

PRESS RELEASE

Photo journalists Abhelakh and Troon present photo book: **'Beyond the Shopkeeper's Counter; Images of Chinese Life in Suriname'**

'Beyond the Shopkeeper's Counter; Images of Chinese Life in Suriname' by photo journalists Ranu Abhelakh and Edward Troon will be launched on Wednesday 16 October 2013 at Riverside Shadien. This volume containing over 280 photos of the lives of people of Chinese heritage in Suriname commemorates 160 years of Chinese settlement in Suriname.

'Beyond the Shopkeeper's Counter; Images of Chinese Life in Suriname' may be considered the first extensive photographic documentary of a ethno-cultural group in Suriname. The principle of this book by the two photo journalists is that the photographs should tell the stories of the people by themselves! Abhelakh and Troon consistently pictured their subjects as Surinamese people.

The sinologist Paul Tjon Sie Fat reinforces the project with his introduction, brief photo texts, and thematic summaries at the end of every chapter. He describes aspects of daily life, economic activities, and the annual celebrations of these special citizens and residents of Suriname. The photo book is unique; it is the first Surinamese publication in two world languages, English and Chinese.

The three makers are convinced that their product will counterbalance ethnic stereotyping – in this case of Chinese – in Suriname, as they show how fully integrated Chinese culture and heritage have become in the reality of Suriname; 'Us' can often hardly be distinguished from 'Them'.

Anyone interested in contemporary Suriname will be happy with **'Beyond the Shopkeeper's Counter; Images of Chinese Life in Suriname'**. "With this book, which is a pictorial record of a particular period, we the authors hope to contribute to the documentation of one of the many facets of Surinamese identity".

Abhelakh has had training in journalism in Suriname, India and the USA, and works a photo journalist for local and international media. In 2010 she published her first book *De Formule van de Surinaamse Identiteit* (The Formula of Surinamese Identity).

Tjon Sie Fat completed his PhD thesis on New Chinese immigration in Suriname at the University of Amsterdam. He is a guest lecturer at the Anton de Kom University of Suriname publishes articles on Chinese identity, language and culture in international journals.

Troon, an engineer by training, has worked in journalism since 1985, and was founder of the Times of Suriname, the English edition of De Ware Tijd, and the Kompas weekly. He is a freelance journalist and teaches photo journalism and graphic design at the Academy for Advanced Art and Cultural Education (AHKCO).

On Wednesday 16 October the authors will elaborate on this photo book which they published by themselves with financial support of Surinamese companies and organizations.

