

对话张培力

偶然与必然之间

A Conversation  
with  
Zhang Peili

Contingencies  
and Necessities Convert  
into Each Other



**LEAP:** 您平时在工作室的工作状态是怎样的？时间是怎么安排的？

**张培力:** 我在工作室不全为了工作，其实基本上也都是朋友在这儿聚会，我自己也可以比较放松地看看电影。如果做作品的话，最多也就是在楼上电脑房里整理资料，做一些后期，或者说是朋友来可以用投影仪放片子看。在这儿待着主要还是图清静，我比较喜欢自己处在懒散，可以发呆的状态里，考虑一些方案。但是真正的方案开始做了，这个工作室是做不了什么事情的，要去别的地方。所以我在隔壁有一个300平米的大一点的工作室，一方面做仓库，另一方面可以做大一点的作品。但是我现在没有工作室适合做体量比较大的作品，一直没有找到合适的。

**LEAP:** 那像现在在余德耀美术馆展出的《卷帘盒子》是怎么制作的呢？是替换了之前的一件作品吗？

**张培力:** 《卷帘盒子》没有办法事先在工作室做好，是先做试验，然后再到现场完成。但那件作品本身比较特殊，因为安装本来就复杂，一定要在现场安装好，所以基本上不会有太大的改动。撤掉的作品是2016年在二十一世纪民生美术馆展过的《看得见尽头的通道》，那件作品把蕾丝编织成没有颜色的十四个国家的国旗，由蕾丝的疏密来构成图案。2016年在民生展的场地虽然不算很理想，但是还不错，因为它刚好是一个通道，也是按照那个尺寸来定的，通道两边是有封闭的墙，所以你看不到别的作品，没有其他干扰。在一个通道里边穿越蕾丝行走，一道一道的，有点像以前夏天用的蚊帐，又有点像帘子，又有点像那种布幔，有点浪漫的感觉。

《卷帘盒子》，2017至2018年  
电动卷帘、可编程逻辑控制器、位置传感器和地毯（珍珠棉）  
1050 × 350 × 350 厘米  
运行时长 30 分钟

*XL Chamber*, 2017-2018  
Electric rolling shutters, programmable logical controller (PLC), position sensor, rug (PE foam)  
1050 x 350 x 350 cm  
30 min  
All images courtesy Boers-Li Gallery and the artist

**LEAP:** What's your modus operandi in the studio? How do you usually divide your time?

**Zhang Peili:** I'm not only in the studio to work. Basically, it's also a place to get together with friends. For me personally, it's a place to relax and watch films. When I'm creating works, at most I'll collate some information in the upstairs computer room, do post-production there or use the projector to screen a film if I have friends over. I mainly spend time out here with the intent of having privacy. I enjoy assuming that absent-minded state, which allows me to mull over some projects. But once I start working on an actual project, I can't really do anything in this space, I have to go elsewhere. That's why I have a studio next door measuring slightly over 300 square meters, which I use for storage, and where I can make slightly larger works. But currently I don't have a studio suitable for making relatively large-scale works. I've yet to find a suitable place for that.

**LEAP:** How do you go about making a work like *XL Chamber*, which is currently on show at Yuz Museum? Did it replace a previous work?

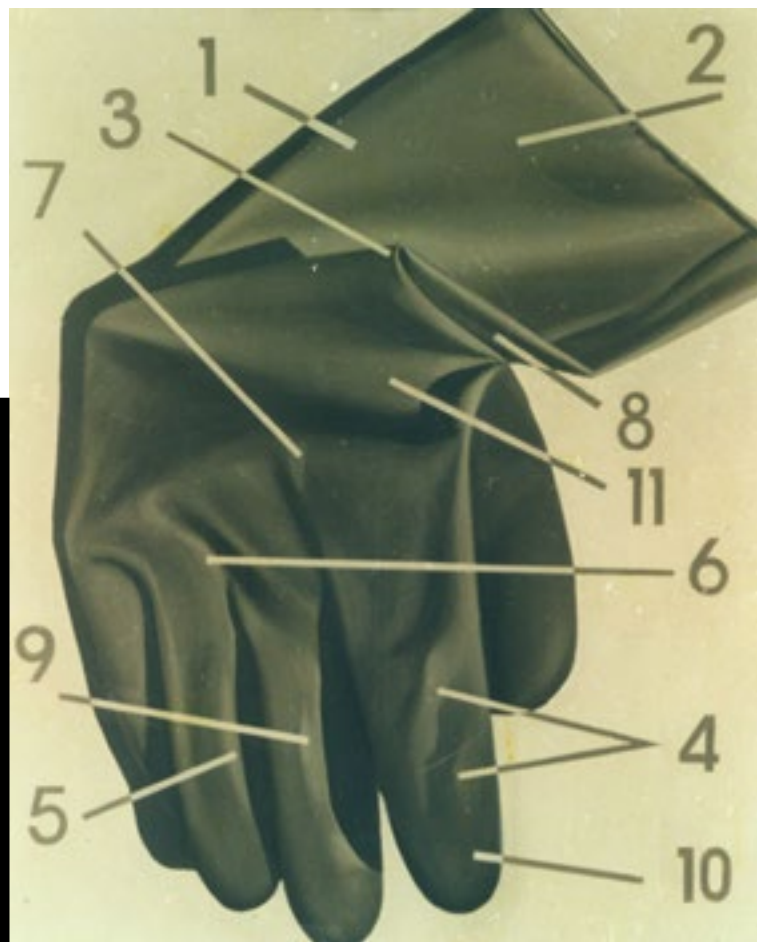
**ZP:** The work *XL Chamber* couldn't be made beforehand in the studio. I did some trials first, and then completed the work on-site. That work is quite special, because it's really complicated to install, it needs to be installed on-site, so there basically won't be any big alterations. The removed work is *The Endless Walkway* (2016) which was previously exhibited in Shanghai Minsheng Art Museum. In that piece, lace was woven to form the colorless flags of 14 countries, playing with the density of the material to configure it into patterns. Although the Minsheng exhibition wasn't ideal in terms of venue, it worked out nicely, because there happened to be a walkway enclosed by walls on both sides, which hid the other works from view and freed the walkway from interferences. Passing through a walkway with these successive lace dividers is reminiscent of the mosquito nets we used to hang up in the summer, as well as curtains, or a kind of veil with a romantic feel to it.

**LEAP:** 《卷帘盒子》是否有对《看得见尽头的通道》有某种意味上的回应呢？

**张培力:** 有一定的关系，因为只要是这件作品用来替代上一个作品，即便我不想直接说什么，有些东西还是会下意识地在作品里存在。但是《卷帘盒子》最直接的来源跟之前在北京掩体空间的《不宜久留的场所》(2017) 有关系。那个展览做完了以后我一直在考虑一个问题，就是说像这样的作品在脱离那个特殊的环境以后，有没有可能重复再做。因为那个场地太特殊了，你哪怕没有作品，不加进去什么东西，这个场地本身就可以给进去的人一种特殊的感受。我后来觉得要完全复制出那种效果应该不太可能，但这样的概念我可以复制出来——就是被控制，被关闭在某一个空间里面，然后失去了自己控制的能力。所以后来他们问我有没有一个新的作品来替换《看得见尽头的通道》，我就挺自然地想到了《卷帘盒子》这个方案。

**LEAP:** 您有多大的兴趣和意图去控制观众的参与？

**张培力:** 我最近几年的很多作品都跟观众参与有关，观众这个因素是我作品当中的一部分，因为我在想象这个作品会给观众带来多少心理上的影响，但是所有东西都应该在一个范围里，一定不会超过观众所承受的极限，否则这件作品从道德上会有一点点自私。当然你更不可能超过法律的底线，要不然过两天就被撤掉了。所以我很难用很具体的东西来确定控制的范围，这两个就是我的底线。



**LEAP:** Can *XL Chamber* be seen as a response to *The Endless Walkway*?

**ZP:** There's a connection there, because as long as one work is used to replace another one, even if I don't mean to say something directly, some things will subconsciously be present in the work. But the most immediate origin of *XL Chamber* relates to the work *Unsuitable Place to Stay* (2017), previously exhibited at the Bunker in Beijing. After that exhibition, I kept thinking about whether or not I'd have the possibility to repeat this work after it got separated from that particular environment. The original venue was so extraordinary that even if you didn't have a work to put into the space, the space itself could give those who entered it a real special feeling. Afterwards, I felt I couldn't entirely do it justice by copying the original effect, but I could replicate the concept. That notion of being controlled, being shut inside of a space, and losing your own capacity for control. So later on, when they asked whether I had a new work to substitute *The Endless Walkway*, I naturally thought of the *XL Chamber* project.

《X?》，1986年  
布上油画，135 × 110 厘米

X?, 1986  
Oil on canvas, 135 x 110 cm

**LEAP:** To what extent are you interested in controlling the audience's participation?

**ZP:** Many of my works in recent years have been related to audience participation. The element of the audience forms a part of my oeuvre, owing to my imagination of how much the work in question will influence the viewer psychologically. But the works should have a pre-limited scope, they mustn't transcend the limits of what's bearable for the audience. Otherwise, the works will be too morally egotistical. Naturally, the works should even less so exceed a legal bottom line, or else they'll get removed within a few of days' time. It's hard for me to use something concrete to ascertain the boundaries of control. But those are two lines I never cross.

