

中国之家

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摄影：罗伯特·凡德·休斯特
序言：余华
Photographs by Robert van der Hiist
Preface by Yu Hua

CHINESE INTERIORS

上海人民美术出版社



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献 给 中 国 人 民
f o r t h e C h i n e s e p e o p l e

——Robert van der Hilst

序言

——余华

罗 伯 特 · 凡 德 · 休 斯 特 在 中 国 摁 下 的 快 门

记得2009年6月初的一天，法兰克福阳光明媚，德国电视一台（ARD）的摄制组拉着我到处走动，让我一边走行走一边面对镜头侃侃而谈。他们首先把我拉到了法兰克福著名的红灯区，妖艳的霓虹灯在白夜里仍然闪烁着热情的光芒，他们试图让我站立在某个暧昧的门口接受采访，马上有人从里面走出来驱赶我们，尝试了几次又被驱赶了几次以后，我只好站到了车来车往的十字路口回答他们的第一个提问。然后又继续接受采访。几处又脏又乱的地方，或站或坐地继续接受采访。我的德国翻译跟在后面，一路上都在用中文发出不满的嘟囔声，他说法兰克福有很多美丽的地方，为什么不去哪里？为什么尽是在法兰克福落后的地方拍摄？

现在，罗伯特·凡德·休斯特的《中国人家》在中国出版了。我想，可能也会有一些中国人发出不满的嘟囔声。中国经历了三十年的经济高速增长，已经成为世界第三大经济国，繁荣的景象随处可见，可是罗伯特·凡德·休斯特却热衷于在中国的落后地区摁下快门，虽然他的镜头也有过对准富裕人家的时候，可是次数太少了。因此一些中国人可能会觉得，罗伯特·凡德·休斯特没有足够地表达出中国三十年来翻天覆地的变化，虽然他的作品里已经流露出了这样的变化，问题是在为数不多的表达了生活富裕的画面上，罗伯特·凡德·休斯特却让让它们尽情散发出庸俗的气息。反而是在那些表达生活贫困的画面上，罗伯特·凡德·休斯特拍摄下了真诚和朴素的情感。于是，一些中国人可能会感到疑惑，这个荷兰人的葫芦里卖的什么药？

我想，这样的批评者往往以爱国主义自居。无论是在中国，还是在其它国家，爱国主义常常是用来批评艺术和艺术家的最好借口。我不认为这是真正的爱国主义，这只是一种口水的爱国主义，或者说爱国病，在其骨子里其实展示了人类

的虚荣之心。虽然我们的现实生活存在着废墟，可是我们愿意展示的却是美丽的公园。

就像人们独自在家中的时候可以是一副邋遢的模样，可是走出家门的时候就要梳妆打扮一番。人人都想拥有一个光鲜体面的外表，除非穷途潦倒成为了乞丐。如果让人选择，是以邋遢的模样的面对照相机，还是以体面的模样面对照相机时，我相信所有的人都会选择体面的模样。我和罗伯特·凡德·休斯特也不会例外，因为虚荣之心人皆有之。

当然，这也是每个人的尊严。问题是人们对尊严的理解不尽相同，有些人认为富贵和繁荣代表了尊严，高楼大厦鳞次栉比、高速公路纵横交错、商店里奢侈品琳琅满目等等的景象代表了尊严。另外一些人却并不这么认为，这些人认为尊严来自于人们的内心，表达于人们的表情，尊严和富贵繁荣没有必然的关系。

我之所以乐意为罗伯特·凡德·休斯特的作品《中国人家》写序，就是因为我在他的摄影作品里看到了从内心出发，抵达表情的尊严。

罗伯特·凡德·休斯特精心设计了他需要的画面，然后摁下了快门。我感到，他在摁下快门的时候，心里充满了对被拍摄者的尊重，无论是人物，还是景物，罗伯特·凡德·休斯特都以感激之情对待。

