

LENIN IN 1918

GALERIEURSMEILE 麦勒画廊

鄢醒 近作 Yan Xing Recent Works

2013



GALERIEURSMEILE 麦勒画廊

鄢醒
近作

Yan
Xing
Recent Works

关于鄢醒
实践的
几段文字

翁笑雨

Some Words
on Yan Xing's
Art Practice

by Xiaoyu Weng

这真的是非常悲伤和危险的,不是吗?当你受够了用你的眼睛张望,用你的肺脏呼吸,用你的嘴巴吞食,用你的舌头说话,用你的大脑思考,有屁眼,有喉咙,有头有腿的。为什么不用你的脑袋走路,用你的鼻窦唱歌,用你的皮肤观看,用你的肚子呼吸:简单的事、本质、完整的身体、静止的旅程、厌食症、皮肤的视力、瑜伽、克利须那神、爱、尝试。当精神分析师说,“打住!该找回你自己了”。我们应该说,“让我们继续前行,因为我们还没有找到我们那没有器官的身体,我们还没有将自己完全肢解呢”¹。

——吉尔·德勒兹 (Gilles Deleuze) 与费利克斯·瓜塔里 (Félix Guattari), 《千座高原: 资本主义与精神分裂》(A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, 1987)

历史学家马库斯·里德克 (Marcus Rediker) 和彼得·莱恩博德 (Peter Linebaugh) 在他们共著的有关大西洋史的研究《九头蛇》(The Many-Headed Hydra, 2001) 一书中详尽描述了在大西洋奴隶贸易时期,来自不同背景、地域、种族、身份的劳动人民由于奴隶买卖和全球贸易汇聚到一起。在连接往来于欧洲和美洲新大陆以及非洲和亚洲港口的贸易货船上构成一种“三教九流”(motley crew) 的状态。尽管这样的情形是“强迫”和“非自愿的”,但却建立起了超越民族国家边界的“国际主义”,传递着全球人道主义的讯息。²更重要的是,文化学者苏珊·巴克-莫斯 (Susan Buck-Morss) 进而指出这样的“混杂性”和初始的“国际主义”正反映出历史书写的“多孔性”(the concept of porosity) 概念。所谓“多孔性”指的是徘徊于普遍历史、总体概念和集体记忆之外的情形,它并不等同于一种不同文化之间的混杂并存的状态,因而并不单一定义某一种文化形式(即所谓西方文化、东方文化等)。相反地,“多孔性”勾勒出现有世界秩序的边界,在这些边界上穿刺、打孔,暴露出历史书写和知识体系构建的虚构性,打破中心—边缘的关系,将被忽略的事件和信息从历史的遗忘中救赎出来。

“多孔性”的概念可以呼应醒的艺术理想。他的创作和思考,一方面不断寻觅、识别并捕捉这些游离于不同时间与空间中的孔径,另一方面在我们生存经验现实和虚构的粘稠文本中不断穿刺打孔。

有关于醒创作的概念、素材、参考、形式和媒介是多元的,但他却不是将来自不同文化、地域和历史阶段的

形态简单地并置。他首先企图否定的便是这些对文化、地域和时间的“外科手术”般的分割。尽管我们的存在已经不可避免地被斩剃得皮开肉绽,但正是那血肉模糊、骨肉相连的暧昧还暗示着另一种变异重生的可能。醒的操纵,那些所谓的挪用、篡改、重现、再构、重置不仅仅是一个物理过程,而更像是一个生物与化学过程。如果说18世纪的贸易货船是世界主义的雏形,那么我们目前的文化生产毋庸置疑地被(或许已经陈词滥调但却无法回避的)“网络公民”所创造的另一“世界主义”状态所左右。网络的民主性和开放性致使信息的分享与索取从固有的知识构建体系中脱离出来,将线、面或体积还原到点。当下我们所面临不再是作者不作者,死亡不死亡,终结不终结的问题,将现代主义中的作者论单一强调出来本身就是个伪命题,既而后现代所宣布作者的死亡也就同样成为了无效的争辩。

一、

《两部录像,三张照片,几件与之相关的杰作和美国艺术》(2013)是醒个展“近作”中的一组作品。看似简单直接的题目构成了一个有趣却隐含的悖论:题目囊括了观者所熟悉的、被普遍接受的、划分或评判艺术作品的方式:媒介、在艺术史上的地位、地域与身份。这些方式构成了艺术史写作的原则。但实际上,这个题目又几乎没有提供任何信息。它写照了丰富多样的艺术实践如何在限定的框架中不断地被消解,简化抽象成一系列的定义、术语和概念。

