Back is an exhibition of photographs selected by Rod Slemmons, Director of The Museum of Contemporary Photography (MoCP), Columbia College Chicago. A total of 284 Silver Eye members from 36 states and 2 foreign countries competed for a \$5,000 fellowship award as well as this juried exhibition at Silver Eye Center for Photography. The Fellowship 2006 award recipient is Howard Henry Chen of Chicago, Illinois. Fellowship 2006 follows six highly successful competitions and is made possible through the generosity of The Heinz Endowments.

Howard Henry Chen continually returns to Vietnam, crossing and re-crossing national and cultural boundaries. The 11 life-size exhibition prints document Vietnam today by focusing on the tourist attractions that are visited throughout the country. Chen was born in Vietnam and moved to Chicago as a small boy at the end of the Vietnam War. Howard Henry Chen has visited his native country and his Vietnamese cousins to take this series of photographs that are often arranged as diptychs and triptychs. In Chen's artist statement he explains, "This work began through my own travels in Vietnam with my Vietnamese cousins, from whom I had been separated for thirty years. As members of the burgeoning middle class in Vietnam – wealth made possible by the movement of global capital – they dragged me to gaudy amusement parks that cater to locals with disposable income. As a wholly socialized American, I dragged them to places like Khe Sanh battlefield and China Beach... My cousins and I thought we knew which Vietnamese landscapes should have the most resonance for us and each other, but soon realized that those ideas were formed by faulty memories and partial histories." Subject matter of the documentary photographs, range from larger than life man-made elephant heads and tusks at the Suoi Tien Amusement Park, huge fabricated dinosaurs at Ho Chi Minh City to reconstructed and enlarged tunnel bunkers for tourists, rusty helicopters, scenic ruins and abandoned bomb casings.

Curator, Rod Slemmons explains, "I chose Howard Henry Chen for the *Fellowship 2006* Award because of what seems to me to be their topicality—their reference to and elucidation of the current American embroilment in Iraq. What will *that* country look like forty years from now? Will it be visited by a combination of global businessmen, returning veterans and curious young tourists? Will the countryside be littered with the evidence of war—evidence of the vanquished? Another important layer of this work is the fact that we are seeing the site of a significant American cultural event through the eyes of someone born in Vietnam but matured in the United States. How is the aftermath of war seen through these eyes?"

Howard Henry Chen was born in Saigon, Vietnam in 1972 and left for the United States with his family in 1975. He grew up in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and studied journalism and political science at Boston University. He then worked as a journalist at several newspapers, covering, among other subjects, the television industry and the changing demographics of the American South. Howard Henry Chen first studied photography at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, where he sharpened his interest in cultural hybridity and produced a project on second-generation Vietnamese in the American South. He won the first Fulbright fellowship given in photography to Vietnam in 1999, and has spent the last six years shuttling back and forth doing photographic work. Chen received his MFA from Columbia College in 2006. Selected exhibitions include: Blue Sky Gallery, Portland, Oregon (2007); Angkor Photo Festival, Siem Riep, Cambodia (2006); Fries Museum, The Netherlands, (2006 – 2007); Minnesota Center for Photography, Minneapolis, Minnesota (2005); Center for Photography at Woodstock, Woodstock, New York, (2001); Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, (1998).

Howard Henry Chen uses a large format 4 x 5 field camera and then scans the images into the computer, manipulates them with Photoshop and prints them on an Epson 9800 printer. The prints are not framed and are pinned to the wall. Howard Henry Chen explains the format of his work, "The diptych and triptych structure in some of the work is a nod to traditional Vietnamese lacquer painting, in which landscapes, views of quotidian life, or leisure activities are shown over multiple panels." Large format cameras are often used for landscape photography because of the very high quality of the prints produced from such large negatives.

Honorable Mention Photographers:

Susan Bank, Philadelphia, PA
Carol Golemboski, Lakewood, CO
Sarah Hoskins, Libertyville, IL
Darlene Kaczmarczyk, Grand Rapids, MI
Louviere and Vanessa, New Orleans, LA
Rania Matar, Brookline, MA
Elizabeth Raymer, Bloomington, IN
Daniel R. Salitrik, Uniontown, PA
Steve Simon, New York, NY
Brian Smetak, Pittsburgh, PA

To request an interview with Howard Henry Chen or any of the above photographers or to request a CD with images, please call Amanda Bloomfield at 412/431.1810, Ext. 12.

Programming includes free gallery tours with the Silver Eye staff in January as well as an evening with *National Geographic* photographers Melissa Farlow and Randy Olson on Friday, February 2, 2007, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Fellowship 2006 is made possible by a generous grant from The Heinz Endowments. Broadcast media sponsorship is kindly provided by DUQ/90.5 FM and WYEP/91.3 FM.

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The mission of Silver Eye Center for Photography is to serve the public through exposure to a wide range of work by locally, nationally and internationally recognized photographers. A Pittsburgh institution since 1985, Silver Eye Center for Photography is the oldest non-profit organization in Western Pennsylvania dedicated solely to the understanding, appreciation, education, and promotion of photography as an art form and as an expressive form of visual communication.

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Gallery Hours:
Wednesday, Friday & Saturday,
Noon – 5:00 p.m.
Thursday, Noon – 9:00 p.m.

ADMISSION IS FREE

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