Uprooted 22, 2008



Yang Yi
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Lambda-print
Image: 100 x 70 cm or 39 2/5 × 27 3/5 inches
Edition of 11 ex + 1 AP
Courtesy Galerie Dix9 Hélène Lacharmoise

Description:
Started 15 years ago, the Three Gorges Dam will be achieved by 2009, after having inundated hundreds of square kilometers in Central China. Yang Yi, born in Kai Xian, a small city with 80 000 inhabitants, built some 1800 years ago on the banks of a tributary of the Yangtze river, knows he will see his native town submerged by waters.
Faced with that destiny, the young photographer decided to dedicate his first work to a world which will have disappeared tomorrow. Called « Uprooted », the series makes present, past and future coexist with great accuracy.
Shot with a medium format camera, the photographs show the streets of a spectral town immersed in water. The buildings have been destroyed before inundation. The few remaining inhabitants, friends or neighbours, are wearing masks and snorkels. Like angels fallen from heaven, they act out their daily life to bring their beloved town to live. Whether shop keepers, children, mahjong players or grandfathers, all are posing for posterity.
Using digital retouching, Yang Yi perfects the creation of a world in suspense, all at once unreal and funny, and « dates » his photographs with sepia, to give them an old post card look.
« Uprooted » is a duty of memory. A present that already belongs to the past. For tomorrow, today is already the past.