▲ **Eli Reed, *Odile Vanot, French Woman Visiting* (2008).**

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHIN KONG MITSUKOSHI

◀ **Sandra Chen Weinstein, *Caravan at Sunset* (2007).**

PHOTO COURTESY OF SANDRA CHEN WEINSTEIN

A world of images

Photos taken by Sandra Chen Weinstein and Magnum photographer Eli Reed mediate differences in the planet's cultures — from orphans in Africa to American celebrities to pilgrims in India

BY **NOAH BUCHAN**
STAFF REPORTER

In the summer of 2001, Magnum photographer Eli Reed traveled to a refugee camp to photograph children orphaned because of the Second Sudanese Civil War. To escape the civil war, these "lost boys," as they are known, traveled hundreds of kilometers on foot from their home country to Ethiopia and back again and finally on to Kakuma, a town in northern Kenya where the camp is located.

The plight of these orphans is poignantly documented in From Lost Boys of Sudan to Hollywood, a series of photographs that span much of the photographer's career. Reed's work is shown along with Facets of India: People of Divine and American Graffiti Series by Sandra Chen Weinstein. The photos are on display as part of Shin Kong Mitsukoshi's International Photography Exhibition (新光三越國際攝影聯展).

From Lost Boys of Sudan to Hollywood is a series of contrasts and demonstrates the broad range of humanity Reed has photographed. A politically minded photojournalist, Reed has covered conflicts in Central America and the Middle East, a coup in Haiti and documented homelessness and poverty in the US, which earned him a Pulitzer Prize nomination.

Reed's images shot in Africa document a story of human survival in the face of tragedy that is largely free of pathos. *Kenya Kakuma Refugee Camp*, for example, shows the "lost boys" in tattered clothing standing in a circle on a dusty street preparing to participate in a game of gymnastics. The broad smiles on their faces and the raucous activity in the center of the composition belie the fact that these children are survivors of a civil war.

A second image, taken in Tanzania, shows three children in the background playing soccer on a dusty road. In the foreground two children, dressed in rags, stare intensely at the camera, their glares and the surrounding shantytown the only hints of their predicament.

Reed once remarked that his work with Hollywood directors such as Spike Lee and Robert Altman helps to finance his other, less lucrative, photojournalistic assignments. "I work on movies when I get broke," he said.

Reed's movie photos, for this reviewer, are of only moderate interest. Though the image of a contemplative Eminem sitting on a rusted metal crate surrounded by used tires or a lugubrious Odile Vanot sitting in front of a window are compositionally and technically arresting, their main attraction seems to stem from the fame of their subjects.

But there seems to something else going on here. The melancholy look on their faces suggests that happiness, especially in the context of the "lost boys," is conditional on the internal workings of the individual.

Whereas From Lost Boys of Sudan to Hollywood shows the broad range of humanity, its stars and victims of history, Sandra Chen Weinstein's Facets of India: People of Divine and American Graffiti Series document the religious life of India and everyday street scenes in the US.

The India photos should be viewed from up close and at a distance. *Veiled* captures a woman standing in a peacock blue doorway next to a gunmetal gray wall, her face partially obscured behind an apricot-colored veil. The photo's composition draws the viewer in as we attempt to uncover the features behind the mask. Viewed from a distance, its strong color contrasts and vague outlines resemble an abstract painting.

From a few paces back, *Pilgrims at Holy Ganges* resembles a Modernist collage in its contingent assemblage of shape and color. Up close, we bear witness to crowds of people going through their ritualized purification on the banks of the Ganges.

The tension between these two states, the near and the far, the opaque and apparent, could be seen as a statement about travel itself: We undertake it as an attempt to glimpse another culture, the astute traveler understanding that only some of its mysteries will ever be revealed.

Some of these images border on cliche — the kind of picture postcard images that everyone takes when in India. *Playing With Fire*, for example, shows a fire breather, while *Man of the Red Turban* is a portrait of an elderly man wearing a turban the color of dried saffron.

