

刘野夫 Liu Yefu

精选文章 *Selected Articles*

展评 | Artforum 艺术论坛

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刘野夫：第一集

2016.06.16

2016.05.14-2016.06.26 魔金石空间 | Magician Space

策展人陈旭峰在与刘野夫的对话中将其创作描述为“包含了一种非常当代的移民状况”。但是刘野夫的首次个展“第一集”中众多影像里的女性形象以及性意象似乎构成了一种更为明显的联系——因此反而更为容易被忽视。

影像装置《3013：太空情人》（2013）由四部分组成——投射在瑜伽球上的地球全貌；经典、老旧Windows系统崩溃的蓝屏（崩溃的系统客气地留言：“此致敬礼，你最爱的破烂老16位操作系统”）；某种宇宙景象的渲染；以及一个关于未来爱情叙事的影像——也是该装置中唯一一个积极推动自身叙事的影像，其他三个都在一种不情愿的小型运动中支持着它——故事开始于一个生活在未来的女孩关于爱情及情人形象的描述，但几乎与一般想象中的未来无关，因为女孩除了生活在31世纪之外，和生活在今天的女孩并无区别。这不成熟的爱情观很快消融在大量女性臀部影像片段之中。

以纽约街道命名的单频录像《640W 139th St.》（2014）与展览中其他作品相比有着非常不同的特性：镜头的使用是恋物癖式的，或者可以说是最流行的商业广告式的（大量流连于“物件”之上，无论是带有隐性商业属性的物件还是人的身体）。影像中没有出现一次女主角的眼睛——也就是说，与展览中其他作品不同，这个影像拒绝对视（或死亡，因为这带着恐惧和欲望的闪躲让这女性成为美杜莎）。影像中出现的声音和画面极为贴合，而其他作品里的声音（无论是旁白还是配乐）都有明显的主导作用。在这个意义上，如果说其他作品展现了某种当代诗的结构（启用元素包括音乐录像带、说唱音乐以及展览导览等大众文化组件），《640W 139th St.》则以一种安静但直接的方式躲避着他人的目光，成为整个展览营造出的兴奋、狂乱气氛极向内崩塌的瞬间。

单频录像《怎么着！野夫》（2014）讲述了一群人等待来自远东的年轻客人“卢也夫”出现的故事。整个作品似乎由真实个人经历和欺诈编织而成（“他妈的到底怎么回事，他还没到吗？”——“卢也夫”的缺席已经是处在真假边缘的问题）；或者从另一个角度来说，由美国梦和全球现实交汇而成：废弃零件组装成的兰博基尼、奢侈品产业与屠宰苏门答腊蟒蛇的联系，以及有关韩国微整形行业的讨论……这些问题被融入一个特定个体的生平叙事中。尽管这些纷乱的事件让作品显得零散，但艺术家对于流行音乐及各种声音的剪接使用让故事得以在一个类现代诗结构的框架中展开。换言之，等待的人们关于“卢也夫”的描述是荒诞而无聊的，但这就是现代式消极等待的意义。

艺术家最新的单频影像作品《琳达》（2016）在音轨上直接使用了评论家杰瑞·萨尔茨（Jerry Saltz）给纽约美术馆做的一次语音导览，观者可以清楚地感受到这权威式声音的带领作用，因为作品的影像部分——特意拍摄的与马蒂斯野兽派绘画或波洛克的行动绘画有关的影像，或是各地日常生活的记录——以一种很明显的方式跟随着这声音，对经典现代主义作品做出回应。但影片最后中国某地小学生在杰克逊音乐伴奏下进行的课间操却又以一种奇异的方式打破了在此次展览中占据重要地位的“声音主导-影像追随”的结构关系。在这里，作为形式的课间操和作为内容的经典流行歌曲彼此转化，积极地抹去了在地域、文化、社会、艺术等方面运转的顽固界限。

— 文/李博文

Review | Frieze

2018.08

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From Cigarettes To Sex Toys, Liu Yefu Finds Absurdity In Advertising

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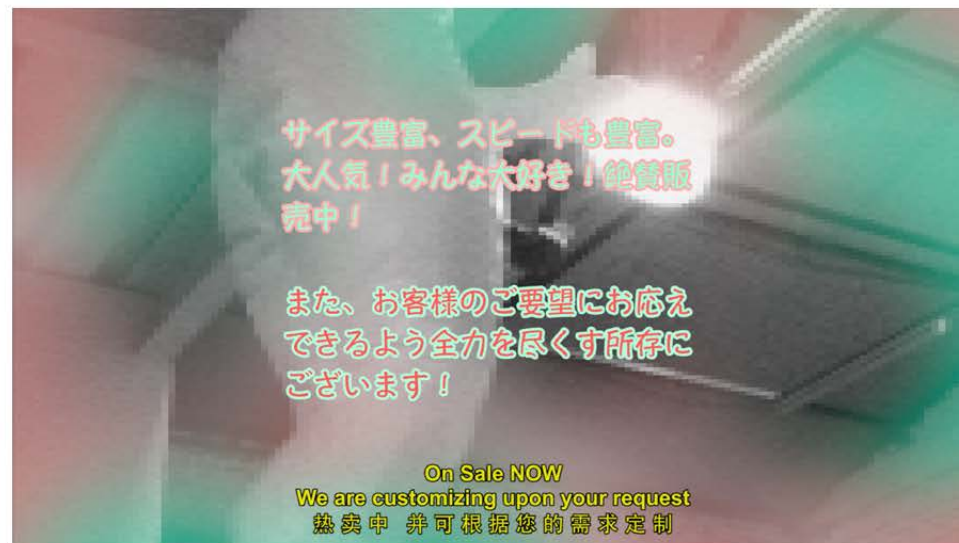
BY TOM MOUNA

21 AUG 2018

At Beijing's Magician Space, demonstrating how products are more than their simple functions and exploring the hegemonic power of language



'No Easy Symbolism', Liu Yefu's solo exhibition at Magician Space, is about semantics: how and what things mean (or don't). Focusing on the language of advertising, the artist amplifies attempts to demonstrate that products are more than their simple functions to expose the ridiculousness and ineptitude of these promotional approaches. This is part of Liu's broader engagement with the endurance of imperialist structures and their effects, especially as connected to the hegemonic power of language.



Liu Yefu, *Ad Proposal II*, 2017, single channel HD video still. Courtesy: the artist and Magician Space, Beijing

Bubba Goes Home, So Does Forrest (all works 2018 unless otherwise stated), one of three small, sculptural assemblages at the exhibition's entrance, consists of a clay bowl one-third filled with a brown resin that partially submerges two clay spheres. 'I wanna go home,' are the dying words of Bubba, Forrest's closest friend during the Vietnam War in the acclaimed Hollywood film *Forrest Gump* (1994). Installed opposite is *Damascus 3 Days 2 Nights Only for ¥3500*, comprising two bangles, reminiscent of the jade kind often worn in China, which hang off a curved nail just above the floor, covered in rubble and shards of pottery. Syria's present state of ruin comes to mind and the assemblage becomes a parodic package-holiday advertisement. In the third sculpture, with the German title *Er wird dich verwerfen als wärst du ein Stück Kartoffeln, das die Hände verbrennt verbrennt* (He Will Reject You as if You Were a Piece of Potato That Burns, Burns the Hands), a twisted fork with a broken prong is stuck into an actual potato that sits beside a clay version in a bowl atop a splintered wooden shelf. A hot potato: a difficult problem or situation perpetually passed on. Via Vietnam and Syria, there are nods to foreign military and

MAGICIAN SPACE 魔金石空间

political interventions, while the works' titles evoke the ways that the often-brutal realities of such actions can be twisted and elided through allusion and metaphor.



Liu Yefu, *Bubba Goes Home, So Does Forrest*, 2018, pottery, clay, oil, resin, 12 x 12 x 6 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Magician Space, Beijing

Eight videos are projected in the second room. Five of these, 'AD, Proposal I-V' (2017–18), show a series of black and white advertising vignettes that the artist created for products including Lucky Strike cigarettes and Japanese sex toys. These often-violent, leftfield videos follow the same pattern: a disorientating opening followed by the inexplicable and comical arrival of the advertised product. Most are also marked by hyperbolic references to different cultures: mumbled Arabic before a hanging; the Statue of Liberty and a messy rendition of The Star-Spangled Banner; a man with traditional Manchurian Queue hair shot dead by a cowboy. The three longer films include *Doubaner on the Grassland*, in which two figures sit against a backdrop of US Civil War-era covered wagons and seemingly random video clips floating in the sky. Two voices, with American accents, engage in a sort of critical discussion of artworks, briefly referring to Kerry James Marshall, Susan Sontag, Slavoj Žižek and Chinese art (seemingly sufficiently covered by mentioning 17th-century painter and calligrapher Bada Shanren). Mostly, though, they talk about break-ups and sex. The dialogue is too scatty to be incisive, which is suggested in the title's reference to Douban: a popular Chinese online platform used for reviewing and discussing almost anything. Confusion and disorientation likewise set the tone for the exhibition's longest video,

How Many Horses, which shows a group of friends playing and revealing the secrets of cryptic word games.

