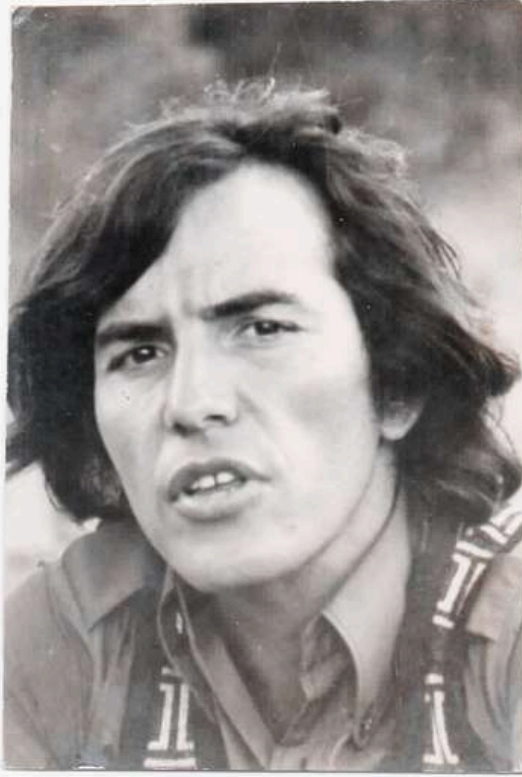


GILBERT BERTRAND

VIETNAM'S INTERSECTION



Gilbert Bertrand's
Xich Lo in a Saigon Street, Saigon 1970-1975



GILBERT BERTRAND

Gilbert BERTRAND was born on 2 June 1938 in Saint-Vallier, in the Drôme region of France. Growing up in a modest family shaped by the hardships of both World Wars – his father a veteran of the Second World War and his mother a homemaker – he developed early on a deep yearning for distant horizons and other cultures.

After completing his secondary education in 1957, Bertrand started a career as a teacher. From 1959 to 1962, he did his military service in Algeria and later joined a civil service mission as a primary school teacher in Tamanrasset, Algeria, until 1970. There, he discovered a passion for teaching and was profoundly moved by the lives of Algerian children and their families. This experience awakened in him a lifelong curiosity for other cultures and a desire to share the French language across the world.

In 1970, following his mission in Algeria, he applied for an overseas posting in Vietnam and was sent by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to teach at a primary school in Danang, in central Vietnam. During this time, he trained as a specialist in teaching French as a foreign language and became a trainer of French teachers.

In 1972, he was appointed Pedagogical Coordinator of the French Institute in Dalat, then in Saigon, where he served until the reunification of Vietnam in 1975. From 1975 to 1980, Bertrand was posted as Deputy Cultural Attaché in Wellington, New Zealand, where he launched a nationwide program for French language instruction in schools and trained local French teachers. He continued this work in New Orleans, USA, from 1980 to 1984.

From 1984 to 1986, he served at the French Ministry of Education in Paris. He was then appointed Secretary General of the French Cultural Service in Beijing, China (1986–1989), followed by similar diplomatic and cultural roles at the French Embassies in Washington, D.C., and Jakarta, Indonesia, until his retirement.

A passionate photographer, Bertrand documented his travels and encounters throughout his career. His portraits of tribal communities in Algeria and Vietnam stand out for their sensitivity and authenticity. His series of street photographs taken in Saigon between 1974 and 1975, particularly during the entry of North Vietnamese troops, is of historical significance, offering a rare and poignant visual record of a defining moment in the country's history.

VIETNAM'S INTERSECTION

From an archive of over 900 photographs taken by Gilbert Bertrand (1970–1975), nine works were selected by the French Institute in Vietnam for ***Vietnam's Intersection***, shown at the Hanoi Photo Biennale 2025.

Bringing together the works of Gilbert Bertrand, Daniel Roussel, and Lily Franey, the exhibition commemorates the 50th anniversary of Vietnam's reunification. After debuting in Hanoi, it travelled to Da Nang and is now on view in Huế, introducing audiences to photographic archives.

The nine photographs offer an intimate view of everyday life in Vietnam during a defining period. Rather than focusing on war, Bertrand highlights the resilience of ordinary people – their work, relationships, traditions, and quiet moments – creating testimonies of dignity, humanity, and hope.

Bertrand's archive is a record of Vietnam in the final years leading to reunification. Distinguished by artistic and documentary value, it captures landmark events, including the entry into Saigon, alongside everyday life. This makes the collection an artistic achievement and significant historical document.

Having never been exhibited prior to the 2025 Hanoi Photo Biennale, the Gilbert Bertrand collection has firmly established its unique value. Today, it's highly sought after by private collectors and prestigious institutions including the National Gallery Singapore. The following photographs offer a glimpse into this body of work, inviting reflection on the people and stories shaping Vietnam's collective memory.



Gilbert Bertrand

Napping on Coconuts

Inkjet print on archival paper, edition 1 of 5

30 x 45 cm

2025 (original analog photo c. 1972-1975)

SGD 883



Gilbert Bertrand
A Warm Gaze

Inkjet print on archival paper, edition 1 of 5
30 x 45 cm
2025 (original analog photo c. 1972-1975)

SGD 883



Gilbert Bertrand

Desert Break

Inkjet print on archival paper, edition 1 of 5

30 x 45 cm

2025 (original analog photo c. 1972-1975)

SGD 883



Gilbert Bertrand

Life on the River

Inkjet print on archival paper, edition 1 of 5

30 x 45 cm

2025 (original analog photo c. 1972-1975)

SGD 883



Gilbert Bertrand

Fleet of Xe Lôi in Waiting

Inkjet print on archival paper, edition 1 of 5

30 x 45 cm

2025 (original analog photo c. 1972-1975)

SGD 883



Gilbert Bertrand

Xich Lo in a Saigon Street

Inkjet print on archival paper, edition 2 of 5

30 x 45 cm

2025 (original analog photo c. 1972–1975)

SGD 971



Gilbert Bertrand

Market in the Shade of Nón Lá

Inkjet print on archival paper, edition 1 of 5

30 x 45 cm

2025 (original analog photo c. 1972-1975)

SGD 883



Gilbert Bertrand

Hair Clip

Inkjet print on archival paper, edition 1 of 5

30 x 45 cm

2025 (original analog photo 1975)

SGD 883



Gilbert Bertrand

Moving Day

Inkjet print on archival paper, edition 1 of 5

30 x 45 cm

2025 (original analog photo c. 1972-1975)

SGD 883

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON THE GILBERT BERTRAND COLLECTION

INTERSECTIONS GALLERY

Marie-Pierre Mol

art@intersections.com.sg

+65 9798 5611

www.intersections.com.sg

Follow Us: [@IntersectionsGallery](#) | [#IntersectionsGallery](#)

© 2026 Intersections Gallery

All rights reserved

*No part of this publication may be reproduced, except for the purpose of research, criticism, and review,
without first seeking written prior agreement from the featured artists and the publisher.*