

# burn.

---



Cai Dongdong

## History of Life

Captured through the eyes of ordinary Chinese citizens before, during, and after the cultural revolution and curated by one of China's most talented visual artists, "History of Life" presents a fascinating story on the determination of the human spirit. A collection of 415 restored photographs chronicling the history of modern China from the 1910s to the late 1990s.





For the past decade, artist Cai Dongdong has visited markets, public offices, libraries, and trash heaps around China salvaging discarded black and white negatives. After amassing a collection of over 600,000 negatives, the artist compiled a book telling an often-overlooked narrative of pre and post cultural revolution China – the narrative of the everyday lived experience of ordinary citizens.

Adding a few of his own pictures into the story, the artist crafted his interpretation of the birth and growth of modern China over 3 of the country's most formative eras: the founding of the Republic, the cultural revolution, and the post-Mao era.



“These images carry the memory of Chinese people. Memories are the only way to establish life. The process of forming this memory symbolizes how I visualize history. Visualization is the only way to understand facts.” Dongdong says.



## About the Artist

Cai Dongdong is an acclaimed multi-disciplinary visual artist. Originally from China, he is currently based both in Berlin and Beijing.

## Related Links

[www.instagram.com/caidongdong](http://www.instagram.com/caidongdong)

Book: [History of Life](#)

*Photo Essay submitted by [Gavin Marcus](#), edited by [Alejandra Martinez](#).*



[← Previous Post](#)

**burn** is an evolving journal  
for emerging photographers.

[about burn magazine](#)

[Emerging Photographer Fund](#)

[group mentorship program](#)

[burn.store](#)

[workshops](#)

[burn.diary](#)

[submit a project](#)

[subscribe to our email list](#)

[support us at burn](#)

## Photo Essays

[Cai Dongdong – History of Life](#)

[Matthew Lam – Hotpot Singapore](#)

[Simona Ghizzoni – Afterdark: Consequences of War on Women in the Gaza Strip](#)

[Mathieu Chaze – Rock, Paper, Scissors](#)

[Tanja Houwerzijl – Layered Beauty](#)

[Willy Vecchiato – Lanzarote](#)

[María Daniel Balcázar – Kilombo](#)

[Daniel Hinks – Summer Holiday Dreams](#)

[Lori Hawkins – A Day in the Life of an Imam](#)

[Toni Privat – Raíces ‘El pla de grau’](#)

[Yael Martinez – La casa que sangra](#)

[Giorgio Bianchi – Donbass Stories](#)

[Joel Pulliam – Springtime Nightmare](#)

[Daniel Hinks – In Sickness and in Health](#)

[Irina Werning – La Cuarentena](#)

[ARCHIVE](#)

## In the spotlight

[Panos Skoulidas – Death In Venice](#)

[David Alan Harvey Rio 2015 Workshop, Student Slideshow](#)

[Kathy Ryan-OFFICE ROMANCE](#)

[BurnDiary anniversary](#)

[A Conversation With Constantine Manos](#)

[A Letter From David...](#)

[Danube Revisited – The Inge Morath Truck Project](#)

[David Alan Harvey Interviews Magnum Legend Elliott Erwitt](#)

[Up from the Sands](#)

[Photo Tips #5](#)

[ARCHIVE](#)

## Recent Comments

[Gordon Lafleur](#) on [Mathieu Chaze – Rock, Paper, Scissors](#)

[Based on a true story – AR Photo](#) on [\(based on a true story\)](#)

[Akaky](#) on [Toni Privat – Raíces ‘El pla de grau’](#)

[Gordon Lafleur](#) on [Toni Privat – Raíces ‘El pla de grau’](#)

[david alan harvey](#) on [Yael Martinez – La casa que sangra](#)

[Askmetatron.com](#) on [Yael Martinez – La casa que sangra](#)


[Gordon Lafleur](#) on [Yael Martinez – La casa que sangra](#)

[Gordon Lafleur](#) on [Giorgio Bianchi – Donbass Stories](#)

[Semana Fotográfica, ed. XXIII \(23 a 31 de maio, 2020\) - EFEcetera](#) on [Giorgio Bianchi – Donbass Stories](#)

[Gordon Lafleur](#) on [Joel Pulliam – Springtime Nightmare](#)

## Search

Copyright © 2021 burn magazine | Powered by [Astra WordPress Theme](#)