I've used words like scatty, oblique and confusing because the exhibition chimes with these adjectives. Liu's approach allows for a reflexive engagement with advertising and, specifically, language's ability to shape understanding – finding within this a counterpart to more pernicious forms of imperial intervention.

Liu Yefu: No Easy Symbolism <http://magician-space.com/enexhibition_details.aspx?id=110> was on view from 15 May until 20 June 2018 at Magician Space, Beijing.

Main image: Liu Yefu, *How Many Horses* (detail), 2018, single channel HD video still. Courtesy: the artist and Magician Space, Beijing



TOM MOUNA

Tom Mouna is a writer based in Beijing.

Article | The Beijinger
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SOTA: Liu Yefu and the Art of Cultural Assimilation at Magician Space

 GJ Cabrera |  Jun 16, 2018 3:53 pm | [Add a comment](#) | 1692 reads

State of the Arts is our regular arts column whereby we take a look at the newest moves in Beijing's creative scene and highlight art news as well as exhibitions, artists, and openings that you should seek out.

As it stands, art history is an ongoing creation and re-interpretation of what happens in the art world, and what is the art world if not the result of many forces at play, each pulling, contending, articulating to each other in order to determine what is relevant, hyped, hot, and driving the zeitgeist. These forces tend to be stronger in certain regions because let's face it, it's not a phenomenon dissociated from the political nor economical context that generates it. Therefore, as a result, art can be also a colonial concept.

We might try to see it from a referential standpoint and understand how it works as a whole: wealth and relative development in certain periods in certain areas nurture artistic ethos and help to develop a framework to sustain them and make them flourish. The political gravitas of such regions, by the means that exist at the time, create circles of influence and bring such elements to those regions that embrace, for whatever reason, what they see; sometimes in an assimilating way and others perhaps too literally on account of the art's influence not aligning with the local needs/concerns/lines of thought.



Liu Yefu's *No Easy Symbolism*, on display for one final week at Magician Space, tackles these specific concerns by forcing the visitor to look beyond local scenarios and to ponder what's going on on a more global scale, merging art and politics, and why not, life as a whole. The works here are on a quest to uncover the intersection between people and nations approach and confront global tensions in the hopes of achieving new ways of thinking, hoping to usurp the dichotomy of East-West and pre-established discourses.

The show's discourse is highly symbolic – or surreal – as the Beijing-born artist Liu Yefu tells us during his recent interview with State of the Arts. We, in turn, cannot help but feel that his toying with surrealism, as a cultural movement, are employed so as to fight back China's current march towards rational thought and materialistic values fueled by a growing middle and upper class.

The exhibition itself consists of a set of still-life sculptures and a relaxed screening room where the artist's video pieces are played uninterrupted. They may sound simple enough, but there's a lot more than meets the eye. So as to further understand Liu's worldview, we spoke to the artist himself.

TBJ: How would you define your art practice?

Liu Yefu: My art practice is an extension of my [put-on-hold] painting practice. It's about history, race, memory; and it's surreal.

What motivated you to choose video as the main medium for your work?

I just can't be satisfied with my poor painting skills.

Do you feel that people are still able to connect to video the same way they used to in the past?

What's behind your decision to arrange a cinema room installation?

I don't care about how they see my video pieces; whether it's via a YouTube video, TV, or formal theater. I just want them to sit down or stand and watch them. It can even just be a place for visitors to rest when they are feeling tired while in 798.

In your installation pieces, there seems to be this idea of a "soiled" art experience. Do you think this notion resonates with Chinese art consumers? Why is it relevant to highlight this issue here and now?

My small still-life sculptures are actually about the failure of the West, or perhaps the failure of 20th century in general in so much as "oil and soil" refers to "iron and blood". The failed dream ("Bubba Goes Home, So Does Forrest"), failed aesthetics (Potato Piece), and even failed democracy ("Damascus 3 days 2 nights only for ¥3,500").

It's not a judgment but more like an indistinct feeling according to my personal experience. Chinese viewers might think "wow, it's a real potato," or the collector will get art-priced dirt. Either is totally fine to me.



"Damascus 3 days 2 nights only for ¥3,500"

Could you elaborate on how you came about with the idea of the "AD" pieces?

The "AD" piece reflects the idea of history having been consumed or modified by a chaotic kid. It's my childhood sketch on history books. For example, a tiger eating a female impressionist while she's painting in Asia ("Proposal I, 2017") can be related to Tora Tora Tora (tiger tiger tiger) – the codename for the Pearl Harbor attack. The Japanese dildo advertisement ("Proposal II, 2017") comes from my version of Saddam Hussein's hanging in which he is erect when he's hanged. The image of the Statue of Liberty holding the torch is turned into a water ad; she is holding a glass bottle of water instead of the torch – beautiful and fragile. The "Eight-Nation Coalition Killing the Boxer Rebel" is just a Lucky Strike ad. It's never easy to turn these images into symbols, but I can't help but ask myself: Does history really exist like this? Or does it have more layers of possibility? Or what does history look like today or in the future?

In the exhibition, there's a subdued yet humorous criticism to certain elements representing the so-called "Western" values/concepts/ways of doing/thinking, and how they can overthrow or eclipse local perspectives. Do you think this represents the central theme of the exhibition as well as representing the current reality in China?

Yes, you could say so, but it's more about a dialogue between two regions with different writing systems – the alphabetic and the pictographic, or a conversation between logic and ambiguity, speculation and perception. Having grown up in a country that uses a pictographic writing system, I wonder if being ambiguous allows one to do something that the 'Western' logic or clarity doesn't. While the order established by the alphabetic West fails once and again (like Western criticism for example), is the ambiguous Far East still running normally? Could this 'natural and turbid integrity' perhaps create more opportunities for the world and provide us with more solutions?

As the exhibition title implies, I'm imagining there is possibly some more subtle, deeper symbolic connection between events like 911, World War II, the Gulf War, the Syrian civil war, Brexit, the German refugee crisis, Trump's government, and a happy-looking group of people playing games. Taking that idea further: violence or gentleness, stress or calmness, sorrow or happiness, Space X or bike-sharing, knowledge or ignorance, civilization or the primitive? If history does indeed repeat itself, is it be possible that the 'post-modern' has come to an end now, earlier than we expected, and we've returned to modernism or the primitive era? Or will it become an infant listening to the noises outside? Now let's forget about the identity as an artist. For ordinary people, what matters much more now is - what is happiness like? What is future like?

A few months ago you were part of a larger group show *The New Normal* at UCCA. Do you feel like a part of a relatively homogeneous group in terms of what motivates your art practice or preoccupations?

I'm not sure, because I'm not sure what the other participating artists stand for. But I'm really interested in some of their work, for example, Yao Qingmei's.

Do you have any short- or long-term collaborations in the works?

I'll go Xinjiang province to travel this September. Let's see what will happen then.

No Easy Symbolism is on show at *Magician Space* until Jun 20 and is the last exhibition that the space will hold prior to undergoing renovations later this month.

Photos courtesy of Sun Shi

对谈| 刘野夫 & 陈旭峰 2016年5月

本篇汇集了北京青年艺术家刘野夫与驻纽约艺术策展人陈旭峰 (Howie Chen) 的对话访谈，讨论的范围涵盖视频与动态图像从业者在艺术领域涉及的一系列相关问题。刘野夫生活工作于北京纽约两地，他的首次个展近期于魔金石空间成功开幕，展期持续至2016年6月26日。陈旭峰作为驻纽约艺术策展人，致力于从事合作型的艺术实践与研究。陈旭峰所策划的展览与公共项目主要有惠特尼美术馆（2001-2007）、MoMA PS1。陈旭峰是“Dispatch”空间的发起人，位于纽约的策展办公室和项目空间自2007年开始策划三十多次国家和国际展览，艺术项目与特邀活动，合作者包括 Vito Acconci, Charles Atlas, Dan Graham, Judith Butler 等等。

陈旭峰：怎么着！野夫。

刘野夫：哈喽！

陈：我第一次见到你的作品是在2014年，当时我在费城策划了一个名为“现在时”的群展。我记得在初选阶段《怎么着！野夫》（2014）和《3013：太空情人》（2013）这两件作品都给我留下了深刻的印象，我们最终将《3013：太空情人》列为展览入选作品。我当时刚刚在麻省理工学院完成了一门名为“电影迁移”的教学课程，课程讨论了全球化移民和电影院在全世界范围内兴起的现象。你的视频作品在第一时间打动我的原因是，它有效地体现了具有现代化气息的迁移现象，同时也体现了你明确的作为一个实践性艺术家的经验，以及对于新的全球“创造力”的经验。