**LEAP:** One facet which is obviously in the same strain as this work, is the written rule-set in your early work *About X?: Exhibition Procedures* (1987). From an audience perspective, that set of rules was rather harsh. Did you only conceive of it as a concept, or did you really want to implement such a set of rules? What about those seemingly random numerical settings pertaining to specific times and amounts of people?

**ZP:** Many people ask me how much I think my works have changed over the years. As far as these things go, I haven't changed that much. Since the 1980s, I've always been struggling with the control exercised by the work over the audience, i.e. the alternating relation between the controlling and the controlled. Actually, back then I didn't necessarily need to put that rule-set into practice, nor would it have occurred to me to use a tool like roller blinds. Back then, my projects were more theatrical, resembling performances, or accidental occurrences. Actually, I didn't aspire to accomplish much by doing that. Because when you write a text, you're only telling people your intentions, but you don't really make it into an installation which you force the audience into accepting. But if such an installation is put into practice and the audience refuses to cooperate, it amounts to nothing. If we were to actually trace this current work to its earliest origins, it would perhaps be *Opposite Space* (1995), which features two identically sized rooms with security cameras on each side, with their respective monitors placed opposite them. Visitors can see one another via the cameras and the monitors, and the doors are also controlled, so after you enter a door, it's impossible to exit right away. So, there's a coercion in play here. It emphasizes a relationship, because the work isn't complete as long as one of the rooms is empty. Pure happenstance and coincidence decide who appears in the room, and there cannot be any repetition. To me, that's really interesting. In 1995, I gave the visitors of the Centre d'Art Santa Mònica in Barcelona the chance of rubbing elbows with strangers. A large part of people's lives is spent with people they don't know. Mainly, these encounters end with a mere glance, and aren't committed to memory. But perhaps because of this artwork, these face-to-face encounters will leave a lasting impression. This work bears some relation to a previous work I did, titled *Art Project No. 2* (1988). However, in *Opposite Space*, the conversation aspect is weakened, so it's mainly about voyeurism and viewing. As you watch others, you yourself are also being watched.



《不宜久留的场所》，2017年  
在地装置：语音合成、3寸喇叭、PLC（可编程逻辑遥控器）、电磁锁和微波感应控制灯泡  
“没有网络”展览现场，掩体空间，北京  
2017至2018年

*Unsuitable Place to Stay, 2017*  
Installation: synthesized sound, PLC (programmable logic controller), magnetic lock and microwave sensor light bulb  
Installation view at "No Network," the Bunker, Beijing, 2017-2018



**LEAP:** So looking at it this way, "people losing control within a confined space" has been a consistent theme in your practice for decades.

**ZP:** It's an intrinsic relation that can be traced back twenty to thirty years. On the one hand, some things deep down inside of me have remained unchanged, while on the other hand our surroundings, although seemingly altered, essentially haven't changed a bit. At times, we may beget certain delusions, because we see present-day cities expanding non-stop, while communication and transportation are improving, culminating in such things as high speed railways. We think our lives have changed drastically, but these changes are all superficial.

**LEAP:** 明显和《卷帘盒子》一脉相承的是您早期用文本写的《先奏后斩：关于X?的展览程序》(1987)的那套规则。当时那套规则对观众来讲是有些残酷的。当时只是把它作为一个概念，还是真的有想去实现那样的一套规则？

**张培力:** 很多人问我这么多年来自己觉得自己有多大改变。从这点上讲其实我改变并不大，从八十年代开始，我就一直在比较纠结作品的控制和观众的关系，也就是控制与被控制的转换关系。其实那个时候并没有说一定要实施出来，而且根本没想到过用卷帘或者其他的手段，那个时候的方案更多的是带有戏剧性的，有点像表演，也有点像一个偶发的东西，我要做的事情其实很少。因为你写文本只是说把你的意向告诉别人，但是没有真正做成装置去强迫观众接受。但是这样的方案实施出来只要观众不配合，你完全是一厢情愿。那么现在这个作品其实要追溯到最早的话可能是《相对的空间》(1995)，两个一样大小的房间，两边是有摄像头，各自的显示器放在对面，观众可以通过摄像头和显示器可以看到对方，然后这个门也是被控制的，一个门进去了以后，你不能马上出来。这个作品里面就有一种强制。它强调了一种关系，因为只要有一个房间没有人的话，这个作品就是不完整的。两个房间是谁出现完全是偶遇与巧合，不可能有任何重复。所以这个我觉得也蛮有意思的，1995年在西班牙巴塞罗纳圣·莫妮卡艺术中心给别人提供了一个跟不认识的人打照面的机会，人一辈子大多数时间都会跟你的不认识的人打照面，基本上就只是看一眼，跟你的记忆是没有关系的，但也许因为这样一个作品，你打个照面就会有印象。这个一方面也是跟之前的《艺术计划第二号》(1988)有关，因为《艺术计划第二号》是窥视和对话，但《相对的空间》里对话的成分就被削弱了，主要是讲窥视与看。其实也不是窥视，摄像头、监视器放在那儿实际上是一个名正言顺的看了，你看别人，自己也在被看。



《相对的空间》  
在地装置  
“来自中国的艺术”展览现场  
圣·莫妮卡艺术中心，巴塞罗纳，1995年  
*Relative Space*  
Installation view  
"China, Artistic Avant-garde Movements"  
Centro d'Art Santa Mònica, Barcelona, 1995

**LEAP:** Your early works show more traces of a mischievous and rebellious attitude, especially against certain organizations or systems. Is this aspect changing at all?

**ZP:** Actually, broadly speaking, this has barely changed. There are differences in the methods I use to achieve it. Everyone bargains with their surroundings and the system. To consider my attitude as one of prank-pulling would be inadequate, since that was merely a genuine attitude at that time. Revisiting this now, my works include some elements of exchange, as a not-so-straightforward way to express my attitude and stance. So in my most recent works I don't only engage in exchanges with the system, but also with the audience. Otherwise put, only when the audience is receptive to this work can the author's attitude be deciphered. If the audience isn't receptive, then this work doesn't hold up and is utterly meaningless. In this respect, my current works are very different from my previous ones.

**LEAP:** 其实从这一点来讲“人在一个有限的空间里失去控制”是您三十多年来探讨的东西。

**张培力:** 这是一种内在的联系，可以追溯到二三十年前，一方面可以说是我骨子里有些东西没有改变，但另一方面也可以说我们的环境看起来好像改变了，其实本质上并没有改变。有的时候我们可能会产生一种幻觉，因为当我们看到现在城市不断的扩大，通讯和交通都在改善，以为生活改变了很多，但所有改变都是表面的。

**LEAP:** 早期的创作中能看到更多恶作剧似的玩味态度，或者说有一种显性地对抗某些团体的意识，您觉得这一点有在改变吗？

**张培力:** 其实宽泛一点讲，这个东西没多少改变，只不过方式上面会不同，每个人都在跟环境和这个系统讨价还价，把它当成恶作剧不妥，恶作剧也只不过在那个时候是一种纯粹的态度，可能现在再谈，里面会包含一些交换的成分，不单纯地在表达我的态度和姿态。所以现在的作品里不光跟系统交换，跟观众也交换——也就是说当观众能接受这件作品了，作者的态度才能被解读，如果不接受的话这件作品就不成立，没有任何意义，这点上讲跟之前有很大的不同。

**LEAP:** 早期有更多玩世不恭的姿态的呈现，而现在会更强调与观众的交换、以及观众的参与，这一点其实跟最初池社成立的时候提出的艺术作为一种“浸入”式的体验，有一脉相承的地方。

**张培力:** 池社那时候“浸入”这个概念其实更多的是指自己。那个时候从艺术角度讲，态度还是比较自恋的。早期八十年代，包括九十年代初很多艺术家都是很自恋的，可能也是因为年纪也大了，做艺术的时间长了以后，会有这样的一厢情愿。这种自恋，我觉得是一个阶段的事情，艺术家不能光考虑自己。现在考虑作品我会把观众这个因素考虑得多一点，尽管有的时候别人看起来还是捉弄，或者说还是有自恋的成分，但是我觉得比八九十年代初那个时候要好一些。

**LEAP:** 可能那个年代需要一种自我相信、自恋才可以发挥自己的主体性。

**张培力:** 从积极的方面来讲可以说那个时代需要, 如果从消极或者客观一点的态度上来讲的话, 一个时代需要什么东西完全是偶然的。中国一直以来是一种声音在说话, 我们看到的艺术都是一种面貌、一种风格, 那个时候如果是六七十年代出现了某种不一样的东西也可以说是时代的需要, 因为早就需要改变了, 但是为什么那个时候没出现呢? 因为不可能。很多事情出现了是合理的, 不出现也是合理的。你说不清楚它为什么会出来, 回过头去看好像它符合这个时代的一种需求或者要求。

**LEAP:** 所以现在回头看“85新空间”的展览, 到池社的成立这些事情, 您也会觉得有很大的偶然性吗?

**张培力:** 有的时候, 偶然和必然之间在相互转换, 我们从历史上看好像它是必然的, 在当时来讲是由很多偶然决定的。很多东西是一个机缘, 而且这个机缘是跟我们自身无关的。如果没有恢复高考, 没有商务出版社出版的一系列哲学丛书, 没有看到一些电影, 我相信那个必然是不成立的。这个必然你看上去是必然, 它其实之前有很多偶然已经决定了它。那么你现在去看很多重大的历史事件, 真的是由很多偶然的事情决定的。必然跟偶然不是没有关系, 其实是在相互之间转换的。

**LEAP:** A more explicitly cynical stance shone through your early works, whereas you currently emphasize the exchange with the audience, as well as audience participation. This is actually in the same strain as your previous assertion of art being an “immersive” experience, made at the time when you’d just established the Pond Society.

