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Edward Burtynsky Exhibition

Hong Kong-based industrial designer Ben McCarthy visits an exhibition exposing landscapes of production.

As an industrial designer, the profession presents me with an intrinsic irony.

It celebrates the possibilities of producing beautiful things. But it also exposes the disarming reality of where things come from.

Canadian photographer, Edward Burtynsky highlights this contrast with eloquent accuracy.

Burtynsky's large, highly-detailed photographs tend to depict man-made landscapes, which, he explains, "are rich in detail and scale yet open in their meaning".

His first solo exhibition in Hong Kong, presents a range of photographs taken in obscure, mostly restricted, regions of China, Bangladesh, Australia, India, Azerbaijan, Canada and the USA, shot over the last 20-odd years.

Amongst them are photos of stone quarries, coal refineries, oil fields, iron recyclers, nickel mines. All are references to the ages of man, be it stone, iron or copper age, and are reflections of his want to explore the shift from these ages, into modern mechanized Chinese production.

"In the last 30 years, we see a complete shift of production to China... I look for images that somehow describe that narrative; the transformation of industrial age."

The clash of confronting concepts in a beautifully composed image allows Burtynsky some kind of objectivity as he neither celebrates, nor condemns mass production.

"These images are meant as metaphors to the dilemma of our modern existence; they search for a dialogue between attraction and repulsion, seduction and fear."

However, the enduring goal of Burtynsky's seems to be to promote a sustainable consciousness, as he now commits about half his time to volunteer organisations within both cultural and ecological industries.

Edward Burtynsky's exhibition runs from September 22 – October 23 at [Sundaram Tagore Gallery](#), 57 – 59 Hollywood Road, Central, Hong Kong.

Edward Burtynsky
edwardburtynsky.com

Note: The following images have been cropped.

