

LA LOMA
Projects

SHANGHAI ZOO

Cody Cloud

September 11 - 25, 2021

6516 North Figueroa Street, Unit A

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The city seemed never-ending, never still, but despite the mind-bending speed of the maglev train that carved into Shanghai, the steamy July weather gave the impression that it all moved in slow motion.

Once I arrived, I set out to explore China's largest city, to photograph Shanghai, but I was overwhelmed by its magnitude. Amid the city's famous interweaving of traditional and western-influenced architecture, I felt hesitant to even attempt capturing its vastness and uncanny juxtapositions. I soon lost my bearings, wandering between high-rises and Shanghainese alleys.

Defeated, I headed back to my hostel where a flyer for the Shanghai Zoo caught my attention. Would this institution represent a more manageable vantage of this sophisticated, conflicted city? I decided to visit the next morning.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, Shanghai rapidly developed into a modern capital, an international symbol for cultural experimentation. After Shanghai came under Communist control in 1949 and during the cultural revolution of the 1960s, its global influence was limited for the next several decades, though the city continued to develop as an industrial center. With its colonial history and cosmopolitan identity (since the 1990s, it has again been home to the largest percentage of expats in China), Shanghai retains a complex symbolism for the rest of the nation.

In the zoo I found a reflection of these overlapping histories of development, sophistication and degeneration, East and West, old and new.

The huge 182-acre zoological garden lies adjacent to Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport in the district of Changning. While I wandered between the trees (100,000 of them), the proximity of this green space to an international transportation hub was palpable. Though the wildlife had ample outdoor enclosures within which to roam, the quiet and calm was regularly interrupted by jet engines.

I was somehow calmed by the atmosphere, a strange equilibrium of order and disorder, marked by dilapidated concrete enclosures, aloof animals, lush landscaping, and dedicated staff.

I visited the zoo daily for one week. These are the images I captured.

Shanghai Zoo, 2008.

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Security Camera #1, 2008

LightJet type C 20 x 24"

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Security Camera #2, 2008

LightJet type C 20 x 24"

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Gorilla with Bottle, 2008

LightJet type C 20 x 24"

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Dogs, 2008

LightJet type C 20 x 24"

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King Cobra, 2008

LightJet type C 20 x 24"

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Man in Blue Room, 2008

LightJet type C 20 x 24"

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African Bugs, 2008

LightJet type C 24 x 20"

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Dolphin Display, 2008

LightJet type C 24 x 20"

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Penguins in the Mist, 2008

LightJet type C 20 x 24"

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Man with Cigarette, 2008

LightJet type C 20 x 24"

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Man with Kite, 2008

LightJet type C 24 x 20"

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Monkeys in the Mist, 2008

LightJet type C 20 x 24"

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Penguin Party Cage, 2008

LightJet type C 20 x 24"

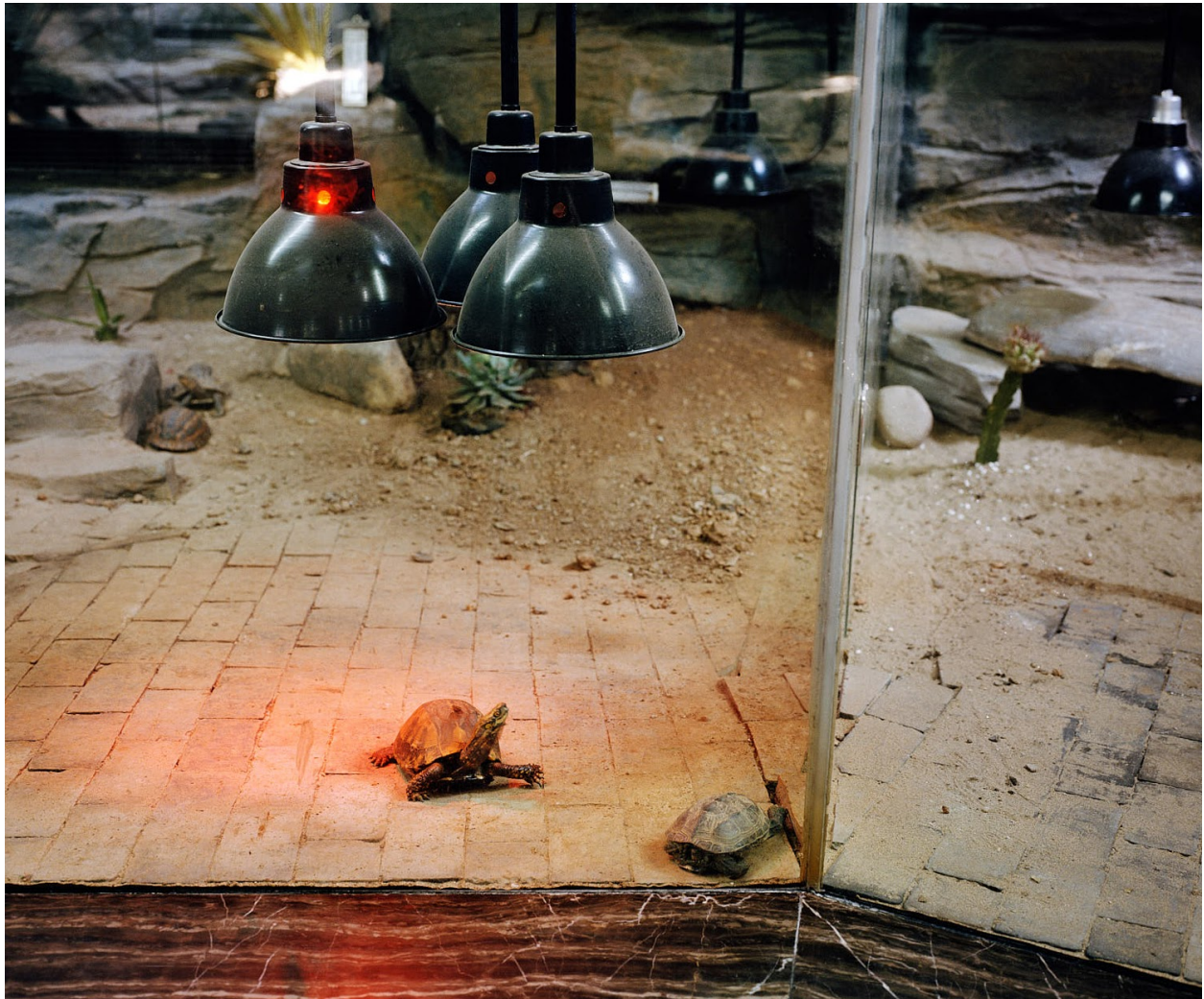
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Polar Bear, 2008

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Turtles in Red Light, 2008

LightJet type C 20 x 24"

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Hippopotamus, 2008

LightJet type C 20 x 24"

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Workers in the Rain, 2008

LightJet type C 20 x 24"