我要以几个相关背景的问题作为采访的开始——这些问题也都是当我第一次接触到你的作品时产生的。能否简单介绍一下你来自中国哪里，来美国之前在哪里学习？

刘：我是北京人，本科是在首都师范大学油画系。

陈：你能谈谈在美国艺术学院的经验 and 印象与在中国的艺术学习不同的地方吗？

刘：在MICA感觉很好，但过了一段时间我发现其实只是另一个教育系统。另外就是MICA会给奖学金嘛，给钱还不好么？中国的艺术教育对我来说是一个很好的基础，对造型的理解和对现实的再现（包括观察方法）。美国的体系更像

一个可视化的哲学系统，像参数化的图像。各有优势，不能一概而论。

陈：能描述一下那段时间你从绘画到视频创作的转变吗？是什么动力让你从绘画转向视频媒介？

刘：最开始是因为学校有比较好的设备可以免费用，就不用再买画材了。之后素材越拍越多。Timothy Druckrey 当时对我影响比较大，他是我的导师，也是一个摄影和媒体艺术的评论人，策展人。

陈：不错。所以说是MICA和你的专业促使你坚持使用视频作为创作媒介的？

刘：恩差不多。当时学校可以满足很多需求，软件硬件之类的。另外就是通过拍摄可以更快地欣赏自己。美国学校资源很多，包括很多DVD和书，有声资料等。有时候来的访问艺术家也不错。另外有一个电影课可以拍16毫米，同时能看到很多老的胶片资料。

陈：可以列举一些在那段时间让你的创作向视频和装置转变的艺术家吗？

刘：Johan Grimonprez, Jan Svankmajer, Vito Acconci, Wassily Kandinsky, Ulf Lanheinrich & Kurt Hentschlagel, Peter Weibel, Herwig Weiser, Philipp Lachenmann, Maya Deren, John Waters, Shion Sono, Daito Manabe, Francis Bacon, Laibach, Nina Hagen, Leigh Bowery等等。开始影响更多的还是一些画家和电影人。

陈：在魔金石空间展出的其中两个作品是你在MICA和巴尔的摩创作的，其对于空间与地理位置的处理很有意思，你将完全不同的空间糅合在一起形成了一个蒙太奇空间。例如，《怎么着！野夫》这个作品在美国和中国之间来回切换，《3013：太空情人》，虚拟的私密空间与真实的公共聚会场面来回切换。在结构上，这种复杂的蒙太奇空间持续贯穿你的作品。是不是在不同地方的生活、学习、创作，这种迁徙背景预示你对空间剪辑采用这样的处理方法？

刘：最开始可能会有影响吧，但后来我发现地理位置的变化好像也不是导致作品中这些关系形成的主要原因。不过总的来说在美国的时候自己和自己待着的时间很长。自己玩首先就要营造很多气氛，模仿和预设很多场景和情绪，然后让自己参与进去。

《怎么着！野夫》里确实设计了一个发生在巴尔的摩的中国的事件。其实美国商场里的东西多数都是中国制造的。尤其是在巴尔的摩这样一个黑人比例很高但消费水平较低的城市，像Save a lot, Galaxy Mall这种地方多数也被山寨商品挤满。所以请一个专门做山寨的“专家”来讲一讲，似乎也是合乎逻辑的。《3013：太空情人》里边实景的拍摄地叫Belvedere Building，是巴尔的摩当地一个不错的酒店，这个楼的顶层早期存放了很多马蒂斯的作品。在这里拍也是想呼应American Psycho里边相对豪华的房间。另外就是我刻意搜索了“豪华游

戏场景”，“豪华房间”等词汇，才发现不同空间下对“豪华房间”的不同预设。成人电影的片段也使用类似的方法。我总想知道拍摄这些镜头的时候是在哪种房间里拍的，因为居住的空间总是像一个容器，我对容器就有各种幻想。

陈：在某种程度上，是不是有些技术和它的逻辑可以让你实现对空间和位置的掌控？特别是通过图像挪用的方法？

刘：开始我没有太多这种意识，更像是对位置和本能反应。进入到一个新的环境通常都会好奇甚至紧张，熟悉以后就觉得安全多了。外在环境无法改变这件事会主动替我分配和思考如何使用它。挪用素材也是因为外在空间无法改变而开始的。

陈：所以你说本能是最初使用视频作为工具时候的理由，那种本能应该怎样描述？你是如何将视频作为一种新的工具去操作的？

刘：这个问题让我想到我对表演和扮演的热情。不表演不释放动作我的身体会觉得不太舒服，好像身体器官需要说话和排泄，表演可以让它们放松，并且掩饰。这种表演是不能公开的，我只喜欢被镜头监视。这种自我欣赏的快感怎么说呢，就像画布反弹给画笔的力量会给画家提供一种愉悦。这时候录像兼具了记录，转播，观看等功能，同时又可以被修改，分享。可能偶尔镜头让它看起来更接近

也可以更假。

陈：有意思。在描述这些影响时，你看到了画笔和相机镜头之间的关系。

刘：恩，原来画画的时候就发现调色的时候很爽。包括画笔对粘稠颜料的侵略和占有，画笔在调色板搅拌就像咀嚼食物的那种快感。画布的反弹力也是类似牙床和食物接触的感觉，所以镜头在这里就像画笔，可以把我弄得很爽。

陈：人们一般会刻意地思考让不同的空间发生关联。通常不会立刻反应，而是刻意的，甚至会抵消掉。你是在数字化感官的基础上去思考你与视频之间的关系吗？

刘：不完全是，虽然没有那么严肃，但在基础层面还是有相似之处。怎么说呢，更像是通过做录像自我满足吧，或许是自恋？因为拍摄和放映的过程可以满足我的监视和被监视的心理同时存在，在执行这个过程的时候还会伴有私心。

陈：我很好奇创造性本能是如何在潜意识中体现的——这当然是许多艺术运动所执着的，比如超现实主义和行动主义。我感兴趣的是在这之下还有什么。通过镜头的直觉，技术调节，还有潜意识。对于我来说这里似乎出现几个显而易见的主题：并置东方或西方，跨文化的影响力（特别是奢侈品所代表的过剩唯物主义和狂欢），还有壮观的全球化野蛮图景。关于这些你能多谈谈吗？

刘：这种“本能”还是在反抗吧。反抗来自于意识上接受了西方推进全球化的进程，但生理上又觉得这种进程使得其他人种从身体结构上对我形成一种压迫，造成弊端，让我处于弱势。总觉得像吃了西方的迷幻剂。

奢侈品这类东西还是挺有意思的，人总要找一点物质归属感，拥有一些实物也是证明自我存在。死人还得找点陪葬品呢。做山寨的人像改进工具一样改进原始产品。对于我来说这是对原始产品的一种本能反应，并不涉及道德。在《3013：太空情人》中，本能也是对原产品（奢侈品，狂欢等）的反映和改造。东方西方对于我来说更像是不同人种在地理上的分布。蒙古人占这片森林，尼格罗人占那片森林，高加索人占另一片森林。所以所谓的东方西方的差异，更像是一片森林里的人对另一片新森林憧憬。狂欢（partying）也许更像祭祀，本能的就会参与。不知道群居物种是不是都会这样。

陈：你在艺术家和山寨厂商之间所用的隐喻方式使我想起深圳制造的全世界都玩儿的悬停板。这种企业着眼于山寨产品时，实际生产出了一些全新的产品并且在西方非常流行。一些新奇的东西甚至从技术和挪用和直接复制的战略中应运而生。

刘：山寨挺像八卦的，八卦来八卦去，最后原始信息的真实性就不重要了。这么说好像艺术家的工作和很多工作都类似。得到了一些启示之后就会想不断地改造和创新，让这个东西因地制宜。做

滑板的也是这样吧。而且山寨包括审美上和功能上的再创造。我自己在录像里边也是一个山寨的身份。当时就是想怎样设计出一个因地制宜的身份给自己，就算不成功，水土不服也是可以的。

陈：假设山寨兰博基尼的人是一位艺术家的角色，要怎样讲他的身份？他/她是否是物质世界和制造业的一面镜子？

刘：不能说等同吧，可能是类似。其实我觉得真正好玩的地方是原产者，山寨厂商，和艺术家这三个关系。一般来说原产品也是有所谓“审美意识”的人参与设计的，之后可能又被没有审美意识的人改造，最后艺术家又发现了两个产品之间的差异。某些程度上说艺术家确实类似一面镜子。