**ZP:** At the time of the Pond Society, the notion of “being immersed” referred more to ourselves. Back then, from an artistic perspective, I had a rather narcissistic attitude. Early on, in the 1980s as well as the 90s, lots of artists were highly narcissistic. Maybe it’s because as you grow older and practice art for some time, you develop such propensities. I believe narcissism is just a phase. The artist cannot consider himself exclusively. When thinking about my works now, I give much more thought to the audience, although in the eyes of some it still comes across as pulling people’s leg, or containing narcissistic elements. That said, I think it’s improved a lot compared with decades ago.

**LEAP:** Perhaps one needed a certain confidence and narcissism in order to express their subjectivity in that era.

**ZP:** Positively speaking you could say that it was a demand of the times. But from a negative or objective point of view, what an era needs is entirely by chance. In China, it’s always been a singular voice. The art that we saw all had the same look and style. You could say that there was a need for something different in the 1960s and 70s—changes should have happened a long time ago. But why did nothing change then? Because it would not have been possible. It makes sense if things happened, and it makes sense if they didn’t. You can never explain why certain things occur. Looking back, they seem to have met the needs or demands of the era.

《仲夏的泳者》, 1985年  
布上油画, 173.5 × 170 厘米

Midsummer Swimmers, 1985  
Oil on canvas, 173.5 x 170 cm



**LEAP:** When you look back on “85 New Space” and the founding of Pond Society, do you think there were more contingencies than necessities?

**ZP:** Sometimes, contingencies and necessities are interchangeable. From a historical point of view, they might seem inevitable, but at the time there were a lot of contingencies. Many things happened by chance, which had nothing to do with our control. Without the resumption of *gaokao* (university entrance exam in China), without the series of philosophy books published by The Commercial Press, without certain movies at the time, there would not be any inevitability. The inevitability that you perceive is in fact pre-conditioned by many chance factors. Many events in history were shaped by contingencies. Contingencies and necessities are not separate; they convert into each other.

**LEAP:** 池社成立之前, “85新空间”是怎么找到这一批志趣相投的人的?

**张培力:** 这是一个很自然的聚合, 因为“85新空间”背后是浙江美术协会, 他们希望把“85新空间”规模做的很大, 他们考虑的是另外一个问题, 因为那时候大家都在冲全国美展, 在八十年代最风光的不是浙江, 是四川、辽宁、北京, 甚至上海、广东。所以浙江一直比较郁闷, 一方面浙江在创作上比较保守, 另一方面对年轻艺术家和从学校刚毕业的学生支持不够, 他们是从这个角度想要有个改变。所以新空间人数很多。虽然我们也画了一些跟之前在学校的毕业创作不一样的作品, 我们觉得这不是我们想要的模式。耿建翌画了《灯光下的两个人》(1985) 和《1985年夏季的又一个光头》(1985), 我画了《请你欣赏爵士乐》(1985) 和《仲夏的泳者》(1985), 但是我们觉得这些作品如果从艺术语言或者艺术观念来讲, 不是我们最终想要的东西。在“85新空间”之后, 我们希望有一些观念、态度上比较接近的人在艺术方面可以有更深入的讨论, 像耿建翌, 宋陵, 还有王强我们几个人以前在学校里面都是同学, 在“85新空间”里我们几个人关系也比较近。

**LEAP:** 所以当时达成了一种默契, 你们都会拒绝有明显感情传达的画面吗?

**张培力:** 这个冷静的表达我觉得更多的是在“85新空间”的时候, 到池社的时候更多的是在考虑艺术对于我们来说是什么。我们那个时候觉得它不是单纯的一种技能, 不是一种带有功利性的事情, 我们更多的是想在艺术里尽可能地排除任何功利, 不单排除情感, 甚至排除思想, 我们不要艺术成为一种思想的载体。因为那个时候很多人都把“85新空间”看成是第二次五四运动一样的思想启蒙、文化启蒙运动, 我们对这个持有保留态度。所以很多时候我们对把我们视作理性绘画或者是理性精神的这个说法很无奈。艺术不应该成为思想的载体, 艺术是思考的载体, 但不是一个主义的载体, 它是跟思考有关的表达和态度。另外, 艺术不应该是一小部分人孤芳自赏、自娱自乐的工具。我们觉得艺术是跟社会、跟我们认为的艺术家以外的那些人有关的一些事情他们可以认为这个东西可有可无, 但你自己做艺术的时候你一定要把艺术以外的这些因素、环境考虑在你的艺术当中。



池社，《作品1号—杨氏太极拳系列》（局部），1986年  
报纸、晒图纸，拼贴  
一组12件

Pond Society, *Yang Style Taichi* (detail), 1986  
Newspaper, blueprint paper, collage  
A set of 12

**LEAP:** 《杨氏太极》(1986)、《包扎——国王与王后》(1986) 那些想法当时是在什么样的情况下产生的?

**张培力:** 我记得我们那个时候有过这样一个默契，就是我们的工作分成两部分，一部分是你自己来计划，另外一部分工作就是在我们这个成员当中只要谁提出来一个想法，就由大家一起来合作完成，这个作品不属于某个人。太极系列最早是我提出来的。风景区那些胡同里边经常会有人在那儿锻炼身体打太极拳，旁边就是美院，所以这个作品针对两个主要的人群，跟美院可以对话，跟锻炼身体的老头儿老太太也可以对话。也就是说一批是跟艺术有关的，一批是跟艺术无关的。这个地点刚好处在两者重叠的地带。然后我们不太喜欢用公共艺术、环境艺术之类的术语来定义它们，它只是跟环境有关的，户外的，比较容易被毁掉的而已。

**LEAP:** 当时有比较细致地去考虑怎么用语言去传播它让更多的人知道吗?

**张培力:** 我觉得语言是我们考虑的最简单的一种形式，任何东西你要表达或者传递肯定需要一种手段，肯定就需要语言。实际上1986年离文革结束也差不多只有十年时间，但是我觉得大家已经把很多街上的东西淡忘了。1976年以后，北京还是出现了大字报，后来叫西单民主墙，到了1986年时基本已经消失了。但我们觉得这个时候在某一个地方张贴某一种东西对心理上的影响是很微妙的。那个时候也没有说这是非法的，但是也没有明文规定是允许的，所以为了安全起见，我们选择了在半夜突然让它出现的方式。有些人对这样的一种方式可能是熟悉的，但是这样的人形、这样的尺寸、材料在当时来讲是有点异常的。那个时候尽管我们知道在美国的艺术里有涂鸦这一说，但我们还没有出现涂鸦，因为没有油漆罐，好像用报纸弄成这样的图形是很自然的选择，并且我们都觉得尺寸必须大，现场差不多有3米多高，基本上就是顶天立地的了。

**LEAP:** 当时有听到一些群众的反响吗?

**张培力:** 当时没有去了解，那个时候还是有点紧张害怕。我们大概到中午去看的时候已经有很多被人撕掉了。据说有很多人很高兴地拿这个报纸可以去卖，因为这个报纸一层一层的里边有很多糨糊，卖起来很重，很多卖废品的人他们很喜欢，所以剩下大概上面有三分之一是手够不着的地方还留着，差不多留了一年多时间，下面都被撕掉了。



**LEAP:** 您最初是怎么接触录像的?

**张培力:** 最初我没有接触，后来借了些设备，但最早的几件作品都不是我自己来控制机器的，后来有一个用小摄像机拍的作品叫《儿童乐园》(1991)。大部分我自己用机器拍摄的作品是在1996年，因为那时候有朋友工作的地方有一台比较好的摄像机，虽然也不是专业的。其实那个时候没有录像的概念。我一直以来喜欢看电影，那时盗版多，一开始看的都是录像带，整天忙着跟别人交换，只要听到谁手里有什么好的片子就会想尽办法去做交换。另一方面我现在很难判断当时到底是要满足拍电影的愿望，还是做录像的愿望，好像那个时候也没有一个要做录像的概念。但是你不可能来拍电影，因为电影胶片很贵，电影的摄像机也没有办法搞到，只有便携式的录像机。而且那个时候知道国外有人在拍，比如说白南准，维托·阿肯锡 (Vito Acconci)，但是没看过他们的作品。所以我自己也用录像来拍作品，但受到启发最大的还是电影。

**LEAP:** Pond Society came out of the exhibition "85 New Space." How did a group of like-minded artists meet through "85 New Space"?

