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燃点3

Random

2016年春季刊; 纵·横 / Spring 2016; Landscape-Portrait · HKD 80; EUR 8; USD 10



廖斐，《移动2号》，两个铁皮水桶，两支纯净水抽水泵，水，2013（图片由艺术家和偏锋新艺术空间提供）/
Liao Fei, "Movement No. 2", two tin buckets, two water pumps, water, 2013 (courtesy the artist and PIFO gallery)



廖斐,《车子1》, 照片, 36 × 27 cm, 2015 (图片由艺术家和偏锋新艺术空间提供) / Liao Fei, "Vehicle-1", photograph, 36 × 27 cm, 2015 (courtesy the artist and PIFO gallery)

我对廖斐的了解开始于一次在工作室的聊天，地点是上海桃浦，晚上九点多，我们急匆匆地见了一面。我只大概记得工作室里面的凌乱，地上摆着两根灯管接起来的一个作品，一架轱辘两大两小、木板向下弯折的四轮小板车，还看到他的画，上面画着没有标题的书。聊天的内容也记得不清楚，大概提起了很多次罗素、笛卡尔、哥德尔这些不沾边的人。当然后来我知道，这些人对廖斐来说不是读一读那么简单。

再次见到廖斐就是半年多以后了，期间看了他的一些朋友的展览，脑子里很容易把他归到那一类去。至于是哪一类，我也无法说清楚，我自己也较劲地去面对头脑里这样的判断。他廖斐好像上海、杭州“那一类”的艺术家，不大关心身边的事情，在工作室里安安静静地看看书，做的作品，大概都有点冷冰冰，讨论的问题看起来都是抽象而没有太大现实关联的。然而我这样说也等于什么都没说，既不能阐释他的创作，也不能从哪个角度给它合适的位置。我也知道，这样每天都会出现在头脑中的粗糙认识，里面参照和糅杂的东西是非常复杂的，不免含有对艺术史的向往和拒绝，有对现实和自我认知的晦暗与暴力判断，有过度的想象，也有看不到的盲从。

展览里有一件叫作《十字路口》的录像作品，廖斐用镜头俯瞰的角度对准一个十字路口，拍摄行人是怎么过马路的。他还设计了几条完全按照交通规则规定去过马路的线路，让一些临时演员按照规定路线走来走去。这些人和普通的行人混在一起，我们无从分辨。拿廖斐的话说，普通人过马路，往往靠直觉选择最短路线，并且时时违反交规；临时演员的路线，目的和普通人一样，都是“到那边去”，只不过按照规则进行：两者掺和到一起，直觉和理性分也分不开，这就是认知的边界。我看完后在想，这大概就是我看到他作品时内心的状态。

在一封Email中他跟我说：“总的来说促成我去创作的很大的原因是出于对自身以及外界的存在困惑。在今天对于这个世界的认知是没有一个真正可以足够让人信服的解释。作为个体的生命终结如此之近，难免会想去做点什么，以更加接近事物一些，对我而言在这样的过程中也可以缓解一些对于存在无知的焦虑。宗教、科学、哲学领域各自不同，又有交叉之处。这些对于事物认识的真理也都是有各自的范围的。在我看来我无力去创造什么，只是想去呈现一些本来就存在的事物。在这点上我部分赞同康德以后对的时代‘揭蔽’的说法。然而‘揭蔽’后面有着经典哲学的认知的野心，对我来说更多的是思考与行动本身。我是一个在做作品时从来不考虑政治的人，不是不关心，我每天在家起来会看新闻频道。政治以及周围的社会毫无疑问是在塑造我的，在影响我的工作。但我说不出具 接 143 页

体在哪里，只能用反证法来说，如果我不是身处在这个时间这个空间，那么我做的东西一定是不一样的，我想它们是以某种抽象的方式在影响我。如果说我的敌人是‘柔软的材料’‘含糊的表述’‘个人的情感化’，我的朋友就是‘坚硬的材料’‘清晰的表述’和‘去情感化’。”