陈：哈哈。我们关于本能和反思的对话，是不是有点像艺术院校的讨论以便让你大量的实践更精确？

刘：哈哈，是的。这就是教育系统对艺术家所做的。有时候偏要你为“本能”找到理由。教育系统培养了所谓的审美意识，但不是每个人都有机会进入教育系统，不过挺好的。

陈：艺术院校会置本能于死地。

刘：哪里有压迫哪里就有反抗么？

陈：说到艺术实践的论述框架，画廊的新闻稿将你的作品置入解剖与检验的结构之中，这一过程在设计上当然需要去除我们刚才所说的本能直觉。我们应该怎么去调和你工作中的这两个部分？

刘：解剖和检验在这里好像是给我的表演和写作归纳找一个更合适的名字。解剖是我对图片和素材的调度和安排，也是想看看图像比喻能够达到什么程度。检验更像是先给自己一个预设（安排角色，位置），然后再通过实践（表演，拍摄，剪辑）来检查这个角色的合理性，检验这种预设是不是能够造成冲突。

陈：也许你剪辑录像的过程中是通过挪用来体现这种“本能”搭建，在技术和图像上的选择过程中出现了一些分析性的东西？

刘：是的。一般是随机拍很多东西，在网上看到喜欢的就会想办法下载或者截屏录像，拿到这个素材。这些地方包括YouTube，FB，Public domain，SoundCloud，Vimeo，甚至是Lynda，Criterion Collection等等，还有朋友硬盘里拷贝的和一些DVD盘里的内容。过几个月之后就会想把这些东西放到一起。最开始都是没有规律地剪辑，或者只能叫排序。直到发现了一个有趣的声音，或者自己想做一个声音的时候，就会再把这些素材根据声音剪辑。可能一个激烈的声音出现的时候就会对应一个“激

陈：我喜欢你作品中这些错乱的视角。你是否注意到你的作品在不同背景下主题和反馈的区别？观众是否会刻意的寻找一些话题？

刘：可能都有无序性。多数观众都会问这些片段是从哪里来的，从这里可以看出观众开始也会混淆素材的真假（实拍/下载）。另外可能会有一个质疑就是我到底想表达哪个具体的“主题”？这个质疑的来源应该就是这些简单拼凑的无序图片，通常这些图片在开始会破坏我的身份和叙述。另外中国的观众会想知道为什么我的叙述用英语。可能我会说英语像一种很好的食材，咀嚼起来很香。即使有很多语法错误，不过英语中的戏剧化和夸张还是会激发我的表演欲，让我想模仿。拿《怎么着！野夫》来说，美国的观众会引用诺曼·克莱因的《从梵蒂冈到维加斯：特殊效果的历史》里所讨论的：除去很多山寨物品，西方也在不断复制自己，好像从巴洛克绘画到拉斯维加斯的建筑这些终极景象。

当然从《小拉尔夫》（2015）和《约克新闻》来说。中国的观众可能会感兴趣我为什么会模仿西方人，西方观众可能会考虑我模仿的是他们之中的哪类人？这类人是不是具有代表性。我猜想中国观众的阅读中会预设我的表演是一种奇怪的行为，西方观众可能会尝试把我的表演对号入座。

陈：当时你在纽约做的几个作品表现了美国的某个城市，那么你如何描述在《约克新闻》和《640 W 139th St.》（2014）中逐渐展开的兴趣点？作为一位生活在纽约的艺术家当时有什么感觉？它是如何影响你的创作的？

刘：我发现纽约是一个“狂欢的”“高潮的”城市，包括不能停止的地铁和不能统一翻修的路面。这就像不睡觉的身体一样对我来说也是毁灭。可能用来描述每个城市的词汇不同吧，纽约显然是高潮。我在纽约住了一段时间后发现，其实安静的在屋里的时候也是在高潮，因为可以听到直升飞机，救火车，救护车的声音，也能闻到两条河和大西洋的躁动。何况视觉上曼哈顿还像一个生殖器。所以这两个作品可以说是在生殖器上完成的，《约克新闻》的场景和911的终极场景相呼应，《640 W 139th St.》的孤独又来自于曾经不远处GG Allin的死。

陈：哦！我大学一年级的時候看过GG Allin的现场，他当时把鼓锤塞进了鼓手的屁眼里。当时去了的人在接下来的一周都受到了极大的创伤。

刘：哈哈，我好想去看看。

陈：“约克新闻”最初是用文本方式来叙述的，之后混合了旁白和错乱的剪辑手法，从而将不同的地理位置和时间放置在一起。在这件作品中，你

疯狂夸张和American Psycho里Bateman的冷静变态都是可以参照的对象。所以首先就预设了一个又脏又臭的流浪者，这个人说出来的脏话通常谁也不会去理会。因为我经常在纽约地铁和这种人擦肩而过，他们还都挺有意思的。我想自己观察他们但同时也不想过于接近。这段叙述其实就是想给骂英语脏话找一个合理的身份。另外我觉得这种没什么用的脏话就是莫扎特k183 G小调在现实世界的反映。

陈：你对待早期的影像作品都有类似的处理方式——将社会与文化空间的二元对立（市区与郊区，中国本地人与华侨，东方与西方，富裕与贫穷，国际与本土）。由于我的家在纽约，虽然你把各种片段混合在一起，但是我还是能辨认出这些地方。

刘：我觉得很有意思的是这些地名翻译成中文都比较滑稽，如同北京的地铁站用中式英语报站。这种翻译就已经戏剧化了这个地方的图像。另外还有像MoMA这样的地方其实北京也有相同的地名。Coney Island这个又是在很多电影里出现的经典场景。另外当一个过气的妓女带有情绪地把这些地名当做约会的地点叙述出来也是很调侃的。拍摄的时候通常都是随时拿出手机拍摄。剪辑的时候是设想这些地名按照直译中文念出来的感觉拼接的。

陈：就《约克新闻》来说，能谈一下你是如何拍摄、搜集与编辑素材的吗？

刘：我到了纽约以后就一直在用手机拍东西，偶尔也用5D和GoPro。这种设备的好处是收集信息快，另外我觉得人眼并不需要过度高清。2014年底左右我就在犹豫是继续在美国还是回国。所以就想先在走之前做些什么。这样就把拍的东西拿出来放到软件里整理。随着整理就发现刚才说到的消极和伤感逐渐清晰了，这时候才去附近拍了绿色头发的镜头，同时才有了这段叙述。其实这个作品的节奏和时长是跟着声音部分进行的。所有叙述结束之后我觉得还不满足，所以画面上才出现了关屏幕的镜头，然后才有了之后电子乐的部分。结尾的泰坦尼克是去北卡旅行的时候拍到的，这个画面还混合了一层在Norfolk港口行驶的军舰，也是在那次旅行中拍到的。你可以看到我们可以为了让一艘船往前行驶而营造出一个假的浪花。人类骗人的技巧真是高超。

陈：你能描述一下你编写旁白的过程吗？在这部叙事影像中有很典型的人声和书面化的语气。

刘：做“约克新闻”，“怎么着！野夫”与“3013：太空情人”时，我向美国的朋友寻求帮助，他们都是普通人。我告诉他们我的构思，希望展现一些比较“过分”的影像。和他们聊天让我放松，感觉亲近了很多。聊一个多小时左右都发现黄色笑话最像共同话题。之后，我将它们放到一个空间记录下来。“约克新闻”的叙述写作和其他的类似，我都是先自己按照英文的情绪去写，写完之后其实要

出现3-4次修正。前两次是语法，后两次是情绪和准确性的修正。参与这个过程的有中国和美国的朋友。到了最后一次修正的时候，我会再按照自己理解的情绪删改一次。“约克新闻”里边的独白开始是给一个黑人流浪者设计的，可是后来觉得表演不够有趣，就先从角色上变成了女性。我记得录音的时候我给那个朋友听了Nina Hagen的“New York, New York”。希望是类似里边那种夸张奔放。后来我发现这些叙述和声音的选择很多还是来自于我的参考材料，这些材料很多也来自于70，80年代。

陈：《640 W 139th St.》是你作为艺术家在纽约独自生活工作的写照吗？Red Stripe啤酒，听Laibach，玩手机，维基百科上的Bukowski，吃薯片，穿女学生制服等？

刘：这里有一点需要澄清，这个录像里拍摄的是我的一个朋友。《640 W 139th St.》里边基本上就是我朋友一部分生活的记录，也和我在纽约的生活类似。她是SVA的学生。平常回家以后她喜欢把屋子弄的很暗，只留两盏彩灯。她有时候给我讲Bukowski，然后我给她听Laibach。后来聊得多了我总觉得这些人之间有点联系，比如Laibach，齐泽克，Bukowski，法斯宾德等等。这里也需要说清楚。法斯宾德的个人习惯和Zizek讲话时候的口水，甚至Bukowski边读诗边喝酒，都是我认为他们之间有共同点的地方。他们的这种陶醉或者说能量是我把他们联系起来的一个重要因素。要说明一下我所谓的内在联系和法