The street scenes found in American Graffiti Series, whether at an amusement park or during a parade, are common renderings of American life and don't have the appeal of the more exotic images from India.

But that's the perspective of this reviewer. Coming from North America, they are of only moderate interest, while those from India are replete with mystery. Undoubtedly, if the exhibit were seen through Indian eyes, the American street series would take on a different kind of meaning.

And it is here that both exhibits stand out: In their own way, the photos — whether Africa's destitute facing Hollywood royalty or a child Shiva across from San Francisco's Gay Pride Parade — mediate the differences in the world's culture, in all its rainbow of multiplicity.

Shin Kong Mitsukoshi's International Photography Exhibition also features a number of emerging and established Taiwanese photographers. After it leaves Taipei, it will be shown from Oct. 8 to Oct. 24 at Shin Kong Mitsokoshi's Kaohsiung Zuoying Store (高雄左營店11F文化館), from Oct. 27 to Nov. 10 at its Tainan Ximen Store (台南西門店6F C區文化館) and from Nov. 18 to Dec. 12 at its Taichung Zhonggang Store (台中中港店10F文化館). For complete details (in Chinese) go to culture.skm.com.tw/newevent.asp.

EXHIBITION NOTES

WHAT: Eli Reed and Sandra Chen Weinstein at Shin Kong Mitsukoshi's International Photography Exhibition (新光三越國際攝影聯展)

WHERE: Shin Kong Mitsukoshi, Building A9 (新光三越A9館), 9F, 9, Songshou (台北市松壽路9號9樓)

WHEN: Until Sunday. Open daily from 11am to 9:30pm. Tel: (02) 8780-5959

ON THE NET:
culture.skm.com.tw/newevent.asp

▲ **Sandra Chen Weinstein, *Child Shiva* (2008).**

PHOTO COURTESY OF SANDRA CHEN WEINSTEIN

▶ **Eli Reed, *Amazon City Hairdresser, Peru* (2008).**

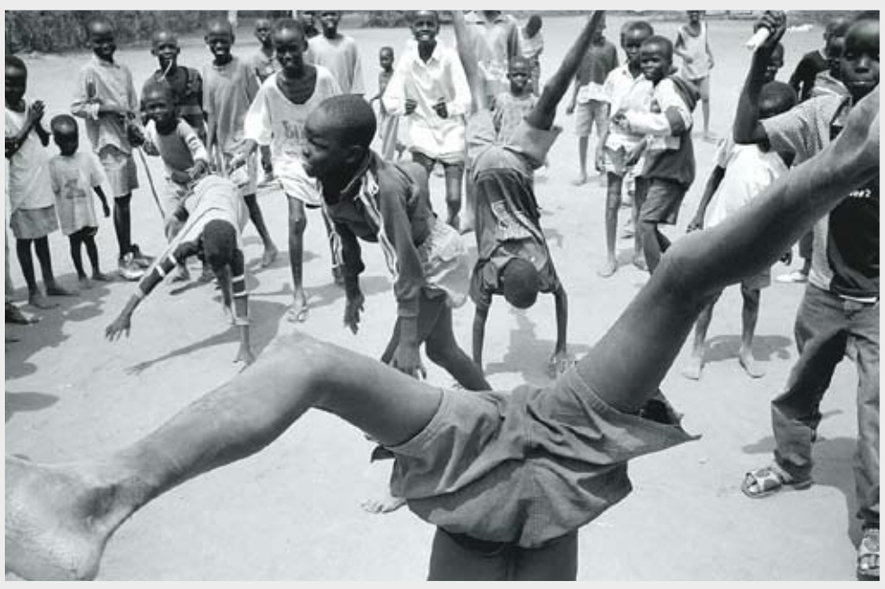
PHOTO COURTESY OF SHIN KONG MITSUKOSHI

▶ **Sandra Chen Weinstein, *Veiled* (2007).**

PHOTO COURTESY OF SANDRA CHEN WEINSTEIN

▼ **Eli Reed, *Kenya Kakuma Refugee Camp* (2001).**

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHIN KONG MITSUKOSHI



EXHIBITIONS

Chen Hsien-tung *The Love of Mountain and River*. PHOTO COURTESY OF 99 DEGREE ART CENTER

