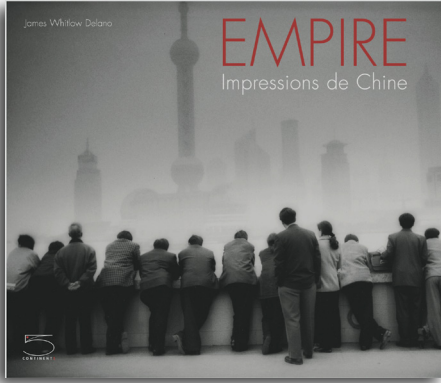


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EMPIRE

IMPRESSIONS DE CHINE

Photographs by James Whitlow Delano

With tremendous tenacity, the people of China are changing the face of their country—often with their own bare hands. Sometimes, it seems as if not a single plot of ground has been left unturned or unproductive. The changes are so rapid and so prolific that the photographer finds himself constantly a step behind, chasing memories. The ancient rhythms of China, once thought to be eternal, are being muffled as the country begins to look more and more like everywhere else in the *new Asia*.

Change is the only constant. James Delano regards change in China with mixed feelings. The light in China is muted by the ever-present coal smoke, which creates a softness. People's faces are smudged, and have the hungry, ambitious eyes of those who work with their hands. This generation may be rough around the edges, but they are on the way up, sacrificing for their children and grandchildren; they are nation-building. But no matter how much China transforms itself, a certain degree of "Chineseness" will always remain. The question is, how much? Immersing himself in a country means, for Delano, quietly wandering the backstreets of the cities, towns and villages. It is still possible to slip into a place or situation unnoticed—at least temporarily. He passes by quickly and quietly in order to capture the immediacy that he seeks before he disturbs the scene. If he is too slow, the moment is lost forever.

These pictures are a strong photographic exploration of what lies beneath the surface of the subject; a study of light, form, energy, emotion and how China reacts to the intrusion of a foreign observer. This book will present a critical, at times ironic, but always informed vision of the nation and its people.

James Whitlow Delano's ongoing photographic work has taken him from the rainforests of Southeast Asia to the ancient Silk Road in China's far west. Focusing on Asia's vanishing heritage in the face of rapid industrialization, China has drawn the photographer back time and again. Photographic assignments have also taken Delano to the highlands of Latin America, Europe and Africa. His photographs have appeared in important magazines all over the world, including *Time* and *Travel & Leisure*, and received major awards.