斯宾德的电影，Zizek的书和Bukowski的诗都没有直接关系。我认为这些人的种种行为，表情，语速，肢体语言等等，才是我观察的兴奋点所在。

陈：这个作品比较有意思，它与你的其他作品相比更像电影并且更具氛围。它关注的不仅仅是图像的组织技巧（即影像制作的过程），也有艺术家的真实生活状态与精神空间。你能谈一谈你当时的想法吗？

刘：这个录像更像是一个记录。其实只有换衣服和穿鞋的那个场景是经过设计的。拍这个东西是因为这个女生住的房间非常小，并且她回家以后只打开那个蓝色灯和粉色灯。她是一个很二次元的人，你知道就是那种朋友圈都很有设计感的。小熊糖，Red stripe啤酒和薯片是她的朋友。我觉得这个录像虽然都是实际拍摄的，可是也像是一个二次元（宅女）的映射。

陈：有一种奇怪的联系让我感觉，在《640 W 139th St.》中的女孩事实上就是你扮演的，因为她的这种记录也反应了你的生活。在“约克新闻”中，你在公园换上女装。你能说一说你是如何运用异装癖与性别的矛盾，并让它们为你作品所用的吗？

刘：我自己扮演的性别转换也是由于对异性行为特征的憧憬。因为我总觉得直男是有限制的，不全面的，近乎苛刻的，在意识上又经常希望支配他人。这种控制欲占有欲是性别的差异，同时也是缺陷。所以我希望更多的去体会异性

《约克新闻》里的“绿狗”是我预设了一个过气的流浪妓女。刚刚说到本来想演一个强壮的黑人男性，可是感觉体型和口音上都差不多，另外这个妓女的身份可以让我把叙述写的更极端和肮脏。其实我在巴尔的摩和纽约都见到不少这类人，有的是毒瘾者有的是站街女，总之她们的外形和语言都很有说服力。她虽然在骂你、羞辱你，可你却并不在乎。类似的镜头也在很多“美剧”中出现过（类似绝命毒师里小粉找的妓女）。其实世界各地的人对这种性别形象并不陌生（可能是美国图像输出能力太强了）。这个角色的出现实际上还是想反映一种“无用（useless）”。这种“无用”建立在自己的优越感上。在纽约对这种“优越感”体会得尤为突出。

陈：这让我想谈谈《琳达》（2016）这个作品，为什么以“琳达”作为题目？

刘：琳达这个名字出自法斯宾德的电影“当心圣妓”。故事是一个剧组虚度时间在永无止境的等着一个导演出现。这和我当时在制作和剪辑的状态差不多，感觉挺浪费时间的，但好像又必须做下去。最后琳达这句话其实就是电影里边的一句带有抱怨情绪的台词，在喊一个演员。

陈：构成这个作品的一个元素是对于“技术图像”的分析。一个图像如何被构建，以及它的社会历史。这与其他图像技术（平面电视、电脑、编辑器）呈现的影像同理。你在《琳达》

中通过西方美术史的镜头表达这些东西。你是在回到中国以后创作这件作品的吗？

刘：《琳达》的这种检验来自于Jerry Saltz在美术馆里的分析。实际上在画作，Jerry，观众和我之间，已经形成了四层图像。可能观众会看到这些画作，但同时又听到Jerry的分析，听过之后又重新审视了画作的内容。我之前画画的经验是对这些画作的简单模仿，这种模仿被教育成了某种膜拜，后来进入美术馆看到了原作，听到了Jerry的声音，实际已经颠覆了以前搭建的图像结构。同时蔓延到其他领域，对历史图片的认知和某些著名景点的憧憬，也完全都不符合逻辑关系。

陈：Jerry Saltz用了一种有趣的讲解，将艺术家和艺术运动构建成一场战斗。他建立了一种结构来审视东方与西方之不同体系的紧张局面。

刘：是的。特别是当他对比马蒂斯和毕加索的时候。

陈：你前段时间给了我一篇E-Flux上卢迎华的文章《从参与的焦虑到去国际化进程》，谈到了与西方有关的中国当代艺术创作的问题。你怎么看待这篇文章？

刘：这篇文章是中国当代艺术进程的研究。那会儿我也在考虑关于魔金石这个展览的主题和文字。

个词。最开始想把展览的题目叫做“助手”，就像我（作为中国艺术家）帮助西方填充艺术史。而“参与”是一种很有意思的现象。我一直怀疑怎样去保持“参与”一件事的激情。奥运会，威尼斯双年展，参与组织乐队，参与援助，参加战争，参加Party等等。尝试去弄清楚“参与”的激情可能也是我希望更明白自己为什么这样工作的原因。

我觉得有时候我是以“助手”的身份在做艺术家，在参与制作成品的过程。其实我觉得马云这个角色不错，比艺术家更像战士。

陈：哈哈，聚会狂欢是你影像作品持续的主题吗？而且在最过分的情况下，聚会的场景中还有色情画面。

刘：是的。

陈：狂欢是如何传达你的想法的？是否是一种对文化或者唯物主义的褻渎？或者是一种庆祝的方式？

刘：之前提到了，狂欢就像是毁灭。狂欢是一个戏剧化的祭祀场景。狂欢是一种极限的仪式。夜店，泰坦尼克，艺博会，墓地，中国家乐福减价的商品，沃尔玛超市打折的时候，公司的年会，颁奖典礼等等对于我来说都像狂欢。

陈：所以狂欢更像是一个空间——在这里，罪犯与英雄纠缠在一起，道德与伦理充满矛盾，这里囊括了东方/西

方的空间。这有一种“渗透”的意味——就像色情的派对场景。

刘：非常正确。我觉得狂欢从来都与道德无关。困惑的浪漫中的自杀也像救赎。夜店狂欢的极致和自杀前的兴奋感可能也有类似之处。自杀和在夜店中性交，9/11的画面，都是狂欢的终极场景。

陈：E-Flux的文章还讨论了艺术创作中一种独立形式的出现——这种独立对于西方艺术历史、研讨和市场有更少的依赖与回应。你觉得这是真的吗？如果是的，它如何在你身上体现——作为一个接受了美国教育的中国艺术家？这会是一种新的自由吗？

刘：各占百分之五十吧我觉得，这很难说。可能从时髦的角度来说确实是从西方艺术史中独立出来了，不过从书写历史的权威来说仍然还在西方。在哪里发生艺术并不意味着那里就有书写历史的能力。因为一旦参与一个事件，就会对这个事件有不同程度的责任感，但是目前不一定有能力付得起这个责任。我觉得这正是矛盾所在，也是最有意思的地方。这种有趣甚至涉及到了刚刚说到的一些问题，比如我生活的城市的变化，参考资料的变化，叙述语言的变化，观众的变化等。虽然“全球化”已经不是什么新课题，“抵抗西方全球化”也不用刻意探讨，但是让活动范围保持流动性，摆脱盘踞一处的工作方式，可能对于我今后的工作更有效。

陈：你怎么看这种独立之下艺术家的话语权与艺术的可能性？在你的创作中有你见到或者感受过的实例吗？

刘：我没有觉得在中国工作有任何差别。其实这里可利用的资源应该说更多一些。虽然这里封锁部分网络，但是应该会有更有意思的东西出现。另一方面说，真正在中国从事“当代艺术”工作的仍然还是一小部分人，这一小部分人的热忱直接影响了“当代艺术”在中国的走向。正是由于这种片面才让这里的工作变得更有趣，我需要去和不同的思考方式去协调，和其他行业接触。其实在中国工作应该说更知道自己在做什么。

陈：对于魔金石的展览“第一集”，在选择作品背后的概念是什么？是如何确定布展方案的？

刘：首先是因为这五个作品是不同时间不同地点完成的，有一定跨度。另外这几个作品基本都是真实拍摄和找到的材料拼贴出来的。所以《640W 139th St.》在布展上才选择了和《3013：太空情人》放在一起，它是完全实拍的，但是角色在身份上又有虚拟的经验，所以和《3013：太空情人》会有一种联系。她们可以是Sasha Grey所代表的任何一个人。另外《怎么着！野夫》和《约克新闻》屏幕比较小，图像又比较混乱，所以我们不希望字幕打扰观看，这样才把字幕打印成文本放在一旁，也希望提供另一种阅读方式。《琳达》这个作品是最新的，虽然也有调侃的成分存

在，但没有一个具体的可以参考的角色出现，所以就分开放在一个空间里。这几个作品也模仿了长焦和微距的观看方式。

陈：好的，还有什么要说的吗？

刘：差不多就这样吧。

Conversation | Liu Yefu & Howie Chen
2016.05

The conversation brings together young Beijing artist Liu Yefu and New York based curator Howie Chen. The discussion covers a field of questions faced by video and moving-image practitioners from both art worlds. Liu Yefu works between New York and Beijing, his debut solo exhibition currently at Magician Space and opens until 26th July. Howie Chen is a New York-based curator engaged in collaborative art production and research. Chen's curatorial and institutional work includes the Whitney Museum of American Art (2001-2007) and MoMA PS1. He is a founder of Dispatch, a NYC curatorial production office and project space that has presented over thirty national and international exhibitions, projects and special events since 2007. Collaborators include Vito Acconci, Charles Atlas, Dan Graham, and Judith Butler.