题目中所提到的“美国艺术”和摄影中对黑人裸体的表现,自然很快引导观众联想到美国备具争议的艺术家庄伯特·梅普尔索普 (Robert Mapplethorpe)。1986年,梅普尔索普发表了他的摄影集《黑色之书》(Black Book),书中收录了一系列姿态撩人、带有色情暗示的黑白人体摄影。而在当时引起轩然大波的正是梅普尔索普选择的黑人模特。梅普尔索普的作品被贴上了种族歧视的标签,且成为了美国80、90年代初“文化战争”的主要对象之一。有关他的展览不断被审取消、关闭,成为了美国有关文化审查最重要的例证之一。³然而在醒的作品里,梅普尔索普以及与他有关的争议只是线索之一。很快,观者便发现他对美术史中更经典的符号的借用,即古希腊时期展现力与美的代表作,来自米隆 (Myron) 的《掷铁饼者》(Discobolus)。醒从“掷铁饼者”进而发展出“射箭者”、“掷铅球者”和“掷标枪者”,均由黑人模特表现。这看似模棱两可的多重引用实际上将矛头直指当时批评界对梅普尔索普作品的不同阐释上,批评者们认为,梅普尔索普将黑人形象简化成他照相机前的“对象”(object),“注视”(gaze)的客体。尽管

“Is it really so sad and dangerous to be fed up with seeing with your eyes, breathing with your lungs, swallowing with your mouth, talking with your tongue, thinking with your brain, having an anus and larynx, head and legs? Why not walk on your head, sing with your sinuses, see through your skin, breathe with your belly: the simple Thing, the Entity, the full Body, the stationary Voyage, Anorexia, cutaneous Vision, Yoga, Krishna, Love, Experimentation. Where psychoanalysis says, ‘Stop, find your self again,’ we should say instead, ‘Let’s go further still, we haven’t found our BwO (Body Without Organs) yet, we haven’t sufficiently dismantled our self.’”¹

—— Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia

The Many-Headed Hydra (2001), co-authored by historians Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, describes in detail the history of the slave trade across the Atlantic Ocean. The global industry brought together laborers from different backgrounds, regions, races and classes. Trade ships transported motley crews between the ports of Europe, America, Africa and Asia. Though formed involuntarily by a coercive force, these temporary communities expressed a spirit of cosmopolitanism that went beyond national boundaries and promised a global humanitarian message.² Political philosopher Susan Buck-Morss points out that the history of these hybrid communities and their nascent cosmopolitanism reflects “the concept of porosity”. The concept of porosity indicates a condition that constantly disassociates itself from universal history, totality and collective memory. It does not refer to the coexistence of multiple cultures, nor does it define a specific kind of cultural form (such as Western culture, Oriental culture, etc). Rather, it traces the borders of the existing world order, punctures and perforates them, exposing the fictions imbedded in history writing and knowledge production. Porosity calls for a canceling of the center-periphery

relationship and rescues the events and information from history’s amnesia.

The concept of porosity echoes with Yan Xing’s artistic pursuit. His practice and thinking, on the one hand, search, identify and capture the holes and apertures that linger in different spaces and times; on the other hand, continuously puncture the viscous context that is composed of the illusions and realities of our daily experience.

Yan Xing’s practice demonstrates a diverse interest in media, references, ideas, forms and materials. Yet, he defies an over-simplified juxtaposition of these resources drawn from different cultures, regions and historical moments. Yan rejects, in the first place, the surgical division of culture, place and time. Although one’s existence has already been violently torn into blood and flesh, the ambiguous state of the “near death” and of the incomplete dismemberment of the body promises a potentially mutated rebirth. In Yan Xing’s work, the creative acts of appropriating, imitating, reproducing, reconstructing and re-positioning constitute not only a physical but also a bio-chemical process. If the 18th century trade ship can be considered as the womb for a prototype of cosmopolitanism, cultural production today is undoubtedly being influenced by another kind of “cosmopolitanism” born out of the Netizen phenomenon. The Internet, with its openness and democratic characteristics, has liberated research and information sharing from the transitional knowledge system’s static structure. It has brought information back to its primitive state, as dots and points, disintegrated from pre-constructed line, surface and volume. Reorganization is now possible. The issues that we face today are not about the authors, their deaths, the end of art history or the end of anything. After all, postmodernism’s proclamation on the death of the author is a futile argument, as it is a false proposition to single out modernism’s discourse on authorship in the first place.

