



Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology

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Zhang Xiao Named

2018 Robert Gardner Fellow in Photography

(April 9, 2018, Cambridge) The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, is pleased to announce the selection of the 2018 Robert Gardner Fellow in Photography. Following an international search, the Gardner Fellowship committee awarded the Fellowship to photographer **Zhang Xiao** (China). The Fellowship carries a \$50,000 stipend to begin or complete a proposed project followed by the publication of a book.

Zhang's work, deeply rooted in fieldwork and interactions with local communities, focuses on the impact of rapid economic change and urbanization on Chinese rural landscape and traditions. According to artist and curator Ou Ning, "[Zhang] has amazing skills to communicate with ordinary people, and most importantly the ability to transfer his research and observation into powerful visual works." Peabody curator Lisa Barbash said "What is especially exciting about Zhang is that he summons new approaches to each new project, by shifting his perspective, changing his palette, choosing new printing forms and adapting his camera equipment to create completely unique portraits within an ever evolving China."

For the 2018 Fellowship year, Zhang will expand on his earlier 2007 work in Shanxi which focused on individual performers in the annual spring festival (*shehuo*), to document the disconnection between the actors' contemporary lives and the ancient traditions. Further research since then, inspired Zhang to revisit the festival to examine another aspect of the festival: the shift from the festival's traditional meanings and props to kitschy entertainment and consumption. According to curator Lisa Barbash, "With his photographic focus on objects—costumes and props—Zhang propels the anthropology museum's traditional concern with material culture into a dynamic present, where the objects are re-invented, re-shaped and re-purposed to, as he says, 'cater to modern society'."

An ancient agricultural festival, *shehuo* originated in the worship of the gods of earth and fire and was a time to pray for good weather for abundant crops (earth) and safety from evil spirits (fire). The festival includes ritual as well as family reunions and enactments of ancient stories and legends. The costumes and props of *shehuo* were once handed down generation to generation or remade in traditional ways, but with the explosion of the internet and diminishing of relevance, props and costumes are now largely obtained on the internet, made from cheap kitschy materials, and often reinvented for modern society becoming disposable goods for a new fast-paced consumer society. Over the coming year, Zhang will examine the impact of these new costumes and props and online consumption patterns on the *shehuo* as well as on the communities producing and using them.

Born in 1981 in Yantai city, Shandong province, China, Zhang currently lives and works in Chengdu, Sichuan province. He graduated from the Department of Architecture and Design at Yantai University in 2005, and began his career with the *Chongqing Morning Post* as a photojournalist. Zhang has won numerous awards including the Three Shadows Photography Award in 2010 for *They*; the second Hou Dengke Documentary Photography Award in 2009, the Photography Talent Award (France) in 2010, and the Prix HSBC pour la Photographie in 2011 for *Coastline*. His publications include *Coastline*, (Actes Sud, 2011; Jia zazhi Press, 2012); *They* (Editions Bessard Press, 2014); and *Shanxi* (Little Man Press,

2013).

About the Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography

The Fellowship funds an “established practitioner of the photographic arts to create and subsequently publish through the Peabody Museum a major book of photographs on the human condition anywhere in the world.” The Fellowship committee invites nominations from experts around the world; nominees are reviewed and selected by a committee of four. The Fellowship provides a stipend of \$50,000, and is unique in its dedication to funding professional documentary photography.

The Fellowship was given by Robert Gardner, award-winning documentary filmmaker and author, whose works have entered the permanent canon of non-fiction filmmaking. Gardner’s works include the documentary films “Dead Birds” and “Forest of Bliss” and books *The Impulse to Preserve: Reflections of a Filmmaker* and *Making Dead Birds: Chronicle of a Film*. In the 1970s Gardner produced and hosted “Screening Room,” a series of more than one hundred 90-minute programs on independent and experimental filmmaking. The series, considered an invaluable historical record of modern cinema, has been transferred to digital format for archival preservation by The Paley Center for Media in New York City. Robert Gardner received Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Harvard University and was director of the Film Study Center from 1957 to 1997. He was also founder and long-time director of the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts and taught the Visual Arts at Harvard for almost 40 years. Gardner is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. His most recent book is *Just Representations* (Peabody Museum Press and Studio7Arts, 2010), a collection of Gardner’s short prose pieces about film and anthropology. In April 2013, Robert Gardner was awarded the James Smithson Bicentennial Medal by the Smithsonian Institution. He passed away in 2014.