Howie Chen: What up! Yefu.

Yefu Liu: Yo yo yo yo yo, what up! What up!

HC: My first introduction to your video work was in 2014 when I was curating a juried exhibition titled Present Tense in Philadelphia. I remember previewing What up! Yefu (2014) and 3013: A Space Lover (2013) and both works left a lasting impression on me — we eventually included the latter piece in the exhibition. I had just finished teaching a class at M.I.T. called Cinematic Migrations in which we discussed the global migrations and emergence of cinemas around the world. What immediately struck me about your video work was that it effectively embodied a very contemporary migration, also one that is specific to your experience as a practicing artist and a new global “creative”.

I want to start off the interview with a few contextual questions — these are also questions I had when I first encountered your work. Can you briefly talk about where in China do you come from and where you studied art before you came to the U.S.?

YL: I'm from Beijing. Before, I was in in Capital Normal University as a painting major. The reason I came to the U.S. was because my family friends were living in Baltimore and told me the city was cool. Also at the same time, Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) had just sent me an acceptance offer too. Also the other thing was that I received a scholarship from MICA. They gave me money, which I thought was pretty ok too.

HC: What was your experience and impressions of American art school in comparison to your art training in China?

YL: It felt great at MICA. But after a while, I found out it was also just another system of education. For me, the education in China was a good foundation for me in terms of the understanding and transformation of images in reality — and also ways of observing it. The system in the U.S. is like the visualization of a philosophical system, it's about ways to frame an image. There are pros and cons for both sides and it's a little difficult to generalise too much from that.

HC: Could you describe your transition from painting to video making during this time? What was it about the video medium that pulled you away from painting?

YL: It began at “MICA Grad Lab”, where there was a lot of equipment you could check out and use for free — so it meant I didn't have to go out and buy painting materials again, and I ended up shooting things more and more. Professor Timothy Druckrey was a very important influence to me. He was my MFA director, and a curator and writer in photography and media art. He used to say, “NO EASY SYMBOLISM”.

HC: Nice mantra. So it was your encounter with the media arts department at MICA that convinced you of the video medium?

YL: Yup I think so. The school gave me what I needed at that particular time. There were plenty of DVDs, lots of software, audio material or books to check out. With all of this, I found that I sort of liked observing myself through video footage. The program also brought over some special visiting artists too, which was cool. The undergraduate filmmaking class was good. It provided me with every step of 16mm film production and there was plenty of old film material lying around.

HC: Could you name a few artists that influenced you at the time of this transition to video and installation?

YL: Johan Grimonprez, Jan Svankmajer, Vito Acconci, Wassily Kandinsky, Ulf Langheinrich & Kurt Hentschlager, Peter Weibel, Herwig Weiser, Maya Deren, John Waters, Shion Sono, Daito Manabe, Francis Bacon, Laibach, Nina Hagen, Leigh Bowery among others. At that point, painters and filmmakers were the major influences.

HC: The two early works included in the Magician Space exhibition were made during your time at MICA and Baltimore. There is an interesting treatment of space and geographical location in both videos — a conflation of disparate spaces into one montage space. For example, in What up! Yefu it toggles between U.S. and China and in 3013: A Space Love virtual domestic space is intercut with actual public party scenes. Structurally, this conflated montage space continues throughout your work. Did your migratory background of living, studying, and making art in different countries and cities inform this treatment of space?

YL: At the very beginning there were these influences for sure. But later I found changes of geographical places wasn't the main cause guiding how these different relationships form. Pretty much during my time in the U.S., I was mostly by myself. When you pass time alone you have to build up different ambiances for yourself. So the work What Up was originally based on things in China that I discovered in Baltimore. The U.S. market still

has plenty of things made from China, particularly in Baltimore, a city where there is a high proportion of black people, but also a low level of consumers. Places like 'Save-a-Lot' or Galaxy Mall are everywhere and jammed with commodities all with a shanzhai aesthetic. So that's why I invited an expert on shanzhai to do a little talk about this — as if it is all entirely logical.

The setting where shooting takes place for 3013 is a place called Belvedere Building. It's a pretty good hotel in Baltimore and in the early days they had works by Matisse stored in the top floor. I did the shooting there because it resonates with the luxurious room in the movie American Psycho. Another side was that I spent a lot of time meticulously going through different computer games with luxurious settings and rooms. Through this, I discovered how 'luxury rooms' have been projected in these different spaces. Adult movie scenes are another similar source of inspiration. I always try to find out what kind of room is used to shoot this kind of scene — the residential spaces for me are like different vessels and it's the vessel that give me all kinds of fantasies.

HC: In some way, does technology and its logic enable this type of spatial and material treatment, especially appropriation?

YL: At the beginning I didn't analyse things consciously too much in this way. It is closer to an instinctual reaction in relation to position and space. When you enter into a new environment, you feel curious even when there's not much there. Afterwards, you start

would you describe what those instincts were? How did you want to use video as a new tool?

YL: This question makes me think about the love I have for performing and acting. If I can't perform or release my body then I feel uncomfortable. It's a bit like the brain and the heart need to speak out and have some kind of release. Performing helps with this release — it allows you to loosen up and conceal at the same time. For sure this type of performance isn't the kind that likes to directly face an audience. I like the idea that it's only the lens watching things and afterwards you can just marvel at it by yourself. This thrill from self-enjoyment, it's similar to the force you feel when a brush bounces as it hits the canvas — this is what painters get a kick from. Similarly, video combines with functions of recording, broadcasting, and viewing, then at the same time, you're allowed to modify things and share that around. Probably it's like the lens inadvertently making things feel closer to reality or sometimes making it seem more fictional.

HC: Interesting, in describing your influences, you then see a relationship between the paintbrush and the camera lens.

YL: Before when I was painting, I discovered that pleasure of mixing colors. It's also about the brush as it coerces the viscosity of the pigment. The way the brush stirs around the palette is the same joy you get chewing food. The bounce off the canvas is close to that

pleasure when chewing your gum. The lens is like a brush; it gives me that similar pleasure.

HC: People usually associate technical mediation in a different space — that is not immediate but rather mediated and even detached. Are you thinking in terms of a digital sensoriality with your relationship to video?

YL: Maybe not completely like that. It is not at all serious, but there is that logic running on a fundamental level similar to what you are saying. How to say, it is more like going through the production of video in order to satisfy myself. Maybe you could say it is a form of narcissism? Because the process of shooting or screening can satisfy my mind and then allows me to have both states of observing and being observed to co-exist together. There is a sense of self-interest involved while I'm carrying out this process.

HC: I'm curious about how creative instinct can manifest the subconscious — this of course was a preoccupation of many art movements such as Surrealism or Actionism. I am interested in what is underneath. Looking at your earlier videos in the exhibition through the lens of instinct, technological mediation, and the subconscious, there are a few themes that seem to emerge for me that is evident: juxtaposition East/West, cross cultural influence (particularly materialism represented in luxury excesses and partying) and also the globalization of brutal spectacle. Can you talk more about this?

YL: This kind of 'instinct' is like a resistance.

belonging. Possessing this object allows you to validate your existence. Dead people also have to find funeral objects to accompany them too. People that do shanzhai are the same as someone who helps improve a particular tool by refining it — they're doing the same thing by refining the original product. It's also an instinctual reaction to this original product, which has nothing to do with having a moral decision behind it. Also in 3013, there's an instinctual reaction and transformation happening to the original product shown via luxury items, parties, etc. The East and West for me is more like the geographic dispersion of different kinds of people. The Mongolians take up a part of the forest, the Nigerians take up a different part of the forest, and the Caucasians take another part of the forest. So really this so-called difference between East-West is really more like how someone from one part of the forests sees a new side to the forest. Partying is more like a ritual — we instinctively need to take part in them. Maybe all species with a collective trait are like this — I'm not sure.

HC: The way you make a metaphor between artist and shanzhai makers reminds me of the ubiquitous hover boards that were invented in Shenzhen. The industry there, which had been geared towards making shanzhai products, actually produced something new and popular in the West. Something novel emerged from these technologies and strategies of appropriation and straight copying.

