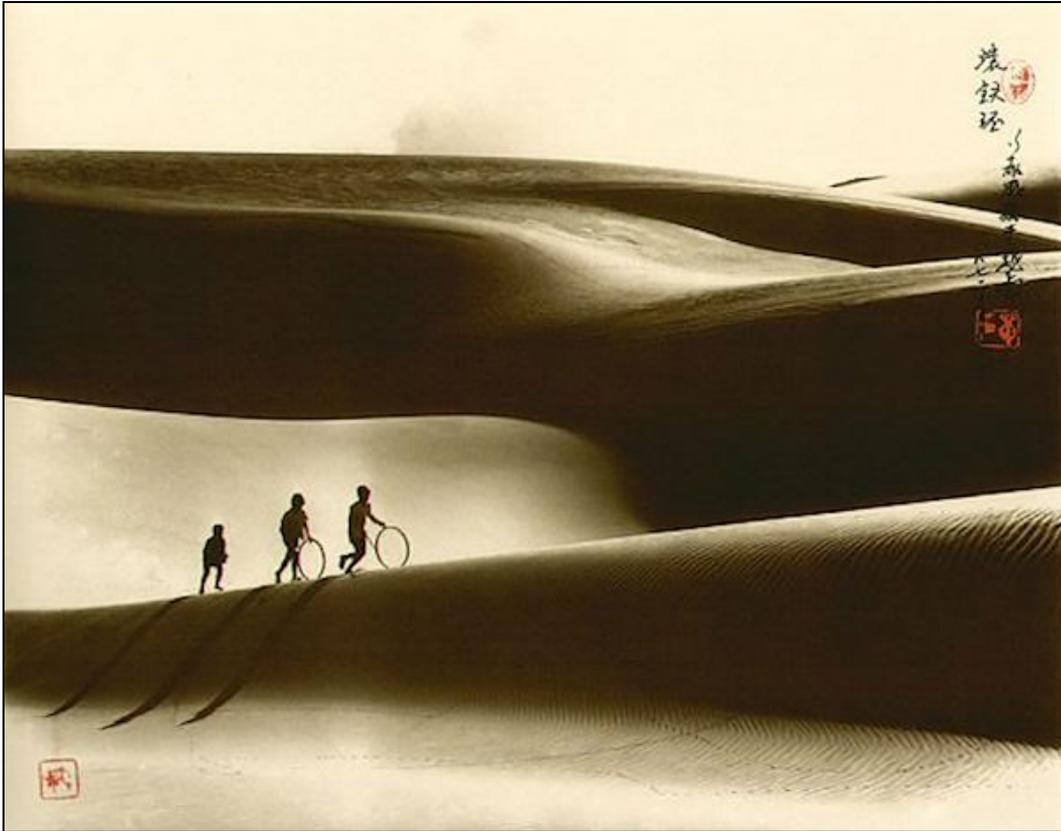


Don Hong-Oai

Grâce à Nguyễn Thế Anh



Playing With Hoops, Vietnam

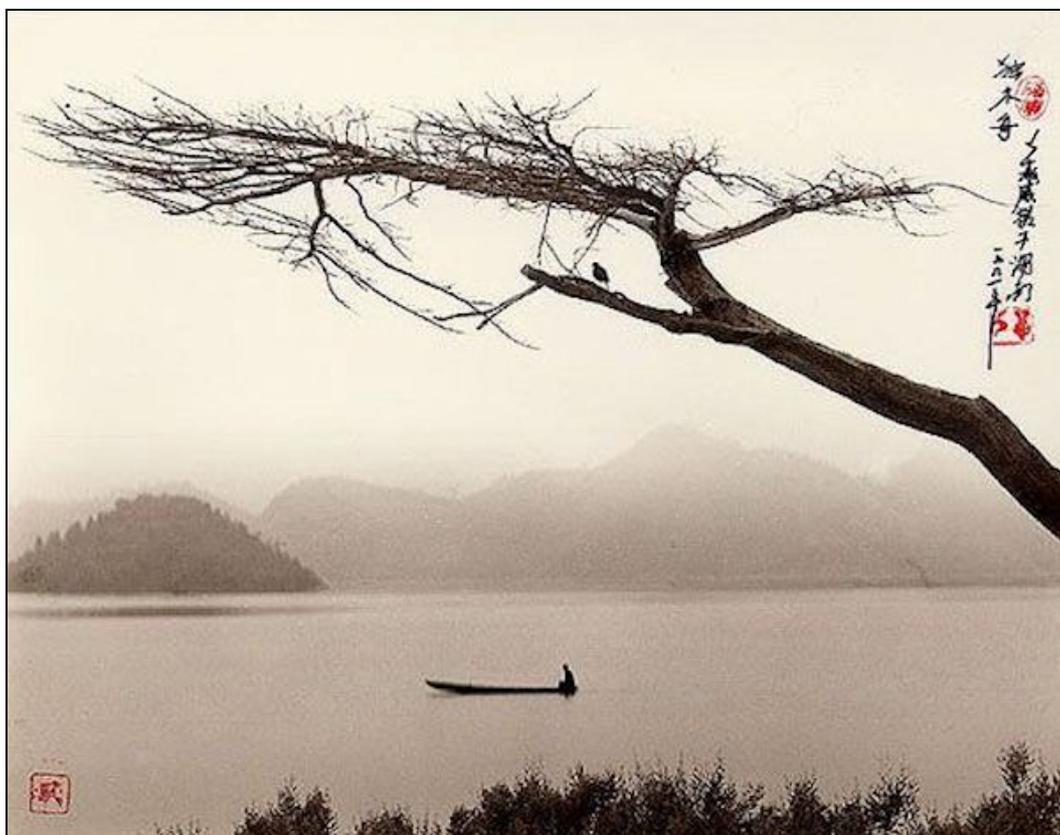


Sandstorm, Vietnam, 1989



To The Market, Vietnam

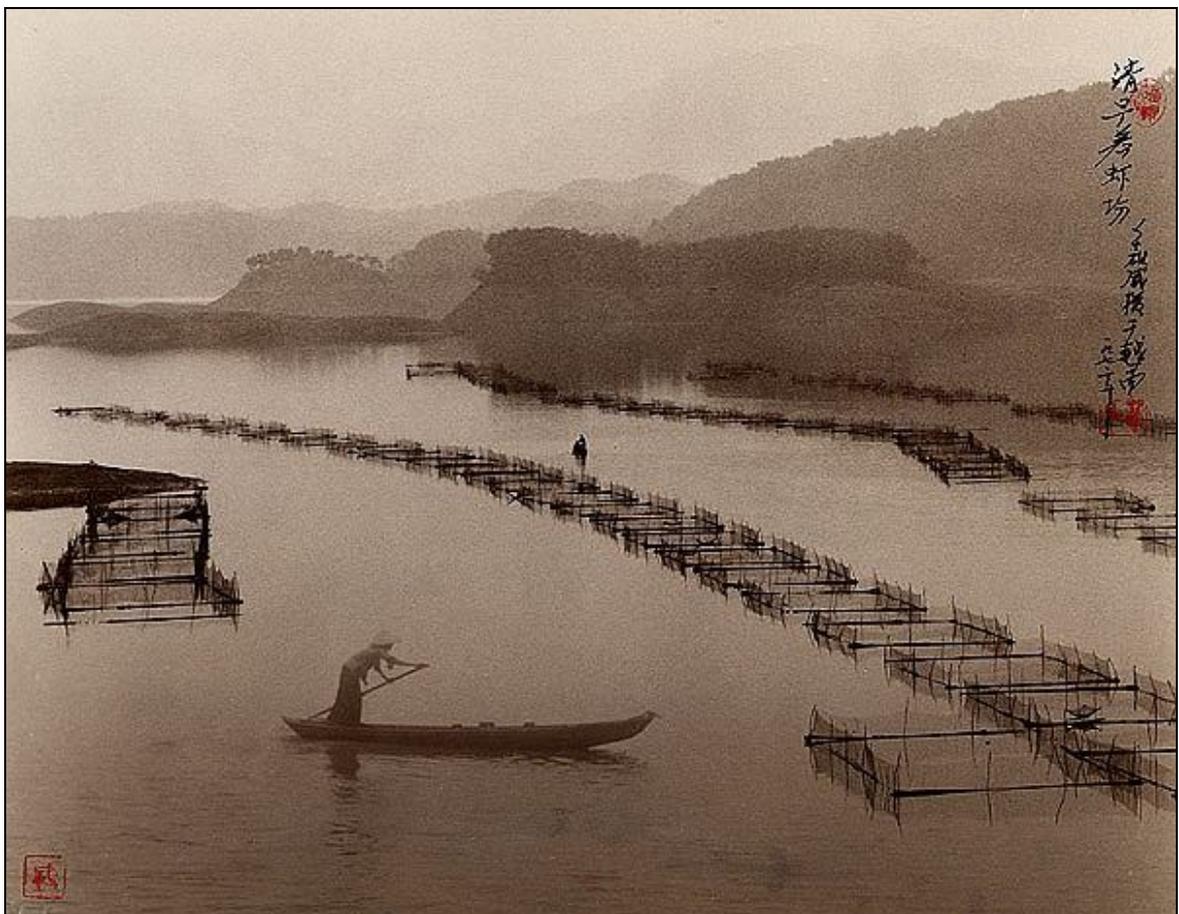
Don Hong-Oai was born in Canton, China in 1929, but spent most of his life in Saigon, Vietnam. As a young boy in Saigon he was apprenticed to a photography studio. He stayed in Vietnam through the war, but fled by boat to California in 1979. He lived in San Francisco's Chinatown where he had a small darkroom to create his photographs. While living the US he returned to China every few years to make new negatives. Only in the last few years of his life – he died in June 2004 – was his work discovered by a wider public, and he was kept very busy making prints for collectors across the US and worldwide.



