

# Wu Yinxian

The image shows the exterior of the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China. The building is a massive neoclassical structure with a long, colonnade of tall, fluted columns. The columns are made of light-colored stone or marble. In the foreground, a wide, paved plaza is visible, with a group of people walking across it. The sky is clear and blue.

Inside the Great Hall of the People

## **Inside the Great Hall of the People**

In 1981, eighty-one-year-old Wu Yinxian was commissioned to shoot "Inside the Great Hall of the People" for a gift wall calendar the Hall was preparing to print. The shoot was part of the Great Hall of the People's "public image campaign," and in all it took two months over a period of three years. Wu strived to depict the grandeur and stateliness of China's bodies of higher government, however in these images of utmost grandeur and stateliness, the ceremonial aspects and nobility of the art of photography transpire. As an effective means of mass propaganda, the essence of these photographs changed once they were printed in a calendar. In a way, photography can be seen as the language of the ideology of the state apparatus: Once the masses have registered the "reflection," they "call out" for an individual sense of belonging, security, honour and submission within the State. In "Inside," this has to do with the atmosphere surrounding the object being photographed, but it is also the product of the Wu Yinxian's sense of political duty and political sensitivity at having been granted the honour of being chosen to photograph the highest governmental spaces of his nation.

Although these photos are the product of the collective unconsciousness of the time, the high quality of the photography work will become more appreciable because they truthfully reflect and exemplify the typical aesthetic criteria of the era and meet the political criteria of mainstream ideology, and express these in an incisive and vivid manner. Looking at "Inside the People's Congress" today, they stand as fine examples of the culmination and closure of social realism in Chinese photography. More importantly, "Inside the Great Hall of the People" raises new questions on authorship, purpose, approach, audience and aesthetic criteria.

By Cai Meng

C print  
20 page  
60 X 71.2cm edition 1/14  
90 X 110cm edition 10









































## **Wu Yinxian**

Born in Shuyang county, Jiangsu Province in September **1900**

Studied in the Shanghai Fine Arts Junior College, **1919– 1921**

Taught fine arts in the Shuyang County High School, **1923 – 1927**

Employed as painter by the Shanghai Yijing Scene Company, **1928 – 1930,**

Photographer of the Shanghai Hongdeng Photo Studio, **1930 -1932**

Art Director of the Shanghai Tianyi Film Company, **1932 – 1934**

Photographer of the Shanghai Diantong Film Industry Company, Mingxing Film Company, **1935 – 1937**

Head of the Film Group of the General Political Department of the Yan'an 8th Route Army, **1938 – 1946**

Technical department head and deputy studio director of the North-east Film Studio, **1946 – 1948**

Director of the North-east Film Studio, **1949 – 1954**

The Deputy Dean of the Beijing Film Academy and also the director of the photography department, **1955 –**

**1970** Member of the Culture Team of State Council, **1970 – 1974**

Advisor of the Film Bureau of the Ministry of Culture, **1977 – 1982**

Past away in Beijing on September **1994.**

Gallery Contact:

PHOTO**EDITION**BERLIN

Ystaderstr.14a

D-10437 Berlin

tel. +49(0) 30 41717831

[www.photo-edition-berlin.com](http://www.photo-edition-berlin.com)

in Cooperation with TOMO Art Center, Beijing, China.