Robert Gardner Fellowship Recipients

2007 Guy Tillim (South Africa). Tillim's Fellowship took him to five African countries, documenting grand colonial architecture and how it has become part of a contemporary African stage. An exhibition of his Fellowship work, *Avenue Patrice Lumumba*, was shown at the Peabody Museum in 2009, and was published in *Avenue Patrice Lumumba* (Peabody Museum Press and Prestel, 2009).

2008 Dayanita Singh (India). Singh's Fellowship work began as a visual diary and later evolved into "photographic fiction." Her Fellowship work was shown in the 2011 Peabody Museum exhibition *House of Love*, and was published in a book of the same name by Peabody Museum Press and Radius Books.

2009 Alessandra Sanguinetti (USA/Argentina). Sanguinetti continued a multi-year profile of two girls living in rural Argentina and their wider social networks for a project called, "The Life That Came."

2010 Stephen Dupont (Australia). Dupont created a study of cultural erosion as well as a celebration of Melanesian people in *Stephen Dupont: Papua New Guinea Portraits and Diaries*. A companion two-volume publication, *Piksa Niugini*, was published by Peabody Museum Press and Radius Books, 2013.

2011 Miki Kratsman (Israel). Kratsman continued a project begun years ago to create a portfolio of photographs that explore how the medium of photography can be used to turn an ordinary moment in a person's life into a suspect one. Kratsman presents Palestinians as targets as though viewed from the perspective of a soldier; as *shahids* or martyrs as portrayed on neighborhood posters or placards; and as "wanted men." His volume, *The Resolution of the Suspect* (Peabody Museum Press and Radius Books), was published in 2016.

2013 Yto Barrada (Morocco/France) Barrada is working on "A Hole is to Dig," which engages the complex terrain of paleontology in her native Morocco. Barrada is exploring the topic from multiple human perspectives: from scientists, museums, and cultural heritage professionals, to those who collect fossils, and those who plunder and forge them.

2014 Chloe Dewe Mathews (United Kingdom) continued her work documenting the lives of people who live on the shores of the Caspian, examining their relationship to the

resource-rich but volatile lands either side of the sea. Her resulting book *Caspian* is currently in press (Peabody Museum Press and Aperture, September 2018).

2015 Deborah Luster (United States) continues her investigation of violence, place, and prison, with a focus on Angola Prison. The site of the prison has been witness to slavery, Civil War, Reconstruction, Black Codes, convict leasing, Jim Crow, the Trustee System, segregation, and mass incarceration.

2016 Ilana Boltvinik and Rodrigo Viñas of TRES Art Collective (Mexico) is developing the second phase of their project *Ubiquitous Trash*, a beach-waste, art-based, research series, which began in Hong Kong in 2015 and has expanded to Western Australian beaches. The project draws on the disciplines of biology, archaeology, economics, and anthropology to create a complex understanding of the material waste in public spaces.

2017 Sammy Balogi (Congo) is focusing on the Gendarmes Katangais, a rebel resistance group from the copper-rich Katanga province of DRC. The Katangese Gendarmes have influenced political landscapes in Central Africa since the Cold War and are likely to continue to do so.

About the Peabody Museum

The Peabody Museum is among the oldest archaeological and ethnographic museums in the world with one of the finest collections of human cultural history found anywhere. It is home to superb materials from Africa, ancient Europe, North America, Mesoamerica, Oceania, and South America in particular. In addition to its archaeological and ethnographic holdings, the Museum's photographic archives, one of the largest of its kind, hold more than 500,000 historical photographs, dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the present and chronicling anthropology, archaeology, and world culture.

Location: The Peabody Museum is located at 11 Divinity Avenue in Cambridge. The Museum is a short walk from the Harvard Square MBTA station. **Hours:** 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., seven days a week. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. **Admission** is \$12 for adults, \$10 for students and seniors, \$8 for children, 3–18. Free with Harvard ID or Museum membership. The Museum is free to

Massachusetts residents Sundays, 9 A.M. to noon, year-round, and Wednesdays from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M. (September to May). Admission includes entry to the Harvard Museum of Natural History. For more information call 617-496-1027 or go online to: www.peabody.harvard.edu.

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