

ANASTASIA**PHOTO**

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PRESS RELEASE

Ed Kashi – Saigon on Wheels

May 30 – August 18th, 2013

Opening Reception: Wednesday, June 5th 6:30 – 8:30pm



Ed Kashi, 1994

Anastasia Photo is pleased to present Ed Kashi's second exhibition at the gallery. In 1994, after completing a project in Thailand, Kashi ventured to Vietnam to explore youth culture. Instead, he found something totally different which inspired him to visually capture his visceral response to a dynamic new to his eyes and senses – Saigon on Wheels.

With the turn of a wheel, Saigon had become like Bangkok a decade earlier: filled with the incessant rattling of motorbike traffic. In just two years, the number of motorbike licenses in the city had skyrocketed from 40,000 to nearly 900,000. Saigon's motorbike craze was on the leading edge of the economic revolution sweeping through Vietnam in the early 1990's. It rejuvenated what had been a sleepy and backward state-run city into a bustling and colorful free-market where activity had returned to pre-1975 levels. With increased foreign investment, new construction and new jobs, there was an air of hope that fifteen years of economic stagnation was over.

This explosion of energy and excitement is the perfect metaphor for Vietnam. The tension caused by years of economic and social suppression had finally snapped and the recoil produced a new motto, *song voi*, or "living fast." Saigon's streets are a constant circus of swirling movement. Girls in party dresses and guys in their Sunday best pass whole families on a single scooter. Virtually every aspect of daily life is played out in the commotion of the streets.

Ed Kashi is a photojournalist dedicated to documenting the social and political issues that define our times. Along with numerous awards, including Second Prize Contemporary Issues Singles in the 2011 World Press Photo Contest and UNICEF's Photo of the Year 2010, as well as honors from Pictures of the Year International and American Photography, Kashi's images have been published and exhibited worldwide. A sensitive eye and an intimate relationship to his subjects are the signatures of his work. Kashi's complex imagery has been recognized for its compelling rendering of the human condition.

"I take on issues that stir my passions about the state of humanity and our world, and I deeply believe in the power of still images to change people's minds," he says. "I'm driven by this fact: that the work of photojournalists and documentary photographers can have a positive impact on the world. The access people give to their lives is precious as well as imperative for this important work to get done. Their openness brings with it a tremendous sense of responsibility to tell the truth but to also honor their stories."

Anastasia Photo specializes in Documentary Photography and Photojournalism. The gallery space also serves as a center for discussion and portfolio review. In an attempt to further connect these photographic images and the events they depict, Anastasia Photo endows each exhibition with a related philanthropic organization. For this exhibition, we have chosen to support Children of Vietnam (www.childrenofvietnam.org) and the Alexia Foundation (www.alexiafoundation.org/)

Anastasia Photo is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11am to 7pm and Sunday 11am – 6pm. For further information or questions please contact Jennifer Samuel at 212-677-9725 or jennifer@anastasia-photo.com.