

HER WORLD YOUNG WOMAN ACHIEVER 2014 WINNER



Sim Chi Yin

Freelance photojournalist based in Beijing, China

Age: 35

Marital status: Single

Why her

- She believes strongly in giving a voice to the underprivileged, and has been fiercely campaigning for the rights of migrant workers both in Singapore and overseas. She is unflagging in her commitment, and has won several awards over the past decade for her articles published in *The Straits Times* and *The New Paper*.
- She is unafraid to go to great lengths for the perfect shot, such as entering the squalid underground homes of migrant workers in Beijing to document their lives. She also somehow manages to win over her subjects so they let down their guard, allowing her to capture intimate family moments.
- In June 2011, she was selected to be part of the prestigious international VII Photo Agency's Mentor Programme, where she was mentored for three years by renowned British photojournalist Marcus Bleasdale. She joined VII Photo Agency as an interim member in July 2014 – the first and only Asian photographer to date to be represented by the agency.
- In September 2011, Chi Yin released her book, *The Long Road Home*, which documents the lives of Indonesian domestic workers in their home countries as well as in Singapore. She documented the lives of these women at her own expense and time by making several trips to Java between 2006 and 2009.
- In 2012, her project on the Rat Tribe –Beijing's basement-dwellers - was exhibited by Magnum Foundation in June at the PhotoVille festival in New York.
- In January 2014, she was one of the 30 international photographers on the *British Journal of Photography's* Ones To Watch list.

Accomplishments in 2013

- She made Photo District News' (PDN) 30 in 2013 – PDN's annual list of new and emerging photographers to watch. She was one of only two Asians to make the list that year. *Photo District News (PDN)* is an international monthly magazine for professional photographers
- September 2013: She bagged the Discernment Award at the ICON de Martell Cordon Bleu Awards 2013, which comes with a cash prize of S\$8,000, as well as the Eternal Discovery Award (also known as the People's Choice Award), which comes with a cash prize of S\$1,000. The ICON de Martell Cordon Bleu Awards are Singapore's richest photography awards.

- October 2013: She was a finalist in the 2013 W. Eugene Smith Grant for Humanistic Photography for her project “Dying to Breathe”, which is about silicosis, an irreversible occupational disease affecting China’s gold miners. The annual grant and fellowship is awarded to photographers who are pursuing long-term documentary projects in humanistic photography.

Education / Awards / Scholarships

Education

- 2001: Graduated with history and international relations degrees from the London School of Economics and Political Science, with a focus on Mao’s China, the Sino-Soviet alliance and the Third World in the Cold War. She had a distinction for her MSc degree in History of International Relations and topped her cohort, winning the Robert McKenzie Memorial Prize for Outstanding Performance in MA, MSC, MPhil or PhD Degrees (all subjects). She was also awarded first-class honours for her BA degree and won the department book prize for Best Undergraduate Dissertation in 2000.

Awards / Scholarships

- September 2013: Won the Discernment Award at the Icon de Martell Cordon Bleu 2013, which comes with a cash prize of S\$8,000, and the Eternal Discovery Award (also known as the People’s Choice Award), which comes with a cash prize of S\$1,000.
- 2013: Made *PDN’s 30 2013*, the *Photo District News’s* annual list of new and emerging photographers to watch.
- June 2011: Selected to join VII Photo Agency’s Mentor Program, a prestigious outfit that has just 11 members. She was the only Asian photographer at that time.
- 2010: Won a Magnum Foundation scholarship for a summer programme in documentary photography at New York University, and subsequently did stints at Magnum Photos New York and International Centre of Photography.
- 2008: Won prizes from the Society of Publishers in Asia and Ifra, an affiliate of the World Association of Newspapers and New Publishers, for her pictures and stories on Indonesian women migrant workers and their trials and triumphs.
- March 2007: Won the Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) English and Malay Newspapers Division’s Feature Of The Month awards for her special reports on the new railway linking Beijing and Tibet (September 2006), and Indonesian migrant domestic workers. She’s won various editorial awards during her time with SPH including the Singapore Press Holdings English and Malay Newspapers Division’s Story Of The Month, Feature Of The Month, and Special Award For Excellence awards for her stories on migrant workers, social issues and the Athens Paralympics

Professional experience

- 2011 – present: Freelance photographer; has photographed for clients like *The New Yorker*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Le Monde*, *Businessweek*, *ESPN Magazine*, *Financial Times*, *Asia Society*, *Stern*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Wall Street Journal* and *Vogue*.
- July 2014: member of VII Photo Agency
- Jan 2011 – June 2014: Became a member of VII Photo Agency’s Mentor Program
- May 2007 – 2010: China Correspondent, Beijing Bureau, *The Straits Times*, Singapore
- February 2006 – April 2007: Correspondent, Foreign Desk and Political Desk, *The Straits Times*, Singapore
- May 2003 – February 2006: Journalist, *The New Paper*, Singapore
- October 2001 – May 2003: Journalist, *The Straits Times/The Sunday Times*, Singapore
- January – September 1997; summers of 1998 to 2000: Intern photographer, *The Straits Times*, Singapore
- July 1999: Did stints as a photographer, *The Independent* and *The Guardian* in London, UK
- 1997 – 2000: Freelance photographer, London School of Economics and Political Science press office; Photographer, *The London Student*, newspaper of the University of London