



# Xu Yong

## Hutong. 101 Photos

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- New edition of a standard work: Beijing's vanished traditional neighbourhoods captured in black-and-white images
- An elegiac tribute to the old alleyways of Beijing
- A critical view of the modernisation and globalisation of cities

Xu Yong (b. 1954, Shanghai) was one of the first photographers to focus on everyday life in modern China, free from political romanticisation or ideological whitewashing. In **Hutong 101 Photos**, he traces the history of the traditional residential district of Beijing, with its centuries-old buildings complete with rear courtyards and myriad narrow alleyways, the "Hutongs." Many of these neighbourhoods have since fallen victim to radical redevelopment and have been demolished. Xu Yong's black-and-white images dating from 1989 bear witness to the rise and fall, the heyday and the decline, of the Hutongs — against the backdrop of the rapid societal change in China that followed the end of the Qing Dynasty. In this milestone of Chinese photography, which is now finally being published as a new edition in book form, Xu Yong has created an elegiac tribute to the old alleyways of Beijing, revealing both their poetic beauty and the sadness surrounding their demise.

Text in English and Chinese.

Born in Shanghai in 1954, the artist **Xu Yong** graduated from Henan University of Science and Technology in China in 1978 and worked as a photographer for the state-run Beijing Advertising Agency in the 1980s. **Hutong 101 Photos**, which he shot in the late 1980s and published in 1990, broke through the then unofficial restriction regarding hutongs as a restricted area for opening up and representation. He used a unique and specially composed photographic language to present hutongs' hundreds of years of history and their vicissitudes over many years while still remaining as the true face of Beijing, the place where most people live, creating a wide range of social impacts. Typical works of Xu Yong include *Solution Scheme*, *This Face*, *Negatives: Scans*, and *18% Grey*. In 1993, the artist initiated and organised the "Hutong Cultural Tour" to actively publicise and promote the protection of Beijing's hutongs. In 2003, he organised the "Reconstruction 798" public art activity in Beijing and was one of the main initiators of the famous 798 Art District.

