









### **Designer's Statement**

#### China 1972: Land of Contrasts

President Nixon traveled through China in 1972. This event marked the opening of China to the Western world, after it had been closed for several decades. Using Greg Murphy's photos, taken that same year, it is possible to see the transition from an urban China to a more modern one taking place. Each of the photos, with the exception of the third one, has pair that represents this contrast.

The first two photos represent ancient architecture with more modern architecture. The Great Wall of China is compared with a city that has office buildings and apartments. The third photo is in itself a contrast. On the left are bicycles and on the right is an automobile. This represents a technological change from a wheeled man powered vehicle, to a wheeled vehicle that is powered by fuel. The fourth and fifth photos represent sports, recreational activities. The fourth photo is one of tug of war, while the fifth photo is one of basketball. The sport of tug of war has been around for over 4000 years<sup>1</sup>, while basketball has been around, as of 2011, for about 120 years.<sup>2</sup> The final two photos serve to contrast the tools and technology available for work. The sixth picture shows a low-tech scale, a device used to weigh something. The seventh picture shows a high-tech, circa 1972, operating table. The nature of their professions is clearly different, but the age of the technology they are using is much different.

China in 1972, I believe is much different than the China today. China was beginning the transition from a society mired in Mao Zedong's farming choices to the global economic power it is today. Many of the photos I have picked deal with technology I did this for two reasons. First, technology affects so much of everyday life, transportation, housing, the workplace and so on. Changes in technology are often used as demarcations between one era or age, and the next. Secondly, they are among the most noticeable contrasts available for me to represent using Greg Murphy's photos. The sports choice was to show that there were cultural contrasts and change going on as well.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.equitygaming.com/history.php>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fags.org/sports-science/Mo-Pl/Naismith-James-A.html>

This visual essay is an attempt to show through photographs that China in 1972 was changing. This is not to say that there was anything wrong with the China of old, but like all countries and societies, it changes over time.