I

The title of Yan Xing’s recent work, *Two videos, three photographs, several related masterpieces, and*

梅普尔索普对黑人美的表现挑战了当时普遍的社会偏见(即黑人是丑陋的),其作品实际上再次肯定了种族歧视,因为对于一些白人来说,黑人那充满“异域情调”的性器官简直是完美的,因而黑人成为了这些白人渴望成为的“另我”(alter ego),成为了“性的他者”(Sexual Other)⁴。而辩护他的人则认为梅普尔索普没有强调性和种族,他只是在表达他对美的诉求,他不能像古希腊人那样在创作绘画或雕塑时,将来自不同模特身上最完美的手、腿或者脸组织起来,因此他必须找到一个最完美的模特本身。他所寻觅的是一种纯粹的“柏拉图式的理想”(the Platonic ideal)⁵。于是在酈醒这里,这两类阐释被叠加交汇融合到了一起,成为了“柏拉图”时代式的黑人的美,或者黑人式的“柏拉图”的美。

但实际上,酈醒作品的焦点真正关心的或许并不仅仅只是这些争论的内容,或者争论内容的对错。这些内容固然是重要的,但对酈醒来说更有意思的是这些“阐释”本身的形成、传播、变异、延伸、流通以及它们如何构成了我们所感知的美术史经验。福柯在他的《事物的秩序》(*The Order of Things*, 1966)一书中提到“达到知识的真正方式并不是所看到的或者可以去论证的,而在于诠释……事实未被阐释前并不能同于真理……”⁶。在福柯看来,语言是无限的,它可以不断地发展、更新、繁殖,因而所谓完整全面的“评论”是不存在的,正是通过艺术图像和阐释艺术图像的语言论述之间的互动关系,艺术知识的产生成为可能。

《两部录像,三张照片,几件与之相关的杰作和美国艺术》显然带有酈醒对所谓“美国艺术”的调戏,是经过他提炼的、“笼统化”了的美国艺术经验。而这概念化了的美国艺术经验又与美国历史经验交织在一起。作为一个移民国家,种族歧视始终纠缠着美国的历史叙述;随着女权主义兴起、同性恋身份问题浮出水面,身份政治斗争的阵营中又加入了性别歧视的论述,而其中又不乏一轮又一轮定义和界限的生产。尽管美国标榜其对多元文化、多元价值观的容纳性,然而一旦这些文化和价值观与美国白人政治经济利益之间产生矛盾,牺牲的往往是所谓的“边缘”。种族和性别歧视直接导致文化歧视,它们从未脱离过我们的视线。另一方面,美国文化的形成本身就是文化挪用的经典例证。美国文化所谓的容纳性其实可以被形容成一种文化“食人主义”(cultural cannibalism)⁷,一种对他者文化的掠食。当不同文化被吸纳再构成美国主流文化关键要素之后,这些文化本身却被谋杀了,甚至连尸体也无处可循,因为它们已经被吞噬消化了。它们仿佛改头换面,成为了美国文化的独创,而捍卫其谎言的对策便是构建一个权力体系,编造一个优势文化与劣势文化的二元对立关系。这些美国经验便是酈醒选择其题材的关键。

二、

“没有器官的身体”(Body without Organ)是吉尔·德勒兹与费利克斯·瓜塔里哲学思考中著名的概念。他们将社会结构比作身体,将其中使社会机器运作的组成部分比作其中的器官。社会机器定义并固定了每个器官具体的职责和功能,从而划分出等级、阶级、准则、道德等社会分割。在德勒兹和瓜塔里合作的《千座高原:资本主义与精神分裂》(*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*)中引用了美国垮掉一代传奇作家威廉·巴勒斯(William Burroughs)小说《裸体午餐》(*Naked Lunch*, 1959)中的这样一段:“人类的身体是那样的没效率。为什么要被一张嘴一个屁眼搞得没秩序,为什么不能有一个多功能的洞,既可以吃又可以拉?我们应该把鼻子也封起来,早就该那么做了”。⁸关于“多孔性”的概念不由得让我们联想到孔的其它关联词和引申意义,比如口腔、喉口,比如进食,比如肛门,比如排泄,比如喷射,比如性交。

突然之间,在我们的脑海里,这些词汇建立起了对立的关系:可口的一反胃的、芬芳的一熏臭的、洁净的一肮脏的、清爽的一污秽的、美好的一丑陋的、纯洁的一淫褻的、高尚的一卑鄙的。我们歌颂善,排斥恶,我们以为我们的人性高于一切。但实际上这一切都是人类自己建立的体系,以自我约束和控制我们往往趋向于精神分裂的行为。