**ZP:** It was a natural aggregation. "85 new space" was organized by the Zhejiang Fine Arts Association. They wanted to make a sizable exhibition in order to compete with the other provinces. In the 1980s, Zhejiang did not stand out in the national art exhibition, Sichuan, Liaoning, Beijing, and even Shanghai and Guangdong were more celebrated. So with "85 New Space," they wanted to make a change. There were many participants in the exhibition. We made very different paintings from our graduation work in school. Geng Jianyi painted *Two People Under Light* (1985), and *Summer 1985, One More Shaved Head* (1985), I made *Enjoy Jazz* (1985) and *Midsummer Swimmers* (1985). In terms of artistic language and concept, we felt that these works were not what we wanted. After "85 New Space," we hoped to have more in-depth discussions about art with people that shared similar concepts and attitudes. A number of us, including Geng Jianyi, Song Ling, Wang Qiang, and I, were classmates in school and already close with each other among the "85 New Space" crowd.

**LEAP:** At the time, did you all share the same feeling against paintings with explicit sentiments?

**ZP:** The rational style was more on our mind during "85 New Space." After forming Pond Society, we thought a lot more on what art meant to us. At the time we did not think of it as just a skill. Art should not be utilitarian. We hoped to eliminate any aspect of utilitarianism in art, not only emotions, but also thought. We did not want art to become a vector of thought. Because at the time, many regarded "85 New Space" as a cultural enlightenment, or another May Fourth. We had our reservations about it. Therefore, sometimes we were quite frustrated with the term "rationa painting." Art should not be a vector for a particular thought. It's a vector for thinking but not for any "ism" or ideology. Furthermore, art should not only entertain the interests of a particular group of people. We believed that art was connected to the society, and the people who were not artists—though they might feel indifferent about art, but when you make work, you need to take into consideration the factors and environs outside of art.



**LEAP:** How were *Yang Style Taichi* (1986) and *Bandaging—The King and the Queen* (1986) conceived?

**ZP:** I remember we had a tacit understanding that our work as Pond Society had two parts; one part was your own plan, and the other part was to work together to realize an idea proposed by a member—the work would not belong to any individual. I proposed the taichi series. Back then there were a lot of people practicing taichi in the scenic area next to the Academy of Fine Arts. So the work spoke to two targets—the Academy people and the senior residents practicing in the area, one related to art, one not. The location happened to be the overlapping zone of the two. We didn't want to define the projects as public art or environmental art. They were simply outdoor and ephemeral.

**LEAP:** At the time, did you consider how to use text and language to spread it so more people would know about it?

**ZP:** I think language is one of the simplest forms of communication we can think of. Anything you want to express or pass on certainly needs a means, and that's when language is essential. In fact, only about ten years had passed since the end of the Cultural Revolution, but I think most people had forgotten about the posters on the streets. The psychological effect of putting things up on the streets was quite intricate. It was not illegal but no law said it was allowed either. To be safe, we decided to put up the figures at night. We knew about graffiti in America, but without access to spray cans, it seemed like a natural choice to make those figures with newspaper. The figures were three-meters tall—we all felt that they had to be large.

**LEAP:** Did you hear any feedback from the public at the time?

**ZP:** We didn't try to find out at the time. We were in fact quite nervous. When we went back around noon, many were ripped off. Apparently a lot of people took them down to sell and earned extra money because the paste added a lot of weight. So only the top third of the figures remained, and lasted over a year.

**LEAP:** 在您后来的创作中,可以看到叙事性慢慢地剥离,之后更多的是装置作品,比如我们近几年看到的几件作品都更强调物体本身机械性的语言。

**张培力:** 九十年代有一段时间,特别是到了2008年那个时候,有几件作品跟我早期几件作品有所不同。那个时候想尝试叙事的可能,所以像《阵风》(2008)跟之前的《(卫)字3号》(1991)或者《30×30》(1988)来比,叙事性强一点,而且更接近电影的拍摄,而且拍摄本身就找了专业团队,因为有很多地方需要专业制景。在这件作品之前的《窗外的风景》(2007)虽然用的也是录像,但从制景上讲比较接近电影。

**LEAP:** 然后在那之后有一个从录像转向装置的变化?

**张培力:** 其实2008年的《阵风》也算是录像装置,2006年我在北京的个展“短语”,里边有件作品就叫《短语》,把电影里两个同样的画面做成感应的装置,一个可以加快,另一个可以放慢,想用这个手段来摆脱纯粹叙事。后来2007年的作品《最低像素》也有感应装置,可以说是从影像转换到装置的过程。

**LEAP:** 更突出媒介本身的特质。

**张培力:** 对,但是我很早就开始尝试录像装置了,《儿童乐园》、《作业一号》第一次展览都是1993年在巴黎,也都是作为录像装置来做的。最后一个录像是《2012的肖像》(2012),之后没有再拍过录像。



《儿童乐园》, 1992年  
10 频道录像装置, 彩色, 有声  
24 分钟

*Children's Playground*, 1992  
10-channel video installation, color, sound  
24 min

**LEAP:** 所以2012年做《2012的肖像》的时候有一个意识说做完这个之后就不再拍了吗?

**张培力:** 也没有说刻意不拍,但也没有特别想拍的念头,所以最后还是没拍,因为还想用别的媒介来创作。我会跟着自己的好奇心走。而且如果没有很强的创作欲望,没有刺激的话,好像也无所谓。如果可做可不做,那还是不做吧。这是唯一别人不能逼的,如果我自己有理由觉得一定要做出来的作品,我会着急去完成。但说句实话除了录像和绘画,很多方面我有很大的兴趣。所以今年或者明年,你们会看到有不太一样的作品。

**LEAP:** 今天看宋陵的一些创作还是能看到和八十年代很相似的地方,宋老师的趣味和倾向似乎一直没有变。而在您几十年的创作生涯里,可以看到各种语言的实验。如果非要提炼出一些恒常的东西,可能是对于观众参与形式的控制,和一种玩味的态度。

**张培力:** 我觉得宋老师近几年的系列作品比较深入,是一种非常平静的心态。我可能也是这个方面跟他不太一样,我折腾得多,比较容易烦躁、厌烦,怕自己一直不断地重复,哪怕大家都说这个作品很好。因为我觉得不要把自己束缚住。

另外,一个艺术家如果不再考虑问题或者面对问题了,基本上他就没有再说话的必要了,因为语言已经没有问题了,没有问题你干嘛还要说? 池社宣言里有一句话是“不是想要这样才这样,而是不得不这样才这样”。按照最通俗的说法,这个“不得不”就是有感而发。你在做作品的过程当中你自己是有感觉的,对你自己来说是一件愉快的事。你自己有感觉,看的人也会有感觉,你自己没感觉,看的人也会没感觉。当然,观念主义的一些作品除外,但是从某种程度上讲它也是一种感觉,只是不是通常所谈的那种感觉——它不是感性的东西,也不是知觉。但它在说什么别人至少是知道的,艺术家自己也知道自己在说什么,为什么要说。所以一件作品如果到了连自己都不知道为什么要做、在做什么自己都不知道的那个阶段,也许做作品对艺术家来说不难,但是我觉得它很有可能没有意义。



“阵风”展览现场, 博而励画廊, 北京, 2008年

View of "A Gust of Wind," Boers-Li Gallery, Beijing, 2008



《请你欣赏爵士乐》，1985年  
布上油画，123 × 195 厘米

Enjoy Jazz, 1985  
Oil on canvas, 123 x 195 cm



**LEAP:** How did you first start making video works?

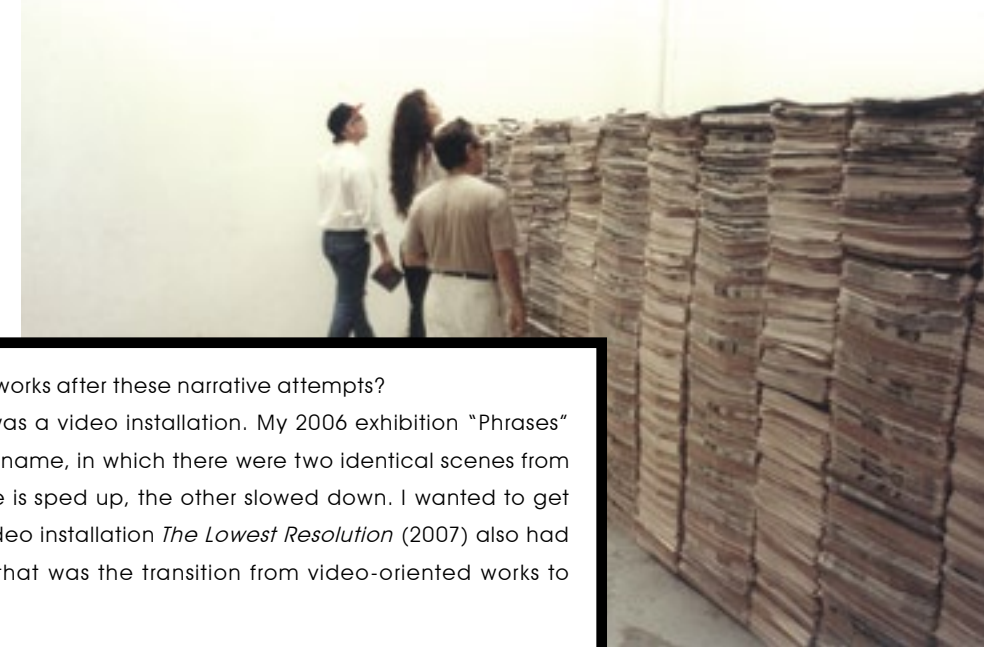
**ZP:** In the beginning I knew nothing about it. I borrowed some equipment, but for the first few works, I had other people operate the camera. Eventually I shot a work myself with a small camera, called *Children's Playground* (1991). In 1996 when a quality camera became available at a friend's workplace, I shot most of the works myself. It was not a professional camera either. Back then there was no such concept of video art. I've always enjoyed watching films; pirated movies were abundant and we were exchanging VHS tapes with each other constantly. We would seek out whatever good tapes out there. On the other hand, I cannot recall whether my motivation back then was to make movies or video works. But it was impossible to make a film, because celluloid film was too expensive and no one had access to a real film camera. There were only handheld video cameras available. I was aware that people were making video works abroad, such as Nam June Paik, and Vito Acconci, but I had not been able to see their works. So when I made videos, I was mostly inspired by films.

