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MOTHER RIVER YAN WANG PRESTON

31 March to 24 June 2017

Mother River is an epic journey along the Yangtze, often known as China's Mother River. The project follows a simple but challenging rule: to document the 6,211km route of the river from source to delta, using Google Earth and GPS (Global Positioning System) to photograph every 100 kilometres.

Made over a period of four years, Yan Wang Preston travelled to the remote high Tibetan Plateau through the Three Gorges to the river's end at Shanghai. She had to find and photograph sixty-three locations, 'Y Points', in diverse and often remote terrain. Since the river source is 5,400 metres above sea level, and half of its length flows through some of the most majestic mountains on the Earth, *Mother River* is on one level a modern-day adventure, where the photographer faced hazards from altitude sickness to mudslides. Wang Preston used a large-format field camera, the kind used by nineteenth-century explorers. Although cumbersome and complex to use on location, the camera produces huge negatives, offering images with astonishing detail.

For the artist, *Mother River* is in part a pilgrimage through her native country: an exploration of a powerful symbol that reconnects her with the ancestral homeland. Closely associated with Chinese traditional paintings and an icon of

the national landscape, the Yangtze represents the folklore of traditional China. However, with over 30 hydroelectric dams on its course, the river is synonymous with China's rapid industrialisation. Preston says, 'I hope my work offers a fresh perspective on China, where traditional landscape meets present-day development'.

To find out more, watch the 'Meet the Artist' video in the foyer or come to our free Artist Talk with Yan Wang Preston on Saturday 13 May, 2pm to 3pm.

Mother River is part of **Views from China**, a special six month programme of exhibitions and events at Impressions, exploring Chinese culture and the long standing links between the UK and China. @ImpGalleryPhoto #ViewsFromChina

The exhibition is commissioned in partnership with Gallery of Photography Ireland.

Yan Wang Preston (Born Henan Province, China, 1976) trained as a doctor in Shanghai before moving to the UK in 2005. She has exhibited at Glasgow International Festival of Visual Arts (2014), Noorderlicht Photography Festival, the Netherlands (2012), and the National Portrait Gallery, London (2006). She won the Shiseido Photographer Prize at the Three Shadows Photography Award in Beijing (2016), and the Syngenta Photography Award (2017). *Mother River* was exhibited throughout China as part of the 2015 UK-China Year of Cultural Exchange.