因此你不能说廖斐是个“无官一身轻”的艺术家，至少现实那层焦虑还是身体的一部分。他在尝试主动地去判断自己与现实、与时代是如何关联的，这与他艺术上的追求有些缝隙。他所说的“坚硬的材料”“清晰的表述”和“去情感化”自然不是为了和社会现实或者艺术世界作对，但这些表述中一定含有对表达自由、个体、日常经验等被滥用的概念的戒备。廖斐的实践针对认知形式而展开，这有点像是在现实里掘了一个坑，坑里面没有东西，掘出的土也放在一边，坑的样子本身就是现实与思维世界之间关联的隐喻。

廖斐对认知的考察往往体现在他对“形式系统”本身的思考之上。比如《一件地球雕塑》这个作品，长方镂空的钢架倾斜悬挂在一米多的高度上，两端分别固定了两台显示器，分别播放南北半球两个地点监测台风运动的实时画面。屏幕上显示的实际上是地球自转作用下两个旋转方向相反的气旋，它们被艺术家想象地连接在一起，组成一个简单的形式辩证系统。这个想象的连接看起来面无表情，其实怪诞、诙谐又认真，被科学阐释的自然世界在这里显得自给自足又矫情，两个屏幕中的气旋似乎别着劲，又被钢架固定着动弹不得。

廖斐这次在偏锋空间的个展用“这句话是错的”作为展览题目，也是想强调形式本身的边界。“这句话是错的”这个经典悖论在其内部是无法证实或者证伪的，艺术家想通过这种隐喻去讨论认知所塑造的自身形式。他把这个语言学问题转化到了一系列运用物理材料和形式游戏展开的工作之中，并且试图揭示“形式系统——认知形式”这一命题下更多的复杂性。认知本身所具有的突破力和想象，糅杂在一系列自身造就的悖反、强权和暴力之中，构成了整个展览的叙事。展场中形体最大的是一件由机械臂、灯球、钢板和石头组成的装置作品，机械臂悬挂着灯球，模仿着宇宙中球体的运动，按照编程设计的椭圆形路线匀速运行。根据艺术家的理解，我们看到的昼夜现象、日食月食，都是这一运动下的事件，也即，认知就是一个事件。当灯球照向钢板时，光线就会透过钢板上竖形的镂空照射在石头上，石头上的光和影会在一段时间内不停地变化。这个事件本身是奇诡和粗暴的，人的存在在里面显得渺小，又因为这种渺小而透出宿命和悲剧的意味。与此相呼应的，是一件名为《这句话是错的》的3D打印雕塑。艺术家扫描了一个人的半身像，但只扫描了半身对称轴的一 接 145 页

侧，并用电脑模拟出另一半的样子。因此我们看到了一个完美对称的身体，真人一样的尺寸，光滑的外表，没有瑕疵，但是并不真实存在。

廖斐的工作让我不由得联想到“新刻度”小组、施勇和钱喂康20世纪90年代的创作，以及杭州“池社”的一些工作。这些他的前辈，同样以去情感化的方式展开过极有开创性的工作，但这些工作在以图像学和社会学为基础的90年代，并没有得到适当的描述。他们与时代那种充满张力的关联，以及各自内部发生的种种丰富的思考，仅仅被现有的艺术史缩略为一种所谓的“观念实践”。正是在这一点上，我对廖斐的工作产生了很大兴趣。如何观看他这一系列以形式系统为考察对象的创作，如何理解他对认知的这种紧张度，并不是一件容易的事。某种层面上，就其内部来说，我们或许可以说廖斐的工作和这些前辈是同质的，他们一起分享了某种对世界的兴趣，这种兴趣与中国文化生产中的趣味、不断形成的边界产生着极其复杂的关联和冲突。但同时，虽然90年代与当下是两个紧密相连的历史情境，但从细节上说，社会和政治图景、美学和价值讨论、国家意识形态投射在文化和艺术上的方式，在松紧度和丰富性上都有着不小的差异。这样去说，并不是为了为廖斐的工作寻找合适的时代位置。验证、重置和追问艺术创作与时代的关联，是壁垒化的当下的一种迫切，也正是在这一迫切中，我们有可能再次获得理解艺术创作的真实性，以及理解其内部历程的机会。