这位不会说中国话的荷兰人，日复一日地游走在中国的农村，试图融入到一个又一个中国的家庭之中。他是如何跨过这条文化鸿沟的？他说：“用眼神、用情感、用我的感受来交流。”

然后他成功了。他的尊重之心在那些贫穷的中国家庭那里得到了回报，他们热情地为他敞开了屋门，将他请入家中，用粗茶淡饭招待他。中罗伯特·凡德·休斯特说：“我被摄入镜头的中

国家体现的强烈好奇心、极大的热忱和友善所感动。每次在他们家里，我还会感受到他们的决心、勇气和意志力量。看来他们只有一个行进的方向，那就是前进。”

如果有人质问罗伯特·凡德·休斯特：为什么不更多地去拍摄中国的富贵家庭？我愿意在此替他回答：那些亿万富翁的家门会向这个高个子及头发的荷兰人敞开吗？中国人一直在说，中华民族是一个热情好客的民族。具有讽刺意义的是，罗伯特·凡德·休斯特的作品告诉我们，热情好客的民族传统现在更多地存在于中国的贫穷家庭，而不是富贵家庭。

而且，这个荷兰人的镜头在面对中国的穷人时，时刻感受到了“他们的决心、勇气和意志力量。”他们虽然贫穷，可是“他们只有一个行进的方向，那就是前进。”

我欣赏罗伯特·凡德·休斯特作品的客观性，《中国人家》将会令人难忘。里面的画面真实地表达了中国人的生存状态，我记得在一幅画面上，一个目光坚定的头像，其背景的桌子上摆着四个闹钟。我想借此提醒人们，在中国三十年翻天覆地的变化之后，还有很多中国人的生活，只是从一个闹钟到四个闹钟的进步。

2010年3月3日

PREFACE

— Yu Hua

Robert van der Hilst: Seeing China

I remember a day in early June of 2009. It was bright and sunny in Frankfurt. A crew from the German TV station ARD took me out on the street, and had me walk around with the city as a backdrop for an on-camera interview. First, they took me to Frankfurt's infamous red light district. The neon lights there flirtatiously flash flesh even in the sanitization of daylight.

The crew attempted to interview me in the doorway of a dubious establishment, but its equally dubious proprietor immediately emerged to hustle us off. After several more similarly unsuccessful attempts in similar settings, they gave up and had me stand at a busy intersection to respond to their first question. They then had me sit or stand in several other chaotic places as the interview continued.

My German translator trailed behind me the whole time, grumbling in Mandarin that Frankfurt has many beautiful places, and why weren't we going there instead? Why shoot the backward bits of Frankfurt?

Now, Robert van der Hilst is publishing his *Chinese Interiors* in China. I think that perhaps some Chinese people in reaction will grumble like my German translator that day in Frankfurt. They will say that China has experienced thirty years of rapid economic growth. It is the world's third largest economy, booming everywhere, but Robert van der Hilst is only interested in shooting the backward parts of China. While he has also photographed China's affluent, they are rare in his work.

Many Chinese people may feel that Van der Hilst has insufficiently explored China's transformation of the past three decades. While his work does portray a changing China, the problem is that the few of his works that depict the affluent life ooze vulgarity, while the poor are conveyed as simple and sincere. Consequently, some Chinese may puzzle, what

drugs are this Dutchman on?

I understand that these sorts of critics consider themselves patriotic. Whether in China or other countries, patriotism is often exploited as the best excuse for criticizing art and artists. I do not consider this to be genuine patriotism – it is a slippery spiteful type of patriotism, or a nationalistic disease that reveals deep-rooted human vanity. Inside, our house lies in ruins, but we flaunt our showy garden.

It is like being a slob at home but elaborately dressed and coiffed when going out. All but the most destitute and desperate worry about appearances. Given the choice between looking unkempt or decent when in a camera's sight, I think everyone would prefer to look good. Robert van der Hilst and I are no exception; this is every human's vanity.