Solitary Wooden Boat, Hunan, 1991



Against The Current

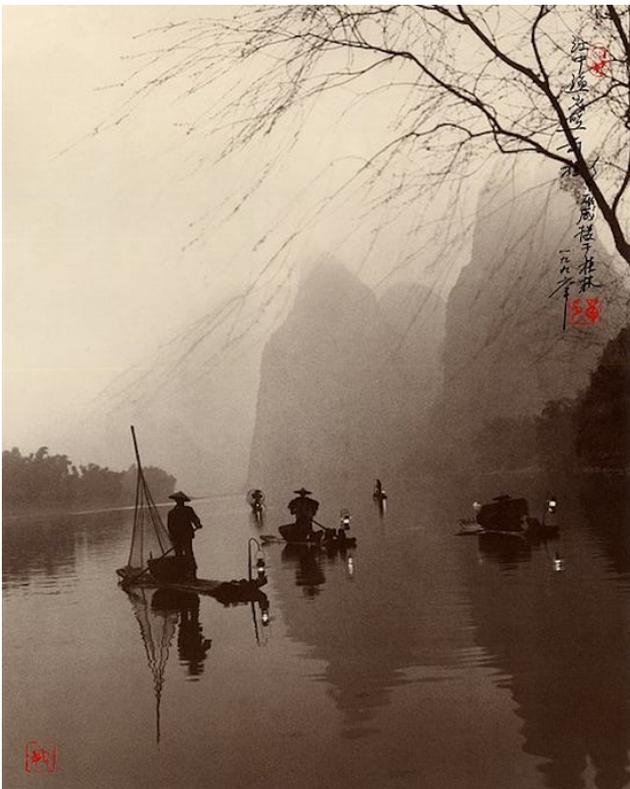


Spring Covers the River, 1988

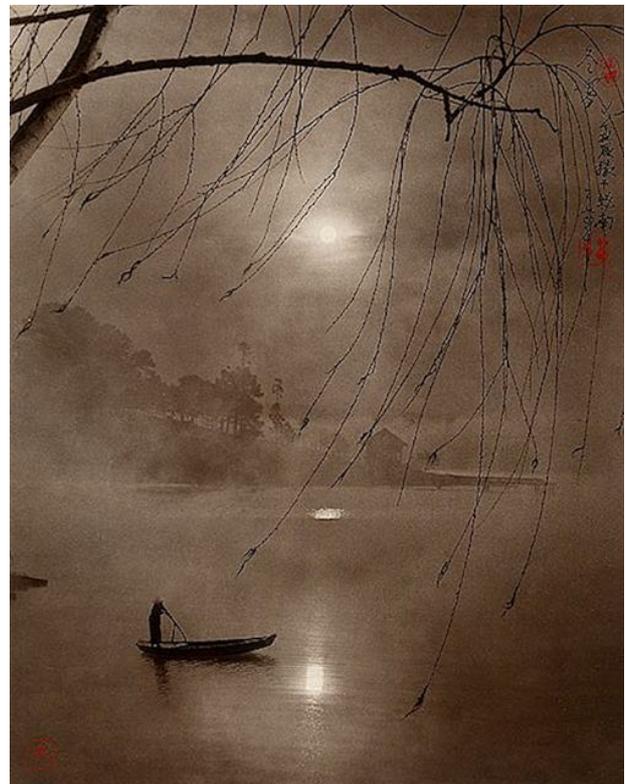


no information available

The photographs of Don Hong-Oai are made in a unique style of photography, which can be considered Asian pictorialism. This method of adapting a Western art for Eastern purposes probably originated in the 1940s in Hong Kong. One of its best-known practitioners was the great master [Long Chin-San](#) (who died in the 1990s at the age of 104) with whom Don Hong-Oai studied. With the delicate beauty and traditional motifs of Chinese painting (birds, boats, mountains, etc.) in mind, photographers of this school used more than one negative to create a beautiful picture, often using visual allegories. Realism was not a goal.



