

GLOBAL
INVESTING

THE CHINA GAMBLE

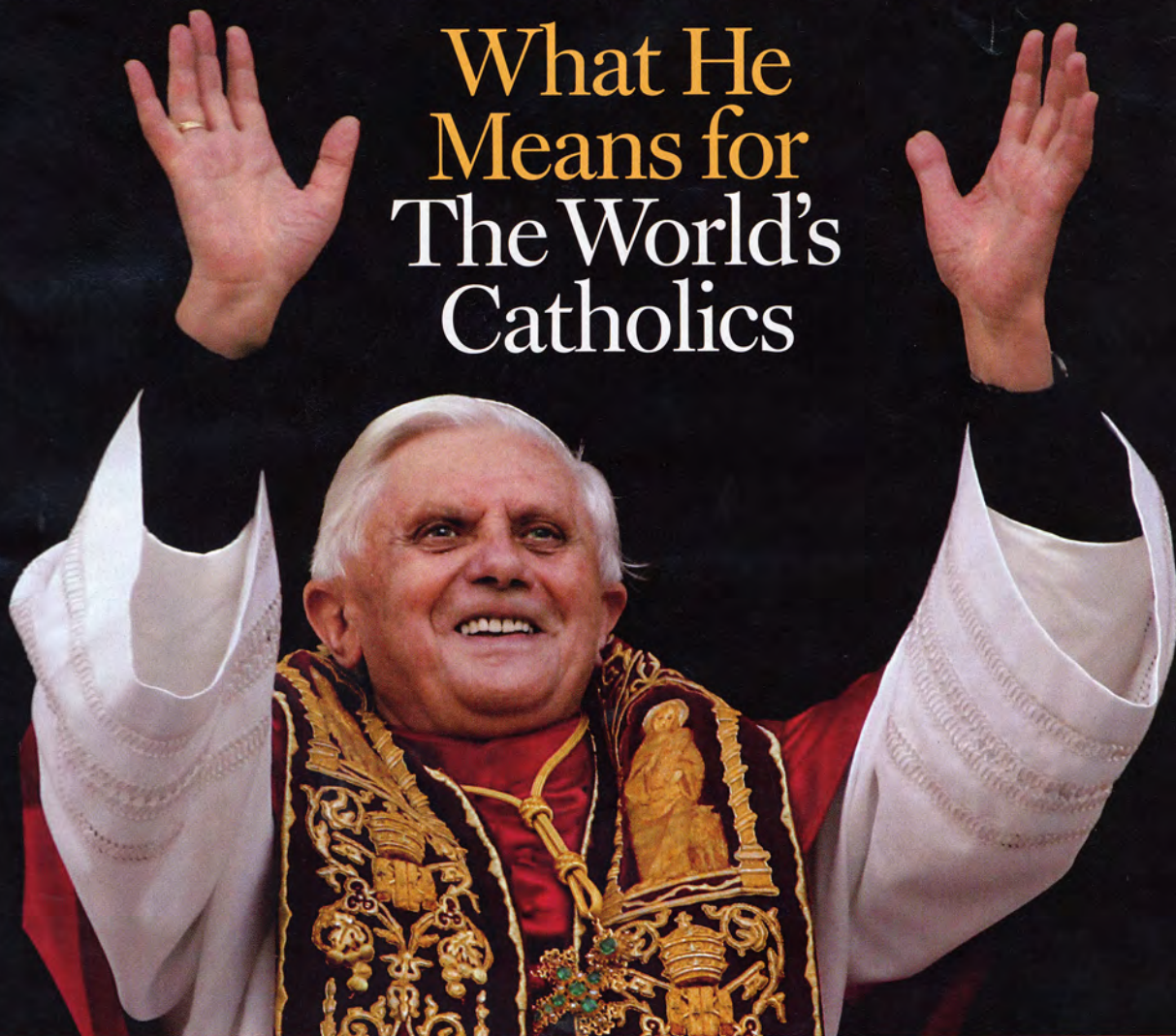
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Benedict XVI

What He Means for The World's Catholics



PHOTOGRAPH BY MAX ROSSI—REUTERS



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Albania Lek 600	Finland €4.00	Ireland (incl.tax) €4.00	Norway Kr 39.00	Slovenia SIT 600
Austria €4.00	France €4.00	Israel NIS 18.00	Poland (incl.tax) PLN 11.30	Spain €4.00
Belgium €4.00	Germany €4.00	Italy €4.00	Portugal Cont €4.00	Sweden SKr 32.00
Bulgaria BGL 4.00	Gibraltar £ 2.70	Kazakhstan \$4.20	Romania Lei 106.500	Switzerland SF 6.90
Croatia KN 20.00	Greece €4.00	Latvia \$4.20	Russia \$4.20	Turkey TL 4,000,000
Cyprus CE2.55	Hungary Ft 590.00	Lithuania \$4.20	Serbia and Montenegro DIN 170	Ukraine \$4.20
Czech Republic CZK 100.00	Holland €4.00	Luxembourg €4.00	United Kingdom £ 2.60	U.S. Forces \$3.25
Denmark Kr 36.00	Iceland IKr 370.00	Malta Lm 1.70	Slovakia SK 110.00	



