

“The Best Things in Life”

A Colour Photography Exhibition by Dr Clinton Chan

March to May 2005

“Arts Expression” Wall, Block 3, Level 1,
Singapore General Hospital (outside SOC main entrance)

Organised by SGH Carelink



“*The best things in life are nearest:
Breath in your nostrils, light in your eyes,
flowers at your feet, duties at your hand, the
path of right just before you. Then do not
grasp at the stars, but do life’s plain,
common work as it comes (.)*”

R L Stevenson

One of the key qualities in photography is ‘thereness’, which is the primary goal of the quiet photographer. It is a sense of the subject’s reality, a heightened sense of its physicality in the image. It is the sense that we are looking at the world directly, without mediation. It is the sense of being a part of the photograph such that we can hear the gurgling of the stream or feel the wind rustling the leaves. Photographs that conjure up the compelling desire to touch the subject, to walk into the picture, to know the photographed person display ‘thereness’.

The photos in this portfolio are my visual interpretation of Stevenson’s expression. It is a reminder of the beauty that is all around us, in our daily experiences that are the “best things in life”, not necessarily the majestic mountains of faraway lands, or the surreal golden leaves in forests virgin. Although the great Sung painter Kuo Hsi once remarked: “It is human nature to resent the hustle and bustle of society, and to wish to see, but not always succeed in seeing, the immortals hidden among the clouds.” Perhaps that “immortal” may just be hidden on that rainbow mural, sitting on that forgotten garden chair, or even across the road...

About the photographer:

Dr Clinton Chan, MBBS(S), MBA(Stanford), is an avid photographer. In 2004, he received an Emerging Artist Grant from the National Arts Council for his work: “Pulau Ubin – A Portfolio of 18 Landscape Photographs”, which was exhibited at the Blue Lotus Fine Art Gallery. Selected pieces are in the collection of the Thomas Welton Art Gallery, Stanford University. His interests in photography seriously developed under the tutelage of Joel Leivick when at Stanford. His greatest influences include Eugene Atget, William Eggleston and Stephen Shore. These photographs were taken with his 1960’s Rolleiflex Twin Lens Reflex camera in his preferred square format. He is currently with the Department of Finance, Singapore General Hospital.