**LEAP:** Narrativity seems to be slowly stripped off in your later works as you made more and more installation-based works. Especially in recent years, you made many large-scale installations characterized by their mechanical language.

**ZP:** There was a time in the 1990s, and also in 2008, when a few works I made diverged from previous ones. I wanted to explore the possibilities of narrative. Compared with *Hygiene No. 3* (1991) or *30 x 30* (1988), *A Gust of Wind* (2008) was more story-driven, and produced like a film. I hired a professional team to shoot the work, and had a few sets made. Before that, I made *The Scene Outside the Window* (2007) on video, but it also came close to film production because of the staged sets.

《临时开放的景点》，1995年  
旧报纸、木制台阶和旧报纸砌成的墙  
1.85 × 8米

Scenic Spot Open Temporarily, 1995  
Used newspaper, wooden steps,  
a wall made of used newspaper  
1.85 x 8 m



**LEAP:** Did you shift towards installation works after these narrative attempts?

**ZP:** Strictly speaking, *A Gust of Wind* was a video installation. My 2006 exhibition "Phrases" in Beijing featured a work of the same name, in which there were two identical scenes from a film—with a sensory equipment, one is sped up, the other slowed down. I wanted to get rid of pure narrative in this way. The video installation *The Lowest Resolution* (2007) also had an interactive sensor, you could say that was the transition from video-oriented works to installations.

**LEAP:** Towards installations that focus more on the structure and medium-specific language.

**ZP:** Yes, but I made installation attempts very early on. Both *Children's Playground* (1991) and *Assignment No. 1* (1992) were installations, and shown for the first time in Paris in 1993. The last video I made was *Portraits of 2012* (2012), and after that I stopped making videos.

**LEAP:** Did you make a conscious decision to stop making videos at the time?

**ZP:** I did not deliberately put a stop to it, but I haven't felt motivated since. I also wanted to make works in other forms, so I followed my curiosity. It doesn't work for me if I'm not inspired or stimulated. If I feel ambivalent, I'd rather not do it. Creating art is the one thing that no one can force you to do. But if I have an idea that I feel strongly about, I would try everything to make it happen. To be honest, I'm interested in many things other than video and painting. You will see very different works from me this year and next.

**LEAP:** When we look at Song Ling's work today, we can find a consistent thread going through his paintings in the 1980s and up until now; whereas the media and languages that you have experimented with in the past three decades are much more diverse. An implicit element that runs through your oeuvre—if there has to be one—could be your interest in audience participation, coupled with a playful attitude.

**ZP:** Song Ling's work in recent years goes to great depth. He has a very peaceful mindset. In this respect I'm quite different. I'm restless, and easily frustrated or bored. I fear for any possibility that I might be repeating myself—no matter how well-received the works are. I do not want to limit myself.

On the other hand, an artist who no longer thinks through or confronts problems should cease their expression. If you can't find any problems in your language, why should you keep talking? In the manifesto of Pond Society, it says "it is not because we want to be like this, it is because we have to." In the plain sense of the word, it means you can't help but feel it. You have to feel it when you make art, and there is pleasure in it for you. If you feel it, the audience can feel it too. But if you don't, nobody will. But of course, certain conceptual works are exceptions to this rule, but there is still a feel to it, just not the sentimental kind, nor cognitive. But the audience can understand what the artist is saying, and the artist is conscious of what they are saying and why they are saying it. If you do not know why you are making a work, or what you are even doing, it may be easy for you to keep making works, but I don't think it would be very meaningful.

张培力工作室

Zhang Peili's Studio

摄影: 王亮  
Photo: Wang Liang







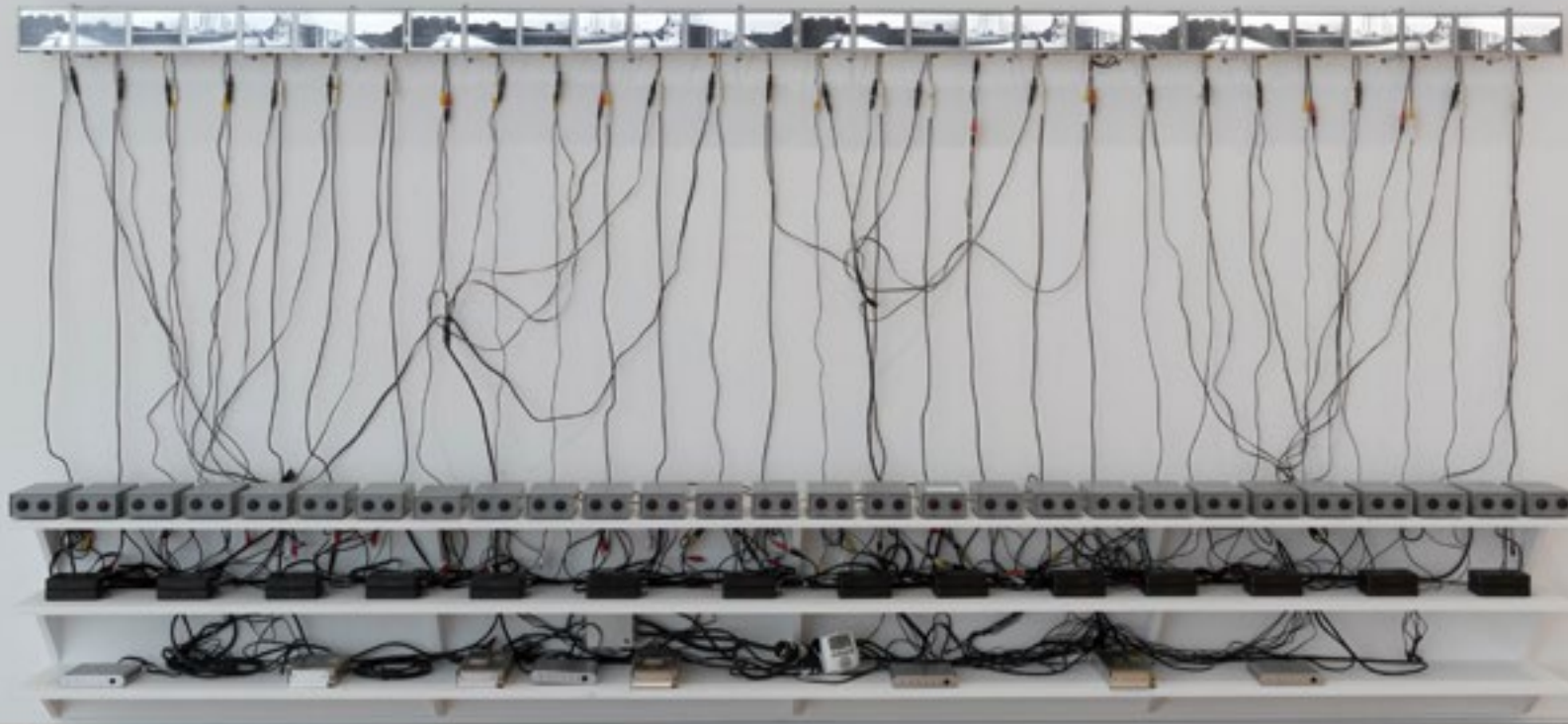






十年前的春天, 张培力在北京的博而励画廊的首个个展“阵风”令人印象深刻, 这也是张培力与博而励合作的开始。2016年贾伟成为画廊合伙人之后, 博而励在纽约开设了他们的第二个空间。

*Zhang Peili has been represented by Beijing's Boers-Li Gallery for a decade, beginning with the memorable exhibition "A Gust of Wind" ten years ago this spring. Since Jia Wei joined as partner in 2016, the gallery has opened a second space in New York.*



## Jia Wei on Working with Zhang Peili: He never repeats himself

贾伟谈张培力:  
满足于内心是他的首要

**LEAP:** 博而励画廊自 2008 年开始与张培力合作。你个人是怎样认识张培力的? 你们现在的合作模式经历了哪些阶段?

**贾伟:** 张培力与博而励画廊合作了 10 年, 可以说是见证了我们的成长。我加入到博而励之前在拍卖行工作, 经常接触张培力比较重要的作品, 对他的作品的价格比较了解。2016 年我加入画廊, 与张培力有很密切的工作, 逐渐有了很深入的了解。