Focus

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**The Work of
Liao Fei,
by Su Wei**

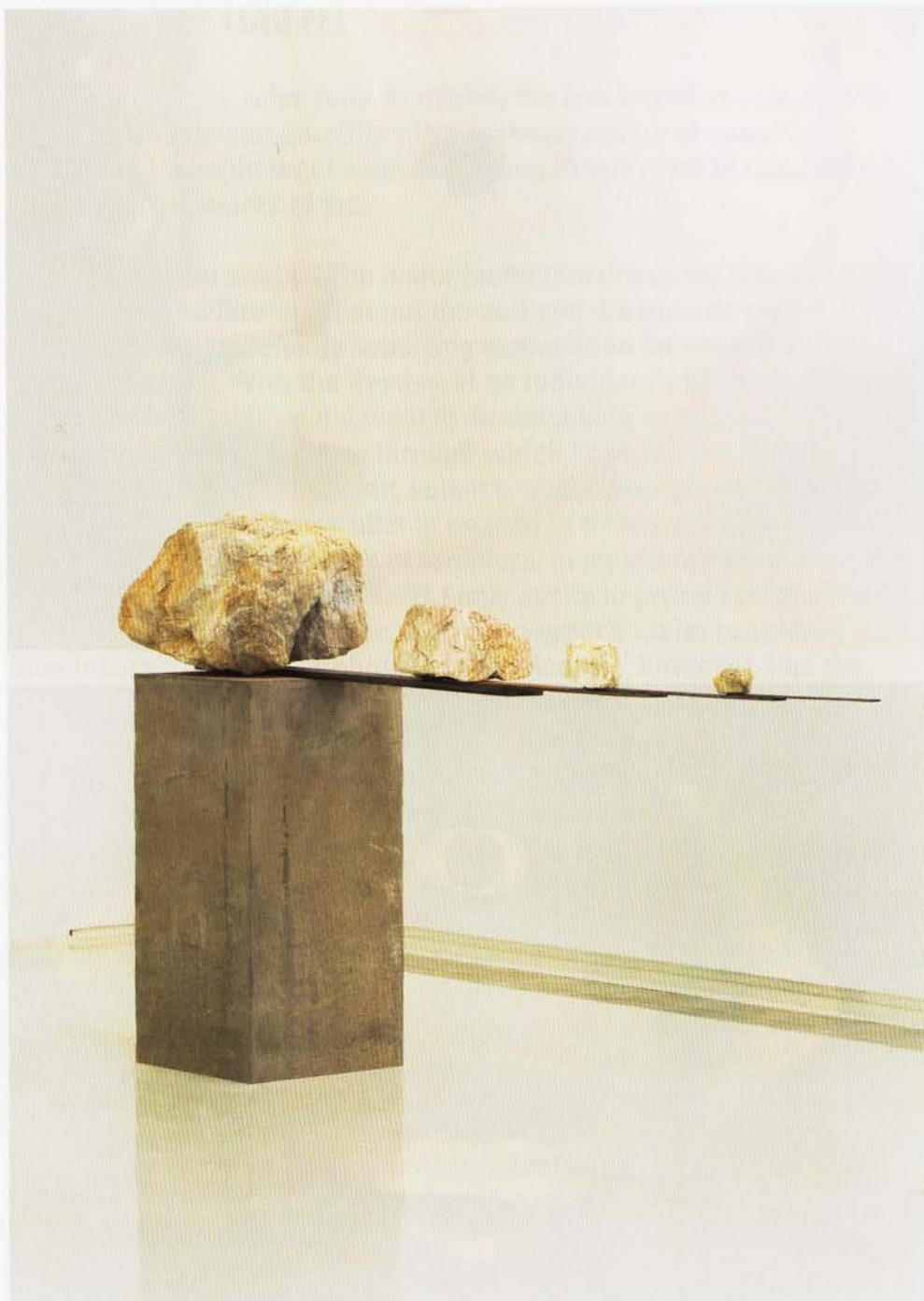
My understanding of Liao Fei's work began with a conversation at his studio in Taopu, Shanghai. It was past nine o'clock in the evening, and we met in haste. I vaguely remember his somewhat messy studio; an artwork depicting two light tubes pieced together was on the floor, as was a small four-wheeled trolley with two sets of wheels, two large and two small. I also saw his paintings of books without titles. I can't recall the subject of our conversation, other than that we mentioned a few unrelated figures such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, René Descartes, and Kurt Gödel. I later found out that they were not just a matter of casual reading for Liao Fei.