酈醒在《脏的艺术》(2013)中将这永恒的矛盾关系勾勒出来。通过循环播放的九个视频,把观者的感官推向了极致,挑战其心理极限。对于爱德华·霍普(Edward Hopper)作品《药店》(*Drug Store*, 1927)的引用不仅仅是形式上的,更在于录像本身构成的不同寻常的双重辩证关系。一方面,“药店”和“药方”构成了指向能够救赎我们心灵之罪的符号,任何的道德不洁仿佛都可以在此得以化解;而另一方面,“药”也成为了一种“毒品”(尤其是英语的“Drug”既可以译成“药品”也可以译成“毒品”),而毒品的“非法性”实际上构成了一种对社会现有道德体系的挑战,在原本一清二白的“合法”与“非法”界限中制造混沌。正如德勒兹和瓜塔里所认为的“被毒品麻醉了的身体”(the drugged body)是接近“没有器官的身体”的方式之一。通过毒品的作用,分配给身体器官的原有功能被打乱,在错乱中我们可以寻觅打破现有社会政治系统的途径,尽管我们永远无法达到“没有器官”的境界,但可以不断向其接近。同样的,毒品的负面定义在这里建立起积极的隐喻,对与错,正与负的二元关系再次得到质疑。这样的“泻”是否可以清空我们的身体,让我们获得没有器官的身体?

American art (2013), contains an intriguing paradox. The title alludes to the common practice of categorizing and interpreting an artwork by its medium, place in art history, region and identity, which constitutes the guiding principle of art history writing. Seemingly promising, the title of Yan Xing's work actually does not provide any substantial information. It mirrors the fact of the constrained knowledge framework, which reduces the richness of art practices into a series of abstract definitions, terms and concepts.

In *Two videos, three photographs, several related masterpieces, and American art*, photographs of naked black men and the term “American Art” in the title remind the viewers of the practice and stories of the controversial artist Robert Mapplethorpe. Mapplethorpe's 1986 *Black Book* features a series of homoerotic, black-and-white nude photographs. The artist's use of black models sparked a great deal of criticism and debate, which resulted in his works being labeled racist by some critics. While controversy over Mapplethorpe's photographs raged during the American culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s, his exhibitions were also frequently censored, closed, and reviewed as important cases on cultural censorship in the United States.³ But in the work of *Two videos, three photographs, several related masterpieces, and American art*, Mapplethorpe's legend is only one of many clues. Viewers would soon discover that classical symbols from art history are also borrowed, in particular, a representative work of physical strength and beauty from the ancient Greek period: Myron's *Discobolus*. Yan subsequently expands the roles of the black models from the disc thrower to archer, shot putter, and spear bearer, which don't have corresponding representations in the great Greek art. But instead, such puzzling multi-references actually correspond with the different critiques on Mapplethorpe's work. Critics argue that the artist has reduced black men to objects in front of his camera and the viewers' gaze. Although Mapplethorpe's representation of the beauty of the black man challenges the widespread discrimination against the black body as something ugly, his photographs also conform with racial stereotypes. Mapplethorpe's photographs reinforce a particular fetish, held by some white men who fantasize the black man as their “alter ego,” the

“Sexual Other” with “perfect and exotic” genitals.⁴ On the other end of the spectrum, supporters of Mapplethorpe's work state that the *Black Book* does not stress issues of sexuality and race; rather, it simply expresses Mapplethorpe's pursuit of beauty. Unable to work like the artists in ancient Greece, who created idealized bodies by borrowing the perfect hands, legs or faces from different models, Mapplethorpe has to find a perfect model⁵ for his photographs. What he is looking for is a kind of pure Platonic ideal. Yan Xing merges both of the interpretations of Mapplethorpe's *Black Book* mentioned above, creating a synthesis of a Platonic version of black beauty and a black version of Platonic beauty.

As a matter of fact, Yan Xing's work does not necessarily center on the contents of these arguments or the justification of those interpretations; more importantly, it explores the development, distribution, transformation, extension and dissemination of the interpretations of art, and how these interpretations construct our art history experience. Foucault writes in *The Order of Things* (1966):

“The function proper to knowledge is not seeing or demonstrating; it is interpreting... none of these forms of discourse is required to justify its claim to be expressing a truth before it is interpreted.”⁶

According to Michel Foucault, language is infinite; it continually develops, renews, and reproduces. Commentary, as a form of language, is a continual process that never reaches completion. Following this vein of thought, it is the interaction between an art image and its interpretation that makes it possible for art to produce knowledge.

Two videos, three photographs, several related masterpieces, and American art can be considered as a parody, where Yan Xing refers to American Art as an abstracted and generalized art experience. America, as an immigrant nation, has been struggling with the issue of racism throughout its history. The rise of the feminist and homosexual movements in the 20th century introduced the issue of gender discrimination into the narratives of identity politics. Although American culture promotes multicultural-