**LEAP:** 你们合作过哪些重要的项目或展览?

**贾伟:** 我从加入到现在并没有接触过他的个展, 但与他合作最密切的是 2017 年 3 月在芝加哥的回顾展“张培力: 记录. 重复。”, 这个展览对我们来说非常重要, 对艺术家本人也很有意义。2016 年底前期准备时, 我与芝加哥的策展人和张培力本人陆续开始对接, 在这个过程中我非常系统地了解了张培力整体的创作与工作态度。在这之前, 在 2016 年 10 月的弗里兹大师展 (Frieze Masters), 我们是当时唯一一个中国画廊, 目前为止也是唯一一个。我们选取了张培力 80 到 90 年代的作品, 以个展的形式在大师展亮相, 泰特美术馆 (Tate) 对展出的多件作品进行了收藏, 芝加哥美术馆的策展人也来看过, 于是 3 月在芝加哥美术馆的回顾展就把一切都串联起来了。2018 年 4 月底 5 月初, 张培力将会在博而励画廊举办个展, 全部是新的互动声音装置。

**LEAP:** 张培力在美术史上有一定的地位, 美术馆策展人对他有兴趣, 但他在当下也很活跃, 所以需要市场的推动。作为画廊你是怎样去平衡的?

**贾伟:** 这个问题需要根据博而励画廊的定位来看, 我们是商业画廊, 商业当然是非常重要的。但在这个推广艺术家过程当中, 我们也有意地去推广我们认为有真正价值的艺术家。也就是说, 不单需要艺术家在商业上活跃, 在学术上也需有一定的位置, 张培力就非常符合博而励的运营理念。因为张培力这样的艺术家不仅在媒介上有突破, 他的思想与他在当代中国艺术的位置, 都足以承上启下。从画廊运营角度来说, 他是一个非常有力量、有影响力的艺术家。在这一方面, 我觉得是双向的, 艺术家的知名度也给画廊带来了声誉。画廊在推动的时候, 我们也尽力把艺术家的位置往高推。第一点, 就是我们不能协助中国艺术家进入到国际上最好的收藏, 例如像泰特美术馆, 芝加哥美术馆和大都会美术馆这样级别的美术馆, 甚至一些大学的美术馆研究室。所以在学术性方面, 我们在国际曝光、公共收藏和一些非常重要的群展个展方面也做了很多努力。

**LEAP:** Boers-Li Gallery has worked with Zhang Peili since 2008. How did you, personally, get to know him? What stages has the relationship between the gallery and the artist passed through?

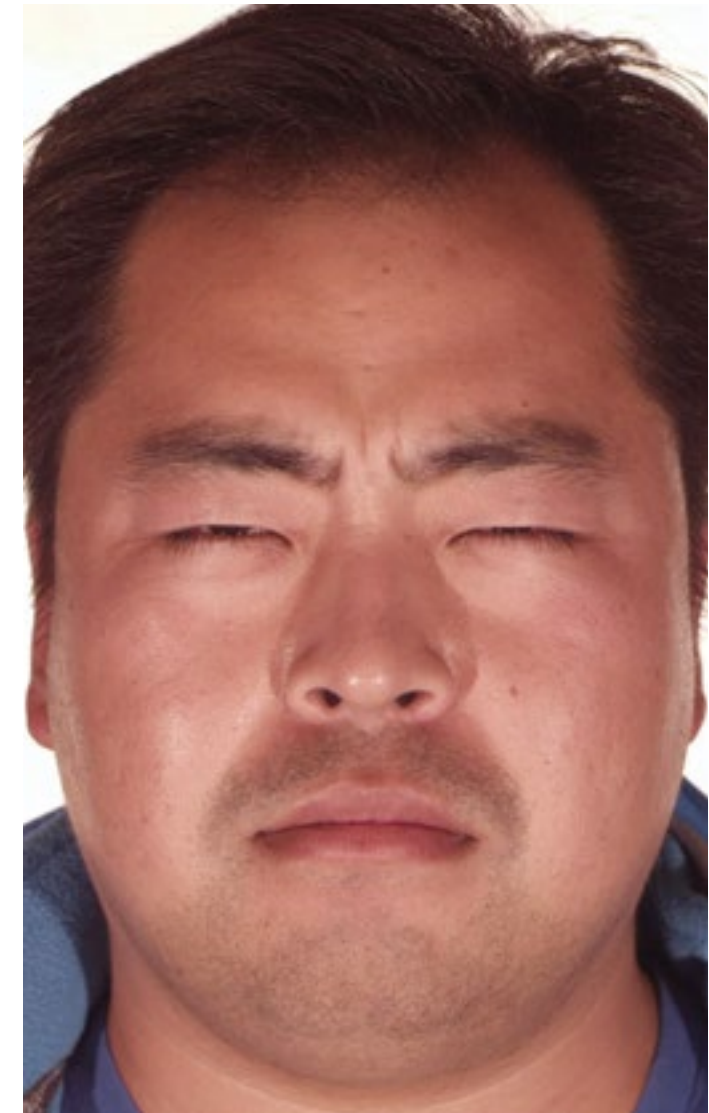
**Jia Wei:** Zhang Peili has worked with Boers-Li Gallery for ten years now, so it is fair to say that he has been a witness to our growth. Before joining Boers-Li, I was working in an auction house, and frequently came in contact with important works of his, so I already knew quite a lot about his market. I joined the gallery in 2016, and have gradually gained a deeper understanding of his work.

**LEAP:** Can you speak a little about the important exhibitions or projects on which you've collaborated with him?

**JW:** We haven't done a solo show since I joined the gallery, so my closest work with him was on his retrospective in Chicago, "Zhang Peili: Record. Repeat." in March, 2017. Other than that, we are the only Chinese gallery to have participated in Frieze Masters. In October, 2016, we selected some of Zhang's work from the 1980s to 90s, of which the Tate picked up a few pieces on exhibit as part of their collection. Around late April or early May, 2018, Zhang will have a solo exhibition at the gallery, featuring all new interactive sound installation.

**LEAP:** Zhang Peili is an important figure in the history of art, and has great appeal for institutions and curators, but he is also a living (and active) artist, and has a primary market for his work. How do you find a balance in supporting him as a gallery?

**JW:** This has a lot to do with the position of the gallery. As a commercial gallery, business is essential to us. But we deliberately promote the artists we find to be of real value. Zhang has made major contributions to his medium, so his ideas and his position in Chinese contemporary art connect the past and the future. The personal appeal of an artist like Zhang adds to the reputation of the gallery, and the gallery tries its best to propel the artist to new heights. We put a lot of effort into gaining more international exposure, particularly getting into public collections.



张培力, 《2012 的肖像》, 2012 年  
录像投影, 彩色, 有声, 22 分 9 秒

Zhang Peili, *Portraits of 2012*, 2012  
Video projection, color, sound, 22 min 9 sec  
Courtesy Boers-Li Gallery and the artist

**LEAP:** 你最欣赏张培力的哪件作品?

**贾伟:** 《2012 的肖像》这件影像装置对我来说非常震撼, 因为他把中国最普通的人物肖像, 通过互动的方式呈现了出来。这件作品也上了《艺术论坛》杂志的封面, 但是它很少被人关注。我觉得张培力 2000 年以后的作品, 始终保持了他对政治、对现状和对社会的不安和焦虑, 同时里面也有自我的感悟。其次还有张培力在美国第一次以装置形式展现的作品《临时开放的景点》(1995)。他与我沟通过, 说当时他的心情就是身处在国外。很多人对中国当时的理解都是一种隔岸观火的状态。他用报纸这个媒介, 用手撕的这个动作表达媒体传达的信息其实并不是准确和客观的。

**LEAP:** 你们日常的合作是怎样的?

**贾伟:** 在合作过程当中, 我非常喜欢和张培力讨论, 在沟通过程当中, 你会发现有一类人会吸收你的能量, 但张培力会给你不同方面的启示。这个可能也跟他长期从事教育工作有关, 他对很多问题的看法并不是绝对的强势, 他会让你有很多自己的想法。另外, 在合作过程当中我发现他对细节的处理很敏感。对他来说可以做很多东西, 但是他选择了一些东西, 从不重复地去做, 他已经去掉了自己“功成名就的中国艺术家”这个符号, 他在不断的尝试新的作品和他认为有趣的作品。还有一点我想强调的是, 满足于自己内心是他的首要。他不太在乎外界对他是怎么看, 所以一个艺术家在不满足外界, 尊重于内心的时候, 我觉得他是非常有魅力的。

(译 / 赵念)

**LEAP:** What is your favorite work by Zhang Peili?

**JW:** I find the video installation *Portraits of 2012* mind-blowing for the interactive way he presents images of the most ordinary people in China. This piece was featured on the cover of *Artforum*, but has not drawn a lot of interest. In general, I sense Zhang's insecurities and anxieties about politics, reality, and society in his work since 2000. The other one would be Zhang's first performance and installation piece shown in the United States, *Scenic Spot Open Temporarily* (1995/2017). He once told me that he felt like he was in a foreign country when he created the piece.