Of course, this is also every human's dignity. The problem is that people have different ideas of dignity. Some believe that dignity is found in wealth and prosperity – in the forms of forests of high rises, cobwebs of highways and shops dazzling with luxuries. Others disagree. They believe dignity comes from inside, that it shows in people's expressions, and has no connection to material wealth.

I thus am pleased to introduce Robert van der Hilst's *Chinese Interiors* – because I can see that his photographs come from the heart, and they genuinely express human dignity.

Robert van der Hilst meticulously composes the canvas he needs, and then clicks his shutter. I feel, when he is shooting, his heart is full of respect for his subjects. Van der Hilst appreciates the participation of people and objects alike.

This Dutchman who speaks no Mandarin has spent day after day wandering China's countryside, towns and cities, trying to integrate himself into one Chinese home after another. Asked how he traverses

the two cultures, he answers, "I use eyes, emotions and exchanged experiences."

He succeeded in this unlikely communication. His respectful heart towards those unprivileged Chinese families was rewarded with warm hearths and open doors, with invitations to come in and stay for weak tea and simple food. Van der Hilst recalls, "I was particularly struck by the enormous curiosity, hospitality and kindness of the families I photographed. Once inside their homes I could also feel the determination, the courage and the willpower these people possess. For them there seems to be just one way to go: forward."

If anyone still questions why Robert van der Hilst does rarely photograph affluent Chinese families, I would respond with this question: would the doors of China's multi-millionaires be as open to this tall, grey-haired Dutchman? Chinese people like to say that we are a hospitable race. Robert van der Hilst's work informs us of the irony that the tradition of Chinese hospitality is being maintained by the poor, not the rich.

Moreover, as this Dutchman focused his camera on the faces of China's poor, he sensed their "determination, courage and willpower. Even in their poverty, they know there is just one way to go: forward."

I highly appreciate the objectivity in Robert van der Hilst's works, and *Chinese Interiors* will prove a memorable book. Its photos genuinely present the Chinese living condition. I recall one image, a portrait with intense eyes. In the background, four alarm clocks were arranged on a table. I want to remind people that, even after thirty years of immense change in China, in many Chinese lives progress has merely meant going from having one alarm clock to four.

March 2010

我认识的罗伯特

六年前，一个会讲中文的法国摄影师打电话给我，说有位朋友要来中国，想介绍我们认识。也许他是出于弄堂草根的自尊，我一问反感西方物质文明熏陶下的优越感和腔调，尤其是面对那些满口洋文，不会说中国话，却走上前来炫耀一通的老外，实在没什么热情演一出装腔作势的戏。出于朋友的面子，我还是答应在我的工作室见了一面，就这样认识了罗伯特。

罗伯特是一位荷兰籍住在巴黎的年轻老头，六十几岁的人，一副好莱坞大牌明星的样子，贵族气派的他带了一名中国助手，叫立立。意，我也善于翻译，淋漓尽致地传达了他们的来意，我也感觉罗伯特的眼神里透出了他的诚恳。寒暄过后，我快人快语，直截了当地说：“你有什么作品让我看看”，罗伯特拿出了《古巴人家》，是一本耗费几年心血在古巴拍摄的摄影集及曾经来中国拍摄的一些有关中国人家主题的零碎片子，他表示想来中国花三到四年时间，专题拍摄中国人家。

老实说，我有很长时间不曾看到这样的片子。突然间跃入眼帘，有种亲切的感动，像是看自己的作品一样熟悉。面对他拍摄的平民，没有凌驾于弱者之上的强势，而是用平和的感觉记录着人性本身的光彩和一种平静的生活状态。他的照片很有意思，从拍摄的人物、造型、场景到瞬间定格的神情，像十七世纪荷兰油画的味道，让人有一种喜爱，我们之间的距离，也突然近了。

在聊起对《中国人家》的拍摄计划时，罗伯特整个人都沉浸在一种充满想象力的激情里。他知道这一切困难重重，自己是个西方人，很难融入中国的平常家庭。虽然言语间流露不多，我感觉到他非常需要帮助。