YL: Shanzhai is also like gossip too. The gossip comes and goes around. Afterwards,

the validity of the original information is not so important. You could say that it is the same with the work of an artist or any other worker too. Once you reach a particular discovery, afterwards your thoughts switch to continually changing or innovating — you shift this thing so it works for local situations. The hoverboards were like that too. Also shanzhai is a method of re-creation, happening on the levels of aesthetics and functionality. The identity I have within my works is also something like shanzhai. At the time, I was thinking how to construct an identity, one I could give to myself to work in a local situation. In that sense it was a failure, but then again the idea of not being able to acclimatize is kind of ok too.

HC: If the artist is perhaps equivalent to the country person making a Lamborghini — what does that say of the artist? Is he/she a mirror of the material world and production?

YL: I wouldn't say they're entirely equivalent, but maybe similar. Actually the place I think is most fun is the connection between original creator, the people making shanzhai, and the artist. Normally we say that the originator of an object is someone aesthetically conscious of constructing something right? Afterwards, you get people aesthetically and consciously unaware who then decide to re-create this thing. Then after that, the artist discovers them, which again makes the aesthetic differences between these objects come out more. At each level you can say that the artist is kind of one side to a mirror yes.

HC: LOL — with all this talk about instinct and

aesthetic consciousness, but it's not like everyone has the opportunity to enter into this system — but that's also a good thing that happens too. There are some shanzhai products that have very little connection to aesthetic consciousness. They're merely functions embedded into a reconstruction — it is just like how I said before, it is a way to adapt to local requirements.

HC: Art school is where instincts go to die.

YL: Haha, whenever there's oppression there's resistance right?

HC: Speaking of the discursive framing of artistic practice. The gallery press release frames your work as being about analytical dissection and examination. This process of course requires a design that is once removed from direct instinct we were just discussing. How can we reconcile these two narratives about your work?

YL: Dissection and examination are words I feel are adequate to summarize and describe my performance and writing. Dissection describes how I dispatch and give order to the images and material. It's also seeing how deep I can reach into things metaphorically. Examination is more like how I give myself a preposition for things (like organizing a role or position). Afterwards, through practice (performance, shooting, editing), I explore the rationality of a character — and then I examine whether this proposition can give rise to enough conflict or not.

HC: Perhaps in the instinctual construction of montage in your video work through appropriation, there emerges something analytical about technology and the images you choose?

YL: Normally I shoot a lot of material intuitively. I see things on the Internet and think of ways to download or capture video online to get hold of material. These places include YouTube, Facebook, public domain, SoundCloud, Vimeo, and also even Lynda, Criterion Collection, etc. Sometimes it could be copied from a friend's hard drive or from a few DVDs. In short, they are all things stored inside some equipment. A few months might pass and I'll think again about putting them together. In the beginning, there are few rules about editing or you could say it's a way to order a sequence. It might be directed by discovering a particular sound or narrative. Or maybe I want to make the sound myself and then put material back into an edit again that fits the sound. For example, an 'intense' sound appears so I will correspond that with an 'intense' image. Another situation might be that an absurd word from a narrative appears and there will be a reaction in the image. Because of this, it might appear that there is no logical connection there.

HC: I like these differing views of your work as something like a productive confusion. Have you noticed different interpretations of your work in China vs. U.S.? What about specific themes and interpretations that seem specific to Chinese and U.S. contexts? Does it reveal what people want to "read" into your work?

Maybe a Chinese audience might ask why my work uses English in the narrative too. Like earlier how I mentioned before, normally I tell them English is like good food — chew it and the flavor comes out more, even with bad grammar. Also there's a side to English that's so theatrical and exaggerated. It really satisfies my urge to perform and mimic. In *What Up*, some people in the West commented that it wasn't just me replicating settings or products. There is also a continual replication of the West in itself — just like the process from Baroque painting to architecture in Las Vegas. Ralph Rockefeller Jr. (2015) and *York News* (2014) also touch on this. The Chinese audience are more interested in why I want to imitate Western people or how I'm able to remember their characteristics or body language. A Western audience might think more about what kind of person I am imitating from here. Maybe like this or that type of person, or maybe an image of Western trash. I guess an audience in China might read the work and see my performance as kind of eccentric; a Western audience might situate it as condemnation pointed to something.

HC: Regarding the group of videos made while you were in New York, which represents a body of work in another city in the U.S., how would you describe the developments and interests reflected in *York News* and *640 W 139th St.* (2014). What was your experience living as an artist in NYC and how did that affect your work?

YL: For me I see New York as a city like a climax to a party. It includes the unstoppable

subway or renovated sidewalks that will never unify together. It's a body that never sleeps, which for me shows its destructive side too. You can probably use different words to describe different kinds of cities — and for New York it's clearly the word "climax". After living there a while, I found even the peacefulness of your own room is still a climax, because all around you hear helicopters, fire engines, or noises of ambulances — you can also perceive commotion from the two rivers and the Atlantic Ocean. Even the form of Manhattan Island looks like a genital — so you could say these two works finish off that image. The scenario of *York News* shares registers with what culminated in 9/11. Elsewhere, the loneliness from *640w* comes from a place not far away from and what reminds me of GG Allin's death.

HC: Oh man, GG Allin performed at my college my freshman year — he stuck a drumstick in his drummer's ass during the performance. Everyone who saw the show was traumatized for a week.

YL: Wow...haha. I would have liked to see him live.

HC: *York News* is narrated with an original text that overlays a voice over a montage that brings together different geographical locations and times. It seems like in this body of work you as an artist, body, and voice is more present than the earlier work. It is not as obscured by appropriated images, mediated image/sound, etc. Could you talk more about the narrative?

subway and they are actually very interesting. I like observing them myself, but at the same time avoid encroaching them. This narrative was about trying to give a rational identity to swearing and the obscenities of the English language. Another way of seeing, is that I see swearing uselessly as a reflection of reality into the world just on the same level of something like Mozart's *k183 G minor*.

HC: Also, characteristic of your earlier videos, there is a similar treatment of different social and cultural spaces brought together, which often are seen as binaries (Uptown/Downtown, Native/Diasporic Chinese, East/West, rich/poor, international/local). Because New York is my home city, I was able to read these difference spaces as you edited the footage together.

YL: Around 2014, I started to hesitate between staying in the U.S. or going back. So my intention was to do something before leaving.

I think it's interesting that if you translate names of places here into Chinese. It gets really amusing like the Chinglish spoken over the announcements in the Beijing subway. The translation already makes the images of these places theatrical. Like with MoMA, Beijing has a place with the same name too. Then for example, a prostitute also brings a certain mood and can transform the name of a place into a site for hooking up — there's something ludicrous in that. Only when I start editing, it makes me think of the disjointed feeling you get reading a place name when it's translated literally into Chinese.

HC: For *York News*, can you talk about how you shot, collected, and edited this material?

YL: After I came to New York, I shot things all the time using my mobile, occasionally I might use 5D or Gopro. The good thing about this equipment is that you can collect a lot of information quickly. The other thing is I believe people's eyes really don't require things in high-definition.

I was organizing things intuitively, which helped me discover the issues I've mentioned to become clearer. At the time, I went nearby to shoot with a lens using some green hair and there was also this narrative segment. Actually with this work, the rhythm and duration were laid together by following the sound. When the narrative was completed, I was still unsatisfied. So there was a moment in the scene when the screen turns off and some electronic music comes in. The ending with *Titanic* was shot while travelling around North Carolina. This scene blends a layer showing a warship in Norfolk Harbour, which was also taken on my travels. In order to make the ship seem like it's going forward, you can see artificial splashes of water created. There are really a lot of skillful techniques out there to trick people.

HC: Can you also describe your writing process for the narrator? There is such a particular voice and textual tone to these narrated videos.

YL: With *York News*, *What Up*, and *3013*, I asked my American friends who are just

The narrative composition of York News is similar to other works. I follow a mood in English in order to write something. Afterwards, what I write goes back through a process of about three to four revisions. The first two rounds of editing focus on grammar. Then the last stages refine the mood and accuracy. I ask both Chinese and American friends to help at this point in the process. When it gets to the final stages, I normally follow my understanding of the mood, taking things out and making revisions.

The monologue for York News was originally intended for a black homeless person. But I quickly realised that the performance wasn't too interesting — it was from that character that it turned into a female character. I remember when we began recording sound, I had my friend listen to a song by Nina Hagen: New York, New York. I was hoping to get a similar level of something exaggerated and unrestrained. Afterwards, I found that a lot of the choices made for narrative and sound actually came the reference material that I had used — a lot actually coming from the 70s and 80s.

HC: Is 640 W 139th St.(2014) a portrait of your solitary experience working as an artist in NYC? Drinking red stripe – listening to Laibach – typing – Wikipediaing Bukowski – eating chips – wearing schoolgirl outfits?