**LEAP:** What is your day-to-day relationship with him like?

**JW:** There are people who absorb all of your energy, but Zhang Peili is the kind of person who always finds a way to inspire you. This might have to do with the fact that he has been engaged with education for so long. His views on most issues are not absolute or overbearing. But he is very sensitive as to details. An artist of his status could do a lot of things, but he's clear about his choices and never repeats himself. He's always experimenting. He also puts his own satisfaction with his work first, and doesn't think too much about how it will be received.



## 对话芭芭拉·伦敦：炒菜之旅

### A Conversation with Barbara London: Making Stir Fry



策展人芭芭拉·伦敦为纽约现代艺术博物馆创立了录像艺术收藏部门。她很早就拜访过中国的艺术家们，并对那次寻访研究做了全面的记录。长期以来，她始终支持着这些艺术家们的作品——这一切都使她成为张培力和耿建翌等艺术家最具信服力的代理发言人之一。

*Barbara London is the curator who founded the video art collection at New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Through an early and well-documented research trip to meet Chinese artists, and her ensuing advocacy of their work, she became a key interlocutor of artists including Zhang Peili and Geng Jianyi.*

**LEAP:** 作为中国艺术界与纽约之间的沟通桥梁，你能否向那些不熟悉你的读者介绍一下你的背景呢？

**芭芭拉·伦敦:** 在 20 世纪 70 年代早期，作为 MoMA 的一位年轻策展人，我专注于录像艺术。录像艺术在当时被视为一块烫手山芋，而且也鲜有研究文献。那时候，艺术家们会交替使用多种创作手法来实验这一媒介的多变形式。策展研究意味着要挖掘艺术家，对于一件作品是以什么原因并如何被创造出来的，我有着强烈的求知欲，不仅如此，连艺术家的相关项目，不管是录像带，装置，还是他们曾经在朋克乐队里担任的角色，我也十分好奇。当我在 MoMA 推动影像艺术与声音艺术的地位时，我就强调艺术家是至关重要的合作人，而不仅仅是作品简介中的一个名字。在中国秘密进行的媒体和表演艺术激起了我的好奇心。我询问了对此有所了解的欧洲同行，并阅读了所有揭示这一变革的文章。当时在中国有屈指可数的几本展览手册和杂志，其中描述了一些外国艺术趋势，我想第一时间最快知道，这些先前被官方孤立的艺术家们都是如何回应的。

**LEAP:** 你的前瞻性不仅仅体现于你关注新媒体艺术里，还体现在你的作品中。你的作品使用了在当时比较新颖的新媒体手段，你是如何决定在 1997 年的“炒菜”（Stir Fry）项目中记录你的旅程的，以及这个在旅程中更新的工作是如何进行的？

**伦敦:** 从 1989 年起，我就想要探索中国当代艺术。当时我在洛杉矶的某个艺术节中看了郑淑丽的作品，那是几件在中国拍摄的录像。显然，当代艺术潮流在那个时候就已经在全球范围内流行开了。于是我想进一步了解这些变化是如何悄然发生的，以及不在主流视野里的中国艺术家都是如何适应当下的艺术趋势的。在去中国访问艺术家的过程中，我也继续着多年来我一直在坚持的事。1976 年我前往日本，那是我早期的研究之旅之一。自那以后，我一直在广泛地寻找新兴艺术家。我访问了他们的工作室，收集文档，将信息整理成册，然后组织展览。多年来，我持续关注了很多艺术家的作品，见证了他们的成长。在中国展开互联网项目的诱因起源于我公开了我的文件夹，与其把这些信息藏着掖着以备未来使用，我将我的调查结果放在网上完全公开，同时这也是为了任何对中国艺术感兴趣的人或者其他策展人。

另外，我认为简化策展过程是有益的。stirfry.org（现在的网址为 <http://www.adaweb.com/context/stir-fry>）的任意一位访问者都有机会与一位策展人一起旅行，共同完成研究任务。我不知道是否有很多策展人用这种方式寻找艺术家，但我觉得能让人们有机会了解一个展览的孕育阶段对双方都有帮助。

**LEAP:** 你是如何认识张培力的？是在什么时候呢？

**伦敦:** 1997 年，在我的“Stir Fry”之旅开始一周之后，我在杭州见到了张培力。我参观了他的公寓，他的房间很整洁，书和录像带精心地摆放在书架上。在聊天过程中，张培力帮助我理解了之前我在北京看到的作品。他解释说，那个年代的很多艺术家都学习过社会主义的绘画风格，就像他那时候是在浙江美术学院（中国美术学院前身）学习的。我认识张培力的时候，很少有艺术家有机会使用摄像机，当时艺术学校也没有设备。张培力就尽可能地借用器材，并靠自己摸索如何使用这个媒介。他一直和朋友一起合作，尤其是在电视台工作的朋友。

张培力的第一部录像作品在技术上非常简单。他设置了一个固定机位，然后让动作（通常由他自己或朋友来完成）在镜头前展开进行。由于没有剪辑台，视频持续的时间就与整个动作持续的时间一样，从而在概念上分出了新的层次。随着接下来几件作品的诞生，张培力和几位同在杭州的艺术家分化出了他们自己独特的创造性技术。作为画家，他们从老旧的美院传统中解放出来，走出了电视和叙事电影的模式，学会了操纵时间。

张培力给我放映了他的作品《（卫）字三号》（1991），这个录像记录了一个令人不安的私密行为。一只鸡被浸泡在洗脸盆里，被涂上肥皂按摩了两个小时。这个可怜又镇静的小东西出奇的温顺，极少扑扇翅膀，或是试图逃离，只是任由这双戴着橡胶手套的手将其变成湿漉漉的鸡毛掸子。这个不断重复的动作本身给观者带来以快感，但也有不安。

张培力，《进食》，1997 年  
三频录像，彩色，有声  
27 分 43 秒

Zhang Peili, *Eating*, 1997  
Three-channel video, color, sound  
27 min 43 sec  
Courtesy Boers-Li Gallery and the artist

**LEAP:** Could you introduce your background generally in terms of being a conduit between Chinese art and New York, for readers who might not be familiar?

**Barbara London:** As a young contemporary curator at MoMA in the early 1970s, I focused on the hot potato of video, about which little was written. Artists criss-crossed disciplines to experiment with the medium's protean forms. Curatorial research meant seeking out artists. I doggedly wanted to know the how and why someone made a work. I was curious about related projects, be it someone's videotapes, installations, or their part in an evolving punk band. More than fonts of information, artists were important collaborators as I developed video and sound art's position at MoMA. The media and performance art clandestinely unfolding in China piqued my curiosity. I quizzed European cohorts who had made it over, and read every article that shed light on the rumbling scene. I wanted to witness firsthand how artists, previously isolated by Mao, were responding to foreign art trends illustrated in the handful of exhibition catalogues and magazines hand-carried into the country.

**LEAP:** You were not only forward-thinking by looking at new media art, but also used relatively novel new media in your work. How did you decide to document your 1997 trip in "Stir Fry," and how did the process working sending updates from the road?

**BL:** I had wanted to explore contemporary art in the "Middle Kingdom" since 1989, when I saw artist Shu Lea Cheang at a festival in Los Angeles. She had a few recent videos from China. Apparently contemporary art trends had traveled around the globe. I wanted to know how that had happened, and how these previously isolated artists would digest current trends. In going to meet artists in China, I was continuing what I had been doing for many years. One of my early research trips was to Japan in 1976. Ever since, I have traveled far and wide searching for emerging artists. I have visited their studios, gathered documentation, slotted the information into file folders, and then organized shows. Over the years, I have followed the work of many artists as they matured. My original motivation for the internet project in China was to make my file folders public. Instead of squirreling away the information for later use, I would put my findings up on the internet, for curators and anyone else curious about art in China.

Also, I thought demystifying the curatorial process would be beneficial. A casual visitor to stirfry.org (now located at <http://www.adaweb.com/context/stir-fry>) gets a chance to travel with a curator on a research quest. I do not know whether many curators search for artists the way I do, but I think it is salutary to let people look in on the gestation phase of a museum exhibition.



张培力, 《(卫)字3号》, 1991年  
单频录像, 彩色, 无声  
24分45秒

Zhang Peili, *Hygiene No.3*, 1991  
Single-channel video, color, no sound  
24 min 45 sec  
Courtesy Boers-Li Gallery and the artist

**LEAP:** When and how did you meet Zhang Peili for the first time?

**BL:** In 1997, a week into my Stir-Fry trip, I caught up with Zhang Peili in Hangzhou. I visited his tidy two-room apartment, with books and videos carefully organized on shelves. Talking together, Peili helped contextualize what I had just seen in Beijing. He explained that, like many of his generation, he had studied social realist oil painting, in his case at the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts (China Academy of Art). When I met Peili, very few artists had access to video cameras, and no art schools had equipment. Peili borrowed gear when he could, and learned how to work with the medium on his own. He always involved friends, especially ones working in television production units.

Peili's first video works were technically very straightforward. He set up a fixed camera, and the action (performed by himself or friends) unfolded in the space in front of the lens. Without editing decks, tapes lasted as long as the event, and were layered conceptually. With few video examples to follow, Peili and his Hangzhou peers devised their own, inventive techniques. As former painters, they were liberated from their traditional art school conventions. They stepped outside of television and narrative film forms, and manipulated time.

