

For Immediate Release



UCR ARTSblock presents the exhibition

Blockaded
A photographic itinerary
through Iran, North Korea, and Cuba

November 9, 2013–February 2, 2014
California Museum of Photography, UCR ARTSblock

RIVERSIDE, Calif., September 1, 2013 – UCR ARTSblock presents *Blockaded: A photographic itinerary through Iran, North Korea, and Cuba*, on view at the California Museum of Photography from November 9, 2013 through February 2, 2014 in conjunction with the release of Roberto Fumagalli's new book *Axis of Evil?* (forthcoming from Mimesis, Milan, fall 2013). Political critic Noam Chomsky has described Fumagalli's book as a "wonderful project." The exhibition will be accompanied by a special artist talk and book signing at 4pm on Saturday, November 9.

This exhibition, held on the third floor of the California Museum of Photography, consists of photographs taken by Roberto Fumagalli in Iran, North Korea, and Cuba, and reflects on the ongoing political and social turmoil in these countries. Fumagalli's images provide a glimpse into everyday life in relation to global events during president George W. Bush's administration, and raise urgent questions of our time. The role of the United States in international relations and the disparity between how it views itself and how it is viewed is visually investigated in these photographs. *Blockaded* introduces a unique approach to the subject of individual and government issues. Fumagalli's photographs are the result of his frequent visits to these countries over the course of eleven years and provide a distinctively personal take on the events and circumstances in each location.

This exhibition offers a singular perspective on the political shifts in recent years, in particular president Barack Obama's re-election, and the accompanying hopes and expectations from other countries, especially those

Image: Roberto Fumagalli, *Statue of Kim Il Sung in the entrance hall of the Grand People's Study House, Pyongyang, October 2007*. Courtesy of the photographer.

branded with an “Axis of Evil” label. The question of what an “Axis of Evil” actually refers to is significant in this show: in what ways has our view of this slogan, and its meaning changed? And how has this idea shifted depending on how it is employed, and by whom?

Fumagalli’s photojournalistic images capture candid moments in Iran, North Korea, and Cuba in the lives of denizens. Fumagalli’s photographs reposition the notion of an “Axis of Evil” in a reality that is not strictly black and white. These images provide a startlingly beautiful glimpse into worlds that are more frequently associated with political turmoil. Fumagalli’s work, through its unique and unbiased representation, sparks new questions about our past and current political beliefs.

The expression “Axis of Evil” was first used by former United States president George W. Bush to categorize countries that the US believed were involved in terrorist activities, and were either currently building, or had the capability to develop, nuclear weapons. The three countries first described as an “Axis of Evil” were Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. Although Cuba was not among the first countries given this title, it was later identified as a sort of sub-category of the expression because of the belief that it has aided terrorism, and had the potential to build weapons of mass destruction. The phrase “Axis of Evil” is most closely associated with George W. Bush’s administration; however, there are still many references to the concept even though the meaning has shifted and become blurred over time.

Visit artsblock.ucr.edu for further details about the exhibition and related public program.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Roberto Fumagalli was born in 1970 in Monza, Italy. He earned his Master of Science degree in Natural Sciences at the State University in Milan in 1994. His first book, *Cuba Va* (2006), was a result of his extensive travels in Cuba and examines the effects of the Cuban Revolution. Fumagalli’s photographs from this book were exhibited at the California Museum of Photography at UCR ARTSblock in 2008, as well as in Rome (2005), Milan (2006 and 2009), Turin (2006), Havana (2007), Paris (2008), Genoa (2008), and in Palermo (2010). Fumagalli has been traveling the world for more than 20 years and his photographic work has appeared in newspapers and magazines across the globe.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Blockaded: A photographic itinerary through Iran, North Korea, and Cuba is organized by the California Museum of Photography at UCR ARTSblock, with assistance from Astara Light, CMP Curatorial Intern. The exhibition was made possible with generous support from Doug Magnon. The Italian Cultural Institute is a media sponsor.



VISITOR INFORMATION AND PRESS INQUIRIES

UCR ARTSblock is located at 3824 & 3834 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92501, and includes three venues—California Museum of Photography, Culver Center of the Arts, and Sweeney Art Gallery—which are open Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 5 pm, plus 6–9pm for First Thursday ArtWalks, which take place on the first Thursday of every month. Admission is \$3, which includes entry to all three venues, and is free during First Thursday ArtWalks (6–9pm). The Culver Center opens 30 minutes prior to film screenings.

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