三、

1918年的莫斯科正值社会政治改革的水深火热之中，列宁在两次暗杀中幸存下来；艺术界也热情高涨，《公社的艺术》（*Iskusstvo Kommuny*）出版了第一期，卡西米尔·马列维奇（Kazimir Severinovich Malevich）和瓦西里·康定斯基（Wassily Kandinsky）均是期刊的编辑和重要撰稿人⁹；苏联教育局新设了视觉艺术部门（Izo-Narkompros）¹⁰，弗拉基米尔·塔特林（Vladimir Tatlin）成为了部门的主管。《列宁在1918》（*Lenin in 1918*, 1939）是一部兼具意识形态的爱国主义宣传电影，表现了伟大革命领袖的共产主义理想，也是酩酊个展“近作”中一件作品的题目。尽管电影本身与作品之间并无直接的理性关联，但却不由让人浮想联翩，之前提到的琐碎的历史事件也仿佛与作品本身产生了诗意的连结。

《列宁在1918》（2013）是一件由多组元素构成的装置作品，其中包括雕塑、绘画、摄影等。每一个元素都是一件单独成立的艺术物件（art object），且都有具体的灵感来源，这些来源细致到具体的艺术家、作品和创作年代等。不难发现，这些艺术家都是美术史上具有重要地位的人物，也就是我们所熟知的“大师”，这些大师构成了中国美术教育，尤其是美术史教育的基础。现代中国的学院派艺术教育体制基本根据苏联制度建立，至今仍旧无法突破，对艺术的感知往往等同于审美，艺术创作需要建立在扎实的写实功底之上，企图通过对大师的临摹、研究、不断地重复以获取某种造诣。出现在教育大纲中的学习对象和艺术流派，显然受限于意识形态的控制，所谓的普遍艺术史实际上永远都是片面的，甚至随着时代变化而自相矛盾。更有意思的是，在中国的艺术教育里，大师的作品往往从历史的上下文中生挖出来，对他们的临摹仅限于视觉形式上——一种“纯粹的”美学追求。产生于不同社会、历史和政治语境的艺术作品被简单甚至无知地并置，构成一种独特的“中国学院西方艺术史”。那么上文中所提到的那些能够体现艺术生产语境的事件与这样的艺术追求相比，显然变得琐碎无关，甚至毫无价值。

正是处于这样的思考，促使酩酊构造了另一段美术史。但是这段美术史一定是虚构的么？这些艺术品难道不可以成为这些艺术家未被发掘的“原作”吗？比如在耳熟能详的艺术家名单中，生卒年不详的Theodor Hey，网络上没有任何关于他的生平事迹，也没有他的简历、展览经历和作品图片，更不要提名字的中文翻译了。难道他不是一个被历史遗忘的艺术家吗？真实和虚构的界限在哪里？历史和现实呢？美国导演奥森·威尔斯（Orson Welles）临终前的最后一部完整电影作品《赝品》（*F for Fake*，又译《伪作》，1973，于1974年公映）也许可以

与酩酊的《列宁在1918》遥相呼应。《赝品》以半纪录片的手法描述了匈牙利人米尔·德霍瑞（Elmyr de Hory）回溯其作为赝品画家的职业生涯故事。实际上这部电影不仅仅是一部有关于德霍瑞的回忆录，其中更穿插了曾轰动一时的克利福德·艾尔文（Clifford Irving）造假美国飞行业大亨霍华德·休斯（Howard Hughes）自传案，随后又杜撰了女友欧嘉·蔻达（Oja Kodar）与毕加索（Pablo Picasso）之间的一段奇事。多个有关剽窃、抄袭、造假、欺骗的故事层层叠加，加之电影片断性的叙述语言，使其变得扑朔迷离，其本身就仿佛一个骗局。《赝品》不仅仅是将几个互相交织的人生编织在一起，更质疑了艺术所谓原创的本质问题。或许在威尔斯看来，德霍瑞和艾尔文的人生故事在艺术意义上已经超越了他们所创作出来的“成品”。而他们的人生故事也如同一个窗口使我们洞悉到我们身处的现实世界实际上是一个又一个虚构叠加，这些谜团在流传中得以获得生命，成为编制进历史的真实。陈列在《列宁在1918》中的这些艺术品也可以获得这样的生命。

《列宁在1918》仿若是从存在于另一个维度中的现代美术馆里凭空降落下来的一个展厅，邀请我们窥探历史的漏洞，或者说它本身就是一个可以穿越时空的“艺术之洞”。展览的历史和艺术的历史在这里重合。酩酊既是作者，又是美术史家，而且还是这另一纬度中的美术馆策展人，或者他的身份已经退到幕后，不再重要。