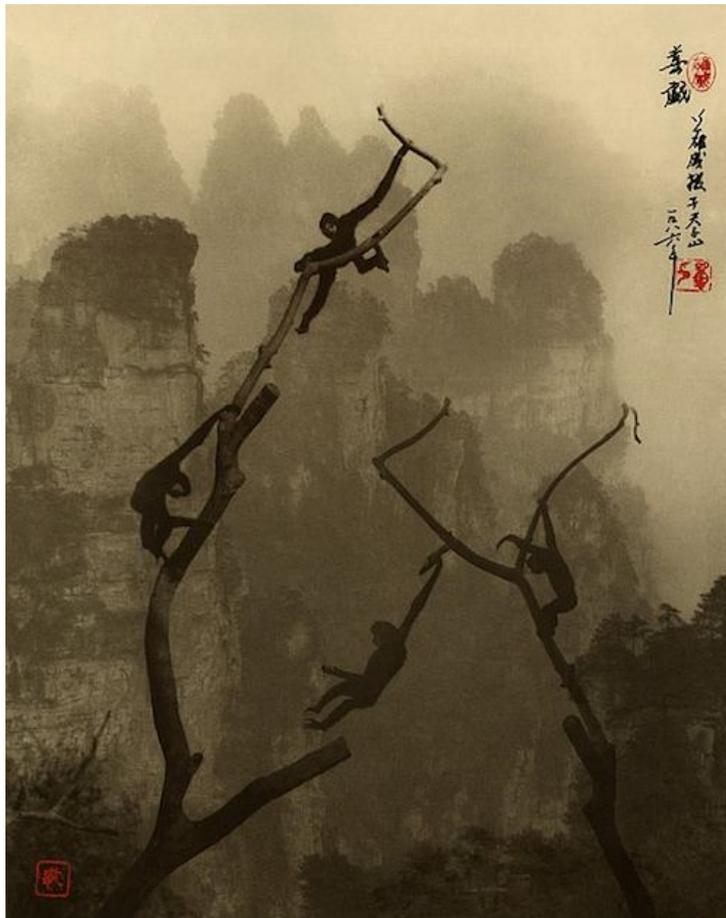
Lanterns Light the Way, Guilin, 1998



Winter Fog, Vietnam, 1974



no information available



Gibbons At Play, Tianzi Mountain, 1986

Don Hong-Oai was one of the last photographers to work in this manner. He is also arguably the best. He was honored by Kodak, Ilford and at Fotokina in West Germany and was a member of the International Federation of Photographic Art in Switzerland and the Chinatown Photographic Society.



Man-Made Lake, Guandong, 1986



After Prayer

All images are toned silver-gelatin prints, 11 x 14 inches or 14 x 11 inches

More about the Artist

Don Hong-Oai was born in Canton, China in 1929 and was raised and educated in Saigon as the youngest son of a business family.

At age 13 he began an apprenticeship at a Chinese photo and portrait shop. During this time he learned the traditional ways of photography from the masters. Everything was done the old-fashioned way from exposing the glass negatives in sunlight to using instinct rather than timers. Don would photograph landscapes in his free time and his style was heavily influenced by the legendary photographer Long Chin-San and his technique of layering negatives to create one composite image.

In 1979 he was able to get to the U.S. and settled in San Francisco's Chinese community.

Don started making a living selling his landscape photographs in front of Macy's and began to receive more and more recognition for his master craftsmanship. He would create these images by taking three negatives, foreground, middle ground and far ground, and selecting a subject matter from each negative to form one composite image. All parts of the image do exist in life, but the photograph as a whole is an image that only existed in Don's imagination. Each photograph is a unique handcrafted piece of work.

He never had an assistant or had his images put together in a lab. Each piece had to be put together by Don as he saw it in his mind. His work has won scores of international awards and is included in hundreds of personal and corporate collections worldwide.