

40 YEARS ON

Editor's Note: This year marks the 40th anniversary of the launch of China's reform and opening-up policy.

China Daily talks to some people from overseas who have experienced or witnessed the important drive.

Born:

Chicago, United States, 1928

Education:

- 1948-50: New York University, BA in art history
- 1964-66: Institute of Design at Illinois Institute of Technology



Barbara Crane

US photographer, one of the first foreigners permitted to take pictures in China

Career:

- 1964: New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois
- 1967: School of the Art Institute of Chicago
- 1969-83: Visiting professor at numerous colleges, including the Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston, University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem, Cornell University
- 1995: Professor emerita of photography, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Work:

Crane's photography has featured in over 90 solo exhibitions since 1965, and seven retrospective exhibitions have been mounted to date. The most recent, *Barbara Crane: Challenging Vision*, opened at the Chicago Cultural Center in October 2009 before traveling to the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in Texas and the Griffin Museum of Photography in Massachusetts.

Exhibitions:

- George Eastman House/International Museum of Photography, Rochester, New York
- Art Institute of Chicago
- Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago
- Museum of Modern Art, New York
- Library of Congress, Washington
- Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, Arizona
- Bibliotheque Nationale and FNDC, Paris
- Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Greece
- WestLicht Museum of Photography, Vienna

Honors and awards:

- 1974: National Endowment for the Arts grant
- 1979: John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship in Photography
- 1988: National Endowment for the Arts grant
- 2001: Illinois Arts Council Artists Fellowship Award in Photography
- 2006: Honored as a distinguished artist by the Union League Club of Chicago and Brown University
- 2009: First recipient of the Ruth Horwich Award to a Famous Chicago Artist, conferred by the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs
- 2013: Honored by the Hyde Park Art Center in Chicago
- 2015: Silver Camera Award from the Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College, Chicago
- 2016: Professional Achievement Award from the Illinois Institute of Technology

Images that captured changing China

Barbara Crane, now 90, looks back on her extraordinary photographic journey around the nation in 1985



Village near Luoyang, Central China's Henan province, in 1985. PHOTOS BY BARBARA CRANE

By **HONG XIAO** in Chicago
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Even at age 90, Barbara Crane's eyes sparkled with joy as she browsed a thick binder filled with 8-by-10-inch black-and-white photographs.

"That's a brick oven, that's an incense burner, and that's a roasted suckling pig especially prepared for the wedding ceremony," she said, describing her work with easy familiarity.

The photos were a few of the hundreds she took during a trip to China in 1985.

China's reform and opening-up had started seven years earlier, in 1978, and Crane became one of the first photographers from the United States permit-

ted by the Chinese government to take pictures freely around the country. She became a "cultural emissary", thanks to an exchange arrangement between Beijing and Washington.

To celebrate her 90th birthday, the internationally renowned photographer and influential educator put on retrospective photographic exhibitions in March at the Stephen Daiter Gallery and Catherine Edelman Gallery, both in her hometown of Chicago.

Going through her photos, Crane shared reminiscences of that trip 33 years ago, when she set out carrying a Rolleiflex twin-lens reflex camera and hundreds of rolls of film.

She roamed the streets and alleyways of not only big cities like Beijing and

Shanghai, but also explored remote villages in Shaanxi, Sichuan and Guangdong provinces as well as the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

"I visited Chengdu, the Lijiang River Valley, Guilin, Guangzhou," she said slowly. "Being the first foreigner to be allowed to photograph and travel freely in these areas, I was able to take pictures no one else had. I learned so much on my trip to China. What impressed me the most were the lovely people and the villages."

She also became something of a celebrity.

"Nobody those days saw Americans up close, so whole villages came out, with young women holding their kids," she said. "People were so generous. They

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