理查德·汉密尔顿（Richard Hamilton）的《是什么使今天的家庭如此非凡，如此有魅力？》（*Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?*, 1956）普遍被引用为波普艺术的起源之作。但其诞生与战后英国及全球政治环境不可分割。严格地说，《是什么使今天的家庭如此非凡，如此有魅力？》的重要性并不能单独成立，而应该与汉密尔顿作为独立团体（Independent Group）一员的经历紧密相连，但历史的书写再一次证明了它的选择性。酩酊的创作有意识地拒绝这样单一衡量独件艺术品的维度，“近作”不仅仅是一个展览，同时也成为了一件整体作品。但这个整体作品的概念与理查德·瓦格纳（Richard Wagner）所提出的“总体艺术”（Gesamtkunstwerk）概念却有所不同。他并不企图通过使用不同媒介来创造一件无所不包的总体性艺术作品，而是将展览本身作为创作的媒介，由此来打破划分独件艺术品基于媒介的规则。正如他对艺术史及其所衍生符号的引用从来都不是直接的，它们在一部电影，一件雕塑，一句诗，一个姿态，一股气味，一阵颤抖，一轮心跳之间闪烁变换，酩酊对它们的再阐释打破了现有的阐释框架和学科规则。在他的实践面前，所有的已知量度都失去效用。

alism and multi-value systems, the interests of the so-called minorities are often sacrificed if they are in conflict with the political and economic agenda of the privileged white community. Cultural prejudices produced by racial and gender discrimination never cease in our everyday lives. In addition, the formation of American culture is itself a classic example of cultural appropriation. Underneath America's proclaimed tolerance of diversity lies a kind of cultural cannibalism.⁷ When different cultures are absorbed by the mainstream American culture, they are completely digested without being credited, turning into something that the Americans would claim as their originalities. In order to hide these lies, a power structure is created, one that positions different cultures in a binary hierarchy of advantage and disadvantage. All these have inspired Yan Xing's exploration of his kind of American experience.

II

“Body without Organs” (BwO) is one of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's prominent philosophical concepts. It compares the structure of a society to a body, and the body's various organs are equivalent to the different parts in a society. Through defining the function and responsibilities of each organ, society perpetuates a structure that creates divisions of class, principles and moral standards. In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari quote a passage from *Naked Lunch* (1959) by legendary Beat generation writer William Burroughs:

“The human body is scandalously inefficient. Instead of a mouth and an anus to get out of order why not have one all-purpose hole to eat and eliminate? We could seal up the nose and mouth, fill in the stomach, make an air hole direct into the lungs where it should have been in the first place...”⁸

Speculating on the concept of “porosity”, words associated with “hole” come to mind, such as mouth, throat, anus, ingestion, digestion, ejaculation and sexual intercourse. In this thought experiment,

these words suddenly form a series of opposed relationships: delicious—nauseous, fragrant—malodorous, clean—dirty, beautiful—ugly, pure—obscene, noble—abject. We've picked our side. As human beings, we are taught to praise good and avoid evil. We believe humanity should be valued above all else. But often, what we believe in is based on a system that we as humans have invented in order to discipline ourselves from the tendency of entering into a state of schizophrenia.

Yan Xing's *Dirty Art* (2013) outlines this perpetuating dilemma, where a series of nine looped videos challenge the viewers' psychological limits with their idiosyncratic contents. The work is inspired by Edward Hopper's painting *Drug Store* (1927), not only in terms of its form and but also in terms of the dialectical relationship embodied by its use of the word “drugstore.” On the one hand, drugstore, a place where medicine can be found, serves as a metaphor for redeeming of one's sins—proscription promises a hope of curing someone who is immoral or impure. On the other hand, drugs refer to illegal substances and its “illegality” challenges the conventional social moral standards, creating confusions along the broaderline of what is supposed to be legitimated and what is not.

Deleuze and Guattari suggest that “the drugged body” is a means to approach a BwO. Drugs disrupt the assigned roles of organs, and within this chaos one is able to find ways of overcoming the sociopolitical order. Even if a BwO can never be fully attained, one can gradually move towards this state. The dual meaning of drugs challenges our binary order of positive and negative, right and wrong. Can Yan Xing's *Dirty Art* help us to clear our bodies by flushing everything out and therefore getting closer to a body without organs?

III

1918 was a critical year for Moscow, a year of social and political reforms. It was the year in which Lenin survived two assassination attempts. It was a year when the art world was full of enthusiasms: the first issue of *Iskusstvo Kommuny* (*Art of the Commune*) was published, of which Kazimir

让我们回到最初提到的“多孔性”的概念上来，鄙醒的实践可以被看作是一种“研究性”的实践 (research-based practice)，但他的“研究成果”从来都不是字面上的。他并不通过陈列具体的档案图像文字来证明他的研究或说教他的观众，他将他的“发现”抽象成一个个孔，让知识在其中流动、穿梭、交融。孔同时也意味着无知，意味着混沌，意味着困惑，但正是在“打开”的前提下，新的可能性才有空间；只有在孔与孔的交融之中，新的创造力才可以孕育。雅克·朗西埃 (Jacques Rancière) 在《图像的未来》(*The Future of the Image*, 2009) 中指出，早在19世纪20年代，黑格尔便已经诅咒了现代主义的理性划分并不会带给艺术所谓的自主性，恰恰相反，这样的分割只能使艺术失去力量。¹¹黑格尔的预言已经成为现实，不仅仅是艺术领域，也体现在现代性的各个阶段。也许鄙醒的实践可以通过在不断地穿刺打孔中，加速这些边界的崩塌。

¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, the University of Minnesota Press, 1987 (2011): 151. 中文翻译自：

“Is it really so sad and dangerous to be fed up with seeing with your eyes, breathing with your lungs, swallowing with your mouth, talking with your tongue, thinking with your brain, having an anus and larynx, head and legs? Why not walk on your head, sing with your sinuses, see through your skin, breathe with your belly: the simple Thing, the Entity, the full Body, the stationary Voyage, Anorexia, cutaneous Vision, Yoga, Krishna, Love, Experimentation. Where psychoanalysis says, “Stop, find your self again,” we should say instead, “Let’s go further still, we haven’t found our BwO yet, we haven’t sufficiently dismantled our self.”

² Marcus Linebaugh and Peter Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001: 151–52.

³ Jenni Sorokin, “Robert Mapplethorpe: Pictures Pictures”, *Frieze*, Issue 83, May 2004, http://www.frieze.com/issue/review/robert_mapplethorpe_pictures_pictures/. Accessed December 29, 2013.

⁴ David Friedman, *A Mind of Its Own: A Cultural History of the Penis*, Robert Hale Ltd, 2009: 145.

⁵ Patricia Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe: A Biography*, Da Capo Press, 2009: 235.

⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences*, Vintage 1994 edition: 40.

⁷ “文化食人”主义的概念最初由巴西诗人 José Oswald de Andrade Souza在1928年提出以批判巴西历史对其它文化的掠夺和占用。在艺术领域，这个概念被策展人 Paulo Herkenhoff引用，并将其策划的1998圣保罗双年展命名为“都是食人者” (*Cannibals All*)。

⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: 150.

⁹ Christina Lodder, “Art of the commune: Politics and art in Soviet journals, 1917–20,” *Art Journal*, Spring 1993: 24.

¹⁰ Bruce Altshuler, *The Avant Garde in Exhibition*, Harry N. Abrams, 1994: 96.

¹¹ Jacques Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, trans. Gregory Elliott, Verso, Reprint edition, 2009: 43.

Severinovich Malevich and Wassily Kandinsky served important roles as editor and contributor⁹; the Ministry of Education established a Visual Art Section (Izo-Narkompros)¹⁰ and appointed Vladimir Tatlin as its Department Head. The film *Lenin in 1918* (1939), which promotes the Communist vision of the great Soviet leaders, does not illustrate Moscow’s art world of the time; but for Yan Xing, the title itself serves a perfect context for one of his other recent works. Yan Xing’s *Lenin in 1918* (2013) makes no direct connection to the propaganda film, but it demonstrates how the fragmented historical events might engender poetical sparks with his artistic approach.

Yan Xing’s *Lenin in 1918* is an installation of multiple elements, drawings and photographs. Each can be viewed as an independent art object that contains a specific reference to an artist, an artwork and the year of its creation. These artists all have prominent places in art history and are what we call “masters” in the context of Chinese art education. Particularly, their practices have served as the foundation of the art history education in China. Following the Soviet model, the Chinese academic art education emphasizes the belief that the art experience equates to aesthetic experience and that art practice has to be based on a solid practice of realism. Students learn by copying the works of masters. Repetition brings perfection. Ideologies control which artists and what art movements are to enter the curriculum. The result is an often-biased art history in a state of self-contradiction as it rewrites itself. More interestingly, in Chinese art education, the masters’ works are always bluntly extracted from historical contexts. Students copy them as a purely formal aesthetic pursuit. Works created in completely different social, historical and political contexts are ignorantly grouped together, forming a unique “Chinese Art Academies’ Western art history”. Compared to such artistic pursuit, the historical events in Moscow mentioned earlier indeed become trivial or even pointless, albeit the fact that they have played an essential role in shaping the art production at the time.

