



1	3	5
2		6
4		7

1. Portrait of Shu Qi — Chen Kun

2. Portrait of Chen Kun — Shu Qi

3. Jiang Wen photographs Zhou Yun. — Liu Heung Shing

4. Nana Ou-yang in the process of photographing her mother — Liu Heung Shing

5. Portrait of Maizi — Huang Jue

6. Portrait of Bi Gan's mother — Bi Gan

7. Portrait of Dou Jingtong — Liu Heung Shing



away from torrential photo streams on social media, and back to the very essence of art, to connect with people?

A: Back in 2016, I saw a survey saying there were some 1.6 trillion images in the world, and that figure doubles every year. It's humanly impossible to absorb this volume of images.

I would say people today access pictures differently, because traditional media has migrated to digital and smaller devices, which helps people access information. If people go to a museum, the image is not going anywhere... When you look at a photograph on a wall, you are free to spend as little or as much time looking at it as you'd like. It makes the process between photographers and the public much more rich and diverse, like a relationship. I think that's great.

Technology is still moving ahead. We don't know where it will lead, but... it's always a

continuing process. We learn new skills as we go. But I believe firmly and absolutely that the way you tell your story, the way you connect with your subject, the way you build this basic trust with your subject is very important. That actually cannot be influenced by a camera. It's between me and you. Technology plays no part.

Q: Is taking photos a coping mechanism or a self-indulgence for you?

A: I think my brain don't function that way. My relationship with photography, I feel very much this burden... of equipment and difficult situations, in war or in peace.

I'm not crazy about cameras, but I feel photography sometimes can tell a story so much better than me telling it to my friends. The journalist in me has a much greater influence on how I approach photography, and that's

obvious if you look at my work.

The question is often asked, "do you still take pictures?" For as long I can see, I'll still take pictures with or without my camera, because it's looking at and learning from people that interests me.

I actually take pictures in my head. I need the camera to capture the light, as well as a lens. But when you look at people, suddenly you're approaching something that's fundamentally human. It's a person-to-person relationship. Internal, external, national, different societies, different cultures... That's really where my profound interest is, and without interest and empathy, you wouldn't do well.

But it's developing that skill, having faith in your empathy toward people that projects you forward. I think one of my strengths is I can put people at ease quickly, and thereby build a sense of trust. I hope that trust

isn't misplaced.

Q: How do you relax people and instantly build a sense of trust?

A: That would be the subject of another book. If you don't know who stands in front of you, how can you start with that? Different people respond to different things you say to them.

Q: You've been running SCoP for six years now, and the museum has held a variety of exhibitions to introduce all kinds of photographic works, to educate the public on the art form. Do you think that somehow, it also helps to heal, especially during the COVID-19 time?

A: It's difficult to say if our exhibition educates anyone, but I think just like a museum, it's there for the public good. You share a good painting, a good photograph, the beautiful things about being human — it's that we

have this capacity, each one of us, to be enchanted, to feel emotion in photographs and paintings.

I feel honored to be able to do this and share with the public. And exhibitions travel, so more people can see them. Photography is a medium that enables our exhibition to travel lightly. That's really wonderful.

Q: How do you relieve your stress?

A: Just before I rushed back for this Zoom call this morning, I walked, circling the Xingguo Hotel. Sometimes I swim. Normally I travel more, but now because of COVID, I can't travel much. I sometimes enjoy having my friends over. Thankfully, many people come to Shanghai. I cook for them. Cooking is my relaxing therapy. I watch what I cook very carefully, and for me, it's a wonderful exercise. At the end of it you can share with your friends.