



News release

Contact: Ash Communications

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Tel: 07957 822641

GSPA photography winner's manuscript collected by British Library with winning images of migrant workers in Dongguan, South China

'Made in China – Life Record of Migrant Workers in Dongguan Manufacturing Hub', a manuscript with photography created by photographer Youbing Zhan, has just been added to the British Library's collection.

This handmade book is from a set of 120 manuscripts and includes winning images from the last Global SinoPhoto Awards (GSPA) 2024 by the well-known Chinese photographer.

295 million migrant workers were moving from the countryside to cities in China in 2022 and Youbing Zhan was one of them together with other members of his family. Having a personal insight into the life of a migrant worker, Zhan dedicated himself to capturing their living and working environment as well as their relationships and struggles. Since 2006, he has taken over 1.6 million photographs on the subject.



In addition to the compelling pictures documenting the workers' everyday lives, Zhan included some artefacts such as a small piece of hardware, a work ID, and a warning letter to a worker. The book was carefully bonded by hand in the traditional Chinese bookbinding style, fashioning the cover using the working cloth worn by himself and the workers.

Some of Youbing Zhan's manuscripts



This image was taken in Dongguan City, Guangdong Province, and shows workers at an electronics factory taking a break from work in the changing room. The factory produces computer hard drives, and the workshop is a dust-free environment. To enter, workers have to wear a dust-free protective suit, gloves, a protective helmet, and a mask.

©Youbing Zhan, *Take a Break, China*, 2011

Sara Chiesura, Lead Curator of East Asian Collections at the British Library, says, “We are delighted that this book is joining the national collection. Mr Zhan’s work not only has great artistic value, but it also effectively documents an important socioeconomic phenomenon in contemporary China, making it an invaluable resource for researchers in the future.”

“The struggle of more than 290 million migrant workers in the manufacturing industry in China has made "Made in China" famous all over the world. I am so pleased that the daily lives of migrant workers will be seen by more people. Work ethics are our pride, and the workers deserve to be remembered”, comments Youbing Zhan.



The Cover of the Book, recently entered into the British Library’s collection, 2024

GSPA founder Yintong Betser adds, “We’re delighted that this book with outstanding images of real people and from real life has been collected by the British Library, particularly as it has been the venue for the GSPA announcements for the last two years. It demonstrates exactly the objective of our Awards, to introduce photographers and their works to the world and bridge the understanding of the Chinese culture and its people - in this case, in a new manufacturing context.”

The collection comes ahead of the GSPA exhibition, sponsored by Raymond Legal, of about 50 photographs, entitled ‘Culture Identified’, to be held at Christie’s London from 13

– 31 January 2025. The exhibition will feature a selection of images curated from the wide pool of entries from GSPA 2020 – 2024, presenting a year of reflection that aligns with the celebration of the Chinese New Year in 2025.

Over the last four years, the Awards have collected thousands of images from hundreds of photographers from more than 40 countries. For the first time, the Awards introduces a People’s Award in its fifth landmark year. This special Award will be chosen by visitors to the exhibition at Christie’s London and via Christie’s social media channels.

As well as the principal sponsor Raymond Legal, Blick Rothenberg has also returned this year continuing its support to the Global SinoPhoto Awards since 2021.

Please contact us for more photographs to accompany this release.

For further information please contact:
Olivia Sandu, Linda Rose or Lynda Heath
Ash Communications
Email: olivia@ashcommunications.com
Email: linda@ashcommunications.com
Email: lynda@ashcommunications.com

About the British Library

We are the national library of the UK and we are here for everyone. Our shelves hold over 170 million items – a living collection that gets bigger every day. Although our roots extend back centuries, we aim to collect everything published in the UK today, tomorrow and far into the future. Our trusted experts care for this collection and open it up for everyone to spark new discoveries, ideas and to help people do incredible things.

We have millions of books, and much more besides. Our London and Yorkshire sites hold collections ranging from newspapers and maps to sound recordings, patents, academic journals, as well as a copy of every UK domain website and blog. Our public spaces are a place to research, to meet friends, to start up a new business or simply to get inspired by visiting our galleries and events. We work with partners and libraries across the UK and the world to make sure that as many people as possible have the chance to use and explore our collections, events and expertise. And we’re always open [online](#), along with more and more of our digitised collection.