考虑到罗伯特对中国的很多情况并不了解，

我决定先帮助他认识、走进中国，让活跃在中国各地的摄影师认识他、帮助他，于是建议他把《古巴人家》送去参加一年一度的中国平遥国际摄影大展。对于我的推荐，尽管组委会没听说过罗伯特的名字，还是同意让他以外国摄影师的身份参展。

这是罗伯特第一次在中国参加大型摄影作品展，虽然从起初的接待待遇遇到展场安排都未受到特别关注，因为他在中国摄影界实在是太无名气。我却很有把握地笃信，这将是他进入中国的精彩亮相。

展览期间，我也抽空去了平遥。一到现场，全国各地的摄影兄弟们都纷纷竖起大拇指，说我做了一件大好事，为大家引见了世界上最伟大的摄影家。后来我专程去了罗伯特作品的展场，他的作品吸引了大批中国摄影人的目光，甚至连组委会都被他作品的震撼力打动，当即决定在整个展览期间为他举办系列讲座，据说也是场场爆满，盛况空前。在那一届平遥国际摄影展的颁奖典礼会上，罗伯特与他的助手立立作为特别嘉宾上台主持，当晚他们几乎抢尽了原主播（凤凰卫视）的风头！

这一连串的事情背后，我深深明白，是这些作品的伟大魅力让中国人接受了他。

此后的一段时间，罗伯特开始陆陆续续走在中国的云南、广西、四川、内蒙、新疆、浙江、河南、贵州、西藏等许多地方。各地的兄弟们都热忱地给予帮助。每当结束一段行程回到上海，仅限于“海汶你好”、“干杯干杯”、“很好”，子也总会在匆忙中见上一面，喝上几杯。过段日子再“见”，他又学了几个中文字词，“香烟”、“红双喜”、“中国”和“酒”，还将家人和朋友介绍给我认识。罗伯特多次抱怨我至今还没去巴黎他

的家里做客，甚至为此大为光火。其实一方面我对于出国兴致阑珊，另一方面也知道他一直在为《中国人家》马不停蹄地忙碌着，希望能早日听到他的好消息。

今天，罗伯特终于把中国人家这一专题拍摄完成，拿来与我和大家分享。面对这一幅幅平和、质朴、在细节上打动人的作品，其实一三四年前我对他的预期，意料之中的欣喜。

所以我很开心能出品罗伯特第一次在中国创作的摄影画册，也将这本《中国人家》推荐给我的中国朋友们。书如其人，没有丝毫物质文明矫揉造作的姿态，他和他的镜头，他的作品，都离我们很亲，很近。

陈海汶
2010年3月5日
于上海南郊小院

The Robert I Know

Six years ago, a Mandarin-speaking French photographer called me from Paris, saying he had a friend who wanted to come to China and who he wanted to introduce me to. Perhaps due to my "Longtang" roots, I have an aversion to Western civilization's intonations of superiority, especially from the mouths of those speaking only foreign languages and no Mandarin. I really have no enthusiasm for the pretentious drama of foreigners flaunting their privilege. Nonetheless, to give my friend face, I agreed to a meeting at my studio – and that is how I came to know Robert.

Robert is a Dutch young old man, living in Paris: a sixty-something with the demeanor of a Hollywood star and noble bearing. The day he came to my studio, he brought with him a local assistant, named Lily. An adept translator, Lily made vividly clear their reason for coming, and the glint in Robert's eyes convinced me of his sincerity. Robert establishes with people a strong sense of affinity, without any intimation of condescension. After the mincing small talk of our initial greeting, I turned blunt, asking him, "What works can you show me?" Robert brought out his *Cuban Interiors* book, a painstaking effort of several years spent shooting in Cuba, and also showed me his first *Chinese Interiors* photography. He expressed that he hoped to spend three to four years in China, shooting interiors.