Chen Hsien-tung's (陳顯棟) solo exhibit, **Symphonic Poem (交響詩篇)**, extols the beauty of nature with fine, elegantly textured paintings with perfectly proportioned blocks of color. Though the lines, shapes and colors woven into the painting resemble the visual vocabulary of abstraction, the presentation of these images differs from that rational style, and instead creates a kind of "symphonic poem" embodying elements of Chinese philosophy. Imagine the abstract landscapes of Chien Chang-ta (簡昌達) combined with the expressionist canvases of Chu Teh-chun's (朱德群) middle period.

■ 99 Degrees Art Center (99 藝術中心), 5F, 259, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段259號5F). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2700-3099
■ Opening reception on Saturday at 2pm. Until Oct. 31

Although dust implies an ending, for the group of artists who come together in **Dust: LuxuryLogico (灰塵／豪華朗機工)**, it represents a beginning. The exhibit of new media art brings together Lin Kun-ying (林昆穎), Chen Chih-chien (陳志建), Chang Geng-hau (張耿豪) and Chang Geng-hua (張耿華) as a collective of artists who distill their ideas into a single work of sculptural installation made from plastic and metal that bears a strong resemblance to an enormous pholcid, a kind of spider commonly known as daddy longlegs.

■ IT Park Gallery (伊通公園), 2F, 41 Yitong St, Taipei City (台北市伊通街41號2樓). Open Tuesdays to Saturdays from 1pm to 10pm. Tel: (02) 2507-7243
■ Until Oct. 23

Every year the reputable Juming Museum holds a themed exhibition as a means of exploring the current state of sculpture. **Keywords: Latent Sculpture, Renting, Scenario (關鍵字：潛雕塑、租借、劇本)** brings together nine emerging sculptors to ponder contemporary sculpture practice and the "chaotic position" that it holds in contemporary art. The show presents 22 works ranging from the concrete to the highly experimental, as well as an on-site installation.

■ Juming Museum (朱銘美術館), 2 Sishihu, Jinshan Township, Taipei County (台北縣金山鄉西勢湖2號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 6pm, closes at 9:30pm on Saturdays. Call (02) 2498-9940 for more information
■ Until Nov. 14

Your Memories Become My Memories. I Will Remember You! (我的記憶 也成為我的記憶我會記得你). Though the exclamatory nature of the exhibit's title may seem a little shrill, Wang Tzu-yun's (王姿云) multimedia (oil, film paper, wood) paintings of cafe life suggest a carefree existence freed from the constraints of work.

■ Butchart Contemporary Art Space, 155, Linong St Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市立農街二段155號). Open daily from 11am to 9pm. Tel: (02) 2820-9920
■ Until Oct. 18

China-born, US-based painter **Guan Zeju (關則駒)** says his canvases are a reflection of the images in his mind. Isn't that the case for every painting? Regardless, Guan's realist studies of women in various positions — a ballerina warming up in a studio or a nude lying languidly on a divan — are psychological portraits rich in allusion (and color), and exhibit a keen understanding of the female anatomy and the play of natural and artificial light.

■ Imavision Gallery (晴山藝術中心), 13F, 224 Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段224號13樓). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 6:30pm. Tel: (02) 2773-5155
■ Until tomorrow

A series of oil paintings by veteran artist **Pan Peng-pian (潘蓬彬)** are currently on view at Meihe Art Gallery (美和藝術中心). Pan's vibrant impasto canvases of quaint villages, urban centers and landscapes follow in the early impressionist tradition of Georges Rouault and Marc Chagall.

■ Meihe Art Gallery (美和藝術中心), 8F, 369 Fuxing N Rd, Taipei City (台北市復興北路369號8樓). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 7pm. Tel: (02) 6600-3698
■ Ends today