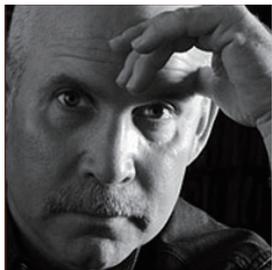


Steve McCurry: Between Darkness and Light

Through October 21st, Seoul Arts Center, Nambu Bus Terminal



Seoul Arts Center is hosting a five-week exhibition of

Steve McCurry's most riveting photographs. McCurry is a world-renowned American photojournalist best known for his iconic "Afghan Girl" photo, which was exhibited in his first Seoul show in 2010. His new exhibition at SAC features 97 photographs depicting darkness and light through notions of visibility, color, intrinsic power, and space composition.

The exhibition's first section emphasizes the importance of visibility or a lack of it. Abandoned cars in Kuwait are left in the dark only to become visible through the intense blaze of oil well fires. A shattered mirror reflects an ambiguous shadowy figure, alluding to a sense of inner invisibility. Many of the photographs leave the viewer wondering about a missing or invisible element. In one, the neon lights of Hong Kong create a great sense of visibility, and yet a driver's object of interest remains unknown. In another, the subject appears to be a black and white cat, but it is only through the shadows that the presence of a person is revealed.

The importance of color appears in the second part of the exhibit. Using walls, buildings, cars, food, clothes, and jewelry, McCurry portrays the attracting presence of color. A remarkable image showing a bright red umbrella and two men dressed in red shirts manages to distract attention away from the beautiful white Taj Mahal in the backdrop. The vibrant blue buildings and the red clothes of the people dominate an image of the city of Jodhpur, India. Whether it is the purple and green colored walls in Havana, the colorful vegetable market in Kashmir, the bright yellow burqa of an Afghan woman, or the fluttering multi-

colored Tibetan prayer flags in the mountainside, all of the photographs succeed in highlighting the significance and beauty of color.

Photographs in the third section hint at intrinsic power of the forces of nature and time. Despite a harsh dust storm, two determined Rajasthani men haul their camels through the desert. In Varanasi, India, a young man exerts himself pushing his bicycle rickshaw carrying two passengers through a wild rainstorm. Another photograph demonstrates the unyielding power of time through a weathered portrait of a man in Kuwait. The power of youthfulness is depicted in photographs of naked boys fearlessly leaping off walls into unknown waters in Bangladesh, as well as youths jumping off concrete buildings in the Sahel Desert.

In the fourth and final section, McCurry's photographs illustrate space composition. Space is first expressed by framing a couple amongst a teeming flock of pigeons

just outside a mosque in Afghanistan. Next, space limitations are conveyed through images of crowds. In Rajasthan, during the Holi festival, a man in a green turban is surrounded by a group of men in red turbans, and barely has space to move. A photograph of people crowded on a train, with bicycles hanging on the outside, provides an impression of limited space. Conversely, the presence of only a few people or objects reveals the notion of empty space. Photographs of an empty building with open doors, or the tiny silhouettes of soldiers within the vast snowy landscapes of Kashmir, heighten this effect.

To explore and appreciate McCurry's photography, head to the V-Gallery at the Seoul Arts Center near Nambu Bus Terminal. This special exhibition is only running for a few weeks until October 21st, 2012. Admission runs from W6,000 to W10,000. For more information visit sac.or.kr or call 02-511-2931.

WORDS BY RAJNESH SHARMA



FROM TOP LEFT

Chiang-Mai, Thailand, 2011;
Boy in mid-flight, Jodhpur, India, 2007;
Snow blankets Times Square, New York, 1994;
Actor Robert De Niro in his screening room in Tribeca, New York, 2010, USA;
Fisherman on Inle Lake, Burma, 2008