Honestly, in these many years I had not seen such images. They leap suddenly into the eyes, with a moving sort of intimacy, with such a familiarity they feel like one's own work. Encountering the common people he photographs, one observes no dominance of the strong over the weak. Instead, the photographs tranquilly record human nature's inherent luster and how that is expressed through a calm lifestyle. His pictures are very meaningful, from the arrangements, the scenes and the people to their expressions in the moment of capture. They stylistically resemble the Dutch oil paintings of the Seventeenth Century. They give people a feeling

of love, as if we were very far apart, but suddenly become close.

When discussing the photographic technique of *Chinese Interiors*, Robert's entire person exudes an imaginative passion. He knew the challenges his project would involve: as a Westerner, it would be very difficult integrating into average Chinese homes. Although I did not say so explicitly, I felt he would need a lot of assistance.

I thought about how Robert did not understand a lot of the conditions in China, and decided that I would help him to get to know China, deeply. I would introduce him to photographers all over China so that they would also help him, and with that in mind I suggested he exhibit "*Cuban Interiors*" at the annual Pingyao International Photography Festival. Although the organizing committee had not previously heard of Robert, they followed my recommendation and allowed him to participate in the foreign photography show.

This was Robert's first big exhibition in China. Before the show and during its set-up, he attracted no particular attention due to his lack of fame in China, but I had complete certainty that it would prove a spectacular China debut.

I went to Pingyao during the show. As soon as I arrived onsite, the brotherhood of photographers from all over China gave me a succession of thumbs-up. They said I had done a great deed, introducing them all to one of the world's best photographers. I later made a special trip to see Robert's show, and learned that his works had attracted the attention of many Chinese photographers. Even the organizers were profoundly impressed. They decided to have Robert give a lecture series during the show, and the seats sold out, which is unprecedented at Pingyao. Come the evening of the televised Pingyao International Photography Festival Awards Gala, Robert and his assistant Lily were special guest

hosts, and they practically upstaged the original Phoenix - TV host, that is.

After all this, I fully understood the great charm of his work, and how they allowed Chinese people to accept Robert. A while later, Robert began a series of trips to places around China like Yunnan, Guangxi, Sichuan, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Zhejiang, Henan, Guizhou, Tibet and more. In each place, the photographic brotherhood offered him warmth and support. Coming back to Shanghai at the end of each trip, Robert would call me. Although due to language limitations, our communication is limited to "Haiwen, hi!" "Drink up, drink up!" and "Very good!", we would nonetheless promptly meet up for a few drinks. Before saying goodbye again a few days later, Robert would have learned a few new words in Mandarin, like "cigarettes", "red double happiness", "China", and "booze", or would have brought several of his friends and family around for me to meet. Robert has several times complained that I have yet to visit him in his Paris home; I think he is rather mad at me about that. However, I am too worn out to travel abroad, and I know he has been working tirelessly on his "*Chinese Interiors*" too busily, too tirelessly, and for too long, so I have awaited the happy news of its completion.

Today, Robert's *Chinese Interiors* project is complete, and he has brought his photographs to share with me – and with us. Encountering these sophisticated, yet simple and highly detailed works, I feel that Robert's enterprise of these past three to four years has delightfully lived up to my expectations. I am therefore very happy to be able to publish Robert's first photo book in China, entitled *Chinese Interiors*, and share it with my fellow Chinese. In the book as the person, there is not the slightest artifice. Robert and his camera, Robert and his work, are to us very dear, and very close.