The next time I met Liao was half a year later. In between, I saw a few of his friends' exhibitions, and in my mind I placed him in that category. As for which category exactly, there was no way for me to say clearly. I put in some effort to decipher my own judgments. Liao is that Shanghai, Hangzhou "type" of artist who pays little attention to what happens around him. He reads books and makes artworks in his studio, quietly. He's somewhat cool and detached, and the issues he talks about seem rather abstract and disconnected from reality. But by making this claim, I'm not really saying anything. It neither explains his work nor positions it suitably from any angle. I am also aware that these rough notions occur in the mind on a daily basis; the things they reference and jumble up together on the inside are complicated. Inevitably, there is both a longing for and a rejection of art history, plus that gloomy and violent judgment of reality and of the knowledge of the self, and excessive imagination as well as indiscernible blindness.

There is a video work by Liao called "Crossroads". From a vantage point overlooking an intersection, the artist's camera records how pedestrians cross the road. He has designed a few trajectories completely in accordance with traffic rules and asked actors to walk back and forth accordingly, mixing with people on the street so that we might not be able to tell them apart. In Liao's estimation, when pedestrians cross the street, they more often than not choose the shortest path instinctively, which often leads them to violate traffic rules. The paths the actors took had the same end goal as the other pedestrians—to "get to the other side"—but *cont'd on p155*



廖斐,《使一支球杆产生四道投影》, 展览现场, 2013 (图片由艺术家和Vanguard画廊提供) / Liao Fei, "Create 4 Shadows of The Cue", installation view, 2013 (courtesy the artist and Vanguard Gallery)



廖斐,《延长的直线》,大理石,钢板,混凝土底座,160×70×75 cm,2015 (图片由艺术家和偏锋新艺术空间提供) / Liao Fei, "A Straight Line Extended", marble, steel plate, concrete base, 160×70×75 cm, 2015 (courtesy the artist and PIFO gallery)

they followed the rules fully. In mixing the two together, reason and instinct became inseparable—this is the boundary of cognition. At the end I thought that I must have been in this state of mind when I looked at his works of art.

In an email, Liao wrote, "The major factor that drives my practice is existential bewilderment about the self and the outside world. There isn't a true and sufficiently satisfying explanation for understanding the world today. With the demise of an individual's life so incredibly close, one inevitably would want to do something, to approach things more. For me, it is a process through which I can relieve the anxiety of existential ignorance. Religion, science, and philosophy are different fields that overlap; their truths in cognizing things are also to be understood within their own parameters. In my view, I am powerless to create something new; instead, I only desire to present what already exists. On this, I partly agree with Heidegger's claim regarding 'disclosure' [*aletheia*]. Behind this 'disclosure,' however, lies the cognitive ambition of a classical philosopher, while my interests are in thinking and action. I am someone who is unconcerned with politics when making works of art. I am not indifferent, because I watch the news at home. Politics and my social surroundings inevitably shape and influence my work. Yet I cannot pinpoint the specifics. I can only use *reductio ad absurdum*. If I hadn't lived in this time and this place, then my works would certainly have been different. I think they must impact me in abstract ways. If my foes are the 'soft material,' an 'ambiguous narrative,' and 'personal feelings,' then my friends must be conceived of as 'hard material,' a 'clear narrative,' and the 'absence of emotion.'"

