



After revisiting the Chinese metropolis of Chongqing in late 2016, I was shocked at the changes that had taken place within four short years. Entire districts had been demolished, subsequently populated with skyscrapers, and the remnants of the Old City was nothing but flat ground with freshly grown grass.

For other countries, changes like these would happen over decades. Yet, here in China the dramatic shift was almost instantaneous— and I was again reminded of my first trip to Shanghai in 2010 where the quickly developing cityscape inspired my previous project *Megalopolis*. There, the low parts of the city were being raised to the ground, red banners indicating older buildings were scheduled for destruction, to be replaced with new construction in the future— the urge to document the scene, knowing full well this was the last time eyes would see the city frozen in time, took hold.

Knowing that shooting the perfect series would require optimal lighting and weather conditions, and that scheduled demolition was looming, I heavily researched and studied maps of Shanghai, identifying potential sites and using my own archived photographs from previous trips as reference.

While I waited for winter, when I would be shooting, the concept of this book was born.

My goal was to bridge a connection between photographs on neighboring pages; depicting different perspective of the same place. Day and night, ground level and a bird's eye view. With a tactful effort

to avoid tourist spots, I was eager to only meet with locals. My mind was constant with the submerged fear that my tripod wouldn't be able to find the nexus of those older photographs, that these sections of the old Shanghai were already lost to history.

In November of 2017 I set off for the Shanghai, arrived at the airport, and took the maglev train into the city. Traveling at 430 kilometers per hour, I saw concrete blocks fly by; everything around me looked the same, built according to a simple template, and found myself overwhelmed with its enormity. These were the homes for those people relocated from the old places.

Starting to explore the city, most of those old places no longer existed. Transformed into construction sites, prepared for demolition, I was struck by the scale of change. Each area wholly demolished, not a single building at a time; giving the shift in the personality of the city a rapid and mysterious quality. In the wrecked desert a single oasis yet survived— windows were boarded up, doors walled, and sporadic lights shown in the distance to indicate inhabitants who refused to move out. These last remnants of buildings hanging onto the old past were hard to find, and could only be discovered by traveling street by street.

Documenting entire neighborhoods, preserving their unique culture and familiarity, was an important aspect of the project; saving those memories before they disappear...the authentic feel of old Shanghai with its street markets, riders on vintage bikes, craftsmen who can fix anything, narrow alleyways, the spiderweb of wires stretching along the streets, and characteristic architecture of exterior stone sinks and shaped roof tiles.

By chance I was witness to the prepared demolition of the 200 houses in Youdianxincun. As the local authorities searched and marked the buildings free of inhabitants, a team of thirty exploring the structures at night to identify which were clear and which were still occupied. Nearby in neighboring Jiaying building tenants desperately tried to save what they could from the homes... dismantling windows, doors, cables, and pipes.

Photographing at night, with limited sources of light, makes for a challenging yet rewarding perspective. Those buildings which were already marked and intended for demolition were particularly absent of light; illuminated only by lengthened exposure times. Working alone, in the dark, immersed in these utterly abandoned debris strewn areas, I became a witness to the final farewell of the once so vibrant infrastructure.