Chen Haiwen
Nanjiao Xiaoyuan, Shanghai
March 2010

“人能弘道，非道弘人。” 孔子《论语》

"It is not truth that makes men great, but men that make truth great." Confucius

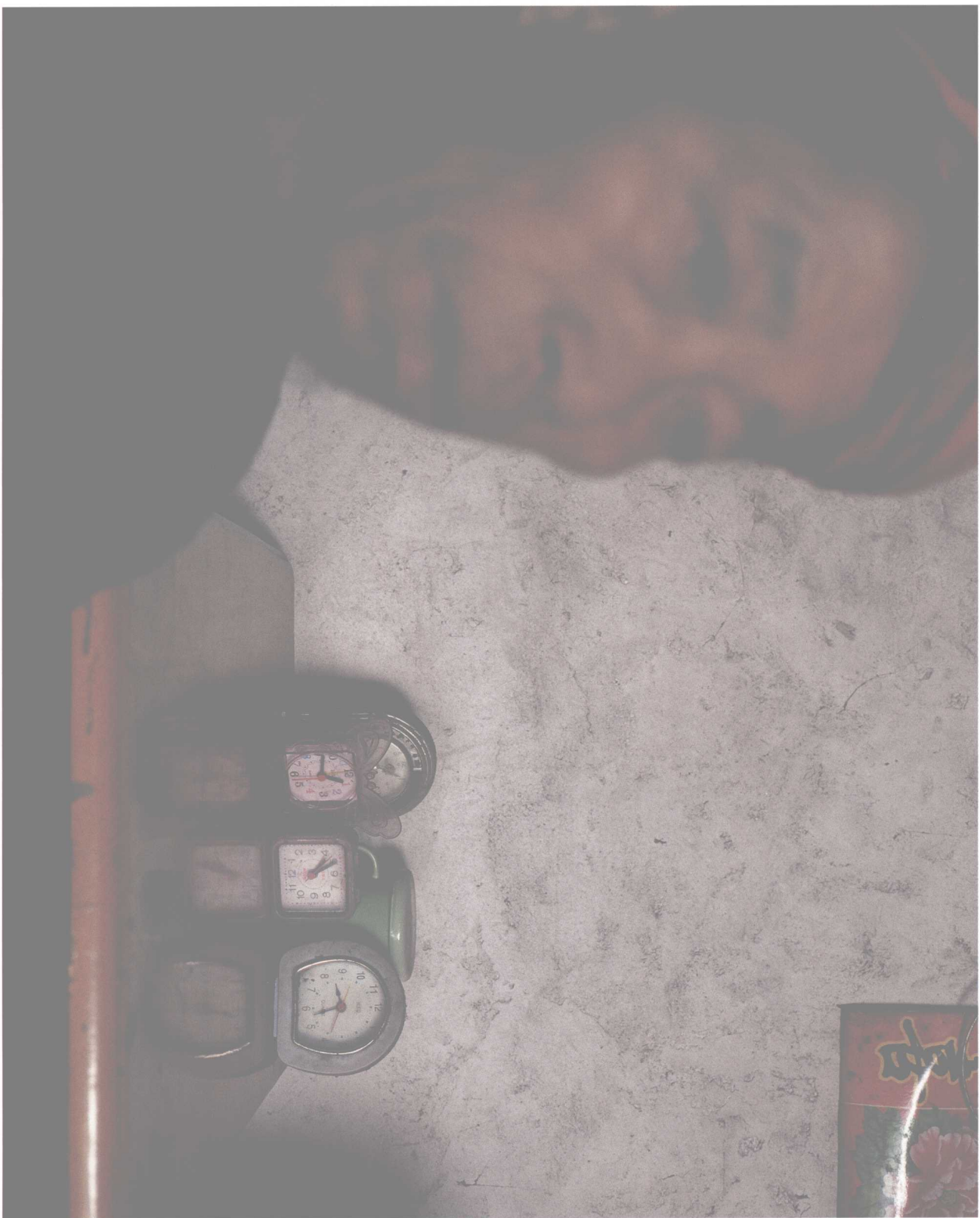




孙女和祖母 / 上海市 / 2007 Young woman and her grandmother at home. Shanghai. 2007



女人 / 上海市 / 2005 Woman at home, Shanghai, 2005



瑶族男人和闹钟 / 广东省油岭镇 / 2006 Yao minority man and alarm clocks. Youlin Town, Guangdong Province. 2006



厨房里的夫妇 / 上海市 / 2005 Couple in their kitchen, Shanghai, 2005