Following these lines of thoughts, Yan Xing creates an unorthodox version of art history in *Lenin in 1918*. Is this version of art history necessarily fictional? Can the artworks appropriated

by *Lenin in 1918* be considered as the referenced artists’ original works? For example, there is little information about the life and work of the artist Theodor Hey, one among many others referenced by Yan Xing. An Internet search reveals no stories about him. There is no biography, no past exhibitions and no images of his works, not to mention the Chinese translation of his name. He is Yan Xing’s creation! Yet, where indeed is the borderline between truth and fiction? Reality and history? Could it be said that history has forgotten Theodor Hey? These issues are explored in American director Orson Welles’s last film *F for Fake* (completed in 1973 and released in 1974). The film, with a semi-documentary style, focuses on the professional life of Hungarian forgery artist Elmyr de Hory. Far from being a memoir of de Hory, the film’s narratives are complicated by the sensational event of Clifford Irving’s fake autobiography of Howard Hughes and a fictional account between Welles’s then girlfriend Oja Kodar and Picasso. These stories of plagiarism, forgery, and deceit are layered upon each other, which leaves the ambiguity and confusion to the audience: perhaps the film itself can also be seen as a hoax? *F for Fake* brings the lives of a number of characters together while posing fundamental questions about art and originality. For Welles, the artistic meaning of de Hory and Irving’s life stories was far more valuable than the “products” they created. Their stories are presented as windows, through which we, as viewers, come to perceive the world as a labyrinth of fictions. Circulation and dissemination give lives to these fictions, which later grow into the truths being woven into history. Similarly, art objects that are displayed in Yan Xing’s *Lenin in 1918* can also acquire such lives.

Lenin in 1918 appears to be a gallery inside a modern art museum, a modern art museum from a different dimension. It parachutes itself in from another time and space, inviting the viewers to read between the lines of art history. It is a black hole that moves freely in and out of art history. The history of exhibition and the history of art coincide here. Yan Xing is not only an author, but also an art historian and a curator from this other dimension. Or perhaps such identities are not important anymore.

Richard Hamilton's collage, *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* (1956) is commonly considered as a single masterpiece and as the origin of Pop Art. Strictly speaking, the importance of *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* does not stand alone; it has to be read through Hamilton's experience as one of the core members of the Independent Group and the post-war British and global politics at the time. Yan Xing is acutely aware of how art history flattens our understanding of art by creating such singularity. *Recent Works* is a solo exhibition, but metaphorically, it is also a comprehensive artwork. The idea of the "comprehensive artwork" differentiates itself from Richard Wagner's concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* or "total work of art". Yan Xing does not try to create a single, all-inclusive work of art by using a variety of mediums; rather, he sees the entire exhibition as his medium, through which he is able to deconstruct the rule of medium-based categorization of art. His references to art history and its derivation are never logical. Instead, these references metamorphose among a film, a sculpture, a line of a poem, a gesture, a puff of scent, a tremble, and a heartbeat. Yan Xing's reinterpretation challenges the pre-existing framework and disciplinary conventions. In front of his practice, all measurements lose their efficacy.

Let us return to the concept of porosity. Although Yan Xing's practice is a kind of research-based practice, his "research results" are not literal. He does not present and display archival materials and documents to support a didactic argument. Yan Xing views his "discoveries" as abstract pores through which knowledge flows, crosses boundaries, encounters and converges. The idea of pores also suggests a sense of the unknown, of bewilderment, chaos and confusion. But it is precisely on the promise of opening up that new potentials become possible. Only through the communication from one pore to another can new creativity become pregnant. As Jacques Rancière points out in *The Future of The Image* (2009), as early as the 1820s, Hegel had already predicted that the modernist's "separation between spheres of rationality entailed not the glorious autonomy of art and the arts", but only disempowered them.¹¹ Yan Xing's practice, by

the continuous acts of punctuating, can perhaps expedite the collapse of these boundaries.

Translated from the Chinese by Sheryl Cheung

¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, The University of Minnesota Press, 1987 (2011): 151.

² Marcus Linebaugh and Peter Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2001: 151–52.

³ Jenni Sorkin, "Robert Mapplethorpe: Pictures Pictures", *Frieze*, Issue 83, May 2004, http://www.frieze.com/issue/review/robert_mapplethorpe_pictures_pictures/. Accessed December 29, 2013.

⁴ David Fiedman, *A Mind of Its Own: A Cultural History of the Penis*, Robert Hale Ltd., 2009: 145.

⁵ Patricia Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe: A Biography*, Da Capo Press, 2009: 235.

⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences*, Vintage 1994 edition: 40.

⁷ Brazilian poet José Oswald de Andrade Souza coined the term Cultural Cannibalism in 1928 to describe Brazil's historical absorption of minority cultures. Art curator Paulo Herkenhoff subsequently borrowed the term for the 1998 San Paulo Biennale, entitled *Cannibals All*.

⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: 150.

⁹ Christina Lodder, "Art of the commune: Politics and art in Soviet journals, 1917–20," *Art Journal*, Spring 1993: 24.

¹⁰ Bruce Altshuler, *The Avant Garde in Exhibition*, Harry N. Abrams, 1994: 96.

¹¹ Jacques Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, trans. Gregory Elliott, Verso, Reprint edition, 2009: 43.