Peili showed me *Document on Hygiene No. 3* (1991). The video records a peculiar private action. A chicken is placed in a washbasin, massaged, and lathered with soap for two hours. The bird is remarkably obedient, rarely flapping its wings or otherwise evading the latex-sheathed hands that turn the poor calm creature into a waterlogged feather duster. The repetitive action is both sensual and unsettling.

**LEAP:** 是什么因素推动了张培力 1998 年到 1999 年在 MoMA 的展览? 你在当时是否参与了对他作品的收购? 你是如何向 MoMA 的同事以及潜在的赞助人展示这些作品的?

**伦敦:** 当我在 1997 年认识张培力时, 电脑和互联网并没有在中国被广为使用。(张培力和我通过电话来约定见面时间。) 那时他刚刚完成了那件了不起的装置作品《进食》(1997), 那件作品有三个堆叠的监视器, 详细展示了三个视点。位于顶部的监视器侧重展示咀嚼时耳朵运动的特写, 最底下的监视器展示了一副刀叉正在切分蛋糕。这两个组合的定镜头是彩色的, 位于中间的监视器则播放着一个黑白的运动镜头, 展示了蛋糕从盘子到嘴的行动路径。这个镜头用绑在吃蛋糕人手腕上的摄像机拍摄, 这一让人辨别不清方向的视角使得“进食”这个动作成为了一个超现实的事件。一口口食物送进张开的大嘴, 这看上去就像是大海深处的捕食者正在掠食。在结构上, 这个处理将作品变成一个被解析的句子, 清晰地定义了其中的主语, 宾语和动词。

在与张培力的会面中, 我解释了 MoMA 如何维护其录像艺术品的收藏。当时, 视频作品的档案格式是录像带, 已经从 1965 年的开盘式录像带演化到了 1997 年的 Digibeta 磁带, 如果在稳定的温度和湿度条件下储存, 寿命可以更长。我强调了一件独一无二的作品与一版限量作品中的一件作品之间的区别。张培力和其他几个中国艺术家在国外的那段时间, 艺术品经销商们急于接手, 或因他们是艺术品世界的新手而占他们的便宜。张培力最后理解并接受了这个体系: 比如说, 制定的版数如何决定了作品最终能够传播的数量? 为什么录像装置作品的价格比油画低? 我承诺给张培利寄一份艺术家合同, 该合同阐明了收购过程, 这一点很重要, 因为我打算筹集资金从而能将《进食》纳入 MoMA 的艺术收藏。MoMA 最后收购了《进食》并于 1998 年展出, 展厅中陈列着杰克逊·波洛克的滴画和张培力的装置, 观者可以漫步之中。这两位艺术家专注于艺术, 非常有创新性, 他们的作品放在一起显得非常融洽。



**LEAP:** What made Zhang Peili the right fit for the MoMA exhibition he had in 1998-1999? Were you involved with the acquisitions of his work at that time? How did you present the work to colleagues at the museum, and to potential patrons of the acquisitions?

**BL:** When I met Peili in 1997, computers and the internet had not spread very far in China. (Peili and I used the telephone to set up our appointment.) He had just completed his great installation *Eating* (1997), with three stacked monitors that detail three points of view. The top monitor focuses in close-up on an ear's movement during chewing; the base monitor shows a knife and fork attacking a piece of cake. These composed, fairly static shots are in color. Separating them is the middle monitor with a black-and-white action view of the cake traveling from plate to mouth. Shot with a camera taped to the eater's wrist, the disorienting perspective turns eating into a surreal event. The delivery of morsels to a gaping mouth seems appropriate for predators living at the bottom of the sea. In structure, the action resembles a parsed sentence, with subject, object, and verb clearly defined.

During my meeting with Peili, I explained how MoMA maintains and preserves its video art collection. At the time, video's archival format was tape, which had segued from "open-reel" in 1965 to Digital Beta in 1997, with longevity boosted through storage at stable temperature and humidity conditions. I emphasized the distinction between a singular

work, a one-off, from what exists as an edition with a finite number. Peili and several of his Chinese-based peers had made trips abroad, where dealers were eager to take them on, or take advantage of the art world neophytes. Peili accepted the system—how editioning fixes the number of legitimate copies of an artwork, and how pricing regrettably elevates painting over video installation. I promised to send Peili an example of an artist contract, which spelled out the acquisition process, important as I intended to raise the funds to bring *Eating* into the MoMA collection. The Museum of Modern Art acquired *Eating*, and exhibited the work in 1998. Viewers ambled between Jackson Pollock's drip paintings and Peili's show. These very focused, innovative artists fit well together.

**LEAP:** How was Zhang Peili received when he spent time in New York in the 1990s? Was he understood in identitarian terms, or more in terms of his approach to media?

**BL:** In 1992 Peili spent three months at Art Omi—an upstate New York summer residency program—with a group of other artists from abroad. He returned to New York on his own in 1994 and spent ten months in the city. Like other classically trained Chinese artists, by day Peili sat with a big pad and charcoals in front of the Metropolitan Museum, sketching tourists' portraits. By night, he attended every art event he could. During this time abroad, he discovered he is happiest and most interested in home.

**LEAP:** 90年代张培力在纽约受到的反响如何? 观者是在身份语境下来理解他的作品, 还是通过观察他处理媒介的形式?

**伦敦:** Art Omi 是一个在纽约北部的艺术家夏季驻地计划, 张培力在 1992 年参加了这个项目, 和很多来自世界各地的艺术家们在美国生活了三个月。1994 年, 他自费重访美国, 又在纽约住了十个月。像很多受过传统艺术教育的中国艺术家一样, 白天的时候, 张培力拿着大速写本和炭笔在大都会艺术博物馆前给游客画肖像画。到了晚上, 他则尽可能地参与每一个艺术活动。也是在他出国的这段时间里, 他发现了自己还是对中国更感兴趣, 而且他在国内的时候才是最快乐的。

**LEAP:** 在你到杭州的旅程结束前, 张培力陪你一起去了龙门村。你在那里发现了什么?

**伦敦:** 在张培力的带领下, 我们乘坐城际公交车离开了杭州, 然后搭乘了辆一路颠簸的出租车。这辆小轿车仿佛根本没有防震弹簧, 鸣笛声倒是异常响亮。最后我们徒步去了龙门村的最后一站, 当地村民从未见过外国人。我们在市场里漫步, 吃了饺子和炸甜饼, 就像自制的甜甜圈。我们穿梭于明代时期的建筑物中, 就像其他的村庄一样, 年轻人为了赚钱而去了大城市, 留下了老人, 女人和孩子。精美雕刻且年代古老的横梁反衬出了村民住宅的简陋, 我们注意到村民们正在为羽毛球拍穿线, 每完成一个羽毛球拍, 他们能从一家当地工厂那儿赚两角钱。我最近在网上查了查, 发现龙门村早就被旅游巴士和游客充斥了。大概我曾在那里看到的生活已经消失了。

**LEAP:** 你在过去的几年里是否关注过张培力的作品? 你会如何描述他这些年他所发生的转变?

**伦敦:** 二十年前, 我在中国结识了 35 位媒体艺术家, 当时电脑和互联网的使用并不广泛, 但现在的情况已经发生了根本性的变化。我也在持续关注着张培力的作品, 而且我还经常和他谈及这样的一个现象, 即在今天的中国, 两股不协调的力量正在融为一体——传统与现代。作为一名艺术家和老师, 张培立并没有试图调和任何一种冲突。他的艺术大胆、有趣且聪明地展现了这种冲突。现在中国有成千上万的媒体艺术家, 他们都很敬重张培力。(译 / 赵念)

**LEAP:** At the end of your trip to Hangzhou it appears that Zhang Peili accompanied you on a trip to the village of Longmen. What did you find there?

**BL:** Guided by Peili on an excursion to Longmen, we left Hangzhou on an inter-town bus, and then caught a bone-jarring ride in a taxi. What the tiny vehicle lacked in springs, it made up for in nonstop horn. We went the last leg of our trip on foot to the village of Longmen, where the local citizens had never seen a Caucasian. We wandered through the main market, ate dumplings and sweet fried bread, a homemade Dunkin Donuts. Like villages everywhere, young men had left for "the city" to earn money, leaving behind the old men, women and children we saw as we wandered among Ming-era buildings. The magnificently carved ancient beams accentuated the shoddiness of the village dwellings, where we noticed villagers stringing badminton rackets, at two cents each, for a local factory. I just looked online and discovered that Longmen now has four buses filled with tourists who are flooding the town. I imagine the life I saw there is gone.

**LEAP:** Have you followed Zhang Peili's work in the last few years? How would you characterize the turn it has taken since your projects together?

**BL:** Twenty years ago, I discovered just 35 media artists in China. Computers and the internet had not spread very far. Now the situation has radically changed. I have continued to follow Peili's work, and often talk with him about the fact that in China today, two dissonant forces are fusing together—traditional and contemporary. As an artist and teacher, Peili has not tried to reconcile any opposites. His art presents the clash baldly, amusingly, and intelligently. In China today there are thousands of media artists, and all have respect for Zhang Peili.