PHOTOGRAPHY

The New Arab Woman

AS A CHILD GROWING up in Morocco, Boston-based photographer Lalla Essaydi on occasion found herself banished to a rural family house—with only her thoughts as company—for being a naughty little girl. For her first solo exhibit, “Converging Territories,” at

New York’s Laurence Miller Gallery, Essaydi revisited that old house 20 years later, in order to depict the life of the 21st-century Arab woman. In her lush color photographs, women both young and old appear with Essaydi’s stream-of-consciousness diary (“I am a book that has no ending. Each

A NEW LOOK: Essaydi captures Arab women

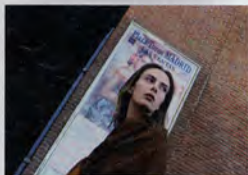
page I write could be the first...”) written in henna calligraphy on their flowing robes and even their skin. The calligraphy, an art form that until the past decade was not taught to Moroccan women, took three weeks for each image. Through her works, Essaydi, now in her 40s, gives voice to a complex generation of Arab women—Western and Eastern, traditionalist and liberal, secular and Muslim. And the imagery—rich in color,

as opposed to shrouded in mysterious sepia—attempts to correct centuries of “Orientalism,” the West’s condescending (and often fetishized) view of its former colonial outposts. The mute, nude and exotic are replaced with the literate and vocal. “I’m reinterpreting the Arab female,” says Essaydi. “We’re always seen as the woman who’s oppressed, when we’re actually negotiating every day.” —T. TRENT GEGAW

MUSIC

Mariachi Makeover

THE ‘80S TEENIE-POP band Timbiriche was the Mexican equivalent of “The Mickey Mouse Club,” launching the careers of both Thalía and Paulina Rubio. So it’s no surprise, then, that the talented Mexican singer Sasha is also a Timbiriche vet. But unlike her former band mates, who still churn out bubble-gum pop, the 34-year-old Sasha has actually evolved over the past two decades. On her latest album, “Por un Amor,” she digs for her roots, rediscov-



SUPER SINGER: Sasha returns to her Mexican roots on a new album

ering traditional Mexican mariachi. “I’ve always wanted to sing the music of my country,” says Sasha, “but I only now feel mature enough to handle these songs about love and loss.”

Although Sasha remains remarkably faithful to the original versions of the songs, she manages to make the mariachi repertoire her own. She slows down the title track and half-whispers the lyrics, squeezing out every last drop of lovesick anguish. Even “La Cucaracha” gets a makeover. With her smooth, honeyed vocals, Sasha’s version oozes sensuality. “These songs have been recorded so many times, I had to do them my way,” she says. “If you’re just going to copy what’s already been done, what’s the point?” Take that, Thalía and Paulina.

—JENNY BARCHFIELD

ART Death Becomes Him

In coming months, those who watch Asian art will be keeping a close eye on prices for the works of Chen Yifei. The 59-year-old Shanghai painter passed away April 10 while directing a high-profile Chinese film, sparking much speculation about the new heights that buyers might be willing to pay for his canvases. While he was alive, Chen’s highly idealized oil portraits of women and landscapes from China broke records at auctions. Jessie Or, Chinese paintings specialist at Christie’s in Hong Kong, believes his death “will raise the attention level of collectors because he is one of the greatest Chinese artists from the early 1990s.” In 1997, “Poppy,” depicting a beautiful girl in traditional dress, sold at Christie’s for \$500,000—the world’s highest sale for an oil by a contemporary Chinese painter.

Trained in a classic communist realist style, Chen first earned a reputation as a top propaganda artist at home before arriving in New York in the early 1980s. While in the West, the flamboyant and highly eloquent painter became popular among a small group of international art collectors in the United States and Europe. Chen also developed a loyal following among some Hong Kong tycoons, who became enamored of his romantic renderings of old China. Upon returning to the mainland, Chen became a prominent fixture of Shanghai society, as an entrepreneur as much as an artist. Over the last decade, he built a lifestyle empire that included publishing, fashion, housewares and one of China’s biggest modeling agencies. In that time, Chen produced fewer and fewer paintings. Which makes them all the more desirable now.

—ALEXANDRA A. SEND



‘POPPY’: Sold for \$500,000 in 1997