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Bob Wolf's View of Vietnam

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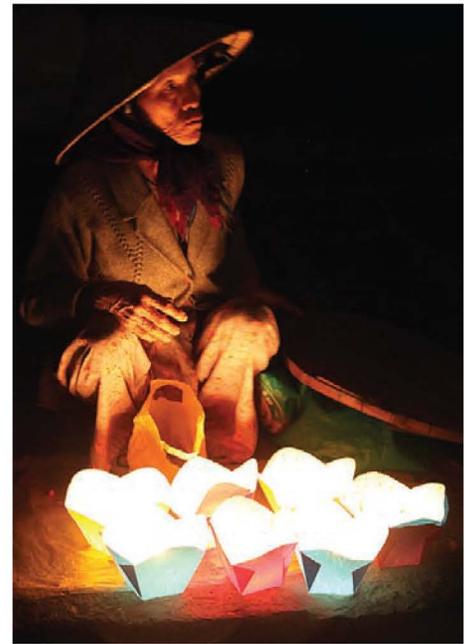
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Bob Wolf's View of Vietnam



Vietnam is a country of contradictions. There is an extreme disparity between the crowds of youthful energetic people in the larger cities and the older, more sedentary people in the rural areas. It was a serious challenge to walk across a street in Hanoi, a city of 6 million people on 2.5 million motor bikes (and no traffic lights!) while the villages in the countryside were often serene

As a communist country there is an ever present sense of 'control' exemplified by the ever present 'officials in uniforms' and the government's ban of internet social networks. Meanwhile the younger, more modern population looks upon the "Party" as outdated and seem to be patiently waiting for the old guard to die off. Younger people speak openly about how their socialist system, while seemingly good on paper, has serious flaws that discourage individual initiative and promote lethargy. There is a sense of struggle and turmoil in the faces of the elders, and a sense of hopeful optimism among the youth. The country is buzzing with new constructions and industrial development while some old villages remain intact and appear as symbols of a bygone era. As a psychoanalyst, trained to believe in Freud's succinct statement: that 'psychoanalysis seeks to uncover the truth' I was struck by this paradox. It was fascinating to see how these people live within this ambiguity and somehow seem to be able to maintain some objectivity; knowing they are constantly being exposed to lies (there was even a 'Propaganda Store in Hanoi that openly sold items with propaganda slogans on them). There were also some interesting parallels to our current social issues. They have their own version of the 99%ers. Government officials and corrupt politicians seem to live a life of opulence while the masses often suffer extreme poverty. As a portrait photographer I was interested in capturing some of these paradoxes with my camera. The subjects, along with the wonderfully diverse, often surreal environments, helped me to create, what I hope you'll find as interesting and powerful images.



— Bob Wolf