One cannot, then, claim that Liao is an artist "free of any responsibility"; at least the anxiety of reality still manifests itself physically. He is actively trying to gauge his relationship with reality, with this epoch, which leaves crevices in his artistic pursuits. The "hard material," "clear narrative," and "absence of emotion" that he mentions are not there in order to oppose social realities or the art world, but they inadvertently project his vigilance toward fixed concepts of freedom of expression, the individual, and everyday experience. *cont'd on p157*

Liao's practice expands from forms of understanding, much like digging a hole in reality only to find nothing in it. The earth dug out is set aside, while the shape of the hole becomes the metaphorical connection between reality and the world of ideas.

Liao Fei's observations on cognizing things are often manifested through his ideas about "formal systems." For example, in "A Sculpture of the Globe", a hollow rectangular steel apparatus hangs at a slanted angle one meter above the ground. A monitor is attached to each end, broadcasting live images of typhoon movements in the northern and southern hemispheres. The screens are in fact showing two opposing cyclones of the Earth spinning on its orbital paths; they are imagined as conjoined entities that make up a simple dialectical formal system. This imagery appears emotionless, but is in fact at once absurd, humorous, and serious. The natural world as scientifically interpreted looks self-efficient and yet unreasonable: the cyclones on the screens seem to be caught in a deadlock, in spite of being anchored by the steel apparatus.

Liao Fei's recent solo exhibition at PIFO was entitled "This Sentence Is False" to emphasize the boundaries of form itself. The classic paradox of "This Sentence Is False" cannot in and of itself be proven or falsified. The artist hoped to discuss the form of cognition as shaped by itself by means of metaphors and interferences. He turned this linguistic question into a series of works that deploy physical materials and formal games in an attempt to unveil the complexity between "formal system" and "cognitive form." The breakthrough and imagination of cognition itself were kneaded within a series of self-engendered opposites, within the strength and violence that constituted the narrative of this exhibition. The largest work of art in the gallery was an installation comprised of a mechanical arm, a light ball, a steel plate, and stones; the light ball hung from the mechanical arm, mimicking the movement of stars in the universe, spinning on a preprogrammed oval orbit. The artist understands the phenomenon of night and day, and solar and lunar eclipses, occurring as events within this movement—in other words, cognition as an event in itself. When the ball of light passed over the steel plate, the light would shine through the vertical gap in the plate onto the stone and changed constantly over *cont'd on p159*

time. The event may seem eccentric and rough, and human existence here may seem insignificant in relation to it—and yet such a sense of insignificance ultimately invoked fate and tragedy. In correlation with this was a 3D-printed sculpture, “This Sentence Is False”. The artist scanned the full torso of a person, but only printed half from life; the other half was simulated digitally. As a result, one saw a perfectly symmetrical body at life size, yet its flawless, smooth surface reminded one of its fictitious nature.

Liao Fei’s work makes me think of the works of the New Measurement Group (Gu Dexin, Chen Shaoping, Wang Luyan), Shi Yong, and Qian Weikang in the 1990s, as well as those of the Pond Society in Hangzhou. These antecedents have developed extremely creative work in a resolutely unsentimental, unemotional mode; yet their works were insufficiently described in the 1990s, when Chinese artistic practice was based on iconography and sociology. Due to tension between their works and the age they lived in, their wealth of ideas has merely been summarized in art history as “conceptual practice.”

For this very reason, I became intrigued with Liao Fei’s work. How to view his series of works that take formal systems as the object of observation and what to make of his anxiety about cognition is no simple matter. To a certain extent, on the “inside” at least, we can perhaps claim that his work is consistent with that of his antecedents, sharing as they do a certain interest in the world—an interest that, in highly complex ways, relates to and conflicts with the preferences and constantly regenerated boundaries within Chinese cultural production. Yet at the same time, although the 1990s was a historical context closely tied to the present, on closer inspection there are a good number of differences in the way social and political landscapes, discussions about aesthetics and values, and an overarching national ideology were projected onto culture and art. Making such claims is not to seek an appropriate chronological position for Liao Fei’s work. Verifying, repositioning, and probing the relationship between artistic creation and the period it is part of constitutes urgency in the present, shuttered as it is. It is also precisely amid this urgency that we regain an understanding of the actuality of artistic creation and the chance to grasp its inner trajectories. ■ Translated by Fiona He