



Wang Guofeng 王国锋

Wang Guofeng considers that his training in painting allowed him to go beyond the limits of professional photography. His works are monumental in scale, while the high resolution renders the most minute details extremely sharp. The series on socialist buildings that were shot in China, the Soviet Union and Germany explores the ideologies behind these architectural feats (their construction's short duration is a record), their common inspirations, and national patterns that illustrate their symbolic power. To curator Huang Du, the integration of the elements of traditional Chinese architecture and classical Russian structures reflect both the collective mentality of the Chinese intelligentsia as well as nationalistic consciousness and socialist ideals. The photographs are not retouched, the work is done with the camera, time and dedication. In the series illustrating Chinese socialist architecture, in order to create a surreal atmosphere at odds with the very ideals behind Communism, the buildings are rendered as empty of people, with the exception of the artist himself in the foreground. To achieve this in such a populated city as Beijing and such a busy place as the train station, Wang Guofeng took many shots over the course of one year at the same time so as to have the same light. The artist uses a large format camera, sometimes with a long lens to take multiple shots. To produce the final image in very high resolution, the selected photographs, void of people, are then stitched together.

The book *The Great Ideal Buildings for Socialists* and his Chinese nationality were his catalysts to photograph North Korea, within the restrictions the regime imposes but still managed trespassing some. He remarkably shot crowds and architecture without editing any imperfection, producing alternates to photographs that are officially released. The first of his Pyongyang series features the façade a governmental building being prepared for a state display with only a few people in sight whilst the music band in military uniform is cheering up the workers hidden behind a screen. Workers and their basic manpowered tools can still be seen through the green mesh. Every rundown aspect of the building appears, each tile of the massive mosaic portrait of the leader appears distinctively. The very high resolution camera and the stitching process evoked above allows an incredible depth of details. Such precision combined with the monumental scale of Wang Guofeng's work, reminiscent of the scale of the very display of power in the photograph, are the artist's signature. Another photograph, which depicts the new leader of North Korea, Kim Jong-un, addressing military and government officials, all but one from the crowd (looking straight at Wang Gofeng's lens towards the leader) gaze at the leader with great sentiment.

Born in Liaoning Province, China in 1967, Wang Guofeng currently lives and works in Beijing. He graduated from the Fine Arts Department in Inner Mongolia Normal University in Hohhot in 1991 and furthered his studies in the Painting Department in the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. His works were shown in galleries and museums in China and internationally, in cities such as Saint Petersburg, Seoul, Beijing, Hong Kong, Rotterdam, New York, Paris, London and Milan. His work was also included in the *6th Shanghai Biennale* and part of the official selection for *PhotoEspaña 2012* and exhibited in *La Ansiedad de la Imagen*.