YL: Ah yes. I need to make clear that the person shot in the video is also a friend of mine. This is what I did every day, as well as the girl — she was a student in SVA. She really enjoyed living in darkness at home. She

told me about Bukowski and I introduced her to Laibach. I always feel there is some kind of inner connection amongst people like Laibach, Zizek, Bukowski and Fassbinder, etc. I also want to take about that more clearly — the everyday habits of Fassbinder; Zizek's saliva when it flies every time he speaks; or Bukowski drinking as he reads aloud — they all point to a common ground they all share. Its an infatuation towards something or a capacity they each have — I'm trying to link together the common denominator that connects them. My individual internal way of bridging these things needs to be disentangled from the unrelated relationships connected to their films, books, or poems by these people. The side I'm more interested in is more located in the behavior of these people: the expressions, the speed of their speech, or their body gestures.

HC: This video is interesting — it is much more cinematic and atmospheric compared to your other ones. Also, there is a focus on not only the technical construction of an image (i.e. the process of making video), but also the real life conditions and psychic space of artists.

YL: This video is more like a record. Actually, only scenes with the change of clothes and shoes are constructed. I shot this thing because the place where the girl lived was very small. She would often go home and only switch on that blue and pink light. She's really a 'Er-Ci-Yuan' person (a 2D person: someone obsessed with manga and gaming). Do you know that this kind of friend circle has a real constructed feeling about it? Eating gummy

HC: For me there is an uncanny connection, as it is unclear if the woman in 139th Street is actually you dressed as a woman — and because it's biographical it is essentially you. And for York News, there is you in drag in the park. Can you talk about how drag and gender ambivalence figures into your work?

YL: With York News, the reason for performing transgender is because I'm attracted to alternative views of heterosexuality. I've always viewed being straight as restrictive and not as comprehensive — and almost too harsh. There is frequently this consciousness to dominate someone. This desire to control other desires is the difference dividing sexes and at the same time it's a defect. So that's why I'm interested in experiencing different modes of thinking and acting between hetero and gay — this gives me a lot of help. 139th is like a documentary designed for that girl. She had just broken up with someone at the time and we were talking about Fassbinder's Love is Colder than Death. The gender could be changed either way in my works. I sometimes don't like straight men because of the domination. Homosexual and transgender can be more sensitive to me. I feel gender can be more intellectual by touching both sides.

The 'green dog' in York News was a scenario I came up with by imagining a has-been prostitute who was also homeless. The reason was that this identity as a prostitute allowed me to write a narrative that could be extreme and dirty. I encountered a lot of these people in Baltimore and New York.

Some were drug addicts; some were women standing on the streets — their figures and language so full of conviction. Similarly, there are countless scenes in American TV where things like this appear (including the prostitute that the character Pinkman finds in Breaking Bad). Actually all over the world, this kind of gender figure is really not strange anymore (maybe the outreach of U.S. images is really that powerful). So when a character like this appears, there is still a reaction that they are 'useless'. This idea of ordering use is a way of showing our own superiority — because for all the people that walk past these people, inside they probably have this feeling. I felt that strongly when in New York.

HC: This leads me to Linda (2016). Why Linda as title of the video?

YL: Linda comes from a moment in the Fassbinder film Beware of a Holy Whore. In the film, there is a film crew who are endlessly waiting for the director. It's a similar feeling when I was editing Linda. I felt maybe I was wasting my time, but also seemed like I had to do this. Actually, Linda is taken from a line with an air of frustration, which happens in the film — when they yell out for an actor.

HC: One element in this video is examining the "technical image" — how an image is constructed and its social history. This is similar to other videos where you look at technologies of image (flat screen, computer, editing). You talk about this in Linda through the lens of Western art history. Did you make this piece after your return to China?

analysis Jerry Saltz does in an art museum. In fact there's already four layers formed between the painting, Jerry, the audience and me. So maybe the audience will see these paintings, but at the same time will start hearing Jerry's breakdown. Then after hearing this, they then can re-examine the content of the original paintings. When I used to paint, I would mimic these particular kinds of painting. This way of mimicking became a form of worship and it was further ingrained into me through education. After Art College, seeing the originals, and by the time I heard Jerry's voice, I had already begun to overturn the framework of viewing these images with — I had already extended out to other fields. At the same time, I was operating on a different logic and gained a set of relationships different from simply acknowledging these historical images or striving to reach the level of these famous masters.

HC: Saltz presents a laughable narrative of modern art that frames artist and movements as battles. This sets up a structure to view the tension between different frameworks for art.

YL: Yes, especially when he talks about Matisse and Picasso

HC: You sent me an E-Flux article earlier, "From the Anxiety of Participation to the Process of De-Internationalization" by Carol Yinghua Lu that spoke to this issue — about Chinese art production in relation to the West. What about the article resonated with you?

YL: The article is a research in the processing of Chinese contemporary art and I was thinking about this text when conceiving this exhibition at Magician Space.

The most important word for me is "participant". So actually originally, I wanted to choose the title "Assistant" to use for the show — similar to the situation of me as a Chinese artist 'assisting' the West in order to fill out their version of art history. This concept of participation is a very interesting idea of reality. I'm always suspicious of this passion to participate too. You can participate in the Olympics, participate in Venice Biennale, participate in a band, participate and give aid, participate in a war, or take part in a party. I'm attempting to respond to this invitation to clarify clearly what it means to 'participate' and also to understand myself more about the causes of why I want to work in this way. We want to play with the West, even if it means being an assistant. We donate value to the West for free. I know it's not free, but seems like we're partying at the same time. So that is why I think Ma Yun is the real soldier. Not any artist. Haha. But Jack Ma.

HC: Haha — that is why partying is such a continuing theme in your videos right? And in the most extreme, the genre of porn that takes place at parties.

YL: Ah yes.

HC: Is partying for you about a type of profanity related to culture or materialism? Or some kind of celebration?

HC: So partying represents more a space where there is a flattening in which "villains" and "heroes" are entangled — where morality and ethics are full of contradictions — which also includes the space of East/West? They are in a sense "interpenetrated" — like the porn party scenes?

YL: Um yes. Totally. I think the party will never be related to a morality from any side. There's a neutral intersection between suicide and nightclub, the scene of 9/11. These are scenes culminated after a party.

HC: The e-flux article discusses the emergence of a type of independence in art making that feels less dependent/responsive to Western art history, discourse, and markets. Do you think this is true? If so, what does this represent to you as a working artist — one that is Chinese with American art training. Is there a new freedom?

YL: 50/50, I think. it's hard to say. Perhaps a fashionable stance would be that you can be independent from Western art history — despite this, you can say that the canonisation of art history is still written by the West. Just because you can produce art in a place doesn't mean it also has the capacity to write its own history.

In the event of participating in something, there will be different degrees of responsibility tied the situation — but it's not certain whether you can meet those obligations. I think this is where the contradiction lies and also is the place that is most interesting. It reaches an interesting

area such as the changes of a city I live in, changes in reference material, changes in the language of narration, or changes to the audience, etc. Even if 'globalization' is neither a new topic nor does a 'resistance to Western globalization need to be done so overtly done. But to preserve the fluidity of life and break from the encroachment into ways of working — maybe these things will help my work be more effective from now on.

HC: What do you see as the discursive and artistic possibilities in this independence?

YL: Firstly, from my perspective I think there is no real difference working in China. Maybe more can be said about more resources here that can be exploited, but a flipside is also less accessible information to get. So it's actually an interesting contradiction. Another side is still only a small minority of people really engage 'contemporary art'. The subjective interest of this small group directly influences the direction contemporary art takes in China. It is precisely because of this one-sidedness that making work here is interesting. I want to resonate with different modes of thinking. Actually I'm even clearer about what I want to do for myself when I'm in China. Secondly, I think perhaps that making work in China actually makes me pay more attention towards things happening outside too.

HC: For the exhibition Episode 1 at Magician space, what is the concept behind the selection of works? How did you decide on the installation?

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to 3013. She is like the anybody that Sasha Grey represents. Also with What Up and York News the screens a relatively small, the images are also chaotic so we were also thinking about ways of display that would not interfere the text with the image. In the end we decided to place the translation as a printed text close to the work — it also added another layer of reading the work. Linda is the newest work, there's also a kind of ridiculousness that exists within the composition, but it also lacks a concrete character that you can reference too — so this work was enclosed in a separate room. These different works also mimic long— distance or close-up ways of viewing an image.

HC: What next?

YL: The End.

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北京市朝阳区酒仙桥路2号798艺术区798东街 / 798 East Road, 798 Art Zone, 2 Jiuxianqiao Road,
Chaoyang District, Beijing, China
+86 10 5978 9635 / info@magician-space.com / magician.space